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Volume 14

McNair Scholarly Review

Spring 2008

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# Scholarly Review
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# McNair Scholarly Review

# How Fair is Fair Value Accounting?

*Cyprian Alaribe*

Dr. W. Bruce Johnson, Mentor
University of Iowa, SROP 2007

*Quantitative financial reporting of asset values and liabilities using a single financial instrument has been debated and brought to the Financial Accounting Standards Board's (FASB) attention for a number of decades. FASB's mission is to improve and establish new standards of financial accounting and reporting. The debate of fair value versus historical cost accounting is intrinsic to the evolution of financial reporting. Historical cost accounting requires that the numbers reported on accounting financial statements be recorded at the amount actually paid for an asset. Opponents question the relevance of this measurement convention. Fair value accounting, on the other hand, reports the current market values of assets and liabilities. Opponents of fair value question the reliability of the measurements. The purpose of this research is to present the opposing views on this important accounting policy debate, due to the trend of America's economy and its increasing demand on fair value measurements in financial reporting. The debate involves conflicting views pertaining to the more accurate measurement of financial assets and liabilities. The research encompasses an array of literature regarding the debate of fair value measurement and it will be left for readers to decide which measurement convention better suits America's companies.*

## INTRODUCTION

Quantitative financial reporting of asset values and liabilities using a single financial instrument has been debated and brought to the Financial Accounting Standards Board's (FASB) attention for a number of decades. FASB's mission is to improve and establish new standards of financial accounting and reporting. The debate of fair value versus historical cost accounting is intrinsic to the evolution of financial reporting.

Relevance versus reliability has been the central debate that creates this controversy. Historical cost accounting requires that the numbers reported on accounting financial statements be recorded at the amount actually paid for an asset. Opponents question the relevance of this measurement convention. Fair value accounting, on the other hand, reports the current market values of assets and liabilities. Opponents of fair value question the reliability of the measurements. Significant strides to simplify financial reporting were not made until June, 2004, when FASB issued an Exposure Draft introducing Fair Value Measurements and opened it for debate and opinions regarding its application. With the exposure draft in place, the aim of the FASB is to establish a single standard of financial reporting to create a more efficient and consistent measurement of fair value reporting. This issue leaves us with the question: how "fair" is fair value?

The purpose of this research is to present the opposing views on this important accounting policy debate, due to the trend of America's economy demanding more fair value measurements in financial reporting. The debate involves conflicting views pertaining to the more accurate measurement of financial assets and liabilities. The research encompasses an array of literature regarding the debate of fair value measurement, and it will be left for readers to decide which measurement convention better suits America's companies. The first section describes fair value accounting and gives examples of the different way it is applied. Also, in this section I will illustrate the financial reporting instruments currently authorized by Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) using Nike's balance sheet. The international Accounting Standards Board has also commented on this debate, and this section sheds light on that discussion. The next section discusses the impact on company reports and auditors if fair value accounting is implemented.

The third section reflects on the actual debate of fair value. It encompasses various arguments, some favoring fair value, and others opposing the standard for financial reporting. In the last section in my report, I will take a careful look at the fair value debate and make recommendations to the Board regarding the current evolution of fair value accounting.

There is no 'formal fair value project' currently on the FASB agenda; however, recent pronouncements (described in Section 5 below) reflect a growing tendency

on the part of the FASB to favor the fair value approach when resolving accounting measurement controversies. Is fair value fair to the issuers of financial statement? I will let you, the reader, decide.

**The FASB's Fair Value Project**

Financial accounting standards in the United States are established in formal pronouncements issued by the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB), a private sector organization that operates with Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) oversight.

Recent FASB pronouncements have created a lot of controversy because they have favored a "fair value" approach to accounting measurement in contrast to the traditional "historical cost" approach. Those voicing opposition to fair value accounting raise important concerns about the reliability and verifiability[1] of the reported numbers. Proponents of fair value accounting, on the other hand, are quick to argue that historical cost numbers are simply irrelevant for decision making purposes even though they are admittedly reliable and verifiable.

FASB, founded in 1973, is delegated by the SEC with the authority to establish financial reporting standards for companies and also for entities in the private-sector, including business and non-profit organizations. FASB does not, however, enforce these standards. The SEC, on the other hand, handles the duties of enforcing financial accounting standards for public companies. In developing accounting standards, the FASB applies a three-stage process while following the due process procedure. In the discussion-memorandum stage, key issues in financial accounting and reporting are presented in a memorandum and open to the public for comments. In the Exposure-draft stage, the Board (FASB) produces an exposure draft on an issue after further deliberations had been made. At this point, the issue is still open for further evaluation by the public. The final stage, voting, involves the board voting on a standard it had previously discussed in an exposure draft. Five of the seven members of the Board must vote approval to issue the standard. Often when standards aren't approved, a new exposure draft is reissued and opened for comments by the public.

The FASB has been responsible for issuing over 150 statements of Financial Accounting Standards and seven Statements of Financial Accounting Concepts. It hopes that the standards will educate financial statement users and auditors, which should in essence help reduce uncertainty and lower the cost of capital. These

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[1] According to the Statement of Financial Accounting Concepts (SFAC) 2, Qualitative Characteristics of Accounting Information (Stanford, CT: FASB, 1980), Relevance and reliability are qualities that make accounting information more useful. Relevant information helps users form accurate predictions about the future. Reliable information is factual, truthful, and free of error and bias. Verifiable information secures a high degree of consensus among independent measurers using the same measurement methods.

financial reporting standards help decision makers efficiently allocate their economic resources.

## What is "Fair Value" Accounting?

The balance sheet is an organized list of assets, liabilities, and equity at a point in time. The purpose of the balance sheet is to report a company's financial position on its particular date. Under current GAAP, "historical cost" is the dominant (but not exclusive) approach used to assign values to these assets and liabilities. There is a growing and controversial movement toward the use of "fair value" measurement for all balance sheet assets and liabilities.[2]

Under a comprehensive fair value accounting approach, all balance sheet assets and liabilities would be recorded at market values rather than at historical cost. According to FASB statement 157, fair value is "the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date." (SFAS Statement No.157)

## Examples of FV Accounting

FASB's exposure draft included an example of an application of fair value accounting. Suppose land is purchased for $500,000 cash on January 1, 2006 (which would make the purchase price the historical cost as well as the fair value at this date). This same asset could be sold on December 31, 2006 for $550,000. This amount would be recorded as the fair value of the asset. According to the fair value measurement, the value of land would be altered based on quoted market prices.

Members of the committee (SEC) perceive some inconsistencies with fair value's definition and application when installation costs are required. Consider the following example of a machine. Suppose on January 1, 2006 a machine was bought for $100 plus $5 on installation costs. According to historical cost measurement, $105 would be recorded as the value of the asset. Thus, the fair value of the machine would be recorded as $100. Committee members argue that impairment losses would result if installation costs aren't added to the fair value of an asset when it's being used for income-producing activities. If installation costs are added, no impairment will be recorded (historical cost will equal fair value).

An example of fair value accounting refers to transaction costs. FASB's Exposure Draft explains another application of fair value measurement when two markets, A and B, for the asset are considered. The asset price in Market B ($35) is more

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[2] Historical cost accounting requires that the numbers reported on accounting financial statements be recorded at the amount that was actually paid for an asset. For example, a tract of land which was purchased 50 years ago for $10,000 may be worth $1 million today but it will be recorded on the balance sheet at its historical cost: $10,000. Historical cost principle is used because of its reliability and freedom of bias when compared to fair market value principle.

advantageous than the price in Market A ($25), ignoring transaction costs. However, the fair value estimate is determined using the price in Market A because the transaction cost in Market B ($20) is much higher than in Market A ($5). The net value is $20 in A, and $15 in B. The guidance is less clear if we modify the example by reducing the transaction costs for Market B to $15. In this instance, neither market is advantageous in a "net" sense, but Market B would yield the higher fair value estimate (ignoring transaction costs), which provides managers an opportunity to pick the more desirable figure based on their reporting objectives.[3] These examples create an unresolved dilemma in the application of fair value accounting.

**How FV is determined (AICPA/FASB)?**

The measurements of fair value reflect three factors: the asset or liability, the market for the asset or liability being measured, and the participants transacting in that market. Fair value focuses on the price that would be received to sell the asset or paid to transfer the liability (an exit price), not the price that would be paid to acquire the asset or received to assume the liability (an entry price).

In FASB's exposure draft in June 2004 (also included in SFAS Number 157), the board introduced a fair value hierarchy to help better estimate fair values. The three (3) levels of the fair value hierarchy reflect the market inputs that affect estimates of prices. SFAS 157 defines "inputs" into various valuation techniques as "the assumptions market participants would use in pricing the asset or liability, including assumptions about risk." Inputs may be. Observable inputs "reflecting the assumptions market participants would use in pricing the asset or liability developed based on market data obtained from sources independent of the reporting entity." Unobservable inputs "reflect the reporting entity's own assumptions about the assumptions market participants would use in pricing the asset or liability developed based on the best information available in the circumstances."[4]

- A Level 1 input is estimated based on the active market's quoted prices of the identical assets and liabilities. These markets are active due to the ongoing transactions with the price of the asset or liability and they provide the most reliable fair value of the reporting entity. Level 2 inputs are observable for the entire term of the reporting entity.
- A level 2 input include quoted prices for similar assets and liabilities but, unlike level 1 inputs, these quoted prices aren't always from active markets; they can also result from little market activity for the asset or liability.

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[3] Botosan, Christine A; Ashbaugh, Hollis; Beatty, Anne L; Davis-Friday, Paquita Y; Et-al. Response to the FASB's Exposure Draft on Fair Value Measurements. *Accounting Horizons.* Volume 19, Issue 3. September 1, 2005

[4] As taken from *The CPA Journal.* A publication of the New York State Society of CPAs. "Fact, Fiction, and Fair Value Accounting at Enron." By Robert G. Haldeman, Jr., CPA. November 2006

- A level 3 input targets the unobservable inputs used in measurement. There is little or no activity in the market for these inputs.

As issuers adhere to the objectives of fair value measurements, the best estimates of fair value depends on the activity in the market for the asset or liability by participants.

The measurement of fair value includes three approaches: the market approach, income approach, and the cost approach. The **market approach** compares prices and other relevant information with similar assets and liabilities in the industry. An important aspect of the market approach is matrix pricing, a technique that involves finding relationships with other benchmarked prices as opposed to relying on quoted prices to value an asset or liability.

Another determinant of fair value involves applying the **income approach**. This approach uses cash flows and earnings to convert future amounts into present (discounted) values. Different valuation techniques can be used to measure the value of future amounts, thus, determining the fair value. These techniques include present value techniques, binomial models, option-pricing models, and various other methods. Intangible assets are measured, using the multiperiod excess earnings method.

The third approach, **cost**, refers to the replacement cost of an item for which its fair value is being determined. This approach is applied mainly to assets only. Fair value would be determined by reference to the price of a substitute asset of comparable utility. These comparable asset prices also have to be adjusted for obsolescence from physical depreciation, economic effects, and the impact of technology.

Although valuation techniques are to be consistently applied, events that cause a change in the weighting of these approaches, e.g. new market developments, can cause an appropriate change in how these valuation techniques are applied. These changes are accounted as a change in accounting estimate.[5]

**Fair Value Disclosures**

SFAS 157 requires disclosure by any reporting entity that uses fair value measurement. Reporting items at fair value is essential, for example, for trading securities.[6] Market and economic trends impact these securities daily; therefore the most accurate balance sheet depiction of the value of trading securities would be if the securities were recorded at fair value. Disclosure requirements included in FASB statement 157 mandates reporting for each major category of assets and liabilities:

a) The fair value measurement recorded at the reporting date.

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[5] Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB). *Statement of Financial Accounting Standards No. 157. Fair Value Measurements.* September, 2006

[6] Trading securities are equity or debt securities that investors acquire principally for the purpose of selling in the near term.

b)   The level in the fair value hierarchy (Levels 1-3) the accounting measured asset or liability category falls in. If an asset or liability falls in level 3 (unobservable inputs), the entity must disclose the changes that occurred during the period and provide a reconciliation of the beginning and ending balances.

c)   The amount of total gains and losses for the period being recorded.

d)   The valuation method used to measure fair value and changes in valuation techniques (in annual periods only), if any.[7]

Financial reporting disclosures are presented in tubular format for better understanding by investors and financial statement users. These disclosures also help investors understand business decisions made by companies.

**Project current status**

In September 2006, the FASB issued additional guidance to help corporations and accounting firms measure assets and liabilities using the fair value method of accounting.[8] This pronouncement is the latest step in the evolution of U.S. accounting practices from historical cost to fair value measurement.[9] SFAS No. 157 affects over 40 existing accounting standards, but it does not expand the use of fair value to any new circumstances.

According to Robert Herz, chairman of the FASB, the U.S. financial reporting system faces a number of important and difficult challenges. Chief among those is the "need to reduce complexity and improve transparency and overall usefulness of the information reported to investors."[10] Critics of GAAP assert that financial statements as now compiled are almost completely irrelevant for investors, analysts, and lenders. For example, analysts routinely adopt workarounds intended to overcome some of the limitations inherent in GAAP numbers.

How can financial statements become more relevant and useful? Some experts, including Herz, believe that fair-value accounting must be part of the answer.[11] Indeed, the FASB increasingly seems to favor this approach. There is little doubt that U.S. accounting standards need to be simplified. There are over 10,000 pages of

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[7] Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB), *Statement of Financial Accounting Standards (SFAS) No. 157 Fair Value Measurements* (Norwalk, CN: FASB, September 2006). Prior to SFAS No. 157, there were different definitions of fair value and limited guidance for applying those definitions in generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP). Difference in that guidance created inconsistencies that added to the complexity in applying GAAP. In developing SFAS No. 157, the FASB considered the need for increased consistency and comparability in fair value measurements and for expanded disclosures about fair value measurements.

[8] Taken from the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB). Statement of Financial Accounting Standards No. 157. *Fair Value Measurements.* September, 2006

[9] Early proponents of fair value accounting include: Paton (1922) for marketable securities accounting; Sweeney (1936) for all asset with fair value measured as the entry price ("replacement cost"), and McNeal (1939) for all marketable assets. Littleton (1953) advocates strict adherence to historical cost for all assets and liabilities.

[10] As quoted in R. Fink, "Will Fair Value Fly," *CFO Magazine* (September 01, 2006).

[11] R. Fink, "Will Fair Value Fly," *CFO Magazine* (September 01, 2006).

technical regulations governing GAAP, and FASB continues to introduce new financial reporting and disclosure pronouncements. Critics argue that this rules-based approach to accounting policy inhibits U.S. competitiveness in the global marketplace.[12]

## Accounting measurements currently used in GAAP Financial Statements

### Nike Balance Sheet

The carrying amounts in a typical GAAP balance sheet are a mixture of fair value, historical costs, net realizable value and discounted present values. The Nike financial statement (2006) is used to illustrate the different measurement conventions used for balance sheet accounts [See Appendix]. The balance sheet will provide an illustration and illuminate current GAAP measurement conventions and thereby clarify the ongoing debate about fair value accounting.

### Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash is the most liquid asset on the balance sheet. Cash equivalents (commercial paper, money market funds, and U.S. treasury bills) are highly liquid investments that can be quickly converted to cash due to their usual maturity in three months or less. The carrying amount of cash reflects that which a company has on hand, which reflects its use of historical cost measurement (also its current market value).

### Net Accounts Receivable

Accounts receivable results from sales of goods and services on credit. Some of these sales are unknowingly made to customers who are incapable of making the required payments. Thus, an estimate is made for funds that are deemed uncollectible. As a result, accounts receivable is recorded at net realizable value at the balance sheet date, rather than rather than at historical cost.

### Short term Investments

Short term investments are of two kinds: securities held to maturity and securities held only for a short period of time. Measuring short term investments depends on how long the company plans on holding that particular investment, but their recorded values depend on the measurement method applied. Nike's short term investments are highly liquid and include debt securities (i.e. U.S. Treasury debt securities and Available-for-sale debt securities). The U.S. Treasury debt securities usually mature in three months. These securities are held to maturity from

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[12] D. Henry and D. Kopecki, "The Snag in Accounting –Made Simple," *BusinessWeek* (June 4, 2006)

the date of purchase, and their values are carried at amortized cost. Available-for-sale securities are recorded at fair value, and any unrealized gains and losses are reported in other comprehensive income. Nike currently does not hold any trading securities as investments.

**Inventory Valuation**

Inventories are measured using the lower of cost or market measurement. Nike uses a combination of the First In, First Out (FIFO) method and the moving average method, to determine inventory cost. Cost is then compared to market value, and the lower of the two amounts is reported on the balance sheet.

**Prepaid Expenses and other assets**

Prepaid expenses are payments made in advance for goods and services to be received in the future. This advance payment creates benefits that span beyond the current period. The balance sheet amount for prepaid expense is initially equal to the dollar value of the advance payment. Balance sheet amounts are then reduced every period as services and goods are received (i.e. rent or insurance).

**Property, Plant and Equipment and Depreciation**

This account reflects the tangible long-lived assets that are in operations. Property, plant, and equipment (PPE) are initially recorded at historical cost, but then depreciated. The corporation applies two different types of depreciation methods to these assets for financial reporting purposes. Depreciation is recorded for buildings and leasehold improvements over two to forty years using the straight-line method. For machinery and equipment over two to fifteen years, Nike records depreciation using the double-declining method. Thus PPE is valued at historical cost and then adjusted downward for depreciation.

**Impairment for Long-Lived Assets**

When the carrying amount of a long-lived asset can no longer be recovered (impairment) there are two ways a company could measure the reduced values of these assets. If readily available, the quoted current market prices can be used to measure the fair value of these assets. Nike uses a more popular method among companies to calculate its fair market value, estimating the undiscounted cash flows when circumstances indicate the carrying value of the long-lived asset may be impaired. This measurement convention is in agreement with the FASB Statement No. 144, "Accounting for the Impairment or Disposal of Long-Lived Assets." Impairment is calculated as the excess of the carrying value of the impaired assets over their estimated fair values. The carrying value of impaired assets is then reduced

to net realizable value (NRV) by reducing a change to income for this excess amount.

**Intangible Assets and Goodwill**

SFAS No. 142, "Goodwill and other Intangible Assets," provides guidelines on measuring intangible assets. Intangible assets with indefinite lives are not subject to amortization; hence these assets are instead tested annually for impairment. When these assets are initially recorded at historical cost and then tested for impairment, the fair value of the reporting unit is compared to its carrying value. If the carrying value of the intangible asset is greater than fair value, impairment is calculated as the difference between the fair value and the carrying value of the asset. The carrying value of impaired assets is then reduced to net realizable value (NRV) by reducing a change to income for this excess amount.

Nike uses a unique approach for measuring its indefinite-lived asset, trademark. It uses the loyalty approach, a standard form of undiscounted cash flows, to measure its fair value. Another method currently used to measure impairment is by calculating the excess of the carrying value over the fair value of the trademark.[13]

**Deferred Income Taxes (Assets)**

Deferred tax assets (and liabilities) measure the expected future tax consequences attributable to differences between the GAAP approach to measuring income and the approach by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The measurement rules are complex and do not fit easily into a single approach.[14]

**Current Liabilities**

Current liabilities include account classifications (i.e. accounts payable, notes payable, accrued liabilities, etc.) that reflect the current debts of a company resulting from its operating activities. Notes payable and current portions of long term debt are liabilities that are payable within a year. The amounts recorded are the (face) values due at maturity. Accounts payable and accrued liabilities are incurred, not yet paid, and are usually due within 30 to 90 days. The carrying amounts for notes payable approximate fair value due to the short maturities. Accounts payable and accrued liabilities are recorded at historical cost because they reflect the original obligations recorded in the balance sheet. They are also approximated in fair value.

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[13] Securities and Exchange Commission.  Nike Inc., Annual report on Form 10-K 2006

[14] Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB).  "Accounting For Income Taxes,"  Statement of Financial Accounting Standards No. 109 (Norwalk, CT: FASB, 1992)

**Long Term Debt**

The long term debts of a company are financial obligations that mature beyond one year from the balance sheet date. Nike's long term debts include corporate bond payments and the Japanese note payment. The carrying amount is the discounted present value at issuance (proceeds). Current value is adjusted over time toward the maturity amount using the effective interest rate. GAAP also requires firms to disclose fair value of financial instruments in footnotes.

**Use of Historical Cost, Fair Value, Present Value**

As the Nike balance sheet illustrates, current GAAP principles use a combination of measurement conventions for financial reporting.[15] These conventions may include fair value measurements for certain assets and liabilities, using fair value measurements for some assets, and using present value measurements for other assets and liabilities. With these different measurements of assets and liabilities, the variations in measurement conventions are likely to cause volatile earnings.

**International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) views on Fair Value Accounting**

The International Accounting Standards Board (IASB), founded on April 1, 2001, is the successor of the International Accounting Standard Committee (IASC) founded in June 1973 in London. It is responsible for developing the International Financial Reporting Standards and promoting the use and application of these standards. In addition, the IASB co-operates with national accounting standard-setters to achieve convergence in accounting standards around the world.

Recent attempts have been made to enable better comparability between the FASB and the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB). Converging both accounting standards would help develop high quality accounting frameworks and encourage better comparisons while both standards are being used in the world's capital markets. It would also aid in creating an easier reconciliation requirement for companies that aren't U.S. based and use the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) but are registered in the U.S.

To increase convergence with FASB, members of the IASB compared their existing fair value standards with the measure introduced by SFAS 157. According to the IASB, the aim of Fair Value Measurements isn't the use of fair value in financial reporting, but to elucidate and abridge current standards. The IASB made several

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[15] K. Most. *Accounting Theory* (Columbus, OH; Grid, Inc. 1977. pp. 143-150) describes in detail more than ten distinct measurement approaches that can be applied to balance sheet assets and liabilities, not all of which are consistent with current GAAP. Most (1977) also describes six different interpretations of the term "fair value" ("current" value) in accounting. The Nike balance sheet does not illustrate the full set of accounting measurement alternatives.

comments regarding the FASB's statement on fair value. An area of concern was the FASB's lack of emphasis on the use of mixed valuation approaches. FASB only allows a distinct valuation approach – market, income, or cost – whichever method is needed to determine the value of a particular asset or liability.

The area most emphasized was the differences in definitions of fair value in SFAS 157 and IFRS. SFAS 157 defined fair value as "the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date." The IASB on the other hand, defined fair value as "the amount for which an asset could be exchanged, or a liability settled, between knowledgeable, willing parties in an arm's length transaction."[16]

There are obvious differences between these two definitions. FASB's definition referred to fair value as an unambiguous exit price, while the IFRS didn't refer to fair value as an explicit exit price, nor as an entry price. FASB's definition of fair value also referred unequivocally to market participants, but the IASB isn't too precise regarding the parties in the transaction. According to IASB's definition of fair value, the parties are only required to be knowledgeable, willing parties in an arm's length transaction. The third difference with the definitions of fair value refers to liabilities. SFAS refers to liabilities as being 'transferred', while IFRS differs slightly by insisting the liabilities can be 'settled' between willing parties in a transaction.[17] The IASB also allows the use of 'mixed' valuation approaches.

Recently, FASB and the IASB have made efforts to make financial reporting easier to interpret by investors and other users of the financial statements. As they debate the differences in fair value definitions and applications, their goal remains to develop similar interpretations of fair value measurement, as this evolution in financial reporting would affect corporations with companies in the U.S. and abroad.

## IMPACT OF FAIR VALUE PROJECT (IF IMPLEMENTED)
### Impact on company reports

If FASB required comprehensive fair value measurement for balance sheet items, some account values would be altered. Amounts initially recorded in historical cost, depending on the measurement date, would change due to the asset or liability's impact in the market at the particular date.

- Inventory valuation would be altered if a company uses the Last In, First Out (LIFO) method. Using the LIFO method, companies value their inventory using process of earlier purchased items as they aim to sell their most recent

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[16] International Accounting Standards Board (IASB), Discussion Paper. *Fair value measurements, Part 1.* November 2006. The IASB Discussion Paper was published in two parts and was opened for discussion only, to be received by April 2, 2007.

[17] Taken from the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB), Discussion Paper. *Fair value measurements, Part 1.* November 2006

inventory items first. Depending on how far back dated these inventory items are, using fair value measurement could cause a big change in the amount previously recorded to reflect their current market value.

- The recorded values of property and plant never change using historical cost measurement (purchase price) in the balance sheet, while equipment value is measured using the depreciation method. These values will be altered if they were recorded in fair value depending on the year the building or equipment was purchased.

- The amount of current liabilities would also be altered if their fair values are recorded instead of their face amounts. The amount of change in the values depends on current economic trends which reflect the value of the dollar.

Fair value fluctuation can also cause earnings volatility and manipulation. An example of earnings being contrived is the recent issue with the SFAS 159. The Fair Value standard (SFAS 159), which is being viewed by FASB, is geared towards giving companies the option of measuring financial assets and liabilities at fair value, which could ultimately improve profits. With this new standard of accounting in the financial statements, a separate disclosure on the application of fair value accounting would be needed to explain the effect that the standard has on the altered financial reporting items. With a global movement geared toward fair value accounting, new disclosures would help investors and users of financial statements to better understand how these values affect balance sheet earnings, which would "eliminate the need for companies to apply complex hedge accounting provisions."[18]

Companies will also be required to display these values separately from those measured under different attributes or financial instruments on the face of the balance sheet. An example would be producing a sensitivity analysis and a breakdown of unrealized gains/losses based on how the related fair value amounts were determined. This disclosure addition could be used to provide additional information to the users of the financial statements.

**Impact on auditors**

Following the introduction of Financial Accounting Standards No. 157 and 159, more companies began to adopt these standards. As issuers adopt the fair value standard to provide more current values of financial assets and liabilities, which affects the auditing of these financial statements, auditors will be forced to tweak some of their techniques to comply with the new standard for accurate audits of companies.

Mark Olson, Chairman of the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board

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[18] Quote taken from a WebCPA journal article, *FASB issues proposal on fair value.* February 27, 2006

(PCAOB), noted some challenges that auditors will encounter while adapting to the change in accounting standards. The increased use of fair value measurements by issuers will force auditors to:

- Undergo some training on valuation, which many auditors may not possess.
- Remember that financial statement preparers can be biased in their assessment of fair value, and as a result, may fail to consider alternative valuation scenarios.
- Keep in mind that internal controls surrounding fair value measurement may be different from those over typical business transactions.[19]

## BENEFITS AND COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING FAIR VALUE

The U.S. reporting system faces many challenges regarding financial reporting, and fair market value application tops the list. The most emphasized aspect of the philosophical debate, and perhaps the root that causes the biggest disagreement to replace historical cost accounting with fair value accounting, refers to the issue of relevance versus reliability.

### Arguments favoring Fair Market Value

The Federal Reserve adopts the fair value measurement while tracking America's economy. This makes it relevant for FASB to adopt the fair value standard for companies. Moreover, a point of concern refers to corporate accounting being the only major reporting system that hasn't adopted fair value and use it as its basis.

Existing standards follow a fragmented guidance and sometimes leads to earnings volatility. Many reformers believe that fair-value accounting is the remedy for simplifying accounting because GAAP currently uses different measurement conventions for assets and liabilities, which can lead to earnings volatility. The relevance of information to investors continues to remain the core focus of people who agree for a move to fair value accounting. Some publicly traded firms have asset market values that equal five times their historical values. Reporting these assets at historical cost would undeniably understate their value, which highlights a deficiency in historical cost measurement.

Better guidance on fair value estimates and audits has been the goal for financial reporting. Numerous conditions have created the need for fair value accounting, which include:

- The economy has become more dynamic and, thus, the need for reliable fair value amounts is becoming increasingly important;

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[19] Taken from the *COMPLIANCE WEEK* article: Olson: Guidance For Implementing AS5 Coming by Melissa Klein Aguilar. *Compliance Week* is a weekly newsletter on Corporate governance, Risk and compliance. June 7, 2007

- The SEC staff and certain other regulators have seen and continue to see problems that are attributable to unreliable estimates of fair value;

- Over the years, standard setters have required measuring assets and liabilities at fair value without providing detailed "how to" valuation and auditing guidance for estimating those fair values;

- And, various accounting projects are underway that would require more assets and liabilities to be measured at fair value.[20]

Suppose a company purchased land in 1920 for $2000. The land is now worth $150,000. In historical cost accounting, $2000 is reported in the balance sheet, while $150,000 is reported using fair value measurement. Who cares what was paid for the land in 1920? In today's dynamic, yet volatile markets people are more interested in what assets are worth today whether to buy or sell. Historical cost is only relevant when fixed assets are assumed to remain the same over time. Users lack the feedback value about appreciation or depreciation in value of these assets after their purchase.[21]

**Arguments against Fair Market Value**

Although there is an advantage in having more relevant information, there are some questions regarding fair value's ability to mislead investors. A point of concern rests on the fact that the money may never materialize. The primary argument against fair value accounting refers to the measurement convention's lack of reliability. Colleen Cunningham (2004), president and CEO of Financial Executives International, (FEI), commented on this issue that "relevant information that is unreliable is useless to an investor. We must, therefore, be clear about the nature of the claim being made for an accounting number described as reliable."[22] Proponents of historical cost accounting believe that it is more reliable than fair value accounting due to historical cost statements relying more on hard numbers and less on estimates.

One of the advantages that Historical Cost accounting holds is that the earnings numbers produced are not based on appraisals or any other valuation techniques or measurement conventions. Measuring assets and liabilities using fair value measurements can lead to earnings manipulation and hiding of losses in the balance sheet by companies, because estimates of current values, not 'actual' numbers that reflect purchase prices, were recorded in those balance sheet accounts. Recent scandals have surfaced in financial reporting. According to a *Business Week*

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[20] As taken from the SEC speech by Jackson M. Day at the 28th Annual National Conference on Current SEC Developments. December 2, 2000

[21] As taken from *The CPA Journal*. Fair Value Accounting, Analyzing the Changing Environment By Rebecca Toppe Shortridge, Amanda Schroeder, and Erin Wagner. April, 2006

[22] Quote taken from, *Financial Executive*. Fair Value Accounting: Fair for Whom? March/April 2004

article, 60 companies are estimated to have manipulated their earnings while utilizing the fair value option of Statement of Financial Accounting Standards (SFAS) No. 159. These companies saw it as "a free pass to off-load money losing securities without taking a hit to earnings."[23] As a result of these actions, losses are hidden, and various financial ratios are improved.

Referring to the previous example supporting fair value measurement, the value, $150,000 is much difficult to determine for the land's current worth. It is much easier to determine the cost of the land which makes historical cost more reliable.

## CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

So what is "fair" about fair value accounting? I believe that investors want fair value information, but not necessarily at the cost of discarding historical cost information. I also believe and recommend further education for investors on what measuring financial instruments at fair value means in the context of financial reporting. Most businesses are using their assets to conduct operations and are not trying to sell them. So is it an appropriate depiction of the assets if they were recorded at fair value? When a business offers an asset for sale, or perhaps the entire business, an appraisal to determine the current market value of the assets must be performed. This is a case where fair value needs to be applied.

The FASB, as part of its fair value project, asked certain user constituents if they prefer fair value or historical cost based measurements, and the result was both. They desire fair value information to better determine the true value of their investment. At the same time, they want to "see the historical results that provide a measure of cash flows and indicate whether management has achieved operating results that were budgeted or predicted."[24] With this, I am in support of Jackson Day's analysis of the speech on fair value accounting by the SEC staff.

Over recent years, the FASB has issued standards that require the use of fair value accounting in measuring assets and liabilities. In the Statement of Financial Accounting Concepts (SFAC) 7, *Using Cash Flow Information and Present Value in Accounting*, FASB presented the idea of using the present value of predicted future cash flows to determine fair value. Upon issuing SFAS 141, *Business Combinations*, the Board focused on the increased importance of intangible assets in America's economy. FASB regulated separate measurements of intangible assets at fair value apart from goodwill. Goodwill was later regulated, in SFAS 142, to be measured at fair value. These changes in measurement conventions justify the Board's deliberate

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[23] From D. Henry and D. Kopecki. The Snag in Accounting-Made-Simple. *BusinessWeek*. June 4, 2007

[24] Quote taken from the SEC speech by Jackson M. Day at the 28th Annual National Conference on Current SEC Developments. December 2, 2000

movement toward fair value accounting.

The FASB, upon the issuance of SFAS 157, *Fair Value Measurement*, aimed to prepare the world for a major change in the way financial assets and liabilities are reported. It believes that the ultimate goal of the fair value project is to "improve comparability, consistency, and reliability of fair-value measurements by creating a model that can be broadly applied to financial and nonfinancial assets and liabilities."[25]

In February 2007, the FASB established SFAS 159, giving companies an option to utilize fair value measurement in reporting their assets and liabilities. Giving companies this option of financial reporting is viewed as a 'trial run' by the board as it prepares to implement a new standard that would require full fair value measurement in financial assets and liabilities. The IASB, having much interest in the discussion of fair value accounting, agreed to work with FASB to develop a discussion paper regarding fair value measurement in financial instruments. The joint effort hopes to bring both standards together and to help insure better comparability by companies that operate in other international countries together with the U.S.

I commend the Board and its efforts in its push for full fair value measurement in assets and liabilities. I also recommend that we stay in this gradual movement in the evolution of fair value accounting as we address one problem after another. A comprehensive fair value approach isn't necessarily the way to go just yet, but further development of the alternative accounting method (the fair value option) should move us forward and show actual improvement in accounting practices.

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[25] As taken from *The CPA Journal*. Fair Value Accounting, Analyzing the Changing Environment By Rebecca Toppe Shortridge, Amanda Schroeder, and Erin Wagner.  April, 2006

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## APPENDIX

**Nike, Inc. Consolidated Balance sheet**
**May 31,2006**

**ASSETS** (In millions)
Current assets:
Cash and equivalents.................................................................$954.20
Short-term investments.............................................................1,348.80
Accounts rec., less doubtful accounts of $67.6 and $80.4.....................2,395.90
Inventories (Note 2) .................................................................2,076.70
Deferred income taxes (Note 8) ....................................................203.3
Prepaid expenses and other current assets...................................380.1
Total current assets ...................................................................7,359.00
Property, plant and equipment, net (Note 3)............................................1,657.70
Identifiable intangible assets, net (Note 4)......................................405.5
Goodwill (Note 4) ...............................................................................130.8
Deferred income taxes and other assets (Note 8) ...........................316.6
Total assets ..........................................................................$9,869.60

**LIABILITIES AND SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY**
Current liabilities:
Current portion of long-term debt (Note 7) ...........................................$255.30
Notes payable (Note 6)...............................................................43.4
Accounts payable (Note 6) ........................................................952.2
Accrued liabilities (Notes 5 and 16) .......................................1,286.90
Income taxes payable ..............................................................85.5
Total current liabilities.................................................2,623.30
Long-term debt (Note 7)...........................................................410.7
Deferred income taxes and other liabilities (Note 8) .....................550.1
Commitments and contingencies (Notes 14 and 16).........................................—
Redeemable Preferred Stock (Note 9) ..............................................0.3
Shareholders' equity:
Common stock at stated value (Note 10):
Class A convertible — 63.9 and 71.9 shares outstanding...........................0.1
Class B— 192.1 and 189.2 shares outstanding........................................2.7
Capital in excess of stated value ................................................1,451.40
Unearned stock compensation .......................................................-4.1
Accumulated other comprehensive income (Note 13)....................................121.7
Retained earnings.......................................................................4,713.40
Total shareholders' equity .......................................................6,285.20
Total liabilities and shareholders' equity .............................................$9,869.60

# Medicaid and the Working Poor: Influences on Non-Utilization of Medicaid Services

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*This study examines various political, social, and economic factors that influence the relative likelihood of an individual consuming services made available by Missouri's Medicaid program. This is crucial in understanding what prevents those eligible from accessing the medical services fundamental to a higher quality of life. Based on a county-by-county level of analysis, the study identifies five significant influences on a county's relative utilization rate: median household income, unemployment rate, number of health clinics relative to the county's population that is eligible to receive Medicaid, geographic region, and percent of the population that speaks English as a second language.*

## Introduction

The Medicaid program was established under Title XIX of the Social Security Act of 1965 as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's "War on Poverty." Its original intention was "to provide medical assistance on behalf of families with dependent children and of aged, blind, or individuals with disabilities, whose income and resources are insufficient to meet the costs of necessary medical acute care and long-term care services" (U.S. Fed 2007, 1.1) Since its inception, the program has also expanded to incorporate additional children and pregnant women. Medicaid

presently insures 51.6 million recipients (U.S. Fed 2007, 1.1) and costs over $320 billion each year (Omear 2006).

Despite the immense size of the program and the millions already enrolled, potential recipients face numerous obstacles in obtaining Medicaid services. All over the country, people who remain eligible for Medicaid benefits do not participate in the program, whether through ignorance, inability, or choice. However, there remains a significant gap in the literature explaining the causes of this non-participation. This research seeks to fill this gap by examining which political, economic, and social variables contribute to non-utilization of Medicaid services. The study will focus specifically on Missouri to narrow the scope of analysis and reduce methodological complexity in accounting for variances between state policies. Multiple linear regression analysis of data for Missouri counties will permit examination of the factors that most influence participation rates.

Understanding the reasons for the variance in utilization of Missouri's program will guide understanding of present overall effectiveness, the nature of existing problems, and appropriate direction for future reform – perhaps eventually resulting in policy reform that brings Medicaid closer to its original promises of access to healthcare for the working poor.

**Literature Review**

Medicaid was established as a federal policy, where each state establishes its own parameters of eligibility, levels of medical coverage, and financial assistance, all within certain national standards. The state then shares both the financial burden and authoritative power with the national government. This study asks the question, what factors influence use of this specific program? As the goal of the Medicaid program is to aid in the provision of and therefore access to healthcare, a more general question can be, what factors affect access to healthcare? Because Medicaid is a system of insurance provision, not actual healthcare provision, this may make the question of access to Medicaid somewhat removed from the question of actual access to healthcare. However, insurance is necessary to afford healthcare without taking on enormous amounts of debt to cover these costs, especially for the low-income population whose economic means are already limited. Therefore, understanding what affects access to Medicaid will aid greatly in understanding what affects access to healthcare itself. Some work has already been done on access to healthcare and even participation in the Food Stamps Program (U.S. Dept of Agriculture 2001), but not specifically access to Medicaid.

*Factors influencing access to healthcare*

A primary contributing factor to healthcare access is education and literacy.

Repeatedly, scholars have argued that higher literacy rates increase use of healthcare services, and overall health status among citizens (Baker et al 1996; Weis et al. 1992). Lower literacy prevents many from fully understanding healthcare instruction or materials (Murphy et al. 1996), or how and when to pursue healthcare services (Hammad and Mulholland 1992). Therefore literacy greatly affects patient interaction with the healthcare system, whether through decreased ability to understand medical instruction or increased difficulty in navigating the medical system. By extension, increased literacy should positively influence the utilization rates of Medicaid services. However, information on the variance in literacy rates from county to county is limited, so this variable will be measured with the far more available proxy of average education rates.

Additional factors that influence healthcare participation are language differences and cultural diversity. Cultural or even religious differences in attitudes toward health can impact greatly one's likelihood to pursue institutionalized healthcare services or treatment for medical ailments (Spector 2000). Language barriers are also noted for their significance in limiting access to healthcare. Those who speak English as a second language in America consistently utilize healthcare services at lower rates (Fiscella et al. 2002). Therefore, a greater percent of the population that speaks English as a second language should result in lower utilization of Medicaid because of the noted barriers to participation.

There is also discussion in the literature regarding the effect of geography on access to healthcare. Some report that rural residents actually experienced fewer problems with healthcare access than their urban counterparts (Bashshur et al. 1994), but others contend that rural areas often face significant health problems and healthcare access obstacles (Fortney et al. 1999), including generally poorer health status overall, greater traveling distances to access healthcare, smaller availability of healthcare providers, and disparities in insurance:

> All rural residents, as a group, have a 15 percent higher rate of uninsuredness than the US average, and a 24 percent higher rate than their metropolitan counterparts. The low levels of insuredness contribute to a cash drain on the rural family. Rural residents pay, on average, 10 percent more of their income out-of-pocket for health care than do their urban counterparts. …Rural residents are more likely to suffer from chronic disease conditions, including arthritis, visual and hearing impairments, ulcers, thyroid and kidney problems, heart disease, hypertension, and emphysema. They are also more likely to suffer limitations in activity as a result of these chronic conditions than are urban dwellers. More hospitals, physicians and nurses, and other health personnel and services will be required to meet these increasing needs. Yet current trends in availability of health care facilities and personnel show marked decreases and consistent inadequacy which paint a bleak picture for rural Americans. ("Health Care"

1989, 102-103)

This argument in the literature suggests a need to incorporate a measure of rural versus urban experience in Medicaid participation rates. Population density is a ratio measure that identifies the relative concentration of residents in each county without dividing or coding each county into either exclusively rural or urban. Consistent with the majority of existing research, this research hypothesizes that more rural areas will experience lower utilization rates because of the various health and access problems described in existing literature.

The socioeconomic status of the individual or her surrounding community is another factor that influences access to healthcare. The low income of an individual prevents or hinders many people from receiving healthcare (Bashshur et al. 1994; Patrick et al. 1988). Some add that low-income persons, among other groups, are more likely to hold skeptical attitudes toward healthcare providers, resulting in generally less interaction with and participation in healthcare services (Fiscella, Franks, and Clancy 1998). Kirby and Kaneda (2005) argue further that the community factor is also important in determining access to healthcare. They find that "living in [financially] disadvantaged neighborhoods reduces the likelihood of having a usual source of care and of obtaining recommended preventative services, while it increases the likelihood of having unmet medical need" (15). This remains true even when controlling for individual characteristics (18); in other words, the negative effects on access to healthcare due to living in a disadvantaged area hold true even if the individual herself is not disadvantaged. Therefore both individual income and relative economic geographic advantage, as measured by average county income, play a role in accessing healthcare. Both of these measures are incorporated in this study to observe the actual impact they each play. Lower average individual and county income would suggest higher rates of poverty and therefore higher need for programs like Medicaid, and then theoretically higher utilization rates. However, based on the literature, these same lower incomes also suggest barriers to accessing those needed services, which would suggest lower utilization rates. This is therefore an area this study seeks to illuminate.

Availability of healthcare providers is also an important factor to consider. Baker and Royalty (2000) argue that higher numbers of Medicaid-providing physicians are far more conducive to increasing access to healthcare than, for example, larger eligibility parameters. Therefore two measures of healthcare providers are incorporated in this study. One is a measure of the number of private-practicing physicians who accept Medicaid recipients, and another is a measure of the public clinics and physicians who accept Medicaid patients. The inclusion of these variables rests on the hypothesis that a higher number of providers, private or public,

increases the likelihood that an individual can (and does) access health services because it increases the availability of medical professionals.

One factor of eligibility for Medicaid includes one's age; those over the age of sixty-five are also eligible for some Medicaid benefits. Although a higher elderly population would not suggest a higher utilization rate (because the rate itself is a proportion), a measure of the percent of the population over age sixty-five is included to determine if the elderly population influences the overall utilization rate. Also, as healthcare benefits are often connected to employment, a measure of unemployment is included in this study. This is based on the hypothesis that if one is unemployed, then one is also without the accompanying healthcare benefits and therefore in greater need of the benefits provided by Medicaid, thus resulting in higher utilization rates.

## Design and Methodology

To narrow the scope of analysis and to lessen complexity in accounting for the influence of policy variation from state to state, this study was limited to the experience of Medicaid recipients in Missouri with a county-by-county level of analysis. This was a secondary analysis of quantitative data collected by various government agencies in recent years, or otherwise derived from this collected data (see Appendix A for specific sources).

### Instruments and Variables

Because the above factors are suggested by existing literature to be influential in accessing healthcare, they were each incorporated into this study as potentially influential in accessing Medicaid.

The dependent variable was the "utilization rate," which I originally defined as the ratio of those receiving Medicaid benefits to those eligible to do so. Data regarding the number of recipients are available from the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (MDHSS 2007, MICA), and data regarding the number of eligible persons are available from the Missouri Department of Social Services (MDSS 2007, County Quick Fact Sheets). This ratio was at the heart of the study and permitted an analysis of the political, economic, and social factors that influence actual use of program benefits for which one is eligible.

However, after building the database, calculating the utilization rates for each county, and observing abnormally high rates of participation (averaging nearly 99% utilization and never less than 93%), I contacted Missouri's Department of Social Services for a more precise definition of the data category labeled "Number of people eligible for Medicaid/MC+ services" (MDSS 2007, County Quick Fact

Sheets). In e-mail correspondence to the researcher, the Department of Social Services clarified that the term eligible meant the number of those actually enrolled in Medicaid, as opposed to those who met eligibility standards. Thus the statistic represented only those who had taken the initiative to enroll to receive benefits, rather than an estimation of the number actually eligible under state and federal guidelines. Any gap between eligible and receiving only represented those few who were enrolled to receive benefits but not physically receiving their cash benefits or reimbursements from the government.

This obviously changed the methodology of this study and forced a redefinition of the dependent variable. Government projections of eligibility (rather than enrollment figures) proved to be unavailable as no such calculation had been projected or estimated – at least not one made available to public knowledge. The research therefore needed a new measure for utilization. Since the Federal Poverty Level is used as a basis for calculating eligibility for Medicaid benefits (MDSS 2007, "Medicaid/MC+ Eligibles"), and this data was available to the researcher, the dependent variable became the ratio of individuals receiving Medicaid benefits compared to individuals below the poverty line.

*Model*

Utilization Rate = $\beta_1$*(Percent of Population Over 65) + $\beta_2$*(Percent Unemployed) + $\beta_3$*(Population Density) + $\beta_4$*(Median County Income) + $\beta_5$*(Percent of Population with Less than 9th Grade Education) + $\beta_6$*(Percent of Population Speaking English as a Second Language) + $\beta_7$*(Relative Availability of Private Practice Medicaid Providers) + $\beta_8$*(Relative Availability of Public Health Care Medicaid Providers) + $\beta_9$*(Northern County Dummy Variable) + Error

*Tools of Analysis*

SPSS statistical analysis software is used to conduct a multiple linear regression analysis to measure the effects of each of these socioeconomic and political variables on the actual utilization rates of Medicaid services in each county. Multiple linear regression analysis allows simultaneous study of numerous variables and their individual effects on the dependent variable, as well as the magnitude and direction of these relationships (Manheim et al. 2006). Each variable is measured both independently, to examine the extent to which each variable is contributing to the variance in the dependent variable, and simultaneously, to examine the total impact of all variables on, in this case, the utilization rate. This not only allows analysis of the present relationship, but also offers an empirical basis for predicting the dependent variable based on knowledge of the independent variables. Thus, this tool will allow

the researcher to both observe and predict the differences in utilization rates given independent variable data.

**Results**

    The findings of this study were surprising. While some results were expected, a few others were very much unexpected. All results bear important implications for the standard of living of the Medicaid population, as well as for the government's implementation of this program. Five factors were found to influence the utilization rate at a statistically significant level, and ultimately accounted for approximately forty-five percent of the variation in the dependent variable. These were median household income, unemployment, portion of the county's population which speaks English as a second language (ESL) at home, the relative availability of public health clinics, and a regional dummy variable, which suggested that northeast and northwest regions of Missouri had a significantly different experience than the rest of the state.

*In-Depth Findings*

    In the course of study, I noted marked differences between the data for the northeast and northwest counties compared with the rest of the state. These differences were especially noticeable in the variance of total annual spending per Medicaid capita. This measure denoted the total annual amount of spending in each county on Medicaid/MC+ programs, divided by the average number of those receiving Medicaid benefits in that county. This operationalization leveled the data so it was comparable from county to county. For example, southwestern McDonald County spent the least statewide, with approximately $3,800 per Medicaid recipient, while northern counties sometimes spent upwards of $9,000, as in Adair and Gentry Counties. Analysis of these results led to the creation of the regional dummy variable, which coded any county in the northern part of the state as "one" and any other county as "zero," to determine if there was a statistically significant regional effect.

    The numerical analysis of the influences on utilization (below) revealed five major factors that were statistically significant. Together these factors explain approximately forty-five percent, as represented by the "Adjusted R Square" value, of the variation in the utilization rates.

Results of a Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

| Variable | Coefficient | Std. Error | VIF |
|---|---|---|---|
| (Constant) | 0.543 | 0.307 | - |
| **Regional dummy** | **-0.120\*\*** | **0.047** | **1.538** |
| % 65 or older | 0.008 | 0.007 | 2.229 |
| % Less than 9th grade education | 0.008 | 0.006 | 2.005 |
| **% ESL at home** | **-0.029\*\*\*** | **0.011** | **1.449** |
| **% unemployed** | **0.043\*** | **0.025** | **1.783** |
| **Median county household income** | **2.31E-005\*\*\*** | **0.000** | **3.111** |
| Relative private practicing Medicaid providers | -0.004 | 0.013 | 2.352 |
| **Relative public health clinics** | **-0.581\*\*\*** | **0.216** | **2.297** |
| Population density | -3.14E-005 | 0.000 | 1.601 |

\* Statistically significant at p-value less than 0.10
\*\* Statistically significant at p-value less than 0.05
\*\*\* Statistically significant at p-value less than 0.01
n=115

Statistical significance is denoted by the bolded variables. Ideally this number should be less than 0.05, but is even less subject to error when less than 0.01. The predictor is still significant when less than 0.10. The magnitude and direction of the relationships between factors and the utilization rate is denoted by the values in the "Coefficient" column. Negative or positive values indicate only the direction of the relationship, not any weight relative to zero. Positive values signify a direct relationship, while negative values indicate an inverse relationship; the magnitude of these correlations is represented by the absolute value of the numerical data.

As the above table shows, there were three significant factors at less than 0.01 (noted with three asterisks): median household income, percent of the population that speaks English as a second language, and the number of public health clinics relative to the Medicaid eligible population. The regional variable was significant at less than 0.05 (noted with two asterisks), and unemployment was also significant at a less than 0.10 value (noted with one asterisk).

The most influential factor was median household income, although the relationship revealed was the surprising opposite of my original expectations. The analysis resulted in a positive correlation between income and utilization, showing

that the higher the median county income, the higher the county's utilization rate. The number of health clinics in each county, in proportion to the county's Medicaid eligible population, was significant but also in the direction opposite the hypothesis. The number of public health clinics was surprisingly inversely related to lower levels of Medicaid utilization. Another significant factor was the portion of the county's population that speaks English as a second language at home. This factor, however, supported the original hypothesis that the higher the portion of ESL speakers, the lower the utilization rates. These variables were all significant at a p-value of less than 0.01. The regional dummy variable added as a hypothesis later in the research process turned out to be significant. Fewer Medicaid eligible people living in the northern counties of Missouri used the program when compared with the rest of the state, even though those who did use it received significantly more per capita. The data show that northeast and northwest regions of Missouri had significantly lower utilization rates than the rest of the state. This variable was significant at a p-value of less than 0.05. Finally, unemployment positively correlated with usage, consistent with the original hypothesis that higher unemployment begets higher utilization. This variable was significant, although at p-value of 0.09. Perhaps most surprising, however, were the insignificant variables; education, availability of privately practicing physicians, and population density offered no significant influence on utilization.

**Analysis**

Both the significant and insignificant factors offer important implications for the access of Medicaid and other government-provided benefits. The gap between Medicaid eligibility and actual use of the program is the result of the systemic and societal problems that prevent Medicaid from reaching its intended demographic of the working poor. The factors that proved significant in this study are at the very least indicators of those problems, and can further be used as gauges for directions of future study.

For example, counties with larger ESL populations have significantly lower Medicaid utilization rates, which suggests language and communication problems between the government and non-English speaking portions of the populace. These language and cultural obstacles increase difficulty in interacting with the complex Medicaid system, subsequently altering the ultimate use of these resources, consistent with Spector's arguments (2000) that cultural differences (as represented by the lingual divide and by general attitudes toward healthcare) between the medical service provider – in this case, both the government and the actual healthcare provider – and service recipient create significant obstacles to healthcare delivery. A further area of research could attempt to draw out whether this finding is

additionally affected by undocumented immigrants; higher ESL populations could be indicative of undocumented populations, who are hesitant to utilize these services even on behalf of their citizen children, for fear of discovery and eventual deportation (U.S. Dept of Agriculture 2001, 9).

Unemployment rates also positively correlated with utilization rate, meaning that the higher the rate of unemployment, the higher the rate of people utilizing Medicaid. This is consistent with my original hypothesis, which simply suggested that with more unemployment, there is higher usage of Medicaid. This could occur for many reasons. The simplest reason could be to fill the void of lost healthcare; with more unemployment, there are fewer employer-provided healthcare benefits and thus a greater demand for the benefits of Medicaid. Additionally, the existing infrastructure that administers unemployment benefits may also aid in the dissemination of information about Medicaid, thus increasing public knowledge about Medicaid services especially to an eligible population. Future research could examine how those receiving benefits initially discovered the program.

Another predictor that proved significant was the relative availability of public health clinics in each county. This variable was crafted by dividing the number of public health clinics by the number of those enrolled in the Medicaid program; this derivation leveled the data across counties so that it would be comparable. Counterintuitively, the analysis showed an inverse relationship: the higher availability of public health clinics, the fewer eligible people actually using Medicaid services. Upon further examination, this finding may be consistent with Baker and Royalty (2000), which describes the crowding-out effect experienced by healthcare providers. Applied to this particular situation, a larger number of public health clinics would provide increased availability of healthcare for Medicaid recipients. This publicly provided availability creates disincentives for doctors and private practices to offer the same services; doctors can direct Medicaid-insured individuals to available service at public clinics, and then continue serving privately-insured individuals. Subsequently, the health clinics throughout the county experience crowding out, where all those who need services are forced to go to the same providers, and then cannot obtain them because they overwhelm the system. This would result in lower utilization rates, as the research found. Further investigation could address both quantitatively and qualitatively the administration, staff, and patients of public clinics directly and examine more closely the nature of the problems experienced by these clinics in delivering services to patients, such as overcrowding, insufficient resources or staffing, language barriers between provider and patient, or otherwise.

The most heavily weighted predictor of the utilization rate was the median income of each county. The positive correlation, again counterintuitive, suggested

that the higher the median income of a county, the higher its utilization rate. Assuming the median income figure correlated to a measure of standard of living, higher income also represented the county's well-being, if only financially speaking. This higher affluence allows increased resources within the county, perhaps even increased levels of political clout, both of which make available the ability to better advertise and disseminate resources and information to educate the county population about available programs and benefits. In lower income counties, there may be a distinct financial constraint on the government to promote the program, resulting in lower usage rates. Also, fewer financial resources limit the government's ability to employ the necessary amount of social workers and other support systems and workers. These government personnel are key intermediaries in ensuring that those who are eligible for Medicaid are able to navigate successfully the intricate systems of government programs and bureaucracy. Making certain that these workers are adequately funded – with both personal income and budgetary resources – and not overloaded with more cases than is possible to address could ensure more efficient use of state funds and higher use of state programs. Future research could examine the impact of the number of government social workers on utilization rates, the effect of a social worker's caseload on utilization rates, or the relationship between a county's average income and its Medicaid and advertising budgets.

Finally, the regional variable proved statistically significant. The northern counties had a notably different experience than that of the rest of the state, experiencing significantly lower utilization rates. One potential explanation could be that the administrative infrastructure of the northern regions of the state is less effective in its responsibilities of implementing the program. This administrative or infrastructural failure could be due to the economic visage of the region; northern Missouri is a consistently poor area of the state. This, then, returns to and is consistent with the conclusions drawn from median income's significance, that lower income suggests fewer resources to aide in administration of the program. Additionally, Missouri history as a Civil War border state offers an alternative explanation of this regional difference. Daniel Elazar (1972) argues that the political culture, or the attitudes and beliefs individuals hold about their political system which then shape interactions with political structures and institutions, varies greatly from state to state and even within states. Within Missouri, he found cultures reminiscent of the Civil War divide. He identified that the individualist cultural pattern was dominant in northern Missouri, and the traditionalist culture was the dominant pattern through most of the rest of the state. Individualist culture sees government's role as extremely limited in the private affairs of citizens, such as healthcare, finances, or unemployment. If Elazar's patterns are accurate, people in the northern part of the state would be more

hesitant to take advantage of Medicaid benefits. This political culture would likely create a disinclination toward depending on anyone other than oneself, especially the government, leading to participation in programs like Medicaid at significantly lower rates. Further study could attempt to translate this concept of political culture into a testable variable to examine the validity of Elazar's theories in relation to the results of this study.

**Conclusion**

The federal government's construction of the definition of poverty – the Federal Poverty Level – is of considerable magnitude to this and every study of poverty and related issues. Eligibility for Medicaid is determined by some measure of income relative to the Federal Poverty Level. This line, developed in 1965, "took the dollar costs of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's economy food plan… and multiplied the costs by a factor of three" (Fisher 1992). A factor of three was used because the Agriculture Department's 1955 Household Food Consumption Survey found that a family's budget for food accounted for about one third of their total income. This calculation was done only the first time (1965), and each year since has been adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index. This measure, however, does not account for the rising cost of energy, transportation, housing, and education, among many other household expenses. The cost of food, therefore, is an ever-shrinking proportion of a family's budget and therefore an increasingly unsuitable measure of poverty. The continued use of this definition then limits the very ways in which we study and discuss poverty in America.

Future research might attempt to bring to life the qualitative aspects underlying the entirety of this work through face-to-face interviews or case studies of Medicaid recipients for more in-depth analysis of their experiences with the Medicaid program. Further work could also incorporate additional variables, such as a measure of racial diversity, a breakdown of recipients and utilization by sex, a more precise designation of counties as rural or urban, and home ownership as an indicator of personal equity, net wealth, and higher long-term potential ability to lift oneself out of poverty and need for Medicaid (Shapiro 2004).

While this study and its results specifically focus on the Missouri experience, the implications of this work are still crucial because Missouri is often considered a bellwether state and patterns that become evident in Missouri could offer direction for similar research in other states and nationally. Additionally, the methodology of the study can be replicated to examine the experiences of other states, and can easily incorporate more variables as needed. Furthermore, assuming the results are general-izable, each of the specific significant factors suggest direction for reform,

highlighting the issues that most affect participation rates in the Medicaid program and therefore most warrant addressing through reform. It illuminates the need for action in low-income, linguistically diverse, and job-depressed regions, and also shows the need to work more closely with public health providers to address the difficulties in ensuring healthcare access to the low-income population. Ultimately, the research calls for a further exploration of the factors contributing to non-utilization, and a major shift in consciousness to awareness of these issues and addressing them through political discourse, activism, and policy reform.

## Appendix A: Variables and Sources

| Variable(s) | Year in Question | Source |
|---|---|---|
| -Median Age<br>-Percent of the Population Over 65<br>-Median Individual Income<br>-Average Education Rates<br>-Percent of Population That Speaks English as a Second Language at Home<br>-Individuals Below Poverty Level | 2000 | United States Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census.<br><br>Factfinder Tool. |
| -Population Density | 2000 | United States Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census. "GCT-PH1." |
| -Number of Medicaid Recipients, by County | 2006 Averages | Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services. Missouri Information for Community Assessment (MICA) Tool. |
| -Number Enrolled for Medicaid, by County*<br>-Annual County Spending on Medicaid/MC+ Program | 2006 Averages | Missouri Department of Social Services. "County Quick Facts SFY-06."<br><br>*DSS labeled this statistic as "Number of people eligible for Medicaid/MC+ services." Further communication with DSS revealed that this is not actually the number of those eligible according to state guidelines, but rather the number enrolled in the program (DSS, personal email to author). |
| Number of Private Practicing Medicaid Providers and Public Health Clinics, by County and Specialty | 2007 | Missouri Department of Social Services. Family Support Division.<br><br>"Report No. FMSPRMT1-01" |
| -Availability of Private Practicing Medicaid Providers, relative to Medicaid eligible population<br>-Availability of Public Health Clinics Relative to Medicaid eligible population<br>-Total Annual County Spending per Medicaid Capita | Varies | Derived, through simple calculations. |
| Utilization Rate | n/a | Derived; the number of those in the county receiving Medicaid benefits divided by those in the county below the federal poverty level. |

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# Microfinance and Child Mortality: Sub-Saharan Africa

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*When the United Nations declared 2005 as the International Year of Microcredit, many countries affirmed that microfinance is a good solution to improving the socioeconomic conditions of the extreme poor. Microfinance institutions (MFIs) provide modest, collateral-free loans to customers who are considered unprofitable by commercial banks, in return for a small deposit (Yunus 2007). Many also provide savings opportunities, insurance, and money transfers. Over the years, microfinance institutions have made positive impacts on developing regions around the world, including Southern Asia, India, and Sub-Saharan Africa. Despite various case studies of the effects of microfinance on different African communities, no research has assessed the efficacy of MFIs on the Sub-Saharan region as a whole. Examining the period from 1980-2005 of 24 Sub-Saharan countries, this research attempts to show that the presence of MFIs is negatively correlated with child mortality rates. It finds, however, that the relationship between MFIs and child mortality is statistically insignificant. It is important to note that data constraints limit the broad application of this conclusion. It also points out that establishing a uniform method of collecting and analyzing MFI performance data improves the accuracy of assessing the impact.*

**Microfinance Background**

For the past few decades both governmental and non governmental organizations have dedicated increasing research to microcredit and its use as a tool to help the economic and socioeconomic conditions of impoverished societies (Lancaster et al. 2007, 12). Many organizations and programs have made collaborative efforts to reach poor families through microcredit systems. One organization whose efforts stand out is the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP). The CGAP is a body of 33 public and private institutions that work together to provide sustainable financial services to the poor through microfinance. Because its member institutions cover a variety of worldwide development agencies, CGAP is a dominating force in the development of microfinance. MFIs worldwide seek guidance from CGAP in order to improve upon their services and better meet the needs of their clients. CGAP continuously creates new banking methods for clients, fosters and supports ideas for the industry and its institutions, encourages technological innovation and develops applicable solutions to problems and challenges the industry faces (Helms 2006, xi-xii). Currently, CGAP, in partnership with the Ford Foundation, is sponsoring a Social Indicators Project, whose purpose is to track indicators that correspond to the Millennium Development Goals, one of which is improving the health of women and children. The indicators show if incomes and assets are increasing and if clients' health conditions are improving. The ultimate goal of the project is to compile globally comparable data that is cost efficient to collect and to create a uniform reporting format for MFIs worldwide (Microfinance Gateway 2007). With this data, researchers will be able to accurately assess the impact of microfinance on more complex variables, such as child mortality.

One multinational effort to help the poor is the Microcredit Summit Campaign. The Campaign has established itself as one of the leaders in worldwide microfinance development. These annual summits (the first was held in 1997 in Washington, D.C.) represent over 100 countries and have helped with the development of microfinance practices and efficacy. The campaign's provisions include not only financing, but also fund management training, health services and education (Microcredit Summit 2007). In the State of the Microcredit Summit Campaign Report of 2006, the Summit reported that by the end of 2005, the Campaign had reached 89.1 million poor, 69 million of them (84.2%) being women—a 570% increase from December 31, 1999 to December 31, 2005 (2007). The Campaign and other organizations target women for several reasons, including that women's participation in microfinance programs has a positive impact on children in the household.

**Child Mortality**

According to the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) the major causes of child mortality in Sub-Saharan Africa are malaria, diarrhea, HIV/AIDS and acute respiratory infections, e.g., tuberculosis (2007). It also states that many child mortality cases occur within the first month of infants' lives due to pregnancy and labor complications and infections. Most illnesses and complications that result in under-five mortality are preventable and treatable, but families either cannot afford healthcare, do not have access to it, or both. Other factors that contribute to health complications—for both children and adults—are proper nutrition, access to clean water and proper sanitation.

Currently, Sub-Saharan Africa houses nearly 90% of the world's malaria cases. Malaria is the leading cause of death for African children, totaling 20% of all under-five mortalities (WHO 2007). Not only does malaria cause a massive social loss, but it also causes great economic loss, costing the continent US$12 billion in GDP annually (2007). Freedom from Hunger, supported by a grant from GlaxoKline Smith Africa Malaria Partnership, initiated a malaria education program integrated with the microfinance services it provides. The program emphasized the cause of malaria, its communicability, prevention techniques, treatment possibilities and information about malaria's most vulnerable victims, children under five and pregnant women. Freedom from Hunger found several indicators that the curriculum was encouraging anti-malaria behavior and helping disseminate valuable information about malaria in the community; at least half the clients were using insecticide treated nets and nearly 90% of the clients shared the information from the program with people in their communities (Freedom from Hunger 2007). Programs like this, in conjunction with additional funding for nets and treatments, help reduce child mortality.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa is a continental as well as a global emergency. According to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), Africa houses only 10% of the global population, yet it is home to an extremely disproportionate number of HIV cases—over 60%—or 25.8 million cases (UNAIDS 2005). Not only does HIV leave many families burdened with economic losses, e.g., wage losses, and medical bills, but it also leaves many children orphaned after their parents or caregivers have died from AIDS or AIDS related illnesses. As a result, children are either homeless or depend on extended family or community support. Some MFIs in Africa have addressed the HIV/AIDS crises by fostering partnerships with organizations that provide specialized social programs for families experiencing crises; these projects help the MFIs focus on financial practices ensuring the quality of their services. One kind of program is an Orphan and Vulnerable Children (OVC) project. This kind of project provides monetary and social support for orphaned children and widows with children. Usually run by NGOs or

community-based organizations (CBOs), the programs help pay for children's education either directly or through a scholarship fund. The programs also actively encourage the community to help support the OVCs (Donahue, Kabbucho and Osinde 2001, 28).

It is also important to note that a country's wealth—specifically measured by GDP per capita in this paper—determines the quality of healthcare and nutrition of its citizens. Countries with a lower GDP per capita have lower standards of living, including access to proper healthcare and nutrition. Also, not only are poorer governments less able to provide aid to their poorer citizens, but they are also less able to provide funding for programs that help combat health and nutritional problems.

**Microfinance in the Household**

World Bank rural development report of Bangladesh by Pitt and Khandker (2003) finds the gender of the program participant determines what, if any, benefits children in the household receive. The research group conducted surveys of microcredit borrowing households from 1998-99. A discouraging figure from the survey states that only 5% of women have complete control over loans in their households, and 78% of husbands reported that they used their wives funds for their own financial projects (Pitt, Khandker and Cartwright 2003, 9). This is an important finding because the benefits that children receive depend on which parent has power over household resources. Men are more likely to allocate income to foodstuffs and personal expenditures, while women are more likely to allocate income to education and healthcare. In a different report, Pitt found that women's microcredit program participation has a decidedly positive and statistically significant effect on child health (Pitt et al. 2003). They also found that men's program participation had neither a statistically positive nor a statistically negative effect on child health.

De la Brière, Hallman and Quisumbing found that bargaining power in the household greatly affects who has power over household decision making and expenditures (de la Brière, Hallman and Quisumbing 2003, 92). In rural Bangladesh, women with more education allocate more of their earnings to their children's health and education, especially female children, while men allocate most of their income to food staples. In a study of South Africa, Ethiopia, Indonesia and Bangladesh, Adam found that the assets couples initially bring into the marriage also affect how they spend future income. The more assets the wife brings in, the more financial freedom she has; she then allocates more money to children's health and education. The more the husband brings in, the more he allocates to foodstuffs and personal projects. More importantly, social status of the couples affects the bargaining power within a household. If the husband has higher social status than his wife, then he has more control over health practices, education, food and the use of

contraceptives (Adam 2003, 37). These findings demonstrate that in some cases, a child's needs may remain unmet if the mother does not have adequate control of household resources.

It is important to note, however, that programs designed to increase women's bargaining power can actually harm women and their children in the long run. Smith found in a study of Cameroon and Kenya that the objective of empowering women (and as a result, increasing bargaining power) through microfinance and other social programs has in fact hindered women in some parts. Apart from being vague in most programs' mission statements, the term and goal of women's empowerment varies across programs and countries. It can mean increasing decision making power in the household, taking responsibility over social welfare services, increasing market economy participation or strengthening women's political voices (Smith 2003, 42). Despite various programs' goals and claims of success, women's micro-entrepreneurial successes and endeavors are struggling to escape the entrenched cultural gender roles and expectations of their communities. Many African countries see microfinance and its secondary empowerment goal as an interference of its customs and traditions. This is why it has met much resistance until the past decade. Unfortunately, although women have taken on greater economic and political roles within their communities and households (especially pertaining to women's issues), they have not attained greater status or power. In fact, men have taken less responsibility as providers while staking more dominance within the household (2003). As a result, some of these women may be unable to appropriate the gains and benefits of these programs to their children, regardless of their increased community and economic involvement.

According to Sharma and Schrieder (2003), microcredit program participation's effect on children's nutritional well being is unclear. Because nutritional well being depends on many factors such as "access to safe water, access to health care and the nutritional knowledge of caregivers," determining whether or not program participation has a measurable effect is difficult (Sharma and Schrieder 2003, 229). Smith (2003) found that women's status relative to men had a great impact on children's nutritional status. In regions where gender inequalities were greater, women's relative status had a more profound effect: South Asia had the greatest level of inequality followed by Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. Smith measured women's status at the household level and the community level,[1] and also measured caring practices including prenatal and birthing care for women, breast

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[1] Smith measured women's household status by if the woman works for cash, her age at first marriage, the age difference between her and her husband, and the education difference between her and her husband. The community level is measured by "girl-boy differences in nutritional status and preventative health care, as well as gender differences in adult education," (Smith 42).

feeding and complementary feeding for children, and the quality of children's substitute caregivers (2003). Although Smith found that improved women's status had a positive effect in all of the regions, she found as socioeconomic status increased, the breastfeeding rate dropped. Because receiving nutrients from breast-feeding is critical to a child's development, policies and programs should address the importance of breastfeeding, the risk of mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS and drug treatment options to prevent mother-to-child transmission (2003).

According to Littlefield et al., households that participate in microfinance have better nutrition, health treatment and outcomes compared to their non-participating counterparts. Furthermore, some MFIs provide health education, credit for sanitation, water and housing, and health insurance through partnerships with health insurance providers (Littlefield 2003). A study from Freedom from Hunger in Ghana showed that clients had better breast-feeding practices than non-clients. They also had better re-hydration for diarrhea treatment than those of non-clients; a study of the FOCCAS microfinance program in Uganda (commissioned by USAID-AIMS) had similar results. Furthermore, a study from the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) found that the extent of severe malnutrition declined as membership increased (2003).

## Methodology

### Model Specification

The following section explains the variable definitions and the methodology of the secondary data analyses by method of linear regressions.

Two major sources of data are the World Bank Development Indicators and the Microfinance Information Exchange (MiX). The author compiled the data for the number of years MFIs were present in the selected African countries from the MiX country profiles. The data for diphtheria immunizations and GDP per capita were exported from the World Bank Development Indicators. Tuberculosis data was obtained from the World Health Organization. The regression models are specified as follows:

1) $MORT_t = \alpha + \beta_1 IDPT_t + \beta_2 TBt + \beta_3 GDPCt + \beta_4 MTMt + \beta_5 Y2t + \beta_6 Y3t + \beta_7 Y4t + \beta_8 Y5_t + \beta_9 Y6 + \varepsilon_t$

2) $MORT_t = \alpha + \beta_1 IDPT_t + \beta_2 TB_t + \beta_3 GDPC_t + \beta_4 MDUM_t + \beta_5 Y2_t + \beta_6 Y3_t + \beta_7 Y4_t + \beta_8 Y5_t + \beta_9 Y6_t + \varepsilon_t$

**The World Bank** defines the mortality, diphtheria and GDP variables as follows:

1. Dependent variable: MORT-under-5 mortality rate is number of children that have died before reaching age five, if subject to current age-specific mortality rates. It is expressed as the number of deaths per 1,000.[2]

2. GDPC-GDP is gross domestic product divided by midyear population, calculated in constant 2000 US\$. The expected coefficient is negative; as GDPC increases, more funds and resources are used towards combating causes of child mortality.

3. IDPT - Immunization, Diphtheria (% of children ages 12-23 months): children who received vaccinations—3 full doses—before 12 months or at any time before the survey. The expected coefficient is negative; as diphtheria immunizations increase, child mortality should decrease.

**The World Health Organization** defines the TB variable as follows:

4. TB-Estimated TB cases, both new and relapses, per 100,000 per year. The expected coefficient is positive; as tuberculosis cases increase, child mortality should also increase.

The author defines the remaining variables as follows:

5. MTM - the number of years MFIs have been present in the selected country. This is an estimate calculated from the profiles of African MFIs (MiX). The year of the institution with the earliest starting date is counted as the first year a MFI was present.[3] The expected coefficient is negative; the longer microfinance programs have been present in a country, the greater the impact they should have on both financial and socioeconomic conditions, including causes of child mortality.

6. MDUM - dummy variable; 1 if the country had an MFI in a given year, 0 if it did not. The expected coefficient is negative; If microfinance programs are present in a country, they should have an impact on both financial and socioeconomic conditions, including child mortality.

7. Year dummy - 5 year dummy variables, e.g., 1 if Year 2, 0 otherwise. Each dummy variable represents one of the five year intervals, with Year 1=1980, Year 2=1985 and so on. Using Year 1 as the base year, the expected coefficient is negative; as time passes, factors influencing child mortality should improve, therefore decreasing child mortality.

Twenty-four countries from Sub-Saharan Africa were selected based on the availability of information.[4] Unfortunately, the data were either incomplete or unavailable for the same time periods for each country. Ultimately, the aforementioned variables were chosen. Regression analyses were conducted with the selected variables at five year intervals, starting with 1980.

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[2] Data for child mortality are available only at five year intervals. As a result, the author had to truncate the other data to correspond to the six years that were available.

[3] Because reporting to the MiX is voluntary, it must be noted that all of the MFIs in any given African country may not be accounted for. Despite this, the MiX is the most complete database for MFI information worldwide.

[4] See Table 1 for a list of the countries

## Table 1

**Sub-Saharan African Countries**, Listed Alphabetically

Benin
Cameroon
Congo, Republic
Congo, Democratic Republic of the
Ethiopia
Ghana
Guinea
Cote d'Ivoire
Kenya
Madagascar
Malawi
Mali
Mozambique
Nigeria
Rwanda
Senegal
Sierra Leone
South Africa
Swaziland
Tanzania
Togo
Uganda
Zambia
Zimbabwe

## Results

This section is divided into two sections: the former is an overview of the results of both regression analyses, and the latter is a detailed discussion of the second regression analysis, which was found to be more statistically significant.

1) $MORT_t = \alpha + \beta_1 IDPT_t + \beta_2 TB_t + \beta_3 GDPC_t + \beta_4 MTM_t + \beta_5\ Y2_t + \beta_6 Y3_t + \beta_7 Y4_t + \beta_8 Y5_t + \beta_9 Y6_t + \varepsilon_t$

**Table 2**

| Dependent Variable | (1) MORT | (2) MORT |
|---|---|---|
| Independent Variables (standard error) (two tailed p-value) | | |
| IDPT | -.36672 (.1678) *(.031)* | .35956 (.1660) *(.032)* |
| TB | .02434 (.01845) *(.189)* | .02792 (.01843) *(.132)* |
| GDPC | -.04981 (.00748) *(.000)* | -.04997 (.00739) *(.000)* |
| MTM | .42756 (.7472) *(.568)* | |
| MDUM | | 12.469 (7.725) *(.109)* |
| Y2 | -12.340 (6.655) *(.066)* | -12.858 (6.518) *(.051)* |
| Y3 | -13.963 (10.17) *(.172)* | -16.403 (9.928) *(.101)* |
| Y4 | -22.900 (11.89) *(.056)* | -26.345 (11.14) *(.019)* |
| Y5 | -32.879 (13.34) *(.015)* | -36.089 (-11.11) *(.001)* |
| Y6 | -36.274 (16.47) *(.029)* | -38.766 (12.00) *(.002)* |
| Intercept | 228.78 (12.02) *(.000)* | 224.38 (12.31) *(.000)* |
| Observations | (144) | (144) |
| R-Squared | .7236 | .7282 |
| R-Squared Adjusted | .7051 | .7100 |

The first model suffered from both autocorrelation and heteroskedasticity. Because both problems could not be corrected, the results that are corrected for autocorrelation are reported in Table 2. The coefficient for microfinance variable MTM is both positive and statistically insignificant. In addition, the coefficients for TB and Y3 carried the expected sign but also proved to be statistically insignificant. The remaining variable coefficients both carried the expected signs and were statistically significant. All tests for significance were at $\alpha=.10$.

2) $MORT_t = \alpha + \beta_1 IDPT_t + \beta_2 TB_t + \beta_3 GDPC_t + \beta_4 MDUM_t + \beta_5 Y2_t + \beta_6 Y3_t + \beta_7 Y4_t + \beta_8 Y5_t + \beta_9 Y6_t + \varepsilon t$

Generally, the second model exhibited greater statistical significance for each independent variable, suggesting that MDUM was a better explanatory variable than MTM. Because the number of MFIs present in a country did not change dramatically over time, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, it is a poor variable for predicting child mortality rates. Furthermore, because the year dummy variables account for the passage of time and MDUM accounts for the presence of MFIs (albeit in a different model), MTM is not a necessary variable. Therefore, the remainder of this section will discuss results from model 2.

## Model 2: Detailed results

Before performing any corrective tests on the model, the results were as follows: the second model had significant explanatory power.[5] The Goodness of Fit test provided an F-statistic of 11.197, which rejects the null hypothesis at any reasonable level of significance. Using the simple rule of thumb where $|r| > .8$, the model also

**Table 3**

| Dependent Variable | (2) |
| --- | --- |
| | MORT |
| Independent Variables (standard error) (two tailed p-value) | |
| IDPT | -.35956 |
| | (.1660) |
| | *(.032)* |
| TB | .02792 |
| | (.01843) |
| | *(.132)* |
| GDPC | -.04997 |
| | (.00739) |

[5] See Table 3

| | |
|---|---|
| | *(.000)* |
| **MDUM** | 12.469 |
| | (7.725) |
| | *(.109)* |
| Y2 | -12.858 |
| | (6.518) |
| | *(.051)* |
| Y3 | -16.403 |
| | (9.928) |
| | *(.101)* |
| Y4 | -26.345 |
| | (11.14) |
| | *(.019)* |
| Y5 | -36.089 |
| | (-11.11) |
| | *(.001)* |
| Y6 | -38.766 |
| | (12.00) |
| | *(.002)* |
| Intercept | 224.38 |
| | (12.31) |
| | *(.000)* |
| Observations | 144 |
| R-Squared | .7282 |
| R-Squared Adjusted | .7100 |

exhibited evidence in support of multicollinearity between the following pairs of independent variables: Y4 and Y3, Y5 and Y4, Y6 and Y5. Using Klein's Rule of Thumb, the model also showed evidence of higher-order multicollinearity. Y6 regressed on all other independent variables=.6781, while the model's R-squared=.4292, suggesting higher-order multicollinearity. In fact, only three variables had an R-squared smaller than the model's—TB, GDPC and MDUM—signaling severe higher-order multicollinearity.

Because the data were time series, autocorrelation was a potential problem. When testing for first order autocorrelation, the Runs test had 63 positive, 81 negative and the Normal statistic= -7.2856, rejecting the null hypothesis at any reasonable level of significance. The model also had a small problem with heteroskedasticity. The p-value =.07443, which rejects the null at $\alpha$=.10, but fails to reject the null at lower levels of significance, suggesting that heteroskedasticity is not a major problem in the model.

As done for the first model, the results that are corrected for autocorrelation are reported in Table 3. The coefficient for microfinance variable MDUM was positive and barely statistically insignificant, suggesting that with better data, MDUM could prove to be a statistically significant variable. Also, the coefficient for TB was statistically insignificant. The remaining coefficients carried the expected sign and were statistically significant. All tests for significance were at $\alpha=.10$.

In reference to the year dummy variables, the coefficients show that as time passes, the negative relationship with child mortality increases, as well as the statistical significance of the relationship. The increase of negativity across variables is not uniform, however. The least significant variable of the second model was TB, with a p-value of .132, showing that the number of cases of TB in the total population is not necessarily correlated with child mortality rates. Logically, the most significant variable of the model was GDPC, with a p-value of .000, showing that as income per capita increases, child mortality decreases (based on the reasons discussed in the literature review).

**Conclusion**

These results do not suggest in any way that microfinance institutions fail to impact child mortality rates. What these results suggest is that the variables used may not be the best predictors of microfinance impact. One reason is the variables include neither the percentage of households that participate in microfinance nor the average loan size. Furthermore, it does not include other statistics such as diarrhea treatment, breastfeeding rates, or malnutrition rates. These variables directly affect child mortality rates and are also affected by MFIs. If they had been available, those variables would have been considered in the regression. In addition, the sample size of the data is rather small. Finally, it is difficult to analyze the impact of a set of institutions on an entire region because each country's economic and socioeconomic conditions vary drastically.

In future research, I would like to do a case study of a community in a Sub-Saharan country—given that I am properly funded. If possible, I will collect data for the percentage of households that participate in microfinance, the child mortality rates per year, the average loan per client, the malnutrition rates, and also the rates of diseases that are particular to that community (especially those that affect children). A case study will provide far more accurate data concerning the efficacy of microfinance, because it can account for variables that are sensitive to communities and individuals (e.g. mother's level of education, gender, and civil conflicts).

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# Black Women's Perception of Workplace Conflict as a Function of Skin Tone

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*This study tested the hypotheses that Black women with dissimilar vs. similar skin tones will experience more interpersonal conflict in the workplace, and that Black women who experience greater workplace conflict with other Black women of dissimilar skin tones will have lower satisfaction with life. Participants were 35 Black women in the workforce. Participants completed online questionnaires measuring workplace conflict, skin tone, and satisfaction with life. In partial support of the hypotheses, darker skinned participants reported more emotional neglect from lighter than from darker skinned Black coworkers. Patterns of verbal abuse and work obstruction did not support hypotheses, and workplace conflict did not correlate significantly with satisfaction with life. Theoretical and practical implications of the current results are discussed.*

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Black women in the United Stated demonstrate biases toward themselves and one another based on skin tone (Lamertz & Aquino, 2004; Seeman, 1946). For example, Black women prefer lighter over darker skinned peers, and lighter skin tone predicts higher self esteem among Black women (Thompson & Keith, 2001). Similarly, college students (Black and White women and men) who rate pictures of

Black women and their lives associate darker skin with less success, less happiness in love, less popularity, less physical attractiveness, less physical and emotional health, and less intelligence (Russell, Wilson, & Hall, 1992). More broadly, lighter skinned Blacks complete more years of schooling, have more prestigious jobs, and earn more than dark skinned Blacks (Hughes & Hertel, 1990; Keith & Herring, 1991). Altogether this research suggests that the African American community has internalized long-standing biases against darker skinned citizens.

Although associations between skin tone and socioeconomic status are well-researched (Hughes & Hertel 1990; Hunter & Sellers, 1998; Keith & Herring 1991), less is known about social relationships between Black women with differing skin tones. Much of the available research on social relationships is indirect and incomplete. For instance, Thompson and Keith (2001) suggest that, if darker skinned Black women relate personal failures to their skin tone, then they will be more likely to feel discouraged and less effective than their lighter skinned peers. Perhaps as a consequence, Black women are closest with other Black women possessing a similar skin tone as theirs (Russell, et al., 1992). The association between skin tone and self esteem may hold only for women of lower income, however (Thompson & Keith, 2001).

Because of objective differences among Black coworkers (e.g., occupational prestige, positional power, income, education) and subjective perceptions of self and others related to skin tone, conflict is perhaps inevitable. Feelings of resentment toward lighter or prejudices against darker Black coworkers are common sources of job-related harassment (Russell, et al., 1992). Further, intra-racial conflict may be difficult to resolve because many Black women work for White supervisors and fear that their supervisors will not understand and hold the conflict against them. However, conflict within the Black coworker community should be viewed within the larger context of conflict and competition between coworkers of different ethnic groups (Lamertz & Aquino, 2004; Pelled, Eisenhardt, & Xin, 1999).

The purpose of the current project is to clarify relationships between darker and lighter skinned Black women in the workplace. The level of Black women's conflict (verbal abuse, emotional neglect, and work obstruction) were measured with Black coworkers of similar and dissimilar skin tone, conflict with coworkers of other ethnicities, and satisfaction with life. The researcher hypothesized that Black women will report more conflict with Black women of dissimilar and similar skin tone, and that Black women who report more conflict with Black women of dissimilar skin tone will be less satisfied with their lives. This research may improve understanding of how Black women view themselves and each other to promote positive and healthy working relationships among Black women.

# METHOD

## Participants

   Participants were 35 self-identified African-American women who were in the workforce currently or had been within the previous year. Participants listed 29 different occupations covering a range of prestige and social position (e.g., cashier, clerk, military, teacher, engineer, civil rights investigator, administrator, executive). Participants' mean age was 36.85 years (SD = 11.90, range 21-62). Participants were recruited through email messages to the membership of predominantly Black organizations and through the social networks of the author and initial participants.

## Measures

   **Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS).** The SWLS (Pavot & Diener, 1993) is narrowly- focused to assess global life satisfaction and does not tap related constructs such as positive affect or loneliness. The SWLS consists of 5 items, such as, "In most ways my life is close to my ideal," and "I am satisfied with my life," rated on a 7 point Likert type scale of frequency. The SWLS is scored by adding the item ratings. Higher scores indicate a higher level of satisfaction with life, while lower scores indicate a lower level of satisfaction with life. The SWLS shows reliability evidence in a two-month test- retest where the correlation coefficient was .82 and coefficient alpha was .87 (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). The SWLS shows validity evidence by demonstrating adequate convergence with related measures, including measures using a different methodological approach to measure life satisfaction (Pavot & Diener 1993).

   **Workplace Conflict.** Workplace conflict was measured with items presented by Harlos and Axelrod (2005). The scale's 17 items measure verbal abuse (8 items; behaviors that intimidate or humiliate people), work obstruction (4 items; behaviors by which employees are denied personal support or organizational resources needed for networking and performing work effectively) and emotional neglect (5 items; behaviors that undermine employees by ignoring their needs and failing to provide support or recognition) received from coworkers. The verbal abuse, work obstruction, and emotional neglect scales have shown acceptable alpha internal consistency reliability (coefficients of .89, .76, and .81 respectively), and validity evidence has been supported by correlations with intent to leave and organizational commitment (Harlos & Axelrod, 2005). For the current study, items stems were modified to focus items on coworkers with selected ethnicities and skin tones. For example the original item stem "Yelled at" was altered to read "Yelled at by a dark skinned Black woman." All the items were presented 5 times, each directed a

different ethnicity or skin tone: Asian, Hispanic, dark skinned Black, light skinned Black, and White. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale. Higher scores indicate greater conflict.

**Skin Tone.** Three items were used to measure participants' skin tone. First, participants examined a color palette consisting of 36 skin tones ordered from light to dark and identified the tone most closely matching their own. Second, participants chose a verbal description of their skin tone on a 5-point scale (Hill, 2002b). Finally, participants compared their skin tone to other Black women in the United States using a 7-point scale. Responses to the three items were standardized and averaged to form a scale of skin tone. Higher scores indicate darker skin.

*Procedure*

Participants all received an email letter asking for their participation. Those that agreed received a follow-up email with a link to the actual survey which was hosted by the researcher's university website with permission from its Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Information Technology Services. Those who declined to participate were not sent a follow-up email and were deleted from the researcher's database. Those who consented to take part then completed a 20 minute online questionnaire containing the SWLS as well as some demographic questions [SEE APPENDIX]. Participants first were prompted to read an introduction to the study and information regarding confidentiality before proceeding further. They indicated their informed consent by then completing the questionnaires. Finally, participants were invited to ask questions about the study and provided contact information for the researcher.

## RESULTS

A repeated measures analysis of variance was conducted to test the hypotheses with regard to satisfaction with life, skin tone, verbal abuse, work obstruction and emotional neglect. Additionally, descriptive statistics were also gathered for the sample investigated.

*Level of Satisfaction with Life and Workplace Conflict*

Descriptive statistics for study variables are shown in Table 1. All scales showed adequate internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha ≥ .70), with the exception of the short (4-item) work obstruction scale that fell slightly below this standard (alpha = .68). Satisfaction with life was in the slightly satisfied range ($M$ = 21.75 on a 5-35 scale) and somewhat lower (about 0.3-0.4 $SD$) than many North American samples (Pavot & Diener, 1993). Participants reported relatively low levels of verbal

abuse and work obstruction from coworkers ($M$s = 1.37 and 1.65, respectively on a 1-5 scale) but somewhat higher levels of emotional neglect ($M$ = 3.44 on a 1-5 scale). Compared to previous samples (Harlos & Axelrod, 2005), the current participants reported somewhat lower than average verbal abuse (0.5 $SD$ lower) and work obstruction (0.3 $SD$ lower), but higher than average emotional neglect (0.5 $SD$ higher), from coworkers.

**Table 1**
**Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables**

| Scale | Items | Alpha Reliability | M | SD | Minimum | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Satisfaction with Life | 5 | .87 | 21.71 | 7.57 | 5.00 | 35.00 |
| Skin Tone | 3 | .95 | 0.00 | 0.95 | -1.76 | 2.16 |
| Verbal Abuse | 8 | .89 | 1.37 | 0.42 | 1.00 | 3.08 |
| Work Obstruction | 4 | .68 | 1.65 | 0.42 | 1.00 | 2.50 |
| Emotional Neglect | 5 | .91 | 3.44 | 0.90 | 1.00 | 4.93 |

*Note.* N = 35.

**Table 2**
**Results of Repeated Measures Analyses of Variance from Multilevel Models**

| Dependent Variable | Effect | df1 | df2 | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Verbal Abuse | Coworker Group | 4 | 79 | 0.57 |
| | Participant Skin Tone | 1 | 33 | 1.53 |
| | Group X Tone | 4 | 79 | 1.06 |
| Work Obstruction | Coworker Group | 4 | 78 | 2.51* |
| | Participant Skin Tone | 1 | 33 | 0.49 |
| | Group X Tone | 4 | 78 | 1.71 |
| Emotional Neglect | Coworker Group | 4 | 78 | 2.57* |
| | Participant Skin Tone | 1 | 33 | 0.70 |
| | Group X Tone | 4 | 78 | 2.93* |

* $p < .05$

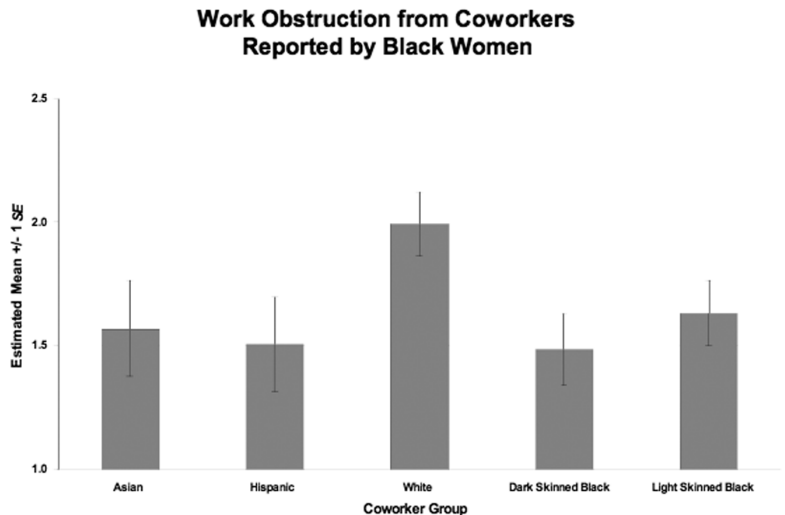*Workplace Conflict between Lighter and Darker Skinned Black Women*

Multilevel repeated-measures analyses of variance (ANOVA) were used to test the first hypothesis that Black participants would report greater conflict from Black female coworkers of differing skin tone. Separate models analyzed verbal abuse, work

obstruction, and emotionalneglect. Each model included the main effect of coworker group (Asian, Hispanic, White, dark-skinned Black, and light-skinned Black), the main effect of participant skin tone (median split used to define lighter and darker groups), and the interaction of coworker group with skin tone.

Analyses of verbal abuse and work obstruction did not support the first hypothesis (see Table 2). For verbal abuse, the main effect of coworker group, skin tone, and their interaction were not significant. For work obstruction, the main effect of coworker group was significant, but the effect of skin tone and the interaction were not significant. Pair wise comparisons (p < .05) indicated that participants reported less work obstruction from Hispanic, dark skinned Black, and light skinned Black women than from White women (see Figure 1). Asian and White coworkers did not differ significantly in work obstruction.

Analyses of emotional neglect supported the first hypothesis partially. The main effect of coworker group was significant, the main effect of skin tone was not significant, and the interaction of coworker group and skin tone was significant (see Table 2). Splitting the analysis by skin tone indicated that lighter skinned participants did not report significantly different levels of emotional neglect from coworkers of varying groups, $F(4,78) = 0.77$, $p = .55$. Darker skinned participants, however, did report significantly different levels of emotional neglect from coworkers of varying groups, $F(4,78) = 4.37$, $p < .05$. In support of the hypothesis, pair wise comparisons indicated that darker skinned participants reported less emotional neglect from darker than from lighter skinned Black coworkers (see Figure 2). In addition, darker skinned participants reported less emotional neglect from darker skinned Black and

**Figure 1**



**Work Obstruction from Coworkers Reported by Black Women**

White coworkers than from Hispanic coworkers, and less emotional neglect from White coworkers than lighter skinned Black coworkers.

### Relations between Workplace Conflict and Satisfaction with Life

Pearson correlations were computed to test the second hypothesis that Black women who experience greater conflict with other Black women of a different skin tone have lower satisfaction with life. The correlations between satisfaction with life and verbal abuse ($r$ = -.17), work obstruction (r = .10), and emotional neglect ($r$ = .16) from Black women of a different skin tone were not significant ($p > .05$), failing to support the second hypothesis. Interestingly, however, the correlation between satisfaction with life and skin tone was negative and significant, $r$ = -.34, $p < .05$, indicating that Black women who describe their skin as darker report lower satisfaction with life.

## DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to assess conflict between darker and lighter skinned Black women in the workplace and the association of this conflict with satisfaction with life. Consistent with the first hypothesis, darker skinned participants reported more emotional neglect from lighter than from darker skinned Black coworkers. On the other hand, darker skinned participants did not report significantly more work obstruction or verbal abuse from lighter skinned Black coworkers.

**Figure 2**



Emotional Neglect from Coworkers Reported by Dark and Light Skinned Black Women
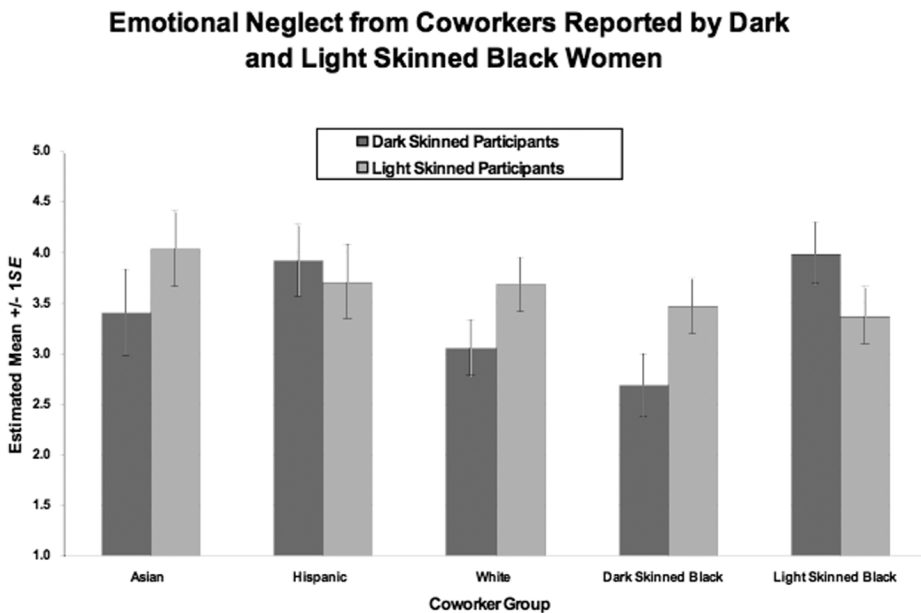
Lighter skinned participants, moreover, did not report significantly greater conflict with darker skinned Black coworkers on any of the scales (verbal abuse, work obstruction, or emotion neglect). Failing to support the second hypothesis, participants who reported more conflict with Black women of dissimilar skin tones did not report lower satisfaction with life. However, participants who described their skin tone as darker reported lower satisfaction with life.

Consistent with past research (Harlos & Axelrod, 2005), emotional neglect and work obstruction were experienced more commonly than verbal abuse by participants in this study. Darker skinned participants reported significantly greater emotional neglect from lighter skinned coworkers, and altogether participants reported high work obstruction from White women. For lighted skinned Black women the perceived emotional neglect from each coworker group was almost the same, which is consistent with Cunningham (1997) who found that light skinned women feel victimized from every ethnicity, even their own, often feeling neither black enough nor white enough and never belonging to any group.

It is important to note, however, that Pelled (1999) and Jehn (1995) found no evidence that emotional conflict impairs performance in the workplace. In contrast, Herschovis et al. (2007) reported that interpersonal conflict is a strong predictor of organization and interpersonal aggression. This may be an important factor to consider due to the level of work obstruction reported by participants in this study, even if emotional neglect is dismissed as a benign factor.

Human resources professionals and business leaders may wish to consider the practical implications of the current results in the context of research on productivity. Interpersonal conflict increases workplace stress (Murphy, 1995) that, in turn, lowers productivity, increases absenteeism, and creates persistent dysfunction in the workplace (Anderson & Pulich, 2001; Levin-Epstein, 2002). Not only does workplace stress present a problem for the individual employee, but it also presents significant psychological, physiological, and financial costs on the organization (Colligan & Higgins, 2005). Symptoms of workplace stress, such as depression, pessimism, and resentment, may eventually lead to hostility in the workplace, low morale, and more interpersonal conflict (Colligan & Higgins, 2005).

As with all research, this study has limitations. First, participants' self-reports of skin tone, conflict, and satisfaction with life may by inaccurate or biased (Marks, 1943; Harvey, 1995). Future research could include multiple assessment methods such as interviews, objective measures of skin tone, behavioral observations in the workplace, and peer ratings of conflict to obtain better estimates and stronger hypothesis tests. Secondly, because this study was correlational, the causal role (if any) that skin tone plays in conflict between coworkers is uncertain. Other variables

may have produced the observed results. For example, socioeconomic status varies by skin tone (Thompson & Keith, 2001) and may produce conflict between women with different levels of income, education, or occupational prestige. Moreover, personality dimensions such as self-esteem may mediate associations between skin tone and conflict. Future research could measure variables such as socioeconomic status and self-esteem to examine their influence on correlations between skin tone and conflict.

The current study's finding of emotional neglect of darker by lighter skinned Black women supports the importance and value of researching workplace conflict among Black women. Preference given to lighter skinned Blacks predicts favorable outcomes in many domains, such as income, job position, and perceived beauty (Keith & Herring, 1991) and may produce conflict among Black coworkers of dissimilar skin tone. The causes of conflict among Black women of dissimilar skin tone deserve clarification in future research to better understand, manage, and prevent conflict among Black women in the workplace. As the Black population continues to assimilate values and beliefs of the dominant culture, research may improve understanding of the effects that intra-racial relationships have on workplace productivity.

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# Inside the Artwork: A Black Child's Perception of Skin Tone in Relation to Social Status and Self-Image

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*This study discovered whether black children, ages 8 and 9, showed stereotyped perceptions of people holding high status occupations, and more so, if they believed that lighter-skinned individuals were more likely to hold these occupations. The researcher also explored the relationship between how the child perceived himself in comparison to the way he perceived a person holding a high status occupation. Children were asked to draw and color pictures of themselves, as well as depictions of people in occupations that are considered high status. The researcher used indicators in the child's artwork, such as skin color choices, as well as the child's discussion, to evaluate the potential skin color bias. The hypothesis that children will show a preference for the lighter spectrum of skin color when drawing the occupational pictures was partially supported by the drawings, but fully supported by the children's discussions.*

Skin color has always been a prevalent issue within the black community. It is known that lighter-complexioned individuals are more likely to have higher-status occupations, higher incomes, and more years of schooling (Hill, 2002). They are also believed to be more respected and well-liked by other people as a whole. Over the years, much research has proven that there is an unfortunate bias in the black

community between the "light-skinned" and "dark-skinned" populations. The "light is right" complex has plagued many African Americans' views about skin color since the days of slavery. Not surprisingly, these attitudes about skin color appear at a very young age.

In one of the earliest studies conducted about this topic, psychologists Kenneth and Mamie Clark (1940) asked children to color line drawings of children with the color that most closely matched their own skin. The Clarks found that the black children frequently colored the drawings a shade lighter than their own skin color. They concluded that children "indicate a clear-cut preference for white and some of them evidence emotional conflict when requested to indicate a color preference" (Clark & Clark, 1940).

Not only do some children evidence a skin color bias in relation to themselves, but there have also been cases in which children have shown these biases towards others. Research has shown that younger children identify lighter-complexioned African Americans more often as teachers, neighbors, and desirable playmates than did older children (Averhart & Bigler, 1997). In that same study, children who gave more stereotyped responses on the Preschool Racial Attitudes Measure II (PRAM II) and chose a higher number of lighter-complexioned individuals in a skin tone selection-task reported their own skin tone to be lighter than did children who gave fewer stereotyped responses (Averhart & Bigler, 1997).

The purpose of this particular research study is to find out if black children believe that lighter-skinned individuals are more likely to hold high status occupations. We will also examine whether there is a relationship between the child's occupational perceptions and his or her own self-perceptions of skin color. In this multiple case study, each child's drawings of people in several high status careers and his self-drawing will be used as the primary tools for assessment. Stories and comments made by each child about his artwork will also be analyzed.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Origins of the "Light is Right" Complex

Most scholars agree that skin color bias in the United States stems from a history of slavery and racial oppression. Early on, "whiteness" became identified with superiority and attractiveness; while "blackness" was marked as being inferior and ugly (Hill, 2002). Color distractions quickly filtered into the African American population, as lighter-skinned slaves, who were usually descendants of white owners, received special advantages in comparison with darker slaves (Reuter, 1918; Williamson, 1980).

Eventually, the belief that refined and beautiful characteristics were only present in people most resembling the white population also played a role in the way African Americans have treated each other over time (Hill, 2002; Russell, et al. 1992). Despite the positivity and influence during the black power movement of the 1960s and 70s (Hill, 2002; Leveston, 2007), some studies continue to suggest that African Americans still show a preference for lighter skin (Brown, 1998). Empirical work also suggests little change in the preference for lighter skin among African American children (Porter, 1991), and even indicates the continuing preference for light-colored dolls among young African American children (Powell-Hopson and Hopson, 1988). This includes the well-known doll study in which children chose a white race doll as being "good" and a black race doll as "bad" (Clark & Clark, 1939).

According to Averhart and Bigler (1997), the theoretical context for relating children's beliefs and attitudes about race to memory is derived from two sources. The first is Bartlett's (1932) work on memory, in which he argued that individuals' memories for pictures, stories, and events are affected by their knowledge and attitudes. Bartlett predicted that material that was inconsistent with someone's attitudes would either be forgotten or distorted over time in order to be consistent with an individual's attitudes. The second source is of Piaget's (1970) notion of constructivism. Piaget argued that all knowledge is constructed by individuals via operational schemes. So when a stimulus is first encountered, a child may transform his or her cognitive representation of the stimulus so that it is consistent with his or her scheme (Liben, 1987).

Considerable evidence has accumulated over the last two decades suggesting that individuals' knowledge and beliefs, also referred to as "schemes" or "schemata," affect their memory (Averhart & Bigler, 1997). The overall theme evidenced is that children are affected by what they hear and see. In turn, these images pay a big part in the child's interpretation of race and skin color when the socio-historical perspectives of skin tone are taken into consideration.

**Why Art is Important**

When working with children, it is common to encounter unwillingness to verbally communicate or even lack of vocabulary in order to effectively discuss their emotional status (Skybo et al., 2007). This makes it difficult for parents, educators, researchers, and psychologists to assess or diagnose the emotional problems that a child might have. When children are asked to draw (in contrast to spontaneous drawing), drawing is used as a method of communication and represents an individual's self-concept, anxiety, attitude, or conflict (Koppitz, 1984). Art, particu-

larly human figure drawings (HFDs), can assist by providing strong cues for follow-up interviews with children and parents and support referral to psychologists for further evaluation (Skybo, et al. 2007). Even when a child does not show signs of serious emotional problems, drawings can still provide insight into the child's general and basic nature (Cox, 1992).

As children grow, they associate various sensations, perceptions, and emotions with their bodies. Therefore, drawing a human figure provides a natural vehicle for the expression of one's needs and conflicts (Machover, 1949). HFDs play an important role in the assessment of personality and intellect; however, interpretation of these drawings should be individualistic and not taken out of context (DiLeo, 1983; Skybo, et al. 2007). As stated earlier, many researchers are able to assess emotional problems and other issues that children might have through careful interpretation of their drawings.

In a study that explored the incidence of negative self-images in black children ($N=10$) of lower-class communities in comparison with black children ($N=10$) of middle-class communities, each child was individually asked to draw and color a picture of themselves (Leveston, 2007). The drawing was compared with the child's scores on the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (CSEI) Short School Form. Although there were no significant findings when comparing the two socio-economic groups to total self-esteem scores, it did indicate that most drawings showed a correlation with individual scores of self-esteem (Leveston, 2007). It was shown that self-esteem can be predicted by how children draw themselves; and in this particular study, the drawings were found to be a more significant predictor of self-esteem than the CSEI (Leveston, 2007).

When examining how economically advantaged African American children ($N=115$) in New Orleans, Louisiana, perceive their skin color, an overall acceptance of accurate skin color was indicated (Williams-Burns, 1980). The CSEI and the Williams-Burns Skin Color Matrix (WBSC) were also used; the latter used to determine the accuracy of the children's skin color perceptions (Williams-Burns, 1980). Overall, the findings indicated that self-esteem was low among the children studied, and that high self-esteem scores correlated with the accuracy with which children colored themselves in drawings (Williams-Burns, 1980). Although the drawings are not used as the primary diagnostic tool, many psychologists and educators turn to references like these to assist them when conducting studies of similar interest with children.

## METHOD

### Research Questions

As a starting point for this study, it is necessary to restate the primary purposes of the research by outlining our research questions:

1. Do children believe that lighter-skinned individuals are more likely to hold occupations that are considered high status?

2. Is there a relationship between the child's skin color perceptions of the people in the occupations and his own self-perceptions of skin color?

3. To what extent are the relationships present in the child's artwork?

### Participants

There are three participants: a 9-year-old African American female, an 8-year-old African American female, and an 8-year-old African American male. Although gender is noted, it is not relevant in this particular study. The children were residents of State College, Pennsylvania, which is a predominantly white and suburban town. All the children had been living there for the majority, if not all, of their lives. It is also noted that the schools they attended were predominantly white and/or had representation of children from several races.

For convenience, the pronoun "he" is used to refer to all participants, although two of the participants are female.

### Apparatus

People Colors Crayons by the Lakeshore Learning Company, which is a set of crayons that come in an array of different flesh-toned colors, ranging from light peach to dark ebony*

Color chart**

Pack of Crayola Crayons

Blank sheets of drawing paper

A pencil

*Eighteen of these crayons were used to create a color scale in order to place the crayons into skin tone categories.

** Because many crayons appear different from the color that they actually produce, a color chart was made so that the child could refer to the chart to see how each crayon's color would show up on the drawing paper. The crayons on the chart will appear in random order to help prevent confounding when the child chooses colors for skin tone.

**Instrument**

The researcher made a color scale to categorize the People Colors Crayons into different skin tone categories. Six crayons were omitted from the original 24-pack so that the skin tone categories had an equal number of crayon representation. The categories are only for the researcher's measurements, and will not be used for instructions with the child. The three skin tone categories, or spectrums, are:

The light spectrum: Includes the crayons buff, peach, almond, melon, coral, and toast.

The medium-brown spectrum: Consists of crayons wheat, spice, cinnamon, copper, redwood, and seashell.

The dark spectrum: Includes mahogany, mocha, chestnut, bark, ebony, and olive.

**Procedure**

The researcher interviewed each of the three children individually in two 1 hour sessions. In the first session, the researcher presented the child with the apparatus. After obtaining verbal assent from the child, he was asked to draw and color a picture of himself, specifically using a People Colors Crayon to fill in his skin color. He was also encouraged to look at the chart to "help" him pick a crayon. After the self-drawing, the researcher asked the child to draw a series of people who are considered to have high status or professional occupations. He was asked to draw and color a picture of a "successful lawyer" on one sheet, and after that drawing, he was asked to draw a picture of a "successful doctor" on another. The same instructions were given about using the People Colors Crayons and color chart.

In the second session, the child was given the same directions, but was asked to draw a "successful scientist," a "successful professor," and finally, a "successful business person." In each session, the researcher encouraged the artist to talk about each of his drawings while he made them. Specific questions were asked based upon what the child wished to share about the drawings, such as, "Tell me more about why you chose to color the scientist 'this' brown and not 'this' brown like you colored the professor?" The researcher took notes about how the child drew himself as well as each of the people in the occupations.

After each child completed the set of drawings, the researcher and the child looked at all six drawings. The child was asked about his overall crayon choices for skin color, as well as any other artistic choices he might have made. The researcher also made sure to ask questions about any comments that the child might have made regarding his perceptions about skin color. The interviews were audio taped and the researcher collected the drawings for further analysis.

**Hypotheses**

1. When coloring people in the professional occupations, the children will never choose a skin color that is in the dark spectrum of crayons.

2. When coloring people in the professional occupations, the majority of the skin color choices will be in the light spectrum of the crayons.

3. Children will color the people in the occupations with crayons in the same spectrum as the color they chose in their self-drawing. For example, if the child is of a medium-brown skin tone, he will also choose colors for the people that are in his skin tone spectrum. Even if the child colors himself inaccurately (i.e., the child is medium-brown, but colors himself in the light or dark spectrum), he may will still use the colors in the spectrum which he colored himself.

4. Children will show a skin color preference, or more so, have an ideal skin color in mind. This will be seen by the repetition of a child's use of a crayon. It can also be seen by the multiple use of the crayon he chooses to color himself with. This color, the color that he is, would be considered ideal as well.

Hypotheses 1 and 2 imply that there will be a relationship between the child's perceptions of people in professional occupations and the idea that lighter-skinned individuals are more likely to succeed at these occupations, as outlined in the first research question.

Hypotheses 3 and 4 seek to prove that there is indeed a relationship between the child's occupational perceptions and her self-perceptions, which answers research question 2.

All the hypotheses answer the last research question of the correlations being present in the child's artwork.

**Analysis**

The audio taped discussion between the researcher and child was transcribed. After the transcription was complete, each set of drawings was analyzed individually. Notes about the child's actual skin color, as well as skin tone choices for the self-drawing and occupation drawings were recorded. The skin color choices made were compared with each hypothesis. Reasons for crayon choices were also closely examined, and if necessary, were related to each hypothesis.

Certain skin color choices among the drawings were taken into higher regard than others. For instance, a child may color all the people in the occupations with the same crayon. This would indicate a preference for this particular color, which we would consider the ideal skin color for this child. This case would be more significant

when supporting our hypotheses than a case in which the child varies his crayon choices. Another example would be if a child colors the drawing of himself two or more shades lighter or darker than his actual skin color. Not only is this inaccurate, but it is also considered a good indication of low self-esteem (Clark & Clark, 1940). The child's inaccurate perception of himself may be directly related to the way he perceives the people holding the high status occupations. One way this might happen is if a child colors himself three shades lighter than he actually is, and proceeds to color the majority of the people in the light spectrum.

Overall, the main objective was to find out if the child's skin color choices supported each of the hypotheses. However, some type of subjective analysis had to be established so that room for false interpretation was lessened. Drawing style was taken into high regard. Not all children considered themselves good artists, so many artistic choices were overlooked. For example, one of the children drew some of his people standing in profile instead of facing the viewer. Decisions like these were not taken into consideration. A concern that is more related to the study is that not every child has an exact crayon color for his skin tone. So, a child might have colored the skin in his self-drawing a shade off from how his actual skin color appears. Therefore, most color choices were compared with the child's transcribed discussion in order to get a true idea of the child's skin tone perceptions.

## RESULTS

### Children's Interviews

The following stories are edited and abbreviated from the original transcriptions in order to eliminate any repetition, unfinished sentences, irrelevant discussion, and/or any misuse in words or phrases by the children.

*Megan*

Megan is a 9-year-old African American female. She is of a medium-brown skin tone. It is later noted that she has ancestry in both African and Mexican heritage.

Megan's first response to the self-drawing request is, "I'm not good at drawing." The researcher lets the child know that her drawing does not have to be perfect and encourages the child to draw. Megan confesses that she's not exactly sure what color she is even while looking at the color chart, but then finds the crayon *spice* and says, "I think it's that one." She is asked if spice was close to her skin tone, and she answers by shaking her head yes. To make sure if Megan has a general idea of the stereotype regarding high achievement and money for each profession, the researcher asks questions such as, "Do you think lawyers are smart?" Her answer was

that they could be, but if they were not, then they only became a lawyer to have money. Megan's response let us know that she knew the high profile that lawyers possessed.

The first time Megan chooses to use a color from the light spectrum is when drawing the doctor. At first she uses *peach*, then says, "I can't see her," and decides not to use that crayon. Megan chooses *buff* instead, but when she goes to color, she says that she cannot see buff either. The researcher asks why she chose those two colors, but Megan says she does not know why. At the next session, Megan states that she is half-Mexican. "My granddad or grandfather's dad is from Mexico. I'm half-Mexican, half-Island, and half-African American. I'm not sure which island, but I think it's Jamaica."

When coloring the scientist, Megan says, "I think she should be *spice*…no *mocha*. Mocha seems too brown though." When asked how is it too brown, she says that the color just seems that way. The researcher goes on to ask if some colors can be too brown in comparison with others. Megan explains, "Well sometimes it could be a little too brown. Like my friend, she's from New York but she's African. And it's sort of hard to see her because she's really dark. Sometimes I think people are going to say, *Who's that standing back there in the shadows…is that a girl?*" When asked if her friend could be a scientist even though she is very dark, Megan replies by saying, "Yea I think she could. Skin color doesn't actually matter. It's about what you think."

Having trouble with the concept of a professor, the researcher explains to the child that a professor is a teacher who has students in college, and that he or she may have several degrees. Megan gains understanding of this concept quickly. When asked if one has to be smart to get many degrees, she says, "Not really. You can be as smart as you want to be. But some people might think you're too smart…and no one likes a know-it-all." Megan picks up the crayon *redwood* to color the skin, but then says, "No. It's a little too darkish-reddish. I'll color him *melon*." The researcher inquires about the color change. The child explains, "I didn't think it would look too good on his face because it's really red. I usually see mixed people or Dominican people that color. But not all Dominican people have that red color." When asked why she chose to use melon instead of any of the other brown colors, she says that she is saving the best for last.

For the last picture of the businessperson, she chooses *spice*, which she claims is a "cool color." When comparing all Megan's drawings, including those from the first session, she was asked that if she could go back and change any of the choices, would she do so. "I would color the doctor *melon* because I think it's a reasonable color." The researcher asks what she means by "reasonable," and she compares skin color

with clothing, in particular, a shirt her father might wear. "My dad might have a shirt that really suits him. It's a reasonable color, so he would wear it. But if I got him a different shirt, he might say, *Oh this does not fit me, it's not a reasonable color. You have to take it back!*"

When asked if she thinks that people would change their skin color if they could, Megan says that it depends on whether they are happy or unhappy with their skin color. The researcher then asks if a brown colored person who is in one of the successful professions like those in the drawings, would be more confident in his color than a brown person who might be a garbage man. Megan says,

If he was really, really dark he may not like it. He might get dirty and people would not be able to tell when he is clean or if he is dirty. If he was like spice he pretty much wouldn't feel like he's a dirty color. Spice looks like a pretty good color for a person. But if something horrible was happening to his skin color, then he might not want to show his face again. But what that person thinks isn't always true when they ask other people. It's usually the person who thinks their skin color is horrible; it depends on their impact on what they think about themselves.

Megan is asked if she thinks lighter colored people are more likely to be in these professions, such as a scientist or a professor. She says, "Not really. I have small pimples on my forehead. If I was lighter, you might be able to see the redness of the acne. It may look ugly." The researcher asks if this "ugliness" might affect someone being able to get a job. For example, the researcher asks, "If I was interviewing for a job to be a doctor, but the person interviewing thought my skin color was ugly. Do you think he would hire me?" She replies by saying no, and that the boss might not think the skin color fits. She is also asked if certain skin colors have to fit certain professions. "It doesn't have to fit. It's what you think is best for you."

During the interview, Megan voluntarily tells the researcher that her favorite colors are spice, redwood, melon, toast, coral, seashell, and wheat. She then says, "I like all of them. I can't choose."

*Derrick*

Derrick is an 8-year-old African American male. He is considered a medium-brown skin tone.

Like the first child, Derrick was also skeptical about drawing himself. "I might not do my best. I'm not good at people that much," he explains. He was encouraged to do his best. Derrick looks at a crayon and decides that his color is a bit darker than what he saw. He picks up *redwood*, and then *spice*, declaring that the latter of the two is better. He says, "[Redwood] doesn't really match my skin that much." After spending quite some time trying to figure out how a lawyer looks, Derrick is

permitted to draw a judge instead. While drawing the judge, he says, "He's successful." He uses the crayon *mocha* to fill in the person's skin color. When asked if there was any particular reason why he chose that color, Derrick contemplated the reasons and even said, "How am I going to put this…," before concluding that he did not know why he chose that color. "It's a pretty neat color on a lawyer though…for a judge."

Excited about drawing the doctor, Derrick decides to color the person *bark*. The researcher asks Derrick if he likes that color. "Bark is okay, but I like this though," the child says as he points to *mahogany*. At the next session, he uses the mahogany crayon to color the scientist's skin. Derrick admits that he likes the "brown color of it." He is asked if he thinks scientists are smart. His response is no and claims that they are crazy. Being 8 years old, Derrick also had trouble identifying a professor, so he was given the same definition as Megan. It is noticed that Derrick colors the person's clothes before he colors the skin. He says, "I prefer the details first, then the skin color. I may not like the clothes and the skin color together." When asked if he thinks the clothes people wear should be dependent upon the skin color they are, he replies yes. "Yea, that's a nice color," Derrick tells us as he colors the skin with the *copper* crayon.

Derrick colors the businessperson's skin *spice*. He said that there was no particular reason why, besides the idea that "spice looks like a nice color for a skin." After his last drawing, Derrick explained why he chose to color all the people brown colors even though there were lighter colored crayons available to use. He says he never thought about it. Derrick also agrees with the belief that people who are brown skin tones can be in these types of professions. But quickly he says, "Except for this one," and points to the scientist. When asked why not, the child answers, "Because he's a scientist. Come on." Derrick then goes on to explain that scientists are weird. He concludes that brown or black people can be scientists, but it's not common.

The researcher then asks him what color would most scientists be, and he points to *buff* and *almond*. Derrick is asked if he thinks scientists are mostly white people. His response is yes. For clarification, it is asked if he thinks scientists are mostly brown people, and he says no. "There are only like five brown scientists in this world," he says with confidence. Derrick is asked if he ever thought about being a scientist. He answers no, and says, "I want to be a baseball player." "How do you consider most baseball players?" the researcher asks. "Black," and then asks, "Why couldn't you just ask me to draw a baseball player?"

*Rebecca*

Rebecca is an 8-year-old African American female. She is of a dark brown skin tone.

Rebecca is very confident about her drawing skills and even lets the researcher know that she may want to be an artist or art teacher when she grows up. She colors herself with the crayon *redwood* in the self-drawing. Confidence lessens as Rebecca is asked to draw the lawyer. "I know what a lawyer is, but I don't think I could draw one," she explains. The researcher encourages the child by asking her what she thinks it is the lawyers do and how she thinks they might dress. Rebecca starts to draw, and decides to color the person *spice*. When asked why she chose that color, she quickly answers by saying, "Because I don't really like drawing white people since I'm brown. I just like drawing brown people to show that I like brown people." The researcher asks if she likes white people too. "Yea, I like white people too. I just like drawing brown people because of the color I am. And I like to show that I like brown and white people at the same time. Sometimes I do white people and sometimes I do brown people."

For the doctor, Rebecca chooses the crayon *wheat* for skin color. While coloring, she asks if the crayon is "a brown." "It looks like a golden," she explains. The researcher asks again, "So one of the reasons why you choose to color people brown is because you're brown?" Rebecca shakes her head yes. When asked if she thinks a lot of black children color people brown, Rebecca states,

> Maybe. They probably have a white friend. You know how they used to
> have slaves back then, and now they don't have slaves. And the white people
> are really nice. So they probably color them white cause their friends are
> white.

The second session with Rebecca evidences some similar skin color biases. Rebecca says she never thought about being a scientist, but admits that she is a good student in science, art, physical education, music, and math. *Coral* is her initial choice to color the scientist's skin, but then states, "This is really light. Is this a brownish color?" The researcher asks Rebecca what she thinks herself. Rebecca says that she thinks it's tan, and decides not to use it. She chooses *spice* instead. Her reason for not using coral is "because it's pink and people aren't pink." She further states that, "They only get pink if they have a suntan."

The researcher asks Rebecca which colors people are. Brown, tan, and peach are her answers. Then she is asked if there are different types of browns. Her response is, "Yea. Like a dark brown, a light brown, and a very, very light brown...like this kind of color," and points to *melon*. Rebecca asks if melon is a "brownish-brown," and she is persuaded to use her own judgment. She says that it is a pinkish color. Then,

she is asked if she thinks that some browns can be too dark. "Yea, my cousin is like dark, dark. Like this kind of color." She points to the color ebony on the color chart. When asked if she thinks *ebony* is a good color, she responds, "If you're brown, you're brown. It doesn't matter."

Again, the researcher explains the concept of a professor when the time comes. Rebecca decides to make the person a science professor, and when asked if one has to be smart to be a science professor, she says, "Yes, because you'd have to teach other people…adults and stuff." She colors the person with the crayon *cinnamon*. Rebecca says she does this for the same reason she offered in the first session. This is simply because she herself is brown. In the discussion about all the drawings, it was asked if she colored the people brown because she wanted to represent black people or just people who are of brown color. "Brown color," she replies. To provide an in depth sense of Rebecca's perceptions about skin tone, a transcription of the rest of the researcher's interview is provided below. The letter "I" stands for investigator, also known as the researcher.

**I:** *If you're coloring and drawing all black people, do you use different shades since black people come in different shades? Or do you color mostly with brown?*

**R:** *I'll shade any color because brown people come in different kinds of colors. You can see I used a different brown in this one.*

**I:** *You said that you do color white people some times. What colors can white people be?*

**R:** *They can be peach, tan, and almond.*

**I:** *Which crayon is tan?*

**R:** *Buff.*

**I:** *Can black people be peach, almond, and buff too?*

**R:** *If the person is mixed, like brown-white people. But they can't be like brown people. They're probably white and was raised by a brown woman or man. So they might think they're brown.*

**I:** *But since black people come in all different shades, can't black people be these light shades too? Can they be black people and not just think that they are brown?*

**R:** *Some people can.*

**I:** *Out of all these colors, how do you think most black people look?*

**R:** *Like redwood, spice, wheat, copper, and cinnamon.*

**I:** *Do you think the people you've colored in your drawings make a lot of money or do they not make a lot of money? Are they really smart or are they not smart?*

**R:** *I think that all people are smart.*

**I:** *Do you think it matters what skin color you are to be in these professions?*

**R:** *No, it doesn't matter. They'll still teach you no matter what color you are. It's not like slavery.*

**I:** *Do you think some people think it matters what skin color people are?*

**R:** *Yeah, some people in the South.*

**I:** *Is it just people in the South?*

**R:** *Yeah, not people here. People in the North are nice to each other and they play with each other no matter what skin color they are.*

### Using the Drawings to Support the Hypotheses

*Hypothesis 1:* The first hypothesis suggests that when coloring the skin of successful people in high status occupations, none of the children will choose a color that is in the dark spectrum.

As predicted, Rebecca never uses a crayon from the dark spectrum. Megan uses *mocha*, which is in the dark spectrum, but also claims that it "seems too dark." Derrick uses *mocha*, *bark*, and *mahogany*, which are all in the dark spectrum. Therefore, the original hypothesis is partially supported. Rebecca's case fully supports this claim, while Megan assists it by saying that the only crayon she uses in the dark spectrum "seems too dark."

*Hypothesis 2:* The second hypothesis predicts that when coloring the skin of people in high status occupations, the majority of the skin color choices will be in the light spectrum.

Megan was the only child to finish coloring a person's skin with a shade from the light spectrum. However, the majority of Megan's people were split between the light spectrum and the medium-brown spectrum. The majority of Derrick's people were in the dark spectrum, and Rebecca's people were all in the medium-brown spectrum. This hypothesis was not supported.

*Hypothesis 3:* There may be a direct relationship between the way the child colors his skin tone in the self-drawing in relation to the colors he chooses to shade the people in the occupation drawings.

Rebecca colors herself *redwood*, which is in the medium-brown spectrum. She only uses colors in the medium-brown spectrum for the occupation drawings. Megan only colors two of the people within the same color spectrum as herself. The colors are *cinnamon* and *spice*, which are in the medium-brown spectrum. Derrick also colors two of the people within the medium-brown spectrum, the color spectrum that he has colored himself. The colors are *spice* and *copper*. Although this hypothesis is not significant in all cases, it is supported by Rebecca's case.

*Hypothesis 4:* Children will show preference for an ideal skin color, which will be represented by the habitual use of one of the crayons.

Megan uses the crayon *spice* twice. One of these times is for her own skin color in the self-drawing. Derrick also uses *spice* twice, and one of these times is for his self-drawing. Rebecca uses *spice* three times for her occupation drawings. This prediction is clearly supported by each case study. In addition, all three children chose the same crayon color as their ideal color.

**Connecting the Discussions with the Hypotheses**

In addition to the color choices in the children's artwork, it was important to pay close attention to how each child expressed his own feelings about skin color in general. Although the hypothesis that children would color most of the people in the light spectrum was not supported, some of the children verbally insinuated a bias for lighter skin. Megan referred to the crayon *melon* as being a "reasonable color" for a doctor. She also suggested that *mocha* seemed "too brown," and referred to redwood as being "too darkish reddish." Rebecca, a child who prefers to color with only brown tones, even stated that some colors can be "too dark" and made a direct reference to the dark skin tone of her cousin. Contrarily, when choosing her crayons, she always made sure to ask if they were brown, and even referred to some as being "too light" or "too pink."

The most prevalent issue that arose was how the children indicated skin color preferences. This issue is related to hypothesis 4. Rebecca showed preferences for brown skin colors and even says, "I don't really like drawing white people since I'm brown." Derrick made it known that his favorite color was *mahogany,* and chose to use mostly colors from the dark spectrum. The fact that Derrick used mahogany to color the scientist, but then later claimed that most scientists were white people, indicated a personal connection to the brown skin color that he used. Instead of coloring the scientist's skin with buff or peach (colors that seemed more realistic for a scientist in his eyes), Derrick chose a more familiar and preferred choice by using mahogany. Although she did not necessarily use all the crayon colors she professed as being her favorites, Megan was more than happy to show which ones were on the top of her list.

## CONCLUSIONS

The first hypothesis states that none of the children will chose to color with a crayon from the dark spectrum. Megan used one color from the dark spectrum, and Derrick used three colors. Since Rebecca did not use any colors from this spectrum, this hypothesis is partially supported. The second hypothesis was not supported because the majority of the children's people were not colored with a crayon in the light spectrum. So according to the drawings, the answer to the first research

question is no. Through the drawings, children did not show that they believe lighter-skinned people are more likely to hold occupations that are considered high status.

However, when looking at the children's discussions, it is quite clear that the majority of the children did indicate the bias that lighter-skinned individuals were more likely to hold professional occupations. Megan decides to color the professor melon instead of her initial choice of *redwood* after seeing the color that it produced. She stated that she didn't think it would "look good on his face" because it is too red. She also said that *melon* is a "reasonable" color for the doctor. Derrick admits that he believes most scientists look like the colors *buff* and *almond*. He also says that there are not many brown scientists, and that most are actually white people. So, when looking back at all the factors, children do indicate a bias for lighter skin in these occupations. Some even show a racial bias when relating these ideas about color to high status occupations.

The hypothesis that children will color the people in the same spectrum as they colored themselves in the self-drawing is partially supported by the results shown in the artwork. Rebecca only uses colors from the medium-brown spectrum, the spectrum in which she colored herself. The last hypothesis, which states that children have an ideal skin color, is fully supported in all cases. All three children used the crayon *spice* more than once. Furthermore, Megan and Rebecca use this color in their self-portrait before using the crayon on one of the people. Therefore, the answer to research question two is yes. Through the drawings, it is seen that there is a relationship between the child's skin color perceptions of people in high status occupations and his own self-perceptions of skin color. These perceptions are evident in the children's drawings as well as their discussions.

Now let's look at the last research question, which seeks to find out how the relationships of the first two research questions can be present in the children's artwork. These relationships can be evidenced through the children's artwork. The artwork helped to interpret children's attitudes about skin tone and should be used as a tool. For one, the process of drawing helped them open up with the researcher and feel comfortable to answer some questions that they may not have wanted to answer before. Drawing and actually coloring the skin helped them form answers about skin tone that they might have not thought about before. However, it is important to note that there should be some measure that accompanies the artwork. Whether it is an interview or a test with a standard scale, this evidence should go hand in hand with the drawings. The drawings should not be used as a diagnostic tool and neither should the interview, because as we can see, children can contradict themselves. Therefore, it is important to look at several measures when trying to establish these types of relationships.

# DISCUSSION

In these three cases, the children colored the people with a bias for brown skin tones. However, in their discussions, it was clear that they had some idea that lighter-skinned people were more likely to hold professions such as the ones in the drawings. From closely reading the children's discussions, it is assumed that their beliefs about lighter-skinned individuals have to do with stereotypes that come along with the professions. As Averhart and Bigler's (1997) research suggests, the beliefs or "schemes" that children possess about the people in these professions may be formulated from pictures, stories, and events. For instance, we do see most scientists on television and even in storybooks as white and sometimes "mad" scientists. Therefore, it would be difficult for a black child to see someone of his skin tone or even his race in this profession. So, not only does skin tone play a role in the way children perceive professionals, but race does as well. It is also seen that some children have some misconceptions about race and racism. Rebecca's statements about people in the "South" being the only people caring about what skin color people are shows another "scheme," one which depicts the days of slavery and how Northerners were more accepting to blacks.

It can also be suggested that the children thought it was okay for a "brown" person to be in certain professions but not others. For instance, they might see most doctors, scientists, and professors as white people, while they thought that lawyers and business people were more likely for to be black people. So one might ask why the children used brown skin tones for most of the occupations even though the children's perceptions of the people suggest the opposite. One reason is that they might be encouraged to draw black people, or simply people who are close to their skin tone. Rebecca noted that she liked to draw people who are brown because she is brown. This might come from the fact that they are comfortable with their own skin tone and that they are used to seeing people who are brown, so their natural reaction is to color people with tones that represent them or maybe their family members or close friends. Another reason is that along with being encouraged to draw successful black people, the children are most likely being encouraged to be successful as well. Their parents probably set high standards for them to achieve. For example, Rebecca told the researcher that she is studying multiplication at home even though she has not yet entered the grade in which that level of math is taught. This suggests that Rebecca's parents want her to be prepared when she returns to school so that she can achieve.

Overall, children were very much aware of their own skin color as well as how others look. They did have trouble identifying what some of the professions were,

such as the professor and the lawyer, but after brief explanations of both, the children were able to make educated assumptions. They were also aware of the high status that these occupations upheld. For example, Derrick reiterated the idea that he was drawing a "successful judge" as he created his second picture. Not surprisingly, all of the children were quite critical of their drawings skills. This is typical of children their age (Skybo, 2007).

Going back through each discussion and even by looking at the drawings, it is clear that gender is a prevalent factor when the children drew each occupation. Some children asked if women could be some of the professions. For example, Rebecca asks if lawyers are able to be girls. When Megan is asked to draw the doctor, she quickly asks if she can draw a nurse instead. Although it is known that nurses can be either gender, it is quite evident that this 9-year-old girl has the impression that most nurses are women. We can see that stereotypes about the professions do not only exist racially, but they are gender related as well. For example, Megan decides to draw a male scientist because she "does see most male scientists." Derrick's reason for drawing a male professor was simply because he is male. But when it came to drawing the business person, who he decides to draw a woman, this task became very difficult for him. He was so critical in the belief of his inability to draw a female, that the researcher asked him if he wanted to stop drawing. Derrick replied yes.

This study also shows the differences between how girls and boys draw. Derrick does not change his mind about any of the skin color decisions he makes, with the exception of the self-drawing because he wanted to "match" his skin color correctly. This shows a sense of indecisiveness. Derrick also forms his own opinions about how girls draw. When the researcher asks if he minded someone watching him draw, he said, "Nope. My cousin will though. She's a girl." He later claims that he never met a boy who didn't like for people to look at his drawings. There were also other artistic choices that were different, such as how the girls concentrated on more detail in the background, while Derrick chose to show more detail in the clothing of the people.

If this study were to be continued, the sample size would be increased. Also, gender would be implemented as a relevant variable. The researcher would ask more gender-related questions in relation to each occupation. It would also be important to include racial biases and not only skin color into the hypotheses and research questions. It is believed that if these factors were included, there might be a different set of results, or even an indication that children might have a more prevalent gender bias than a bias for race or skin tone.

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# APPENDIX A

**Examples of Children's Drawings**

The following are examples from each child's set of drawings. The first set of drawings is megan's doctor, professor, and scientist, respectively. As staed beffore, she colors the first two from the light spectruma dn the last with a crayon in the dark spectrum. The next set is Derrick's drawings of the lawyer, doctor, and the scienties. Derrick chose to color them all with crayons from the dark spectrum. The last set of drawings is Rebecca's self-drawing, doctor, and scientist. They are all colored within the medium-brown spectrum.

## Megan's Drawings



*Doctor*          *Professor*          *Scientist*

## Derrick's Drawings



*Lawyer*          *Doctor*          *Scientist*

Rebecca's Drawings



*Self Drawing*

*Doctor*

*Scientist*

# The Domestication of Horror:
# Jane Austen's Revision of the Gothic
# in *Northanger Abbey*

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*This paper uses genre theory and deconstruction to argue that rather than parodying the Gothic romance, Jane Austen's novel,* Northanger Abbey, *revises the genre—toning down its sensational elements—in order lay bare the dangers and everyday horrors (possibly) endured by the female members of a system founded upon boundless patriarchal authority. Further, it contends that this revision causes the reader to reconsider the Gothic genre in its own right, taking its essential message about the perils of unchecked male power more seriously than before.*

*Northanger Abbey* is filled with direct allusions to its relation with the Gothic romance. This connection most generally takes the form of unrealized but oft-commented upon Gothic possibilities. It is Austen's habit of marking the absence of Gothic convention that has led many critics to the conclusion that Austen's novel is a parody of that genre. Terry Castle has said as much when she claimed that in *Northanger Abbey* Austen sought "to debunk one of the most cherished icons of late eighteenth-century popular taste" (27). Other critics, like Tara Ghoshal Wallace in her 1988 paper, "*Northanger Abbey* and the Limits of Parody," have used the supposition of humorous parody to question the didactic aim of the novel. And still others, like Carol Gerster, have posited that Austen employs parody to "inspire

readers to think differently about women and gender relations" (117). Although this model of *Northanger Abbey* as parody has generated many productive avenues for critical discourse, it has also hindered our ability to see and explore others. It is my contention that a revaluation of the novel's form and its intertextual reference will yield alternative insights and offer new paths for exploration.

Specifically, this paper will argue that Austen revises the Gothic—stripping away the superficial atmospherics of creaking doors, hidden passageways, and ghostly appearances—to reveal the everyday horrors (or the possibility of them) in a system where patriarchal authority knows no legal bounds. Rather than simply laughing at the Gothic, Austen asks us to reconsider the source of the terror in the genre and to take its underlying message about the dangers of unmitigated male power seriously.

**The Gothic Romance Novel**

Despite its overwhelming popularity, the Gothic novel was considered "All story and no reflection," providing "nothing like useful knowledge" (Austen 17), existing as mere sensationalist women's entertainment. *The Mysteries of Udolpho* by Ann Radcliffe, the novel Catherine reads in *Northanger Abbey*, is often considered the quintessential Gothic romance and is thought to have been one of the most widely read novels in Europe during the time Austen was writing (Castle 27). In the roughly 200 intervening years between its publication and today, the gender linkage to the text may have ceased to be the overt reason for the genre's disparagement, but the critical valuation of *Udolpho* and the genre are much the same. Terry Castle writes:

> Set in sixteenth-century France and Italy in a fantastical world of impene-
> trable castles, gloomy convents, and bloodthirsty banditti, Radcliffe's
> sensational account of the innocent Emily St. Aubert's suffering at the hands
> of the diabolical Montoni, brigand chieftain of the castle of Udolpho, made
> few concessions to historical or emotional plausibility. Its characters were
> romantic stereotypes; its psychological range limited. Nevertheless, thanks to
> a stupefying combination of dramatic plot twists, exotic scenery, and
> carefully manipulated hints of supernatural horror, Udolpho was an unparal-
> leled publishing success. (27)

What Castle's description of *Udolpho* also reveals are several of the conventions associated with Gothic romance in terms of setting, plot, and character development. As is suggested, Gothic novels were most often set hundreds of years in the past, taking place in the ominous castles of foreign lands. Stock characters included the susceptible heroine, the tyrannical villain, the young handsome hero, and the female and male foils. Plot convention called for the beautiful and defenseless young heroine to be orphaned and terrorized by her new guardian, fleeing (or attempting to flee)

his dastardly clutches. After pages and pages of sensational terror and intrigue, the heroine was finally rescued by her hero, and thereafter destined to live a life of supposed married bliss. These novels nearly always featured a female character as the protagonist, which may have been another reason they were considered a lowly form of entertainment.

### *Northanger Abbey* as **Parody**

In keeping with Gothic convention, Catherine Moreland is the protagonist of *Northanger Abbey*. Although her specific character makes her an unconventional heroine, Austen destines her to this role in the first line of the novel ("No one who had ever seen Catherine Moreland in her infancy, would have supposed her born to be an heroine.") and goes to great lengths to remind the reader of the Gothic connection that she is making. It is true, she confesses, that Catherine's mother does not fit the Gothic type either: "[not] dying in bringing [Catherine] into the world as any body might expect, she still lived on—lived to have six children more—to see them growing up around her, and to enjoy excellent health herself" (15). Undaunted by these deviations from Gothic circumstances, Austen continues to tease the reader with the hint of a future terrific plot. She then goes on to reveal the litany of ways that Catherine does not live up to the standards of a Gothic heroine— being not incredibly pretty, witty, talented, or passionate—yet Austen heartens her audience with the consolation that "when a young lady is to be a heroine, the perverseness of forty surrounding families cannot prevent her. Something must and will happen to throw a hero in her way" (18). The "perverseness" referred to here is the lack of a conventional Gothic hero—a lord, baronet, or young man of unknown origin—among them in this supposed Gothic romance. Surely, then, when the reader finds in the following paragraph that Catherine is to vacation in Bath with her comparatively wealthy neighbors, Mr. and Mrs. Allen, it comes as no stretch of the Gothic imagination to foresee the likelihood of this trip offering the circumstance which may supply this unlikely heroine with both the necessary sufferings and her heroic counterpart. We know that in the trip, she is at least afforded the opportunity to be attacked on the road. Yet Austen does not employ this Gothic convention either, but simply marks its absence in the text: "Neither robbers nor tempests befriended them, not one unlucky overturn to introduce them to a hero" ( 20).

Even Mrs. Allen, who was previously described as "a good-humoured woman" does not escape the Gothic suspicion Austen induces in the reader:

> It is now expedient to give some description of Mrs. Allen, that the reader
> may judge, in what manner her actions will hereafter tend to promote the
> general distress of the work, and how she will, probably, contribute to
> reduce poor Catherine to all the desperate wretchedness of which a last

volume is capable—whether by her impudence, vulgarity, or jealousy—whether by intercepting her letters, ruining her character, or turning her out of doors. (20-21)

Austen maintains this tone for the first two chapters of the novel, playing to the reader's expectation of Gothic convention, and this story's promise of it, only to leave the expectation unfulfilled. The author's insistence that we continue to read as though *Northanger Abbey* were a Gothic novel despite the repeated evidence to the contrary—disappointment both in terms of character and plot conventions—is considered one of its main parodic devices.

Once past these two introductory chapters and the narrator's inducement of the reader's proper literary sensibility and Gothic expectations, the narrative settles into detailing the day-to-day events in Catherine's life at Bath—"Every morning now brought its regular duties…" (25)—a stark contrast to the promise of Gothic intrigue promised in the proceeding chapters. This attention Austen gives to the commonplace effectively removes the reader's expectation of the sensational, offering cause to doubt the sincerity of the author's Gothic intent and distancing the reader from her previous sympathies with the heroine, supplying the feeling that she'd been duped by the author who merely parodied the story the reader had expected her to provide.

So when Catherine, inspired by her visit to Northanger Abbey and the Radcliffean-like tale Henry spins for her in the carriage ride there, begins to exhibit the heightened sensibility one would expect from the heroine of a Gothic romance, Austen's denial of Gothic explanation allows the reader to interpret this as a sign of Catherine's naivety. By now, the reader has come to expect the marked absence of the Gothic element. Of course the scroll she finds tucked away in a drawer of the heavy chest in her room is just a laundry list and not a mysterious scrap of diary implicating the General in the death of the late Mrs. Tilney. The chest was unlocked, and the key there as well. And truly, what good reason beyond mere conjecture does Catherine have for thinking that he shows "the air and attitude of a Montoni!" (176). Thank goodness, Henry discovers her horrible assumption, rebukes her for ill judgment, and puts an end to the extravagance of these "visions of romance" (187). Certainly now, Catherine is humbled, as the reader had been, by the attention to the mundane in Part I, and surely the critic is convinced of the parodic nature of the tale. Austen has shown how these Gothic conventions are purposeless flights of fancy alone, sensational without merit. Or has she?

### The Inadequacy of Parody

Austen repeatedly raises the reader's and/or Catherine's Gothic hopes only to dash them with images of the everyday. If this were the case for the whole of the

novel, there would be little room to debate the categorization of *Northanger Abbey* as a parody. However, this is not the case. Very near the end of the novel, after having been rudely tossed out of Northanger Abbey by General Tilney without discernible cause and having made the journey home to Fullerton alone, Catherine is visited by Henry Tilney. Henry relates the story of the General's motive for both courting Catherine as a daughter-in-law and ejecting her unceremoniously from his house—the gullible General had at once believed John Thorpe's assessment of Catherine as very wealthy and was now under the impression of Thorpe's more recent accusation of her poverty and social-climbing nature. The General is revealed to be not only credulous, but motivated by greed as well. Given this new information, both Catherine and the reader are able to recognize that although her initial surmise of the General's character might have been wrongly founded, her Gothic suspicion was not, and "that in suspecting General Tilney of either murdering or shutting up his wife, she had scarcely sinned against his character, or magnified his cruelty" (230).

Up until this moment in the text, Austen has thwarted both Catherine's and the reader's attempts to use Gothic knowledge to any avail; she has failed their expectation at every turn. However, the inclusion of this episode serves as a critical turning point in the novel, altering the view of those prior events in the novel marked by the absence of Gothic elements from what could once have been thought parody to what may now be seen as a conscious effort by the author to strip the form of its possibly confounding elements—exaggerated stock characters, the conventional setting, the death of parents, attacks by bandits on the road, the appearance of skeletons, ghosts, other ghastly apparitions and the like—that cause the reader to mistake the source of Gothic horror. In this way, Austen removes the artifice from the Gothic romance, replacing the sensational with the mundane, laying bare the patriarchal authority at the heart of the horror in Gothic romance. *Northanger Abbey* thus revises the form, acting as a cipher of the Gothic romance, asking its readers to reconsider the very nature of the genre. That General Tilney did not murder or lock up his wife is not the point. Terrible though that act would have been, it would not have directly affected Catherine, who was simply on vacation and not legally under his control. The point, then, and the source of true horror, is that short of murder, General Tilney had the legal right to do with his wife much as he pleased. He could be horrible without reproach. This does have direct bearing on Catherine and her future, for all women of this time relied on the kindness of their husbands or guardians, not the law, to protect them. That Henry Tilney appears to be a kind man despite suffering his father and brother is Catherine's only hope in the patriarchal system. Perhaps too, with this revelation, Austen is asking her readers to appreciate the value of feeling in the Age of Reason, for it is Catherine's sensibility, not her

reason that allows her to distinguish between the villains and the heroes of the world, between the John Thorpes and the Henry Tilneys.

Even the conventional, albeit ironic, happy ending serves to support this new supposition. After relating the news that Catherine's parents will agree to her engagement to Henry only with General Tilney's consent as well, Austen addresses the reader directly, writing:

> The anxiety which in this state of their attachment must be the portion of Henry and Catherine, and all who loved either, as to its final event, can hardly extend, I fear, to the bosom of my readers, who will see in the tell-tale compression of the pages before them, that we are all hastening together to perfect felicity. (233)

Approaching the conclusion of the novel thusly, Austen not only fulfills her authorial duty to the conventional (and socially appropriate) ending of the genre, but does so with a wink and nod that calls attention to the artificiality of such.

## Conclusion

I have shown that the relationship of *Northanger Abbey* to the Gothic romance is more complicated than that of a simple parody—far from the comic imitation that such a characterization implies—and how by shedding the preconception of the novel as such we are able to connect the text to the Gothic romance in a way that transforms the genre from frivolous entertainment to a critique of the patriarchal system. This reading also allows us to see that in domesticating the Gothic plot—in taming it enough so that we can recognize the systems of oppression as such—Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* not only links the Gothic romance to critique, but provides a more believable and obvious criticism than is possible in the traditional Gothic form.

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# Continuing Conflict: An Analysis of the Relationship between the United States and the International Atomic Energy Agency since 1985

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Since the closing of World War II and with the dawning of the nuclear age, nuclear weapons have represented one of the most dangerous threats to civilization and society at large. With the onset of the Cold War in 1949, the imminent threat of nuclear war loomed even greater as the potential for controlling the spread and development of such weapons decreased with every year. The International Atomic Energy Agency was formed in 1953 as an agency to ensure the peaceful use of nuclear energy throughout the world. As a United Nations Agency, the IAEA sought to utilize the benefits of atomic energy while curbing the potential abuse and spread of atomic technologies for war purposes. The Agency remains one of the only measures of international control that attempts to maintain the use of nuclear energy for peace, and yet under its watch during the Cold War, nuclear weapons proliferated and the potential for their use in wartime increased dramatically. This increase in availability was not specifically a result of shortcomings on the part of the IAEA, but rather ensued largely as a result of limited cooperation between the United States, the world's largest and most advanced nuclear power, and the agency. This policy of non-cooperation came about as a result of tensions in the bipolar climate of the Cold War, where the nuclear powers of the world were extremely hesitant to surrender any control of their military and peaceful nuclear affairs to an outside regulatory body. This trend continued late into the Cold War.

As the Soviet Union experienced decline and ultimately collapsed in the late 1980s and early 1990s, however, the previous dynamics of the world nuclear climate changed dramatically. Without an overwhelming antagonistic threat to focus military resistance against, the United States seemed poised to halt or reduce their control of nuclear affairs in an effort to promote world stability with nuclear weapons. The early days of worry about nuclear war seemed over as America emerged as the undisputed leader in nuclear technology and weapons. This reduction of tension, however, did not translate into an increase in cooperation with the IAEA, thereby continuing its decided lack of authority. Although the IAEA gained some support worldwide for its safety programs in the wake of disasters in the late 1980s and its role in the inspections of Iraqi nuclear facilities after the first Gulf War, numerous other international incidents involving the United State's foreign policy continued to undermine the authority and overall credibility of the agency. American independent political intervention and unwavering cooperation in the affairs of Israel, continued relations with India and Pakistan despite their nuclear aspirations, intervention and attempted overall control of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction inspections, and separate agreements with North Korea outside of the pre-existing framework of the Treaty on Nonproliferation undermined the purposes and negated the abilities of the IAEA to successfully promote the use of nuclear energy solely for peaceful purposes.

There has not been much research done on the relationship between the IAEA and any other international organization or nation, or on the IAEA's organization and effectiveness in completing its purposes. The United States, on the other, hand is a major player in international diplomacy and world affairs. Much scholarship exists on the relationship between the United States and other international bodies, such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and NATO. There has also been significant literature on the nuclear aspects of the world, with focus on the Cold War, development in World War II, the United States' development, and rogue nations, but there has been very little emphasis on the development of safety and regulatory aspects of this developing technology. A significant gap exists in the literature of the history of nuclear affairs in the world, and this study seeks to partially fill that gap by examining the relationship between the IAEA and the United States after one of the most pivotal and critical parts of modern world history.

## Background: Nuclear Affairs and the Agency from 1953 to 1985

The IAEA began in 1953 after several failed attempts by the United States to create an agency and international guidelines that would allow it to retain a virtual monopoly on the nuclear technologies and affairs of the world. The West held a great distrust for Joseph Stalin's government and viewed him as a potential threat to

international balance, especially should Soviet Russia gain access to nuclear weapons, and this distrust of the Soviet Union played a huge role in deeming how foreign policy would develop. This attitude is reflected in various proposals made by the U.S. in the United Nations and in legislation by Congress. Despite repeated warnings by members of the scientific community about the dangers of early non-cooperation, the United States adopted the Atomic Energy Act in 1946, which made it a crime to pass along nuclear technologies, materials, or secrets to anyone not authorized.[1] This even included former allies that helped in development during World War II.[2] The United States also attempted to push their monopoly onto the international arena with the Baruch Plan in 1946, which suggested creating an International Atomic Development Agency that would serve as a depository and regulator of nuclear material for all countries and would also inspect each participating country to ensure cooperation.[3] Negotiations stalemated as the Soviet Union refused to allow on site inspections and chided the U.S. for continuing their tests even as they tried to ban the weapons for the rest the world. Even this scored propaganda points for the U.S, who stood to gain a positive image as wanting peace if the Soviet Union accepted or rejected the terms.[4] Unfortunately, these early efforts to curb nuclear proliferation failed as the Soviet Union detonated its first bomb in late 1949.[5]

These early American unilateral attempts at nuclear safety failed, but United States policy continued to develop along these lines even later in the nuclear age. This international stance was again brought under fire in 1953 when the Soviet Union detonated their first thermonuclear weapon, mere months after the first American tests of this sort. This development prompted a newly fierce propaganda war between the two powers directed towards each other, their allies, and the third world nations of the world, as both countries sought to maintain a peaceful image abroad in order to gain allies against the other, for more allies meant better access to resources.[6] The American response in this situation was another attempt to create an international authority to control the nuclear powers for peaceful purposes. With his "Atoms for Peace" speech to the United Nations in 1953, President Eisenhower made a bold move towards openness and cooperation in creating a new international nuclear agency that would serve as a depository and regulation body for all nuclear

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[1] Environment and Natural Resources Policy Division, *Nuclear Proliferation Factbook: Fourth Edition* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1985), 1.

[2] J. Robert Oppenheimer, "The Atom Bomb as a Great Force for Peace," *New York Times*, 9 June 1946, 7.

[3] Environment and Natural Resources Policy Division, *Nuclear Proliferation Factbook: Fourth Edition*, 14–16.

[4] Andrei Y. Vishinsky, "Text of Address by Vishinsky Before United Nations Assembly Stating Soviet Views," *New York Times*, 19 September 1947, 18–20.

[5] William J. Laurence, "Soviet Achievement Ahead of Predictions by 3 Years," *New York Times*, 24 September 1949, 1.

[6] Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower's Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 24–26.

materials.[7] The Atoms for Peace program was recognized as being a vehicle for control of fissionable materials (and thus available to check the spread of weaponry), but it was also designed to advance American interests in its political competition with the Soviet Union, immediately undermining the purpose and authority of the new agency.[8]

Numerous other challenges faced the fledgling agency during the Cold War Period as the continual mistrust between the two superpowers reached ever-higher proportions. The most notable weakness in the IAEA's mission as outlined in its statute was its lack of authority and ability to regulate the arsenals of the nuclear weapons states. This, of course, was a deliberate omission by the drafters of the IAEA statute, as neither the United States (fresh from its extreme secrecy stage in 1942 to 1953) or the eternally paranoid Soviet Union were going to subject their arsenals and primary defenses to international control. As these tensions reached their peak in 1962 with the Cuban Missile Crisis, both the Soviet Union and United States began to recognize the need for greater international control.[9] The result of this realization was the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which made it illegal for any state not already in possession of nuclear weapons by 1962 from owning them and prevented all signatories from transferring nuclear weapons secrets to any non-weapons state.[10] Although the Nonproliferation Treaty represented an important step towards controlling nuclear arms use and their spread, the treaty also contained a number of fundamental flaws that severely detracted from its intended purpose. The inequality between nuclear weapons states and non-nuclear weapons states was viewed as a discriminatory policy by a number of developing nuclear nations, such as Brazil, Argentina, and India, and many key nuclear states refused to sign the treaty.[11] The ability of states to refuse to sign the treaty also reflects another weakness in the treaty, since there is no specific incentive for states to join nor are their penalties for discontinuing membership.[12] The treaty was intended to be coupled with economic and political incentives independently enacted by powerful nations such as the United States, but this allows for uneven considerations and further discriminatory abilities outside the interests of nuclear security in the world

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[7] Eisenhower, Dwight D. "Atoms for Peace." Given before U.N. General Assembly, December 8, 1953. cited in: David Fischer, *History of the International Atomic Energy Agency: The First Forty Years* (Vienna: The Agency, 1997), 493.

[8] Alexander L. George, Philip J. Farley, and Alexander Dallin, eds., *U.S.-Soviet Security Cooperation: Achievements, Failures, Lessons* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 338–39.

[9] IAEA Statute; cited in Trevor N. Dupuy and Gay M. Hammerman, eds., *A Documentary History of Arms Control* (New York: R.R. Browker Company, 1973), 397.

[10] Treaty on the Nonproliferation on Nuclear Weapons: cited in Dupuy and Hammerman, *Arms Control*, 562–63.

[11] Stephen M. Meyer, *The Dynamics of Nuclear Proliferation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 10–24.

[12] Treaty on the Nonproliferation on Nuclear Weapons: cited in Dupuy and Hammerman, *Arms Control*, 562–63.

— a key point when economic considerations are brought into the picture; the U.S. alone has the ability to bribe, extort, cajole, embarrass, or coerce an antagonistic country when it pleases.[13] Thus, not only was the treaty born from outside problems between the United States and the Soviet Union, but the unwritten terms of the document were not upheld by the United States and thereby made a little more ineffective.

The Cold War also led to a more subtle undoing of the IAEA's international credibility and to the image of the nuclear industry as a whole. The constant climate of open hostility between the two superpowers led to a perceived need for faster development of nuclear technology. Both the Soviet Union and the U.S. sought to out pace their opponent in numerous areas of technology, including rocketry, nuclear power generation, and space technology. Unfortunately, both sides also cut numerous corners early on in their attempts to gain an advantage, and for the international nuclear industry, this spelled disaster. The first problem that caught international attention and negatively affected the industry was the Three-Mile Island melt down of 1979. Although no one was injured and no radiation leaked beyond the plant, the incident called into question the effectiveness of the safety measures taken in nuclear power plants, and the reliability of the frequent safety inspections.[14] Although the IAEA had little to do with inspecting or safeguarding U.S. nuclear plants, the international opinion of nuclear power quickly shifted towards the negative. - Numerous orders for new plants were canceled, thus limiting further the scope of the IAEA's potential international role in overseeing and promoting peaceful international nuclear activity.[15] The more potent disaster that spawned from the nuclear arms race occurred in 1985 near the city of Chernobyl, Ukraine. The Chernobyl reactor was an old Soviet model, and when scientists were running a test on reactor #3, safety mechanisms failed and the reactor went critical. Due to the lack of a containment dome, the resulting explosion released large amounts of radiation into the atmosphere, which affected the health of countless European citizens and contaminated thousands of acres of land. Even more disturbing was the unwillingness of the Soviet leadership to reveal the problem to the international community, and the common image of nuclear power in the world declined even further. The positive consequences of these incidents were that international emergency measures were brought into place for nuclear reactors all across the world, such as an incident reporting system.[16] This is again the result of U.S. and Soviet unwillingness

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[13] Meyer, *Dynamics*, 148. This is especially important later, when India violates International preferences by detonating a nuclear device. The U.S. does not bring pressure to bear on the nation, and therefore little reciprocity is achieved in preventing nuclear development in non-signatory countries.

[14] IAEA Annual Report for 1979, 3.

[15] Fischer, History of IAEA, 189–90.

[16] Ibid, 192.

to sacrifice autonomy in the nuclear industry, and demonstrates the ineffectiveness of the IAEA to implement itself effectively without the express consent or will of the United States and the other nuclear powers behind it.

As the world's foremost nuclear power, the United States developed a considerable interest in maintaining autonomy in its own nuclear affairs. The U.S. has usually avoided working through the IAEA since its inception for a myriad of reasons. This was initially due to the fact that the IAEA was a weak body and had no system of international safeguards in place, the U.S. trying to protect its nuclear advantage, and economic advantages stemming from the prolific nuclear industry. Plus, bilateral and multilateral agreements were far easier to pursue and the America undertook the tasks of its own inspections early on. By the 1970s, these agreements tended to supersede IAEA agreements (U.S. industry was more important) and seriously undermined the international authority and credibility of the IAEA, since the founder and largest supplier of nuclear materials did not subscribe to its regulations. Numerous problems also developed as the U.S. independent policing efforts became increasingly unmanageable and complex as bilateral agreements needed to be renegotiated. Some countries did not abide by these agreements, either, but since they existed outside of an international forum, the U.S. authority was also diminished.

The bipolar climate during the Cold War led to a United States alignment with other nuclear organizations instead of the IAEA. America has always held significant interests and alliances with Western Europe, and in the wake of WWII, the economies of France, Great Britain, and other allies were shattered.[17] In addition, the newly formed North Atlantic Treaty Organization provided increased security against the potential for a Soviet invasion of Europe, and increased interests for the United States on European soil. When the European countries banded together and formed an atomic energy community, the U.S. decided to subscribe to their safeguard agreements and not to the IAEA's (which were still in the developmental stages).[18] Although this significantly undermined the overall authority of the IAEA, the Eisenhower administration had several reasons to prefer participation in the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM). It allowed for a more unified Europe, which had been a goal of U.S. foreign policy since the end of World War II, to better face the Soviet threat and to make European nuclear operations dependent on the U.S. supply. By creating formal institutions to promote a single European community, a unified Europe allowed for greater expansion of trade and quicker rebuilding of individual economies by bringing their security interests closer by adding an

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[17] U.S. Department of State, *Fundamentals of US Foreign Policy* (Washington: Bureau of Public Affairs, 1988), 12–14.

[18] EURATOM Cooperation Act, 1958; cited in Environment and Natural Resources Policy Division, *Nuclear Proliferation Factbook: Fourth Edition*, 146–48.

economic element to NATO. Other economic advantages came about for the blooming U.S. nuclear industry. The industry leaders hoped that EURATOM would create a ready market that was rich with funds from the Marshall Plan loans to postwar Europe waiting to be exploited. The industry could trust the Western European countries more than any other nations in the world (since they had a mutual threat in the Soviet Union) and could pursue agreements much easier given their close cultural ties. EURATOM also implemented a comprehensive safeguards agreement before the IAEA did, so it made more sense from a security and nonproliferation standpoint to align themselves with the European countries rather than the IAEA. This decision, however beneficial at the time, led to a severe decrease in international authority and prestige for the fledgling IAEA, for its founding nation had abandoned it and instead allied itself with its own interests and outside of the safeguards that every other member state had to subscribe to. This not only created mistrust within the Soviet Bloc about the IAEA's ability to lead and implement action for the entire international nuclear community, but it also undermined its image as an authoritative and reliable independent international organization to prospective member states.

Another major drawback for the international regulation of nuclear materials came as the United States redefined how proliferation should be handled. When President Jimmy Carter took office, he brought a profound shift in nuclear export policy. His policy sought to control the worldwide plutonium economy that the U.S. had relied upon and accepted for so many years by controlling the export of certain technologies and materials, and his views concerning proliferation remained fixated on plutonium.[19] This change was prompted by the apparent failure of the NPT to prevent countries from wanting to acquire weapons, as well as not effectively denying them the means to do so. Technology that was used for peaceful purposes could also easily be put to use for war. Critics of the safeguards system believed it was impossible (if a state has the technology) to prevent any country with adroit technicians and a small supply of plutonium to be days away from a bomb, and so U.S. policy shifted accordingly and several countries were forced to renegotiate their existing contracts with the American nuclear industry.[20] Carter sought, in accordance with congressional views, to enact a moratorium on reprocessing and enrichment technology transfer, withholding authority for U.S. reprocessing, renegotiating Agreements for Cooperation to achieve compliance with stricter safeguards procedures, and denying sales of nuclear fuel and technology to countries unwilling to go along with U.S. views on safeguards and proliferation dangers.[21] This affected several close

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[19] Nuclear power Policy Statement by the President on his decisions following a review of U.S. Policy, 1977; cited in Environment and Natural Resources Policy Division, *Nuclear Proliferation Factbook: Fourth Edition*, 224–28.

[20] Fischer, *History of IAEA*, 250–51.

[21] Nuclear power Policy Statement by the President on his decisions following a review of U.S. Policy, 1977; cited in Environment and Natural Resources Policy Division, *Nuclear Proliferation Factbook: Fourth Edition*, 224–28.

allies, such as Japan and EURATOM (who later negotiated separate agreements, to the resentment of other countries who saw this as preferential treatment) and ultimately undermined the United States' image as a reliable nuclear supplier. Many countries viewed constantly shifting policies as undesirable, and few new contracts were negotiated with the United States. Since the U.S. was also acting as a strong advocate of the IAEA at the time by coercing countries to join the NPT and accept IAEA safeguards regime, the credibility of the IAEA itself was also influenced negatively as it was also seen as having shifting policies. Unfortunately, the support of the U.S, something the IAEA desperately needed for much of the early atomic period, came at an inopportune time and did not help the IAEA's image abroad very much.

A problem that began plaguing the IAEA after the inception of the Nonproliferation Treaty was increased politization that occurs within the agency's meetings. Problems and disputes that often have no place in the international atomic forum bog down practical discussion and hinder progress towards achieving goals. Israel and South Africa were both lightning rods in their respective regions; both were attempting to acquire nuclear arsenals by the 1980s - Israel likely already possessed one, or the capability to quickly obtain one - and represented international pariahs. Israel was constantly deplored by Arab states for its militant role in the region, and little progress was seen in creating a peaceful and nuclear weapons-free middle east. A nuclear-weapons free zone was sought by several Arab states as protection against Israel, whom was recognized unofficially as a weapons state, but Israel hampered such efforts numerous times throughout the 1960s. The milestone problem in this tenuous relationship, however, came in 1981, when Israel bombed a French-supplied nuclear reactor in Iraq.[22] On June 7, U.S.-supplied warplanes hit the plant before the nuclear material was delivered because Israel saw the plant as a means for Iraq to acquire atomic weapons. The strike came without U.S. prior knowledge, and it dealt a severe blow to the IAEA's international reputation, for it implicitly called into the question the effectiveness of the safeguard and inspection regimes that were supposed to keep clandestine weapons programs from happening.[23] The Arab nations made a motion to condemn the attack and to remove Israel's credentials from the conference that was going on (a modest slap on the wrist for such a bold action).[24] The U.S. delegation initially supported condemning the attack, since it violated arms agreements between the two nations and severely challenged the peace process in the region.[25] But after the Israel lobby in Washington put

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[22] U.S. Senate, *Hearings Before the Committee on Foreign Relations United States Senate 97th Congress on the Israeli Air Strike and Related Issues* (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1981), 5.

[23] Ibid, 12-14.

[24] IAEA Annual Report, 1981.

[25] U.S. *Senate, Senate Hearings on Israeli Air Strike*, 11.

pressure on the U.S. delegation, the American representatives shifted their stance, and threatened to leave the conference and the IAEA should Israel's credentials be revoked.[26] After a close and disputed vote, Israel did lose their credentials, and the British and American delegations walked out of the conference. If their withdrawal from the IAEA and NPT had stood, it would have been a fatal blow to the agency, since the U.S. alone accounted for 22 percent of the total budget.[27] Israel's credentials were restored after this action, however, and the U.S. rejoined the agency in 1983, but with a reduced budget.[28] This incident shows the influence the United States has over the IAEA, and how it is willing to put the interests of its own allies above the effectiveness and autonomy of the IAEA. All countries have to balance their domestic security issues with their international cooperation, but the United States holds an unusual amount of sway over many the IAEA due to its premier position in nuclear affairs and budget considerations, and will likely continue to exert its influence whenever it has interests to do so.

As the world's most advanced nuclear power, the United States has consistently been in a unique position to direct the course of nuclear development worldwide. However, due to multifaceted security and economic pressures throughout the Cold War period, America relentlessly pursued an independent path in nuclear development, putting the interests of the world's atomic community second to its own. This headstrong policy was first made apparent during the first years of the atomic age, as the Truman and Eisenhower administrations jealously guarded their nuclear monopoly despite repeated and strong warnings from the scientific community of the consequences. Subsequent administrations did little to change the mantra of the United States dictating its own course of atomic development.

Atoms for Peace and the establishment of the International Atomic Energy Agency potentially represented important steps in creating a safe worldwide nuclear community, but American actions soon undermined their basic intent as proved them to represent mere propaganda measures spawned by the bipolar political climate. The early alignment with EURATOM held numerous short-term benefits for the Western nuclear powers, but only with severe long-term consequences at the expense of the IAEA's international credibility and image. The period of secrecy was replaced with one of 'openness,' but the nuclear arms race was already spiraling out of control, and veil of safety was razor-thin under mutual assured destruction.

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[26] Fischer, *History of IAEA*, 268–69. Fischer relates that the U.S. delegation initially condemned the attack and did not deter efforts to revoke Israeli credentials, until the final day of the conference, when the Israeli delegation learned of their stance. A call to Washington elicited a prompt reversal and the U.S. delegates then threatened to leave the conference and IAEA if Israel lost its credentials.

[27] U.N. Department of Public Information, *The United Nations and Nuclear Nonproliferation* (New York: The United Nations Department of Public Information, 1995), 12–16.

[28] Environment and Natural Resources Policy Division, *Nuclear Proliferation Factbook: Fourth Edition*, 6.

American policy had quickly created an ineffective agency with no hope of ensuring a cooperative and safe world nuclear climate.

The IAEA continued to be proved an instrument of American nuclear policy after the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. Before the crisis, little attention was paid to the fact that the agency could do nothing about the nuclear weapons states' arsenals, and it only played the minor role of overseeing technical cooperation. However, after worldwide attention came to the thin veneer of stability surrounding the arms race, the Nonproliferation Treaty was formed in a belated attempt to control the spread of nuclear weapons. It seemed that few lessons were taken from the previous generation of policymakers, for the powers in place found little common ground and subsequently created a treaty that was both weak and ineffective. Numerous volatile countries, such as Cuba, Pakistan, South Africa, and India, refused to join the fight against spreading nuclear weapons because of the inherent discrimination present within the document, and the IAEA's role was severely limited once more. The Nonproliferation Treaty only sought to accommodate the spread of nuclear material, not to halt it, and was only made effective when coupled with U.S. diplomatic pressures.

The IAEA was shown to the world to be the tail to the dog of U.S. foreign policy during the Israeli incident in 1981. Since America provided the largest amount of monetary and technical support to the agency, it's presence within was indispensable, and the threat of withdrawal proved to be an effective means for asserting U.S. control. In effect, the IAEA's worldwide policies represent little more than an extension of U.S. nuclear interests, and the agency only gains a measure of effectiveness when and where it is within America's interest to do so. Despite the apparent ever-growing need for effective international control, the nuclear climate continued to lack such a body during the Cold War Period.

**Positive developments with the IAEA: Expanded Safety Regime and Inspections Duties**

It is apparent that there were numerous challenges facing the IAEA during its formative years, and despite the advantages of a strong international regulatory body overseeing nuclear affairs, the United States continually, if unintentionally, undermined the IAEA's ability to ensure peaceful use of nuclear energy. However, just as unintended international events lessened the IAEA's authority during the early Cold War period, such events also contributed to the increasing prestige of the agency in several small, yet important, areas. The decline of the Soviet Union and the resulting decay of its nuclear infrastructure allowed for the agency to shine in the international arena in a situation that no other group could hope to respond to.

One of the areas where the International Atomic Energy Agency saw the most improvement and prestige among the nations of the world is in the area of safety measures and recommendations. This was one of the initial envisioned reasons for creating such an international agency, although it took many years to formally adopt a safety program, and it became widely adopted only in the wake of nuclear accidents, most specifically Chernobyl in 1985. Chernobyl was a dual result of conducting a dangerous experiment without proper safety and the inadequate overall safety practices of the Soviet Union as a result of the international arms race and cutting corners resulting in an inefficient and ineffective chain of command.[29] This was one of the most apparent signs of decay within the Soviet Union, and the problem was compounded with the leadership's unwillingness to admit to the problem. This lack of safety structure led to immediate concerns within the United States public and other industrialized nations, and shortly thereafter, the IAEA created a number of important — and effective — inspection organizations, review committees, and safety regulations that became adopted by most nuclear programs worldwide.[30] These programs also allowed for increased safety inspections among cooperative nations and nuclear sites, with the notable exceptions of the United States and the People's Republic of China. Nevertheless, despite the absence of these two nations' support and involvement, the prestige of the IAEA during this period saw vast improvement as they set the benchmark for safety and communication abilities for nuclear reactors and accidents.

The IAEA saw positive development late 1980 with the creation of numerous nuclear-weapons-free zones throughout the world. Because of the continued tension of threatened nuclear conflict, many regions of the world had taken notice of the trouble that brewed from opposing nuclear arsenals and took it upon themselves to prevent any such problem in their own region. Formerly socialistic-leaning nations, such as Argentina and Brazil, had developed their nuclear programs throughout much of the early nuclear age. With their ties to the Soviet Union and antagonistic tendencies towards the United States (who carries the big nuclear stick in the region), they often sought nuclear weapons in competition with each other and in order to secure a place of relative power in the international and regional communities. With the relative weakening of the Soviet Union in the wake of the Cuban Missile Crisis, these two nations, once a thorn in the side of U.S. international diplomacy, decided to abandon their nuclear weapons development programs in favor of a nuclear-free weapons zone with the treaty of Tlatelolco (1967). This landmark treaty in Latin America paved the way for other weapons-free zones that

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[29] Fischer, *History of IAEA*, 194–95.
[30] Fischer, *History of IAEA*, 210–35.

proliferated in the wake of a weak Soviet Union and later helped with the NPT acceptance in most Latin American countries (Cuba not until 95, and Brazil and Argentina in 1994). This also led to other nuclear weapons free zones: The Raratonga Treaty in 1986 (South Pacific), the Pelindaba Treaty in 1996 (Africa), and the Bangkok Treaty in 1995 (SE Asia) that charged IAEA with inspections to enforce.[31] Antarctica is also recognized as being a nuclear weapons free zone free from nuclear testing or development by any nation. The development of these zones heightened the sense of security against nuclear conflict for many regions of the world and prevented a worldwide nuclear arms race that involved more than the two superpowers, and in most cases the IAEA was called upon to fulfill inspection duties and was expected to maintain the agreements held by every nation. These treaties represent yet another expansion of the IAEA's responsibilities and prestige during the period of a weaker Soviet Union and after the fall of Soviet Russia.

Another instance that increased the authority of the IAEA in the international arena during the late cold war and afterwards was the increased role it played during the Gulf War crisis. The Middle East has always been a center of United States' foreign policy throughout the Cold War, particularly during the late 1980s when the Soviet Union was engaged in a problematic conflict of Afghanistan.[32] The U.S. provided support for many of the regimes in the region during this period, including Saddam Hussein and Iraq. During the first Gulf War, when Iraqi clandestine nuclear weapons programs were discovered, the IAEA who was tapped to handle the important task of inspecting the nuclear facilities in Iraq to ensure that all nuclear weapons were destroyed and any technologies or materials that could be used in the future to obtain such weapons were removed or destroyed.[33] Although Iraq had been considered a U.S. ally for much of the period, developments in the politics of the Middle East (namely the Iran-Iraq conflict and the latter's invasion of Kuwait), the development of a rogue nuclear state in the region was considered by most diplomats to be an unstabilizing move, and in the absense of any other international agency that could handle nuclear affairs, the IAEA was given an important responsibility. After the crisis had passed, the removal of nuclear materials from Iraq was one of the first post-Gulf War successes by the international coalition.[34] The quick completion of this task highlighted the abilities of the IAEA to rapidly deploy inspection teams and highlighted their abilities to conduct fieldwork, even in a diplomatically fragile region. The U.S. and other NATO allies are indirectly responsible for the perhaps

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[31] Ibid, 266–67.

[32] U.S. Department of State, U.S. Foreign Policy, 12–14.

[33] U.S. Senate, Senate Hearings on Israeli Air Strike, 57.

[34] Peter D. Zimmerman, Iraq's Nuclear Achievements: Components, Sources, and Stature (Washington: Congressional Research Service, 1993), 56–58.

the most prestigious and important task of the IAEA's lifetime with the inspection duties in Iraq, and contributed immensely to their ability to prove to the international community how they can be effective in dealing with nuclear problems.

Despite these apparent boosters of support for the IAEA during the late period of Soviet decline and subsequent fall, these are not indicative of the trends concerning the international respect afforded the agency during this period. These have tended to rather be isolated examples of how well the IAEA could perform when given the responsibility, but there exist many more instances where the IAEA failed to perform its specific duties, and in almost every case, the United States is directly responsible for the undermining of the authority the IAEA needed.

### India and Pakistan: A Dangerous Precipice

One of the most prominent examples of how the IAEA has failed to enforce the Nonproliferation Treaty due to United Stated intervention and inaction is with the case of India and Pakistan. These two nations represent the largest and fastest growing nations on earth in terms of population and industrialization. Both nations have also developed considerably advanced nuclear programs, but neither have ever been signatories to the Nonproliferation Treaty.[35] This is in part due to their antagonistic tendencies towards one another (mutual distrust of adherence to not build nukes), the case of Israeli nuclear weapons ('sanctioned' by the United States), and the inability and unwillingness of U.S. foreign policy to exert sufficient influence on either nation to prevent their development of nuclear weapons.[36]

The problems with nuclear weapons in this region began in 1974, when India, using materials from U.S. and Canadian sources, detonated a 'Peaceful Nuclear Device.' They claimed this device was for mining purposes only, and maintained that they had used the material in accordance with their pledge to maintain peaceful uses of nuclear energy only.[37] Unfortunately for India, the rest of the world community condemned this test, and eventually a panel recognized that there is no distinction between a nuclear explosion for 'peaceful' purposes and one for military uses.[38] However, this distinction had never been made before the PNE test, so India became an unofficial nuclear power that was also a non-signatory to the Nonproliferation Treaty. This made for an especially tricky international situation for the IAEA, who had no power to force any country to sign the Nonproliferation

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[35] Leonard S Spector, Mark G McDonough, and Evan S. Medeiros, *Tracking Nuclear Proliferation: A Guide in Maps and Charts*, 1995 (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1995), 12–14.

[36] Fischer, *History of IAEA*, 245.

[37] Lawrence Scheinman, *The International Atomic Energy Agency and World Nuclear Order* (Washington D.C.: Resources for the Future, 1987), 174–76.

[38] Robert L. Beckman, *Nuclear Nonproliferation: Congress and the Control of Peaceful Nuclear Activities* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985), 217–18.

Treaty, and the United States, who held considerably lucrative trade interests with India at the time, was unwilling to flex its diplomatic muscles to force them to sign.[39] Thus, as early as 1974, the IAEA failed in its attempts to curb the proliferation of nuclear weapons, due mainly to the unwillingness of the United States or any other major leader in nuclear energy to exert influence on the growing nation.[40]

Now that India had entered the nuclear club, it only became a matter of time before Pakistan, whom is a constant enemy of India and has fought several wars in recent memory with, sought to develop their own nuclear weapons program. Efforts to limit Pakistani nuclear efforts were somewhat more successful, due in part to the Indian PNE and funding from Mid-east countries (OPEC, specifically) that raised fears about an Islamic Bomb.[41] This is also of great concern because of their ties as a predominantly Islamic Nation to the volatile states that exist within the Middle East. In addition, a nuclear Pakistan increases the risk of a regional nuclear war with their neighbor with whom they are extremely antagonistic and have many disputes with.[42] As a result, we see unwillingness on the part of both nations to either enter into a treaty that curbs the development of nuclear weapons or into a treaty with each other to prevent any outbreak of hostilities. Since the IAEA also defines nuclear power as an inalienable right of any nation in the world, and the willingness of some western European nations to export potentially weapons-applicable technologies to any potential buyer, the situation in Southern Asia had the potential to spiral out of control before anyone knew what was happening.[43] Indeed, it was not long before West Germany, an eager exporter of nuclear technology (often against the wishes of the United States, from whom they received most of their technology), and France began to supply Pakistan with the technology they would need to produce a viable nuclear weapons program. The U.S. again could only stand idly by and watch as their technology was exported to a nation that was not involved in the Nonproliferation Treaty.

The worst fears of the world were realized in the mid 1990s when both India and Pakistan began to test missile delivery systems that were capable of deploying nuclear weapons across the Asiatic continent. They maintained that such development would only increase the stability of the region by countering the 'big stick' of Chinese and Russian nuclear power. With the downfall of Soviet Russia and the subsequent weakening of China as a result, both countries now felt much freer to

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[39] Ibid, 217–19.

[40] George, Farley, and Dallin, *Security Cooperation*, 344.

[41] John Newhouse, *War and Peace in the Nuclear Age* (New York: Alfred A. Kopf, inc., 1989), 275.

[42] U.S. Senate, *India-Pakistan Nuclear Proliferation: Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific of the Committee on International Relations, One Hundred Fifth Congress* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1998), 1–2.

[43] Fischer, *History of IAEA*, annex 2.

pursue their nuclear interests. In 1998, both countries carried out a series of nuclear tests, each officially becoming a nuclear weapons state without any of the attached responsibilities against proliferation.[44] This came as a shock to the rest of the world, not because it was unexpected, but rather because of the blatant nature of the tests. The United States imposed mild sanctions on both countries, but later continued its trade relations, and in 2004, even renewed nuclear transfers of technology with India. Again, this is a striking example of how the United States does not use their ability as a leader in economic and nuclear affairs to coerce nations into taking a less risky and more stable path of nuclear development.

## The Iraqi Question: WMD's and Beyond

Iraq has long been a center of controversy with regard to nuclear affairs. The country exists in a volatile section of the Middle East, sharing a long border with Iran with whom they have fought numerous wars. The Iraqi failure to recognize Israel has made them a pariah in the world community and made them a target for an Israeli air strike against their nuclear plant under construction in 1981. Despite this, the United States and other Western Nations continued to provide them with materials that have dual uses for both peaceful and potential militaristic programs in an attempt to bring stability and peace to the region.[45] In addition, the United States, in a misguided effort to subdue Iran vicariously through Iraqi power, provided Saddam with components for biological and chemical weapons of mass destruction along with many tons of conventional weapons (which they also gave to Iran) which served to bolster Saddam's ideas of grandeur in the region.

With the Invasion of Kuwait in 1991, the United States went to war against a surprised Iraq, who had tacitly assumed they would be allowed to take such an insignificant country in the region. At the onset of the Gulf War, it became apparent that Saddam Hussein desired nuclear weapons of mass destruction, and one of the most pressing concerns for the U.S. administration was to make sure that all WMD's were removed from the country. The IAEA was tapped as an independent regulatory agency with enough structure to inspect and ensure the removal of all questionable materials and technologies from Iraq.[46] They had the authority to do so, also, since Iraq was a signatory to the Nonproliferation treaty, and any state in violation of the treaty would be subjected to international (voluntary) sanctions and IAEA inspections anywhere they felt they needed to go.[47] This was the first time any country had been found to be in violation of the Nonproliferation treaty, and would be a

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[44] U.S. Senate, *1998 India Pakistan Nuclear Proliferation Hearings*, 1–3.

[45] U.S. Department of State, *U.S. Foreign Policy*, 59–63.

[46] Hans Blix, *Disarming Iraq* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2004), 20–21.

[47] U.N. Department of Public Information, *U.N. and Proliferation*, 15–19.

milestone in the course of the IAEA's history and work. This was the first chance the agency had to prove their ability to keep the world safe from the wrong uses of nuclear energy.

Unfortunately for the IAEA, the United States also saw an arguably larger threat in the other types of WMD's that were present in Iraq. Saddam had also built sizable stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons and platforms for their deployment. These chemical and biological agents were not under IAEA authority, and were to be removed under the authority of another U.N. agency, UNSCOM — the United Nations Special Commission — with whom the United States held considerably more authority and sway.[48] Although the U.S. provided crucial intelligence to the IAEA in the course of their investigation and provided some useful manpower and technology, they also attempted in many cases to influence Hans Blix and his staff through UNSCOM.[49] Despite the advantages of an independent agency continuing their investigation outside the political wills of various governments (which would only add to the credibility of remaining in Iraq), the United States felt it necessary to pursue inspections as they saw fit. Despite this intrusion, the IAEA was remarkably successful in completing their objectives of removing all known sources of material and technology from Iraq. The United States, however, continued to treat the agency without respect, and this later causes problems when the agency makes recommendations for later conflicts.

The experience in Iraq was unique in that it marked the first time the United States provided intelligence (and a considerable amount of technology) to an international agency to help further its goal, but the experience was marred by the attempted influence the U.S. exerted on the agency. This highlighted the dependence of the IAEA on the United States in terms of funding, personnel, technology, and intelligence, and where international credibility and prestige could have resulted, more questions were raised as the validity of the IAEA's abilities to accomplish its goals.

**Cuckolded: North Korean Nuclear Weapons and the 'Agreed Framework'**

Another example of an International Pariah attempting to gain access to nuclear weapons is the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, or North Korea. This country lives on a small peninsula in the shadow of a nuclear China, whose presence is all but dominating in Southeast Asia. As a result, the politics of North Korea are often lost in the shuffle of the nuclear powers of India, Pakistan, and China, and Kim Jong-Il desired to gain more of a presence in the region. His solution to the problem

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[48] Blix, *Disarming Iraq*, 20–22.
[49] Ibid, 18–26.

was to pursue nuclear weapons, which he thought would give DPRK a more stable leverage in Asia while allowing for the threat of retaliation against any would-be attackers.

DPRK was a signatory to the Nonproliferation treaty since the 1970s, and thereby subjected to inspections by the IAEA whenever deemed necessary. Under the leadership of Kim Il-Song, their expansion of nuclear programs began in the late 1980s, and they relied on technologies supplied from a free-giving West Germany, France, and a sympathetic Communist China. By 1994, it became apparent that North Korea was pursuing technologies far beyond the peaceful intentions it stated publicly. The IAEA, under Hans Blix and fresh from its experience in inspecting Iraq, attempted to gain entry into the Communist country for the purpose of inspecting its declared nuclear sites. The government refused, despite this being an obvious violation of the treaty they were signatory to. This refusal highlighted another weakness of the IAEA in its inability to impose punishment on a state that did not adhere to the provisions of the Nonproliferation Treaty. All eyes now turned to the United States, the international nation responsible for enacting sanctions to coerce a country to cooperate with the international agency.

The United States instead decided to pursue independent negotiations with DPRK, completely excluding the IAEA and arriving at an 'Agreed Framework' that allowed for increased trading between the two nations should the Government agree to not pursue nuclear weapons any longer. This was neither an international treaty nor a contract, but more of a 'memorandum of understanding' between the two nations that was noted by the U.N. Security Council.[50] Under this agreement, North Korea would replace its graphite fuel rod plants (which could easily produce plutonium for a weapon) with light-water reactors and would accept fuel from the United States while both countries worked to normalize trade and relations.[51] The recent death of Kim Il-Song led to high hopes of a true cooperative agreement between the two nations that would not include nuclear weapons, and it seemed that the United States, despite having overstepped the bounds of the IAEA's authority, had defused the situation.

However, a change in congress quickly led to a nonobservance of the agreement between the two nations. The agreement broke down after a series of factors came together to conspire against the framework. First, the IAEA had no place within the Agreed Framework — they were not allowed to serve as inspectors nor did they have authority in any sense.[52] In addition, the U.S. eventually did not fulfill its part of the

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[50] U.S. Committee on Foreign Relations, *U.S. Policy Toward North Korea: Hearing Before the Committee on International Relations* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2000), 8–9.

[51] Young Whan Kihl and Peter Hayes, eds., *Peace and Security in Northeast Asia: The Nuclear Issue and the Korean Peninsula* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1997), 34.

[52] U.S. Committee on Foreign Relations, *Hearing on North Korea*, 6.

agreement after a change in Congress. The United States had likely been hoping that the new regime of Kim Jong-Il would collapse soon after it took power, and as a result, it dragged its feet and eventually never sent the new power plant materials to the peninsula.[53] When the U.S. did not maintain its side of the bargain and DPRK formally from the Nonproliferation Treaty, the authority of the IAEA to inspect and ensure that no weapons are being made was nullified. This showed the unwillingness of the United States to support the agency even in its own interests, and also demonstrated the weaknesses inherent in the Nonproliferation Treaty as well as the lack of ability for the IAEA to impose its authority and to punish non compliant nations. The United States has held the upper hand in international relations over the beleaguered UN Agency, and has often pushed its own agenda over the IAEA's. This action would eventually come back to haunt the international community as North Korea announced its first nuclear test in 2006.

## Conclusions

The lack of cooperation during the Cold War Period between the IAEA and the United States continued even after the main antagonistic threat was removed. The IAEA expanded in its abilities in some areas, but was predominantly undermined by the foreign policies and considerations of the United States.

There were a number of important, if small, victories for the IAEA on the international stage. The expansion of the safety regime in the wake of several international nuclear incidents gave the agency greater recognition by nations of the world as the leading authority in nuclear safety. The subsequent adoption of its safety manual for nearly every nuclear operation in the world proved how esteemed the agency's record had become. The abilities of the IAEA to inspect countries for breaking nuclear agreements were also expanded greatly. Early doubts about the ability of the IAEA to assert its authority were laid to rest early after the discovery of nuclear programs in Iraq, and it seemed that the agency itself was finally on its way to achieving the independence and authority it had needed for much of the Cold War period.

This initial optimism soon gave way to the same forces of unilateralism and U.S. meddling. Cases with proliferation in India, Iraq, and North Korea proved outside of the ability of the IAEA to handle effectively, and through independent actions by the United States government and foreign policy, the agency failed to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons in many instances, thus failing to achieve the goals outlines in the IAEA statute. North Korea, India, and Pakistan are not signatories to

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[53] Richard Haass and Meghan O'Sullivan, eds., *Honey and Vinegar: Incentives, Sanctions, and Foreign Policy* (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2000), 45.

the Nonproliferation treaty and are nuclear powers in the world. The IAEA has had its authority cuckolded again by the interests of the dominant industrial nations of the world, and they remain dependent on the United States for support in many areas, including intelligence, foreign pressure, personnel, and funding, and have yet to receive the full support from America in any one of those categories.

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# Genuine Artifice, Serious Camp:
# The Women's Films of Todd Haynes

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## Introduction

*As the New Queer Cinema has become a well-established vein of modern filmmaking, its films no longer speak only to the culturally savvy gays and lesbians who began making them over a decade ago. In fact, the term "queer" itself no longer speaks only to those individuals. Gay filmmaker Todd Haynes spent the better portion of his early career making such queer-aimed critical triumphs as Poison and Superstar, but he has also delved into the more accessible—and in many ways, more radical—realm of queering straight genres about straight people. His films* Safe *(1995) and* Far From Heaven *(2002) are both provocative examples of his transformation of familiar genres through queer aesthetics—satire and camp.*

Camp may be defined loosely as something that provides sophisticated entertainment through its self-consciously artificial and extravagant elements. Susan Sontag said that this aesthetic discourse is exclusively playful and lighthearted— apparently a means by which gay men (most specifically) may forego their defiant morals, prompting their audience to do the same, in order to integrate themselves into society more smoothly through comedic, unserious entertainment. This genre of discourse is still present in mass media in overblown but ultimately safe showcases

such as the film *To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything! Julie Newmar* and the television program *Will and Grace.*

More recently, however, critics Pamela Robertson, Andrew Ross, and John Babuscio state that similarly intentional aesthetic exaggeration may indeed incorporate deeper moral and emotional nuances or even political implications. Haynes's films *Safe* and *Far From Heaven* integrate heightened aesthetics into complex stories, thus assisting him in making more emotionally appealing and broader socio-political statements. While critics like Marcia Landy and Dana Luciano have already examined and discussed several elements of Haynes's films individually, including the films' corporeal and temporal elements, this research will approach the specific types of artifice in his films. It will examine how Haynes (a gay man) uses consistent themes of exaggeration and camp in these films to express genuine and meaningful messages not about gay men, but about women. Through this examination, one may see that Haynes has exhibited camp in its more serious and inclusive incarnation, extending beyond the notion of comedic and unserious means of social integration for gay men. Thus one may see that Haynes uses camp as a filmic device and not a restrictive genre classification.

**Camp or Parody?: Notes on Artifice**

Camp is a tricky word to define; its malleability and sheer diversity has been the topic of discussion among scholars for the past half century. In her well-known 1964 essay, Susan Sontag describes camp as a very specific mode of aestheticism: "It is one way of seeing the world as an aesthetic phenomenon… the way of Camp is not in terms of beauty but in terms of the degree of artifice and stylization" (54). She argues that gay men and other suppressed groups use this discourse to shed associations with any moral wrongdoing: "Camp is a solvent of morality. It neutralizes moral indignation, sponsors playfulness" (64). Thus one may use camp to disarm one's audience with comedy and style. However, might this "playful" moral solvent in fact work to eliminate or at least neutralize the morals of the queer individual? Does the camp that Haynes utilizes work toward this result?

In the discussion of camp and satire, one must consider the possibility that the messages may amount to nothing more than simple parody of the text or genre upon which they draw. Judith Butler (1993) suggested that heterosexual parody is something that resorts to easy comedy and fails to subvert the constructions it claims to expose, "reidealiz[ing] heterosexual norms without calling them into question" (231). Similarly, in *Gender Trouble* (1990), she writes:

> Parody has been used to further a politics of despair, one which affirms a
> seemingly inevitable exclusion of marginal genders from the territory of the
> natural and the real. (186)

However, instead of a camp manifested through blatant humor and parody, Haynes's camp crafts a complex and subtle satire of artificial conventions of repressive society by highlighting the artificial conventions associated specifically with the fantasized (filmic) societies of the 1950s and 1980s. In short, Haynes satirizes artifice in life using artifice in art. In doing so, he strips his protagonists of any real choices; in effect, he forces the audience to examine critically the slightly distorted mirror of society that he has presented before them.

Pamela Robertson (2002) supports this claim that camp may be used as an effective political tool; one can employ an exaggerated aestheticism to help express "how women have negotiated their feelings of alienation from the normative gender and sex roles assigned to them by straight culture" (279). While "the diva" icon within camp is admittedly an often objectified symbol for worship, idolized as much for her sex appeal as her deep-rooted androgynous aggressiveness, Robertson still makes the case for a *feminist* camp—one that "views the world queerly; that is, from a non- or anti-straight, albeit frequently non-gay, position" (271). That Haynes has embraced the conventions of "women's films" and made queer transformations of them suggests that camp may indeed be a feminist tool with political effectiveness.

Andrew Ross (2002) asserts that the moral solvent theory and the feminist theory concerning camp can coexist. He argues that camp's artificiality—an imitation of a socially constructed "femininity"—has resulted from everyday oppression: "the fantasy possibilities of life on the screen allowed the utopian privilege of imagining a better world" (323). Thus camp may be not only an effective political discourse but also a means of expressing deep emotional longing. One may see this longing in something as familiar as the song "Over the Rainbow," as performed by the exemplary camp icon Judy Garland. Haynes's films, however, never quite invite audiences to imagine a better world directly. Instead, the artificial elements of the worlds that he highlights through the stylizations in his films allow (and provoke) audiences to consider their own normative expectations and the problems that arise with those expectations.

Why, though, has Haynes chosen to make films with effective political implications regarding gender roles not about gay men but about straight women? One may argue that Haynes's dedication to revealing these feminist messages in such a specific way—through the common discourse of camp—may further reveal his own queer motivations. As Ross states, "[Camp] belongs to those who have the accredited confidence to be able to devote their idiosyncratic attention to the practice of cultural slumming in places where others would feel less comfortable" (316). Haynes achieves this "cultural slumming" by highlighting the limitations presented by aesthetic and emotional artifice in the specific eras of the 1950s and the 1980s.

Cultural critic Jack Babuscio (1984) speaks more specifically of the ways in which camp may work as mode of communication rather than a means of outward stylization. "Camp emphasizes a style as a means of self-projection, a conveyor of meaning and an expression of emotional tone… In terms of style, [camp] signifies performance rather than existence" (43-44). Indeed, in their own ways, Haynes's films are performances in and of themselves. The performativity of his films is signified in effect by the heightened styles—in the case of *Safe*, the material 1980s; in *Far From Heaven*, the lavish 1950s.

While Babuscio argues that the aesthetic element of camp in film "further implies a movement away from contemporary concerns into realms of exotic or subjective fantasies" (43), Haynes crafts his films by stylizing certain subjective fantasies with the very intention of addressing certain contemporary concerns. When discussing camp as a serious mode of representation, Babuscio states that camp "allows us to witness 'serious' issues with contemporary detachment, so that only later, after the event, are we struck by the emotional and moral implications of what we have almost passively absorbed" (49). In his films, Haynes's manifests camp specifically through his stylization—artistically genuine and respectful while also culturally satiric. Here, camp is not the piece itself; camp is a device that shades and enriches the central messages of the piece.

**Todd Haynes and the Queer Cinema**

Todd Haynes has a well-established career in the realm of Queer Cinema. His canon of work includes the critically-acclaimed *Superstar: The Karen Carpenter Story*, *Poison*, *Dottie Gets Spanked*, and the more commercially successful *Velvet Goldmine*. All of his films deal with queerness on some level, whether or not directly addressing the subject of (homo)sexuality. His hugely critically successful *Poison* won the prestigious Grand Jury Prize at the 1991 Sundance Film Festival, partially prompting noted film critic B. Ruby Rich to write her well-known article that coined the term "New Queer Cinema" (qtd. in *Fabulous!*). After a decade and a half, this fairly new queer vein of filmmaking continues to be pioneering and provocative, and Haynes's films continue to contend as frontrunners among critics' circles. *The Village Voice* named *Safe* "The Best Film of the 1990s" (Lim) while Far From Heaven received four Academy Award nominations and dozens of independent film festival awards ("Awards for *Far From Heaven*").

The critical success of his films is arguably due partly to the questions they raise in terms of their audiences' expectations. Marcia Landy (2003) states that Haynes's aesthetic approach "reveals [his] rejection of realism with its predilection for naturalness, authenticity, and sentiment" (128). Through his cinematic treatment,

she asserts, "the communication of a communicability becomes a possibility... the anomalies of the image become apparent through the use of parody, the jamming of clichés, and the highlighting of artifice" (139). Landy argues that the corporeal elements of Haynes's films, including gesture, form and health issues, "challenge clichés about representation, sameness and difference, and identity" (123). It is through his very artifice that he achieves these corporeal subversions. In addition to corporeal subversions, Dana Luciano (2007) discusses the temporality of Haynes's queer artifice. Drawing upon the stillness (not stagnancy) of the domestic drama, he constructs a "queerness as an inappropriate relation to [stagnant] hetero temporal norms, a failure or disinclination to live up to the time-patterns of the straight world" (259).

The queering of corporeality and temporality in *Safe* and *Far from Heaven*, films drawing upon straight/artificial conventions of the past and dealing with (for the most part) straight characters, are instrumental in the "newness" of Queer Cinema. Certainly, though the films do not necessarily discuss "gay issues," they may have just as much a place within the canon of the New Queer Cinema as any queer film with queer themes.

### The Contexts of *Safe* and *Far from Heaven*

For a full synopsis of *Safe*, see Appendix A.

For a full synopsis of *Far from Heaven*, see Appendix B.

In the analyses of these two films, which one may denote as period films, it is important to consider the cultural context within which each takes place. The conventions present in the films are reflective of the times in which they take place, not for the sake of making commentary about those times gone by per se, but instead for the sake of removing the audience from the immediate world momentarily in order to engage more critically yet less cynically. *Far from Heaven*, in 1957 Connecticut, takes place amidst the post-World War II complacency of America under the administration of Dwight Eisenhower. In white suburbia, the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s remained a distant dream of the future, nor had modern feminism taken root. Even in the Yankee town of Hartford, desegregation was merely condescension; as one of the film's miserly socialites puts it, "Not that I'm against integration, mind you. I do believe it is the Christian thing to do." Artificial conventions like the protagonist's lavish parties and celebratory magazine spreads make this complacency apparent; later, artifice works to expose the looming need for this world to change.

In *Safe*, one sees a world thirty years later: in 1987 in California's San Fernando

Valley. Here is a world of excessive materialism accompanied by political conservatism, the Reagan years most painfully memorable from the widespread rise of AIDS. Though feminism and multiculturalism have earned their places in society since the world of *Far from Heaven*, condescending prejudices still manifest in the bland shallowness of this world. In terms of artifice, Roddy Reid (1998) writes: "*Safe* makes the flat characters and environments flatter while still heightening, as it were, the local pastels" (34). Haynes thus portrays this world—1980s suburban California—from an intentionally shallow and false perspective, decidedly more ironic than his truly beautiful aesthetic portrayal of 1950s New England.

Keeping with the conventions of the periods in which his films take place, Haynes clearly borrows liberally from the filmic conventions associated with the periods as well. From its title onward, *Far from Heaven* is reminiscent of German-born director Douglas Sirk's film *All that Heaven Allows* (1956), along with his *Written on the Wind* (1956) and Imitation of Life (1957). Haynes imitates life in such a deliberate but genuine way by paying homage to Sirk, possibly, because of what critic Laura Mulvey calls Sirk's creation of "a cinema in which the screen itself speaks more articulately than its protagonists, tongue-tied by the conventions of their fictional setting, the powers of censorship in Hollywood at the time, and the norms of the family melodrama genre" ("Liner Notes"). Haynes draws upon this Sirkian model because of its sincerity, where people are concerned, posed within conventional artificiality where their society is concerned: that is, the people seem real while their surroundings do not. Now that these restrictions are not always present in modern filmmaking, Haynes has intentionally readopted them (for the most part) in order to make a queer transformation of the genre by subverting the audience's normative expectations concerning desire, gender and identity.

*Safe* is less a direct homage to a particular auteur or genre than it is a convergence of subgenres and styles in order to portray the bland artificiality of the 1980s most effectively. The film's central themes and conventions are reminiscent of the Disease-of-the-Week TV movies of the 1970s and 1980s, most notably *The Boy in the Plastic Bubble* (1975), but some of the film's themes even draw upon the "fight against death" conventions of mainstream motion pictures like Terms of Endearment (1983) or *Beaches* (1988). Haynes has fused these "realist" women's melodramas with a sensibility reminiscent of Alfred Hitchcock or Stanley Kubrick—an eerie science-fiction film, with its long-shot severity and blandness. Thus the camp here is more of an ironic nature than the camp in *Far from Heaven*—the truly queer juxtaposition of genres signals that these artifices are more outwardly critical of the world in question, far less beautiful than 1950s Connecticut and far more immediate in the past.

Both films pay homage to style: *Safe*, an experimental fusion of the women's film and the "looming disease" sci-fi; *Far from Heaven*, an embodiment of the women's melodrama in all its beauty and splendor. Still, the serious homage may evoke an audience with a sensibility appreciative of camp to find subtle humor in the exposition of age-old conventions. Those conventions are both textual and aesthetic, deeply associated with both the era in which each film takes place and the style with which each film is composed. Among the elements of camp that Haynes employs (in addition to the obvious elements of heightened sight and sound) are the gestures and stilted language that its characters use, the over-dramatized difficulties that the characters face, the stock characters that the audience encounters, and finally the expectations that the audience develops based upon these conventions. Examining these artificial (truly campy) aspects of the films critically may allow for a clearer understanding of the genuine messages and subversions that Haynes has so carefully crafted.

## Artificial Language and Gesture

One may begin an analysis of the different aspects of camp in these films by examining the artificial language and gestures that the characters use. The protagonists are recognizable quite early as signifiers of the repressed woman, what Laura Mulvey (1976) describes as a castrated version of man whose desires are subjugated to her roles as wife and mother (439). *Far from Heaven*'s protagonist, Cathy Whitaker, has much in common with *Safe*'s Carol White—their intriguingly similar names, their roles as wife and mother (in the case of Carol, stepmother), and even the actress who portrays them (Julianne Moore, in two award-winning and critically-acclaimed performances). Though their language and gestures differ in regard to style, the performances both work to signify similar oppressive constraints that women face.

*Far from Heaven*'s Cathy is, for the most part, eloquent and charming, a kind-hearted socialite whose intentions are innocent. She sweeps in and out of rooms with her perfect, brightly colored dresses, with a constant smile on her face. She laughs pleasantly and her voice is warm and engaging. She is also a nice liberal: when a friend quips about her theatrical endeavors in her college days, Cathy muses, "Oh, for Heaven's sake! Let's go inside before Joe McCarthy comes driving by!" She is affectionate, extending her arm to a perfect stranger—indeed, a "*Negro*" stranger— her gardener whom she had mistaken as an intruder in her yard. Still, she is disciplined and authoritative with her subservient children and her black maid, giving gentle but firm orders concerning daily tasks. She upholds everything that is expected of her as a middle-class white woman in the suburbs with a perfect home

and a perfect family. When she and her husband, Frank, miss a dinner date because Frank has been arrested for public intoxication, Cathy calls her friends up with a marvelous, gendered excuse: "Frank says it was the bumper that got hit, but you know me—I can't tell the difference!"

In contrast to Cathy, *Safe*'s Carol is bland and disengaged in her language and gestures. Still, the sensibility behind the performance is as exaggerated and "queer" as Cathy's. Carol is pretty and unthreatening, seemingly the quintessential "trophy wife" to the man who would rather his wife be seen and not necessarily heard. She is not eloquent and does not have much to say. In the beginning of the film, when she and her husband have ordered a new set of furniture for their living room, she murmurs to the movers, "We were thinking with the coming out part here on the wall," the pitch of her voice perpetually rising at the end of every sentence, as to imply that she is never quite sure of anything she tries to say. She is stiff and straight-faced during her weekly aerobics classes with her fellow suburban housewives, who lament that she never sweats. She is polite to her Mexican maid, taking the time to speak to her in Spanish: "Fulvia, can you pour me some milk? Some leche?" In fact, she is always polite, yet never quite as eloquent as she seems to wish of herself. When visiting the dry cleaner's, she engages in the following dialogue, polite yet awkward and dryly funny:

Carol:      How's your little girl?
Laundress:  She's fine.
Carol:      Oh, she's so cute.
Laundress:  Oh, thank you!
Carol:      Okay, bye.

Both Cathy and Carol live routine, day-to-day lives: Haynes uses exaggerated camp to underscore their compliance to those routine norms, whether the exaggeration be "more" or "less." In a stark contrast, the men in their lives do not have the constraints of stilted dialogue or gesture. *Heaven*'s character of Frank is indeed a repressed homosexual, so to say that he suffers no constraints is problematic; however, in strict terms of his language and gestures, the stilted artificiality is not as obvious with him or with any of the male characters to the degree that it is with the women. Frank repeatedly lashes out in anger, using expletives like "fuck" and "goddamn," to the dismay of Cathy, who, when her son laments, "Aw, geez," at the thought of being sent to bed, firmly responds, "That is not the kind of language we use in this house. Now march." Although Frank's performative compliance to "masculine" aggression suggests the presence of societal expectations for both sexes, his and the other males' language gestures are often incongruent with the stilted

artificiality of the women's world. At the Whitakers' yearly autumn soiree, Frank gets heavily intoxicated and, when another man in the room makes a sexually suggestive comment about Cathy's beauty (again, lacking stiltedness), Frank, legs crossed and in an outrageous campy tone, quips: "It's all smoke and mirrors, fellas, that's all it is. You should see her without her face on!" Cathy, once again upholding her expected role as a woman, smiles and responds, "He's absolutely right. We ladies are never what we appear, and every girl has her secrets."

Raymond, Cathy's black gardener and, later, her confidante, is certainly not free of any racial constraints in this 1957 world. However, he still seems to be free of the constraints where emotional expression is concerned that Haynes's female characters face. When the two go on an outing on a beautiful fall day, Cathy is escaping her household after a night of fighting in which Frank slapped her. Noticing her bruise, Raymond candidly engages in the following dialogue, prompting Cathy to disarm herself momentarily:

Raymond:  *Did he cause that?*
Cathy:    *He didn't mean to strike me*
Raymond:  *I'm so sorry.*
Cathy:    N*o, heaven knows we all have our troubles. I'm sure you yourself—*
Raymond:  *What?*
Cathy:    *I don't know. Ever since running into you at the exhibition, I kept wondering what it must be like to be the only one in the room—colored, or whatever it was—how that might possibly feel. I'm sure I've never…*
Raymond:  *Well, I suppose you sort of grow accustomed to it over time. I mean don't get me wrong, there is a world, even here in Hartford, where everybody does indeed look like me. The trouble is very few people ever leave that world.*

Raymond appeals to the emotions of someone he barely knows—something that Haynes's female characters are too constrained to do. Still, he remains polite, complying with his role as the subservient black man. Later that same afternoon, when he addresses her as "Mrs. Whitaker," Cathy replies in true camp fashion (this time with a more emotional melodramatic punch): "Oh, Mrs. Whitaker sounds so formal. Would you—ask me to dance?" In all their interactions, the candidness of their dialogue, instigated by the man, prompts Cathy's momentary disclosure and the performance of her true character. Indeed, she still speaks cautiously, with high manner, thus displaying her genuine sensitivity on the subject matter. It is not until later, toward the film's conclusion, when she entreats Raymond with tears in her eyes: "Please, call me Cathy." These familiar camp conventions may make an audience realize perhaps the last thing they expected: that her artificiality is her inner

essence—beautiful yet stilted. Haynes shows the audience this in order to invite them to reexamine what they expected all along.

Similarly, the male characters in *Safe* are markedly less cautious, but here, hypocrisy is much more apparent. Carol's husband, Greg, talks rather openly about sex and his displeasure with her when she falls ill and refrains from sleeping with him. Greg's male friends (Carol has none) are also candid in their suburban way. One evening at a dinner date, one man tells a rather graphic joke about a vibrator, interestingly refraining from using an expletive: "We just couldn't get the darn thing out!" Similarly, when Greg's son, Rory, writes a verbally graphic essay about black and Chicano gangs in L.A., complete with violent details, Greg affirms, "Good job, Ror." When Carol inquires on why the story has to be so gory, Rory responds, "Gory? That's how it really is! God!" to which Greg quickly responds, "Hey, hey, watch it."

Later, when Carol has traveled to Wrenwood, the retreat for people exhibiting her elusive ailments, she encounters Peter Dunning, the self-help guru who contends that physical illness is due to self-loathing. During her stay, the audience overhears Peter, who has AIDS (but curiously shows no symptoms), describing a recurring dream to his followers—indeed, one cannot ignore the cult-like characteristics of the Wrenwood community—to crystallize his self-help mantra:

> Suddenly, all I see all over my hands and legs are black horrible sores. All over me—oozing. And at first I'm horrified, and I'm full of self-pity and anger, I'm enraged, until suddenly—I look down again and I realize that they aren't sores at all, but these black pansies, these sort of wilted black pansies that I used to pick when I was a child. So in my dream I remember that, and as I pick up each wilted flower, they would just instantly bloom into beautiful bouquets. Incredible story.

Peter is hugely rich from the profit he makes from the patients at Wrenwood, many of whom continue to see a decline in health. He is excessively gregarious and emphatic—indeed, campy—offering false hope and, in some ways, destructive paths of self-liberation. In contrast, Carol never curses, never lies, never misleads: she only speaks plainly and inarticulately about what she sees in her immediate world. The hypocrisy of the men through their language is severe in this film; Carol is not even capable of being a hypocrite under the constraints of her stilted and artificial performance of language and gestures, since she is so deeply subject to them.

### Artificial Drama and Crisis

Another way in which the artificiality of these films may become worthy of analysis concerns the ways in which the characters and other filmic devices deal with

the dramas and dilemmas, both miniscule and major. *Heaven*'s Cathy is a cautious character, striving to make ugly things beautiful and to live in the secrecy of her husband's and of her own desires. Life is stable, still, domestic. During an interview with the *Weekly Gazette*, a local women's magazine, Cathy glimpses a black man (who turns out to be Raymond) walking near her house, midday. "Oh, my goodness!" she exclaims, "Would you excuse me? I think there's someone in my yard!" The music becomes mysterious and dissonant, as the elderly woman interviewing Cathy suggests, "Oh, my word, Mrs. Whitaker! Perhaps you should call the police!" This heightened drama is both campy satire and serious expression— Cathy truly is a protective wife and mother, and her dramatic reaction to the displacement of normality reflects what the audience may see in themselves, no matter how liberal one may believe oneself to be. Haynes's presentation of this crisis in such a heightened way makes the audience call into question the mechanisms and reasons by which one makes those judgments and has those dramatic reactions.

When Cathy begins to face more important crises, the artifice heightens even more, further reflecting a genuine representation of the more inclusive sentiments held by Haynes's audience. When she first finds Frank in the arms of another man, she throws the dinner plate she has meant to bring him and runs, completely losing her ability to respond articulately and reasonably, a stark contrast to what the audience has learned about her up until this point in the film. The camera angles are severe, the music is percussive and violent, and Cathy looks tremendously lost as the elevator doors enclose her into a claustrophobic space she must enter before she can escape. Later, when she and her husband attend a "reparative" sexual therapy session and Frank shouts that he just wants to "get the whole fucking thing over with," her face melts into sheer horror, as though such a linguistic anomaly has represented a much larger rift in the world she has known until this moment. Her sincerely moving reaction prompts Frank to embrace her, a striking visual scene complete with the autumnal leaves swirling around them as they both feel woeful and helpless. This heightened drama is indicative of what one may truly feel in this sort of crisis, even at the expression of something as relatively harmless as the word "fuck" is in contemporary film. Once again, the style and theatricality forces the audience to question why this anomaly has been so startling and what that means about their expectations in the first place.

*Safe* offers more examples of its filmic reaction to crisis. In the spirit of both the disease movies and the sci-fi thrillers it draws upon, there is more danger looming just out of the periphery. In fact, the entire film has an eerily low buzz hovering over the rest of the soundtrack, as if to signal impending peril. Furthermore, some of the film's crises, including the first real conflict that the film presents, unfold in a rather

campy manner. As Carol returns home from a day of errands, she calls out to Fulvia to inquire if there were any calls on the "telefono." Fulvia does not answer. The camera angle remains steady as she walks through her empty house. As she walks into the doorway of her living room, the audience sees her face melt into horror as she mutters, "Oh, my God." What on earth has happened? the audience wonders. The next shot is of two black couches. "We did not order black!" Carol complains. "This is—this—this—this is not what we ordered! I don't believe this," as she approaches the telephone, apparently to call the furniture emergency hotline. While this is, again, campy and dryly satiric, one must wonder how dull a life like this must be to evoke such an extreme reaction. In effect, once again, the viewer must look critically at this filmic world as a whole and how it applies to the world in which the viewer lives. How dire is excessive materialism in an age of illness, AIDS, violence, danger?

Carol encounters several more crises before and after her journey to Wrenwood. She begins to suffer from slight ailments including violent fits of coughing on the freeway, causing her to seek shelter from the fumes in a parking garage. When she reluctantly decides to change her hairstyle and get a perm, the overblown problem of deciding upon a hairstyle becomes yet more dramatic when she has an allergic reaction to the chemicals used for the perm. When her ailments cause her to disengage from sexual activity with her husband, who in effect lashes out in anger, she sits in melancholy silence in her living room, holding a framed photo of Greg, Rory and herself. The next morning, when she apologizes to her husband, he embraces her. As she weeps and falls into his arms, she begins to shake and vomit all over his shirt, apparently reacting to the multitude of aerosol spray products Greg has immersed himself in before his day at the office. Finally, in the most extravagant episode of all—arguably the campiest—Carol once again visits the dry cleaner's, who is routinely fumigating the premises. Carol collapses and goes into a seizure, and the paramedics rush her to the hospital. It is here that she decides, much as the women of the familiar TV movies-of-the-week, to *take control of her life* and move to the sterile retreat at Wrenwood. This convention of dealing with her problem is familiar, and once again forces the viewer to examine the protagonist making the decision to do something with her life that is unsure and, possibly, unsafe.

## Artificial Conventions: Stock Characters

A third way in which one may examine the artificiality of the conventions in these films is through a discussion of the familiarity of the "stock" supporting characters. The stock supporting character represents something more accessibly recognizable than the more complex (albeit, in the case of *Safe*, outwardly bland) protagonist. This does not imply that Haynes fails to write richness into any of his

characters in terms of an actor's opportunity to showcase craftsmanship. In short, the more obvious roles that the stock characters represent make an analysis of the films' artifices more effective in terms of the films' broader societal implications.

Both in *Heaven* and in *Safe*, Haynes has included characters familiar to anyone acquainted with women's films. Both films have a collection of "townspeople" offering their commentary on various issues at hand. In *Heaven*, the viewer often catches a glimpse of the white 1950s American bourgeoisie chattering about, for instance, their preference of classical art to modern art or their views on racial integration. In *Safe*, these extra characters mostly appear as the various doctors she sees, who all blame her illness on her diet or "stressful" lifestyle, or as other residents at Wrenwood, where they share their experiences and provide anecdotes or "lessons" in which they are loquacious, or at least more open and articulate than Carol, about their illnesses. Quite literally, these characters sing, chant and meditate about their optimism (the camp and satire here appear most explicit when they collectively break into a folk-tune called "Give Yourself to Love") as Carol simply looks on. These manifestations of the Greek chorus are ultimately at odds with the main characters—Cathy prefers modern art and her heart bleeds for Negroes; Carol knows she is sick but cannot explain herself when it comes to her illness.

The same opposition that Cathy and Carol feel from the minor characters they feel from their supposedly closer female friends—indeed, the familiar and conventional "best friend" characters. Early in *Heaven*, Cathy sits with her lady friends, drinking daiquiris, gossiping about their husbands' sex drives (while, keeping true to their stilted dialogues in the strict style of the 1950s melodrama, never saying the word "sex"). Elle, the social ringleader and Cathy's best friend, quips about a friend of hers whose husband insists on sex "every night of the week. And—three more times on the weekend." She adds, "Can you imagine?" as the other ladies laugh under the influence of their daiquiris, with the exception of Cathy, who simply smiles and looks down. Her gay husband certainly does not want to consummate their love eight times a week. Her relationship with Elle (played perfectly by Patricia Clarkson, truly a camp icon in her own right) remains strained and becomes more so as the secrets of her unraveling marriage become unbearable, especially when she seeks solace in the black gardener. Elle, who is possibly not as young and certainly not as hip as Cathy, seems judgmental of Cathy's choices, but more importantly to her, it seems, she is hurt to have been excluded from Cathy's secrecy. This familiar convention of the [campy] best friend ultimately further isolates Cathy—in Elle's eyes, Cathy has not only made bad choices but has neglected their friendship in doing so. This puts Cathy at further opposition to the world around her and the possibility that she may make her own choices.

Similarly, Carol finds herself at odds with her friends. As she grows more symptomatic, inquiring friends begin to interrogate her version of the "best friend," fellow suburbanite Linda: "I heard she was seeing a psychiatrist." "Is she okay? Her skin is sort of—well, I mean, her hair is really cute, but her skin…" Linda, unaware of Carol's health issues, is now somewhat at odds with her best friend, obviously perturbed that she does not have an informed response to the other ladies. Later, when Carol begins investigating her own symptoms, she rants to Linda over lunch about society's lack of awareness where harmful chemical are concerned, to which Linda sympathetically but blandly replies, "Yeah." This "best friend" is yet more stylized satire of the shallow 1980s on Haynes's part—Linda cannot offer anything but "Yeah." to her best friend's severe and serious concern about the fate of society. At Wrenwood, Carol feels for the first time quite literally alone, but this may be a realization that she has been alone all along, reflecting upon the artificiality of her past relationships. As time goes on, she befriends Chris, a flamboyant (possibly gay) fellow resident with whom she takes a turn making dinner for the other residents. He orchestrates a birthday surprise for her at the film's conclusion, at which she feels compelled to thank everyone for helping her through a rough time and, then, deliver a "speech" of sorts:

> I don't know what I'm saying, it's just that I really hated myself before I came here, and um, so I'm trying to see myself hopefully, um, more as I am, more, um, more positive like seeing the pluses. Like I think it's slowly opening up people's minds, like educating and AIDS and other types of diseases, 'cause, 'cause… and it is a disease, 'cause it's out there and we just have to be more aware of it, um… with make… people aware of it and, um, even ourselves, like um, going… reading labels and going into buildings, it's…

Though disjoined and pitiful, her stammering serves as a notable indicator that this new friend, whether gay or not, has inspired her to have, if not a shift in values, then at least a slight opening toward a different and more inclusive sensibility. She remains in poor health, and the irony of her thanking the other Wrenwoodites for helping her puts her at further opposition to them, with their forced optimism and condescending connectivity with one another, but with whom she will most likely choose to commune as long as her health continues to decline. The birthday surprise from the campy stock character of Chris is, indeed, far more meaningful than any artificial self-help rhetoric the rest of them have thus far condescended to use with her.

## Expectations and Implications

Cathy and Carol perform restrictive language and gesture discourses integral to who they are in their own respective worlds. The artificial ways in which they deal with their artificially dramatic crises manifest later when they must deal with truly dire situations. Finally, the conventional characters that they encounter are ones with which they eventually find themselves at odds. The conventional stock characters symbolize the larger societal themes with which Cathy and Carol truly find themselves at odds. This opposition (difference) partly evokes Laura Mulvey's (1976) assertion that, in traditional film, "ultimately, the meaning of woman is sexual difference" (444). However, Haynes has transformed the traditional restrictions that these films otherwise would have reinscribed by defining these women not by sexual difference, but by difference. Indeed, Cathy and Carol are at odds with most of their respective worlds in the end. Carol's only remaining relationship seems to be with a man who is likely gay, while Cathy's only remaining relationship seems to be the tenuous one with her black maid—the two of them, forging together into the future (queer) stillness of the highly stylized home. Neither protagonist has broken free of her respective conventions, because this is not possible. Instead, Haynes has stripped each character of choices where her fantasies are concerned— whether they be material (Carol's pastel, chemically dependent former world), romantic (Cathy's longing for love from a man) or "self-actualizing" (Carol's search for a cure; Cathy's search for perfection). Judith Butler describes these fantasies as being "construed not as a set of projections on an internal screen but as part of a human relationality itself" (*Undoing Gender* 15). The internal screen, here, is indeed a quite external screen: the screen onto which the film is projected, stylized, satiric and campy with a queer sensibility. Haynes has made the projections literal so that one may more accessibly examine those very parts of human relationality—those of gender, those of normative constructions. These women threaten patriarchy and misogyny as much as the "queer" individual in the traditional sense, because each character symbolizes a type of stylized incongruence out of synch with the patriarchy: in *Safe*, presented as ironic satire; in *Far from Heaven*, as a deeply melodramatic (and thus indeed campy) conflict of inner desire and outer (artificial) expression.

Laura Mulvey's description of the female filmic icon as a "castrated image" is one that, she states, has been the object of oppression in traditional film. In reacting to the castrated woman, Mulvey states, man can view the woman as a fetish (a scopophilic/empowering mode), or by "investigating the woman, demystifying her mystery" (444), (a voyeuristic/ego-preserving mode). Though Haynes does not allow the women to attain their fantasies, he succeeds in disallowing the audience to

oppress them (or, possibly more importantly, in inviting the audience to seek their own liberation) by eliminating the opportunity for either character to become the viewer's fetish or target of investigation in his stylized, imagined worlds. In *Safe*, Haynes defetishises Carol—corporeally, temporally and stylistically—and never allows the audience a chance to demystify her. Thus the expectation that the viewer has to find out the source of her illness or for her to find a cure would defeat the purpose of Haynes's queer themes. Such a conventional and expected solution would be, in essence, Haynes's consent for the audience to ignore the mechanisms the rest of the film had called into question.

Similarly, in *Far from Heaven*, Haynes strips all men (former sources of fantasy/desire) from Cathy's life—in the end, she is neither a fetish nor a mystery to be demystified. Not only has Haynes reversed the filmic tradition of woman as the man's source of desire, he has also disallowed the woman from fulfilling her desires in order to call into question all of those expectations relating to desire and fulfillment. Cathy remains mostly in the corporeal, temporal and stylistic elements she began in, differing only in her dress: instead of the full-skirted, bright-colored dresses at the film's introduction, she now wears a slim tweed suit, signaling a subtle openness toward the future. Against the viewer's expectations, she does not run away with her black gardener, nor does she come to terms with her husband's dalliances.

In short, Haynes strips Cathy and Carol of their choices in the end—a deviation from convention in women's pictures—to liberate them from normative and restrictive expectations that would have simplified their complexities and diminished their value as citizens of the world. The camp in each film exaggerates and stylizes the different types of excess that each character wants to attain—the cure, the perfect marriage—and in effect invites audiences to call into question exactly why those normative restrictions have cultivated their expectations in terms of film and, possibly, in terms of real life.

## Conclusion

Todd Haynes has constructed two women's films in which he incorporates elements that queer the conventions upon which they draw, not only concerning the corporeal and temporal, as past studies have explored, but also the artificial. Through deliberate style, satire and camp, he has drawn upon former filmic conventions in order to offer representations of the problems associated with issues such as gender normativity, the social construction of desire, and compulsory heterosexuality—not for gays, lesbians or transgender individuals, but for heterosexual women. His women's films denote the true "newness" in queer cinema, in which "the queer present negotiates with the past, knowing full well that the future is at stake" (Rich 22).

As fellow gay filmmaker John Cameron Mitchell described queer cinema, "part of what makes it queer is understanding that this represents that" (*Fabulous!*). Todd Haynes has crafted his artificial, campy and stylized films to represent a restrictive heterosexual world of repressed women, subjugating them to restrictive norms within their own filmic worlds while disallowing them from being diminished or simplified in the eyes of the audience. Thus, remarkably, Haynes has exhibited the use of a queer mode of representation in a more inclusive and genuine fashion than one would find in simple comedic parody. Haynes has used artifice to provoke his audiences, queer and straight alike, to consider straight issues from a queer perspective. Thus he has exhibited that one need not view a film as "camp" in and of itself; instead, camp may be but a device to set forth queer cultural messages. As the New Queer Cinema seeks to address present issues by dealing with past conventions, one may take a valuable and ultimately more inclusive lesson from Todd Haynes and his use of a truly queer tradition: camp, at times funny, at times deeply sad and moving, and always genuine.

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## Appendix A

**Synopsis of *Safe* (1995)**

Set in California's San Fernando Valley in 1987, the eerily slow-moving film opens as Carol White (Julianne Moore) and her husband Greg (Xander Berkeley) return to their suburban mansion from a social gathering. Carol blankly complies with Greg's sexual desires, but she complains of a persistent sneeze and chill.

Carol lives a pedestrian life with many suburban luxuries: she attends aerobics class with other housewives, including her friend Linda (Susan Norman), who muse that Carol is so lucky since she never sweats during a workout. Carol's daily routine comes to a halt one day when she discovers that the new couches she had ordered did not match the rest of her living room. She argues with the furniture company and settles the error.

Mysteriously, Carol's health begins to decline steadily. She first takes serious notice when she cannot breathe while driving on the highway, apparently due to the exhaust fumes from surrounding cars. She begins suffering from other ailments, including nosebleeds, vomiting, and seizures. Though her husband and doctors tell her that her condition is stress-related, Carol is convinced that the issue lies elsewhere. She takes notice of a flyer that advertises classes and workshops on "environmental illness," and she begins to attend meetings. She becomes educated about the dangers of artificial "toxins" that surround her in everyday life. She relays the information to Greg and he begins to attend the meetings as well. Eventually, Cathy stops wearing makeup and perfume, wears a health mask, and carries an oxygen tank with her.

Carol attempts to continue her life as "normal," but on a trip to the dry cleaner's, she walks into a room that is being fumigated and falls into a violent seizure. She is taken to the hospital and the doctors continue to claim that her problems are psychiatric. However, during her stay at the hospital, she sees a commercial for Wrenwood, a new-age community for people who suffer from environmental illness.

Wrenwood proves to be a stark change from her suburban life in southern California. In the middle of the New Mexico desert, the community is a group of camp-like cabins and natural, alternative forms of food and clothing. Carol is greeted warmly by Claire (Kate McGregor-Stewart) and Susan (April Grace). They help orient her into the community, and the three attend an evening convocation, where Carol meets the program leader, Peter (Peter Friedman), a chemically sensitive man living with AIDS.

Later that evening, Carol settles herself into her cabin and breaks down into

tears. Claire, taking an evening walk, hears Carol and attempts to console her. She tells Carol that a positive attitude will heal her body, and she recalls when she first moved to Wrenwood. She says that she helped heal herself by sitting in her room, gazing at herself in the mirror, and telling herself, "I love you."

Weeks pass, and Carol's health continues to decline. She inquires Peter about moving into a more chemically-free area of the community. She receives indefinite answers from him as her health declines even more. Later, when one of the residents succumbs to his illness and passes away, Claire informs Carol that she can move into his former room: a small, porcelain-lined cell that eerily resembles an igloo. Later, Carol befriends Chris (James LeGros), an ambiguous young man who is eager and friendly with her when they both sign up to prepare dinner for the community on the same evening. By coincidence, this evening is also Carol's birthday, and Chris leads the residents in a surprise celebration for her after dinner. Speechless, Carol stammers to convey her gratitude and express the importance of the values they learn at the Wrenwood community. Chris accompanies Carol home later that evening, and she enters her room. She gazes at herself in the mirror. The film closes as Carol stares at herself, pale, weak, spotted with lesions, muttering "I.. I love you. I really love you."

## Appendix B

### Synopsis of *Far from Heaven* (2002)

The film opens against the richly colored backdrop of autumnal New England. Hartford, 1957: Cathy Whitaker (Julianne Moore) runs errands, good-mannered children in tote, in her sensible and handsome station wagon. In her full, bell-shaped, colorful dress, she is greeted at her home by her dutiful and grounded maid, Sybil (Viola Davis). This evening Cathy plans to attend a social gathering with her husband, Frank (Dennis Quaid), an ad executive at the successful Magnatech, Inc. When Frank does not arrive home from work on time, Cathy is concerned when she receives a call from the police station informing her that her husband has been taken in due to public intoxication. Later, she lies to her friends about their absence at the party, attributing it to a minor car accident.

The next morning, Cathy is engaging in an interview for a local women's magazine, showing off the home and family of "Mr. and Mrs. Magnatech." The interview is interrupted when she catches a glimpse of a black man in her back yard. She confronts him but learns that he is Raymond Deagan (Dennis Haysbert), the son of her gardener who has recently passed away. Cathy apologizes for her rudeness and she and Raymond subsequently have an undeniable rapport. Later, the reporter, having witnessed the incident, describes Cathy as "dutiful a wife and mother as she is kind to Negroes." Meanwhile, Cathy and her best friend Eleanor Fine (Patricia Clarkson) plan their upcoming yearly soiree, to be held at the Whitaker residence.

Frank's behavior continues to become more peculiar, and one evening Cathy decides to pay Frank a visit at his office to take him a plate of dinner. When she arrives, she enters his office to find him in a loving embrace with another man. Shocked and speechless, Cathy flees and awaits Frank at home. When he arrives, he confesses that he has always had feelings of desire that he has tried to keep in secret. Still in shock, Cathy reluctantly suggests that he see a doctor, to which Frank agrees. Later, Cathy becomes supportive and even "proud" of Frank for his willingness to be honest and his attempt to redeem their marriage. Frank becomes increasingly uncomfortable and eventually tells Cathy not to involve herself in his personal matters.

The soiree is a success until Frank becomes far more intoxicated than anyone else and begins acting flamboyant and making mean-spirited jabs at Cathy. She diverts the attention elegantly, but afterward, she asks Frank why things must become "ugly." Drunken, he takes her in his arms and attempts to make love to her, but his passion eventually morphs into anger and he hits Cathy.

The next day, Eleanor pays Cathy a visit and sees the bump on Cathy's head.

Cathy lies about the cause of the bump, but Eleanor knows that Cathy is lying and reminds her that she is her "dearest and closest friend in the world." She reluctantly leaves but tells Cathy to call her, day or night, if she needs anything. Painfully, Cathy begins to cry. Raymond, who has come to work in her yard for the morning, sees her and offers to console her. She reluctantly agrees to go on an errand with him into the woods. Amidst the autumnal foliage, the two speak candidly and honestly. She admits that Frank hit her but did not mean to, and he speaks of the troubles of being "the only one in the room." They discuss parenthood—Raymond is himself a widower with a young daughter. He and Cathy continue their afternoon at a local pub, where they each have a drink and share a slow dance, though their chemistry remains platonic.

Meanwhile, the local town gossip, Mona Lauder (Celia Weston), has witnessed Cathy and Raymond on their outing and has begun to call the other women in town to spread the news. It travels quickly, and eventually Frank learns the news. He rushes home to confront Cathy. Alarmed, Cathy argues with Frank but eventually agrees to fire Raymond. The next day, she meets Raymond to tell him that they cannot be friends any longer, to which he responds with a great deal of sadness and disappointment.

Weeks pass. On Christmas morning, Cathy presents Frank with her gift to him: a romantic New Year in Miami. The two seem to be happier, but during their vacation, Frank meets a younger man and meets him clandestinely. Meanwhile in Hartford, Raymond's daughter falls victim to a group of young boys who have heard of Raymond's liaison with Cathy. The boys chase her into a dark alley and throw rocks at her head. When Cathy and Frank return to Hartford, they hear that a colored girl was attacked by a group of boys; Cathy is shocked while Frank brushes the news aside.

Again, weeks pass, and Cathy begins to feel a need to become involved in a civic cause. She phones the NAACP to inquire about volunteer work, but is interrupted by Frank, who has returned from work and begins to cry. He confesses that he is in love with the man he met in Miami and tells Cathy that he wants a divorce. Cathy simply walks away—though broken, she does not allow Frank to see her express any emotion. That evening, she confides everything in Eleanor, who opens Cathy sympathetically with welcoming arms. However, when Cathy mentions that the only person she could talk to all along about her marital problems was Raymond Deagan, Eleanor feels hurt and betrayed. She tells Cathy that even if nothing romantic happened between her and Raymond, Cathy certainly made it sound as though something had.

The next day, Sybil approaches Cathy, though she says it is not her "place," to

inform her that the colored girl who was attacked weeks earlier was Raymond Deagan's daughter. Distraught, Cathy rushes to Raymond's house to see him and the recovering young girl. Raymond suggests that they stay in the driveway, even though it is a cold February evening. He says that Hartford is no longer a welcoming place for him or his daughter, and he informs her that he is planning to move with his daughter to Baltimore in two short weeks. Crushed, Cathy divulges that she is to be single again and suggests that she may be able to pay him a visit in the future, claiming that no one would know them in Baltimore. Raymond, nearly in tears, tells Cathy that such a visit would not be such a good idea, and he beseeches her to live a long, full, happy life. Unable to look him in the face, Cathy leaves in tears.

March arrives. Cathy is now in a slimming tweed spring suit, preparing to run errands for the afternoon. She shares a brief moment of comfort with Sybil, who is now the only steadfast peer in Cathy's life. She leaves to run errands, but knowing that Raymond's train is scheduled to depart that afternoon, she is compelled to stop at the local train station. As she walks onto the platform, she catches a short glimpse of Raymond helping his daughter onto the train. The two meet eyes and gaze at each other for several seconds. Suddenly the train begins to pull away and Raymond resolutely bids her goodbye with a simple wave. Cathy waves longingly and watches the train travel into the distance as her eyes fill with tears. The music swells as she goes back to her station wagon, errands to be run. As she drives away, the camera slowly pans upward to capture a single Hawthorne bloom against the grey, rainy sky.

# Drama in Black Hollywood: An In-Group Analysis of Portrayals of African-American, Romantic Relationships in Modern Cinema

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*Portrayals of African-Americans in romantic, heterosexual relationships in modern cinema aid in demonstrating how racial stereotypes and gender roles are maintained through visual representation. It is important to understand the manner in which black males and females are depicted in these situations and the accuracy of such imagery. This study incorporates focus group interviews of African-American college students in which subjects observed film vignettes of African-Americans in conflict situations. Afterward, students discussed the implications of the observed material in response to open-ended questions revolving around issues of stereotyping and art versus reality. Findings of this study will be used to construct a questionnaire, which will be designed to measure the effects of media portrayals on the interaction between black males and females.*

Research suggests that feature films can have a significant influence on racial attitudes and race relations in the US. Studies show that young people gain much of their knowledge about other races and cultures, as well as their racial stereotypes, from leisure viewing of current films that focus on race-related issues (Loewen, 1991). The movie Crash, 2005 Oscar winner for best film, incorporates themes of gender and race into various vignettes throughout the film. One particular subplot

involves a middle-class, African-American couple that initially believes themselves to be successfully integrated into American society, but later find that their material wealth does not protect them from the realities of racism and racial conflict. The couple encounters conflict due to their race, and this experience indirectly leads to disagreement between the two. This verbal disagreement provides an example of how African-American men and women are portrayed as individuals and as couples in their interactions with one another as well as during conflicts in romantic relationships.

The goal of this study is to explore how accurately current films reflect the everyday experiences of African Americans, as opposed to more stereotyped portrayals. The author is also interested in learning more about how such portrayals influence both black and white audiences. Specifically, do stereotyped images of African Americans in films shape attitudes about African Americans among both black and white audience members? Or, are blacks more likely to recognize inaccuracies in films and reject them? This study focuses on whether current films accurately portray the African American experience, especially the interaction of couples in romantic relationships. Focus groups of African American students and their responses to three scenes in the movie Crash were conducted to achieve this goal. The author hopes to use results obtained to inform development of a questionnaire instrument for a future research project, a survey that will be used with a more diverse population of students to measure the influence of these images on expectations for individual-level behaviors and for interactions between African American men and women in romantic relationships.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

According to research, black women have historically been portrayed in highly stereotyped ways in the media, often as either domineering or powerless (Jones, 1998). For example, a reoccurring stereotype in films with black characters is one of the African-American woman as a 'background maternal figure' (Thaggert, 1998), or an authority figure who socially lacks power; thus, remaining in a power seeking position (Anderson, 1997). Furthermore, the auditory dimension of film is considered an important element of film theory in regard to women and minorities. While both black and white women function primarily in film as the passive object of the male gaze, a consistent lack of an auditory presence for black women in film has aided in defining societal standards of inequality amongst women based on race (Hobson, 2002).

Research has shown that black men are negatively stereotyped in Hollywood

films as well. While white males are most often depicted as smart and romantically desirable, blacks, as well as other ethnic minorities, are typically reduced to demeaning and secondary status. It is argued that such race and gender-specific imagery is functional: while it promotes race/gender stereotypes, it also serves to rationalize white male dominance as necessary to maintain the status quo (Spigner, 1994).

African-American males and females in film, in relation to one another, have been observed as representing the Sambo and Sapphire images respectively. As the Sambo represents the demasculinized Black man and the Sapphire image represents the masculinized black woman, research argues that these constructs have been perpetuated and have served destructive purposes in the images of the relationship between black men and women. These two stereotypical constructs that are unique to the representation of Blacks in film abnormalize the African-American man and woman, through constructing a Black gender identity that is the antithesis of traditional European gender identities (Applewhite, 2005).

**Research Question:** *How do African-American male and female young adults view appropriate gendered behavior in black, heterosexual relationships based on portrayals of behaviors of African Americans within film vignettes that are representative of those same types of relationships? Do African American young adults see a correspondence between film images and their own experiences, or are they critical and questioning of media images?*

## METHODOLOGY

This study is a qualitative study exploring how media influences the way young black adults expect black men and women to behave as individuals and in relationship to one another. Talk was centered on the movie Crash as students discussed racial and gender implications of film scenes and compared them with personal or second-hand experiences.

**Participants:** This study involved African-American college students (ages 18-25) from Truman State University (TSU) and from Washington University (Wash. U.) in St. Louis, MO. A total of 12 participants were used for the study; six participants were male and six were female. The students chosen were associates of the researcher, as the study used a sample of convenience. These students were recruited in a variety of ways including the 'facebook' Internet tool, an electronic database of students from various college institutions throughout the nation. A mass e-mail was sent to numerous African-American students from both of the aforementioned universities using the website http://www.facebook.com. In the letter (as in signed

consent forms), participants were informed that their participation would be voluntary and that they would have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Students were also informed that the study required videotaping, although all videotapes would be destroyed at the conclusion of the study. Furthermore, it was important to note that students were told that no personal identifiers would be used in the final analysis of the data.

**Focus Groups:** The purpose of the focus group interviews was to probe understanding of gender roles in African-American relationships as influenced by media images. The researcher asked questions such as 'What is happening in this scene?' and 'What is the major conflict in this vignette?' Students were encouraged to share their thoughts openly in order to produce opinion-based dialogue. Students were assigned to focus groups according to gender in order to decrease the rate at which individuals adjust their attitudes to fit socially accepted gender viewpoints. There were two focus groups per institution; one for males and another for females. The male focus group at Truman consisted of three members while the female group included four participants. The male focus group at Wash U. was comprised of three members, like the male focus group at Truman, while the female focus group only consisted of two participants.

**Film Segments:** Scene 1) The scene consisted of a disturbing vignette in which an African American couple is harassed by a Caucasian police officer. The officer is under the assumption that the wife is a Caucasian prostitute performing sexual favors for the husband, a prestigious film producer. The officer proceeds by inappropriately frisking the wife after forcing the couple to exit the vehicle; Scene 2) This scene depicts the same couple at home arguing about the traumatizing events of the evening. The intense argument touches upon issues of race, class, and gender; Scene 3) This scene features an uncomfortable conversation between the now-separated couple that takes place weeks after their previous encounter, in which the wife attempts to reconcile differences in the midst of still existing tension due to misunderstanding.

**Procedure:** Students who chose to participate were given three time slots (60-90 minutes each) from which they could choose to attend the Crash focus group. The focus groups at Truman were conducted in a University seminar room as scenes from the Crash DVD were displayed on a television monitor in the room. The focus groups at Wash U. were conducted inside of a classroom within an on-campus site used for the study. The scenes from the DVD were played on a laptop connected to large projector screen. After watching the three selected scenes from the film, students discussed their interpretations. Students were reminded that they must be respectful of others and were not allowed to interrupt peers during commentary.

Afterward, the researcher manually transcribed the dialogue of the video recordings from each discussion. Common themes which were discussed and attitudes towards the film were identified, analyzed and organized according to gender. These themes were then used to identify specific comments made by participants in different focus groups that illustrated major points regarding racial stereotypes and relationship issues from these scenes in Crash.

## RESULTS

All of the participants agreed that racial profiling does happen consistently. The males and females in the focus groups recognized that situations similar to the movie do happen often although they obviously should not. The rather quick responses, however, hinted that racial profiling was an every day reality for blacks, and black males specifically (much like the black man in the movie).

*Black Male Experiences with Racial Profiling*

Every black male who participated in the focus groups provided details of recent, first or secondhand accounts of racial profiling that they were forced to endure. One male, from Washington University focus group, informed the group that his family was convinced to move on four separate occasions (to a different state each time) because of constant harassment that his father faced from the police on a daily basis. He mentioned Florida, Nebraska, Missouri, and Georgia as all states where he and his family had lived and where they experienced a mass amount of police harassment. For example, this particular young male contended that his father would get stopped once a day on his way to work in one particular state.

*Black Female Experiences with Racial Profiling*

The black females did not provide information that would indicate that they themselves or other African-American females were victims (directly) of racial profiling. One young female, from the Truman State University focus group, emphasized that she and another male counterpart of hers would get stopped on a regular basis based on his appearance. Her statements would suggest that the male individual mentioned was being harassed because he was black in addition to other aspects of his appearance. Based on the information provided by all of the focus groups, this is the only time that a person gave descriptive information that would give a listener reason to believe that the victim even looked threatening.

*Status as a Factor in Black Male - Police Relations*

In giving the police (as an entire unit of officers from across the nation) the benefit of the doubt, we can assume that having 'wild hair' and wearing a wife beater, as the above participant described her friend, is suggestive of criminal behavior. Even if the police arrest every black male wearing a tank top or with wild hair (in the form of unkempt dreadlocks, braids, or another black hairstyle), the fact that young black male college students, and older black male professionals (i.e.- the aforementioned father of a subject for this study) receive the same treatment cannot be ignored.

*Black Male Knowledge of the Law and Their Rights*

As much as black males are harassed according to participants in this study, it only makes sense that black males know so much, offhand, about the law and their rights as individuals. There is no information in this study in which I requested the majors or area of study for each student. There is also no information that would show the professions of those with close ties with the participants; familial or otherwise. I mention this to emphasize that I do not wish to make assumptions about how the black males in the study know the facts about law enforcement that they do. The black males from both Truman State University and Washington University volunteered this information to their peers often during the focus groups. The topics covered included those more irrelevant to the movie (such as the rights of an individual who has marijuana on him/her when pulled over for a routine stop) as well as how to monitor police radar guns when pulled over for speeding.

*How Does This Knowledge Relate to How Black Males React in Conflict Situations?*

The more relevant laws are pertinent to this study because they provide reasoning for how the black males in this study suggested that they would act if they were in the place of the black husband in the first vignette that they viewed. For the most part, the black males stated that the first scene did not seem reasonable simply because cop cars, in large cities specifically, have dash cameras that monitor the activity that goes on during routine stops. In this sense, the officers would be hesitant to perform rather uncalled for and forceful actions as seen in the first vignette. One member of the male focus groups also pointed out the fact that police officers must give their badge number upon request. The same participant said that he would go to extent of the filing a counter-complaint about the officer when given this information if the officer inappropriately touched his wife. Other members of his particular focus group responded with opposing views that showed hesitation in readily believing that this approach would help them in dealing with the police. They

pointed out the notion that police lie and are, in many instances, corrupt. In all four focus groups, this theory was supported by commentary by its group members, who all said in some fashion that the police have a way of twisting the truth around. The main question, which came up in the male focus groups, was: 'What would you as the husband do in that situation (considering the fact that you know the truth does not always prevail)?' In other words, 'What would you do as a black male knowing that you may be still be placed in jail or beaten for voicing your opinion?' The black males who answered the question in both focus groups responded that they, as men, would have no other option but to go to jail in standing up for justice.

### Black Male Interpretations of the Husband

These findings, if indeed reflective of real life, suggest that all black men could possibly face a catch 22 situation every time they enter a vehicle and begin driving; voice their opinion when they feel that they are being treated unjustly and face the repercussions or walk away from the situation with less harm by swallowing their pride and accepting injustice. Many would argue that the black male in the movie swallows his pride too much when looking at the entire situation. With the second scene, many of the focus group participants interpreted the husband's actions as nonchalant. The husband in this scene asserts that there is nothing that he could have done in the first situation when the police officer molested his wife. He also discourages her from calling the police, his reasoning being that it will not assist in the situation. As much as both male focus groups criticized the husband for his choice in action from the first scene, they totally denounced him for his failure to act further in the second scene, especially given his position. All of the males agreed that there was more that he could and should have done to remedy the situation or at least calm his wife's emotion. Members of Truman State male focus group stated that he lacked the emotion that a black male, or any male, would have had in that position. One member commented that the husband did not act in accordance to usual depictions of black males in the media, as a whole, as 'bold and brave.' This indicates a connection between how black males see themselves and how they are portrayed, at least to some extent.

### Black Female Interpretations of the Wife

Black females, as a whole, agreed that they would be upset if they were placed in that position. Their statements indicated that they would want their husbands to be more upfront and protective than the husband seen in the movie. Nonetheless, the females seemed very critical of how the wife behaved in all three scenes, especially in how she communicated with her husband. The female focus groups contended that

the wife's actions did not accurately represent how a 'fully' black female would act in such situations. The African-American wife in the scene, whose on screen appearance gives the impression that she is of a mixed heritage, was evaluated rather harshly by her female counterparts. The female participants commented that it is her suggested privileged background that gives her the false idea that the system works, and in this case, in her favor. It was also suggested that her appearance, alone, grants her access to these privileges. One female participant from the Washington University group commented that African-American females with lighter skin are better off in society. This perceived ignorance is seemingly what leads the wife to talk to her husband in the manner that she does in reaction to the racial profiling incident. All of the females studied indicated that the wife was very disrespectful in her conversation with her husband during the second scene observed. In this scene, the wife implies that the husband speaks to the offending officer as if he is being subservient to him because he is white and persists in making impressions of the husband in a mock slave overtone. The females overwhelmingly agreed that this was outright disrespectful and not acceptable. They added that a fully black woman, raised in the black community, would never make a reference to slavery in an argument.

The black females did agree, however, that black women do often fulfill their stereotypical roles of being argumentative and assertive. However, there is a slight contrast in how black women and black men view the usage of this assertiveness. Black women contended that a black woman will often bring up arguments with their significant others, will state their opinions to their significant others, and will force conversation until an issue is resolved. Research has suggested that women, in general, tend to dominate and perpetuate arguments as a response to needing conflict resolution promptly (Hojjat, 2000). However, as mentioned earlier, the females (as well as some males) do not believe that a fully black woman would say some of the more disrespectful things she says, they definitely agree that the argument would take place and have the same overall tone.

Some black males, on the other hand, saw the black female as assertive, but within her own domain and without codependency. While black males at Truman State University openly recognized that black females are usually portrayed as loud, vociferous and quick to speak their mind, males from Washington University added that a "fully black" woman would react differently than the wife portrayed in Crash while in an argumentative situation. They implied that if the movie contained a normal black female, the second and third scenes would have never occurred because the wife would have probably been arrested from the onset of the sexual harassment for being belligerent with the officer for disrespecting her. Assuming that the second and third scenes had taken place under the same situational context, males from

Washington University stated that a black woman would have given the husband the silent treatment, a common strategy used in conflict resolution by females, in general. They added that black females would contact their friends and complain before even communicating with their significant others and proceed by making unreliable claims about further legal action they would take in response (ex. calling the NAACP and black rights activists such as Rev. Jesse Jackson, Rev. Al Sharpton, etc.).

On a different note, the focus groups felt that people from white backgrounds will talk the justice talk and will have the resources to walk it as well. The focus groups emphasized that Caucasian Americans have a better understanding and overall connection to the law that is stronger than that of African-Americans. This would imply that if the couple in the movie were white, then they would not have hesitated to inform the police officer that he is breaking the law. Ironically, all of the focus groups agreed that a non-black would have never been harassed in the same manner (if at all) given the same circumstances. While all of the focus groups agreed that blacks are often victimized like Crash portrays, they found it unbelievable that a white couple would face even close to the same consequences. More specifically, they found it even more unbelievable that a white woman would be groped or sexually harassed in that scenario.

In analyzing how students responded to the third and final scene, there is strong difference in opinion noticed between males and females. In this, the apology scene, students were asked to state their opinions about the wife's apology to the husband and, also, their opinions about the husband's reactions to the apology. Both black males and females were very critical of their own gender. Males viewed the husband as an uncaring individual who did not sympathize enough with his victimized wife. Black females, on the other hand, saw the wife, not as the victim, but an inconsiderate mate who did not think about her husband's thoughts and feelings. Females, overall, felt as if the wife brought the issue to him at the wrong time and place. Furthermore, they felt as if the apology was not heartfelt as she basically emphasized the fact that his dignity had been taken away. This was not a healthy approach according to the black women analyzed, as it was too direct in bringing up negative outcomes of the incident that harmed the husband's dignity further. Focus group reactions coincide with research that suggests that women will often be 'inauthentic' in conflict resolution in order to avoid negative repercussions from their mates (Neff & Harter, 2002). Males, on the other hand, felt as if the wife's apology was just and fair. The males did not only feel as though the husband should have done more to console his wife, but felt as though a male should be ready to discuss an important issue with his wife as the point of marriage is an unyielding partnership.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In order to understand how the students felt about the stereotypes in film themselves, it is necessary to examine the themes that emerged in accordance with the stereotypes that are present in the movie Crash. The stereotypical depictions indicative of powerlessness include the black male as subservient to the white male and the black female as a sex object. This particular section attempts to pick out important generalizations about key issues covered within the themes that emerged. Here, the focus is more on how blacks students view stereotypes in the context of society rather than in the movie Crash specifically.

### Black Male Subservience to White Male Dominance

The focus groups provided many statements that would indicate that police harassment against black males specifically is prevalent. The focus group participants (whether conscious of it or not) phrased their statements in a manner that would presume that police officers were all white. This is important as it supplies evidence that social authority in the form of law enforcement is associated with the white race (white male, specifically, as law enforcement is a male-dominated field). In one instance, a male from Wash U. felt it necessary to point out that an officer was black during one of his many vignettes about police harassment. As he pointed it out, he mentioned that he was extremely surprised that a black officer would treat him in such a manner.

Furthermore, despite his clean-cut appearance and the fact that he informed the officer (and the audience for that manner) of his career status, focus group respondents were not surprised that the police harassed him. They seemed more amazed at the fact that the black male in the movie held a prestigious position. All of the focus groups made it very clear that the male was not a regular black male because of a variety of factors, especially his status. Focus group participants stated that it was very rare to see black man with that level of power. Even with this presumed power in the form of money and career status, focus group members were pessimistic in believing that a black man's word would make a difference in a police station.

### Black Woman as Sex Object

The focus groups all agreed that a white couple would not have been harassed in the same manner if placed in a similar situation. Moreover, the focus groups contended that a white woman would not have been sexually exploited by a police officer. This would indicate an imbalance of power between white women and black

women, or a clear imbalance in respect allotted to white women and black women by higher authority such as law enforcement. Also, saying that the black woman in Crash is viewed as a sex object does not automatically mean that she is seen as 'sexually desirable.' Along the same lines, in saying that black women, as whole demographic group, are looked at as sexual objects does not mean that they are seen as more 'sexually desirable' than white women (Collins, 1996). Instead, the black woman in Crash is seen as a 'sex object' in the sense that she sexually exploited simply as a means to prove the white male cop's power. In the movie, the police officer's power exists in two dimensions – one that is overt and another that is covert. Overtly, the cop is ultimately in charge of the situation because he is the authority figure enforcing the laws as he is entitled to do so. The exploitative and abusive power is based on the fact that he is white and the man that he has pulled over is black. The black woman is not even seen as human, but a pawn in the white officer's attempt to damage the black male's character, in which he succeeds.

Black males and females view blacks, in general, similarly. All focus groups agreed that blacks are vulnerable to attack by society. Both males and females agreed that blacks are generally treated differently in society; more negatively. The ideas presented by the black stereotypes indicative of black powerlessness are suggested to be true. However, responses from blacks indicating their reactions in situations in which they are powerless suggest that blacks are aggressive as a means to combat what they see as injustice. Black stereotypes, the black male as aggressive and the black female as hyper-assertive, I formally suggested to be indications, not so much of power, but as reactions to lack of power.

*Black Male Aggression and Black Female Assertiveness*

Black male aggression was recognized by black males as a usual portrayal of black males in the media. Males, however, were very understanding of the consequences of what aggressive or stereotypical behavior would bring. Black males understood the difference between being aggressive, using violence to combat some type of harassment, and being determined to protect oneself against that harassment by knowing his/her rights. Furthermore black males indicated a need to be emotionally involved in situations in which their female counterparts were threatened. They were very adamant about putting their partners before themselves. They were not concerned with their own well-being or dignity, but rather responsive in making sure that their mate was safe and assuring them that they were not alone. In this sense, black males seem to think logically as opposed to instinct as the aggressive notion might suggest (Hoghen & Waterman, 2002).

Black female assertiveness was a trait identified by both black males and females

in their relationships with one another. Black males felt as though black females were very opinionated and were quick to voice these thoughts; black females suggested the same notions. The fact that females recognized this character trait, but understood the bounds of disrespect when talking with their significant other indicated signs of a healthy relationship (Shi, 2003). Black female respondents saw resolving conflict as a two-way street; one in which both parties would share responsibility for protecting the welfare of both partner, but also with the male as a respected and domineering individual, despite being a strong force herself individually. Black females, at least those participating in this study, want their husbands to be strong, forthright, 'stand-up' individuals just as they themselves would be when they feel as though they have to be for their own sake. This supports the idea that the media aids in forming subtle gender roles and expectations (Harris & Hill, 1998). Furthermore, black females and males seemed to be somewhat critical of their own gender and willing to sacrifice for their significant others. For example, males were willing to face incarceration for the sake of countering disrespect of women and females, but females understood why a black male would not take such drastic measures.

*Making Meaning: Real Life Relationships Between Black Males and Black Females*

Black males and females present traits that are suggestive of a deep loyalty for one another, although they are faced with obstacles not faced by other races. Black males and females seemed very protective of their significant others and placed a very strong emphasis on making logically smart decisions. The major question, however, is whether these attitudes are reflected in the ways that black males and females would actually react in real life situations (Clarkwest, 2006). One could argue that individuals viewing depictions of others in certain situations are more critical of their actions. When viewing a scenario, one may be more likely to analyze the implications of the character's actions more deeply as opposed to actually being put into that situation, themselves, in an abrupt manner. For example, black males said that they would be quick to comfort their significant others if placed in the position of the husband in Crash, however, they might not be in that state of mind after such a traumatizing event. Doing what is considered the right thing to do might not appear readily as the primary option. In this sense, this study measures young black individual's attitudes strictly in terms of how they perceive film images and not necessarily their real-life actions. Whether or not the actual interactions between black males and females would actually play out in a similar fashion as the African-American couple in Crash is not determinable from this study. However, notions of correct gender roles and responses to racial stereotypes presented in the media are suggested through this qualitative evidence.

*Black Views of Authenticity of Movie Images of Black Characters*

The students never mentioned the characters in the context of being the products of the imaginations of film directors and writers. When making comparisons between on screen characters and their ideals of 'regular' black people, students rarely made a distinction between the black people they knew and black people that they view in the media; whether it be in film, television, magazines, etc.. In other words, the actions of the black, on-screen characters were often analyzed based on whether or not they were indicative of what a black person would do in general; not in comparison to depictions of blacks in film that they had themselves seen. For example, many of the focus groups mentioned that the high status of the African-American husband in the story was a rare case for most African American males. Surprisingly, however, the focus groups never specified that black males of higher status were not seen in movies.

It important to take into account that questions asked of the participants never directly request opinions based on their viewing of other movies. Nonetheless, this study assumes that students will consider the scope of movies in general, which obviously covers other movies containing African-American characters. As the black characters do not accurately portray the lifestyle of the average person of black heritage according to the focus group students, they also do not mirror the usual representations of blacks in cinema based on research. The movie 'Crash' was critical in this manner as this can prompt conversation about the erroneousness of this film alone and of usual depictions. From this, it can be assumed either one of two things; either there was a silent recognition of a disconnect between how blacks are generally portrayed in movies and how black people act in real life; or, African-American students have been influenced by the media that they have seen to the point of interpreting these viewings as not only valid observations but, in a sense, reality itself. This infers that these thoughts have become conscious patterns of thinking. The latter is supported by the fact that people are affected by the images that they view. Research has shown that blacks are avid consumers of media and are more likely to interpret the media imagery they see as credible and real than other racial groups (Entman, 2000). This would mean that the responses offered by students used in the study may be highly influenced by previous imagery of blacks that they have seen. A problem presents itself when the majority of the images shown representing African-Americans are indeed negative.

Student responses support the idea that African-Americans are likely to interpret, even what they themselves label a somewhat unlikely occurrence in media, as possible or expected, as almost all focus groups stated, to a degree, that the attack presented in the movie was probable. As stereotypical images of black powerlessness

and reactions to the lack of power are often thrown about in the media, blacks see paralleling imagery as natural. While it safe to say that movies affect how blacks view themselves, whether or not these perceptions translate into affecting individual behavior is an unanswered question. The accuracy of media imagery (specifically) is somewhat decided as typical though blackness is agreeably not homogenous. In this sense, the idea of one correct notion of black behavior in accordance to film may be forever vague.

*Implications For Future Studies*

Future studies may use this data as the basis for quantitative research. Information on a number of research areas is present in this study including police harassment, black couples in conflict situations, black gender communication, etc. Quantitative research using more participants will be a better predictor for particular outcomes related to each of these areas. A couple of drawbacks to this study, however, have been observed. First, the researcher does not consider the sexual orientation of the participants. Sexual orientation is an important factor since there is strong possibility that people with different sexual orientations may view relationships and gender roles within those relationships differently. For example, a homosexual black student would have no previous experience in dealing with someone of the opposite sex in the relationship context, which could affect their commentary.

Lastly, the female focus groups used in this study were disadvantaged in the sense that their focus groups were moderated by a male facilitator. A main concern of this study, a concern for all conducted focus groups, was to make sure that group talk was monitored in an environment that promoted unbiased reactions and comments (Kruger, 1994), which entailed talk in a single-sex atmosphere. Although female focus groups did not have the privilege of talking in an all-female setting, it is important that the results are preliminary and are to be used for a quantitative and more comprehensive study.

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# APPENDIX

**AFTER SCENE 1**

*Describe the sequence of events in this scene.*

*Do the events that occur in this scene seem reasonable to you based on your own experiences?*

*Would this situation have been different if this couple was not black? If so, how?*

**AFTER SCENE 2**

*Do the reactions of both the male and the female in this scene appear to you to be typical of a black male and black female in a similar situation?*

*Would this scene have differed if the couple were not black?*

*Did the husband choose the right course of action?*

**AFTER SCENE 3**

*How would you describe the wife's apology?*

*How would you describe the husband's reaction to the wife's apology?*

**SUMMARY**

*Do the scenes we have just viewed say anything about the influences of outside factors upon the heterosexual, romantic relationships of black couples (specifically)?*

# Rhetorical Strategies for Media Use and College Voter Motivation in a Local Election

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*It is a maxim in education, media-communication, and political science disciplines, "College students do not vote." This study sought to discover which media and what kinds of media rhetoric motivated the college students who did vote for a proposed smoking ban in a rural Midwestern college city. The project investigated personal communication (including e-mail), television, radio, print media, and other types of communication for their effectiveness in motivating college students to vote. The research subjects were voluntary, self-selected, respondents to an online survey conducted using the student e-mail system at Truman State University.*

It is common knowledge that college students do not vote. At least they do not vote in numbers that reflect the level of voter participation of other age groups in the United States population. There are 40.7 million 18-29 year-old citizens in the United States, double the 20 million of 66-77 year-old citizens. 18-24 year-olds make up 13% of the population of eligible voters in the United States, and 18-29 year-olds make up 21% of the voting eligible population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004). These numbers are not just statistics; they represent potential voters, people whose voice is not yet being heard in proportion to their numbers.

While studies in various disciplines have examined American voter behavior, and

college age voter turnout, few studies have been conducted which have specifically investigated the motivational effects of different types of media on college students' voting behavior. This study examined college student voting motivation at the local level, by measuring the effects of different types of media rhetoric used to influence their decisions to vote on an issue that should have been important to them. Specifically, this study sought to discover the effects of the campaign rhetorical strategies used by the two opposing sides of the proposed citywide smoking ban.

The interest group Kirksville Breathe Easy, a local anti-smoking group whose members represented the ban proponent camp in this campaign, were the main activists involved in promoting the smoking ban. The anti-ban camp was led by a coalition of local businesspersons, the Kirksville Business Owners Who Believe in Freedom of Choice. It was necessary to examine the rhetorical strategies of the two opposing sides to determine their persuasive influence, because good rhetoric is believed to motivate the listeners to agreement and then to action.

The research sample was drawn from the student body of Truman State University, a liberal arts college. The focus of the project was the issue of a proposed smoking ban in the April 3, 2007 municipal election in Kirksville, Missouri.

The specific questions this study sought to answer were: 1) What effect did the use of various media have on the motivation of college students who voted on the ballot measure to ban smoking in public places? 2) What were the most effective rhetorical uses of those media? 3) Which media were the least rhetorically effective or were rhetorically ineffectual? and 4) What were students' responses to open-ended questions about what rhetorical media use most motivated them?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The U.S. Census bureau has documented the rate of voting participation by defined groups for many years. Some of the recent work with that data has been done by the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), at the University of Maryland's School of Public Policy. In the 1972 presidential election (the first time 18 year olds could vote in a presidential election), 49 percent of registered college students voted; only 37 percent of the non-college registered voters in the 18-24 year age group did so. The researchers found that the participation rate of both college student and non-college student voters dropped off after the 1972 election, and the participation rate of college students has never returned to the rate attained in that election (Lopez, Kirby & Sagoff, 2004). This CIRCLE study only examined participation numbers not the motivations of the voters.

For most presidential elections, the level of college voter participation has fallen from the turnout in the previous election, with notable exceptions in 1992 and 2004. Wattenberg corroborated the findings of Lopez, Kirby, and Sagoff. He found that by the election of 1988, the number of registered college age voters who voted had fallen to 36 percent, in 1992 it rose to 41 percent; in 1996, it fell to 32 percent, and stayed at 32 percent for the 2000 election; and then in 2004 it rose by ten full points to 42 percent. Mid-term elections usually have worse participation rates than Presidential Elections (Wattenberg, 2008, p. 99).

The potential effect of a large block of college students in an election at the municipal level has been well documented, especially in "college towns." There have been numerous news stories about the efforts of some college cities around the United States to restrict voting to local citizens only, or they have made it so difficult to register and vote that most students have not bothered. Some local election officials and candidates around the U.S. have perceived college students as a threat to the status quo (Tady, 2004). In some communities, on-campus (dormitory) students were specifically targeted for discrimination. In others the only students permitted to vote were those who could prove they were "natives" of the city where the school was located (American Civil Liberties Union, 2000; Haslup, O'Loughlin, Fitzsimmons, Fox & Wagner, 2001).

Other college cities have made the act of voting easier for college students by placing a polling location on-campus. Kirksville, Missouri is one such college town. The students of Truman State University who live in on-campus housing (dormitories and college owned apartments) have their own precinct. No one else may register to vote at the Truman State University precinct, including Truman State University students who live off-campus, faculty, or other university staff. The precinct is centrally located on the campus in the Student Union Building.

While college voters can potentially affect election outcomes, especially in locales where they represent a large percent of the population, research indicates they are not easily mobilized. One recently published study concluded that college students must be motivated to vote long before the election actually takes place. If students have not registered in time to vote, motivational rhetoric is of no value (White & King, 2007).

Some studies have focused on techniques that have been effective in motivating voters. The importance of door-to-door canvassing was the focus of a study that utilized experiments in six different communities: Bridgeport, Connecticut; Detroit, Michigan; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Raleigh, North Carolina; and St. Paul, Minnesota. The authors found that, "Each successful contact [by canvassers] with a registered citizen raises that individual's probability of voting by approximately 7

percentage points, which is considerable given the fact that local elections often attract only 25% of the electorate to the polls" (Green, Gerber & Nickerson, 2003, p. 1094). While not specific to college voters, this study illustrated how a block of voters, who in a state or national election may seem to statically small, can determine the outcome of a local election.

Dr. Richard Niemi of the University of Rochester and Dr. Michael Hanmer of Georgetown University studied 1,200 college students who lived on-campus, off-campus, and at their parents home to discover their registration status, voting record, and whether they had been contacted by a political party in person, by telephone, by e-mail, or regular mail. Over 47 percent of the college students reported being contacted. Twenty-five percent were contacted by telephone or in person, 38 percent by e-mail or regular mail, some by a combination of the two categories. This study also found that college students were registered and voted at a higher rate than non-college students aged 18 to 24, and that students registered at their college address voted at an 8 to 10 percentage point higher rate than students who were registered at their parents' home (Niemi & Hanmer, 2004).

Another way to motivate college age voters is with the use of personalized messages by campaign workers. Workers with *Rock the Vote*'s 1996 voter registration drive were able to get newly registered voters to fill out self-addressed postcards with the pledge "I will vote because_____," on them. The newly registered voter was encouraged to write their own reason(s) on the card and the campaign workers kept the postcards. The cards were then mailed back to the voters two weeks before the election. The effect was a much higher level of voter partici-pation by the people who had filled out the cards that included the prompt, versus a control group of newly registered voters who did not fill out postcards with the prompt (Burgess, Haney, Snyder, Sullivan & Transue, 2000, pp. 45-46). It has been over a decade since this project found something that may work better than many other methods and very little seems to have been done with the information.

Another study has demonstrated that just one experience of being interviewed had the effect of motivating registered voters to actually vote by more than twice the rate of the control group (Kraut &McConahay, 1973, p.402). In this study, the researchers found that the old fashioned method of speaking with people face to face and asking them to vote or to vote in a particular way was a very effective way to get out the vote. It is expensive, but a lot of campaign money seems to be spent on methods that do not produce results.

What has not been investigated, as far as this researcher has been able to discover is the effects of mediated messages in local television and radio programming in the weeks leading up to a local election. Also missing from scholarly literature are studies

on the efficacy of yard signs, posters, and other traditional American campaign literature and trinkets such as campaign buttons, emery boards/fingernail files, bumper stickers, etc.

## Research Questions

RQ1: *Is personal contact by a representative from an interest group more effective in motivating a college voter to vote than if the voter was not personally contacted?*

RQ2: *Are some types of rhetorical strategies for media use more effective than others for influencing a college voter's position on an issue?*

## Operationalization

The dependent variable is the answer to the question: "How did you vote on the smoking ban?" Informal polls of Truman State University students before and after the election indicated a significant "for" position result would be found.

The independent variables in this study seek to measure factors that influenced the decision of student voters to vote for or against the ballot measure. The survey questions were crafted after consulting with professors who had conducted political and or media effects research projects, and reading published works on survey construction (Dillman, 2007; Patten, 1998; Weisberg, Krosnick & Bowen, 1996).

Within the survey, rhetorical strategies for media use was operationalized as any publication or broadcast of a message in favor of the smoking ban or opposed to the smoking ban. Among the types of rhetorical strategies included were newspaper articles or advertisements, radio or television public service announcements, billboards, yard signs, and posters. Personal contact was operationalized as a phone call, e-mail, or face-to-face conversation from a representative of an interest group.

The survey had 38 questions. Most required an answer before the computer would let the participant proceed to the next question. The more personal questions had an option of "I choose not to answer this question." Each type of media had a True – False question that asked if the participant had encountered it prior to the election. Then there were questions about that particular media's effect on the student's position on the smoking ban. These questions were set up in a 4-point Likert scale that did not have a neutral or "This item had no effect on my position" choice. One question asked the participants to rate thirteen different media items for their motivational effect, on a scale one to thirteen, with one being the most important and thirteen being the least important. They were asked to only use each number one time, and to rate each item with a different number, even if some items had similar values. This forced a ranked order to avoid serial-order effect, which can occur in self-reported surveys when the respondents just move down the list

checking the same number or option. The usual option chosen is the middle choice of "This item had no effect on my position" (Fink & Kosecoff, 1998; Patten, 1998).

Each set of questions was coded based upon respondents' answers to how that factor influenced their vote. Some questions were simple Yes – No questions. Other questions had a four point Likert scale value for its influence on the students vote; +2 = *very much affected my vote in favor*, +1 = *somewhat affected my vote in favor*, 0 = *for no answer*, -1 = *somewhat affected my vote against*, -2 = *very much affected my vote against*. Respondents were not aware of the numerical weighting of any of the scalar responses. For example, question 4: "Did you read any newspaper stories, editorials, or advertisements about the proposed smoking ban in (on-campus or off-campus) newspapers?" was a simple Yes – No answer question. If the respondent indicated Yes, it was followed by question 5: "Which side of the smoking ban proposal seemed to be covered more by newspapers?" and question 6: "How much did this affect your position on the smoking ban?" The coded value of this set of questions was based on the respondents' responses to the third question using the four point Likert scale. If the respondent indicated - No to question 4, they skipped questions 5 and 6 and were directed to another Yes-No question regarding a different media.

## METHODOLOGY

The researcher used an online survey, administered via TruView, the Truman State University faculty/student e-mail system. The survey was informally piloted by a sample of convenience of approximately twenty-five Truman State University students. The researcher recruited them from the summer undergraduate research community, and specifically sought out students who were familiar with survey construction (including two graduate students). After the concerns of the pilot participants were corrected, the researcher had three doctoral faculty members review the survey for problems prior to activating it.

The survey asked Truman State University students about the media messages they were exposed to prior to the election, and the effect of those messages upon their voting position on the smoking ban issue. The sample was a self-selected group of Truman State University students who voluntarily responded to the survey. The survey ran from Thursday, July 5, 2007 through Friday, July 13, 2007 - one full week and a day. The survey participants were recruited using a block e-mail sent by the University Public Relations Office, an announcement that was easily seen by any user of the University e-mail system, and e-mails from Communication department professors to current and former students. Participants were enticed to participate by the offer of the chance to win one of two, one-gigabyte flash drives. The winners

were chosen at random by computer.

The researcher used an online survey because it is anonymous, and had more potential for response than a direct mail or telephone survey, with almost no cost. Direct mail surveys are quite costly and often have a lower response rate than an Internet survey (Dillman. 2007). A telephone survey would have been too problematic, given the state of technology. Many people use call blocking, and many Truman State University students have only cell phones, for which the phone numbers are not available.

The population size was 5,896 students, with a self-selected sample of 456 respondents completing surveys. (The population was derived from the number of people who received the various e-mails, minus the duplication.) Greg Marshall, the system administrator of online surveys for the Truman State University Information Technology department noted that participation rates for 52 recent TruView online surveys shows that there was an arithmetic average of 250 responses, a median of 176, and a mid-range of 187, and full range of 1 – 1,599 responses. He also said that the very low scores of 1-4 were for test surveys not actually run. Thus, this sample demonstrates an excellent response rate for any TruView survey, and even more remarkable given that it was conducted during summer term.

The collected data was exported into an Excel spreadsheet and pie graphs. The data was then analyzed by frequency of response.

## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The ballot measure passed. The YES - vote total was 1,820 (61.28 percent), the No – vote tally was 1,143 (33.72 percent), a 677 vote difference. While there were also two contested city council member positions, and a ballot measure question about continuing the city sales tax on the municipal election ballot, the certified election results provided by the Adair county election officials indicate that some voters only voted on one issue – the proposed smoking ban.

When the polls closed, the final student voter count at the on-campus precinct was 130, just 6.6 percent of 1,971 students registered at the Truman State University Student Union Building precinct. The final tally of the on-campus vote was YES – 112 votes (86 percent), and NO – 18 votes (14 percent). Of the 130 students, 113 voted only on the smoking ban issue; they did not vote on the other issue on the ballot, which concerned the citywide sales tax (Sizemore, 2007). According to Deputy Adair County Clerk Wanda Sizemore, the Truman State University students who lived off-campus were registered to vote in their neighborhood precincts, and their numbers are unknown. Survey question 28 asked, "Did you vote in the Kirksville Municipal Election on April 3, 2007?" There were

456 responses; 327 students answered – NO (71.7 percent), 13 students chose not to answer the question (2.9 percent), and 116 students claimed to have voted – YES (25.4 percent).

The number of students who said they voted for the smoking ban is high. It exceed the number of known votes (112) by four, yet it is within the realm of possibility as the email and web site solicitations were made to students living off campus as well as those who lived on campus (whose level of response to the ban issue is known). According to Tracy McFarland, Residence Life Housing Coordinator for Truman State University, the spring term student population (undergraduate and graduate) was 5,459, with 2,518 students registered in campus housing and 2,941 students who lived off-campus who were potential voters. The responses to the survey regarding the number of persons who voted and their position may be over reported. Yet, the result was possible considering that the off-campus student population is more than the on campus population.

RQ1: The results of this study support that personal contact by a representative from an interest group influenced college voters to vote, more than if the voters were not personally contacted. A total of 63.6 percent of respondents indicated that they had been contacted by representative from an interest group. Of these who had been contacted, 11 percent indicated that it had very much affected their vote against the ban, while 19.6 percent claimed that it had somewhat affected their vote against the ban. Another 50.3 reported that it somewhat affected their vote in favor of the ban, and 19 percent indicated that personal contact very much affected their vote in favor of the ban.

RQ2: The results of this study support that some types of rhetorical strategies for media use are more effective than others for motivating a college voter on their position on an issue. The survey asked respondents to rate 13 items for their affect on the student's position. The results in rank order, based on average rank, were pre-existing belief(s), discussions with professors, other students, and/or friends, discussions with family, in-person (face-to face) contact, newspapers, posters, public forums, e-mail, other, radio, television, yard signs, and telephone calls, (Table 1). In an open-ended question that followed this ranking question, students typed in what the other influences were. Some of the rankings were as expected; others were somewhat surprising. It is interesting that print media scored significantly higher for motivating college students to vote than electronic media.

**Table 1**

| Influence on Voters | Average Rank | % Ranked as First Choice |
|---|---|---|
| Pre-existing belief | 3.3 | 53 |
| Discussions with professors, other students, and/or friends | 3.9 | 16 |
| Discussions with family | 5.1 | 12 |
| In-person (face-to-face) contact | 5.5 | 4 |
| Newspaper | 6.7 | 1 |
| Posters | 7.4 | 1 |
| Public forum | 7.8 | 3 |
| E-mail | 7.9 | 2 |
| Other- | 8.2 | 3 |
| Radio | 8.5 | 1 |
| Television | 8.6 | <1 |
| Yard signs | 8.6 | 3 |
| Telephone call | 9.4 | 2 |

Anderson and Silver (1986) and Katosh and Traugott (1981) examined the measurement and validity of self-reported voting and both teams found that the general U.S. population has a tendency to over report voter participation. However, Anderson and Silver discovered that younger voters, and educated voters, have much less tendency to over report voting (pp.779 -782). Katosh and Traugott grouped education with income and not age. They discovered that higher socio-economic class members have a much higher proportion of over reporting, but their study did not examine age groups in the same way as Anderson and Silver did.

In the course of conducting this research project, the researcher discussed strategy with leaders from both sides of the issue and was told by Erin Black, of the group Breathe Easy, that they had registered or processed changes of address for over 200 voters on the Truman State University campus prior to the 2006 Mid-Term National Election. The group purchased the list of people who actually voted from the Adair County Election Registrar and found that not one of the newly registered voters actually voted in that election.

The city of Kirksville, Missouri had a reported census year 2000 population of 16,988 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Yet, Sizemore said Kirksville had 14,803 registered voters on April 3, 2007 election day, and that Adair County does not have an updated population estimate to explain the relationship of the two reported numbers. 2,963 total votes were cast on the smoking ban issue. 1,820 voted – YES

(61.42 percent). 1,143 – voted - NO (38.58 percent). Truman State University students, at least the students registered on-campus, did not decide the outcome of this election. However, many of the people who voted against the smoking ban, who have spoken publicly since the election, have said they believe this measure was started by and decided by Truman State University students.

Given the response for this study and the concerns with reliability of self-reported voter behavior, it is important to address the validity of results for this study. Examination of demographic and ideological information revealed by respondents indicates that the sample is representative of the Truman State University population of voters in spite of a couple of surprises in light of previous research into the composition of the American electorate. Numerous voter surveys have found that a very large percentage of Americans identify themselves as Moderate voters. The expected results for question 32 – "How do you describe yourself politically?," were that the number of respondents who considered themselves to be *Moderate* would be in the 35-40 percent range. In this survey, 26 percent did claim to be *Moderate*, *Very Liberal* was 16 percent, *Somewhat Liberal* was 29 percent, *Somewhat Conservative* was 19 percent, *Very Conservative* was 4.6, and only 4.8 percent chose not to answer the question. At first glance, the size of the Moderate choice (26 percent) appears to be below the expected result. However, political identification is a continuous spectrum of ideological position, more akin to a number line than just the five choices available in question 32. If the more moderate students of the *Somewhat Conservative* and *Somewhat Liberal* choices are considered, with students who claimed to be Moderate, the size of the group was representative of the Truman State University voter population.

Secondly, on survey question 33 – "Which political party do you most identify yourself with?," the number percentage of people who chose not to answer the question rose dramatically to 18.4 percent. Persons claiming to be Democratic were 36 percent, Republicans were 19 percent, Independents were 11.8 percent, Libertarians were 4.4 percent, Greens were 2 percent, and 7.7 chose "Other" to describe themselves. The 18.4 percent who chose not to answer the question is a large and significant unknown. This question could have had a write in blank or box for people to describe themselves if they chose to. In the informal pilot survey, there was no indication that this question would elicit such a large number of students choosing not to answer the question. No single ideological group was disproportionately over reported in comparison with the general population of the state of Missouri. The reported student percentages reflect similar percentages reported by Truman State University students in previous political socialization surveys. Each year the incoming freshmen at Truman State University (and other colleges and

universities) are surveyed for their attitudes and beliefs about numerous topics. This data is compiled and published in annual Cooperative Institutional Research Program, Full Study reports published by the Higher Education Research Institute. In the 2006 CIRP report, Truman State University freshmen were asked "How would you characterize your political view?":

**Table 2**

| $n$= 1,300 | Men | Women | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Far left | 4.9 % | 3.4% | 4.1% |
| Liberal | 26.6% | 29.3% | 28.2% |
| Middle-of-the-road | 35.2% | 41.8% | 39.0% |
| Conservative | 29.7 | 25.1 | 27.0 |
| Far right | 3.7 | 0.4 | 1.8 |

(HERI, p.24)

This is the latest CIRP report available. When its data on student political orientation is compared with the data in the four years prior to the 2006 report it is very similar. This supports the results obtained in this project, and that questions 32 and 33 produced an accurate and representation of the Truman State University student population.

Third, the respondents were somewhat evenly spread by academic class standing. Question 35 – "On the day of the election, April 3, 2007, in what year of study were you?," showed a 17.3 percent response for senior. The juniors were 33.8 percent, the sophomores were 25 percent, the freshmen were 20.8 percent, and Graduate students were 14 percent. These were the expected relative percentages for each group, except for the seniors. Truman State University has a large number of five-year seniors, but the composition of the senior group is unknown. Some of the seniors are possibly graduated and responded to the survey e-mail, because another student notified them about it. The researcher was notified via two separate spontaneous (not instigated by the researcher) Facebook announcements about the survey. It is possible the large number of seniors who participated in the survey was in part due to social networking e-mails. Regardless, the result was a sample that was somewhat evenly balanced and similar in composition to the entire university student population.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Overall, the results of this study suggest that social relationships and personal contact had the greatest motivational influence on college age voters in this election.

While media rhetorical strategies were less influential, the traditional print forms such as newspapers, posters and yards signs were most motivational. Since this election and study was strictly concerned with local issues, the results are not able to be extrapolated to the state or national level. It is very possible that the poor turnout by Truman State University college students is a reflection of their disinterest with the community and government of Kirksville. This is a rural college city and many students are from major metropolitan areas such as St. Louis and Kansas City, Missouri, and Chicago, Illinois. Some maintain their voter registration at home, and vote there by mail-in ballot or in person.

It is possible that the smoking ban will be on the countywide ballot in the upcoming 2008 Presidential Election. This survey could be conducted again, next time much closer to the election, to see if the college student voter turnout rate increases and if media rhetoric plays a more significant role.

In addition, it would be beneficial to research how many off-campus college students are registered to vote and what their participation rate is. This could be accomplished more easily during the school year, than during a summer term research internship.

This study used a sample comprised of participants who were self-selected respondents to an online survey. Numerous scholars have found discrepancies between self-reported data and verifiable data obtained from election officials. It would be more statistically valid to obtain a random sample from the rolls of registered voters, and survey them about their voting behavior and motivation. The researcher would know if the respondent had actually voted.

The assessment of motivational influence is incredibly complex. Some voters are passionately concerned with a single issue. It is advisable that future research should examine the motivational influence of particular issues, especially issues that are known to have polarized camps of people with significant numbers of members.

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# Effects of Forest Management on Small Mammal Communities at Sugar Creek Conservation Area

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*Anthropogenic disturbances are capable of affecting the diversity of mammal communities essential for ecosystem development and sustainability. This study assessed small mammal populations and communities of Sugar Creek Conservation Area alongside the habitat structure created by the current trends of forest management implemented by the Missouri Department of Conservation. Findings from habitat surveys found significant differences among habitat structure between treatment groups, although significant, they were not entirely unexpected based on treatment prescriptions. Simpson's Indices were low throughout all treatment areas (0.18). Although results indicate low diversity throughout treatment areas these findings appear uncertain and cannot be entirely contributed to forest management practice.*

## Introduction

Habitat disturbance, more specifically, anthropogenic habitat disturbance is a topic of major concern to ecologists and natural resource managers (Pickett and White 1985), generating the need for further investigation into the effects of man-made disturbances in various habitats. Many studies have sought to determine the relationship between habitat disruption and responses of small mammal populations and communities (Klenner and Sullivan 2003; Sullivan and Sullivan 2000; Sullivan et. al. 1999; Moses and Boutin 2000; Hall and Willig 1994; August 1993) as a

factor in determining the health of the ecosystem and the effectiveness of intentional disturbance (e.g. logging, restoration management). Studies have been successful in this attempt, showing small mammals to respond quickly and significantly to habitat disturbances and imparting significant contributions to ecosystem health and sustainability, indicating their importance in maintaining ecosystem integrity.

Disturbance is an essential element to the health of an ecological system but is often hard to define and conceptualize because of the ambiguity involved (Eulinger 2003). Disturbances can be defined based on their frequency and intensity (Pickett and White 1985) or by its effects on species diversity (Hall and Willig 1994). The variations in frequency and intensity have been theorized to result in an increase or decrease in biodiversity and are thought to be best suited at intermediate levels (Connell 1978). Intermediate levels of disturbance represent a non-equilibrium state within the habitat, whereas high levels of disturbance support only tolerant colonizers and habitat generalists, contrary to low levels of disturbance creating a stagnation within the environment, interrupting the establishment of colonizing species (Connell 1978). Such variations represent the need for any intentional disturbances to be documented and measured to ensure effective and healthy implementation.

In terms of assessing the effects of disturbance on small mammal communities and populations, past studies in spruce-fir forests have shown Clethrionomys gapperi (red-backed voles) populations to have little response to partial cuttings, but seem to be negatively effected by clear-cut treatments (Klenner and Sullivan 2003). Conversely, Microtus species have shown a positive response to clear-cut (Sullivan and Sullivan 2001) and, in general, species richness increases in clear-cut areas (Sullivan et al. 1999; Verme 1981) but not always abundance (Fisher, 1995). Peromyscus (white-footed mice and deer mice) species have shown their generalist nature and seem to respond favorably or show no adverse effects in most treatment types (Sullivan et al. 1999; Moses 2000; Klenner 2003; Root et al 1990; Wallen in text). Whereas shrew populations seem less dependent on the type of treatment being applied to canopy vegetation, relying on shrub and leaf-litter cover (Fisher 2005).

Furthermore, because of their use as indicators of ecosystem stress and health in past studies, their direct response to changes in habitat condition and structure (Avenant, 2000; Medellin et al. 2000) and because of their critical niche within the ecosystem as prey items, seed and fungal spore dispersal agents, and consumers of invertebrate and plant product (Klenner and Sullivan 2003), it would seem small mammal community diversity would be an appropriate tool for gauging the effects of disturbance, and more specifically the effects of forest management of vegetative

structure as it is related to small mammal community diversity (Etcheverry et al. 2005; Sullivan et al. 1999).

As such, Sugar Creek Conservation Area (SCCA) provides an optimal area to assess the effects of forest management on small mammal community structure. The area has been under the management jurisdiction of the Northeast branch on the Missouri Department of Conservation since 1974 and within its boundaries has numerous management prescriptions. The focus of this study will provide data regarding the habitat structure of three independently managed stands, as well as an undisturbed stand, and small mammal communities within. Together this data should provide researchers with an opportunity to compare findings between areas and with past studies to assess whether forest management is providing healthy habitat for small mammal community diversity.

## Methods and Materials

*Study Area*

Sugar Creek Conservation Area, located 6.5 km southwest of Kirksville, MO, is under the jurisdiction of the Northeast regional office of the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) (Cooper 2005). After decades as farm and grazing land the area was purchased in 1973 (Amerman 2007). Totaling 1026-ha, SCCA is divided into three compartments and is mostly dominated by oak-hickory forest, but also contains prairie restoration projects, meadow and old-field habitats. Located within the 1000-acre northwest sector of the conservation area, Compartment Three (C3) represents the most diversely managed forests. Included in this area are stands prescribed and treated for Timber Stand Improvement (TSI), Timber Harvest Sales (THS), and Clear-cut Timber Harvest. Because of the diverse array of treatment areas located within the compartment, C3 makes a suitable and feasible research area. Within C3, four research areas were surveyed; these included undisturbed forest (Stand 28, 35-acres), Timber Harvest Clear-cut (Stand 42, 13-acres). Timber Harvest (Stand 62, 27-acres), and prescribed Timber Stand Improvement (Stand 69, 21-acres). Four research areas provide a large spectrum of management, offering a fuller picture to assess changes in vegetative and small mammal community structure.

*Habitat Survey*

A line-intercept survey of vegetative stratum was employed during this study. Habitat surveys began in mid-May 2007 and finished in late June 2007. Within each stand, 10 transects (50m) were surveyed with starting point and bearing determined randomly. Transect data was gathered for three vertical strata, ground cover (0-2m), sub-canopy cover (2-5m), and canopy cover (5m+). Height was gathered for each variable measured, excepted for sub-canopy cover. Canopy height was approximated

using a Suunto® clinometer and diameter at breast height (DBH) was taken for each canopy datum.

Ground-cover variables included herbaceous cover (HGC), woody cover (WGC), down woody debris (DWD), leaf litter (LL), bare ground (Bare), and mixed cover (Mix) (indeterminate herbaceous cover and leaf litter). These variables were chosen because of the relation to habitat preferences of small mammals known to inhabit the region and because of the variation expected between treatment areas. One-way ANOVA analysis was used to determine significant differences between coverage variable across habitats. Tukey's method was employed as the principal post-hoc testing to reveal any further differences between variables and habitat type.

*Small Mammal Survey*

Small mammals were live trapped over a month long period (June 2007) using Sherman® live-traps with a mark-recapture method, each area was trapped during four successive nights. Traps were baited with agricultural sweet feed and rebaited as needed. During each trapping session, traps were left open during the day, as most areas had sufficient cover and the feasibility of opening and closing traps each days was in question (only three individuals were lost during trapping). Each stand totaled 600 trap nights each with a practice of loose transect placement for each area (area topography and opportune areas for capture were a determining factor in trap placement). Data for mammal captures were recorded (species, weight, sex, right foot length, tail length, right ear length, and history) and animals marked with a red Sharpie® marker on their underside and released. Analysis of small mammal community diversity employed Simpson's Index as it primary tool.

## Results

*Small Mammal Survey*

A total of 42 small mammals representing 3 species were captured in 2,400 trap nights (600 trap nights/stand). Traps success for all sessions was 1.75%. Complete results are shown in Table 1. Across all areas, *Peromyscus leucopus* (white-footed mouse) dominated the survey. This species constituted 90.5% of all captures and was found in all areas. *Blarina* (sp) was the second most common species captured, with 3 captures, composing 7% of total small mammal captures. This species however was found only in Timber Stand Improvement. The only other species recorded during trapping was *Microtus* (sp), trapped in the Timber Harvest area. Simpson's Index was calculated for all areas, these are summarized in Table 1.

*Habitat Survey*

Assessment using the line-intercept method yielded reliable results. Alongside habitat coverage type, height was also measured for herbaceous and woody ground

covers as well as canopy cover height. Mean height and standard deviation results within research areas are summarized in Table 3. Between all areas herbaceous ground cover height differences were found to be insignificant (F= 0.10, p-value 0.961). Woody ground cover height was found to have significant difference between areas (F= 4.77, p-value 0.007). Canopy cover height results are as follows: Stand 28 (15.85 meters), Stand 42 (29.71 meters), Stand 62 (17.64 meters), and Stand 69 (14.66 meters). These results were not analyzed any further due to confounding variables. Percent coverage details are summarized in Table 2.

**Herbaceous Ground Cover (HGC)**: Herbaceous ground cover was found throughout and had a negative correlation with canopy cover (r= -0.379, p-value 0.016). One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) using Minitab 15.1 showed significant difference between habitats (F= 5.22, p-value 0.004). Tukey's post-hoc testing revealed no significant difference between the undisturbed area and remaining areas, but a significant difference was found between clear-cut and the Timer Harvest and TSI. Percent coverage estimates revealed clear-cut to have the highest percentage of herbaceous material, covering 24.3% of the area. This finding is not surprising, as clear-cut areas will naturally allow the formation of vegetative ground cover with the lack of any vertical cover.

**Woody Ground Cover (WGC)**: Similarly, WGC was found in all areas and also had a negative correlation with canopy cover (r= -0.729, p-value= 0.000). One-way ANOVA analysis showed significant difference between areas (F= 26.06, p-value= 0.000). Post-hoc analysis revealed significant differences between undisturbed and clear-cut and TSI. Post-hoc testing also revealed significant differences between clear-cut and TSI, as well as between Timber Harvest and TSI. Post-hoc testing shows the negative correlation between canopy cover and woody ground cover to be substantiated.

**Down Woody Debris (DWD)**: Significant difference in DWD was found between areas (F= 8.96, p-value= 0.000). It was not unexpected to find these results as DWD has a negative correlation with canopy cover (r= -0.593, p-value= 0.000). Post-hoc testing shows that clear-cut had the most significant difference when compared with other habitats.

**Sub-Canopy Cover (SC)**: Coverage 2-5 meters above ground differed significantly across areas (F= 16.29, p-value= 0.000), showing a positive correlation with canopy cover (r=0.601, p-value= 0.000). Post-hoc testing indicated undisturbed coverage to be significantly different from those of Timber Harvest and TSI, likewise between clear-cut and TSI, as well as between Timber Harvest and TSI.

**Canopy Cover (C)**: As expected, canopy cover varied significantly across areas (F= 47.33, p-value 0.000), coinciding with percent coverage estimates, post-hoc

testing revealed significant differences between undisturbed and clear-cut and Timber Harvest. The same was found between Clear-cut and Timber Harvest and TSI, in addition to TSI and Timber Harvest. Results, as expected, correspond with the management practice.

**Diameter at Breast Height (DBH)**: Measurements of diameter at breast height was found to differ significantly across areas (F= 3.52, p-value= 0.025). Post-hoc testing reveled though that these findings were less significant as first calculated. Tukey's shows no significant difference between Stand 28 and the other areas, although Stand 42 did differ significantly from Stands 62 and 69 with no significant difference being found between Stands 62 and 69. The results indicate statistical error as the reason for ANOVA significance and Stand 42 is somewhat of an outlier in this analysis, which is not unexpected, as it was clear-cut habitat. The post-hoc testing reveals to us that among areas with considerable canopy cover there is no significant difference between the ages of the trees providing coverage, resulting in areas of even-aged forest.

**Leaf Litter/Mix**: At the conclusion of data collection it was determined that the variables of leaf litter and mixed ground cover (e.g. indeterminate herbaceous and leaf litter) should be categorized together, due to the fact that HGC played an inconsequential role as cover with leaf litter as crucial coverage. As such, any further discussion regarding leaf litter is in fact the combined totals of leaf litter and mixed cover.

One-way ANOVA showed significant difference across habitats (F= 83.65, p-value= 0.000) and a positive correlation between leaf litter and canopy cover (r= 0.815, p-value= 0.000). These results are not unexpected, as treatment dictates a reduction or maintenance of canopy cover. Further post-hoc analysis showed undisturbed and TSI to be the most similar in terms of leaf litter and canopy cover, showing significant difference between clear-cut and TSI.

## Discussion
*Habitat Survey*

Results from the line-transect survey revealed expected structural elements within each habitat. This is further supported by mean diameter at breast height, with no significant difference between areas, indicating an even-aged canopy. Even-aged management is the current trend of MDC (Clark 2007) and even-aged forest is to be expected given that the entire area was clear-cut around the beginning of the 20th century (Cooper 2005). Additional factors influencing the scope of this study included the inability to gauge successional periods or establish a successional timeline. Establishment of these factors would undoubtedly lead to additional

support regarding the expectation of habitat structure and small mammal species.

*Small Mammal Survey*

Findings from this study are comparable to past studies from the same area. Cooper (2005) found *P. leucopus* to dominate areas within C3 (90.4%) as well as finding low diversity and richness within the same compartment; Cooper's study recorded a total of four species (*P. leucopus, Blarina* (sp), *Tamias striatus*, and *M. ochrogaster*). Further mammal surveys of the area have resulted in higher richness but low diversity, with six species (other than *P. leucopus*) accounting for less than 40% of captures species (*R. megalotis, S. cooperi, Sorex* (sp), *M. ochrogaster, P. maniculatus, Z. hudsonius*) (Burt 2007).

Contrary to these findings, an on going study of Chiropteran species within Sugar Creek has found genuine species diversity (Burt 2007). A total of six species occurring in Missouri have been recorded, including the endangered Indiana bat and maternity roosts (*Myotis sodalis*). Past studies have also indicated a healthy richness of larger mammals, ranging from White-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), Bobcat *(Lynx rufus)*, and Coyote (*Canis latrans*). Healthy populations of larger mammals, though not as apparent, can be indicators small mammals. Being predators to the smaller, forest floor dwelling animals, local carnivores would seemingly indicate a healthy community of small mammals.

It is a perplexing question to be answered, how is the diversity of mammals other than forest floor small mammals as healthy as it is with the deficits we see in the smaller mammals. This study has again shown *P. leucopus* to dominate forested areas within Sugar Creek, though not surprising being a habitat generalist, its nature would dictate success in varied habitats, but the extent to which it dominates while other species show little or no presence is astounding.

**Conclusion**

Theory would dictate that with an increase in habitat heterogeneity, such as that seen in the clear-cut, would accompany an increase in species richness (Tews 2004). This process is seen in numerous studies regarding clear-cuts; Sullivan (1999) found mean species richness to increase in clear-cuts when compared with clear-cut burned sites and forested areas. Meta-analysis by Fisher (2005) and Kirkland (1990) also indicates clear-cut areas should report higher species richness, and at times abundance, in comparison to other managed and unmanaged areas. These findings have been corroborated by numerous other studies, although other findings have shown *P. leucopus* populations to dominate clear-cut areas (Root 1990). It may be the clear-cut site at Sugar Creek, though only recently managed in 2004, may possibly be in the establishment stage of its successional process, reducing the

richness of species inhabiting the area (Fisher 2005). This is plausible but habitat assessments were indicative of a heterogeneous habitat, again raising the questions of community diversity within the clear-cut.

Though the Timber Harvest area yielded similar diversity estimates to those of the clear-cut, it did however provide the only microtine capture. The seemingly over-abundance of *P. leucopus* is not unnatural or surprising to find in a forested area such as Timber Harvest site, what is surprising however is the lack of other species. As a genus, Microtus species tend to vary in their habitat preferences, but all species occurring in Missouri have been observed at Sugar Creek or similar conservation areas and the Timber Harvest provides at least one species (*M. pinetorum*) its preferred habitat. Again as with the clear-cut site, habitat structure does not seem to be detrimental to small mammal populations as adequate cover of varied types are provided.

As for the prescribed TSI and the undisturbed site, in which habitat differences were nominal, there seems to be rather sparse support for the difference in small mammal captures. Despite the fact that the undisturbed habitat provided substantial canopy cover and two marshy ponds, there seems no explanation, based on its habitat structure, to account for it rather weak species abundance and richness. However, weather was a significant factor, as it rained periodically during the trap session and bait was consumed by the resulting influx of arthropods. Disturbance by nuisance species was observed to be highest in this area as well. Together these factors show additional trap sessions are needed to re-evaluate this location and provide adequate data for comparison.

The scope of this study does not seem to have the capability of establishing the precedence of forest management effecting small mammal communities in a positive or negative manner and the question still remains as to whether management practices are dictating the low diversity estimates or whether there are other influencing factors determining diversity. Whether these additional factors are limiting food availability needed by microtine, insectivores, and other rodents, it is not within the realm of this study to answer. What can be answered, however, is that habitat structure throughout all areas is comparable to that which would be expected of areas treated in such manners, concluding that the Missouri Department of Conservations practices are successful in terms of creating the prescribed habitats. Nonetheless, this study seems to have brought up more questions that it has answered, resulting in inconclusive findings, though not insignificant ones. Repeated measures of habitat structure, and more importantly, small mammal communities is needed to more thoroughly answer questions pertaining to any positive or negative effects of forest management on the area.

| Species | Undisturbed (28) | Clear-cut (42) | Timber Harvest (62) | TSI (69) | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *P. leucopus* | 5 | 14 | 9 | 10 | 38 |
| *Blarina* (sp) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| *Microtus* (sp) | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 5 | 14 | 10 | 13 | 42 |
| Simpson's Index | 0 | 0 | 0.2 | 0.38 | 0.18 |

Table 1: Capture totals for all small-mammal trapping.

| Cover Type | Undisturbed (28) | Clear-cut (42) | Timber Harvest (62) | TSI (69) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Canopy | 82.26 | 4.2 | 38.34 | 92.44 |
| Sub-Canopy | 57.42 | 22.98 | 28.5 | 77.86 |
| HGC | 10.06 | 24.3 | 8.08 | 2.46 |
| WGC | 9.84 | 55.5 | 46.56 | 10.62 |
| LL | 28.22 | 6.56 | 34.6 | 65.98 |
| DWD | 0.9 | 11.8 | 10.66 | 0 |
| Mix | 50.68 | 0 | 0 | 19.1 |
| Bare | 0.3 | 1.84 | 0.1 | 1.84 |

Table 2: Percent Coverage totals for habitat survey

| Habitat | HGC Height Mean | HGC Std. Deviation | WGC Height Mean | WGC Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 28 | 81.18 | 24.08 | 74.6 | 32.9 |
| 42 | 99.2 | 17.51 | 40.3 | 52.7 |
| 62 | 80.54 | 12.02 | 81.74 | 5.9 |
| 69 | 64.13 | 26.26 | 80.88 | 22.54 |

*Table 3: Summary of Herbaceous and Woody Cover Height*

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# Sex and the Aging Woman: The Everyday Erotic in *Spence + Lila*

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**Introduction**

*The view of aging as a dynamic process rather than the beginning of the end is one uncommon in the mass media and in literature. Women over the age of 50 are told repeatedly to try every means necessary to reverse their maturation and conform to the societal norms of beauty, which primarily center on young, thin women. Although turning back the clock might seem like the most empowering thing for an older woman to do, accepting this ideal means that she is admitting that she, as is, is not good enough. In Bobbie Ann Mason's novel* Spence + Lila, *however, Lila embraces her body and herself as she grows older and faces breast cancer. This novel has not received the attention it deserves as a convincing portrait of the lives of everyday people who often go unnoticed. It is Lila's desire to live a life full of love and the everyday erotic that assists Lila in her struggle with cancer. She has pride in the strength of her body and her years of experience. It is this pride and passion, which reaffirm her hopes to continue living and growing as a person as long as she is blessed with life. Lila's alternative view of the aging process serves as a positive model for women over 50.*

The title characters in Mason's novel are lifelong lovers and friends. They have two daughters and one son and live on a farm in Kentucky. The farm is both their

life and their work; their need to nurture the land, their animals, and each other is the foundation of their marriage and companionship. After Lila's vacation to Florida where she has a mini-stroke, the doctors discover a lump in her breast and subsequently perform a mastectomy, as well as a surgery to clean the arteries in her neck. During her stay in the hospital, Lila reflects on her relationship with Spence, her connection with her children, and the strength which has guided her through so many difficult times over the years. Faced with her own mortality, Lila reiterates to herself how precious and significant her life has been and will continue to be after her recovery.

Lila gives the reader a positive view of the aging process, unlike so many other images in the public eye. Lila sees her body as the vessel of her maternal nurturing, the source of eroticism and sexuality, and her tie to the earth and her farm, while others might view her aging body as a canvas for plastic surgeons, or simply the remains of something once beautiful. Lila reflects the beauty of her spirit as her physical self matures. She is true to herself and does not feel an obligation to play the part of a lifeless older woman.

Beauty and sexuality are not generally, however, equated with getting older. Contemporary culture suggests that female sensuality and beauty peak somewhere in the thirties and after menopause are completely absent. The struggle to maintain the appearance of youth plagues women from all walks of life. As Wiederman and Hurst state, "Women's bodies are more often looked at, evaluated, and sexualized [than men's bodies]" (272). In their study of body image and sexuality among college age women, they found that a woman's perception of herself correlates to her sexual experiences and attitudes; i. e. having a positive view of one's self can be indicative of an active sex life (279). Although these results cannot necessarily be generalized to older women, other research has shown that women retain certain aspects of the sexual identities of their younger years (Adams and Turner 128). "Cultural beliefs that proscribe sexual activity and interest for old people" were cited as a cause for decreased sexual interest in the aging population (127).

This paper will read *Spence + Lila* in juxtaposition with other cultural materials which provide insight into the historical context of the novel and contemporary ideals about the role of the aging woman. As New Historicist critic Veeser states, "Literary and non-literary 'texts' circulate inseparably" (qtd. in Booker 139). This relationship between literary and other cultural texts can give us a concrete picture of cultural attitudes regarding a given subject. I will argue that this novel provides readers with a view of the aging woman unseen in many areas of popular culture.

**Cultural Background**

In Audre Lorde's essay "The Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power," she states that women have been taught for generations that eroticism is immoral. By vilifying the erotic, we deny ourselves power to discover "psychic expressions of what is deepest and strongest and richest within each of us" (341). Lorde equates the erotic with a capacity for joy, which remains unknown until it is discovered. She extends the definition of the erotic and implies that sexual pleasure is not limited to coitus but can be found in everyday events including writing a poem or dancing. The purpose of the erotic is to share deep feeling (also a human function of sexuality), and without the erotic, we are suppressing truth and denying ourselves power.

The purpose of sexuality, then, is not wholly represented by reproductive functions. It is a means of discovering oneself through the expression of strong feeling. This self-discovery, however, is not encouraged in older women. Pharmaceutical companies have devoted years of research to find ways to enhance the sexual performance of men. Viagra commercials and other similar advertisements for male enhancement abound. Women have not received the same sort of attention. As one woman noted, "…the culture is saying, 'You are not attractive as a woman; act your age; be dignified,' which means to me, be dead sexually. It's a terrible bind for a middle-aged woman. I say, acknowledge, applaud, enjoy sexuality! Get rid of the stereotypes!" (Our Bodies 450) The model for beauty (and thus, sexuality) in contemporary Western culture is that of the thin, young woman. This image, along with the numerous older men who choose much younger lovers, discourages the self esteem of older women.

As Adrienne Rich explains in *Of Woman Born*, the female body is seen as "impure, the site of discharges, bleedings, dangerous to masculinity, a source of moral and physical contamination." (43) This mindset has guided the patriarchal society for centuries. A woman is only useful to her community if she provides children for future generations. Men often remain fertile throughout their lives, but for women, the fifties generally mark the end of the child-bearing years, and thus, for a large portion of society, the period when it is appropriate for a woman to freely display her sexual behavior. As women age, they are often no longer considered the object of someone else's desire, but these attitudes do not stop some women from becoming active and powerful as they pursue their sexual desires, rather than fading into the background as they grow older. For some, social stigmas are less important in the later years of their lives than when they were young, and focus can be placed on their own desires rather than pleasing the wishes of a society centered on youthful women.

Literary portrayals of post-menopausal sexuality are often of a stereotypical

nature. Older women are viewed as grandmothers or simply widows who have lost a lifelong lover. In television advertisements and popular televisions shows, women are given an unrealistic view of mature beauty. The makers of beauty products advertise ways to reduce the visible effects of aging, suggesting that looking younger can increase quality of life. Botox ads urge women to "express yourself" by getting the cosmetic injections to eliminate wrinkles. Print ads for the product, appearing in such magazines as *Woman's Day*, ask women "Isn't it about time?"

Hollywood personalities also encourage looking forever young. In an Oprah episode entitled "Aging Brilliantly: Meet Our Experts," guests Nora Ephron, Diahann Carroll, and Geena Davis gave the women in the audience and the millions of viewers their views on aging. The show's website describes this show as "an unflinching look at the truth behind getting older" (Oprah). The three women openly discussed their views on the necessity of cosmetic procedures to look and feel younger, but when pressed with questions from older women in the audience about sex after menopause, or vaginal dryness, for instance, they and Oprah shied away from these more nitty-gritty questions. Oprah repeatedly referred to the vagina as the "va-jay-jay" and nervous laughter accompanied questions about these common complaints. Questions of this nature were fielded by Dr. Love, Oprah's medical expert.

This medicalization of menopause as a disease resulting from age "occurs when human experiences are defined as medical problems to be treated by medical personnel" (MacPherson 348). Medicalization is a phenomenon beginning in the 1960s with hormone replacement and other cutting edge pharmaceutical "cures" (MacPherson 348). Instead of being a natural process of the life cycle, menopause is seen as a problem that must be overcome. Dialogue between women about their experiences is limited by the perception of women's aging as a disease rather than a normal process. That is not to say that things were better before television ads or medical treatments. Fifty years ago discussion was equally prohibited by male-dominated society and women were either forced into silence about their changing bodies or they "subscribed to a type of false cheerfulness required by a society that restricted us from talking freely with one another about our bodies and our health" (Our Bodies 127). Women today are often more likely to try "fixing" themselves through cosmetic procedures or a visit to the doctor than to embrace their aging selves. Little attention is given to the older woman who remains cosmetically unimproved as she pursues happiness and sexual vivacity; this idea is slowly changing, however.

Feminist self-help books, such as *Menopause and Emotions: Making Sense of Your Feelings When Your Feelings Make No Sense* by Lafern Page and *Our Bodies, Ourselves:*

*Menopause* by the Boston Women's Health Book Collective, seek to discuss openly the biological and emotional facts of the aging experience and menopause. According to one study quoted in *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, "The more a midlife woman perceived herself as less attractive than when she was ten years younger, the more likely she was to report a decline in sexual response or activity" (140). Further, "feelings about our bodies are often a result of the attitudes we hold about aging" (127). Margaret Morganroth Gullette writes of her experiences growing older that she was "overcoming the self-hatred learned while having had a younger female body" (*Our Bodies* 126).

### *Spence + Lila* in Context

This hatred of the body never seems to be learned by Lila. Lila is accepting of her age and makes no attempt to be someone else or conform to a broader sense of beauty. When a volunteer at the hospital speaks to Lila about purchasing a prosthetic, Lila is uninterested, despite the woman's insistence on the positive nature of the prosthetic breast. "You may get depressed over losing part of your femininity," the woman tells Lila (Mason 104). "It's an important investment" (105).

The loss of her breast is not something Lila faces without apprehension. Her breasts give her balance both physically and emotionally. After surgery, she says to Spence, "I didn't realize how you depend on your jugs for balance. I feel all whopper-jawed!" (74) As she walks down the hall and feels her flat chest and the drainage bottle attached to her groin, she feels "she might have had a sex-change operation" (81). Later she remarks that she wishes she could "grow a new jug" (92). The realization that she has lost a part of herself is clear in Lila's mind, but she does not lose perspective on the larger picture: life with only one breast is still life. Before her mastectomy, "cradling her breasts like babies," she tells her daughters "[her breasts] ain't worth more than living" (31).

Audre Lorde had a similar experience after her own mastectomy and refusal of prosthesis. Lorde states that pressuring women to conform to an ideal image of the female body after surgery causes women to feel disconnected with the wholeness of their bodies and their battle against the disease after the surgery. This emphasis is "a regressive tie to the past" which classifies the cancer "as a cosmetic problem" (Cancer Diaries 55).

> It encourages a woman to focus her energies upon the mastectomy as a cosmetic occurrence, to the exclusion of other factors in a constellation which could include her own death. It removes [the woman] from what that constellation [of life] means in terms of her living, and from developing priorities of usage for whatever time she has before her. (57)

Lila shares this attitude as she recovers. The prosthetic might make her appear better to the outside world, but it could never change the fact that she has lost a part of herself, and more importantly has survived what could have been a fatal illness.

Cancer risks for women double in their mid 40s (Our Bodies 152). These cancers, along with other chronic diseases, can change quality of life and cause women to be more conscious of their own mortality. Surviving a life threatening illness can provide both a source of strength in having overcome and a sense of dread at having the disease recur. For Lila, her breast cancer diagnosis is a chance for her to remember the aspects of her life which are most dear—her children, the farm, her relationship with Spence.

Though age has taken away Lila's capacity to become a mother again, her maternal nurturing thrives throughout the novel. Maternity, while a product of sexual reproduction, emanates through her femininity long after procreation is possible. Though nurturing is generally associated with femininity, Spence possesses this trait as well. Both Spence and Lila have learned the importance of nurturing through their experiences on the farm and with their family. Within their marriage, the role of caregiver is shared by them both and does not conform to the traditional idea of the woman as the only nurturer. For them, maternal nurturing functions as a source of the erotic and allows them to share deep feeling, as Lorde suggests.

As they enter the hospital before Lila's first surgery, Lila's thoughts are on her daughter Cat and her grandchildren. She also reminds Spence to care for the garden while she's away (Mason 17). In this moment, when others might be concerned with their own welfare, Lila remains her caring self. Her thoughts are focused on the absence of care her sickness will bring to those she loves. Even her cat Abraham is not forgotten. Spence reflects that he has "never seen her so crazy about a cat, the way she baby-talks to him" (35). Her nurturing is unselfish and she expects nothing in return. Before her surgery, Cat and Nancy talk with their mother about her fears and she remarks that she is lucky to have daughters who are so good to her (39).

Spence's nurturing is evident in his relationship with his family and the animals as well. He feels that it is his purpose in life to care for his wife. After returning from Florida he acknowledges that "if something had happened to her then, he would have been to blame" (35). Spence hates to travel, so Lila has taken several trips without him. Although relatives have commented about her spending his money, he simply tells them that she "took care of [his] mother for ten years and she deserves to get out and have fun" (48). Speaking with his daughters in the hospital he feels "he may burst into tears" as he recollects that his daughters have never acted their age, and even now, when they are over thirty, he still feels they are his little girls (49). As he feeds the calves, he remembers the time he raised a veal calf and the suffering

that the animal endured. "He and Lila couldn't talk about it" (38). As he empties feed into the troughs, he speaks to the cows, calling each by its name. Everyone on the farm receives this individual care and attention—from the crops and animals to the humans.

For Lila, her relationship with Spence and her children has been the source of the erotic throughout her life. Maternity is, as Alice Rossi has observed,

> a component of the feminine paradigm that is isolated from, and even at
> odds with, the others. One manifestation of this is the muting of
> sexuality in motherhood: the sexual satisfaction of childbirth and
> lactation is played down, while the pleasures of heterosexual (marital)
> intercourse are emphasized as the correct outlet for female sexual desire.
> (Rossi 167)

Lila, however, allows herself to experience eroticism in her relationship with her children. Emotion "rises in her throat" as Lila remembers "the tugging sensation of nursing them as babies…Nancy liked to bite. Cat was always hungry. Nancy wasn't weaned until she was two and a half…" (Mason 86). The type of intimacy in this relationship with her daughters could not be experienced without her body's fertility and the sustenance her breasts were able to provide for her children. Lila also recalls changing their diapers and "[kissing] them right between the legs before she pinned on the diapers. They would squeal with pleasure…It was such overwhelming simple love, there was nothing wrong with it" (140). Even as grown adults, Lila continues to kiss her children on the lips to show them her love for them, her "need to keep hugging her children, touching and holding" (141). Her children are the result of her sexual relationship with Spence and part of her relationship with him extends to them.

Spence and Lila have maintained a vital sex life since their teenage years. After running away from home at the age of 18 and crossing the state line to search for a justice of the peace who could marry them, the two find themselves lost on a country road. "Spence persuaded her to have the honeymoon first…arguing that they'd never find this perfect, peaceful place again" (111). This spontaneity is not lost as their relationship matures.

As Lila lies in her hospital bed, Spence comments to himself that "if this is going to be her time, then what he and Lila should do is have a last fling together" (97). As Lila faces death, Spence's solution is to do something that is life-affirming. Lying in the hospital bed, Lila moans from a combination of pain and joy in seeing her husband but Spence is reminded of her seductive moans (160).

Even images outside their relationship remind the couple of their sexual attraction for each other. "Tina Turner turns Spence on, the way Lila does—Lila's

large, warm, sexy body" (159). He is excited by the sexual movements he sees as Mick Jagger and Tina Turner dance on the TV screen. With her friends, Lila casually flips through a magazine and finds an underwear ad featuring a man "young enough to be Lila's grandson, but he makes her feel a twinge of desire. She wishes she could go home right now and get in bed with Spence" (109). Their marriage has not limited their ability to find eroticism and sensuality in everyday experiences.

For Spence and Lila their memories of everyday experiences take place within the property lines of their farm, which they both have cared for and brought to fruition during the years they have spent there. They are connected to the land and animals as much as they are connected to each other. Like their marriage, the farm requires love and nurturing. Lila compares her family with the land she has worked as she faces her own mortality and realizes how fleeting life is. As Lila notes when she sees her children with families of their own, "This is what life comes down to…replacing your own life with new ones. It's just like raising a crop" (Mason 29). Life is cyclical and must come to an end so that new life can begin.

Spence makes numerous comparisons between the farm and the earth and Lila's body. To him, the earth and Lila both represent life giving forces; their fertility has shaped his world. Spence likens Lila's breasts to cow bags. Lila remembers this as she gazes at the four walls surrounding her in her hospital room. "He has funny names for [her breasts], like the affectionate names he had for his cows when they used to keep milk cows. Names like Daisy and Bossy. Petunia. Primrose" (Mason 19). Wandering through the fields, Spence steps over a ridge of dirt left from a tractor tire and compares the cut in the land to the cut the doctors will make in Lila's neck. As he takes his first ride in an airplane he sees their farm from up above and notices how much the land reminds him of the body of a woman. "The woods are like hair, the two creeks like the parting of a woman's legs, the house and barn her nipples" (164). From up above, all the aspects of the farm "lose definition and become small parts of something much bigger," just as he and Lila are part of something much bigger than themselves (164).

Looking out over his land, he remarks to himself, "This is it. This is all there is in the world—it contains everything there is to know or possess…What [I have] here is the main thing there is—just the way things grow and die, the way the sun comes up and goes down every day. These are the facts of life" (132). Without a family and the farm, his life would have no meaning. It is the complete understanding of something so simple which makes Spence appreciate who he is and where he comes from.

Again in her hospital bed, Lila remembers the "strong, comfortable smells of cows in the barn…gathering in tomatoes before a frost…an electrical storm scattering black tree limbs across the yard…the world has changed so much…but she

is afraid that inside she hasn't changed at all…Her innocence has always embarrassed her" (Mason 139). The innocence she speaks of results from a lifetime spent living life the best way she knows how. Her innocence does not reflect ignorance but a worldview undistorted by inhibitions she rejects. Rather than representing naïveté, Lila's innocence demonstrates her higher understanding of her own world, much the same way a child gazes at the world without caring about the superficial aspects of adulthood. She has spent her life living among the simple things of the world. Like life, the farm will only give to her as much as she puts into it.

## Conclusion

Mason's novel offers the older woman a message she cannot get from mainstream media: an aging woman has just as much to offer her world as she did in her younger years. Though wrinkles and hormonal changes may come with age, they are not a reason to stop living life. Lila's character reaffirms that a woman who is confident with herself can live a lifetime of vitality rather than a mere thirty years' worth. Lila's body has given life to three children, has been a source of sexual pleasure and eroticism, and has been her tool to care for the plants and animals on the farm. It does not need repair by a plastic surgeon's knife, or an injection of Botox, or a prosthetic breast. She is a whole person, still capable of the pleasures of life, even after her battle with cancer. Lila and many other women are still climbing to new heights of joy and eroticism long after society deems them "over the hill."

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