

Spectrum

Published by

Center for Writing Across the Curriculum

Saint Mary's College of California

accessible online at the website of
the Center for Writing Across the Curriculum:
www.stmarys-ca.edu/center-for-writing-across-the-curriculum

Printed by Coast Litho, Oakland California

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25th Annual Spectrum Award Winners

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“The Presence of the Grotesque in Flannery O’Connors’ Works” BRIDGET HANNA

“Contrasting Queens” REYNA OLEGARIO

“The Rhetoric of Difference: An Analysis of How We ‘Other’” CAITLIN WIRE

i 25 Years of Writing Excellence !

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From The Editors

Welcome to the twenty-fifth edition of *Spectrum*, the journal of undergraduate writing across the curriculum at Saint Mary's College of California. By publishing this year's six award-winning student texts, we celebrate the elegance of language and the practice of critical thinking through writing. We invite professors and students to use these six pieces as models for the power of language to construct knowledge—to facilitate the learning, expanding, and sharing of ideas.

We extend deep appreciation to all the students who submitted their writing, produced during the 2012 calendar year for courses of all disciplines. The submissions were so strong overall that we are awarding not four *Spectrum* prizes, as we did last year, but six, and we are giving not two three honorable mentions, as we did last year, but three. Additionally, we decided that, this time, it would seem arbitrary to distinguish among the winners by delineating a first, second, and so forth; therefore, all six student writers featured here are winners of *Spectrum* prizes.

The difficult task of narrowing and then further narrowing the stack of blind submissions was accomplished through much serious work by our diverse panel of judges, both professors and Writing Advisers of CWAC: Center for Writing Across the Curriculum. We deeply thank the judges for their time and devotion to writing excellence. Likewise, we thank the professors who guided their student writers to express well and to learn through the process of communicating. All of these efforts culminated in a collection of winning pieces that, together, represent a broad variety of genres, as well as discipline-specific citation styles, across our curriculum: Art History, Chemistry, Communication, Composition, Literature, and Politics.

Spectrum has been published for twenty-five consecutive years, only the past two of which through CWAC. English students and professors deserve praise and appreciation for launching *Spectrum* and subsequently publishing and championing the journal and contest year after year.

This year, the publishing process continued to evolve and to involve more and more students. A new practicum course, a section of Communication 190, was created through which students could learn principles of magazine copy-editing and design and also apply those principles by producing *Spectrum*. We appreciate the collaboration of the Communication Department, particularly Chair Ed Tywoniak, in shaping this new course. And we appreciate the students of Communication 190 for all their work ensuring a quality publication that reflects well on the college.

Another addition this year was a staged editing process for finalists that mirrors what

occurs when writers work with professional publications. We invited each finalist to meet three times with a CWAC Writing Adviser to review issues at both the idea and sentence level, and then to submit the revised piece. Winning texts were selected from among the resubmitted pieces. We appreciate all the earnest effort that the finalists and the Writing Advisers devoted to making good texts even better.

We also asked the winners to write Author's Notes, to share their idiosyncratic experience of writing, submitting, and revising, in order to inspire others to keep working toward the most skillful use of language and the most expansive exploration of ideas. These notes, either excerpted or in full, are including in *Spectrum* for the first time.

There have been so many people involved in this contest and journal that the list of people deserving appreciation is long. In addition to those already mentioned, there were many other people involved in making this contest and journal a reality. CWAC Administrative Assistant Jen Herrington managed the critical details. SODEXO catered a fine banquet for the awards ceremony. The Print Shop created our program. Coast Litho in Oakland was an excellent business partner. And the entire staff of CWAC contributed in small and large ways. As we reflect back, we realize that where one person's work ended and another began became wonderfully indefinable.

We offer this journal with deep appreciation for the work of all the student writers, professors, and staff of our college. May you pour yourself a cup of tea, sit back, and enjoy the spectrum of writing across Saint Mary's College of California.

—Kevin Reyes and Tereza Joy Kramer

Saint Mary's College 25th Annual Spectrum 2013 Winners

Following is a brief note about each author's piece, in alphabetical order:

Alexis Gonzales, "Osteoporosis and Bone Regeneration Techniques,"
for Valerie Burke and Linda Wobbe's Chemistry 089: Chemical Literature.

The delicate balance of our human bone structure is put in jeopardy by osteoporosis. But there is hope, according to Gonzales' exploration of new avenues for regeneration.

Evelyn Minaise, "Identity Unit Project: An Unexpected Exploration,"
for Aaron Sachs' Communication 3: Communication Inquiry.

Lebanese. American. First-born. Female. Caucasian. Studious. What do these labels mean? And what impact do they have? Or do they? Minaise travels through hard-to-define, sociopolitical territories of association.

Amanda Nordby, "What Is a Hipster?"

For Valerie Sullivan's English 5: Argument and Research.

What is counterculture hipsterism all about? Nordby takes readers through the 1940s and onward, into today, up and down and through stereotypes and sincerities and the very real influences that this counterculture just might have on all of us.

Nikole "Koko" Petitt, "Reading Between the Lines,"

for Lisa Manter's English 141: Studies in Medieval Literature.

The title of "author" has not always come automatically with the act of publishing. Petitt studies the primary texts of a medieval writer, Marie de France, who hid behind inspiration. At least, that's what she professed.

Sheryl Xue Wei Tan, "The Complexity of Justice in Multicultural Societies,"
for Patrizia Longo's Politics 115: Theories of Justice.

Traditions and expectations are imbedded in the fabric of culture. Tan unravels the interrelationships of preconceived ideas within societies, revealing pressures on justice and how it is interpreted, and by whom.

Kristen Thompson, "Court Influence: How 18th Century Vienna Fueled
One of Classical Music's Greatest Rivalries,"

for Ronald Dodson's Art History 194: Artists in Film.

What was the true stage of the rivalry between Antonio Salieri and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart? Thompson walks among the nobility and intellectuals and musicians who held sway in the 18th Century Viennese courts.



Hill and Fence – Jaycee Casalnuvo

Osteoporosis and Bone Regeneration Techniques

Alexis Gonzales

INTRODUCTION

Around 44 million Americans will suffer from either osteoporosis or osteopenia, diseases related to varying degrees of bone loss.¹ The two major types of bone are cortical and trabecular, the latter type being most affected by osteoporosis.^{2,3} Accounting for 80% of the total amount of bone in the body, cortical bone is the more solid type of bone that makes up the ends and central portions of long bones.⁴ Trabecular bone, also known as cancellous bone, is the spongy meshwork of bone providing strength for the weight-bearing ends of long bones, and accounts for the remaining 20% of bone.^{3,4} It is important to note that the trabecular meshwork is filled with what is known as bone marrow, which is where the majority of blood cell production takes place; however, the focus should be on the stability and strength that this meshwork provides for weight-bearing bones.³

A critical function of bone tissue is its ability to remodel: there is a delicate balance between bone resorption and bone formation.^{3,5} In its most basic form, bone remodeling is regulated by osteoblasts – cells that regulate bone formation, and osteoclasts – cells that regulate bone resorption.^{3,5} Osteoblasts secrete an extracellular matrix for

mineral ions, such as calcium and phosphate, to crystallize in, creating bone.⁵ Synthesizing an artificial matrix for in vitro bone regeneration that mimics this osteoblastic matrix will be discussed later on. Being that the trabecular matrix is mostly made up of basic components, osteoclasts induce bone resorption by secreting osteoclast-derived

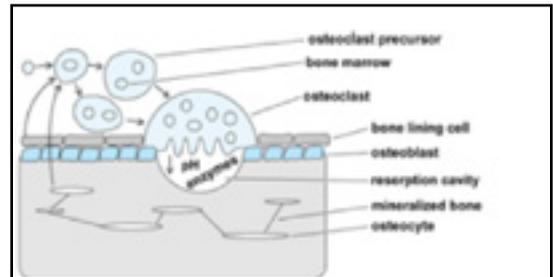


Figure 1. Image of osteoblast and osteoclast interactions with bone

hydrogen ions and degradative enzymes, creating a contained acidic environment surrounding a specific area of bone (Figure 1).⁵ Osteoporosis is the disturbance of this bone remodeling, when the number of osteoclasts exceeds that of osteoblasts, meaning that more bone is being degraded than formed.⁵ Osteocytes are hypothesized to play a significant role in regulating this process by recognizing abnormal strains or fractures in bone, and signaling proliferation of osteoblasts and minor inhibition of

osteoclasts.^{2,5} Commonly associated with post-menopausal women and older men, osteoporosis ultimately makes the bones more fragile and more prone to fractures due to the loss of the trabecular meshwork, and therefore loss of overall bone stability.

OSTEOPOROSIS IN WOMEN AND MEN

Although osteoporosis is a bone disease more commonly associated with women, it is becoming more prevalent amongst both sexes.¹ Bone regeneration is heavily regulated by both bone damage and hormones.⁶ When bone experiences micro damage, biological mechanisms shift the bone remodeling balance to fix the damage and restore the necessary function of that area of bone.^{5,6} Male

and female sex hormones play a significant role in equilibrating bone remodeling, and as humans age, these hormones are depleted, causing an imbalance in the remodeling process, which usually leads to a primary stage of osteoporosis.^{5,6}

Around the age of fifty, most women experience menopause, which is when their menstruation cycles stop and their ovaries cease production of hormones such as estrogen.⁶ In addition to estrogen levels

depleting as women age, osteocyte numbers decrease, creating an environment favorable for uncontrolled osteocyte proliferation, ultimately leading to activation of bone resorption.⁶ In one study, twenty-five mice experienced an ovariectomy (OVX) and another twenty-five underwent a sham surgery (SHAM). In the SHAM surgery, ovaries were removed and put back in place in order to ensure that results were not from the surgery itself, but from the removal of the ovaries.⁶ Being that estrogen deficiency is so closely

related to osteocyte apoptosis, osteocytes were stained for activated caspase-3 (Casp+Ot), which was used as a marker for apoptosis.⁶ The study found that the OVX mice experienced a significant increase in osteocyte

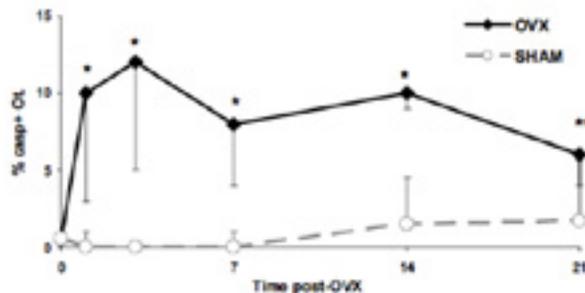


Figure 2. OVX: mice with ovariectomy, SHAM: mice with ovaries removed and put back in, % casp+ Ot: amount of activated caspase-3 (marker for apoptosis). This graph shows that mice who underwent ovariectomies, experienced higher amounts of activated osteocyte apoptosis over than the SHAM mice group over a period of 21 days.

apoptosis, having nearly 800% more apoptotic osteocytes than the SHAM mice (Figure 2).⁶ After two-weeks post-surgery, researchers also saw a marked increase in bone resorption in the same region they found significant osteocyte apoptosis.⁶ Overall, researchers concluded that OVX, signifying an immediate withdrawal of estrogen, led to an increase in osteocyte apoptosis in certain bone areas, which is associated with osteoclast proliferation causing an increase in bone resorption in

those same areas.⁶ This study shows that estrogen withdrawal through ovariectomy, mimicking the menopausal effects women experience, is directly connected to bone resorption, which provides a valid explanation for why most women experience osteoporosis post-menopause.

The hormonal correlation to bone resorption in men can be seen in those suffering from prostate cancer. Luteinizing hormone-releasing hormone (LHRH) agonist therapy is a common method of treatment for prostate cancer that causes a significant decrease in the production of male sex hormones, as low as levels found in castrated men.⁷ LHRH agonist therapy is crucial to hypogonadism because the luteinizing hormone initiates testosterone production in the testicles through patterned pulsing secretions, affecting the hormonal balance necessary for proper bone remodeling.⁷ Androgen is another male sex hormone that directly stimulates osteoblastic bone cells to proliferate and inhibits osteoclastic activity, preventing excessive bone resorption.⁷ Continuous LHRH agonist therapy disturbs the normal secretions of this luteinizing hormone, ultimately reducing levels of testosterone and mainly androgen to castration levels.⁷ In one study, researchers compared hormone levels and bone mineral density (BMD) in men diagnosed with prostate cancer; one group was receiving LHRH agonist therapy and the other group was classified as watchful waiting (WW) because they were not receiving treatment.⁷ Over a period of six

months, researchers found that initial LHRH agonist therapy, meaning within seven days of treatment, caused a rise in LH levels and therefore an increase in testicular androgen production.⁷ Continuous LHRH agonist therapy, however, meaning within three to four weeks of initial treatment, showed a sharp decline in the amount of testicular androgen being produced down to castration levels.⁷ In relation to BMD, the study showed that after the full period of six months of treatment, mean BMD decreased by 1.4% in the LHRH group, whereas BMD increased by 0.97% in the WW group.⁷ Overall, researchers concluded that men with prostate cancer who are being treated with LHRH agonist therapy suffer from significant decreases in major male sex hormones, causing a decrease in overall bone mineral density and eventual onset of osteoporosis.⁷ This study indicates that male sex hormones also have a significant effect on bone remodeling. Being that prostate cancer is becoming more common in older males, this study also suggests that men are equally susceptible to osteoporosis due to treatment, as women are susceptible due to menopause.

Although there have been studies using hormone therapy to either prevent bone loss or regenerate bone that has already been digested, no definite conclusions have been made. Modern techniques of bone regeneration, not including hormone therapy will be discussed as the main alternative to prosthetics in humans suffering from significant bone loss.

BONE REGENERATION

One of the primary techniques used for boneregenerationinvolvestissue-engineering scaffolds. A scaffold is a synthesized, biological matrix that mimics the trabecular network in cancellous bone, so an effective synthetic bone tissue can be made and implanted.^{3,5,8} Although scaffolds can be nonbiodegradable or biodegradable, the latter is becoming more preferred, as an additional surgery is no longer required to remove the scaffold once the bone has completely healed.⁸ Deriving synthetic scaffolds from natural materials such as collagen, chitosan, and elastin, makes it difficult to control various properties of the material.⁸ Synthesized scaffolds, however, allow scientists to control properties such as composition, porosity, pore size, and interconnectivity, in order to optimize growth and integration of tissue engineered within the scaffold.⁹ A group of scientists

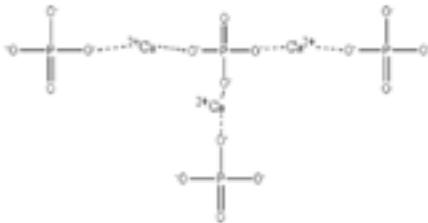


Figure 3. Schematic of Calcium-Phosphate polymeric mineral layer

studied the third generation of macroporous polymeric composite scaffolds which they enhanced with a surface calcium phosphate

(CaP) mineral layer (Figure 3 and 4).⁹ While the composite scaffold mimics the trabecular network in human bone, the CaP mineral layer minimizes the foreign body giant cell response that humans typically experience with polymeric biomaterials.⁹ Surprisingly, the CaP mineral layer significantly improved compressive strength of the scaffolds; therefore, the maximum amount of force the scaffold could withstand without fracturing or deforming was increased. Peak compressive

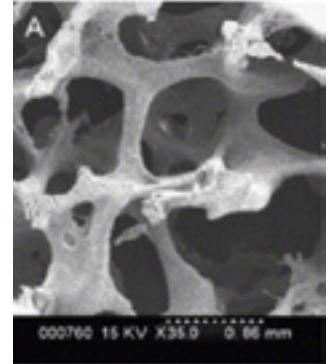


Figure 4. Image of scaffold coated with CaP mineral layer

strength for the uncoated scaffold was 0.049 MPa, whereas the coated scaffold measured at 0.110 MPa.⁹ Upon comparing the bone growth within the two scaffolds in an in vivo implantation over a two-week period, the uncoated samples showed a significant amount of foreign body giant cells (FBGCs), whereas the coated samples showed no apparent FBGCs (Figure 5).⁹ Overall, researchers found that this applied calcium phosphate mineral layer on an already successful macroporous polymeric composite scaffold, improved the functionality of the bone engineered within the scaffold by strengthening the scaffold itself, while minimizing the immune response to regenerated tissues.

Although synthesized scaffolds allow

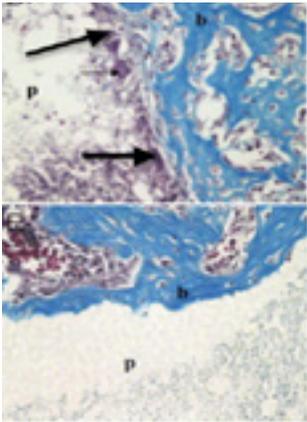


Figure 5. *b*= ingrowing bone, *p* = polymer, arrows indicate FBGCs. Top: uncoated scaffold after 2 weeks, Bottom: coated scaffold after 2 weeks

group of scientists developed a high-strength silk protein scaffold made up of micro-sized silk fibers (Figures 6 and 7).¹⁰ Natural and pure collagen has low compressive properties in the hydrated state, 2-150 kPa, whereas this scaffold reinforced with silk fibers could withstand a maximum compressive strength

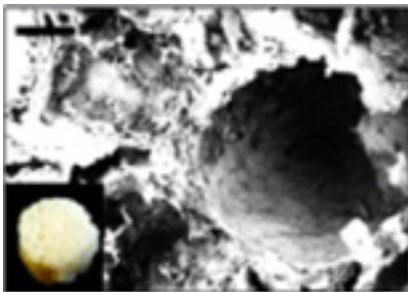


Figure 6. Image of silk scaffold characteristics.

of about 13 MPa.¹⁰ Overall, researchers concluded that the development of this

scientists to control specific properties of the scaffold, scientists must also take care to create scaffolds that most closely imitate natural trabecular bone, especially its ability to withstand compressive forces. For example, a

silk microfiber-reinforced synthetic scaffold could be a viable imitation of the mechanical functions of natural bone due to its high compressive strength properties.¹⁰

Another biomaterial similar to synthetic scaffolds is synthetic bone graft material: it provides a porous structure mimicking cancellous bone, a framework for host bone to regenerate itself, and the material is also biodegradable.¹¹

One inventor developed a synthetic bone graft material made of ceramic, which is comprised of calcium phosphate.¹¹

As mentioned previously, calcium phosphate, when used in synthetic scaffolds, provides the structure with higher compressive strength and minimal immune response. The ceramic particles provide this graft material with the same benefits. Additionally, the use of ceramic particles allow scientists to control pore size in order to maximize the ability of osteoblasts



Figure 7. Images of scaffold being implanted into mouse and harvested

to bind to the material, resulting in enhanced bone formation.¹¹

Another major technique used for bone regeneration involves the use of stem cells. Currently, bone-marrow-derived stromal cells (BMSCs) are the most commonly used source of uncommitted mesenchymal stem cells (MSCs), though they contain very few MSCs after being harvested.¹² A group of researchers discovered a more plentiful source of uncommitted MSCs in the buccal fat pad, located in the oral cavity.¹² The buccal fat pad does not contain BMSCs; however, it does have adipose-derived stromal cells (ADSCs), which retain a significantly greater amount of MSCs than BMSCs post-harvest.¹² Using the recombinant human bone morphogenetic protein-2 (rhBMP-2), buccal fat pad derived ADSCs can differentiate into osteogenic cells, promoting bone regeneration.¹² Over a period of fourteen days, scientists found that human buccal fat pad derived ADSCs could be induced into osteogenic differentiation when treated with rhBMP-2, and that enhanced bone formation was found in ADSCs treated with both rhBMP-2 and other osteoinductive reagents (Figure 8).¹²

Another study using bone marrow mesenchymal stem cells (BMMSCs) showed their ability to enhance viable biomaterial resorption in rat tooth sockets, within a chitosan-gelatin scaffold.¹³ The chitosan-gelatin scaffold was highly porous; therefore, BMMSCs could interact with the scaffold more easily, producing enhanced osteoblastic differentiation, and enhanced

bone repair within the rat tooth socket.¹³

SUMMARY

Human bones provide the framework around which the body is built. The delicate balance that bones uphold during remodeling is crucial to maintaining its essential framework. Hormonal imbalances caused by age or cancer treatment have detrimental effects on this balance, causing bones degradation and compromising the overall strength of the human body. Due to recent findings in biomaterial research, new avenues of healing are being developed to subdue osteoporotic effects, and in some cases eliminate them.

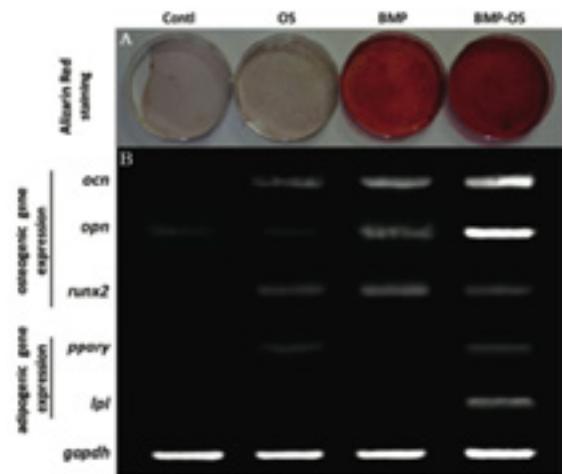


Figure 8. Contl: control group with no treatment, OS: osteoinductive reagent treatment, BMP: rhBMP-2 treatment, BMP-OS: rhBMP-2 treatment with osteoinductive reagents. Both BMP and BMP-OS show significant gene expression for bone formation, however BMP-OS showed stronger signs of expression.

With the aid of synthetic scaffolding and stem cells, bone lost to hormonal imbalances can be viably restored.

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The Identity Project: An Unexpected Exploration

Evelyn Minaise

Growing up, I did not realize how much I struggled with my identity until I noticed the differences between me and my siblings' experiences. According to my uncle, I have it hard – I am the firstborn, the first of my extended family to be born in a country other than Lebanon, a first-generation Lebanese-American, the eldest child in our group of close family-friends, and a female; I am the ultimate experiment child. I give away advice to the Lebanese parents asking about AP classes rather than watching a midnight movie. Thus, I fit into an odd social niche: immigrant student who has grown up with a studious lifestyle, peers who indulge in the American social atmosphere, and a selective group of Lebanese-American youth who can seamlessly transition between Lebanese or American environments. This is an immigrant experience, and rarely can an American understand how I struggled between my Caucasian race and Lebanese ethnicity. M. Gigi Durham describes this conundrum perfectly in her essay about South Asian female teens living as first-generation immigrants in America:

When adolescence and diaspora occur in tandem, identity formation becomes an even more complex issue ... For children of immigrant diaspora groups, adolescence is

a particularly complex juncture, calling for a sophisticated grasp of cross-cultural dialectics and the sociopolitical dimensions of Otherness that will mark their adult lives. (Durham 140-141)

I identify with Durham's analysis of South Asian female in that life is a constant juggling act due to gender hierarchy, parental restrictions of physical mobility, and a dissociation from what is considered American.

Durham's hierarchical explanation details why my family and I had conflicting ideas as I grew up. I was obviously exposed to American ideals, but, by Durham's reasoning, I unconsciously suppressed the urges to act on them to maintain my traditional and expected Lebanese roles. Lebanese women are expected to put their husband's and family's needs above their own. I admire that willingness to sacrifice, but it translates to a very specific message for young girls. This means that young women should control their emotions, avoid challenging others' opinions in public, be exceptionally physically attractive, and act prim and proper - all at the same time. By no means is the Lebanese culture advocating the oppression of women; instead the culture challenges women to maintain a certain level of "decency" that treads on a

fine line between upholding proper etiquette and controlling creativity. This foreign form of etiquette is misunderstood and requires a shift for any first-generation Lebanese-American female. For example, by the time I was in the fourth or fifth grade, my mother would ask me not to do certain things with my group of friends. Although it seemed random at the time, my mother gradually made decisions that would shape me into her idea of the flawless Lebanese-American woman. If we were at someone's house for a celebration and everyone was going outside to play basketball, I could not go, although I did not understand why. Eventually, I noticed other young girls subject to the same treatment. My dad would sneak in a few snide remarks like, "You're a girl; don't be so aggressive about those things," while my mom would say, "It's indecent for you to act that way." I noticed an intersectionality of multiple parts of my life: major parts of my identity met and existed together in conflict. I somehow maintained a balance between what is considered decent without sparking controversy, but I could not experiment with the intersectionality between my gender and race until much later in my life, after I had already been conditioned to notice the nuances in behavior expected of my ethnicity and race.

Daughters of immigrants often deal with unequal opportunity. Not necessarily

Daughters of immigrants often deal with unequal opportunity. Not necessarily because they are first-generation children, but more because they are female.

because they are first-generation children, but more because they are female. Even though the United States may not be a patriarchal society, both male and female immigrants impose these practices on their

personal environments and lifestyles. Thus, "Women of color 'inhabit a sex/gender hierarchy in which relations of power have been sexualized'" (Durham 144). Women

and men inherently come to the US on unequal footing in the eyes of immigrants, and women are expected to maintain a double-standard of upholding traditions and not assimilating to American life the way the men can and do. This depicts an intersectionality between gender roles and foreign culture because "'while males are often encouraged to Americanize rather quickly, females are more frequently expected by their families to maintain traditional roles and virtues' ... this differential adaptation tends to result in intra-familial conflict" (Durham 144, 145). For example, as we grew older, I noticed that age ceased to act as a social barrier and gender took its place. My brother is three years younger than me, but, because he is male, he can participate in certain activities that I could not when I was his age. Even now, I often rely on my brother's presence to allow me to stay out later at group outings or attend them

when my parents know boys my age will be present. The American side of me feels like this is unfair, but my Lebanese identity knows my parents are just trying to instill traditional values in me and my siblings

I have experienced and continue to experience the type of immobility Durham describes that parents impose on their children out of fear and uncertainty. The biggest issue I have is with curfew. According to my parents, I do not have a curfew, yet I am reprimanded when I return home later than 10:30 pm. My parents claim that they do not worry about me; instead, they do not trust the people I hang out with. In these scenarios, my parents do not refer to these people as my friends. They distinguish me from everyone else as if it separates me from what they think I do when I hang out with "Americans." More specifically, they think of me differently in comparison to my American friends, making a point to call them "American." In placing physical restrictions on me, my parents believe they can restrict my actions in the future. While this makes some sense, they fear influences I tend to avoid in the first place. Ultimately, I choose what I want to have an impact on me despite external influences.

Immigrant parents restrict their kids' physical mobility because of fears

of American stereotypes. Durham's interviewees said their parents had fears "of the possibility of sexual misbehaviors ... These fears played out in the form of a 'discipline of the body' that extended to clothing and demeanor and that was related to issues of sexuality" (Durham 149). Immigrant parents favor "discipline of the body" because of the physical restriction the idea promotes. By controlling their children's physical presence, they no longer fear unwanted external influences.

I was faced with this uncertainty growing up and struggled to identify myself. Was I Lebanese or American?

These parents have a fear of anything sexual rather than strictly misbehaviors; based on extreme stereotypes,

American teens are either promiscuous or chaste, and immigrant parents do not always notice the space in between the two with which most people identify. For an immigrant parent, media plays a huge role in how their kids are raised because, for many, this is the most exposure to the American teen culture the parents have received. The influence of stereotypes on gender hierarchy, especially as women are expected and hoped to maintain traditional roles, explains Durham's phrasing of "discipline of the body."

My situation is a bit more unique than that of the South Asian teens. My father went to college here in the States and experienced more of the American

lifestyle than my mother ever did and more than the South Asian parents Durham described. Because my parents have more first-hand experience in this country, the media has less of an influence of how my parents view American teens. I have a bit more room for negotiation – as a result, I feel that I am in a more ambiguous state than that of the South Asian teens. My mother takes note of the media’s portrayal of teens as much as the South Asian parents, more than my father. The South Asian teens can assume that their parents will say “no” if they want to go out with friends past a certain time, but I have some tricky maneuvering to do since, because of my mom’s influence may not rule the answer in my favor. I have to learn to appease both my parents in an intricate dance that will, if successful, ultimately favor all three of us. Regardless, the three of us need to compromise. But perhaps this lends itself to a more open relationship than the South Asian teen girls have with their parents because I negotiate with mine.

Most of the children in my family-friend group have experienced an ironic dissociation from the American culture and still do today. There is a strong resistance of Lebanese to cling to the American culture, but there is a sense of pride in being Lebanese. I distinctly remember an instance when my then-5 year-old sister “corrected” her kindergarten teacher, stating that she was born in Lebanon and

not in the US; she was born and raised in California and had only been to Lebanon twice in her life. At the time, my little sister assumed more knowledge and experience of her Lebanese background to a comedic point. I know many close friends who entered grade school not knowing a full sentence in English, only speaking Arabic. I was faced with this uncertainty growing up and struggled to identify myself. Was I Lebanese or American? I’ve since settled for both depending on the question being asked. I believe I’ve found a healthy balance by adopting the best of both Lebanese and American cultures – utilizing “Lebanese-American” to its fullest. We created a “discursive space” in our otherwise-uncomfortable liminality through church parishes and family-friend groups (Flores 143). The space between being Lebanese and being American could be an area of strife, yet adopting and embracing it makes the difference between discomfort and pride. I believe it to be a coping mechanism immigrants take on to create a home away from home, and it becomes so ingrained in life that it is difficult to be rid of. This coping mechanism, however, is extremely important for Lebanese-Americans because we often physically look white and are formally categorized as Caucasian but are Middle Eastern and practice Middle Eastern traditions. Therefore, race and ethnicity oppose each other as my supposed race is hegemonic

in society while my ethnicity is anything but dominant, especially since more and more Americans do not understand and sometimes fear the Middle East.

Because of intense parental influence and the odd social environment created, first-generation American youth tend to dissociate themselves from being labeled American. Despite being extremely critical of their parents and the traditions by which they were raised, the South Asian teen girls associated themselves with their native culture and insisted on drawing differences between themselves and the white dominant group. They cultured themselves in a lifestyle of whiteness to fit in at school yet lived mostly Indian-infused lives. As a result, "the girls saw themselves as outsiders to both of the spheres they inhabited; they did not self-identify as American, though all of them had been raised in the U.S. and held citizenship. They did classify themselves as Indian, but

recognized that their Indianness differed from that of their parents" (Durham 154).

While similar, I feel that I face a different and more complicated sort of debacle in how I choose to associate myself with either the white or Middle Eastern cultures. The tension between race and ethnicity may be difficult at times, but we have learned to be proud of who we are as Lebanese-Americans. As a result, I find my Lebanese-American peers use that identification – "Lebanese-American" – more than an Indian teen would use "Indian-American." Although ideas, gender roles, parental influence, and American values may differ between cultures, I have learned to make sense of them and adopt them into a Lebanese-American identity that I am proud of. Due to conflicting race and ethnicity, Lebanese-Americans learn to create a discursive space in our liminality.

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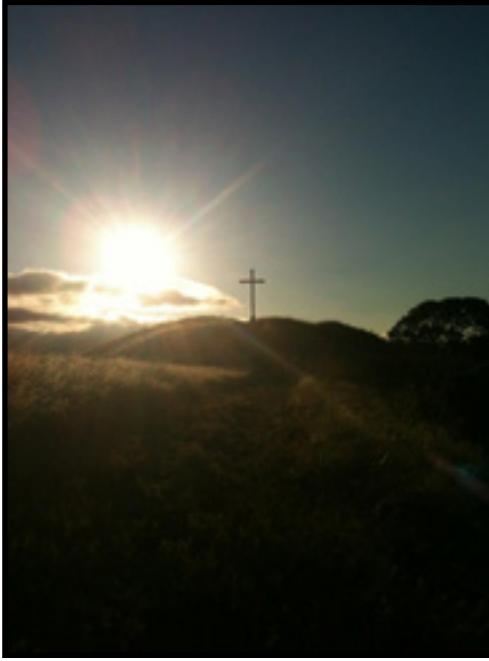
A Note From The Author -

All the classes I've taken at SMC have been a joy, but Communication Inquiry might be my favorite thus far. So when we discussed aspects of identity in the unit, I could finally pinpoint aspects of my identity I had always struggled with. One text in particular resonated with me, "Constructing The 'New Ethnicities': Media, Sexuality, and Diaspora Identity In The Lives of South Asian Immigrant Girls" by MG Durham. Durham applied concepts I had learned in class to the lives of South Asian immigrant girls. For the first time, I could understand much of my upbringing, and everything came into full circle.

When I was given the assignment to relate a class text to an aspect of identity, I knew I had to talk about Durham's piece and my life. It was difficult for me to write because, in writing, I was solidifying the insecurities, making them more real, insecurities that I was aware of and insecurities I hadn't previously recognized. I was so critical about my writing in this essay because the topic was so personal. I wrote three drafts before I presented one to Professor Aaron Sachs during his office hours, and he pushed me even further to make more connections with the text. Professor Sachs believed in my ideas and knew I could expand even more, and for that I am extremely grateful. I wouldn't have thought to submit anything to Spectrum if it weren't for his encouragement.

By the time I submitted my essay to Spectrum, I wasn't sure how I could change it any more. Madeline and Carly helped my paper get to the way it is now, a more comprehensible version of my original paper. We read, reread, and reread again, making sure every word was perfect. I finally got it to a point where I believe anyone can understand why I identified so much with the South Asian girls Durham studied and why I and other first-generation immigrants might have felt distressed growing up.

- Evelyn Minaise



Molly
Allen

Here Comes the Sun

Reading Between the Lines

Koko Petit

In the Medieval literary tradition, within which the term “authorship” is only conferred upon longstanding literary authorities, a preoccupation with establishing one’s own authority is not altogether surprising. After all, as Jennifer Summit explains in her essay “Women and Authorship,” the idea of medieval authorship differs greatly from our modern understanding. An author was not simply someone who created a text, someone who participated in the act of writing or someone who was published. As Summit explains,

In scholastic settings, medieval grammarians employed the term auctor as a marker of doctrinal authority, signifying an ancient theologian or approved classical writer who commanded deference and obedience. The auctor’s status emerged through a system that linked auctoritas, authority, to tradition, defined as a stream of continuous influence by its root tradere, to pass on. (92)

Achieving a status of authority in the literary tradition was not to be taken lightly, and thus, often in lieu of claiming authorship, writers attributed their work to some widely accepted authority and they themselves took on the title of scribe. In the Prologue of *The Lais of Marie de France*, Marie makes reference to authority, tradition, and authorship no less than seven times. Although Marie is adamant that she herself is not the creator of the *lais*, citing multiple other authorities, a closer examination of the Prologue, using the phrase *gloser la lettre*¹ as the key to decode her writing, reveals that Marie is indeed the clever author of the *lais* and that her authorship, her autograph, is not the only thing she hides behind layers of text.

Marie does not hesitate when it comes to establishing authority for the *lais*. Consider the opening lines to the Prologue:

Ki Deus ad duné escience

E de parler bone eloquence

Ne s’en deit taisir ne celer,

Ainz se deit voluntiers mustrer. (lines 1-4) 2

Marie plays on the trope of divine inspiration and proclaims, in a roundabout way, that

1 “gloss the letter”

2 “Whoever has received knowledge/ and eloquence in speech from God/ should not be silent or secretive/ but demonstrate it willingly” (Hanning, lines 1-4). It is interesting to note here that “knowledge” is *escience*, which could be viewed as being close to “proof” or “evidence,” all of which is something to

her impetus to write comes from God. In other words, since God has *duné*, or given, *esciënce* to Marie, it is God who inspires and authorizes the production of the *lais*. Although there are several other authorities cited in the Prologue, from the “ancients” to philosophers to the Bretons, God is by far the greatest source of authority for this *grevoise ovre*³ (line 25). After all, there is no source greater than God. Marie milks this claim for all that it is worth, and religious language abounds throughout the Prologue, although its application is often subtle.

One such subtle application is revealed in the use of the word *mustrer*, whose English translation fails to convey the full implications of the word. Jerry Root, in his article “*Mustrer* and the Poetics of Marie de France,” explains the significance of the word *mustrer* and its religious overtones. As Root writes, “*Mustrer* comes from the popular Latin *mostrare* or *montrare*, both from *monstrum*. *Monstrum* comes from the Latin *monere*, ‘to warn’” (153). In the sense that it is used in the Prologue, *mustrer* is akin to the modern *révéler*⁴ or *faire connaître*⁵ (153). Root further explains, “As its etymology suggests, *mustrer* implies the idea of bringing something unknown to someone’s attention, putting it before their eyes, making it manifest, revealing it in nearly a religious sense” (153-4). What is lost in translation is that God did not simply give Marie knowledge laden with religiously charged language that she then takes upon herself to share with the masses, but more specifically, her work is a revelation in itself. Marie sees writing as her God-given talent and revealing the knowledge that God has given her as her God-given purpose. Marie is a messenger from God, the *lais* a message from God for *Ki de vice se voelt defender* (line 23).⁶

Although Marie establishes early on that her authority comes from divine inspiration and that God has given her the talent to relate the *lais*, she by no means claims that the *lais* originated with her or that God inspired her to actually create the *lais*. On the contrary, Marie gives all the credit to the Bretons. The *lais* are simply something *k’oiz aveie* (line 33).⁷ Marie only insists that she put them together, that *M’entremis des lais assembler,/ Par rime faire e*

keep in mind. Also, the last line is probably closer to “must” or “should demonstrate it willingly,” implying that it is the duty of “whoever” to share this knowledge. The word *duné* is close to *donner*, or “to give.” The distinction between “received” and “given” may seem subtle, but the emphasis on the giver rather than the receiver is significant and will be stressed shortly.

Note: All subsequent quotations from the Prologue will be given first in Old French and then in English in the footnotes. Also, since not all of the lines in the two versions line up, and because lines occasionally are inverted, line numbers are given for both the Old French and the English.

3 “weighty work” (Hanning, line 25)

4 “to reveal”

5 “to make known”

6 The Hanning and Ferrante translation is “He who would guard himself from vice” (line 23), but the gender does not seem to be specified. Instead, it could be read as being directed at “whoever” or “whomever.”

7 “[that] I’d heard” (Hanning, line 33)

reconter (lines 47-48).⁸ If she is to be believed, then all she did was put them in the form that they are found in her text. They are part of a longstanding tradition, Marie explains,

*Ne dutai pas, bien le saveie,
Ke pur remembrance les firent
Des aventures k'il oïrent
Cil ki primes les comencierent
E ki avant les enveierent
Plusurs en ai oï conter,
Nes voil laisser ne oblir. (lines 34-40)⁹*

According to Marie, the Bretons composed the *lais* in order to remember the *aventures* of their people, and, presumably, the lessons that that they hold. Marie, in her turn, is ensuring that these stories, these *aventures*, are passed on.

However, to believe her would be to betray the very lesson that she professes to teach. Marie proclaims,

*Custume fu as anciens,
Ceo testimoine Preciens,
Es livres ke jadis feseient,
Assez oscurement diseient
Pur ceus ki a venir esteient
E ki aprendre les deveient,
K'i peüssent gloser la letter
E de lur sen le surplus mettre. (lines 9-16)¹⁰*

In the first two lines of this passage alone Marie cites two separate authorities, both the

8 “I undertook to assemble these *lais*/ to compose and recount them in rime” (Hanning, lines 47-48).

9 “I did not doubt, indeed I know well,/ that those who first began them/ and sent them forth/ composed them in order to preserve/ adventures they had heard./ I have heard many told;/ and I don’t want to neglect or forget them” (Hanning, lines 34-38). It is interesting, as Hanning and Ferrante note, that these lines have been inverted in order to flow more smoothly in English (Hanning 29). The difference is slight, but in the Old French version *aventures* is placed at the forefront, emphasizing the importance of the word.

10 “The custom among the ancients—/ as Priscian testifies—/ was to speak quite obscurely/ in the books they wrote,/ so that those who were to come after/ and study them/ might gloss the letter/ and supply significance from their own wisdom” (Hanning, lines 9-16). The word *sen* can also be read as “sense” or “meaning” or even “mind,” as it is later used in line 20. Both “surplus” and *gloser* imply adding something to the text.

anciens and *Preciens*, a Latin grammarian, who validate the style of writing she employs in the *lais*. Like the ancient authorities of the literary tradition, as the Latin grammarian Priscian can testify, Marie implies that she wrote the *lais* in a vague fashion so that the audience might *gloser la lettre*. If this is to be taken as advice, which it undoubtedly is if the reader does indeed gloss the letter, then Marie is encouraging her readers to read between the lines in order to discover the meaning hidden within the text. With this concept in mind, a whole new understanding is opened up. The reader no longer takes the text at face value, but looks beneath the surface level.

With this new understanding, the reader then becomes aware that the authorities that Marie cites are, among other things, an elaborate smokescreen. Marie is simply a skilled rhetorician, playing by the rules of the literary game. Marie knows quite well that, as Jennifer Summit writes in “Women and Authorship,” she is dependent upon external forces, since for medieval writers “the act of writing was bound up in the wider social and historical networks of patronage, scribal reproduction and circulation” (92). Marie, like many writers before her, uses the “language of self-negation” (96) and the “language of female humility” (96) to her advantage. Marie knows full well that “the visionary writer establishes her authority on the basis of her self-effacement, in order to show that her writing issues not from her individual consciousness but from a heavenly source” (95). She erases herself from the text. She denies any part in the creative process that forged the *lais*. God is the one who gave her the knowledge and the ability to “assemble” the *lais*. But she does not stop at divine inspiration in order to build her authority through self-effacement. The Bretons are the source of the *aventures* recounted in the *lais*. Not even her writing style is her own. She writes in the style of the ancients, not daring to break outside of that tradition. In addition to her self-effacement, she begs that the reader does not think her to be too bold, writing, “*Ne me tenez a surquidiee/ Si vos os faire ecest present*” (lines 54-55).¹¹ But all of this excessive denial and humility is a ploy, a literary trope to disguise her hand in the text. After all, the use of *mustrer* in the Prologue is actually *se mustrer*,¹² a subtle hint that it is Marie *herself* who is revealing everything; she is more than the simple scribe she claims to be.

The trope of the scribe was not altogether uncommon among medieval writers. Lynn Staley Johnson writes, in “The Trope of the Scribe and the Question of Literary Authority in the Works of Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe,” that medieval writers learned to work around the restrictions of the literary world: “The fact that a text had to be mediated by both a scribe and an audience presented the author with a set of problems—and necessitated a

11 “Do not think me presumptuous/ if I dare present them to you” (Hanning, lines 54-55)

12 This is the reflexive form of the verb. Not only can this be read as Marie being the true voice behind the revelation, but it can also be interpreted as Marie revealing herself, as Marie revealing her own intent.

range of strategies—ultimately related to the degree of authorial control he or she might wish to exert, or be perceived to exert, over a work” (823). The trope of the scribe is one such tool. Marie pretends to be a scribe, or more specifically, a compiler, gathering together “*auctoritas*—that is, selections from authoritative works—into a collection” (Summit 99). Marie, by claiming to have acted only as a scribe on behalf of the Bretons, and more subtly, for God, implies that she has not altered the text. Using the assumption that scribes are simply taking down dictation, Marie is able to deflect the reader’s attention from her own involvement. But even though she insists that she only assembled the *lais*, that she acted as a compiler, the underlying implications of this statement point to at least a minimal involvement in the text. Admitting to being a scribe is admitting to at least a limited authorship of the text in the modern sense of the word. As Johnson explains, “Scribes not only left their marks upon the manuscripts they copied, they also functioned as interpreters, editing and consequently altering the meaning of texts” (820). The transmission of texts alone is subject to alteration since “the act of transmission was also an act of making meaning” (Summit 105). That Marie states “*Rimé en ai fait ditié,/ Soventes fiez en ai veillié!*” (lines 41-42)¹³ serves also as a subtle admission to an involvement that extends past even that of a scribe, as altering the basic structure of the oral tradition of the Breton’s surely altered the integrity of the text somewhat. Scribe or author, either way the text appears to have been altered in one way or another, and by altering the form of the text, Marie has made an indelible mark upon the Breton tradition itself.

That is, if the Breton tradition even existed at all. As Hanning and Ferrante point out, “As there are no extant ‘Breton *lais*,’ we cannot substantiate Marie’s claim or decide to what extent her plots may follow Breton originals” (3). It is quite possible the Breton tradition was entirely fabricated, that Marie simply created an authority for her own work, a way in which her work would be taken more seriously than if labeled as the work of a woman without any authority of her own. However, whether or not the Breton *lais* did indeed exist, Marie evidently labored not only to validate the authority of her work but also to hide the extent of her authorship of the *lais*. But the question remains, simply put, why?

The trope of the scribe serves as more than a smokescreen to hide Marie’s authorship; it is used to veil her purpose in “assembling” the *lais*; as Johnson explains, “Sometimes the scribe served as a screen between the author and the reader and was deliberately used to mask intent, particularly when the author intended to criticize civil or ecclesiastical institutions” (838). If one “glosses the text,” it becomes apparent that Marie does in fact have something to hide. If readers follow this advice, if they read between the lines of the *lais*, the messages

13 “To put them into word and rhyme/ I’ve often stayed awake” (Hanning, lines 41-42)

are somewhat subversive in that they undermine the presumptions of the society to which she belongs.

The lesson that the Prologue, and consequently the *lais* themselves, teaches extends further than the narrow confines of Breton *aventures*. The idea of *gloser la lettre* is potentially subversive in itself. As Summit succinctly puts it, “If, as Marie de France indicates, medieval ‘authorship’ could embrace acts of reading as well as writing, it is difficult to know where to draw the distinction between author and reader—or, indeed, how many readerly activities in the Middle Ages could also be considered ‘authorial’ ones” (102). A reader who truly embraces *gloser la lettre* becomes his or her own authority. From *Bisclavret*, the reader understands that appearances can be misleading. *Lanval* tells the reader to trust his or her own judgment of character and not rely on the judgment of others. *Laustic* teaches that courtly love, and by extension other social institutions, is not all that it is chalked up to be. The idea of glossing the letter is mirrored within the lessons of the *lais*, and, when that lesson is taken outside of the literary and applied to the life of the reader, the message of the *lais* becomes subversive. After all, since Marie writes,

*Li philesophe le saveient,
Par eus meïsmes entendeient,
Cum plus trespassereit li tens,
Plus serreient sutil de sens
E plus se savreient garder
De ceo k'i ert a trespasser, (lines 17-22)¹⁴*

it can be inferred that if the reader wants to avoid *De ceo k'i ert a trespasser*, the reader must *gloser la lettre* of the world. The danger that the *lais* present is that they teach critical thinking and teach readers to think for themselves. And people who think for themselves are not easily manipulated into believing anything that some “authority” declares as truth.

However, Marie has ensured that none of this is immediately apparent. The text itself, and by extension its writer, is without blame. Marie, the scribe, is simply inspired by God and informed by history and tradition. It is the reader who glosses the letter and makes sense of the text. If the reader finds anything subversive within the text, the responsibility for this interpretation falls upon the reader and not Marie. The reader is simply reading between the lines.

14 “Philosophers knew this,/ they understood among themselves/ that the more time they spent,/ the more subtle their minds would become/ and the better they would know how to keep themselves/ from whatever was to be avoided” (Hanning, 17-22).

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A Note From The Author -

As an English minor, it is often assumed that I love writing. However, my relationship with writing is more of a love/hate relationship, although it generally leans more toward hate, especially during the early stages of writing. For me, the writing process is often rather painful. More than a few tears have been shed, far more than I would like to admit. Of course, to be perfectly honest, most of the pains of writing are self-inflicted. I'm a bit of a perfectionist (perhaps an understatement) when it concerns academic writing, and, thanks to my abhorrence of the editing process, I tend to try and write the perfect paper in more or less one draft. Minor edits follow, but nothing too hefty. This often means that I spend unnecessary time stuck on one phrase or one paragraph when I should just move on and come back to that problematic section. Of course, this describes the troublesome paper, the paper that doesn't just magically write itself.

The paper I submitted for Spectrum was not one of those papers that make me regret the life choices that led me down the path of the literature major. There were a few struggles early on, more in the idea department than anything else, but once I reread some articles and found an article that discussed the implications of the Old French, the paper just kind of clicked. I was then able to hole myself up in my room, play Joshua Radin on repeat, and write and write and write until all of my ideas were on paper. I'd chosen a subject that fascinated me, or, to be more precise, several subjects that fascinated me. It is somewhat rare that I have the opportunity to combine my major and my minor, that these two worlds collide. Thankfully, I found a copy of the book in the library in Old French. After that, it was simply a matter of figuring out how to combine an understanding of the Old French with my particular fascination with authority and authorship, especially that of women writers. The fact that I loved the subject matter made this essay enjoyable to write.

As I mentioned earlier, I rarely spend that much time editing my papers. The writing process itself, the constant deleting and rewriting that takes place within the initial writing process, generally suffices. A few tweaks here and there, and it's done. This time, however, I had several required editing sessions, from workshops in class to working with the Writing Center. For me, this was the hardest part of the writing process simply because I was forced to allow other people to give me advice about my writing. Although initially hesitant, many of the changes I eventually made smoothed out the rough edges of the paper. Thanks to my classmates, several sentences and paragraphs were rearranged, greatly improving the flow of ideas within the structure of the paper. Thanks to the Writing Center, I was finally able to grapple with the ending of my paper. The biggest lesson this paper taught me was to ask for help, since others may be able to see problems and solutions that elude me.

- Koko Petit

The Complexity of Justice in Multicultural Societies

Sheryl Tan Xue Wei

Abstract

Joseph Carens writes, “No one supposes that every liberal democracy is morally obliged to adopt exactly the same institutions and politics.”¹ This supposition is not only limited to liberal democracies but also applies to all societies that encounter the intricacy of multicultural differences. Societies have different requirements when considering the problem of justice and equality. Therefore, the problems that inevitably arise due to varying conceptions of justice within a society indeed necessitate limits within which societies can fairly define justice. What is seen as *just* to one group, or culture, may be viewed differently by another. Should one culture decide that its definitions of justice supersede another’s in order to maintain universal values? When and how should a society take culture into consideration in order to formulate a theory of justice? This paper aims to show the significance of the differences that exist within multicultural societies and the results of varying conceptions of justice. The structure of society is not a universal realization but is instead relative to its history, evolution, and interpretation; as such, the complexity of a society should be applied to the formulation of justice.

1 Joseph Carens, “Complex Justice, Cultural Difference, and Political Community,” in *Pluralism, Justice, and Equality*, ed. David Miller and Michael Walzer, (Oxford, England: Oxford UP, 1995), 52.

According to Aristotle, "All men hold that justice is some kind of equality...justice is a certain distribution to certain persons, and must be equal for equals."² This idea underlines the basis for most Western theories of justice: these theories look to *universal equality* as a necessary attribute to a just society. However, they fail to acknowledge the importance of culture, or they assume a culturally homogenous society. As a result, most discussions about justice tend to be lacking in cultural sensitivity. Different cultures and societies subscribe to definitions that have been historically embedded in their traditions, but who is to say that their definition is wrong because their definitions are dissimilar from another? In a multi-polar international system, the implications of ever-growing multicultural societies have become more important than they did in the past when homogenous societies were once the norm. The different ideas of justice in societies have brought forth questions that require answers imperative to formulating theories of justice that are sensitive and fair to cultural differences. This paper investigates the significant differences that exist within different cultures and discusses when justice is necessary in order for society to function objectively. After all, *society*—in terms of its makeup and how it should function—is not a universal realization but is instead relative to its history, evolution, and interpretation; as

2 Aristotle, "Equality and Inequality," in *Political Thought*, ed. Michael Rosen and Jonathan Wolff, (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999), 226.

such, the inherent

complexity of a multicultural society should be applied to the complexity of justice.

History and its relevance in societies and cultures are critical in understanding the diverse conceptions of justice that exist. Societies do not develop overnight; rather, they are formed over time through traditions passed on from generation to generation. Consequently, the values and expectations of a culture may not necessarily be universal. In *Spheres of Justice*, Michael Walzer states, "Goods in the world have shared meanings because conception and creation are social processes. For the same reason, goods have different meanings in different societies. The same 'thing' is valued for different reasons, or it is valued here and disvalued there."³ The application of justice should be understood as a subjective concept, so it requires particular attention with respect to different cultures. In his article "Equality in a Multicultural Society," Bhikhu Parekh points out that "Equality requires that those who are equal in relevant respects should be treated equally"⁴ As such, cultural relevance remains essential in the interpretation of laws to ensure relative justice. Parekh uses the example of a law passed by the British Parliament "empowering the Minister of Transport to require all motor-cyclists to

3 Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*. In *Justice: A Reader*, ed. Michael J. Sandel, (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007), Originally published in Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality*, (New York: Basic Books, 1984), 335.

4 Bhikhu Parekh, "Equality in a Multicultural Society," in *Citizenship Studies* 2.3 (1998), 400.

wear crash helmets.”⁵ The Sikhs in Britain campaigned against the law, which was then amended as the turban was found to satisfy the criterion of serving as another protective headgear. The turban was “accepted as legally equivalent to the helmet,”⁶ thereby ensuring that the law takes into account aspects of culture that do not infringe upon safety precautions. Arrangements made by the legal system can ensure that the principles of equality and choice be maintained with regards to minority cultures without

As a society evolves, justice should naturally evolve to fit society's current needs.

imposing upon the majority cultures of the society. Just because a smaller culture has different requirements does not mean that it needs to give up those requirements in order to assimilate into the majority of dominant culture. A just society should be able to effectively account for these cultural differences.

As a society evolves, justice should naturally evolve to fit society's current needs. Michael Walzer emphasizes that “social meanings are historical in character; and so distributions, and just and unjust distributions, change over time.”⁷ Even though change is constantly occurring, historical influences still remain a large factor in defining a society. For example, religion may evolve to fit into the current globalized system, but there are

certain aspects of a religion that still remain despite the changes that have occurred. Thus, how can a just multicultural society account for these aspects of a culture that are deeply rooted in its history? In Singapore, Islamic schools are required to adhere to the national secular curriculum of public schools while they concurrently engage in religious teachings and beliefs. This allows the

Muslim population in Singapore to pursue an academically-broader education while retaining their religious instruction that may

not otherwise be available in public schools.⁸ A society has to consider the demands presented by both the majority culture as well as its minority cultures, for “the nature of the balance depends on a number of factors such as the importance of the minority practice to its way of life, the kind, extent and cost of the changes required in the society's way of life, and the society's capacity to make the changes without seriously damaging its coherence and stability.”⁹ The complex nature of a society's needs is more evident when trying to compromise among the different needs of its subcultures. Therefore, it becomes even more important for a society to find a balance between acknowledging cultural relevance and diversity while maintaining a common

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid., 401.

7 Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, 336.

8 Norimitsu Onishi, “In Singapore, a More Progressive Islamic Education,” *New York Times*, April 22, 2009.

9 Parekh, “Equality in a Multicultural Society,” 399.

justice applicable to all its members.

How should a culture's history be a consideration for justice within a society? The issue that arises in most debates is that justice is understood as a universal concept equal for all, and fails to account for different notions of what is needed by cultures present within a larger society. In this globalized era, it becomes especially difficult to maintain that society only needs to cater to a single group's needs. Parekh proposes that "[s]ince human beings are culturally embedded, such concepts as equal respect for persons, equal opportunity and equality before the law need to be interpreted in a culturally sensitive manner."¹⁰ Unfortunately, prejudice continues to subsist because society allows for its existence. Traditions and expectations that are passed on from generation to generation make the notion of eradicating prejudice from our societies increasingly difficult. Martha Minow points out that "existing institutions and language already carve the world and already express and recreate attitudes about what counts as a difference and who or what is the relevant point of comparison."¹¹ The Colonial Era is a pertinent example that describes these differences and the roles of colonialism by creating the line between "my culture" and "your culture." Thus:

The picture of "cultural differences" between "Western culture" and the cultures of various Third World colonies that were constructed in colonial times, and that persist in contemporary postcolonial incarnations, was never a simple descriptive project of describing "cultural differences"... The pictures of both "Western" culture and particular "Third World" cultures that resulted were often marked by some interesting peculiarities.¹²

These preconceived ideas of what a culture is serve to further perpetuate general ideas of what a culture is about. In writing about cultural defense, Anne Phillips asserts that "any deployment of culture involves a stereotype,"¹³ which results in the perceivable aspects of a culture becoming products of stereotypes created by other cultures. If the deliverance of justice within a society is based upon stereotypes by the majority culture or the minority culture, can that society be seen as just?

At the same time, this continued perpetuation of stereotypes and preconceived notions of a culture is not entirely due to perspectives of external cultures or out-groups, but is also as present internally in the "victimized" cultures. Uma Narayan uses the example of the *sati*— "a practice where a widow ritually immolates herself

¹⁰ Parekh, "Equality in a Multicultural Society," 408.

¹¹ Martha Minow, "Justice Engendered," in *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Anthology*, ed. Robert E. Goodin and Philip Pettit, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publisher, 2006), 503.

¹² Uma Narayan, "Contesting Cultures," in *The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory*, ed. Linda J. Nicholson, (New York: Routledge, 1997) 402.

¹³ Anne Phillips, "What's Wrong With Cultural Defence?" in *Multiculturalism without Culture*, (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2007), 84.

on her husband's funeral pyre as an indication of her devotion"¹⁴ —and argues that "the perception of *sati* as part of 'traditional Hindu culture' has less to do with historical facts than with contemporary fundamentalist attempts to equate 'Indian culture' with aspects of *Hindu* culture and with practices that embody *their* visions."¹⁵ However, the issue of *sati* is not merely an external stereotype of the Indian culture, but is also maintained through fundamentalist constructions in order to differentiate between Western culture and Indian culture. Because these misconceptions are ingrained in people's beliefs due to their environment, they are less inclined to act in a manner which accepts an environment that differs from their own. "Many of these visions of 'national culture and traditional values' are totalized constructions that pick on certain values and practices that were not universally prevalent, but only existed in specific 'pockets' of the national landscape, depicting them as embodying 'national' traditions or values."¹⁶ A culture should not be seen as an absolute view, but needs to be understood in a manner relative to the particular aspects of that culture. For change to occur, it must ultimately come from within a society by understanding the different practices of each culture in order to change the mindset of the external world.

It remains incredibly difficult for all societies to separate from the mindset of creating a black and white environment within culture-versus-culture situations if a culture's actions only act as a continuation of previous ideas. Minow writes that "[d]ifference may seem salient not because of a trait intrinsic to the person but instead because the dominant institutional arrangements were designed without that trait in mind;"¹⁷ the contrasts between different cultures continue to be constructs of society rather than inherent within the culture. Even though there are certain distinctions within cultures, there are still foundational rights and equalities that a society should establish and ensure as a common ground for all groups. When these differences start to infringe on this foundation, society should be able to step in and make a decision over which is a moral right as to which is a "good thing." The cultures within a society should be able to come to an understanding that justice is the product of their cooperation, not of their disagreements. "Justice...is not abstract, universal or neutral. Instead, justice is the quality of human engagement with multiple perspectives framed by, but not limited to, the relationships of power in which they are formed,"¹⁸ Minow suggests. Different concepts, such as responsibilities and duties, may have different connotations to people of different backgrounds. For example, the duties of a daughter to her family in an Asian

14 Narayan, "Contesting Cultures," 403.

15 *Ibid.*, 405.

16 *Ibid.*

17 Minow, "Justice Engendered," 502.

18 *Ibid.*, 503.

society that subscribes to ideals of communitarianism (rather than the belief of individuality) may supersede her own individual wants. Yet, who can say that the idea of “duty before the individual” is implausible because this particular idea of duty differs from another society?

Similarly, justice, along with equality and freedom, is defined by the society that people reside in, and perhaps, member cultures in a society can come to a common understanding by compromising upon what these terms mean. “We often forget how to take the perspective of another. We forget even that our point of view is not reality and that our conceptual schemes are simplifications, serving some interests and uses rather than others,”¹⁹ Minow contends. Societies need to realize that justice is an ongoing process formulated by all members of a society and it is not to be seen as a universal concept. Cross-communication between cultures becomes essential to formulating a theory of justice that can bind a society closer together. After all, a society can be seen as a complex organism, made up of many smaller, diverse cultures. According to Joseph Carens, the “understanding of justice is acknowledged to be the product of particular time and place, a particular culture and history. It is *our* understanding of justice.”²⁰ Justice remains a complex term, consisting of many overlapping (and sometimes dissimilar) meanings, but it should be possible to find a common intersection between all these meanings in a just society.

19 Minow, “Justice Engendered,” 513

20 Carens, “Complex Justice, Culture, and Politics,” 59.

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A Note From The Author -

A friend once said, “There is no perfect first draft.” Let me expand on that, “There is also no perfect final draft.” How can I squeeze in all my ideas and thoughts into a paper with page limits and time constraints?

And then, there is the dreaded writer’s block...I found myself staring blankly at my laptop more times than I actually spent writing it.

This paper is the product of ideas and thoughts from many different people—the reconciliation of my background as an international student—blended with the many ideas of which I have been exposed. It is not meant to be an absolute perspective, but a different one. It is simply food for thought, and a different view from someone from a different culture.

Perfection, just like justice, is not absolute, but is also relative. The perfect paper is the paper that you take pride in, not a paper that gives you a good grade. During the editing process for *Spectrum*, I realized that the best editors are the people who know me, and the people who are from a different academic background. Therefore, this paper is not simply my work, but the evolution of my ideas through the encouragement and support from many people who pushed me to find new limits to my writing. The most important part of writing is not the end product, but the entire process, especially my involvement and interaction with everyone who helped me write something that I take pride in.

- *Sheryl Tan Xue Wei*

Court Influence: How 18th century Vienna Fueled One of Classical Music's Greatest Rivalries

Kristen Thompson

From the baroque glories of the Habsburg courts arose a city that became the world's musical epicenter, Vienna. Ruled by two great patrons of the arts in the eighteenth-century, Maria Theresia and Joseph II, Vienna gave birth to the artistic genius of numerous musical composers including Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert. Yet, the underlying politics necessary for landing Vienna's powerful court patrons created an atmosphere of intrigue and fierce competition—a place where mediocrity could rule supreme with proper noble favor and innovative genius overlooked due to royal tastes. For Joseph II's court composer, Antonio Salieri, and emerging virtuoso, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, this was the world in which they lived. During the ten years of their intense rivalry, success and failure were determined not just by musical ability, but by the power and opinion of Vienna's royal courts. Despite his comparative lack of musical talent, Salieri was a force in the musical world due to his ability to work within the court systems, while Mozart's failure to comply led to his lack of success. Thus, it was the musical court politics of eighteenth-century Vienna that cultivated an environment

of heightened artistic competition and led to the rivalry between two seemingly disparate composers: Antonio Salieri and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

The emergence of Italian opera in the seventeenth-century was the catalyst responsible for making Vienna the musical capital of the Western world. As opera came to prominence in Naples, it drew the attention of the Austrian monarchy, the wealthy and powerful Habsburgs. The Holy Roman Emperor of Austria and his future successors began to summon Italian court composers to Vienna to start an operatic tradition within the ruling city.¹ Such actions had several powerful consequences that greatly influenced the future of music in Vienna, including the Salieri and Mozart rivalry. Firstly, the importation of foreign composers sparked both outrage and fervent competition from native-born Austrian musicians. Secondly, it instilled a deep-rooted Italian tradition in the music performed throughout Vienna. The Italian stronghold would prove so unyielding that even the musical genius of Mozart was unable to shake it nearly one-hundred years

1 Marboe, *Book of Austria*, 109.

later. Indeed, "Vienna had an Italianophile contingent among its nobility"² as a direct result of this influx of Italian culture. Despite emerging attempts at integrating local German culture into the theaters, the public--and an overwhelming majority of Viennese aristocracy--favored the tradition of Italian operas. Privately, some nobility even promoted Italian culture within their homes.³ Not until Emperor Joseph II converted his mother Maria Theresia's Burgtheater into the Nationaltheater in 1776 was there a deliberate and outward embrace of German opera or music.⁴ But thirdly, and most importantly, since the Habsburgs 'began' this musical revival, music and opera became the symbol of high society and ultimately a monopoly maintained by the royal courts.

Upon the first arrival of Italian composers, the Habsburgs held a court monopoly on all theater production in Vienna.⁵ Therefore, nearly all musical creations within the city were dictated by nobility; they were the city's sole patrons. Musicians could be employed by others as teachers, but their large scale works needed to be commissioned by royalty in order for them to be showcased to the public in Vienna's theaters. Once again, Emperor Joseph II challenged the norms and lifted the court monopoly in 1776,⁶ opening up the possibility of patronage to other members of Vienna. Nonetheless, Joseph II became the

theatre director for the newly minted National theater. While there was a new semblance of freedom, there was no escaping the power or control of the Viennese courts. In addition, musical patronage distinguished the wealthy as cultured and worldly among Vienna's elite. Although music appreciation was now practiced by peasants and the lower middle-class, it was truly the mark of the upper-class bourgeoisie and nobility. The middle-classes still needed time to arise as patrons of prominence following the lift of the court monopoly.

Despite the repeal, nobility during the eighteenth-century maintained unofficial control over theatre production. Music "loomed large in the rites and pleasures of the courts"⁶ as royalty continued to use classical music and opera in every aspect of their celebratory events. Aristocrats and ambassadors regularly held private concerts within their homes.⁷ Upper-class civilians hired musical instructors to educate their wives and children. Musicians flocked to the city, and patrons welcomed them with open arms, eager to showcase their status. Thus, Vienna became the "adoptive home of musicians and men of intellect."⁸ Within an environment flooded with wealthy patrons, classical music, opera, and Italian culture, an aspiring composer arrived to make his indelible mark on the eighteenth-century Viennese

2 Link, "Theatrical and Musical Life," 223.

3 Ibid.

4 Heartz, "Figaro," 256.

5 Link, "Theatrical and Musical Life," 230.

6 Link, "Theatrical and Musical Life," 230.

7 Weber, "Musical Taste," 190.

8 Link, "Theatrical and Musical Life," 210.

Habsburg courts: Antonio Salieri.

As a young boy of sixteen, Salieri arrived in Vienna as a composer perfectly primed to satisfy the musical demands of his patrons. Antonio Salieri was born on August 18, 1750 in the small Italian village of Legnago. His musical studies began with the assistance of his older brother, Francesco, who had studied music in Padua.⁹ This education did not continue, however, as Salieri was sadly orphaned at an early age. Upon moving to Venice at this time, though, he caught the attention of one of the city's most powerful families.¹⁰ Rather off to Naples for traditional training, Venice's current Mocenigo IV, introduced most influential people of court Kapellmeister Gassmann. Vienna was not epicenter it would become, to leave with Gassmann

For it was during this time, nearing the peak of his career, that Salieri was introduced to Mozart, the young musical genius who would challenge him artistically throughout the rest of his career.

the Mocenigos, prosperous and than send Salieri Italian musical doge, Alvise him to one of the his life, Viennese Florian Leopold yet the musical so Salieri's decision to Vienna over

Naples was quite unusual. Nonetheless, Gassmann took in Salieri as his pupil and the two arrived in Vienna on June 15, 1766.¹¹ Joseph II, who maintained a strong affinity for Italian opera, immediately set out to meet the young Italian musician whom his court Kappellmeister now called pupil.¹²

Thus began Salieri's swift ascendancy within the royal courts of Vienna. He started asserting himself within the royal circles, and a mere ten years after first arriving in Vienna, Salieri was appointed chamber composer and Kapellmeister. Salieri was no longer confined to working within Vienna alone, either. He had over eight operas to his name and showcased them around the world in Munich, Naples and Paris, solidifying his universal reputation.¹³ In addition to becoming a world-renowned composer, Salieri was a well-respected teacher of singing and composition. His pupils included Austrian soprano Caterina Cavalieri, Beethoven, Schubert, and Liszt.¹⁴ While Salieri ascended swiftly within Vienna's musical scene, it was his political favor with the emperor that proved of greater importance. "Because of his favor with Joseph II...and of his successive roles as court composer, director of the Italian Opera, and

9 Marboe, *Book of Austria*, 359.

10 Braunbehrens, *Maligned Master*, 14.

11 Ibid., 16.

12 Ibid., 17.

13 Ibid., 23.

14 Schenk, *Mozart*, 311.

court conductor, Salieri was able to wield powerful influence over the availability of theaters and patronage."¹⁵ This influence would soon prove beneficial. For it was during this time, nearing the peak of his career, that Salieri was introduced to Mozart, the young musical genius who would challenge him artistically throughout the rest of his career.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was an Austrian born musical genius, renowned for his works by the age of ten. Born in Salzburg on January 27, 1756, he had an extraordinary musical ability from an early age. By the age of three Mozart began playing the clavichord, and at the age of four began writing short compositions. One day when he was six, he was found playing the violin and sight-reading music despite having never received private lessons.¹⁶ His father Leopold, who maintained a firm influence over his life, took him on numerous concert tours throughout Germany, England, Italy, and eventually Austria. Mozart made his first appearance in Vienna at the young age of twelve. In 1768, he composed his first opera, the singspiel *Bastien und Bastienne*, with Joseph II and his then unmarried sister, Marie Antoinette, in the audience.¹⁷ These musical feats caught the attention of the Prince Archbishop of Salzburg and Mozart began to work under the controlling patron for several years. Mozart's carefree nature and behavior bordering on impropriety did not bode well with the archbishop, regardless of the musician's capabilities. Ultimately, the relationship between musician and patron was a disaster.

Several years later in 1781, Mozart returned to Vienna to an astounding reception. Believing in his innovative genius and counting on the support of the captivated Viennese nobility, Mozart made a radical and unprecedented decision by severing ties with his patron, the Prince Archbishop of Salzburg.¹⁸ Typically, such a move meant the certain death of one's future artistic career. Mozart, however, was more confident. "You are altogether wrong if you imagine that I shall be thought the less of by the nobility and the Emperor," Mozart wrote to his father. "The Archbishop is hated here, by the Emperor most of all"¹⁹ He was correct, as he immediately gained a commission by Joseph II to create a German opera for the Nationaltheatre. Upon this break with his former patron and a new royal commission, "there was no trace of the popular to be found in his compositions, no further concessions."²⁰ Mozart was a free man. This new transition marked the beginning of Mozart's Viennese period and the most artistically creative phase of his career.

While his innovative works were indeed polarizing, Mozart's talent could not be ignored.

15 Borowitz, "Murder of Mozart," 270.

16 Borowitz, "Murder of Mozart," 272.

17 Marboe, *Book of Austria*, 113.

18 Ibid.

19 Schenk, *Mozart*, 291.

20 Ibid.

It was declared by some that, "When the young man of twenty-five, [sic] settled in Vienna, he needed but the opportunity and he would utterly cast all other composers in Vienna into the shade."²¹ Therefore, Mozart presented a tremendous threat to existing musical foundations of Vienna, most notably to those who were prospering greatly within the current system. Mozart's genius was a direct imposition to the success and lifestyle of court composer Salieri. As a result, he cunningly wielded "his adroitness in Viennese opera politics and his prestigious position" within the courts as a weapon against the music of Mozart.²² And so began one of music's greatest rivalries.

In the land of musicians, "the composer of a king had to be politically adroit to retain his position at court,"²³ and Salieri was more than adept. Securing prestigious teaching positions among Vienna's nobility ensured continued financial security in addition to guaranteeing future patronage. In late 1781, the Duke of Württemberg arrived in Vienna with his daughter the princess Elisabeth Wilhelmine. She was betrothed to Joseph II's nephew and heir, Franz. Joseph II sought a worthy piano teacher to educate Elisabeth for her future status.²⁴ At this time Salieri was already a well-respected instructor and knew the value of such a position. Although Mozart was aware of the tremendous opportunity such a role would bestow, he was inept in the court politics necessary to land the role of the Princess of Württemberg's musical instructor. His carefree disposition often led to crass or inappropriate public comments about his peers or the Viennese nobility. While still vying for the instructor position, Mozart was quoted as calling the princess an "eighteen-year-old lout, a regular calf."²⁵ This impropriety cost him the job and favor among the courts. Salieri was awarded the role of piano instructor to the princess. By landing the coveted position, Salieri reasserted himself within the royal courts through aligning himself with the wife of the future Holy Roman Emperor.

Being superiorly musically gifted compared to Salieri, Mozart grew resentful of what he believed was the Emperor's continued favoritism towards the court composer. In a letter to his father he wrote, "As for the Princess of Württemberg and me, it is already over. The Emperor has spoiled the thing for me, because the only one who counts for him is Salieri."²⁶ Unaware of the underlying court politics which cost him the position, Mozart's competitive nature increased. Now, his primary artistic goal was to not only impress the Emperor, but to showcase how his artistic abilities far surpassed those of the court composer.

Mozart was Salieri's only true rival in the operatic medium. Initially, however, Salieri

21 Heartz, "Figaro," 256.

22 Marboe, *Book of Austria*, 113.

23 Thayer, *Salieri*, 96.

24 Borowitz, "'Murder' of Mozart," 284.

25 Weber, "Musical Taste," 180.

26 Schenk, *Mozart*, 307.

was unfazed because he and Mozart were composing in different languages. Mozart's first operatic commission in Vienna was *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, a German singspiel for Joseph II's Nationaltheatre in 1782. German was not of interest to Salieri, nor did he consider himself competent in the language.²⁷ Although Mozart's opera was the only true success of the Nationaltheater experiment, it came all too late. The public's interest in a national opera was waning. "The Emperor, knowing the restless curiosity of his Viennese subjects, again gave them...an Italian

With the closing of and reopening of the was once again to be Fortunately for Mozart,

Mozart was Salieri's only true rival in the operatic medium.

in addition to German, French, and Latin.²⁹ However, once a peripheral menace to Salieri's courtly clout and public popularity, Mozart was now an ever present threat with this sudden artistic shift.

Competition for supremacy of court favor took a heightened turn. Upon the switch back to Italian opera, Salieri was named director and Kapellmeister.³⁰ He was in an evermore influential role, capable of manipulating particular outcomes within his favor. History has not been favorable to Salieri; Academics continue to speculate on the numerous ways he hindered Mozart's career and prevented him from attaining patrons or financial success. While this has been grossly exaggerated, Salieri did indeed use his cunning and authority to produce particular desired outcomes. When Mozart started writing *Le nozze di Figaro*, Salieri was involved with numerous clandestine attempts to cease production. The opera spanned over four hours, requiring a great deal of effort from its cast, crew as well as audience.³¹ Salieri utilized the length as he tried to turn Mozart's cast and royal spectators against him. Mozart and his father grew outraged at the attempts ranging from complaints on arias, to apparent royal prohibitions found within the opera. Mozart's father, Leopold, complained in a letter to peers and patrons, "The cowardly alliance of undeserving people devoted its entire energy to hating, denigrating and disparaging the art of this immortal artist."³² Nonetheless, *Figaro* took the stage in October 1785 and was relatively successful showing nine times until the September of the following year. His masterpiece was overshadowed, however, by Salieri's more popular *Grotta di Trofonio*, showing an illustrious seventeen times during the same

Opera [house]."²⁸ the Nationaltheater Burgtheatre, all opera conducted in Italian. he was fluent in Italian

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., 308.

²⁹ Braunbehrens, *Maligned Master*, 114.

³⁰ Hertz, "Figaro," 257.

³¹ Painter, "Mozart at Work," 200.

³² Braunbehrens, *Maligned Master*, 114.

year as Mozart's *Figaro*.³³ Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and *The Magic Flute* were to meet similar unfavorable outcomes. Despite his genius, Mozart did not play to the royal Viennese tastes, nor was he given adequate support by Salieri and the aristocratic Italians in his operatic productions.

While Mozart's operas are considered masterpieces today, they were relative failures compared to the more popular contemporary works of Salieri. Mozart's style was unrivaled, it was daring, and it was unconventional. Yet, there was not a strong enough audience in eighteenth-century Vienna to see the value of operas like *Figaro* or *Don Giovanni*. With an audience filled primarily by the royalty and its courts, an opera's value lies in how closely it aligned with their traditional Italianophile tastes and Mozart's work never catered to the conventional. Furthermore, it was commonly stated that Mozart's work was simply "too much" for an audience-- royal or civilian--to absorb. They did not have the time or musical ear to fully grasp the rich beauty of his operas.³⁴ The 1984 film, *Amadeus*, discusses this notion in greater detail, that both the royal and civilian audience were simply not ready for Mozart's musical innovation. Although *Amadeus* is a historical dramatization of the encounters between the two men, it captures the essence of their rivalry, works and the Viennese courts in a manner that few scholars can dispute. "I think you overestimate our dear Viennese, my friend,"³⁵ states Salieri to Mozart in the film. While Mozart sought to outdo Salieri by creating the greatest operas to ever grace the stage, his rival knew how to outdo him in a different manner. Although Salieri's "artistic individuality was not strong... [or] important enough to impress upon the opera a new character,"³⁶ his operas were tuned perfectly to the ears of the nobility as well as the public. Italian opera was traditional and popular. So too, was Salieri:

*In other words...Mozart's operas were less to the taste of the monarch and the public in Vienna than those of Salieri, and it was the same all through Germany. Whatever the appreciative few may have thought of Figaro and Don Giovanni, to the general operatic public, Salieri was certainly the greatest of the living composers.*³⁷

Mozart was the genius, but Salieri was the composer of the people. Both men strove to

33 Ibid., 122.

34 Braunbehrens, *Maligned Master*, 124.

35 Thayer, *Salieri*, 97.

36 Schenk, *Mozart*, 368.

37 Shaffer, *Amadeus*, Film.

gain what the other held and both men were fatally consumed by their envy to do so.

While both musicians respected the other's works, Salieri was crippled by his jealousy of Mozart's musical talents. "Mozart's superior gifts...made Salieri's lifelong devotion to music meaningless."³⁸ He knew that Mozart's abilities greatly surpassed his own. Regardless of all his power, prestige and fame, Salieri knew he could not compare to the child prodigy from Salzburg. The film *Amadeus* illustrates this beautifully through Mozart's braying laughter, "directed towards all who have been denied the fire of Salieri felt it was the the gods, reminding attain the artistic envied in Mozart. Salieri's ever present reassert his court and shrewd manner. stemmed directly support Salieri had no intention of losing. When another composer of such genius is one's contemporary, one must do whatever is necessary not to lose favor with the courts or the public.



us common mortals spitefully, maliciously creative genius."³⁹ mocking laughter of him he could never brilliance he so greatly This further explains desire to continually influence in a clever His power and success from the Emperor,

Mozart too was driven by envy, envy of Salieri's power and success, especially among the nobility. In the final days of his life he was mysteriously commissioned to write *The Requiem*. Believing the work to be the supreme masterpiece of his career, the piece that would finally provide him with the success and recognition from the aristocracy he so desired. Mozart became consumed, his envy pushing him to madness. Driven to complete the composition for both the pecuniary and personal success he felt it would bring, Mozart worked himself into a state of physical and mental decline. He "began to speak of death and declared that he was writing the requiem for himself."⁴⁰ Eerily prophetic, Mozart died weeks later on December 5, 1791. He continued to compose *The Requiem* while on his deathbed.⁴¹

Despite being the bitterest of rivals, Salieri and Mozart were not the bitterest of enemies; nonetheless they let their rivalry consume their lives. Mozart worked himself into a state of deterioration and ultimately death. Salieri was overcome with grief and regret. Both had been driven by their need for success and recognition among royalty. The rivalry had run so deep

³⁸ Thayer, *Salieri*, 91.

³⁹ Thayer, *Salieri*, 127.

⁴⁰ Borowitz, "Murder' of Mozart," 282.

⁴¹ Marshall, "Film as Musicology," 177.

that shortly after Mozart's death, rumors began to circulate that Salieri poisoned the genius in order to maintain his position within the Viennese courts. Near the end of his life Salieri attempted suicide and claimed to have "murdered" Mozart, further perpetuating the myth.

He had prevented the world from fully embracing the genius and beauty that was Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Mozart's life was his art and his art had never come to full fruition, all due to Salieri.⁴² In a cruel twist of fate, Salieri realized he was living in a world that was slowly forgetting him, but Mozart was continuing to live on. Vienna and its courts no longer knew their most popular composer.

The rivalry that consumed the latter portion of both Salieri and Mozart's lives produced an outcome that neither could have foreseen. At the time of Mozart's death in 1791, Salieri was the most powerful and popular composer in Vienna, while Mozart was buried in a poor, unmarked grave. Yet today, Salieri's name is all but forgotten as Mozart is remembered as the pioneering musical genius of Vienna's classical era. "Can you recall no melody of mine? I was the most famous composer in Europe,"⁴³ laments Salieri in the beginning of the film *Amadeus*. The nature of their rivalry led to this unforeseeable conclusion. Salieri's popularity was a direct result of playing into the contemporary tastes of the Viennese courts and public. Meanwhile, Mozart's polarizing works fought tradition and introduced new musical styles. Ultimately, the lack of innovation within his traditional works led to Salieri being forgotten, but Mozart's avant-garde compositions saw to it that he will always be remembered.

42 Borowitz, "Murder' of Mozart," 264.

43 Ibid., 266.

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What Is The Hipster?

Amanda Nordby

“On every street corner, Hipsters spread themselves out in neat little groups, leaning on old graffitied brickwork, occupying bus shelters, jamming on their ukuleles, spinning vinyl records at every opportunity, dominating garage sales and generally looking ... cool. Hipsters ... try very hard to look like they don't give a shit about anything, but they give a shit about everything ... They give a shit, about not giving a shit.” –Stuff Hipsters Hate

In the midst of a culture where hippies, beatniks, and punks were no longer considered relevant social icons and youth culture approached homogeneity through mainstream consumerism, hipsters rose to become America's newest symbol of youth rebellion. Hipsters live in the now; they seek to be the first to uncover or create obscure cultural influences and then they turn them into the latest trend. Though they take on many trends and personas, hipsters have one goal: to embrace their own individuality while rejecting the cookie-cutter consumer culture that overwhelms society today.

Since emerging from a small Brooklyn community in the late 1990s, hipsterism has blossomed in almost every major US city. However, it has become much more than America's most widespread counterculture. Hipsters have become media darlings,

attracting frequent attention from periodicals as prevalent as Forbes, The New York Times, Time, and Newsweek. It has become a viral internet sensation; “hipster” and related search terms have been trending on Google since 2004, and blogs about hipster culture, such as Look at This Fucking Hipster and The Hipster Runoff, accumulate millions of visitors daily. Clothing retailers such as Urban Outfitters, American Apparel, and Free People have thrived since recognizing the counterculture as a marketable brand and adopted knockoff hipster trends as their standard merchandise. As much as hipsters attempt avoid the spotlight, their unique culture is constantly imitated. Due to this imitation, the image of the hipster has morphed from a rebellious, audacious, and quirky culture into a charming, society-approved archetype that is as American as

apple pie.

Hipsters are criticized heavily in American society because they are seen as an insincere culture of imitators. Some contend that hipsters only take trends from previous countercultures and shouldn't be recognized as an original culture. Others argue they are a symbol of the lackluster attitude of American youth. Because of accusations like these, "hipster" has become a derogatory label, and the culture it represents is often dismissed as insignificant. However, hipsters are worth more to American society than most are willing to admit. By searching for underground trends, they expose mainstream society to a greater variety of influences. Hipsters enrich youth culture by valuing creative expressions of individuality rather than the blind following of trends. In their pursuit of kitschy underground trends, hipsters combat oppressive social norms that plague youth. Far from being the lost, trivial culture of yuppies society has come to think it is, hipsterism is a dynamic, creative, and genuine American counterculture.

Hipsterism made its first appearance in print during 2003 with Williamsburg resident Robert Lanham's humorous profile of hipsters, *The Hipster Handbook*. Included in *The Hipster Handbook* is an explanation of what a hipster is, a glossary of hipster slang, and a profile of the counterculture's tastes and trends. Lanham says hipsters "distinguish themselves by dressing creatively, ... possess an innate contempt for franchises, strip malls, or the corporate world in general, ... believe

irony has more resonance than reason, [and] are always more culturally aware than most" (Lanham 12-13). Most importantly, Lanham emphasizes, "hipsters will never admit to being hipsters" because putting a label on oneself foils endeavors to be different (Lanham 13).

Hipsterism has grown into a culture well-known for exploring obscure American art, music, fashion, literature, and lifestyles. Rather than defining their style by imitating catalogues or advertisements, which present pre-packaged versions of "cool", hipsters seek to create their own style. In their analysis of hipster culture, Zeynep Arsel and Craig Thompson emphasize hipsters have a "do-it-yourself" attitude toward tastes and preferences (Arsel and Thompson). Whenever possible, hipsters customize or create their own possessions to achieve a one-of-a-kind aesthetic. In fact, this is the goal of the hipster: to be one-of-a-kind in a society where originality seems almost impossible. Hipsters prefer thrift stores to malls, local record stores to iTunes, and underground dive bars to dance clubs. Hipsters pursue their goal by exploring thrift store racks, seedy neighborhood nightlife scenes, and kitschy local shops to find the unfound and make it their own. When they discover their own trends, they exchange them with others in their social group and community and gain more insight into a wider variety of underground trends (Arsel and Thompson). The ultimate result of their creative process of discovery: a completely

unique set of tastes for each hipster.

In addition to their unique and varied tastes, hipsters remain original by avoiding stagnancy. In *The Hipster Handbook*, Lanham explains that hipster culture is constantly changing because hipsters strive to keep their style as “deck” (meaning cool and original) as possible. Trends that were once deck become “fin” (meaning uncool and cliché) as they become too widely adopted (Lanham). *Stuff Hipsters Hate*, a blog dedicated to tongue-in-cheek analysis of hipster culture, asserts that hipsters “give a shit, about not giving a shit” as to what the rest of society considers cool (Erlich). When a hipster believes their style is fin, they will abandon it and search for new, unknown trends to make their own. Because of their aversions to all dull, mainstream, and fin things, hipsters constantly change their tastes. Rather than being easily defined by a set of trends, hipster culture can be defined by its affinity for uniqueness and its dynamic cycle of deck and fin trends.

When and where did hipsterism begin? Though the hipsterism we know today originates in the 1990s, the culture has roots much deeper in American history. “Hipster” is actually a term the contemporary counterculture borrows from a 1940s subculture centered on the then-emerging jazz scene. The term is a manipulation of the word “hip,” slang for “informed” people (Etymonline). 1940s hipsters were generally white, middle-class urbanites with an affinity for the booming jazz scene. They divorced themselves from many aspects of their

“white” culture and instead embraced the lifestyles of African American jazz artists (Arsel and Thompson). Though this early American subculture is far removed from contemporary hipsterism by time and historical context, there are some key similarities between the two. First, both glorify a removal of social norms. Hipsters in the 1940s removed themselves from white culture, and their current-day counterparts remove themselves from societal trends of conformity and consumerism. More importantly, the cultures are similar because they value knowledge of the latest trends. 1940s hipsters divorced themselves from white culture to immerse themselves in the jazz scene as it was becoming popular (Clark Historical Society). Contemporary hipsters, likewise, are the authority on “new cool”; they gain social clout by being the origin of trends and discovering things before they become popular (Arsel and Thompson). It is primarily because of the latter that contemporary hipsters share a name with their ‘40s counterpart.

Hipsterism also pulls influence from all major post-WWII countercultures, including the beatnik, hippie, punk, and grunge cultures. According to *Encyclopædia Britannica*’s definitions of the original countercultures, the beatniks (early 1950s) are manifest in the hipster culture’s rejection of materialism and their celebration of nonconformity and creativity. In addition to the same ideals as the beatniks, the hippies (mid-1960s) share the hipster tendency towards inclusive communities (*Encyclopædia Britannica*). Punk

(1970s) influenced hipsterism with its emphasis on the importance of innovation. Hipsterism adopted its tendency towards thrift store clothing and its trademark flannel shirts from grunge culture (1080s). And so, the influences of countercultures were from as much as fifty years before that hipsterism began.

The first mention of the counterculture ideals in the media is in a 1996 New York Times article profiling Williamsburg, a Brooklyn neighborhood. They were then called “bohemians,” because hipster wasn’t yet a widely used term, and were acknowledged as an influence in neighborhood dynamics. By 2000, a New York Times review of the neighborhood’s nightlife revealed the bohemians had some trademark influences in the area. Bars were described as “charmingly garish,” and they’re characterized by showcasing obscure, emerging bands (Powers). The author also notes the young people “tried spots that no one else had yet declared chic” (Powers). Hipsterism had gained influence in Williamsburg by the new millennium.

The popularity of the hipster movement exploded in the decade since its Williamsburg beginnings. It has been adopted by thousands of teens and young adults nationwide, and it even gained significant footing in other countries, as seen in Google Trends (Figure 1). In a 2008 Forbes article, author Lauren Sherman argues that hipsterism is “currently more powerful than any previous counterculture” because of its large following. How does one account for the recent popularity of hipster

style and ideologies—which by definition ought to be generally unknown?

The counterculture’s popularity mostly is due to the ease of access to its style influences in the information age. Google and other search engines increase the ease with which curious teens and young adults can explore all types of topics, including countercultures such as hipsterism. Furthermore, frequent news coverage and a multitude of hipster-themed blogs keep them in the public eye and allow anyone with mild curiosity and access to a computer or television to stay up-



to-date on the latest hipster news. Because of the technology surrounding them, teens and young adults in the information age have an easier time participating in the counter culture than ever before. Ample exposure from the internet and media ensures that the hipster will not fade out of relevance any time soon.

Hipsterism has also gained immense amounts of popularity because it is an economical option for someone who wants to be stylish while living during America’s recession. In her analysis of Americans living in the current recession, Patricia Marx observes

a culture of youth desperately trying to create an image of affluence. She interviews children in upper-middle class, including a sixteen-year-old girl who says she “gets sixty dollars a week in allowance, which is supposed to cover all her expenses, including transportation, food, and entertainment,” and that “she knows kids who get as much as two hundred dollars a week” (Marx). The teen and her friends spend their allowances on pricey consumer brands, including Apple. “Apple owns us,” says a teen when asked about the brands he consumes (Marx). The cost of materialism in American youth culture is especially emphasized when Marx interviews a girl named Lee. The author reflects:

Lee said that the shoes to wear are still Uggs ... or ballet flats (omnipresent). “I got a Longchamp bag, a nylon thing,” she said “But I think the purse kids want is Vera Bradley,” she went on, referring to a shoulder bag in a bright-paisley quilted fabric that would please any Palm Beach socialite. (Marx)

What is the cost of Lee’s ideal shopping trip? According to Marx’s cost assessments, the combined purchases suggested by Lee would set a customer back over \$300. While this mindset of expressing oneself through costly purchases may be a viable option for America’s upper middle class and above, the majority of people can’t afford to build their identity with designer brands. Credit card debt and bankruptcy abound in America because people try to maintain a façade of affluence by spending more than they

have on pricey designer brands and equally pricey lifestyles. To contrast, hipsters—either appalled by or financially unable to follow this trend of overspending—turn up their noses at overpriced products.

In fact, the hipster aesthetic is so cheap that it is attainable for almost anybody—even those in poverty. Because the hipster lifestyle offers an alternative to a culture that values costly material goods, it is appealing to the middle and lower class—especially college students and young urbanites with little or extra money to throw away. In “Selling Out,” an analysis of the dynamics of hipster culture, David McRaney says hipsters acknowledge they “can’t out-consume each other because they can’t afford it, but they can out-taste each other.” While hipsters like to stay “decked out” in the latest trends, they acknowledge their financial limits and monitor their spending accordingly. Hipsters frequent small artisan shops and thrift stores, rather than overpriced stores in shopping malls. They prefer the cheapest beers, and they buy music from independently owned record stores rather than pricey music stores or department stores. When shopping for their homes, they generally buy from vintage or thrift stores rather than shelling out a pretty penny for furniture and housewares. Instead of driving, hipsters tend to use public transport or ride fixed-gear bikes. Hipster consumption patterns don’t just maintain their unique aesthetic—they also help maintain a manageable, economical lifestyle. Whether they want a case of beer, a way to

get across town to an indie rock concert, or a pair of combat boots, hipsters acknowledge their financial limits and tend to minimize spending.

Finally, hipsterism is popular because it offers a new, refreshing, and empowering way for followers to experience their identity. Americans today tend to depend on advertisements and the media to help them decide what is cool. This helplessness often leaves teens and young adults feeling lost as they attempt to construct their identity in society's image. Rather than creating their image through brands like Lee from the article "Cool Enough for School", hipsters create their image through their own perception of the coolness of off-brand items. Hipsterism encourages creativity and genuine self-expression—a new kind of cool that independent young people can appreciate. McRaney says:

Unknown bands are a special sort of commodity. Living in a loft downtown, wearing clothes from the thrift store, watching the independent film no one has heard of—these provide a special social status which can't be bought as easily as the things offered to the mainstream.

Rather than going to the mall and purchasing the latest version of the commercial world's style, hipster youth are encouraged to start trends and find their own style. They're encouraged to scour record stores and find music that speaks to them—not music that is necessarily popular in the rest of the country. They're encouraged to go through

thrift stores and find things that express their originality. According to Arsel and Thompson, the process by which hipsters find their own trends and styles gives them "feelings of self-discovery, personal enrichment, and identity investment" (Arsel and Thompson 798). In fact, hipsters are stereotyped for being so prideful about their tastes and discoveries that they're viewed as outright pretentious. Common memes, or internet jokes, include the "You probably haven't heard of it," meme (Figure 2) and "I liked ____ before it was cool" meme. Since hipsters discover themselves through a do-it-yourself process, it makes sense for them to have a heightened sense of ownership of their identity and pride in their tastes. Being able to reinvent themselves independent of societal expectations is the most appealing aspect of hipsterism.

Hipsters have been around for over ten years, and experts say they won't be leaving anytime soon. Because they are a constantly-present and relevant culture due to media exposure and the convenience of online searches, anyone can learn about hipsterism and begin immersing themselves in it. Hipsterism offers a stylish way of life that is easy to maintain regardless of one's financial standing. Finally, the high emphasis hipsterism places on creative self-discovery makes it universally appealing, especially to younger people in the process of forming



identities. Google Trends data (Figure 3) clearly demonstrates that the combination of these three factors have facilitated the rapid growth of hipsterism. Additionally, given that interest in hipsterism is predicted to increase by nine percent in the next year, it is apparent that the counterculture has an appeal that destines it to be a part of American culture for years to come.

Hipsterism is extremely popular due to its many positive qualities.

However, the counterculture's popularity comes at a cost. Think of hipsterism as a public Wi-Fi network. A Wi-Fi network is accessible to everybody within a certain radius, and therefore everyone can benefit from connecting to it. However, the network has a fixed bandwidth; it can only transfer so much data at a time. As more and more people connect to it, the limited bandwidth is being shared among a greater number of users. Eventually, the quality of information transfer is compromised for all of the Wi-Fi users because each only receives a miniscule portion of bandwidth to use as they surf the net. Ultimately, when a Wi-Fi network becomes too popular, the experience is cheapened for everyone involved.

The problem of a popular Wi-Fi network is analogous to the ever-increasing popularity

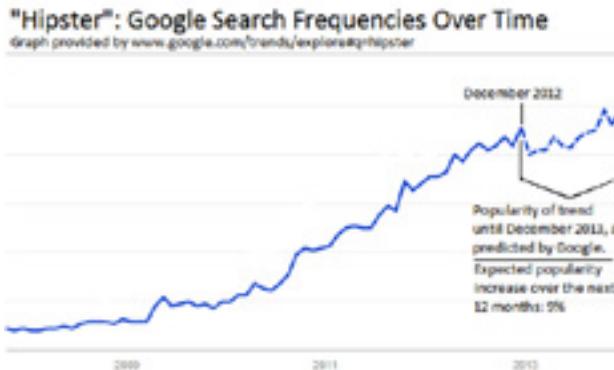
of the hipster--as they leech off the original culture, the experience of being a hipster is cheapened for everyone involved. Hipster wannabes create a false image of what a hipster is because to the untrained eye of society, they are identical to true hipsters. In

fact, the imitators have a greater presence in society because they are the only ones who self-identify as hipsters (remember, The Hipster Handbook states a true hipster will never admit to being a hipster).

Though hipsterism gains strength as it gains followers, it is also true that the counterculture will attract more and more attention from the rest of society. McRaney comments on the mainstreaming of counter culture when he says:

In the 1960s, it took months before someone figured out they could sell tie-dyed shirts and bell bottoms to anyone who wanted to rebel. In the 1990s, it took weeks to start selling flannel shirts and Doc Martens to people in the Deep South. Now, people are hired by corporations to go to bars and clubs and predict what the counter culture is into and have it on the shelves in the cool stores right as it becomes popular.

Refer back to Figure 3, which shows the increasing popularity of hipsterism on the internet. Now refer to its inverse, located



in the upper left corner of the graph. This new graph can be titled "Privacy of the Original Trends of Hipsters over Time." As hipsterism gains popularity, it becomes more and more apparent to entrepreneurs and marketing companies that the quirky, kitschy, independent lifestyle of the hipster is extremely marketable.

In fact, hipster culture has already been taking the commercial world by storm for years. In Apple's 2006 "I'm a Mac" ad campaign, the company uses the image of a young, cool hipster to represent Mac users and a stuffy, dorky older gentleman to represent PC users (Stevenson). Certain hipster trends, such as thick-rimmed, clear-lens glasses, are now available in virtually any department store (Figure 4: a pair from Target, \$12.99).



The trademark hipster moustache has become an extremely popular pop-culture icon and can now be found reproduced on almost any type of product. Books lampooning hipster style, such as *The Moustache Grower's Guide*, *Hipster Puppies*, and blog spinoff *Look at this Fucking Hipster*, are increasingly common in bookstores as more authors realize that people want to read about (and make fun of) hipsters. As many have found, hipsterism is so popular that adding it into any product makes it instantly more sellable. It is important to note that this popularity is contrary to the actual intentions of hipsters, who want their

styles to remain as obscure as possible. This is the difficulty of being a hipster in a hipster-obsessed society.

The image of the hipster is often used by companies to sell individual products. However, the companies profiting most from hipsterism are those who make the entire hipster aesthetic and possible for anybody willing to pay top dollar to imitate the counterculture. Urban Outfitters, American Apparel, and Free People are the most well-known "hipster" stores today. Through investigation of the counter culture, these stores fill their shelves with clothing, shoes, accessories, housewares, art, and music that mimic the most current, ironic, and quirky hipster styles. Thanks to these stores, consumers can now buy a portion of America's vibrant new counterculture during their next trip to the mall. This has proven to be a successful business tactic; Sherman reports that in 2006, stores like Gap are struggling to make sales while Urban Outfitters is thriving because its hipster styles attract the attention of a more rebellious, youthful consumer market. Some analysts see this as a sign that hipsterism is alive and well because it can offer Urban Outfitters a strong customer base. However, the success of Urban Outfitters is a result of its ability of leech off the creativity of hipsterism.

Stores like Urban Outfitters are appealing because they offer consumers an opportunity to try hipster styles without the long process of finding their own in discount stores. It also offers them the opportunity to be "hip"

without the risk of being too different than others. The practicality of Urban Outfitters is undeniable but it has bred, as a young adult interviewed by Arsel and Thompson puts it, a wave of “wannabe consumers who purchase a prepackaged, commercialized hipster ensemble rather than immersing themselves in a do-it-yourself process of aesthetic exploration and discovery” (799). A hipster imitator or “wannabe” can be characterized as one who adopts hipster styles without adopting any of the basic values of hipsterism, including frugality and creative originality.

When Urban Outfitters sells hipster clothing, they imitate an aesthetic achieved by shopping at thrift stores (that is, the classic hipster aesthetic)—and then they sell it to consumers for high prices. In February of 2013, research at the Urban Outfitters in Walnut Creek, California revealed the hipster look can be purchased for over \$100 per outfit. Hipster wannabes who procure hipster style from Urban Outfitters overspend for their clothing; their overspending directly opposes the frugality of classic hipster culture. Hipster wannabes also avoid the sincere do-it-yourself originality, a value treasured by true hipsters. The wannabes don’t want to create their own styles like a hipster would. Rather, the wannabes adopt the same mass-produced trends as the hordes of cookie-cutter consumers frequenting Urban Outfitters.

How do the wannabes besmirch the image of the hipster? Hipsters are generally thriftier than the average American. But, society cannot distinguish between hipsters

and imitators; therefore, society gives the impression that hipsterism is a culture of overspending bourgeois youth when hipster wannabes spend top dollar on their styles. As discussed earlier, hipsterism is a fresh, original counterculture because its participants make sincere efforts to have tastes unique to them. However, hipster wannabes don’t have the time or desire for the process of creative trend-setting. Instead, they follow the hipster-wannabe flock to the nearest Urban Outfitters and buy mass-produced styles. By observing this, society is given the impression that hipsters are just another gullible market of conformist trend-followers. As though by magic, the imitators enshroud what it truly means to be a hipster. Writing for *Adbusters* on the unoriginality of hipsters, journalist Douglas Haddow says, “one mutating, trans-Atlantic melting pot of styles, tastes and behavior has come to define the generally indefinable idea of the ‘Hipster.’” Hipster wannabes add negative stereotypes about hipsters to the melting pot of the hipster definition, thereby cheapening the image of the original, meaningful culture of trendsetters they aspire to join.

Due to the large-scale popularizing, commodification, and insincere imitation of hipsterism as well as society’s inability to distinguish between true hipsters and trend-followers, hipsters are seen in a negative light in American society. In *Adbusters*, Douglas Haddow exemplifies America’s one-dimensional view of hipsters in “Hipster: The Dead End of Western Civilization”.

He declares hipsters to be “a culture lost in the superficiality of its past and unable to create any new meaning” (Haddow). Unbeknownst to Haddow, true hipsters create new meanings for trends and cultural influences every day. They are the opposite of superficial because their original style comes from a sincere creative process. However, they are overshadowed by the overwhelming number of wannabes who rock identical outfits from the latest Urban Outfitters catalogue. Haddow also says hipsters aren’t a counterculture because they do not challenge “the dysfunction and decadence of their elders” (Haddow). However, true hipsters do precisely that—they reject the “dysfunction and decadence” of a main culture obsessed with conspicuous, conformist consumption by staying away from malls and department stores. However, because hipster wannabes neglect the actual values of hipster culture, they do not follow suit; they are happy to join the consumer culture that threatens to swallow America. In essence, society has a falsely negative view of hipsterism because the culture is obscured by copycats.

Hipster hatred is founded in society’s disgust at wannabe hipsters. When only directed at wannabe hipsters, the hatred is legitimate; wannabe hipsters are the unoriginal, superficial consumer culture described in Haddow’s article. However, hipster hatred is indiscriminately directed toward anyone who appears to be a hipster—including the genuinely creative participants of the counterculture. When society makes

no attempt to distinguish between the herd of hipster imitators and the counterculture’s true members, The Hipster Handbook author Robert Lanham asks in “Look at this Fucking Hipster Basher”:

What remains for artists and bohemians who are legitimately trying to be part of a counterculture? You get the sense that if Jimi Hendrix were to show up in Echo Park today, he’d be publicly mocked in a style section piece on blipsters for wearing a feathered fedora. Duchamp would have given up as soon as he appeared on dadaist-or-douchebag.com. And Warhol would be demonized as a hipster gentrifier for setting up his factory in a Brooklyn warehouse. Critics continue to complain that we live in an era where all art is derivative and devoid of substance. But if Hendrix, Duchamp, or Warhol were alive today, we’d be doing our damndest to derail their self-expression, dismissing them as fucking hipsters.

Lanham has a point. Hipster hatred discourages the more recent culture of false hipsters, but it also discourages the root hipster culture composed of artists and trendsetters. For every handful of bourgeois urbanites that equate closets full of Urban Outfitters threads to originality, anti-consumerism, and anti-corporatism there is at least one sincere hipster creatively sculpting their identity through their own perceptions of cool. That hipster must be taken into consideration by the American public and judged fairly—not thrown into the media slaughter with the rest

of the hipster wannabe sheep. Otherwise, the true hipster may become discouraged from their creative pursuits—and America would be suppressing a culture full of potential artists who may become the next “Hendrix, Duchamp, or Warhol” (Lanham). True hipsterism is a dynamic, sincere counterculture that encourages creativity and self-expression; American should take care to avoid attacking this cultural gem with hipster hatred.

America has a lot to learn from the hipsters. Hipsterism has grown in popularity because it is a counterculture in which “cool” is redefined as “different” and “original.” It encourages an attitude of continual creativity and reminds people their identity can be self-made, rather than shaped through society’s image. Hipsters prove that a person can be cool without being owned by brand names or spending large amounts of money—a fresh attitude when compared with the (over)spending mindset of Americans as a whole. Becoming a hipster is a

journey of self-discovery that liberates people from societal expectations and teaches them to make their own tastes instead of deriving them from advertisements, the media, or peer pressure. All of these are reasons hipsterism is so “deck”. However, Americans have come to appreciate the wrong parts of hipsterism. Ignoring all of the unique ideologies of the hipsters, they have come to focus only on the material aspects—their kitschy style. By adopting only the hipster aesthetic and none of the sincere parts of the counterculture, the American public has trivialized a culture of artists, trendsetters, and rebels. If Americans could learn to adopt the hipster mindset and create their own original styles, they would be able to appreciate hipsterism for all that it is. Rather than reducing the counterculture to a cookie-cutter consumer ideal or heavily stereotyped joke, Americans should learn to appreciate the dynamic, rich counterculture hipsterism has grown to be.

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Please submit via e-mail to waccenter@stmarys-ca.edu with Spectrum 2014 in the subject line, or in person to the Center for Writing Across the Curriculum, Dante 202. Please include the writer's name, the professor's name, and the course number. Writing may be submitted by the student writer or the student's professor.

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