
JOURNAL OF THE SPEECH AND THEATRE ASSOCIATION OF MISSOURI

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Reflections: 75 Years of STAM

A Reflection of STAM

Bob R. Derryberry

STAM—Reflections on 75 Years

Ed See

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Conversations from my Shoe: A Playwriting Exercise for Social Development

Laurie Melnik

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**Journal of the Speech and Theatre
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Volume 37, Fall 2007

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Policy Statement and Call for Papers
Journal of the Speech and Theatre Association of Missouri
Fall 2008 – Volume 38

The editor of the 2007 *Journal of the Speech and Theatre Association of Missouri* is presently accepting manuscripts. Scholarly articles, book and resource reviews, and teaching resources are all encouraged. Scholarship from a diversity of areas from the discipline encompassing communication, speech, and theatre will be considered. These areas include, but are not limited to: Speech, Debate, Theatre Instruction and Performance, Communication Theory, Interpersonal Communication, Intercultural Communication, Health Communication, Rhetoric, Persuasion, Organizational Communication, Political Communication, Family Communications, Listening, Communication Ethics, Mediation, Public Relations, Film, Mass Media Theory, Mediated Communication, and New Communication Technologies.

All submissions should be in Microsoft Word. References should follow the latest edition of the American Psychological Association style manual. Three paper copies and a diskette copy should be included with each submission. A detachable page with author affiliation should be included with the paper copies. All submissions should be received by February 11, 2008, to insure full consideration for publication.

Updated submission information for volume 38 will be available in October of 2007 at the website for the Speech and Theatre Association of Missouri – www.stamnet.org

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A Reflection of STAM

Bob R. Derryberry

In response to occasional light-hearted queries from friends and associates about the length of my tenure in teaching and affiliation with the Speech and Theatre Association of Missouri, my memories happily include almost four decades of rewarding relationships with our organization. With my colleagues, I am amazed as I glance through STAM programs and journals. One publication reminds me that only thirty-one years ago convention organizers advertised the availability of a block of rooms at the \$18.00 rate for double occupancy! Regular membership in the same year was priced at the \$4.00 figure.

My memories emphasize that our organization has given and continues to provide unique professional encouragement that is found in very few other places or associations. From my perspective, the Speech and Theatre Association of Missouri has provided inspiration, association, and professional growth through its unique network of individuals devoted to speech communication and theatre enrichment and recognition in our state.

As I reflect upon decades of conventions and activities, I remember the excitement and anticipation of friends from a variety of educational backgrounds arriving on location for a few short days of professional growth and mutual support. I recall hearing new and experienced voices of fellow members exchanging ideas for speech communication courses or activities, educational theatre, and debate-forensics. I remember lively discussions on a broad ranges of topics and challenges in secondary and higher education. Often, when I think of the Speech and Theatre Association of Missouri, I remember inspiring educators, and my list only begins with names such as Loren Reid, Sally Crawford, Larry Grisvard, Ron Wineinger, Dan Curtis, Ben Martin, James Floyd, Bob Bilyeu, Sara Hart, Tom Harte, Richard Rice, Karolyn Yocum, Dan Curtis, Leslie Irene Coger, David Peerbolte, and colleagues including Peggy Dersch, Scott Jensen and Joel Short. Consistently, each convention program has introduced numerous and dedicated members who serve the organization, present programs, and publish ideas that inform and inspire.

When I reflect upon the mission of STAM through the years, I recall strong advocates of professional standards, and I remain grateful for the encouragement of colleagues who have been willing to share their talents and research with others. I recall many outstanding organizational and educational displays and the presenters who contributed to the courage of new coaches and directors. Significantly, the initial introduction of many vital educational issues found healthy environments for discussion at STAM gatherings of the past years.

I also think about the role of STAM in promoting leadership and the growth of members through the years. The blend of secondary and collegiate participation has always been exciting, and I am delighted that STAM has also balanced program participation and involved new educators and experienced professionals from diverse educational levels. I hold special memories of service on the Board of Governors, a body that continues to give long hours in deliberation of communication-theatre education while serving particular needs of small and large educational institutions.

I am grateful for the outstanding record of STAM as it celebrates seventy-five years. The voices of our organization's past are certainly joined by strong membership and leadership in 2007 in meeting new challenges.

STAM--Reflections on 75 Years*Ed See*

Seventy-five years! To survive, and even thrive, for seventy-five years is an achievement for any one or any thing. And so this is a milestone year for the Speech and Theatre Association of Missouri (STAM), which was originally founded as the Speech Association of Missouri (SAM) seventy-five years ago by a small band of dedicated individuals. It is appropriate that we pause and salute those visionary pioneers. And to remind ourselves why they believed there was a need for a state-wide organization promoting and improving speech and theatre education at all levels in Missouri. We should ask ourselves whether we are accomplishing what Loren Reid and the other founders hoped to accomplish seventy-five years ago.

My personal involvement with STAM began in the early 1960's when I was teaching speech and theatre in a brand new Raytown South High School. When I reflect back upon my years with STAM, I immediately remember the wonderful STAM colleagues and how they enriched my life, both personally and professionally. For me, STAM is not only annual conferences, workshops, banquets, and committee work (all important elements) but people like Larry Clark, Larry Grisvard, Lesley Irene Coger, Jim Highlander, Wayne Brown, Ron Wineinger, Frances McCurdy, Mary Donna Ross, and so many others over the years. I have tremendous appreciation and respect for all those who have stepped up in the past and led and mentored us through STAM. I will forever be indebted to Lorene Nichols Polen, who introduced me as a young teacher to STAM many years ago and impressed upon me the importance of being professionally active.

To appreciate the value of STAM, try to imagine what the past seventy-five years would have been like if it had not existed. What would have or could have filled such a void? For example, it was the united efforts of STAM which successfully fought back against state attempts to weaken standards and requirements for certification to teach speech and theatre in public schools. STAM's advocacy efforts on behalf of speech and theatre have advanced our legitimacy and identity in the curriculum. Of course, this is an ongoing struggle which requires our continual and coordinated attention and action. We have repeatedly

learned over the years the importance of being united. Because STAM brings together teachers of speech and theatre at all levels of education throughout the state, we have been much more effective as an organization than if we had been divided. We have also learned the hard way that we lose if we get pushed to the margins and are viewed as peripheral "extra"-curricular activities. Through STAM's diligence, we can earn our place in the curriculum.

It is true that over the seventy-five years of STAM's existence, speech communication and theatre have evolved as more separate and discrete disciplines and, in higher education, what were once more encompassing "Speech Departments" are now likely separated into individual departments of "Speech Communication," "Theatre," "Broadcasting and Film," "Speech Pathology and Audiology," etc. Yet we have a common heritage and we are more likely to be heard in bureaucratic domains when we speak with one voice, which STAM allows us to do.

To deserve our place at the table, we in speech and theatre must have worthy programs taught and directed by qualified and dedicated teachers with clear-cut goals and philosophies. We should not be teaching speech or theatre if we are not well-prepared to our content areas. Otherwise, our students will be ill-served and our disciplines diminished. And, again, I believe STAM played a significant role in improving the quality of our teaching, which has led to stronger speech and theatre programs throughout the state, in rural, urban and suburban schools. It has provided an invaluable link between teacher education programs in colleges and universities and the high school and middle school teachers. However, we can and we must do better!

Overall, STAM's first seventy-five years have been proud years of achievements. Where do we go from here? The past is prologue. We have learned that we can't stand still or we will be left behind or even regress and lose our identities and be back where we started, as some weak component of English programs. Will there even be a STAM seventy-five years from now? If so, what will it look like and, more importantly, what will it represent and stand for?

To some, STAM is like the mythical village of "Brigadoon" in the old musical, which only appears briefly and then disappears for a time. Should STAM primarily be a conference organization that emerges each fall for three days of workshops, awards banquets, board meetings,

and fellowship and good cheer and then disappears into the mist while the congregants go back to their real lives in the classroom, the forensic tournaments, or the rehearsal hall? Are we here primarily to provide remedial workshops for newly minted or ill-prepared speech/theatre teachers or do we have a broader vision and purpose serving all levels of education in Missouri? If the latter, how do we proceed to achieve our professional goals as an organization? That is the challenge for future and for the next generations who inherit the mantle and legacy of Loren Reid and the other leaders of STAM who preceded us.

And, of course, we must always consider our students, who are the real reason for an organization like STAM. Their learning, development and achievements must continue to guide us in all that we do. Otherwise, why are we here?

And, finally, HAPPY BIRTHDAY, STAM!!!! Let us celebrate!!!!!!!!!!

**The Process and Impact of Ethnodrama:
Reflections on *Bible Beater/Bra Burner***

Jennifer L. Freitag

Abstract

The ethnodrama, Bible Beater/Bra Burner, asks probing questions about what it means for a woman to claim or reject a Christian, feminist, or Christian-feminist identity. It focuses on the experiences of fifteen eastern Iowa women and includes multiple perspectives on faith, motherhood, relationships, politics, homosexuality, choice and freedom within and without the church institution. This essay explains the rigorous methodological steps taken to achieve a social conscious, critically engaging and ethically responsible ethnodrama that inspires personal reflection and social understanding. Through scripted dialogic conversation, the utopian performative is realized, revealing the potential for social change that begins on a personal level.

This project began as a personal struggle of identity performance. Academic theory, historical research and the journeys of fifteen eastern Iowa women birthed an ethnodrama of dialogic conversation, critical perspectives and authentic struggle. Ultimately, a utopian glimpse of the power of social change through staged performance is the experience that stays with me.

Bible Beater/Bra Burner was a personally challenging, professional rigorous and artistically exhausting project. The ethnodrama that resulted, however, has implications important for the performance studies field. This paper articulates the inspiration, methodology and writing process of the ethnodrama, *Bible Beater/Bra Burner*. It highlights the scholarly significance of such work while giving voice to the personal impact it can inevitably effect, especially in the context of autoethnographic experience.

Inspiration for *Bible Beater/Bra Burner*

In my experience, adoption of either a “Christian” or “feminist” label of identity has usually prompted a cluster of mostly negative terms associated with each. The seeming assumption that these two labels are bipolar opposites has caused confusion not only in the way I perform my own identity, but in the way the labels seem to converge and diverge in the lives of individuals around me. My own extreme self-awareness has cautioned my use of identifying with either school—Christianity or feminism. As I have performed my identity to others in daily life, I have embraced tenets of both “sides,” discarding labels of identity associated with each and striving to redefine the words used to misrepresent and disrespect us in our seemingly progressive Western society. I have been cautious to use the word “Christian” when voicing my opinion in the academic sphere because I am aware of the repercussions and barriers this blunt identification usually provokes. I have been afraid to call myself a feminist in Christian circles where I know quick, negative assumptions will be made evaluating my spiritual maturity. “Feminist,” in my experience, is simply a word not used in the self-identification of anyone in Christian social circles I have been a part of. Yet I have never felt *ashamed* of bearing either label—only fearful of the connotations I suspected others ascribed to me for bearing either label. The labels have made discussions more difficult, forced my need to prove myself to others, sometimes closed doors of connection completely and even threatened to damage relationships I possess with individuals who identified themselves in only one of these schools. At times, I have hypothesized that perhaps the joining of these “sides” is an unrealistic ideal, and that any such coming together on a Christian feminist continuum would mean compromise on one or both sides.

Reflecting on these personal struggles of identity in my own life eventually led to me to question whether other women struggled in similar ways. I began to wonder if there were other women in Iowa who identified as both Christian and feminist and about the journeys taken to get there. I wanted to know how women defined these ideologies. I was interested in analyzing the power of Christian and feminist labels and the choices women made whether or not to self-identify with a label. I was also interested in how staged performance could be used to approach these issues of identity. Thus, I designed an ethnographic research

project to address the following questions: *How do women negotiate the relationship between Christianity and feminism in their daily performances of identity? How does language function for and against this performance of self? How can staged performance be used to approach these issues of women's identity?* These questions reflect the twofold nature of this project: (1) an ethnography that explores the experiences of women who self-identify as both Christian and feminist, and (2) a creative analysis of the data through ethnodrama, a performance script written from the ethnography. The ethnodrama, *Bible Beater/Bra Burner*, asks probing questions about what it means for a woman to claim or reject a Christian, feminist, or Christian-feminist identity. It focuses on the experiences of fifteen eastern Iowa women and includes multiple perspectives on faith, motherhood, relationships, politics, homosexuality, choice and freedom within and without the church institution. *Bible Beater/Bra Burner* was presented to the public on April 20-22, 2006 in the University of Northern Iowa Interpreters Theatre.

The project began with an investigation of theory to inform my ethnographic and ethnodramatic scripting processes. The theoretical backbone of this project was interdisciplinary in nature, including exploration of liminality in performance and method, conceptualizations of performance, performativity and ritual, and theories of identity performance at the intersections of gender/sex, religion and rhetoric. I discovered that resistance to dominant standards of social behavior in gendered, religious and rhetorical performativity creates complex intersections of liminal identity performance. The power and meaning of gender roles, religious rituals and performative stereotypes became central to this ethnography/ethnodrama.

I also spent a significant amount of time exploring the historical performance of Christian and feminist identities, specifically through the waves of women's movements in the United States. I found it critical to understand the convergences and divergences of these identities in order to grasp the contemporary relationship between them. Historically, feminism and Christianity have had a long, complicated, sometimes conflicting and sometimes harmonious relationship. In contemporary United States society, the oxymoronic combination of Christianity and feminism has been both harmonious and oppositional; in many ways, contemporary debates and dichotomous battles prevent meaningful

discussion about third wave issues relevant to both Christian and feminist ideologies. This perspective ultimately informed many scripting decisions as well as expose ethical responsibilities to all those involved in the process. It also allowed me to imagine the possibilities of social change ethnodramatic work in this area could bring.

Methodology of *Bible Beater/Bra Burner*

As I have already mentioned, this project embodied a two-fold approach that began with ethnography. I invited women who self-identified as both Christian and feminist to participate in qualitative interviews. I interviewed fourteen eastern Iowa women on their perspectives and experiences relative to Christian and feminist identity. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis. I found it necessary to focus on women's experiences given that men's voices have been historically privileged in Christianity, and women's experiences have been historically marginalized in many areas. Miller, Taylor and Carver (2003) assert:

The story of women's autobiography is the story of resistance to the disembodied, traditionally masculine "universal subject" whose implicit denial of skin color, gender, sexual orientation (other than heterosexual), and economic disparity constrained many women as "others" with no voices or physicality. (p. 4)

I sought visibility of women's perspectives in a way that was reminiscent of second wave consciousness-raising groups, and this decision also reflected my overall feminist aim to break down hegemony in contemporary scholarship.

The fifteenth perspective included in this ethnography was my own. Although traditional ethnography includes qualitative interviews and field observation, autoethnographic data of my own experiences and perspectives provided the fieldwork component of this ethnographic research. I considered myself a research participant in this process, a natural extension of my already subjective relationship to this topic. In this way, I feel I was a more intimately involved and active co-performer in this project, thereby influencing the dynamics of power (Turner, 1975) throughout this project. My personal experience as a Christian feminist provided a foundation of lived experience that not only allowed me to

connect more relationally with my participants, but also provided the firsthand field experience needed to authenticate their stories through analysis. As a practicing Christian, I had experienced many of the rituals associated with the Christian religion. As a feminist, I understood the foundation of critical feminist views of Christianity. It was useful to embrace my own experiences not only as a tool for creating a trustworthy rapport with the women I interviewed but also to add depth and purpose to my work. I agree with Kenneth Burke (1989) that true objectivity is unattainable; instead of attempting the impossible, I decided to use my passion and experiences in these areas to contribute to the whole of my research. By integrating my own experiences with those articulated in the interviews, I was able to engage both personally and academically with my own and other women's experiences in a way that was both critical and meaningful. My own experiences and perspectives were also useful during the script writing process of the ethnodrama, which I explore more thoroughly in the next section.

The data analysis for this project differed significantly from traditional ethnographic analysis in that it employed the creative writing of a script to analyze the most meaningful liminal experiences of the interview subjects. My third research question (*How can staged performance be used to approach these issues of women's identity?*) asked how staged performance can be used and is answered through the ethnodrama, *Bible Beater/Bra Burner*. According to Johnny Saldaña (2005), "Ethnotheatre employs the traditional craft and artistic techniques of theatre production to mount for an audience a live performance event of research participants' experiences and/or the researcher's interpretations of data" (p. 1). An ethnodrama is a type of ethnotheatre that involves the creation of a script from ethnographic data. According to Saldaña (2005),

An *ethnodrama*, the written script, consists of dramatized, significant selections of narrative collected through interviews, participant observation field notes, journal entries, and/or print and media artifacts such as diaries, television broadcasts, newspaper articles, and court proceedings. Simply put, this is dramatizing the data. (p. 2)

Ethnodramas give researchers opportunities to use performance as a “pragmatics of inquiry” (Conquergood, 2002b); in this case, as a method for data analysis.

Ethnodramatic writing was extremely appropriate for this project given its ability to address liminal experiences by troubling boundaries and barriers of separation between individuals (Denzin, 2003).

Ethnodramas both recreate liminal experiences and themselves become spaces of liminality. Denzin (2003) comments that “ethnodramas focus on crises and moments of epiphany in the culture. Suspended in time, they are liminal moments” (p.83).

Also known as public-voice ethnographies, ethnodramas are important for giving voice to previously ignored or marginalized voices (Denzin, 2003), especially because they are performed to a public audience. Miller, Taylor and Carver (2003) assert:

Until a life is shared through writing or performance, it does not exist at all, or at least it does not resonate in the broader realm of public consequence. (p.4)

Ethnodramas make multiple perspectives visible by involving “participant and audience empowerment through forum reconstruction and ‘dialogical interactions’” (Mienczakowski, 1995, p. 361).

Conquergood (1985) explains the goal of dialogic conversation:

This performative stance struggles to bring together different voices, worldviews, value systems and beliefs so that they can have a conversation with one another. The aim of dialogical performance is to bring self and other together so that they can question, debate and challenge one another. (p. 9)

Similar to performance ethnography, ethnodrama “makes visible who the players are and gives room for multiple truths to exist simultaneously” (Jones, 2006, p. 344). It was with this goal in mind I began to write.

The significance of employing this two-fold methodology is extremely important for the performance studies field. First, it provides an avenue for presenting ethnographic data to the public without compromising the confidentiality of participants. Second, it allows the ethnographer to analyze ethnographic data through creative writing, thereby exploring a new avenue beyond traditional data analysis. Third, it keeps the ethnographer extremely accountable to the interview participants because the ethnodrama is presented to the general public.

Fourth, presenting a theatre performance provides the general public a way to engage with scholarly research they may not encounter without reading academic journals. Fifth, it provides a forum for understanding diverse perspectives, a positive root of social change.

Writing *Bible Beater/Bra Burner*

Although my data analysis through creative writing was anything but linear, I can reflect on several “steps” I employed throughout. My knowledge of rhetorical analysis informed this process; first, it allowed me the freedom to analyze the data and write creatively without adhering to a strict formula. Just as Nothstine, Blair and Copeland (2003) suggest that rhetorical analyses are “at their best, critically, when they are least rigorous ‘methodologically’” (p. 40), so was the composition of *Bible Beater/Bra Burner* most beneficial without strict guidelines that would limit its creative potential. Lucas (1981) encourages rhetorical scholars to “reject the uniform application of predetermined formulas, which are most likely to produced scholarship that is dull, mechanical, unimaginative, and commonplace” (p. 16).

Second, using rhetorical method to inform my ethnodramatic writing helped me to identify which narratives made the most meaningful arguments important for inclusion in the script. These narratives would be positioned against one another in a balanced conversation between perspectives. As I analyzed the interview transcriptions, I closely examined what arguments were made through each narrative and how the participants’ narratives overlapped, paralleled or opposed one another. I examined how participants used narratives to express or justify their positions on various issues. One poignant example in *Bible Beater/Bra Burner* is the birthing scene near the end of the second act. One participant told her story (performed as a group monologue in the script) of horrible pain, loneliness and frustration through child labor to argue that if God loved women, she would not have had to endure such a horrific experience.

As I became more involved in the writing of *Bible Beater/Bra Burner*, I had to decide how I would develop characters in the script to depict the experiences of one or more interview participants. Ultimately, I wrote the script for nine voices. I made this decision for two primary reasons. This allowed me to create composite characters in the script

representative of two or three women's perspectives. Although I was hesitant to do this given my conviction that each woman's voice be heard in the performance, I soon realized that creating composite characters helped me create a more balanced array of perspectives. Combining the overlapping perspectives proved to be more artistically appropriate for representing similar views than using two or three characters whose perspectives echoed one another; this way, I was able to create more distinct characters with notable difference in background, experience and opinion.

I decided against representing myself as a character in the script primarily because I wanted to be extremely cautious not to privilege my voice as ethnographer and director. Instead, I framed the participants' stories from my own position as a researcher and participant, knowing that *Bible Beater/Bra Burner* was ultimately the stories of women told through my perspective. I wanted to make the interview subjects' experiences the foci of the performance; thus, I decided to make my voice visible but not central in the script. My voice functioned to frame the ethnodrama; for example, I began Act I with a choral reading of segments of my informed consent letter and research questions.

Throughout my writing process, I used verbatim monologues from interviews as much as possible. In my attempt to employ various artistic writing techniques throughout the performance, I scripted conversational monologues, group monologues, traditional scenes, conversations between characters, and poems. I used various theatrical techniques including choral reading, spoken word, visual imagery and physical movement to convey the depth and variety of perspectives while keeping the audience engaged in the performance. I also use religious, feminist and academic literature, music and PowerPoint slides throughout *Bible Beater/Bra Burner* to dialogue with the participants' perspectives. For example, I used portions of biblical text and excerpts from a Planned Parenthood website during the abortion scene in Act II to dialogue with the women's personal experiences and opinions on the subject. Another scene in Act II that approaches homosexuality utilized voiceovers of interview segments over a powerful worship chorus. At the end of Act I, slides of diverse images of women were displayed during a peaceful song to convey the harmonious parallels between Christianity and feminism.

To remain critical of my own writing process, I invited colleagues and interview participants to read the script for constructive feedback multiple times. Because my goal was to bring the perspectives together in a dialogic conversation and not to further my own views, I invited others to keep me accountable to this. I also had to examine the impact of my own point of view and goal for the project. This involved asking myself a series of questions informed by Michael Keck's (personal communication, April 23, 2006) methodological framework for ethnodramatic writing. Keck, a designer and facilitator for workshops in various settings including prisons and correctional facilities, asks several ethical questions considered within the context of this project. In his framework, Keck asks, "What is your relationship to the issues? What are your experiences/preconceptions/expectations?" I had to realize my subjective, autoethnographic relationship to the interview data and participants to remain self-critical through my writing. I also had to be aware of my own personal bias to ensure that my goal in writing the script (creating a dialogic conversation between multiple perspectives) was not overshadowed by my own desire to further specific perspectives I had on particular issues.

Keck then asks, "How will your project affirm and support the community issues and concerns? How will your work give voice and agency to the community and how will it support transformation?" Addressing these questions involved choosing narratives and portions of interview data for inclusion in the script that truly spoke to issues and concerns of the interview participants. I also labored to position their perspectives and stories against one another in a way that allowed for a balanced dialogue that did not privilege some stories over others. I realized that if I included a certain perspective on an issue, I needed to include other perspectives that questioned or challenged it. An example of such dialogic conversation is a scene in Act II in which all characters are seated on the floor, as if at a church picnic, having a conversation about multiple issues. For this scene, portions of verbatim interview data were used to script an honest conversation between the women on a variety of issues including politics, the division of church and state and the oppression of religion. Throughout the conversation it is clear that very opposing views are present. I also wrote the script to present participants' perspectives for analysis by an audience, as opposed to analyzing the data and presenting clear answers to questions that arose in

the data. Consequently, I approached my writing to support transformation through promoting dialogue, honesty and understanding. I also found it important to support transformation by writing the script to allow audiences to learn or understand something about themselves or others, a necessary step toward personal change (Goodall, 2000). Thus, in order for an audience to connect with the stories in *Bible Beater/Bra Burner*, the scripted stories needed to produce meaning.

Keck further questions, “What are some of the ethical issues surrounding your attempts to represent, to depict or portray, the community and its inhabitants?” This question is reminiscent of Denzin’s (2003) pondering, “Who can speak for whom?” and it made me extremely aware of my ethical responsibility to authentically represent my interview participants’ experiences and perspectives as much as possible through the script, especially because it would be performed for a public audience. I knew that this was a challenging task because theatrically performing participants’ experiences on stage makes them extremely vulnerable to misrepresentation and hegemonic biases. This was also difficult because the relationship between the interview participants and *Bible Beater/Bra Burner*’s audience would not be direct. Ultimately, I would act as the mediator between them, ultimately dictating how stories would be told through a cast I would direct. This meant having to evaluate my own privilege as a researcher, academic, director and “owner” of the women’s experiences. I had much responsibility and obligation to ensure that the established trust with my participants was not broken. I had to embody participants’ experiences without compromising their confidential identities, allow actors to “find” their roles while still remaining true to the participants’ experiences and ensure that these experiences did not seem theatrical or melodramatic on stage. I understood the importance of authentically embodying gender, religious and rhetorical performativity throughout the script and agreed with Conquergood (1991) that “social dramas must be acted out and rituals performed in order to be meaningful” (p. 359) and how I “must be a co-performer in order to understand those embodied meanings (p. 359). If gender or religious performativity were not represented and embodied with authenticity, participants’ experiences could become over-dramatized, cliché, hegemonically biased and unproductive to my desired goal. I also had to be careful the actors did not embody stereotypical representations of Christian or feminist identity that would be harmful to

creating an open and honest dialogue. Both my commitment to authentically embodying participants' experiences and my position as autoethnographic participant helped me to do this. All of us were ultimately co-performers throughout this entire process.

Finally, Keck asks, "Is your representation of the community and its inhabitants entirely accurate? Is it comprehensive and authoritative? If not, what are the distortions? How did these distortions arise?" As I have already mentioned, I had to make the audience of *Bible Beater/Bra Burner* aware that although I did my best to authentically represent the interview participants' experiences, the performance was ultimately my interpretation of the participants' stories. I made this known by making my position as researcher evident in the script and including a director's note in the program that explained this. I also had to realize that *Bible Beater/Bra Burner* is limited in scope in that it only represents the experiences that participants chose to share with me in their interviews and what I ultimately chose to include in the script; it also reflects the views of only fifteen eastern Iowa women who spoke from educated, heterosexual experiences. These considerations address Keck's question, "How are the issues of power and privilege implicated?" as well as Conquergood's (1991) questions regarding the politics of performance:

What is the relationship between performance and power? How does performance reproduce, enable, sustain, challenge, subvert, critique, and naturalize ideology? How do performances simultaneously produce and resist hegemony? How does performance accommodate and contest domination? (p. 361)

I realized that *Bible Beater/Bra Burner* had to tactfully approach my participants' experiences in a way that simultaneously recreated, authenticated, challenged and critiqued them. For example, during the abortion scene in Act II, one woman shares her experience of struggling with whether or not anyone has the right to end the life of a five month old fetus that has developed recognizable fingers and toes; her narrative is challenged by another woman's pro-choice question asking about what God's will is for a woman who is raped. In this scene and others, I positioned opposing views so as not to privilege a particular religious or political view that reproduced hegemony.

When the majority of the script was completed, I held auditions to cast roles for *Bible Beater/Bra Burner* and began directing rehearsals.

This aided in the later stages of my writing process as I realized what would work theatrically; as director and cast, we co-participated in the staging of the script, the development of the characters and the textual changes needed to ease flow and rhythm in the script. I also made choices regarding the use of simple set pieces (chairs, benches, stools and blocks), costumes (the women were dressed completely in black and wore colored scarves when in “character”) and lighting so that the *production* of the performance did not overshadow its *focus*—the experiences and perspectives of the women interviewed.

Although these challenges made writing the ethnodrama quite laborious, I believe the final performance was successful as a collection of *pedagogical performance narratives* as conceptualized by Denzin (2003). He states:

They draw on multiple personal and group experiences and often include composite characters. They criticize existing social formations and imagine utopian alternatives. They are fragmentary and personal, and they stitch themselves into the many fabrics of popular and political culture. (p. 38)

I ultimately scripted Act I as an introduction to my interview participants and a picture of what a harmonious merging of Christianity and feminism might look like. I opened Act II through a spoken word poem that most visibly articulates my own perspective. It serves as an introduction to the complexities, controversies, conflicts and barriers to the utopian performative harmony of Act I. I struggled writing the end of show particularly because I did not want to convey that I had made a clear conclusion upon reflection of all the perspectives expressed; it thus became an artistically visual representation of the interconnectedness of the experiences represented and the dissension among them.

Scholarly Impact of *Bible Beater/Bra Burner*

Bible Beater/Bra Burner creates a dialogic conversation between multiple perspectives on empowerment versus oppression, stereotype versus authentic identity performance, public versus private performance of self, and controversy versus unity. It exposes the struggles of Christian feminists with issues including leadership, religious authority, motherhood, gender roles, homosexuality, reproductive freedoms and

political identity. *Bible Beater/Bra Burner* brings visibility to women's perspectives, illuminates the complexity, controversy and struggle of female identity and utilizes theatre as a useful, safe, collaborative and utopian avenue for addressing these issues.

At the beginning of the project, I asked three research questions, all of which are answered through the ethnodrama, *Bible Beater/Bra Burner*. First, *how do women negotiate the relationship between Christianity and feminism in their daily performances of identity?* The complexities of Christian, feminist, and Christian-feminist identity only begin to be understood through this project. Women negotiate these identities through a variety of ways dependent on their personalities and personal experiences. Most simply put, they struggle with these negotiations on multiple levels—as mothers, as church members, as professionals, as women. *Bible Beater/Bra Burner* is a collection of these negotiations, and the negotiating process is the major force that drives the action in the ethnodrama forward.

Second, *how does language function for and against this performance of self?* Language functions to normatively fit identity performance into compartments of socially constructed meaning. For some women, negative feminist stereotypes were so powerful that they specifically chose not to identify with a feminist label, even if they identified with feminism on various levels. Most interestingly, some women who I assumed identified as both Christian and feminist (as the call for participation stated) explicitly denied association with one of these identities. For example, one participant described growing up in a Christian environment, but she now desired a Christian religion extremely different from that of a Judeo-Christian tradition. Another participant explicitly denied being a feminist but shared how many people around her regularly put her in that category because of the work she does to liberate other women and pioneer avenues for women to lead in church communities.

My third research question, *how can staged performance be used to approach these issues of women's identity?* is answered through the actual staged production of the ethnodrama, *Bible Beater/Bra Burner*. In this project, staged performance took abstract, theoretical ideas about identity and made them concrete, authentic and personal through character performance. The use of staged performance also functioned to allow the general public to engage with the ethnographic data in ways

they might not otherwise have the opportunity. Mienczakowski (1996) explains:

The public performance of ethnography deacademizes and popularizes the report process. Furthermore, it returns the ownership, and therefore the power, of the report to its informants as opposed to possessing it on behalf of the academy. (p. 254)

Thus, not only does an audience outside the scholarly community benefit from the ethnographic research, but power is also given back to the research participants (who are generally those outside the academy) whose experiences and perspectives are the foci of the ethnodrama.

In this project, staged performance was able to accomplish the goals of Conquergood's (1985) dialogic conversation, thereby offering a utopian glimpse (Dolan, 2006) of a world where Christianity and feminism can merge together and honest, respectful and peaceful dialogue can occur. This can only be made possible by first creating a foundation of understanding, acknowledgement of other perspectives and critical reflection of one's own perspectives. Wilkerson (1991) states:

Theatre becomes an opportunity for a community to come together and reflect on itself... It is not only a mirror through which a society can reflect upon itself—it also helps to shape the perceptions of that culture through the power of its imaging. (p. 239)

Bible Beater/Bra Burner begins the communicative process toward furthered cultural understandings of performative identity specific to gender/sex, religion and rhetoric; Jones (2006) notes that, "performance is the crucible for forging new visceral understandings of culture" (p. 344). It also conveys the importance and necessity of using performance to explore the complex issues of human identity. Dolan (2006) exhorts performance as a pedagogical tool to make the world better and "to incite people to profound responses that shake their consciousness of themselves in the world" (p. 519). Even further, Dolan (2006) asserts:

Theatre can move us toward understanding the possibility of something better, can train our imaginations, inspire our dreams, and fuel our desires in ways that might lead to incredible change. My concern here is not with the content of performance—not necessarily with plots or narratives that address utopia,

but with how utopia can be imagined or experienced affectively, through feelings, in small, incremental moments that performance can provide... These feelings and sensitivities, in performance, give rise to what I'm calling the "utopian performative." In many ways, utopian performances gesture toward my own desire to knit together performativity and performance, bringing real performance to the site of so much invigorating theoretical discourse. Borrowing from J. L. Austin (1962), utopian performatives describe moments which, through their doing, allow audiences to experience, for a moment, a sense of what utopia would feel like were the claims of social justice movements realized. (p. 521)

Thus, the societal effects of *Bible Beater/Bra Burner* may not be tangibly realized beyond its definite role toward spurring social consciousness of marginalized perspectives, creating a liminal space where personal struggle with the issues could occur, and promoting social understanding and equality between people across ideological perspectives. All these are roots of positive social change.

In short, ethnodrama possesses the ability to take ethnographer/director, research participants, cast and audience on a journey through the complexity of human experience. It offers a creative, intertextual channel through which to struggle with the thematic issues foundational to its subjects and their experiences. With this comes the possibility for social change – at its minimum, roots of social consciousness about issues present in the performance and the opportunity for understanding and embracing difference.

Personal Impact of *Bible Beater/Bra Burner*

It is difficult to articulate the overwhelming impact that writing and directing *Bible Beater/Bra Burner* has had on both my academic life and my personal life. This performance exposes issues not previously explored through ethnographic research and exemplifies the power of staged performance to approach human identity. It also artistically expresses my frustration with the polarization of Christian and feminist ideologies and the stereotypes associated with each as well as my desire to create a dialogic, honest and meaningful public discussion of these

complex identities. My personal journey through the interviews, scriptwriting, rehearsals and performance was full of challenge, investigation, critical thinking, discovery, reflection and liberation. I began this journey with curiosity regarding other women's perspectives on the convergence of Christianity and feminism, and through it I was able to compare my own experiences with others in a public forum that allowed multiple perspectives to dialogue in a way that does not exist in our society today. I took risks I had personally never taken before; namely, I "outed" myself as a Christian feminist—and challenged many people in my life to experience the struggle between Christianity and feminism and the value of understanding diverse perspectives. *Bible Beater/Bra Burner* is a vulnerable exposure of my own identity struggle, a plea for engagement in this dialogue with openness and true listening, and a testimony to the power of ethnotheatre.

I have been greatly affected, sometimes frustrated, and ultimately inspired by this project, which is especially significant given the passion it has given me to continue working in the performance studies field. I was excited to discover the academic and artistic possibilities of ethnotheatre and the glimpses of the "utopian performative" it can create. I was also encouraged by the responses I received by all those involved in the ethnography and ethnodrama. Participants expressed intrigue and empowerment through the embodiment of their stories on stage. I observed the emotional connection my cast members made to the real women they represented, and I listened to them reflect on their journeys of self-discovery and female connectedness that were a part of their *Bible Beater/Bra Burner* experience.

Concluding Thoughts

In this project, ethnodrama became the liminal space for a collage of women's perspectives to be crafted together in a way that promoted understanding and social consciousness with critical reflection, honesty and ethical responsibility. To me, this *is* the utopian performative – where the personal becomes concretely embodied on stage, where historically marginalized perspectives sing, dance, chant and shout in harmonic clash, and where academic research becomes personally and socially relevant enough to inspire small sparks of change

in those individuals previously alienated by scholarly jargon. Ethnodrama is a powerful tool, and we have yet to realize its tremendous impact on all the co-participants of its complex process. Although ethnotheatre can involve much academic, physical and emotional rigor, the product is perhaps the most innovative idea to inspire personal reflection – the roots of social change – to date.

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The Shape of a Deaf Identity: The Impact of the Language of the Hearing World on Deaf Individuals' Identities

Kaitlyn C. Hills

Abstract

*The purpose of *The Shape of a Deaf Identity* is to examine the role that a dominate culture, specifically the hearing culture, plays in forming the identity of a minority culture, specifically the Deaf Community. With a foundation in Muted Group Theory, this paper explores the formation of Deaf individuals' identities through textual analysis (based on Ariel & Giora, 1998). Consequently, several results and possible interpretations were identified. Language, culture, and the influence of a more dominant (hearing) culture are all identified as major components in the formation of identity. This paper, thus, suggests that the Deaf identity is at least partially shaped by the dominance of the hearing culture. The textual analysis specifically explores how the power of the hearing culture affects the language choices made by Deaf individuals.*

“In some way, you’re saying deaf people are not good enough, they need to be fixed,” signed Mr. Walker [a Deaf student at Gallaudet University], 20. ‘I don’t need to be fixed. My brain works fine’” (Schemo, 2006, p. 9). “This is a time [technological advancements] of great change in deaf culture,’ she [new Gallaudet University president Dr. Fernandes] said” (Schemo, 2006, p. 9). The protest last fall by Deaf students at Gallaudet University, the world’s only Deaf university, exemplifies the language used by individuals around the nation that relates to deafness.¹ The ongoing struggle between two worlds can be seen. One world sees technological advancements, such as hearing aids and cochlear implants, as devices to

¹ Throughout this paper the capitalization of the words deaf and Deaf are significant. This follows the common use of the letter to indicate the distinct difference between audiological deafness and cultural Deafness. The use of the lowercase “d” refers to audiological deafness. The use of the uppercase “D” refers to cultural Deafness (Reagan 2002).

improve the daily life of individuals considered to be audiologically deaf. The other world sees deafness as a classification no different than being left-handed or right-handed, a trait that is held by select individuals, designated not by them, but assigned to them upon their birth.

A world absent of sound, a world experienced solely through the other four senses describes the experience of Deaf individuals in today's society. While not considered part of the dominant group because of their auditory difference, the Deaf community's establishment as a minority group prevails as the place Deaf individuals hold in society. However, when approximately 9 out of 10 deaf children are born to hearing parents, an identity conflict is bound to ensue (Baker-Shenk & Cokely, 1980). The question comes to be: does a deaf person identify himself or herself through the language used by the hearing world, or through the subculture language of deafness?

The language a Deaf individual uses to depict himself or herself is the foundation for the following study. Research suggests that language is often considered to be a key factor in developing identity (Ariel & Giora, 1998; McLean & Pratt, 2006; Miller, 1999; Mills, 2006; Reagan, 2002). Studies have also suggested that language used by dominant groups in a society can control the language used by minority groups in the same society (Ariel & Giora, 1998; Kramarae, 2005; Orbe, 1996; Orbe, 1998; Pacini-Ketchabaw & Armstrong de Almeida, 2006). Scholars have also been interested in the study of the formation of Deaf identity (Mitchell & Karchmer, 2006; Nikolaraizi & Hadjidakou, 2006; Reagan, 2002). Deaf identity through written language choices, however, has not been the focus of previously conducted studies.

Thus, this study sought to examine the implications of language on Deaf individuals' identities. The study began by examining the language used in poems, artwork, and American Sign Language (ASL) videotapes. These mediums were chosen for their static textual formation. Next, the study searched for common, recurring themes throughout the texts. Finally, the study attempted to examine themes in relation to language used

by the dominant culture versus language used by the Deaf subculture.

Literature Review

An inspection of existing literature suggests that the place one holds in a society will impact the language choices made in various interactions. The foundational theory relating to this evidence is the muted group theory. Muted group theory involves the power position of one group over another. The more powerful a position in society the less adapted, changed, or muted a group's language must be. Muted group theory has also been called a variety of other names in order to most accurately convey the intent of the theory; the other titles include muffling action theory, the hushing theory, voiced-over theory, smothered voices theory, and stifled group theory (Kramarae, 2005). A variation of muted group theory provided contextual structure for this study, basing itself in the foundation of muted group, yet applying the concepts to a different group of individuals.

Muted Group

Muted group theory is based in the work of anthropologists Ardener and Ardener, who sought to examine the reason why women were often not listened to (Ardener, E. 1975; Ardener, S., 1975; Mills, 2006). The theory was then developed further through the research of Kramarae (2005). Kramarae's research focused specifically on women in a less advantageous situation than men in regards to communication. The idea is suggested that language choices and traditions are based on practices established mainly by men through the dominant position they have held in society. Therefore, women have to either change the formation of the language they use to fit the established practices used by men or be considered as less intelligent based solely on the formation of and manner in which they use language. The place of women in a subordinate group, lacking the power of the more dominant group, gave rise to the "muted" appearance of the group as a whole. Note the

fact that the phrase is muted and not mute, implying not that the individuals do not have the ability to speak, but instead that they are denied the right to speak in their own way (Kramarae, 2005).

Subsequent studies supported the findings of Ardener and Ardener and Kramarae (Mills, 2006; Orbe, 1996; Orbe, 1998). Mills (2006) suggested that women, as a traditionally marginalized group, make language choices based on what the situation is, which individuals are present, and what the established norms for the situation are. Depending on these factors, women's communication styles and approaches were found to change. In regard to whether women were considered muted or not, the situation changed drastically when men were present. Orbe (1996; 1998) expanded the parameters of the muted group theory in order to establish a framework from which to examine other minority groups within the dominant culture. These groups, defined by Orbe, went beyond the previously established examination of gender differences to include "non-dominant" as the criterion classification. This classification sought to include those who were "traditionally without societal power" (Orbe, 1998, p. 1). Non-dominant becomes an umbrella term for all of the labels that can be applied to those considered to be in a situation lacking power. For example, those who are labeled based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disabilities, and age, can be considered non-dominant groups or individuals (Orbe, 1996). The research suggests that individuals belonging to non-dominant groups communicate differently with those members of the dominant culture. This difference can also be seen when there is the potential for or confirmed presence of members of the dominant group. These individuals represent the group of individuals who have long been in power and are oppressive to less powerful people (Mills, 2006; Orbe, 1996; Orbe, 1998).

Identity

Identity is a very abstract concept for which scholars have long attempted to establish a more concrete understanding. Studies of identity have taken different approaches in

investigating the development of an individual's identity. These studies range from examination of age to importance of ethnicity, background experiences, gender, and language, just to name a few. Youth go through a process of exploring various identities in establishing an understanding of themselves (Helfenbein, 2006; Liang, 2006; McLean & Pratt, 2006; Miller, 1999; Rahman, 2001). In different situations, they will stretch the line to find out what the boundaries are in exhibiting aspects of their identities (Helfenbein, 2006). Adults often come to understand and articulate their identity through accomplishments and alignment of societal expectations (McLean & Pratt, 2006; Mills, 2006).

A common theme that spans research related to identity is the idea that individuals often have not one identity displayed in all arenas, but different derivatives of one identity depending on the demands of the situation (Helfenbein, 2006; Liang, 2006; McLean, 2006; Miller, 1999; Mills, 2006; Rahman, 2001). In essence, individuals have multiple identities from which they can choose to use in order to demonstrate to others the persona they wish. Depending on the details of the situation, an identity can serve a variety of purposes. Identities can be related to an individual's attempt to find his or her place in the world. An individual may be seeking to be identified as a member of a specific group of people and not with another (Helfenbein, 2006). Identity can also serve the purpose of classifying an individual's ethnicity, gender, and social class (Mills, 2006). Identity is an individual's "sense of self" (McLean & Pratt, 2006, p. 714). The formation of identity is the result of various experiences. The experiences drawn upon are viewed in relation to an individual's own perspective, as well as his or her perspective of how others see him or her. Identity involves some aspect of acceptance of these factors as being true (Ariel & Giora, 1998; Helfenbein, 2006; Liang, 2006; McLean & Pratt, 2006; Miller, 1999; Mills, 2006; Nikolarazi & Hadjikakou, 2006; Reagan, 2002).

Language Choices

Language is also a common factor used in determining an individual's perception of their own identity. Language is an automatic identifying factor that often carries several implications with it. Be it the culture, the ethnicity, or beliefs of an individual, the language and words chosen are a demonstration of the meaning an individual is attempting to communicate (McLean & Pratt, 2006). Whether it is in relation to an individual using gender specific language or being multilingual, language is prominent in the configuration of identity (Ariel & Giora, 2006; Helfenbein, 2006; Kramarae, 2005; Liang, 2006; Miller, 1999; Mills, 2006). When an individual uses language patterns that follow those typically outlined by members of his or her gender group, the expectations, beliefs, and power related to that group also become his or her own (Kramarae, 2005). Gender can also be reflected in the language used in an individual's writing, thus demonstrating how he or she identifies him or herself. For example, it was found that females took on the strategies outlined by men in their writing because this was the expected norm. The women identified themselves as having less power than their male counterparts; they, therefore, wrote not in their own style, but in that which reflected the framework established by men (Ariel & Giora, 1998).

Understanding and utilizing multiple languages also shows the impact of language on identity. When an individual chooses to align him or herself with a particular language, he or she also chooses, be it consciously or subconsciously, to align with the characteristics of this identity (Liang, 2006; McLean & Pratt, 2006; Miller, 1999; Mills, 2006; Nikolaraizi & Hadjidakou, 2006; Pacini-Ketchabaw & Armstrong de Almeida, 2006). In some cases, the choice of a language, and thus an identity, can be a source of turmoil within the individual. By choosing one language over another, an individual is seen as choosing one group over another. Not wanting to disrespect a heritage or disregard a background, but at the same time desiring to fit into a specific group either for a sense of belonging or to improve one's economic situation, the choice of

language reflects a complex decision (Liang, 2006; Rahman, 2001).

Language in general is not the only condition in which an individual's identity can take form. The use of a specific language, with its unique implications, can have many of the same influences (Liang, 2006). The choice of languages can also put individuals in a position of power. If an individual is the only one in a group that is fluent in a language, he or she is often designated as the spokesperson of the group (Mills, 2006). Another example occurs if an individual is better at speaking and manipulating a language compared to his or her peers. The language that is usually, but not always, newly learned allows the more accomplished user to express himself or herself as more self-confident. Oftentimes, he or she is more powerful than he or she was previously. This comes through the acceptance into the dominant group that an individual gains through language (Miller, 1999). In some cases, dominant languages cause individuals to perceive his or her own language as less important and less successful. Therefore, value is not placed on maintaining an identity related to one language but attempting to acquire a new identity through a different language (Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2006). The language itself may also be an element of power in one's identity. The fact that an individual even knows a specific language may put him or her in a position of power. Language can be used as an avenue to align with power, a way to be seen either positively or negatively, or a means by which certain goals are accomplished (Rahman, 2001). Language can be an influential factor in the formation of an individual's identity.

Findings of the various studies on the language used to establish identities are often the product of interview methodology. After the interviews are administered, the transcripts are then examined for the existence of common themes relating to the individual's language choices in narratives about their identity (McLean & Pratt, 2006). Oftentimes, the themes within an interview are determined by fitting them into categories established by the various researchers (Helfenbein, 2006; McLean & Pratt, 2006;

Nikolarazi & Hadjikakou, 2006; Orbe, 1996; Orbe, 1998; Pacini-Ketchabaw & Armstrong de Almeida, 2006).

Deafness

Studies of the Deaf demonstrate the unique position these individuals are often in. Outwardly, Deaf individuals do not often look any different from their hearing counterparts, but upon discovery of their deafness they will be treated as if they have a problem that requires fixing. Studies of the Deaf often seek ways to better understand these individuals that appear to be so similar, but in many ways are so different. Various examples of studies of the Deaf have been suggested and completed. They encompass several different areas and are often related to education, development, and identity (Mitchell & Karchmer, 2006; Nikolarazi & Hadjikakou, 2006; Reagan, 2002). Their findings include the type of education they are receiving, the situation in which they are receiving it, the number of deaf children attending a public school, the number who are the only ones in their school, and a determining factor to see what appears to be working and what does not (Mitchell & Karchmer, 2006). Studies have also examined the language Deaf individuals choose to use, the technological devices they choose to use, the culture they choose to identify with, and the impact of all of these on their construction of their identity (Nikolarazi & Hadjikakou, 2006; Reagan, 2002).

Several research studies have been conducted in order to grasp how individuals develop a Deaf identity. Quite often this research comes to revolve around whether or not an individual feels they are deaf or Deaf. These terms are used to explain either a view of deafness that focuses only on the audiological aspects of being deaf or a view of deafness that relates to being considered culturally Deaf (Baker-Shenk & Cokely, 1980; Nikolarazi & Hadjikakou, 2006; Reagan, 2002). Oftentimes, an individual whose identity is as a “deaf” individual sees himself or herself as the hearing world sees him or her – an individual who needs to be made normal by acquiring the ability to function as a hearing person does, interacting with the world

around them by hearing and speaking. This identity only focuses on the medical aspect of being unable to hear. Their education entails emphasis on learning speech and acquiring the ability to lip-read (Nikolarazi & Hadjikakou, 2006; Reagan, 2002). Individuals that hold this perspective attempt to appear as hearing as much as they possibly can in the identity they portray.

Research suggests that individuals considered to be Deaf focus not on the fact that they cannot hear but on how much they can do; they see their deafness as a gift. Individuals that see themselves as Deaf focus on the cultural aspects of their deafness. This includes such things as a shared language, an emphasis on ASL as a primary means of communication, Deaf community support, Deaf role models, Deaf history, and an awareness of Deaf culture. Their education is often in a residential school for the Deaf, a place where they feel they are free to communicate in their natural language and not feel ostracized because of a lack of access (Nikolarazi & Hadjikakou, 2006; Reagan, 2002). Deaf individuals are proud of their deafness; they see it as a crucial factor to their identity.

Nikolarazi and Hadjikakou (2006) suggest that individuals could also occasionally have what would be considered a compromise of the two identities, a “bicultural identity.” These individuals often have a combination of experiences that resemble the experiences of individuals who identify themselves as being either deaf or Deaf. The determining factor in this circumstance is the group of people that the individual is with at the moment. Depending on the group an individual with a hearing loss is with, they will either act with more of a deaf or a Deaf identity.

Research Question

The literature examined demonstrates the existence of studies conducted regarding the use of the power a dominant language in a culture or group can have in impacting the language choices made by minority groups (Ariel & Giora, 1998; Kramarae, 2005; Liang, 2006; Mills, 2006; Nikolarazi &

Hadjikakou, 2006; Orbe, 1996; Orbe, 1998; Pacini-Ketchabaw & Armstrong de Almeida, 2006; Rahman, 2001; Reagan, 2002). In several of these studies, it was found that the result of language choices was often the “muting” of the minority group (Ardener, E. 1975; Ardener, S., 1975; Mills, 2006; Orbe, 1996; Orbe 1998). The construction of identity has also been the subject of previous studies (Helfenbein, 2006; McLean & Pratt, 2006; Mills, 2006; Rahman, 2001; Reagan, 2002). Studies have also been conducted on how language choices shape individuals’ identities (Ariel & Giora, 1998; Liang, 2006; McLean & Pratt, 2006, Miller, 1999; Mills, 2006; Nikolarazi & Hadjidakou, 2006; Pacini-Ketchabaw & Armstrong de Almeida, 2006; Rahman, 2001; Reagan, 2001). Various studies have also been done in regard to Deaf individuals and the construction of Deaf identities (Mitchell & Karchmer, 2006; Nikolarazi & Hadjidakou, 2006; Reagan, 2001). Therefore, a logical assumption would be that the language of the dominant culture (hearing culture) might shape the identity of Deaf individuals. For these reasons, the following research question served as the guide for the completed study:

RQ1: How does the language of the dominant culture shape the identity of Deaf individuals?

Method

Qualitative research designs are often utilized in gathering data for analysis. Due to the nature of the questions being asked, interviews are often the chosen methodology (Helfenbein, 2006; Liang, 2006; Miller, 1999; Mills, 2006; Nikolarazi & Hadjidakou, 2006; Pacini-Ketchabaw & Armstrong de Almeida, 2006). The interviews of the literature examined related to deafness followed an outline based on questions formed from knowledge already established about deaf identity. The participants were allowed to choose the form of communication they wished to utilize— sign voiced through an interpretation or speaking for themselves. Information was gathered from both deaf individuals with Deaf parents and

individuals with hearing parents (Nikolarazi & Hadjikakou; 2006).

The desired outcome of this study was to examine the influence of dominant culture language on Deaf individuals' identities. Based on a review of the literature, the following section outlines the details regarding the sample, conceptual and operational definitions, and method of textual analysis of this study.

Sample Size

Regarding the number of texts necessary for a credible textual analysis, scholars have varying opinions. The overall conclusion is that it is at the researcher's discretion to determine what is a sufficient amount of sources for gathering information (Potter, 1996). Various examples of studies employing textual analysis have been examined. They too varied in the number of samples used. Weaver (2004) used the written responses of 74 women, while Tracy (2004) used a sample of 44 reduced from an original sample of 130; Dhoest (2003) used as many examples as could be found in a specific genre within a designated time period, and Ariel and Giora (1998) examined approximately 25 texts.

The sample size used for this study involved a total of 13 texts. These texts can be further broken down into the following categories: one example of artwork with language integrated into it (We're); one ASL story interpreted and transcribed by an outside interpreter (Lentz 1992); 11 poems written by Deaf and hard of hearing individuals (Leisman, 1949; Kessler, 1981; Madsen, 1971; May, 2002; McDonald, 1992; Opeoluwa, 2002; Panara, 1981; Shipley-Conner, 1992; Tull, 1994; Vogenthaler, 2002; Wright-Meinhardt, 2002). All of these texts fell under the genre of expressions of identity. The age and the gender of the authors varied. There were a total of four texts written by men, six texts authored by women, and three texts with the gender unobtainable. The date of the texts ranged from late 1800's to 2002.

Conceptual and Operational Definitions

The conceptual and operational definition of culture used in this study was any group holding a common perspective regarding the following: language, traditions, accepted standards of behavior, acknowledged awareness of background, and a public participation in these aspects (Reagan, 2002). Often, in a single geographical locale, two or more cultures may have to coexist and interact. Because of the nature of this situation, there will naturally arise a dominant culture and minority culture. Conceptually, the dominant culture is the one with the most established power (Orbe, 1998). Operationally, in this study, the dominant culture was represented in the form of the hearing culture.

Conceptually, minority culture is that which is subordinate to the dominant culture. Operationally, this study recognized the Deaf culture as the minority culture.

One of the most significant aspects of culture is language. Conceptually, language is the means by which the members of a culture communicate and express themselves; this includes written, spoken, and signed modes (Reagan, 2002). Operationally, in the study, accepted English and ASL modes represented language, which applied respectively to the dominant and minority culture.

Further research suggested that language is a prominent factor in developing identity (Ariel & Giora 1998; Helfenbein, 2006; Kramarae, 2005; Liang, 2006; Miller, 1999; Mills, 2006). In this study, both conceptually and operationally, identity was defined as an individual's perception of self, created through experiences based on personal outlook and the assumed outlook of others (McLean & Pratt, 2006).

A specific identity that this study dealt with is deafness. Deafness is conceptually and operationally defined in reference to those individuals with an audiological loss (Reagan, 2002). It included authors of any age, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, and education level. This study also included individuals who perceive themselves to be deaf or Deaf.

Textual Analysis

Previous studies of Deaf identity have approached data collection through quantitative measurement, interviews, and ethnographies (Mitchell & Karchmer, 2006, Nikolarazi & Hadjikakou, 2006, Reagan, 2002). Textual analysis deals solely with texts as its source for data. It allows communication to be examined from the approach of literary analysis (Potter, 1996). This study sought to analyze Deaf identity through a textual analysis approach following the research design of previous textual analysis studies examined (Ariel & Giora, 1998; Dhoest, 2003; Potter, 1996; Tracy, 2004; Weaver, 2004). The subsequent structure was the research design used. Upon collection of data, each text was first examined for comprehension and understanding. The texts were analyzed a second time, regarding language related to identity; then marked accordingly. The texts were examined a third time focusing on words related to the dominant culture. When phrases related to hearing, speaking, or words, for example, were identified they were marked with an identifying mark. The texts were then examined again, this time focusing on identifying language related to the non-dominant culture. These phrases included such things as eyes, hands, and visual descriptions. Once they were identified, each word was marked accordingly. The texts were examined a fifth time, looking for any other significant language choices made by the author. These included things such as common Deaf experiences. These language choices were then marked. Finally, the texts were examined a last time looking for observation and analysis that was related to themes and patterns developed throughout the sample. An identifying mark was then placed in order to denote the findings. From these analyses, themes suggesting the influence of the dominant culture on the Deaf individuals' identities were developed.

Results

The study suggested the following results in respect to language choices regarding identity, dominant culture, non-

dominant culture, and other significant language choices. The suggested results are presented in the order in which they were marked and identified in the texts.

Identity

Throughout the texts examined the most common recurring language choices for identity were, 'I,' 'me,' and 'my' (Leisman, 1949; Lentz, 1992; Kessler, 1981; Madsen, 1971; May, 2002; McDonald, 1992; Opeoluwa, 2002; Panara, 1981; Shipley-Conner, 1992; Tull, 1994; Vogenthaler, 2002; Wright-Meinhardt, 2002). Other identifying language choices present were 'I've,' 'we,' and 'ours' (Lentz, 1992; Vogenthaler, 2002; Luton, 2003). In addition to these self-descriptive identifying language choices was the common use of formation of identity through separation. These languages choices were 'you,' 'your,' 'you've,' and 'they' (Lentz, 1992; Kessler, 1981; Madsen, 1971; Opeoluwa, 2002; Wright-Meinhardt, 2002). These language choices were seen in texts by both genders, authors of all ages, and from varying time periods.

Dominant Culture Language

The dominant culture languages choices overwhelmingly outweighed any other language choices made. With a few exceptions, texts were filled with language choices relating to the audiological perspective of deafness. The emphasis that the dominant culture places on hearing and speaking was easily seen. The language choices discovered under this category include: 'hear,' 'talk,' 'voice,' 'sound,' 'shouted,' 'word,' 'speak,' 'spoken word,' 'deaf,' 'heard,' 'songs,' 'sings,' 'ears,' 'music,' 'written words,' 'ring,' 'lips,' 'voicelessly,' 'hush,' 'bells ring,' 'deafness,' 'listen,' 'sing,' 'play violin,' 'noise,' 'constant sounds,' 'diseased,' and 'phone' (Leisman, 1949; Lentz, 1992; Kessler, 1981; Madsen, 1971; May, 2002; McDonald, 1992; Opeoluwa, 2002; Panara, 1981; Shipley-Conner, 1992; Vogenthaler, 2002). These language

choices were made by individuals of both genders, authors of varying ages, and from different time periods.

Non-Dominant Culture Language

The non-dominant culture language choices were sparse in a majority of the texts. In most cases only one or two words were present under this category. The language choices made under this category are as follows: 'hands,' 'signs,' 'mind and hand,' 'silence,' 'handshape,' 'fingers are equal,' 'Deaf,' 'eyes,' 'symbols,' 'silent,' 'nimble fingers,' 'hearing world,' 'gesture,' 'seeing,' descriptions of creation of various signs, and words such as 'dream' and 'need' occurring in quotations (this identifies these words as the most commonly used English gloss word for that sign) (Lentz, 1992; Leisman, 1949; Kessler, 1981; Madsen, 1971; May, 2002; McDonald, 1992; Opeoluwa, 2002; Panara, 1981; Shipley-Conner, 1992; Tull, 1994; Vogenthaler, 2002; We're, 2003; Wright-Meinhardt, 2002). Individuals made these language choices from both genders, of differing ages, and from different time periods.

Other Significant Language Choices

Also identified were other significant language choices. These language choices appeared to have a very strong affect on the development of the author's identity. These language choices varied by each individual. A few examples appeared to have transcended into multiple visions of identity. Most prominent among these were common Deaf experiences (Lentz, 1992; Leisman, 1949; Madsen, 1971; McDonald, 1992; Opeoluwa, 2002; Shipley-Conner, 1992; Tull, 1994; Vogenthaler, 2002; Luton, 2003; Wright-Meinhardt, 2002). This included the feeling of being isolated from the other individuals around them. Further the feeling that he or she is defective as a person and can never be good enough. The experiences of being forced to

try to be like the hearing world. Also included under this umbrella are the common learning experiences of deaf individuals. These language choices were present in a variety of the sources.

Another language choice that appeared to be significant was the use of repetition throughout the text. Often times, repetition was used to emphasize a specific point. The language choices that were identified as repetitive are as follows: “then what?” “They say I’m Deaf,” “You have to be deaf to understand,” “I feel,” and “I would” (Kessler, 1981; Madsen, 1971; May, 2002; Opeoluwa, 2002; Wright-Meinhardt, 2002). These choices reflect typical poetic formation in the English language. This technique is one that is utilized to draw the readers’ attention to a specific point.

A final language choice that influenced the outcome of the development of themes was the use of metaphors. Metaphors are used throughout a majority of the texts in order to help develop the feelings experienced. The metaphors are related to deafness and what it can be compared to in the world around the author. The metaphors include descriptions of unfinished creations, creations that are finished but flawed in some way, nature and the world around it, the rich versus the poor, and deafness as either a disease or death.

Themes

The various language choices made by the authors suggested themes that were identified across all of the texts. One of the most common themes used to describe the development of identity was the use of common deaf experiences. Another theme identified is related to the unity and polarization of the dominant culture and the non-dominant culture. Identity was created based on elements of identifying with one group (Deaf) and not identifying with the other group (hearing). Additionally, the language used by the authors often reflected a theme of displacement. Along these same lines of this theme was another which reflected a theme of language that would sometimes reflect/describe an attitude of negativity towards deafness as a

concept. Another theme is the use of descriptions that are often heavily laden with of language related to hearing. In these cases, descriptions were of concepts such as the heart or of the experiences of the world around the individual. Choices reflect language that described what these things would hear or sound like. One of the final themes identified, relates to the formation of the literature itself. A repetition of phrases was used to help emphasize the creation of identity throughout the texts. The final common theme that was present was the use of metaphors to indirectly discuss identity. In order to be considered a theme, an element was present in multiple sources if not the entire sample used.

Discussion

The findings of this study suggest that amongst this particular sample size, the dominant culture influenced the language choices used to develop the identity of individuals in the non-dominant cultural group. In these texts examined, the hearing culture, in most cases, muted the Deaf culture. This is seen by the overwhelming presence of language choices made by authors that reflect the values of the hearing society. Further examination suggests that the acceptable way to discuss one's identity is via the format established by the hearing culture. Included in this format is the discussion of elements in terms of hearing, speaking, and sound.

Not only are the individual authors choosing an acceptable format in which to discuss the matter of his or her hearing loss, this same individual is also choosing elements of his or her own identity to display. These individuals' identities have been formed from a variety of experiences including age, ethnicity, background, gender, and language. This study specifically examined the impact of language on identity formation. However, the use of background or common Deaf experiences to explain the manner in which the individual ultimately arrived at his or her conclusion regarding identity was increasingly present. The importance of these experiences includes things such as being ignored by those who surround an

individual and being forced into a situation where an attempt is made to fix an individual's disability by teaching him or her skills it is almost impossible to accomplish. Perhaps most influential on a Deaf individuals' identity formation is the commonly held belief that because of his or her hearing loss an individual can never be successful or amount to a whole person (Madsen, 1971; May, 2002; Opeoluwa, 2002; Tull, 1994; Vogenthaler, 2002; Wright-Meinhardt, 2002). The identity of the Deaf authors indicated in the texts examined reflects a typical formation of identity (Helfenbein, 2006; Liang, 2006; McLean & Pratt, 2006; Miller, 1999; Rahman, 2001). The identity of these individuals appears to have been formed by experiences and decisions common to the creation of identity.

A common focus in the study of identity is the aspect of the elements of an identity (Helfenbein, 2006; Liang, 2006; McLean & Pratt, 2006; Miller, 1999; Rahman, 2001). Oftentimes, an individual will have a pool of identities from which he or she can draw depending on the current circumstance. The case appears to be no different in the examination of the thirteen Deaf authors. These individuals reflect an identity that is dissatisfied with his or her deafness. "So near and yet so far away," "And look on me as queer," "The fruit of my life's work? Nothing," "I've been dying /since soon after my first breath," "A flaw with a perfect spot," "I've never belonged/ Not fully," and "For I am not allowed to be human," (Leisman, 1949; Kessler, 1981; Opeoluwa, 2002; Shipley-Conner, 1992; Tull, 1994; Vogenthaler, 2002; Wright-Meinhardt, 2002). By doing so these authors are embracing an identity forced upon them by the dominant culture. These individuals are perhaps seeking to portray the element of his or her identity that is dissatisfied with deafness. The identity being portrayed allows the author to have a more acceptable position to the target audience of the texts, the hearing culture.

The choices made by the authors not only reflect that the Deaf are indeed a "muted group," but that these same individuals are having to choose between different languages in addition to the identity that comes with each language. The need for this decision ultimately shapes the identity of an individual.

By choosing to use the language of the dominant hearing culture, it is suggested that the Deaf individuals are choosing between their second language of English and their first language, a signed language system (these includes ASL, Conceptually Accurate Signed English, Pigeon Signed English, and Signing Exact English). The advantage of choosing one of these language systems over the other one may bring an individual power, self-confidence, and acceptance in a particular group. Along with the different languages are the different identities that come with them. Those who embrace the identity that comes with English also appear to embrace the power it gives them to interact with the hearing world. Those who embrace the identity that is part of a signed system of language also accept, in essence, the potential of being misunderstood and looked down upon by the hearing world. When the authors of the texts examined align themselves with a language they also choose to align with elements of the accompanying identity.

Word choices were deliberate and intentional in the examined texts. This suggests that the authors purposefully chose each individual word for its denotative meaning, as well as the connotative meaning that accompanies it. The most prominent choice that suggests the hearing culture's influence on the formation of Deaf individuals' identities is the theme of descriptions. The strongest potential explanation for this description is the power of a dominant culture over a non-dominant sub-culture. This theme suggests that the Deaf authors perhaps felt the need to describe things auditorially instead of visually in order to be heard by the dominant culture. The world, which surrounds the Deaf individuals, relies on receiving information most commonly through auditory channels. The concept of relying solely on visual channels is not a commonly accepted measure. Therefore, Deaf individuals choose to describe things not as they experience them, visually, but how the rest of the world experiences them, auditorially. The identity that these individuals hold requires a transitional element in order to feel more whole as an individual. It is seen in the following examples: "[. . .] the tinkle of a bell, /the cooing

of a dove, /the swish of the leaves [. . .]” (Panara line 10-11). “the song the sunset sings,” (Kessler line 9-10). These examples demonstrate the influence of the dominant culture on the Deaf identity. If these individuals had described the world as they truly experienced it, they would have done so with visual descriptions.

The exception to this theme was the selection by Anne McDonald, “Wing Biddlebaum.” In this selection the author describes in words her visual language. The selection suggests that she is writing for the individuals who have an understanding of the Deaf community. Her identity is formed through discussing the formation of signs and visual descriptions, not auditory means. This text suggests that the author is attempting to manipulate the written English language to represent her visual gestural language, a seemingly significant source of who she is (See Appendix A).

Another theme that suggests the influence of the dominant culture on the non-dominant is the content of the metaphors used. The language choices in these metaphors demonstrate not only the common beliefs held by most of the hearing society, but also the impact of the language. These individuals accept the idea that deafness and things related to it are not as good as what could be experienced if they could hear. When the authors do use words related to the non-dominant culture, they are portrayed in an unfavorable light. “[. . .] silence has no value, no significance, and no sense” (Wright-Meinhardt line 26). The metaphors also represent the negativity of the deafness that they feel they face. These language choices appear to be more neutral in their suggestions. However, the power of the meaning behind the concepts influenced the identity of the Deaf authors. Deafness is described as being similar to a cow formed without a tail; deafness is equivalent to nothingness; being deaf is similar to a withering tree all alone versus a tree out of place; deafness is also explained by using a death and life description in which death is the equivalent of deafness (Lentz, 1992; Opeoluwa, 2002; Shipley-Conner, 1992). The use of these metaphors would suggest that the Deaf authors have internalized the metaphors of deafness described by the

dominant culture. Instead of creating their own, the authors perhaps feel they must use accepted metaphors of items with defects and in isolation.

Another theme identified addresses the in-group versus out-group perspective of the authors themselves. These language choices reflect an “us-versus-them” type of identity. This suggests that the Deaf authors have taken on the dominant culture’s view of them as separate and different as individuals based on the auditory abilities. The authors that seek to unite Deaf audiences do so by presenting terms such as “us,” “ours,” and “we.” The authors that seek to polarize the hearing world use language choices such as, “they,” and “you” perhaps because they desire to do so, but more probably because they have already experienced this decision by the world. These choices are perhaps influenced by accepted terminology used by the hearing culture to talk about the Deaf culture.

A curious theme to examine is the language used in explaining common Deaf experiences to describe development of identity. In these situations words that would usually be understood best by the dominant culture are chosen instead of words that would be more fitting for the Deaf individuals with whom these experiences are shared. An example of this is seen in the following: “With the spoken word of the moving hand,” “what is it like to ‘hear’ a hand?” “Before my silent clan I stand/ And voicelessly convey to hearing eyes – / in symbols they can understand –” “A gesture here, / a word there,” and “listen in on conversations beside me that I never understand.” These individuals discuss experiences by using the accepted format of focusing on the sound and words. These descriptions focus on what the dominant culture expects and experiences. The authors of these texts are writing to the majority audience, the hearing world.

The themes discovered throughout the texts examined suggest the influence of the hearing culture on the development of the identities of the Deaf individuals who authored the texts. One of the limitations of the results of this study is the sample selection examined. The results determined from these texts cannot be generalized to the larger population. The findings of

this study are limited to the thirteen texts examined. The themes are only applicable to the texts examined and not beyond.

A further area to be considered as a limitation was the topic of the text in ASL. In order to maintain the neutrality of determining the dominant language choices of the culture, the study intended to utilize multiple interpretations of the one ASL text by multiple interpreters outside of the study. (Nikolarazi & Hadjikakou, 2006). However, only one interpreter examined the text. This could result in the text having either too many or not enough dominant language choices.

Another limitation that must be considered is the topic of the English language. It is possible that language choices were made because it is the nature of the written English language. For the reason that Deaf individuals were taught written language in order to communicate with the hearing world, this may have had an impact on the language choices that were made. Deaf individuals might not have considered other options in expressing himself or herself in written language because of the manner in which he or she learned it.

Overall, this study suggests that in the instance of the thirteen static texts analyzed, the language of the dominant culture influenced the formation of the identity of the Deaf individuals who authored the texts. This is seen in the language choices of the Deaf individuals, which reflect phrases and terminology that are the acceptable format of the dominant culture. These results suggest that as members of a non-dominant subculture, Deaf individuals feel a need to change the manner in which they communicate in order to be accepted and understood by those around them. The natural manner and vocabulary that is applicable to the Deaf experience is seen as being inferior to other language choices that could be made. The findings of this study suggest the Deaf community shapes their identity based on the language of the hearing culture.

Further study of this topic might find it useful to expand the sample size used. While this type of study cannot be generalized to the entire population, the inclusion of more texts may allow future research to build toward more universal conclusions. Additionally, to further understand this topic,

future research might seek to more deeply study the demographics of the various authors. In the influence of the writings of Deaf authors, it would be useful to consider such elements as: educational background (residential school or mainstream school), gender, severity of hearing loss, and family background (hearing parent or Deaf parents). Finally, further study might seek to focus on the differences between static texts in ASL and static texts in English. This study narrowly examined the implications of the language of the dominant culture on the minority Deaf culture.

Conclusion

While an individual's identity is often based in his or her own culture and personal experiences, it is interesting to think that one culture's dominance over another is just as much, if not more, responsible for the formation of identity. Just as many studies have examined the results of this phenomenon, this study sought to do so from a research perspective. While formations of identity, a dominant culture's influences on minority language, language in relation to identity formation, and Deaf identity have all been the subject of research studies; a combined approach has not been taken in this area. In an effort to better understand the ever-changing impact of language, this study attempted to explore the impact of all of these factors. In doing so, this study also sought to specifically understand the possible basis for resistance demonstrated by the Deaf community against stereotypes and adversity.

Appendix A

Wing Biddlebaum

Anne McDonald

My hands talking like birds
give me my name, a "W" soaring
from the temple. They amaze me,
banish vowel, consonant of my baptismal
name like English sparrows. I taunt:
"roost-pigeon," "piss-smell."

In answer: the handshape: "dream."
The "need" finger drifts,
shows me bright animals, prey
of air. I learn to link
the scarlet teenager
with scarlet fever. I'm
the shamed red woman, waiting
for cities to rise after
Babel, from a language of shapes.

In this night-anchor, my hand-
birds claim a field-harvest:
church, tree, fireflies.

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Onward Christian Soldiers: Southern Baptist Convention's Support for Operation Iraqi Freedom

Brian Kaylor & Bryan Fischer

Abstract

Prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom, the vast majority of religious leaders publicly offered opposition to the war. As a result, one Protestant denomination stood out among the rest as its leadership strongly backed Bush's planned attack—the Southern Baptist Convention. This study analyzes this unique religious rhetoric in support of a controversial war in light of Goldzwig's (1987) work on public theology. The failure of this pro-war rhetoric is explored, as well as implications for religious and other rhetors.

Nabil Shaath, a senior Palestinian official, told the BBC that in June 2003 he overheard President George W. Bush tell Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas, “God would tell me, ‘George, go and fight those terrorists in Afghanistan,’ and I did, and then God would tell me, ‘George, go and end the tyranny in Iraq,’ and I did” (Freeman, 2005). The White House quickly denied the claim, but for many critics the remark conjured up memories of Bush calling for a “crusade” shortly after 9/11 or other statements about how his religious faith inspires his policies. Shaath added that he did not understand the comment to be literal: “It was really a figure of speech (by Bush). We felt he was saying that he had a mission, a commitment, his faith in God would inspire him ... rather than a metaphysical whisper in his ear” (Freeman, 2005). Regardless of whether the statement was literal or even occurred, it draws attention to the religious rhetoric surrounding Operation Iraqi Freedom. While most religious leaders denounced the war, Bush would not be alone in God-based appeals in support of it.

On March 18, 2003, U.S. soldiers invaded the borders of Iraq to topple Saddam Hussein's government. However, they entered Iraq with international and domestic protest behind them and the condemnation of major religious leaders before them. So nearly comprehensive was the opposing religious rhetoric that one organization's pro-war arguments

stand out as both distinctive and controversial, and thus deserving of rhetorical scrutiny. That religious body, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), is far from being a stranger to controversy. Much as its boycott of Disney and its teachings on the role of women in the home and church, the SBC's support of Operation Iraqi Freedom garnered attention and created controversy. *The Baptist Standard*, the newspaper of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, noted, "Nearly all U.S. and European churches have voiced opposition to the war. Only the Jewish Congregation and selected members of the Southern Baptist Convention have voiced support for the war," (Eckstrom, 2003). In fact, the Reverend Jim Wallis, editor of the evangelical Christian magazine *Sojourners*, stated, "There's never been such unity among the churches in the country, even during Vietnam" (Bumiller, 2003). This strong support led to one critic to label the SBC as a "war church" (Hastings, 2002).

As a result, the SBC's rhetoric remains unique and worthy of study. This study explores the SBC's rhetorical support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in light of Steven Goldzwig's (1987) work on public theology by analyzing previous research, the SBC's rhetoric in support of the war, and the impact and implications of those messages.

Review of Previous Literature

Goldzwig (1987) depicted public theology as "theologically based discourse intentionally targeted for mass audiences in an attempt to influence the attitudes, values, and belief of both religious and secular publics," (Goldzwig, 1987). This discourse is outlined as significantly different from civil religion, which focuses on the delicate balance between religion and politics. Developed by Hart (1977), the civil religious "contract" suggests that politicians will not be too religious and religious leaders will not be too political. Public theology, on the other hand, explores religious leaders who cross the line of mainstream, or "official," civil religion as they explicitly mix religion and politics. To exert this political influence, Goldzwig contended that religious rhetors employ three strategies: expedient simplicity, existential conflict, and action rituals.

Expedient simplicity refers to "a rhetor's invocation of a univocal and partisan god. This god determines how one should worship

and whom one should support,” (Goldzweig, 1987). By invoking the rhetorical argument of expedient simplicity, rhetors establish a god-based or theology-based plea for support. This appeal for support compliments the second strategy of existential conflict, or the current problems or struggles. While expedient simplicity lays the foundation of god-centered the existential conflict support builds the policies and belief changes the rhetor advocates. Since the end goal of public theology is a change in public attitudes, existential conflict provides the crucial link between appeals for holy and godly support and the response desired from the audience.

Finally, action rituals are “Repetitive ritualistic events, themes, and organizational patterns” used to link rhetors to their audiences (Goldzweig, 1987). If expedient simplicity lays the foundation, and existential conflict builds the arguments, then action rituals are placed as the religious grounding for the argument. Action rituals create systems where audiences become linked to rhetors and their enlightened cause and no longer evaluate the structural integrity of arguments, but rather run to it as shelter, justification, and defense for the belief or attitude. Thus, public theology establishes religious support for the rhetor, states the positions for support, and then offers familiar arguments and labels for an audience to rally behind. However, despite this seemingly ingenious and subversive persuasive appeal, Goldzweig (1987) noted that because of a highly partisan and religious nature, public theology rarely succeeds in persuading external audiences who may hold differing cultural and religious views than those of the rhetor. Other than appearing as a footnote or referenced in passing in civil religion studies, Goldzweig’s public theology has remained basically unused despite its uniqueness in examining rhetoric that falls outside the dominant civil religious discourse.

Additionally, the political activism of the SBC, the largest Protestant denomination in the U.S., provides a unique situation where a mainstream religious organization may be using rhetoric typically reserved for the fringe. While public theology has not been used to examine the SBC, other approaches have demonstrated some aspect of the SBC’s rhetoric and controversies. Huebner (1991), Stone (1992), Kell and Camp (1999), and Dixon (2004) all explored the SBC’s internal conflict and the rhetorical battle that developed. Warren (2001) explored the themes the SBC used to justify its boycott of Disney because of

alleged pro-homosexual actions. Miller (2002) examined the SBC's apologia after being attacked for its position on the role of women in society, and Kaylor (2006) explored the SBC's media portrayals of women. All of these studies work to build an overall picture of SBC rhetoric, its nature, and its impact. Each study also demonstrates that prior to the SBC's pro-war rhetoric, many people held negative perceptions of the SBC because of its internal battles or external proclamations on homosexuality and the role of women. These rhetorical conflicts and the fallout from them, places the SBC and its leaders as less-than-trusted rhetors at the outset of the rhetorical situation examined in this study.

Declaring War

Due to the grassroots, non-hierarchical organizational structure of the SBC, no official position was taken nor can any one individual (even its president) claim to speak for any other Baptist. However, the democratic process used to determine leadership indicates on a national level the general institutional thought. Thus the opinions of the leaders of the convention will be analyzed, particularly since most outsiders view them as speaking for the entire convention and not just as individuals. The SBC's internal communication to its more than sixteen million members and the use of public and religious forums for espousing religious and political ideologies identifies an immediate religious mass audience as well as a broader audience of the American public. The SBC's official support of the war was proclaimed in statements in the *Baptist Press*, *SBC Life*, various state Baptist papers, and in some mainstream media. The articles and statements during the six months prior to the start of the conflict and the first month following it were used to explore the justifications given by SBC leaders for the war. These statements were collected and then analyzed in light of Goldzwig's (1987) work on public theology.

Expedient Simplicity

Before the war began the debate about whether the U.S. should go to war engulfed political and religious communities. As the vast majority of Christian denominations spoke out against the possible war,

many of the leaders of the SBC came to the Bush administration's defense. This rhetoric, though dealing with a political issue, was often couched in the God-based appeals of expedient simplicity. Former SBC President Charles Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church in Atlanta, said, "The government is ordained by God with the right to promote and restrain evil. Therefore, a government has biblical grounds to go to war in the nation's defense or to liberate others in the world who are enslaved" (Blumenthal, 2003). Daniel Heimbach, professor at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, answered the objection that if Hussein is really evil then God would remove him: "It's not a limitation of God, it's that God wants to use us. He could do it himself, but he wants us to do it" (Hall, 2003). And Don Hinkle, editor of the Missouri Baptist Convention's newsletter *The Pathway*, argued that Scripture and the example of Jesus justified war. In his article entitled, "Bush is right: Sell our coats, buy a sword," he included numerous references to biblical passages to clearly demonstrate his belief that God supported the action:

Scripture teaches that war will come (Ecclesiastes 3:8). Throughout the Old Testament, there are examples of God using warfare to carry out His plans, to punish the wicked and preserve His people (Deut. 9:4-6, Jer. 5, Num. 33:55-56). ...Jesus was not pacifist. He encountered Roman soldiers and never once told them they had to leave the army. Twice in the New Testament, he cleared the temple by force. Jesus even told his disciples to sell their coats and buy a sword (Luke 22:36). I say it's time we went shopping. (Hinkle, 2003)

The SBC leaders clearly felt that their support of Operation Iraqi Freedom was more than just personal opinion, but that it represented the will of God and that God wanted to use the United States to bring about God's will in Iraq.

Existential Conflict

In addition to the God-based appeals of expedient simplicity, the SBC also argued in favor of the war based on the existential conflict. James Smith, Sr., Executive Editor of the *Florida Baptist Witness*, wrote an editorial supporting the war: "While no Christian can take pleasure in

the prospect of waging war, I believe a war against Iraq, as outlined by President Bush, is morally just and absolutely necessary. The dots have been connected” (Smith, 2003). Richard Land, head of the SBC’s Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, was the chief public SBC proponent of the war, particularly in arguing for military action based on issues of the existential conflict:

It would be a strategic and sizable blow to terrorism to remove [Saddam’s] Hitler esque administration from power. It would suggest to Iranians, Saudis and Syrians that they too could have such a government of the people, by the people and for the people. (Bates, 2002)

Regarding Saddam, he said, “We are talking about a man who, if he lived in a normal society, would be institutionalized. He is a sociopathic psychopath” (Hastings, 2003). He also argued that war was justified because Iraq was developing nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, had broken the conditions of the 1991 ceasefire, attempted to assassinate former President George H. W. Bush, was directly related to the 9-11 attacks, and because it would be done in defense of the U.S. (“Catholic bishops join opposition to war,” 2002). And Land praised Bush because he “demonstrated the kind of courageous leadership that we expect from our president and the world has come to expect from America” (Strode, 2003). Then-SBC President Jack Graham argued, “Removing Saddam Hussein from power is a just and necessary action after 12 years of lies and deception. This war is ‘just’ because its cause is liberation not occupation, protection not aggression, peace not appeasement” (Strode, 2003).

Often SBC leaders argued in favor of action because Iraq was developing weapons of mass destruction, an argument that now lies at the center of much of the controversy surrounding the war. Samuel Shahid, an Arab-American professor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary said he had “no doubt the Iraqis have weapons of mass destruction” (Tomlin, 2003). And Land argued:

Military action against the Iraqi government would be a defensive action. ... The human cost of not taking Hussein out and removing his government as a producer, proliferator and proponent of the use of weapons of mass destruction means we can either pay now or we can pay a lot more later. (Toalston & Hastings, 2002)

Land and other SBC leaders frequently argued in favor of the war based on the “just war” paradigm first proposed by Augustine and long accepted by Protestant theologians. Ironically, many religious leaders who argued against the war did so based on the same framework. Yet, the SBC used this concept of “just war,” as well as other arguments, to develop the case for war against Iraq.

Besides simply arguing the existential conflict as justification for war, the SBC leaders also used it to attack those who opposed the war. Land attacked Europe for not supporting Bush’s plan to go to war: “The US should not sit idly by waiting for her allies in Europe to indicate their support. ... No offence intended but we have had to extricate the Europeans from conflagrations of their own making twice in the last century” (Bates, 2002). Craig Mitchell, professor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, stated, “This crisis would have ended long ago if the French, Germans and Russians had been concerned less with asserting their own perceived power and more concerned with the suffering of the people of Iraq. The time for war is now” (Tomlin, 2003). Land also attacked those religious leaders who argued against the war:

There is a certain type of Christian afflicted with what an old professor of mine called “anticipatory reconciliation.” They believe their opponent is always reconcilable, can always be reasoned with. And wonder “what have I done to make him mad at me?” If you’re looking for a reason for this perpetual ability for some people to go deaf, dumb and blind, there’s a certain mindset in what used to be mainline Protestantism that is just incapable of grasping the kind of evil represented by Saddam. They think underneath he’s a nice guy. He’s not. He’s a sociopathic, evil person. That kind of naiveté fails to take into account the native evil in humanity. It just won’t do for grownups who are dealing in world affairs. (Nolan, 2003)

Perhaps due to the fact that the SBC was virtually the lone religious voice in favor of the war they felt they needed to not only build the case in the positive, but also attack those who opposed it. Some of these attacks were also in response to other religious groups or individuals that attacked the SBC for its pro-war rhetoric. Overall, the SBC leaders spent

the most time developing their case for Operation Iraqi Freedom based on the details of the existential conflict.

Action Rituals

Finally, the SBC's arguments also develop action rituals to build similarity with their audience. SBC leaders frequently called on Baptists to pray and fast that God's will would be done. Graham, using militaristic language to describe the act of prayer, stated:

Southern Baptists will embrace and engage this global challenge with faith and renewed commitment to evangelism and missions. We will unite in prayer and faith. We will enlist prayer warriors as special forces to pray for our troops and their families. We pray for peace and the possibility of a better world where tyranny and terrorism are eliminated. ... Now is the time for all Americans to band together as brothers and sisters in support of our nation, our Commander and Chief, George W. Bush, and our military forces. I encourage our pastors and churches to designate days of prayer and fasting. May our families join together in personal and private intercession. (Graham, 2003)

This served to add religious acceptance to their position and to invite Southern Baptists and other religious individuals to join them in an active manner. Additionally, the militaristic language (e.g. "enlist prayer warriors as special forces," "band together") worked to sanctify violence and deputize all Southern Baptists as they joined in the war effort. The SBC's North American Mission Board offered resources for Baptist churches to use, including prayer guides, daily devotionals, video clips, photos, and plans for ministry (Dotson, 2003). The SBC also attempted to couch this conflict in religious terms in order to build common ground with the religious audience. Land frequently used religious terms as to describe his support of the war. "What was it the Supreme Court justice said? He said, 'I can't define pornography, but I know it when I see it.' I know evil when I see it, and Saddam Hussein is evil" (Strode, 2003). And again: "Saddam Hussein is evil, and compared to him we are pure and good" (Lampman, 2003).

Additionally, Land attempted to suggest that Southern Baptists were united in favor of the war, creating somewhat of a “bandwagon” appeal to those that may be questioning it: “The vast majority of Southern Baptists support President Bush’s Iraqi policy. They believe that Just War criteria have been met” (Hastings, 2002). While primarily generated toward the religious audiences, especially Southern Baptists, the action rituals used by the SBC leaders attempted to build common ground in order to make their rhetorical case for war more compelling. They attempted to create this connection through calls to prayer and fasting, providing materials for churches to use during their worship services, couching the conflict as a religious matter, and by suggesting a greatly unified support for the war. These actions rituals, along with the God-based appeals of the expedient simplicity and the arguments for war of the existential conflict, provided a detailed rhetorical support for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Winning the War?

The reaction to the SBC’s war rhetoric demonstrates that it remained largely unsuccessful. As Miller (2002) found with the SBC’s image restoration attempts following attacks for their position on women, this rhetoric seems only to have been successful with those already agreeing with the decision. Goldzwig (1987) pointed out that public theology rarely succeeds in persuading external audiences that may hold differing cultural and religious views than those of the rhetor. Thus, international critics would not likely be swayed by SBC war rhetoric because most international criticism comes from a different cultural view of society, God, and the relationship of the two. Even in America the presuppositions that SBC public theology relies on are not generally accepted by all, and are even directly rejected by many. This led to other religious leaders interpreting Augustine’s just war theory as justifying opposition to Operation Iraqi Freedom while the SBC leaders viewed it as supporting the war. Public policy appeals to God remain unlikely to convince those working under a different epistemological framework.

While most outside groups were not convinced by the SBC’s arguments, not even all Southern Baptists were supportive of the war or persuaded by the SBC leadership, despite what Land suggested. Former President and Nobel Peace Prize winner Jimmy Carter, a lifelong

Southern Baptist who teaches Sunday school and is now supportive of a dissident SBC organization (Cooperative Baptist Fellowship), penned a *New York Times* editorial arguing that the war is not a just war (Carter, 2003). The SBC responded with an attack on Carter's article in the *Baptist Press* (Coppenger, 2003). Charles Kimball, a Baptist minister and professor at Wake Forest University, argued that wrapping God in the American flag in support of the war destroys the credibility of the U.S. in the Muslim world when these messages are broadcast there:

All of these folks in their certainty and arrogance are doing considerable harm by what they are preaching. They have to realize that these words reverberate around the world and are being used by Muslim extremists to whip up a frenzy. (Blumenthal, 2003)

Just as Bush's rhetoric appears to have convinced few of his original detractors, the SBC's rhetoric persuaded very few who were not already supportive of the policy. In many ways the divide among Baptists on the war resembled the lines that already split Baptists. Starting in the late 1970s and continuing into the early 1990s, the SBC had been involved in a large internal battle for control between the fundamentalists who are now in control and the moderates and conservatives who have been pushed out. The Southern Baptist voices against the war came predominately from those moderate and conservative individuals no longer in power. Goldzwig (1987) predicted that public theologians may face opposition not only from outside groups but also from within their own denomination or group as a result of their venture into public policy issues. In the SBC this impact was enhanced by the presence of a previously established opposition network. Thus, the SBC failed to persuade international, domestic, and even internal critics with their rhetoric in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Additionally, the SBC had already lost much credibility politically with many in society as result of previous public stances. This may have lessened the impact this pro-war rhetoric could have had for many observers. Despite the lack of attention Goldzwig gave to the credibility of the speaker, expanding his framework to incorporate it becomes necessary when understanding that as the rhetor's credibility decreases, the potential for a deeper and more probing audience evaluation of their assumptions is probable. While continuing to grow in membership, former SBC President Grady Cothen (1995) noted:

The affiliation of the leadership with the forces of right-wing religion and politics won the designation for all. Some persons saw Southern Baptists as fractious, backward, and selfish. The name Southern Baptist began to imply mean-spirited, argumentative, and sometimes ignorant people who had lost touch with a modern world. (p.182)

The increasingly common view of the SBC as judgmental, ignorant, and out of touch makes a reevaluation of the assumptions in its rhetoric more likely and may contribute to the seemingly decreased effectiveness. Previous public controversies such as the Disney boycott and statements about the role of women resulted in many being skeptical of Southern Baptists before SBC leaders even began their case for war. Due to previous missteps or controversies, the public theology rhetoric can lose its power, especially to those only moderately sympathetic or less at the outset.

Implications

As a result of this analysis of the SBC's war rhetoric a few important conclusions should be discussed. First, the rhetoric of public theology builds upon itself, increasingly relying on the acceptance of past issues for the justification of current conflicts. Thus, as the credibility of the rhetor(s) or the assumptions of the rhetoric are placed in question, its persuasiveness fails. It is possible that another religious group, such as the Lutheran or Methodist churches, could have made identical arguments with at least a slightly more success than the SBC. With external and internal groups predisposed against the SBC leadership, the SBC began with a difficult task of persuading anyone regardless of the issue or side. This is not to suggest that these groups would oppose the SBC on any issue, but that they are far less likely to be persuaded by the SBC's arguments because of a loss of credibility on public policy issues. Scholars using Goldzweig's (1987) public theology, as well as other rhetorical approaches, should take into account the rhetor and rhetor issues like credibility in order to more accurately determine the impacts of a particular message or campaign and why it may or may not have been successful. A particular rhetorical situation cannot be effectively evaluated in a vacuum, and so the rhetorician must consider

other situations that have may indirectly impact the one being analyzed. For instance, the Reverend Jerry Falwell, one of the two examples Goldzwig (1987) used to develop his work on public theology would most likely be even less successful today than he was in the late 1980s because of a loss in credibility with many people as a result of comments or positions taken since that time. More research is needed to flesh out the impact of the rhetor(s) on the success or failure of public theology.

A second implication from this study concerns the audience(s). Goldzwig (1987) only slightly dealt with audience issues. But by dividing up the audiences of this rhetoric in the analysis, the SBC's rhetorical failure is highlighted. While some were supportive, it was only those already predisposed to the SBC's position. Those that opposed the SBC and its stance included an external audience that remains unlikely to be swayed by religious arguments, and an internal audience that stands in opposition to the SBC leadership at nearly any available opportunity. Without understanding this *kategoria* as created by these audiences, the effectiveness or failure of this rhetoric cannot truly be examined.

Additionally, Miller (2002) and Kaylor (2005) suggest a final, and perhaps more important, audience for religious rhetors that should not be ignored by scholars as they study the messages—God. Public theology rhetoric often refers to God in justifications for a particular action or belief. Since this remains a part of the rhetor's motivation and influences self-evaluation of the rhetoric, scholars should consider the impact of this perceived audience. The SBC leadership employed these God references and they, no doubt, believed that God supported their policy in favor of war. However, even if this were true, it would not change the failure of this rhetorical campaign. As Miller (2002) wrote, religious rhetors “should not neglect the expectations of other audiences” if they desire to change the public's opinion (p. 140). But it does offer scholars insight into possible future rhetoric. As Kaylor (2005) argued:

This is important because it indicates how the rhetor evaluates the message and the outcome, and offers clues to what the future rhetoric from them could be like. After all, if they do not learn any lessons from the communication act being examined, then there is unlikely to be much difference in philosophy or style the next time they communicate. (p. 19)

Since the SBC leaders believed they were speaking for God, they would likely act the same if given the opportunity to do it again. Thus, unless a theological change occurs first, this rhetorical failure is unlikely to lead them to change their rhetorical strategies and scholars can likely expect similar God-based theological appeals on political issues from SBC leaders in the future. More research should help develop the role and impact of audience(s) in the effectiveness of public theology.

A final implication from this study is the usefulness of the public theology framework, as opposed to civil religion, to explore the intersection of religion and politics. While Goldzwig's (1987) work on public theology began to fill a significant void in the study of religious-political discourse, it has received little attention other than as a slight footnote or citation in civil religion studies. Not all religious rhetors engaging in public policy debates abide by Hart's (1977) contract, even those in considerable positions of influence. By not dealing with this unique form of religious discourse, scholars may be leaving a gap in their understanding of religious-political communication. While future research is needed to continue to build on Goldzwig's public theology, this study demonstrates the usefulness and need for work in this area.

Conclusion

This study explored Goldzwig's (1987) work on public theology, analyzed the SBC's rhetoric in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and then drew some implications from its failure. The SBC attracted headlines and condemnation for its support of the Iraq war. However, their rhetoric did not attract many supporters for the war as their arguments remained largely unpersuasive among the unconverted. The SBC's rhetoric was hampered by its own credibility as rhetors on public policy and as their arguments failed to reach the various audiences due to differing belief systems. This study also highlighted the usefulness of Goldzwig's (1987) work on public theology, and began the process of refining and developing it to aid scholars in future studies of unique religious-political rhetoric such as the SBC's support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. While the U.S. did ultimately go to war in Iraq, the SBC failed in garnering support for the mission.

Following Palestinian leader Shaath's comments about Bush saying God told him to invade Iraq, Southwestern Baptist Theological

Seminary professor Malcolm Yarnell told the BBC that while he did not know if the statement was true, “If he said that, it would not surprise me, but it would not alarm me, either” (Thompson, 2005). Although Bush may not actually have believed Operation Iraqi Freedom was God’s will, Yarnell and most Southern Baptist leaders clearly do. Yarnell did not even have problem with the usage of the term “crusade.” He explained:

Among evangelical Americans ... there are the ideas of evangelical crusades or revivals that are not militant in any way. ... [Crusades] just means evangelists asking people to trust Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior and go to heaven. It is not about forcing other people. (Thompson, 2005)

Just months after American troops entered Iraq, Southern Baptist missionaries entered the country to evangelize the nation. It seems that the SBC’s support of military action was simply the beginning of their Iraqi crusade.

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**Comedic Splatterpunk Theatre:
Changing Symbols of Blood on Stage**

Ryan Louis

Abstract

Splatterpunk Theory, coined in 1986, seeks to define patterns in modern horror literature. It is, in essence, the rejection of the “quiet” classical assumption of romantic horror in favor of an unfastened realism. Traditionally, neither reality nor catharsis abound in extrapolative images of blood and guts. Tradition conversely dictates that blood represent the life force. In an emerging subgenre of theatre, however, the rhetorical role of blood evolves. Instead of evoking terror or tragedy, blood conveys humor. This paper seeks to evaluate the changing symbolic role of blood in theatrical performance from an historical perspective. Contemporary theatre now showcases political and cautionary content in new, stylized versions. Subversive and fascinating, these shows splatter society with new values to consider.

Compare the following scenarios. When done reading, analyze the traditional elements of humor present in each situation.

- A. A woman, after having an eye gouged out, slowly escapes the scene. Soon thereafter she reëmerges *sans* eyeball. In its place one sees nothing but a gooey, blood encrusted hole in her skull. Several onlookers faint in sheer disgust and fear.
- B. A man hangs upside-down, suspended from rafters. A crazed maniac enters and slowly begins to remove this man’s fingers and nipples in an attempt to get him to repent for his wrong-doings. Blood splatters each character while the suspended man screams for mercy.

On face value, one might be hard-pressed to find the humor present in either situation A or B. Those persons not completely ruled by the macabre would say that these situations are not comedic, but instead horrific. True, both of these situations showcase the traditional elements of horror literature. In situation A, this viewpoint is consistent with its

author's intent--coming from a piece from the Parisian Grand Guignol. In situation B, however, the intent is comedic, part of Martin McDonagh's Broadway smash *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*--directed by Wilson Milam in early 2006. Both of these situations are examples of a trend in the media known as Splatterpunk. They appear at different times in different cultures, yet have similarities in presentation. The discordant difference--and one that we shall address at length--is that one is terror, the other humor.

Hacking Out Its History

Splatterpunk Theory, coined in 1986, seeks to define the patterns in modern horror literature. It is decidedly "anti-establishment, militantly underground, and aesthetically terrorist" (Kern 48). This rhetorically clunky neologism emerged after a debate over the worthiness of explicit horror. It is, in essence, the rejection of the "quiet" classical assumption of romantic horror in favor of an unfastened realism. The particularly anti-furtive movement appropriates an extreme outlook on both intent and technique.

In *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, the concept of aesthetic terrorism is madly appropriate. Literally a play about terrorism, *Inishmore* uses jarring images of blood-splattered walls, blood-soaked dresses and severed limbs as impetus for effective comedy. *Inishmore* is an example of this new Splatterpunk horror: explicit. Uniquely, though, it is also an example of Splatterpunk that prioritizes evoking the comedic above that of terror.

In addition to *Inishmore*, a new musical appearing off-Broadway in November, 2006 further showcases the dancing and happy-go-lucky role that Splatterpunk often takes. *Evil Dead: the Musical*, directed by Christopher Bond and Hinton Battle and based on the 1982 film by director Sam Raimi, places zombies, chainsaws and humor together in the grand spotlight of New York's stage. Moreover, the musical proudly offers the public a chance to buy "Splatter Zone" tickets for a discounted rate. The warning signs when entering the box office advise theater patrons to wear clothing they wish not to wear again when seated in these first two rows of the theater. By combining the comedic style of Gallagher with live theatre one cannot help but ask if this new musical is totally unique or part of a larger theatrical pattern.

Louis J. Kern in his treatise on American Splatterpunk examines the roles of gore and explicit violence in American literature and film. He dictates that authors now use “visual obliteration as a means of stabilization and acceptance of a reality” (51). By depicting hyperbolic examples of reality, many authors illustrate observations of societal constructs. He further claims that “vicarious violence becomes a cathartic route to self-reaffirmation in a world of terminal boredom and hollow ideals” (50). Thus, in Kern, we have a theory that places both reality and catharsis within the depictions of extreme violence. This concept of “hollow ideals” also places special emphasis on the direct theatrical response (via violence and gore) to his assertion that societal morality is waning. In addition to Kerns, Nora M. Alter asserts that the readily accessible images of blood on television contributes to the use of violence on stage. She maintains that “these images were to leave an increasingly sharp impact” and continues “live theatre is able to restore at least weak contestatory power to the dominance “anaesthetizing” trend of media images” (xix). Shock is part of the theatre’s direct influence; “living theatre has the possibilities of...*immediate* response to current events and can adjust itself to them in performance” (Alter xv; original emphasis). Blood as humor seems to be the next step in this continued fragmentation of society as response to the growing feelings of powerlessness in the face of the world-wide environment of real terror.

Traditionally, neither reality nor catharsis abound in extrapolative images of blood and guts. Tradition conversely dictates that blood represent the life force. When seen outside the body, blood becomes a direct symbol for pain, suffering and death (Chevalier & Gheerbrant 100). To gauge the new rhetorical value of blood--one that strays from the view of blood as pain and therefore dramatic--we must evaluate the link between stage and the changing role of blood as humor.

Humor has always been violent. Especially in 20th-century American slapstick and French farce, comedy requires someone to get hurt. This trend is best described by Superiority Theory. We laugh at those “lower” than us; those that slip on the banana peels. They are lower because they fall and we do not (Riley 170). The American tradition of violent humor suggested at length by William Keough in his appropriately punned book title *Punchline*, however, is not unique to the times. Although many argue that we are in an age of increasing violent images in all media forms (Kern 47), the links to society’s positive

response to violence predates Charlie Chaplin and *Tom and Jerry*. The anthropologist J.C. Gregory once related that “there is enough brutal triumph, enough contempt, enough striking down from superiority in the records of antiquity to presume that original laughter may have been wholly animosity.”

Both the modern and antiquated include myriad examples of the prevalence of violence in the humor of popular culture. Daphne O’Regan suggests in an analysis of Aristophanes’ *Clouds* that “even as we appreciate Aristophanes’ biting wit, our cackling at Strepsiades’ antics confirms as well the rivaling pleasure of generic and hubristic violence” (113). Pitting the ancient texts of Aristophanes against that of the modern blood-lust romp in *The Lieutenant of Inishmore* solidifies the existence of this rhetorical bond in the context of history--particularly in the theatre.

It is thus not humor’s ties to violence that warrants new discussion. Further development in Revenge, Anger and Release theories prove that this conjoining is both documented and pervasive qua humorous texts (Keough xxii; Riley 178). It is the shifts in symbolic representation, however, that necessitate our attention.

What social changes now allow for blood to be a symbol for both humor and catharsis in recent theatrical stagings? Research has long evaluated humor technique--a mere sampling would include a list of Meredith, Bergson, Sypher, Mulkay and Oring. Further to this, much research assesses violence in theatre. Included in this research is Gordon’s in-depth evaluation of the Grand Guignol, Kern’s Splaterrpunk article, as well as Styan’s erudite appraisal of dark comedy and Albuquerque’s consideration of the rise of violent depictions in Latin theatre. All of these studies, however, emphasize that violence presents itself during particularly caustic events in society. Whether speaking about the Spanish Civil War or the Vietnam War, “ideological messages...were then incorporated--more or less consciously, visibly or audibly--into virtually all cultural productions” and, in particular, theatrical productions (Alter xii). Too, all of these studies hold that blood stands in contradistinction to humor.

The link between comedy and violence is not challenged. Aristophanes’ *Clouds* and Shakespeare’s *Troilus and Cressida* are both violent and, at times, humorous. The “ferocious satire and honed-edge, sharp bite” of what is often termed as “Savage Comedy” stands out in

both ancient and modern texts (White 2). The depiction of that violence, however, now reaches new heights. By examining the new trend in bloody comedies, we will be able to comprehend a new pattern in theatre and, in turn, the social impacts of such a pattern. As previously stated, violence in theatre is causally linked to mirrored events in society. Also outlined above is the fact that violence is often shown in a humorous light (i.e. the genre of dark comedy or the use of comedy as device to release tension in a drama). The new height in theatre, though, is that the violence is not shown through elements of slapstick (banana peels and pies-in-the-face) but with the graphic use of stage blood; the more blood, the more funny.

Dismembering the Study

Describing the theatrical stage never quite evokes the same visceral sense of actually being there; of seeing the spatial interplay of the scene unfolding behind the fourth wall. Theatre scholars are uniquely disadvantaged in that they have--in essence--one chance to see, hear and understand the complex designs of plot, theme and mood. Film theorists have a rewind button; television researchers now have DVR. One can examine the action held within each frame of Eisenstein's famous Odessa Steps sequence in *Battleship Potempkin*--studying the artful montage in slow-motion or in still-frame. In live theatre, however, there is no such intimate dissection. Scholars of rhetoric, additionally, often bypass the genre in favor of less instantaneous media. Transcripts of a speech aid in a skillful evaluation of a speaker's intent. But often, like studies in theatre, the speaker's vocal intonation, charisma and command of an audience are not included in the study. It is, however, the fact that theatre is live that makes it so important to study. Turning to Alter again, she asserts that "live theatre pre-dated and anticipated significant aspects of current postmodernist debates about the mutual and often contradictory imbrication between mediation and *immediacy*, and yet this theatrical anticipation has been ignored by cultural critics" (xxiv; emphasis added).

Additional to her declaration of theatre's importance, Alter's study focuses on theatre's relationship to the outside world--specifically, the Vietnam War. Her uncovered findings emphasize the added value of violence in subject and theme. She thus termed this pattern as its very

own genre: Vietnam Protest Theatre. As a response to the bloody “televsualization” of the war, drama came to incorporate similarly violent and bloody images. Arguably, theatre can provoke greater feelings of intensity than its pre-recorded counterparts. Theatre is both live and in-your-face. Seeing blood onstage or getting splashed in the face with it would confer a much different feeling than would the sight of blood on an evening news report. With the growing popularity of modern blood-filled plays such as *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, *Evil Dead: the Musical*, *Shockheaded Peter* and newer, bloodier revivals like *Sweeney Todd* we must ask ourselves whether a politically-charged theatrical trend from over 30 years ago is at home again on the popular stage.

The pattern is apparent, yet altered. Vietnam Protest plays are quite serious in scope. Showing a person’s example of self-immolation--perhaps being engulfed in flames--conveys no recognizable symbolic tie to humor. It was in that sense that Vietnam Protest Theatre declared its purpose: creating shock with the same subjects now desensitizing the public on the television set.

In contrast to these protest plays, the blood-soaked meanderings of the modern stage are replete with humorous overtones. Thus, there is a new course of study needed. The nature of the linking symbol in these plays--blood--offers a unique chance to probe the rhetorical value of symbols within theatre as they relate to contemporary society. Just as Alter linked the grave tones of Vietnam-era violence to the stage reflecting it, I plan to show relations between modern societal views of the depiction of violence and a new genre of theatrical response. In order to see contemporary theatre in a broader scope, we must turn again to Splatterpunk theory and define this genre within the context of existing taxonomic repertoire.

This study will follow Paul M. Sammon’s model of Splatterpunk literature. His lengthy examination of Splatterpunk as it pertains to horror fiction offers a unique palate from which to paint the picture of this often misunderstood subgenre. Sammon explains Splatterpunk writings as “work that acts through so many taboos” (279) to become an authorial ideology accomplishing “challenge, rebellion, and change” (285).

Sammon offers several tenets to classify Splatterpunk literature. First, the material must have explicit depictions of both sex and violence.

Second, it must have a political and cautionary point within the framework of real life situations. These real situations are, of course, hyperbolic. Third, Sammon echoes a sentiment by popular Horror novelist Clive Barker in that the writing must “subvert [the reader], throw out their ideas about the status quo, throw out their ideas about sexuality, throw out their ideas about death” (280). In essence, the writing must be active and directly call for change within a subversive milieu.

Splatterpunk reaches outside of the horror community in literature, however. In 1984, before the term’s application to writing, it had a following as “splatter films.” Examples of this subgenre are *Bloodfeast*, *Night of the Living Dead* and *Evil Dead* (the movie). The precepts outlined in Sammon’s work correctly pertain to these films as well. Because of the seemingly ubiquitous nature of Sammon’s study, it will be a satisfactory tool to use for my theatrical analysis as well.

Although I compare Vietnam Protest Plays to the new subgenre of Splatterpunk theatre, it is vital we enhance our perspective of violent theatre by placing the newer examples within a larger, historical context. First, Greek theatre (of which we previously acknowledged Aristophanes’ *Clouds*) used comic festivals and competitions to express an agenda in a context where “political (and judicial) rhetoric and theatrical discourse would have influenced each other reciprocally” (O’Regan 3). Knowing that 5th century Athenian ideology was rather violent, this intended rhetorical reciprocity was often exemplified in the produced comedies. Second, turning to the early 20th-century French tradition of the Grand Guignol (an excellent example of which was *A Crime in the Madhouse* by André de Lorde) we see the height of colonialism and attempted cultural domination. Part of its emergence as an art movement was a reaction to the British critics who “savaged the Gaullic shockers as “mild amusement”” (Gordon 35). Thus, the French had sole ownership of the genre--and cultivated it as their own. Gordon concludes that at “the heyday of the Grand Guignol, in the 1920s and 1930s, there was probably less violent crime...in Paris than in any major European capital” (49). Continuing, Gordon correlates the rise in crime with the amount of censorship present in a culture (e.g. Nazi Germany and conservative America). Gordon makes the case that the Grand Guignol may have purged Parisian society of violent impulses; thus justifying a societal need for more gore and less fascism. In both

preceding examples, we see that each society articulates a clear response to culturally endemic violence through dramatic arts. Important to us is that the emerging subgenre of Comedic Splatterpunk is the newest addition to this pattern of violent theatrical response--American style. That is, rooted in an American tradition of violent humor (presented above by Keough).

For Comedic Splatterpunk, I will mainly analyze four plays: *Shockheaded Peter*, the recent revival of *Sweeney Todd* on New York's Broadway, *Evil Dead: the Musical* and *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*. Although the visceral nature present in many pieces of contemporary theatre may be described fastidiously by an artful critic, it remains the personal experience of live theatre that offers the highest level of sensory impartation. Thus, I will critique each play and, in turn, evaluate the rhetorical implications of the similar way in which the directors choose to use blood.

Blood-Spattered Bonvivants

Blood's presence in the theatre is not new. Rather, many Greek productions used the blood of a slaughtered goat as a stage prop. Additionally, the previously discussed Grand Guignol permissively used faux gore-inducing contraptions to shock and terrorize the audience. From these examples, we plainly see that the tradition of visible blood on stage is firmly rooted. Within both of these practices, although blood occasionally shows up on stage, it always carries with it a symbolic intent consistent with Chevalier & Gheerbrant's definitions above. They see blood as a negative force; a source of both tragedy and horror. Comedic Splatterpunk takes it to a different level.

Consider first the climactic dance sequence in *Evil Dead: the Musical*. Act two, scene seven features a song titled "Do the Necromonicon." Playing both on the pop song "Do the Locomotion" as well as the word "necromancy"--the act of communicating with the dead--the sequence actually puns death. The song is upbeat, featuring five zombie demons in their attempt to subdue the only living man amongst them. Mixing the choreography with Michael Jackson's "Thriller" and fast, Can-Can kicks, the scene successfully contrasts the macabre subject matter with a lively tone. After being trapped by the demons, our hero turns on a chainsaw and hacks them all to bits. The blood from the

undead showers the audience. What would normally suggest the absence of humor is actually rife with it. Streams of blood erupt from each side of the stage, actors begin slipping in it; audience members get soaked. The absurd nature of it all overwhelms and complicates the senses. The only reaction is laughter. This situation is best described by Incongruity Theory. As Riley explains, “our minds are set to expect the expected, and when something or someone doesn’t turn out the way we thought, the incongruity of the situation can produce a laugh” (176). In this case, the incongruity is grossly apparent as audiences have never had the opportunity to experience anything similar in the context of a theatrical setting.

Likewise, when the lights come up on the second act of *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, the scene is completely covered in blood. Two men sit on stage sawing off parts of bodies--dismembering them for easy disposal. The instruments they use are not very sharp and in order to cut, they have to put all of their energy into the effort. This scene would be horrifying if not for the impartial attitudes of the men. They banter with each other in the same “well here’s another fine mess you’ve got me into” style of the comic duo Laurel and Hardy. An audience recognizing this similarity will generally understand that this reference, though incongruent with traditional expectations of blood imagery, is meant to be humorous. Also, because the image of these men surrounded by blood is in such sharp contrast to the scene ending the first act, Riley’s interpretation of Incongruity Theory applies.

The two previous examples feature blood prominently throughout the play. In the following two examples, the comedic use of blood is not as systemically pervasive. The recent revival of *Sweeney Todd*, directed by John Doyle and premiering on Broadway in early 2006, reformatted the classic Sondheim musical as a minimalist drama. The play itself is dark. Yet in this retelling, the violence is only implied--suggested by screeching whistle sounds. As each character dies, another comes forward with two buckets. The whistle noise begins to die out and a red, viscous liquid pours from one bucket into the other. This depiction of blood at first seems in line with traditional symbolic representations--the blood represents death, the music cacophonous. The characters, however, make faces at the audience during these sequences. These faces are often contorted or beguiling as if saying “did I do that?” This behavior mirrors that of a clown when smelling an odorous flower or

slipping on a banana peel. The prominently featured discomfort in the clown invokes laughter from the onlooker. This, again, is an example of Superiority Theory. Because the death of the character is only implied, the audience remains aloof to it. There being no graphic depiction, the blood seems out of context and thus, suitable for these turgid facial expressions.

Shockheaded Peter bases its plot on the grisly moral tales for children of Edward Gorey. This musical features human-sized puppets in various situations where, more often than not, the child expires at the end of each vignette as a result of poor decision-making. Examples are Harriet's burning alive after playing with matches and an obstinate Augustus who refuses to eat, eventually starving to death. These scenes are often accented by creative uses of blood imagery. In the musical segment "Snip Snip," the little boy Conrad habitually sucks his thumbs. His mother warns him that if he continues the habit, a monster whose hands are made of scissors will come and snip them off. The accompanying song describes the monster emerging and snipping off the thumbs--eventually causing Conrad to bleed to death. The blood is not real, nor does it look it. Through creative puppetry, though, red cloth emerges from his thumb stubs. This dismal-sounding, blood-infused scene turns comedic when coupled with the exaggerated English accents and a singing, stoic polka band. This is because the show is reminiscent of the violent puppet shows made famous by Punch & Judy skits. The difference being that Punch & Judy featured the implements of pain (long pieces of wood and boxing gloves) *sans* blood. The association is undeniable. The updated version, however, makes its point with the copious blood imagery created by the directors Julian Crouch and Phelim McDermott.

Equipped with an overview of these four plays--all premiering in New York within the last two years--evidence of a pattern emerges. Prior to these four plays, few examples exist of blood being used in a specifically comedic way. As blood used in such a deliberate and explicit way, it serves us well to apply the elements present in these plays with that of Sammon's Splatterpunk model.

The words of Stephen King, echoed in Sammon's article, give us a good starting point for this examination. In King's words, "Splatterpunk's intent is to deliberately violate the reader, to outrage, to be deliberately offensive. This has always been the underlying point of

horror, and it's one of Splatterpunk's greatest strengths" (282). Perhaps most elemental to each of the plays described above is its irreverent use of blood as humor. Each redefines blood in a way that deliberately violates the audience's sense of tradition. They test the boundaries of modern sensibilities to uproarious effect. Let us now consider the three tenets of Sammon's theory.

First, in order to be Splatterpunk, a work must have explicit depictions of violence and sex. Both *Lieutenant of Inishmore* and *Evil Dead: the Musical* certainly fit this characteristic. *Sweeney Todd*, fits as well. Despite only implying violence, the graphic blood imagery and sexual language positions it in the same category as *Inishmore* and *Evil Dead*. *Shockheaded Peter* fits as well, though only on the periphery. The content is decidedly absent of sexual rhetoric. The graphic nature of the violence, however, must not be refuted. The language describing the violence, too, is explicit.

Second, Splatterpunk must have a political and cautionary point within the framework of real life situations. All four examples purport this trait quite effectively. Humor often draws attention to itself. *Inishmore* exemplifies this in that it places the scenes within the realistic framework of Irish "freedom-fighting." It links the absurd nature of blood-shed in the real world with its comedic counterpart on stage. In both situations, we realize the blood is gratuitous. Amit S. Rai asserts that "if part of what is at stake today is the creation of normalized subjects of a global community arrayed against evil, a mediation on monstrosity enables us to imagine another kind of future by bringing back the trauma of history. Monstrosity, then, is an event that transforms both the idea and experience of culture and history" (554). The history of terrorism in Ireland is acute. Here, the creators depict an extreme version of this monstrosity in their main character, James. Rai's "transformation" occurs when the material presents this madness in the form of something irregular: humorous rhetoric.

Rai, paraphrasing Jacques Derrida, contends that a monster "disrupts proper boundaries, blurring the identities through the experience of a certain liminality...At that moment, monstrosity may reveal or make one aware of what the norm is and when this norm has a history" (552). This situation accurately defines the three remaining plays. The literal monsters in *Evil Dead*, the barbarous monster Sweeney Todd and the ghoulish creatures that attack the children of *Shockheaded*

Peter all blur reality, their moral sentiment masked behind monsters that challenge an audience's perspective of what is "normal." We are cognizant of the fact that we laugh at circumstances rarely or never laughed at before. If we then begin to examine what we are laughing at, we can perhaps see that "any appearance of monstrosity in this domain allows an analysis of the history of the norms" (Rai 552). It may not be normal now to laugh at such things as wild blood-splatter, but perhaps it soon will be.

The third tenet of Sammon's essay also equates to these four plays. Splatterpunk must be subversive--setting itself to change the status quo, specifically in current views of sexuality and death. Rai concurs in the image of "monstrosity as the harbinger of an always risky future, as that which breaks with normality even as normalizing culture finds its legitimating in those very breaks" (540). Society evolves. Splatterpunk aims to push it forward while a monster image can do that by undermining the very issue of what society finds to be normal. By using a monster (literally in *Evil Dead* and *Shockheaded Peter*, figuratively in *Inishmore* and *Sweeney Todd*), each play impels the status quo to move forward--forcing culture to normalize those anomalies. Both sex and death are exposed as fodder for light entertainment seekers.

All three tenets of Sammon's Splatterpunk essay are present in each of the outlined examples of theatre. Herein is the crucial point at which contemporary blood-spattered theatre differs from the world of original Splatterpunk: instead of fear, the blood imagery invokes laughter. Because these plays are so similar in scope and societal implication to what Sammon presents, we can conclude that many plays in contemporary theatre are, in fact, newer versions of Splatterpunk. Thus, their naming conventions should be similar. We should deem this new trend as the emergent subgenre of Comedic Splatterpunk Theatre.

Conclusion

Theatre, as Alter stated, is often a response to current events. Further study seems appropriate in terms of what the emergence of this subgenre means for a society consistently exposed to images of blood on television and in film. Are we becoming desensitized to graphic images of blood and gore with rising exposure to war on television? And what effect does that shift have on our minds and our mental construction of

life and death? The catharsis and discussion presented by Kern suggests the same thing that Gordon does: purging violent thoughts may be possible through exposure to violent images. Society is fragile, however. Introducing such a theory may work in early 20th century France, but for a modern American society already saturated with media violence, it may have the adverse effect.

This study does not aim to make any moral assessments. The facts overwhelmingly suggest a new genre pattern in contemporary theatre--not necessarily ethical implications. As controversial as the first Splatterpunk movements were in both literature and film, it seems that the same wariness should carry over to its stage representations. So far, however, all four plays have opened to great critical and financial success. The trend is likely to continue. The following generic formula seems applicable:

monetary + critical success = future examples of similar content

With future examples, we may, indeed, see controversies arise. Turning to Rai again, we must impact the claims made in this study.

“Civil society has been absorbed in the state...Resistances are no longer marginal but active in the centre of a society that opens up in networks, the individual points are singularized...The milieu of the event, as the contradictory and historically contingent site of unaccountable ingularization, is also, and for essential but strange reasons, the stage of monsters” (551).

The changing symbolic representation of blood as well as the prevalence of monsters in this new subgenre suggests an active--no longer marginal--resistance to modern drama and current events. Contemporary theatre now showcases political and cautionary content in new, stylized versions. Through *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, *Evil Dead: the Musical*, *Sweeney Todd*, and *Shockheaded Peter* we see a broader pattern of societal influencers emerging. Subversive and fascinating, these shows splatter society with new values to consider. Should we wipe off the grime and see Comedic Splatterpunk Theatre for what it is--an emerging, political subgenre? Or keep believing that what was once sacred still is?

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**The Evolution of the Announcing Component Within the University
of Missouri's Sports Radio Network:
A Case History**
John McGuire

Abstract

This study examined the evolution of the announcing component for the University of Missouri's statewide radio network since 1948. The research demonstrated the announcing component's interaction with the rest of the system was strongly influenced by its interaction with and proximity to those in the control component. Interaction was particularly high when the University of Missouri employed play-by-play announcers in some off-air capacity. The study also found that the distribution structure for a statewide radio network could impact the announcing component's interaction with the rest of the system.

Many individuals are involved in producing and distributing collegiate sports play-by-play broadcasts. The on-air play-by-play announcer and color analyst, however, are typically the most recognized individuals associated with this coverage. The play-by-play announcer describes “the who and what” going on in the game while the color analyst describes “the how and why” (Schultz, 2002).

Play-by-play coverage of collegiate sports has long been a programming staple for radio, dating back to the 1920s (Smith, 2001). Many colleges and universities have successfully been involved with regional or statewide radio networks delivering their team's play-by-play to a large potential audience. One such school is the University of Missouri, where a statewide radio network has been distributing Tiger play-by-play since 1948. One unique aspect regarding Missouri's statewide network is the history of prominent announcers who have been associated with these broadcasts. The line-up includes nationally renowned sportscasters like Bob Costas (who has done World Series play-by-play and hosted the Olympics for NBC), Kevin Harlan (CBS and TNT play-by-play announcer who also does the NCAA men's basketball championships on Westwood One Radio), and Dan Dierdorf (a former

color analyst on ABC's *Monday Night Football* who also worked as a Super Bowl commentator). Other prominent announcers like Jack Buck, Bob Starr, and Dan Kelly have all been behind the microphone for Tiger sports on radio. The famous sports announcers who have been "Voice of the Tigers" are a major reason why the University of Missouri radio network occupies a unique place in the history of play-by-play collegiate sports (See Table 1 for a partial list of Missouri announcers who have gone onto national or regional acclaim).

Although these announcers have enjoyed public prominence at one time or another because of their roles within University of Missouri sports play-by-play, their actual influence over the production and distribution of such broadcasts is another matter. One way of analyzing this influence is suggested by DeFleur (1970), who conceives of the mass media as social systems generating programming content. Through this perspective, announcers represent one of several components involved in creating sports play-by-play content. This research, utilizing the University of Missouri's statewide radio coverage as a case history, examines the evolving role of the announcing component through system theory. Through this research, an understanding can be gained regarding (a) the evolution of the announcing component, (b) the structural and functional interaction announcers have had with other system components, and (c) what factors have influenced these interactions.

The first section of this research offers a brief literature review concerning the history of University of Missouri statewide radio sports coverage. System theory and its application to mass media will also be discussed. The second section describes case history as the methodological basis for gathering and analyzing data. The third section of the paper analyzes the evolution of the announcing component for the University of Missouri's statewide radio network and its interaction with the rest of the system. The last section discusses findings and implications. (See Table 1)

Literature Review

One of the earliest broadcast descriptions of a University of Missouri sporting event occurred in 1924, when WOS in Jefferson City relayed accounts of a Tiger football game played in Columbia (Lambert,

1950). In the period between 1924 and 1947, individual stations originated their own coverage of the Missouri Tigers, emphasizing football play-by-play during the fall. KMOX in St. Louis and KCMO in Kansas City were among stations carrying a partial schedule of Missouri games (Rains & Rains, 2000).

Since 1948, three specific eras of University of Missouri Tigers sports coverage on radio can be identified, including (a) the years of 1948 through 1973 when Columbia radio station owner Mahlon Aldridge and the University of Missouri's athletic department were deeply involved in the distribution and production of the radio broadcasts, (b) the period from 1979 through 1997 when Missouri's athletic department started seeking awarding the broadcast contract to outside vendors through a bid process, and (c) the multimedia contract era that has existed since 1998, where the broadcast distributor has taken on other marketing activities previously handled by the University of Missouri's athletic department (McGuire, 2004).

The Aldridge Era: 1948-1973

From 1948 to 1973, KFRU in Columbia served as flagship station for the statewide radio network and Mahlon Aldridge, the station's co-owner and general manager, handled the play-by-play (University of Missouri, 1962). While big city stations like KMOX (with Harry Caray doing the games) were allowed to continue originating Missouri football broadcasts, Aldridge became the voice of Tiger sports for many people listening to rural Missouri stations that could not afford to originate their own coverage. This period also saw the University's athletic department actively involved in facilitating what became known as the Missouri Sports Network (MSN). Starting in 1950, the University became involved in distributing the broadcasts as well as soliciting a central sponsor for the network games. The statewide football radio network tripled in the number of affiliates in a matter of years. By 1970, the network's football coverage was being picked up by more than 50 radio stations. While MSN also offered Tiger basketball play-by-play during this period, only 8 to 10 stations a year committed to carrying those games (R. Kelly, 2002; University of Missouri, 1962).

KMOX eventually joined the Missouri Sports Network, in 1973, replacing KFRU as the MSN flagship station. This also meant a change

on the broadcasts, as KMOX sports personality Bob Starr replaced Aldridge as MSN's play-by-play announcer. Despite the change in flagship station, the University remained involved in organizing the statewide radio network up until 1979.

MU Broadcast Rights Put Out for Bid: 1979-1998

Financial pressure on Missouri's athletic department eventually forced the university into seeking more revenue from its athletic broadcast rights. For many years, Missouri athletic officials had seen their participation in MSN primarily as a public relations vehicle for the school (University of Missouri Radio, 1962). In the 1970s, however, schools like Missouri were facing greater economic demands because of Title IX requirements, increased personnel costs, and facility expenses. Missouri athletic director Dave Hart believed selling exclusive broadcast rights (starting with the 1979-1980 athletic season) to an outside broadcast company would increase the school's revenues from its statewide broadcasts (Hart, 2003). The open bidding process proved more successful than Hart could have hoped for: Revenue and other benefits (e.g., free promotional station announcements) generated from the statewide broadcast contract rose from \$50,000 in 1978 to over \$1 million dollars a year in 1981 (Hart; Missouri Net, 1981).

The change to an exclusive broadcast rights contract also created greater demands on local affiliates. The biggest change was the distributor's demand that all local affiliates carry Missouri men's basketball games as well as football. In addition to more games, stations had to give up more on-air time to allow the network to sell more commercial availabilities. Stations were also obligated to carry additional programming carried by the statewide network, such as coach's call-in programs.

Multimedia Contracts: 1998-Present

The exclusive broadcast rights contract for the University of Missouri evolved again in 1998. Companies seeking the University's broadcast rights were now being asked to bid on what was known as a multimedia rights contract, where the broadcast distributor would also handle many of the athletic department's marketing responsibilities (one

exception was the sale of game tickets). The distributor was now called upon to handle matters such as selling advertising space at the school's sports venues to creating promotional materials for the athletic department. An entity called Missouri Sports Properties (also referred to as Mizzou Sports Properties or MSP), developed by Learfield Communications in Jefferson City and International Sports Properties in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, won the initial multimedia rights contract (Lear, 2002). MSP has remained as the rights holder for University of Missouri statewide radio network, with the most recent contract at the time of this research running through the 2015-2016 athletic season. The 11-year contract guaranteed the University at least \$32.5 million in cash and other benefits, with revenue sharing offering the potential of millions more if MSP met its revenue goals (mutigers.com, 2004).²

System Theory Applied to the Study of Mass Communication

Interaction that occurs between individuals, groups, and institutions that can be identified as orderly and systematic over time provides the basis for identifying social systems at work (Loomis & Dyer, 1976). As this study posits that the generation of University of Missouri sports play-by-play occurs through a social system, it is appropriate that system theory is used as the theoretical basis of this study.

One of the primary tenets of system theory states system components are both structurally and functionally interactive (Fisher, 1978). Structural interaction concerns the level of order found within a particular system while functional interaction describes the actions and reactions within a given system. Fisher describes a third type of interaction, evolution, as examining how the passage of time effects structural and functional interaction between components. Fisher cites the operation of the U.S. government as an example of structural and functional interaction at work within a social system. Structural interaction is highly ordered (the three main branches of government), while functional interaction among the executive, judicial, and legislative

² As of the multimedia contract awarded through the 2015-2016 athletic season, Learfield Communications based in Jefferson City, Missouri had sole control of Mizzou Sports Properties.

branches is seen as highly complex. In studying the evolutionary nature of this system, Fisher noted one could examine changes in federal policy over time (p. 199).

System theory has been utilized in a variety of academic disciplines over several decades. Although von Bertalanffy (1972) originally applied the idea of systems to the study of biology in the 1920s, other researchers have used system theory to examine organizations (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939), social groups (Fararo, 2001), and psychiatry (Menniger, 1963).

System theory has also been applied to the field of mass media. DeFleur (1970) developed a model describing the mass media as a series of social systems generating content for the public. DeFleur placed particular importance on the audience component in his model, noting that the ability to garner a large audience is vital to the financial success of such media messages. DeFleur also identified four major functions in his model. These functions include (a) generating content that attracts an audience, (b) attracting revenue from advertisers in consideration for providing the audience, (c) avoiding actions that would cause regulatory involvement, and (d) maintaining an equilibrium of the entire system.

McLeod and Blumler (1987) noted varying levels of mass media could be studied through system theory, such as a specific media organization (e.g., an individual newspaper), a set of organizations within a medium (e.g., studying television networks), or across media (e.g., examining news coverage by newspapers versus cable television). McLeod and Blumler believe systems should be viewed as “dynamic organizations in constant change” (p. 275).

The social system generating University of Missouri sports play-by-play over its statewide radio network is identified by six major components. The three primary components that have emerged as the system evolved over time include network distribution, advertising, and control (as exhibited by the University of Missouri’s athletic department). The announcing component was one of the three other identifiable components operating at a secondary level within the system, along with audience and local affiliates (McGuire, 2004).

Having these identifiable components allows for an examination of one particular component, the announcing component, and its interaction with the other parts of this unique system. Thus, we can consider the structural and functional interaction of the system’s

components, in relation to the announcing component in the system generating University of Missouri radio sports play-by-play.

Methodology

Research utilizing case history, a form of case study, allows for a focus on the evolution of a particular event or process (Denzin, 1989). Cases can be classified in such a manner to encompass a wide range of phenomena: From a single child to a classroom of children, even an incident such as the mobilization of professionals to study a childhood condition (Stake, 1995). Case history appears to be particularly applicable as a methodological approach regarding the examination of systems, as one seeks to evaluate the evolution of a given phenomenon (Fisher, 1978).

Several data collection methods were employed in this study, with semi-structured interviews serving as the primary method. Particular attention was given to individuals who worked as Missouri play-by-play announcers, as well as those working in the control and network distribution components. All interview participants were asked a standard set of questions, and then additional questions related to a participant's area of expert knowledge. Other materials, including documentary evidence, archival records, and physical artifacts (e.g., play-by-play recordings), were collected as part of the case history research process (Yin, 1994). Credibility of the research was established through a combination of suggested methods, including data triangulation (multiple sources to corroborate evidence) and member checks (Cresswell, 1997; Stake, 1995).

Social System Generating University of Missouri Statewide Radio Broadcasts

As this research focuses upon the role of the announcing component (specifically those involved in the statewide radio broadcasts), the next sections consider the (a) structural and (b) functional interaction the announcing component has with other components within the system. The evolution of these interactions will also be discussed.

Structural Interaction

The announcing component enjoyed significant structural status during the MSN's first quarter-century from 1948 through 1973. This was a direct result of Mahlon Aldridge and his multiple network roles, including that of play-by-play announcer. One factor behind Aldridge's influence over the network was his proximity to the university and its officials. Aldridge was a co-owner and General Manager of KFRU radio in Columbia, where the campus was located. Being located in the same community, it was logical for Aldridge to take on the network's play-by-play duties when the network was first formed. Aldridge's later appointment as network coordinator (as well as continuing as play-by-play announcer) could be linked to the personal relationships he had built with school officials like Missouri football coach and Athletic Director Don Faurot (who later worked as Aldridge's color analyst on football) (Gray, 2002). Aldridge's relationship with the University allowed him to remain on the football and basketball broadcasts through the 1972-1973 sports season, despite complaints from some listeners about Aldridge's declining play-by-play skills (Gray, 2002).

The structural significance of the announcing component started receding with the University's designation of KMOX to replace KFRU as the statewide radio network's flagship station in 1973. University officials related that their decision stemmed in some part from complaints about Aldridge's on-air decline (Gray, 2002). A far more significant factor was the desire of University athletic officials to have KMOX and its 50,000-watt signal as part of the statewide network (Rawlings, 1973).

Aldridge's departure meant the announcing component would no longer be coordinating other parts of the system generating Missouri radio play-by-play. The announcing component's status declined even further once Missouri broadcast rights started being awarded on an exclusive rights basis in 1979. The control, network distribution, and advertising components became dominant as the generation of revenue became the primary factor in the system's existence. The selection of Missouri sports announcers was now subject to a selection process involving the control and network distribution components. KMOX General Manager Robert Hyland was also influential regarding the selection of Tiger broadcast personnel because of his station's role as

network flagship. Distributors of Missouri play-by-play during this time saw the ability to own the rights to Tiger broadcasts and to sell advertising as the most important aspects of their business. The selection of announcers was considered a secondary matter, and the distributors (e.g., Sports Network Incorporated, Learfield) readily accepted Hyland's choices for announcers (often people working on the KMOX sports staff) (Lear, 2002; Maracek, 2002). The announcers during this time who did the play-by-play were still publicly prominent (i.e., Bill Wilkerson, John Rooney, Kevin Harlan), but did not wield the authority that Aldridge once did within this particular system.

The announcing component's structural significance was restored to some extent in 1997 when the University hired its play-by-play announcer, Mike Kelly, as a full-time athletic department employee (Kelly had been working full-time at KMOX radio). In serving as Director of Broadcast Operations, Kelly was now working with the network distributor on the production details regarding the statewide radio network broadcasts as well as working with local affiliates.³ While the system was still emphasizing the ability to generate revenue for the control and network distribution components and an audience for advertisers, the announcing component had re-established at least some of the structural significance it once enjoyed.

Functional Interaction

As previously noted, the announcing component is identified one of six components within the social system generating University of Missouri sports play-by-play. When considering the functional interaction that the announcing component has had with the rest of the system over the three major eras previously noted, the announcing component's relationship with control and network distribution has experienced the greatest evolution, while interaction has with other system components has varied.

³ As of 2006, Mike Kelly's title within the University of Missouri's athletic department was Director of Community Relations.

Control

After the University of Missouri became involved in the statewide radio network in 1950, the announcing component developed significant functional interaction with the control component. Mahlon Aldridge's position in overseeing MSN for the University, as well his personal relationship with athletic officials like Don Faurot, contributed to this high level of interaction.

When Aldridge's involvement with MSN ended in 1973, the relationship between the announcing and control component evolved toward limited interaction. Announcers chosen to handle Missouri broadcasts from KMOX (and later KCMO) were no longer close to the control component either through an employment situation or simply through proximity to Columbia. The control component also acted more formally in regards to the selection of announcers, maintaining its right to decline announcers chosen for Missouri broadcasts. An athletic director during this time said his concern was with making sure announcers chosen for the play-by-play broadcasts were not only competent, but would present the desired image of the University and its athletic program to a statewide audience (Castiglione, 2003).

Another concern for the control-announcing component interaction after 1973 involved what Tiger announcers were saying during the broadcasts. As Missouri announcers were now free of close ties to the athletic department, play-by-play men like Bob Starr and Bill Wilkerson and color analysts like Kellen Winslow were more forthcoming with criticism when Missouri teams did not perform well. Wilkerson (2002) believed the listening audience wanted a straightforward broadcast, as opposed to Mahlon Aldridge's openly partisan support for the Tigers. Some on-air comments made by Wilkerson and other announcers during this time occasionally created tension between Missouri athletic officials and their announcers. Castiglione (2003) believed announcers for Missouri should strive to be positive about the team that they were announcing for.

The functional interaction between the control and announcing component also involved the overall marketing of the athletic department. While Mahlon Aldridge was a natural salesman for all Missouri teams, announcers that succeeded him as play-by-play announcer saw their promotion of Tiger athletics as part of the job

(Wilkerson, 2002). When Mike Kelly became part of Missouri's athletic department administration in 1997, marketing Missouri sports was again prominent in the broadcasts: "...make no mistake about it, in this day and age in broadcasting, the radio play-by-play announcer is also a marketer...trying to promote different events that are coming up that the University is involved in" (M. Kelly, 2002). With the University's athletic department employing color analysts Jon Kadlec (football) and Gary Link (basketball), this trend of having its primary announcers continued through the early 2000s.

Network Distribution

Before 1973, Mahlon Aldridge's involvement with MSN allowed for significant functional interaction between the announcing and network distribution components. After Aldridge's departure from the network in 1973, the announcing component's interaction with network distribution diminished. Companies that acquired Missouri broadcast rights like Sports Network, Incorporated and Learfield Communications were focused on their ability to generate a profit based on the rights fee being paid to the University of Missouri. The selection of announcers, as a result, became one of accommodation with other system components. Maracek (2002) downplayed the role of collegiate play-by-play announcers, saying that "the game made the announcers. I really didn't care who did the games. So what worked politically, financially, I was more than happy to accept." A Learfield official described the selection of any collegiate play-by-play announcer as "a political process," which could be influenced by the association a particular announcer enjoyed with an athletic department or key local affiliate (Gardner, 2002).

Announcers on Missouri's statewide radio network broadcasts between 1973 and 1997 were typically chosen from a large market affiliate (KMOX or KCMO in Kansas City) and not the network distributor (an exception to this was John Rooney, who worked for Learfield's Missouri Network as well as doing Tiger play-by-play during the early 1980s). As a result, day-to-day interaction between the announcers and the network distributor was limited, except to arrange the logistics for delivering the broadcasts. This situation changed after 1997, when Missouri's athletic department added Mike Kelly to its staff. One

of Kelly's job duties (in addition to radio play-by-play) was dealing with the network distributor on a regular basis. As a result, the functional interaction between the two components was restored.

Local Affiliates

As with the control and network distribution components, the level of interaction between the announcing and local affiliate components evolved following Mahlon Aldridge's departure from MSN in 1973. With Aldridge no longer involved, it was now the network distribution component that would deal with local affiliates. This situation changed after the Athletic Department's hiring of Mike Kelly in 1997 (M. Kelly, 2002), who often engaged with local affiliates.

Columbia-area broadcast outlets also served as the source for radio play-by-play announcers and program hosts for other University of Missouri sports broadcasts. As women's basketball and baseball started receiving greater coverage, stations in the Columbia radio market were counted on carrying the games as well as providing the announcers. Central Missouri broadcasters like Rod Kelly, Chris Gervino, David Lile, and Tex Little picked up these play-by-play assignments simply because of their proximity to the university (Gervino, 2002; Little, 2002; R. Kelly, 2002).

Audience

As the play-by-play announcer and color analyst tend to have the greatest public exposure within the system generating University of Missouri sports play-by-play, it is logical that the announcing component enjoys a relatively high level of interaction with the audience component. Unlike other components with this system, the announcing-audience interaction has been consistent over the life of the system. Much of this interaction regarding the statewide radio network has taken the form of correspondence from Missouri broadcast listeners. These letters have ranged from being full of praise for the announcers to being highly critical of those working on the broadcasts. Some events have spurred a large amount of public response, such as replacing Mahlon Aldridge with Bob Starr before the 1973 football season. Numerous letters came into the University complaining that Starr failed to deliver the sort of passion

that Aldridge put into his play-by-play description (Blase, 1976, among others).

Missouri's athletic director at the time, Mel Sheehan, responded to many of these listeners, telling them that Starr "was a professional, and of course, as such does not become overly enthusiastic about the team" (Sheehan, 1976). Although announcers that followed Aldridge tried to present a more even-handed account of Missouri games (i.e., KMOX announcers like Dan Kelly and Bob Costas), they still understood that Tiger fans wanted the game reported from their perspective. Rooney believed a collegiate sports audience still expects their team's announcer to present the game in a way that makes the audience feel like "he's their guy" (2002). Harlan (2003) says he was cognizant about demonstrating a passion for the Tigers during his play-by-play broadcasts.

Advertising

The announcing component generally had little interaction with the advertising component over the history of the statewide radio network. While announcers like Mahlon Aldridge did live commercials on early Missouri broadcasts—and current announcers still do shorter "live reads" promoting game advertisers—those dealing with play-by-play had little interaction with the businesses purchasing time on the broadcasts. An exception to this has been Mike Kelly, who recalls being asked to visit with potential clients for local affiliates, encouraging them to purchase time on the Missouri broadcasts (2002).

Implications and Conclusion

This study has envisioned Missouri's statewide radio network as a social system, with the announcing component representing one of six separate components generating play-by-play broadcasts. In examining how the announcing component has evolved over the period of the study, three significant eras emerged. The first covers the years from 1948 through 1973, when Mahlon Aldridge wielded great influence over the system delivering Tiger play-by-play. The second era (1973 through 1997) marked a period when prominent sports announcers from KMOX radio handled Tigers' play-by-play, but had less interaction with other

components. The third era (1998-Present) saw the announcing component regain structural and functional interaction with the rest of the system. This stemmed from Mike Kelly's hiring by Missouri's athletic department to serve in other capacities besides his play-by-play duties. These three eras have served as mileposts in analyzing the evolving interaction the announcing component has had, particularly with the control and network distribution components.

As with any case history research, there are limitations to generalizing the findings of one particular case. It would be useful to have similar studies occur involving other regional or statewide radio networks in order to make comparisons. It can be suggested, however, that this study has established two indicators that would be useful in determining the ability of announcers to influence the production and distribution of collegiate radio sports network broadcasts. One such indicator deals with the relationship that the announcing component has with the control component. As suggested by the experiences of Mahlon Aldridge, Mike Kelly, and others with Missouri's statewide radio network, it can be argued that the announcing component will have greater structural and functional interaction with the rest of the system when a broadcaster is associated with an athletic department in some capacity other than doing play-by-play. Mahlon Aldridge's position with the statewide network during his long association with the University's athletic department afforded him direct control over many decisions. Mike Kelly's position within the athletic department also provided direct contact that announcers have not had during the long history of Missouri play-by-play.

Fisher's conception of structural interaction in social systems identified physical proximity between components as a factor in determining the level at which interaction occurs. In examining the social system generating University of Missouri play-by-play, it is apparent that announcers who have been in close proximity to the Columbia campus have also been more capable of having an impact on other system components. This was seen during Mahlon Aldridge's time while he was both Missouri's play-by-play announcer and General Manager of KFRU radio in Columbia. The move of Mike Kelly from KMOX to working in the University's athletic department has also contributed to the announcer being more involved with other parts of the system (i.e., working for the Control component). During the period

when Missouri play-by-play announcers were not in close proximity to Columbia (announcers like Bob Costas based in St. Louis or Kevin Harlan in Kansas City) they were less likely to have significant interaction with other system components. As a result, announcers based in Kansas City or St. Louis have had diminished ability to influence the system generating play-by-play broadcasts. The evolution of University of Missouri sports coverage also suggests that announcers working in the Columbia-Jefferson city media market have had greater opportunities to do secondary University sports such as baseball or women's soccer.

A second indicator emerging from this study is the type of distribution structure that is used for a radio network's play-by-play broadcasts. When the University of Missouri was involved with organizing its statewide radio network, its play-by-play announcer (Mahlon Aldridge) served as the network coordinator. As a result, the announcing component enjoyed significant interaction with the rest of the system. As the University moved away from being involved with the network and offering the broadcast rights to a third party, the announcer's interaction also declined. It is suggested that colleges and universities that choose to organize their own radio networks in-house rather than outsourcing that task affords announcers in those opportunities to have greater interaction with and greater influence over the rest of the system. In situations where schools outsource the organization of their radio sports network to an outside company (e.g., a distributor such as Learfield Communications), the announcing component will generally have less opportunity to influence the system. Future research should consider differences between in-house broadcast operations versus those operated by a third party through a system perspective.

From a historical standpoint, this study has demonstrated the contrast that exists between Missouri's history of prominent announcers doing Tiger play-by-play and the limited ability these announcers had to impact the system generating the broadcasts. Announcers like Bob Costas, Joe Buck and others will long be remembered for their contributions to the sports broadcast industry and the many memorable events they were a part of. These announcers also share in the unique legacy of being a former "Voice of the Missouri Tigers." Yet while it is the announcers who have enjoyed the prominence generated by these broadcasts, it did not entail much in the way of power over others in the

system. In fact, factors like the announcer's direct involvement with the control component, the proximity announcers had to other components, and the type of network distribution that dictated an announcer's interaction within the system. One obvious caveat is that announcers like Bob Costas or Kevin Harlan never viewed the Missouri play-by-play position as their "destination" job, seeking instead to climb the career ladder in the sports broadcast field to more prominent announcing opportunities (especially on network television). This is reflected by the short tenures many Missouri play-by-play announcers had between 1970 and 1990.

The roll call of nationally prominent announcers has achieved historical prominence for the University of Missouri's statewide radio network in sports broadcast history. Recent history, however, suggests that as long as the University desires to have its announcers be part of athletic administration on campus, this legacy may have run its course.

<i>Table 1</i>		
<i>Prominent Announcers, University of Missouri's Statewide Radio Network, 1948-2006</i>		
Announcer	Role with Missouri Broadcasts	Other Sports Broadcast Work
Mahlon Aldridge	Play-by-Play, 1948-1973 (Football, Basketball)	None
Bob Starr	Play-by-Play 1973-1976 (Football, Basketball)	Play-by-Play, NFL, MLB (Regional)
Dan Kelly	Play-by-Play, Color, 1973-1981 (Football)	Play-by-Play, NHL (National, Regional)
Bill Wilkerson	Color, Play-by-Play 1977-1983, 1985-1993 (Football)	Play-by-Play, NFL (Regional radio & television)
Bob Costas	Play-by-Play 1976-1977, 1978-1981 (Basketball)	Play-by-Play, World Series Studio Host, NFL on NBC Studio Host, Olympic games
John Rooney	Color, Play-by-Play 1977-1978, 1981-1984 (Football, Basketball)	Play-by-Play, MLB, NFL, NCAA Men's Basketball Championship
Dan Dierdorf	Color, 1984 (Football), Super Bowls	Color, NFL <i>Monday Night</i>
Kevin Harlan	Color, Play-by-Play 1986-1989 (television) (Football, Basketball)	Play-by-Play, NBA, NFL, NCAA Men's Basketball
Tom Dore	Color, Play-by-Play 1989-1991 (Football, Basketball)	Play-by-Play, NBA (Regional), NCAA Women's Basketball Championship
Mike Kelly	Play-by-Play 1991- (Football, Basketball)	Play-by-Play, 2000 NFC Title game (radio)
Joe Buck	Color, 1991-1992 (Basketball) Play-by-Play, Super Bowl	Play-by-Play, World Series

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The Relationship between College Student Class Participation and Perceived Instructor Communicator Style

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between college student class participation and perceived instructor communicator style. Participants were 262 undergraduate students who completed a measure of classroom participation (Fassinger, 1995) and the Communicator Style Measure-Short Form (Norton, 1978). Results indicated that (a) class participation was positively correlated with the human, actor, and authority instructor communicator styles and (b) students reported 0-32 attempts at class participation, with an average of 1.8 comments or questions offered during a typical class period. Future research should examine whether students have a preference for particular communicator style attributes when instructors utilize various instructional strategies.

One way in which college students actively engage in their educational experience is through class participation (Cohen, 1991). Class participation, which is defined broadly as the comments offered and questions asked by students during class time (Fassinger, 2000), has benefits for both students and instructors (Rocca, 2001). For students, class participation increases their state motivation (Junn, 1994), signals their involvement in the course content (Wulff & Wulff, 2004), improves their communication skills (Berdine, 1986), stimulates their critical thinking abilities (Garside, 1996), and increases their affect for learning (Richter & Tjosvold, 1980). For instructors, class participation promotes the discussion of controversial issues, serves as an indicator of student learning, encourages and affirms student contributions, and provides a means for student evaluation (Berdine, 1986; Cohen, 1991; Dallimore, Hertenstein, & Platt, 2004). As such, it is no surprise class participation

is a behavior desired by instructors (Brozo & Schmelzer, 1985; Parr & Valerius, 1999).

At the same time, a primary reason why students do not participate in class is due to instructors (Wade, 1994). Instructors who are considered “boring, bored, pushy, moody, closed-minded, too opinionated, condescending, [or] unfriendly” (p. 23) are likely to have students who do not participate in class (Berdine, 1986). Conversely, when students perceive their instructors as approachable, supportive, verbally immediate, and nonverbally immediate, they are more likely to participate in class (Fassinger, 2000; Menzel & Carrell, 1999; Rocca, 2001). Other instructor behaviors which stimulate class participation include enthusiasm (Armstrong & Boud, 1983), patience (Beacham, 1991), encouragement (Smith, 1977), and listening (Cohen, 1991).

Communicator style, which is the way an instructor “verbally, nonverbally, and paraverbally interacts to signal how literal meaning should be taken, filtered, or understood” (Norton, 1978, p. 99), is an instructor communicative behavior which encapsulates many of the aforementioned behaviors. Communicator style is comprised of any combination of 10 communicative attributes: impression leaving, contentious, open, dramatic, dominant, precise, relaxed, friendly, attentive, and animated (Norton, 1978, 1983). *Impression leaving* instructors have a memorable style, which depends on their affiliative expressiveness and use of information-seeking behaviors. *Contentious* instructors like to debate and may get somewhat hostile, quarrelsome, or belligerent. *Open* instructors are extroverted, unreserved, straightforward, and do not have problems directly communicating their thoughts or emotions. *Dramatic* instructors are verbally and vocally active, and use stylistic devices (e.g., exaggerations, voice, rhythm, stories) to underscore content. *Dominant* instructors “take charge” of the situation by talking louder, longer, and frequently. *Precise* instructors are accurate, using well-defined arguments and specific proof or evidence to clarify their statements. *Relaxed* instructors appear anxiety-free, calm and at ease when engaged in interactions with others. *Friendly* instructors recognize students in a positive way and are considered to be kind and caring. *Attentive* instructors are alert, listen with empathy, and are concerned with understanding students. *Animated* instructors are physically active and use eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, body movement, and posture to underscore content.

Potter and Emanuel (1990) categorized the 10 communicator style attributes into one of three instructor communicator style categories: human, authority, and actor. The *human* instructor recognizes students as individuals and uses the open, attentive, friendly, and relaxed communicator style attributes. The *authority* instructor is in charge and conducts class efficiently by using the precise, dominant, and contentious communicator style attributes. The *actor* instructor is a storyteller who uses the dramatic, animated, and impression leaving communicator style attributes.

Because students prefer instructors who use the friendly, attentive, and relaxed attributes (Potter & Emanuel, 1990); are highly satisfied when instructors are friendly, attentive, relaxed, and dramatic (Prisbell, 1994); and associate instructor use of the open, impression leaving, and relaxed attributes with solidarity (Andersen, Norton, & Nussbaum, 1981), it stands to reason students will be more likely to participate in class if instructors are perceived to use the human and the actor communicator styles. Conversely, because students rate the dominant and precise attributes as the least desirable in an instructor (Potter & Emanuel, 1990) and instructors who are perceived to use the dominant, contentious, and precise attributes are also perceived as verbally aggressive (Myers & Rocca, 2000), it stands to reason students will be less likely to participate in class if instructors are perceived to use the authoritarian communicator style. To investigate this idea, the following hypotheses are posited:

- H1: A direct relationship will exist between student class participation and perceived instructor use of the human (i.e. open, attentive, friendly, relaxed) communicator style and the actor (i.e., dramatic, animated, impression leaving) communicator style.
- H2: An indirect relationship will exist between student class participation and perceived instructor use of the authority (i.e., precise, dominant, contentious) communicator style.

Additionally, we were curious about the frequency with which college students participate in class. Although it is known that college students ask questions and use information-seeking strategies (Aitken & Neer, 1993; Myers & Knox, 2001; Pearson & West, 1991), research findings illustrating how often students participate in class are scant. In a

small class, students ask an average of 3-4 questions per 50-minute class period (Pearson & West, 1991; West & Pearson, 1994); in a large lecture class (i.e., 400 students), students ask an average of 10-15 questions per 50-minute class (Nelson & Pearson, 1999). Fassinger (2000) obtained a mean participation score of 11 attempts made by all students during a typical class period. To contribute to this limited body of research, the following research question is posed:

RQ1: During a typical class period, how frequently do students report participating?

Method

Participants

Participants were 262 undergraduate students (146 men, 111 women, five students did not report their sex) enrolled in an undergraduate communication course at a mid-Atlantic university. The age of the respondents ranged from 18 to 45 years ($M = 19.68$, $SD = 4.81$). One hundred and forty nine ($n = 149$) participants were first year students, 46 participants were sophomores, 33 participants were juniors, 29 participants were seniors, five participants were post-undergraduates, and two participants did not provide their class standing. The majority of the participants ($n = 146$) reported on a class with an enrollment of 50 or more students, 33 participants reported on a class with an enrollment of 30-50 students, 55 students reported on a class with an enrollment of 11-30 students, and six students reported on a class with an enrollment of 10 students or less.

Procedures and Instrumentation

On the second day of the semester, participants were asked to identify a course they had taken during the previous semester and to complete two instruments in reference to their enrollment in the course. The two instruments were a measure of classroom participation (Fassinger, 1995) and the Communicator Style Measure-Short Form (Norton, 1978). The measure of classroom participation is a six-item scale that asks students to (a) provide a numerical account of how many times they offered a comment or raised a question during a typical class

period (i.e., one item) and (b) indicate how often, using a five-point Likert scale ranging from *very often* (5) to *never* (1), they contribute to class discussion, volunteer in class, and express their personal opinion (i.e., five items). Fassinger (1995) reported a reliability coefficient of .84 for the six-item scale. In this study, a reliability coefficient of .93 ($M = 2.39, SD = 1.07$) was obtained for five of the six items. (The one item which asked students to provide a numerical account of how many times they participated during a typical class period was not included in the reliability analysis.)

The *Communicator Style Measure-Short Form* is a 10-item instrument that asks respondents to report their perceptions of their instructors' communicator style. Participants were supplied with a four-sentence description of each of the 10 communicator style attributes (i.e., impression leaving, contentious, open, dramatic, dominant, precise, relaxed, friendly, attentive, animated). Using a scale ranging from *strongly agree* (5) to *strongly disagree* (1), respondents were asked to indicate the level of agreement in which their instructor used each attribute. This measure has been successfully employed in previous studies (Infante & Gorden, 1987, 1989; Montgomery & Norton, 1981; Myers & Rocca, 2000).

Data Analysis

The hypotheses were explored using a series of Pearson Product-Moment correlations. Perceived instructor use of the human, actor, and authority communicator styles was calculated by summing the items that comprised each style (i.e. the open, attentive, friendly, and relaxed attributes were summed to create a composite score for the human style; the dramatic, animated, and impression leaving attributes were summed to create a composite score for the actor style; and the precise, dominant, and contentious attributes were summed to create a composite score for the authority style). Student participation was calculated by summing the five items using the Likert scale that inquired whether students contribute to class discussion, volunteer in class, and express their personal opinion. The research question was answered by obtaining an average for the one-item measure of how many times students offered a comment or raised a question during a typical class period.

Results

The first hypothesis predicted a direct relationship would exist between student class participation and perceived instructor use of the human and actor communicator styles. The hypothesis was supported: $r(261) = .26, p < .001$ for the human communicator style; $r(262) = .26, p < .001$ for the actor communicator style.

The second hypothesis predicted an indirect relationship would exist between student class participation and perceived instructor use of the authority communicator style. The hypothesis was not supported. Instead, the results indicated a direct relationship exists between student class participation and perceived instructor use of the authority communicator style, $r(261) = .38, p < .001$.

The research question inquired about the frequency with which students report participating (i.e., offer comments or raise questions) during a typical class period. Students reported 0-32 attempts at class participation, with an average of 1.8 ($SD = 3.23$; $Mdn = 1.0$, $Mo = 0$) comments uttered or questions asked during a typical class period.

Because class size could affect the frequency with which students participate in class, a series of post-hoc partial correlations controlling for class size was computed between the summed class participation score and the three instructor communicator styles (i.e., human, actor, authority). Positive correlations were obtained between student class participation and perceived instructor use of the human communicator style, $r(257) = .25, p < .001$; the actor communicator style, $r(257) = .29, p < .001$; and the authority communicator style, $r(257) = .36, p < .001$.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between college student class participation and perceived instructor communicator style. Two general findings were obtained. The first finding was that college student class participation is positively correlated with perceived instructor use of the human, the actor, and the authority instructor communicator styles. In examining the first finding, it is not surprising that positive correlations were obtained between student class participation and both the human and the actor

communicator styles. Prior research has established that when instructors are perceived to use the attributes that comprise the human and the actor communicator styles, instructors are rated by students as being effective. For instance, effective instructors are perceived as being more relaxed, friendly, and open (i.e., human) as well as dramatic and impression leaving (i.e., actor) than instructors who are perceived as being ineffective (Anderson et al., 1981; Norton & Nussbaum, 1980; Schroeder & Leber, 1993). This finding may also explain why student perceived learning is positively related to instructor communicator style. As previously discovered, student affective and behavioral learning are predicted, in part, by the impression leaving, relaxed, open, attentive, dramatic, and friendly communicator style attributes (Andersen et al., 1981; Myers & Horvath, 1997; Norton, 1977; Norton & Nussbaum, 1980). Additionally, Myers, Martin, and Mottet (2000) found that perceived instructor use of the impression leaving, friendly, and animated communicator style attributes predicts, in part, why students are motivated to communicate with their instructors for relational, participatory, and functional reasons. Taken together, the results of these past studies, as well as the findings reported in this study, suggest perceived instructor use of the human and the actor communicator styles may promote student participation in a variety of forms.

More surprising, however, was the positive correlation obtained between student class participation and the authority communicator style. At first glance, this finding appears perplexing due to recent research which has suggested perceived instructor caring and confirmation are essential to students' success in the classroom (Ellis, 2000). Yet, instructor use of the authority communicator style may stimulate student class participation for two reasons. First, instructors who use the authority communicator style may be perceived as creating a learning community where instructors stimulate student interaction through their use of the precise, dominant, and contentious communicator style attributes. According to Book and Putnam (1992), in a learning community, instructors model communicative behaviors which encourage the exchange of ideas, the analysis of arguments, and the provision of evidence to support these ideas and arguments. Instructors who promote a learning community may be perceived by their students as challenging, demanding, or forceful, which then stimulate student participation. Second, perceived instructor use of the authority

communicator style may be a style which college students expect their instructors to employ. As Hayward (2003) reported, college students expect their instructors to have a strong command of the subject matter, to be clear, and to stimulate student interest in the subject matter. Thus, when instructors communicate using the precise, dominant, and contentious attributes, students may be more inclined to participate in class because the instructors' behaviors meet the students' expectations of how college instructors should communicate.

In examining the second finding, students reported participating, on average, 1.8 times during a typical class period. Although this number is lower than the number of attempts obtained in prior research efforts, recall that (a) the majority of participants reported on a class in which enrollment was 50 or more students and (b) participation was operationally defined as offering a comment or asking a question. It is possible students' reports of class participation would change if another definition was provided to the participants. According to Melvin and Lord (1995), scholars have not agreed on the components which constitute class participation. Additionally, it is possible student class participation is affected by a host of factors not explored in this study. These factors include the extent to which instructors actively solicit student participation, whether instructors direct their requests for participation toward one student or toward all students, whether these requests take the form of open or closed questions, whether these requests require students to recall information or provide an opinion, whether student participation is linked with a particular instructional routine or strategy, and whether students are prompted to participate based on a comment or question proffered by a classmate. Future research should strive to identify these factors and their subsequent impact on student participation.

Future research should also examine whether students have a preference for particular communicator style attributes when instructors either lecture or lead discussion. Extant research conducted by Holladay and Coombs (1993) found that individuals who deliver strong messages are considered more dominant, animated, open, friendly, dramatic, and attentive than individuals who deliver weak messages. Instructors who utilize these same attributes, then, may find that students rate them more positively when they lecture or lead discussion. Additionally, given the increasing number of nontraditional students enrolling in higher

education (US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2002), it might prove prudent to explore whether perceived instructor communicator style attributes impacts their participation in class. Houser (2004) reported that nontraditional students welcome an open dialogue between students and instructors. Because traditional and nontraditional students differ in the instructor communicator style attributes they consider to exemplify teaching effectiveness (Comadena, Semlak, & Escott, 1992), identifying how instructor communicator style attributes influence the class participation of nontraditional students could be useful in enhancing these students' educational experience.

In sum, the findings of this study indicate that perceived instructor use of the human, actor, and authority communicator styles are positively correlated with student class participation and that students report participating in class, on average, 1.8 times during a typical class period. Instructors should consider that if they use the human, actor, and/or authority communicator styles, student class participation might increase. Because a positive link exists between instructor communicator style and perceived instructor effectiveness (Nussbaum, 1992; Sallinen-Kuparinen, 1992), utilizing the right combination of communicator style attributes could result in additional favorable outcomes for both instructors and students.

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**Teaching the Ties that Bind:
Family Communication as a Course or
Unit in the Communication Curriculum**

Scott Jensen

Family communication is a relatively new area within the communication discipline. At the same time, it has been a paramount consideration to how we communicate since we first began to understand how individuals interact with one another. Families are the one common denominator to all of us—we each have one as part of our history. Similarly, we all exist today within the context of a family structure. The face of *family* has changed, but the sense of what the term means remains stable. West and Turner (2006) define family as:

...a self-defined group of intimates who create and maintain themselves through their own interactions and their interactions with others; a family may include both voluntary and involuntary relationships; it creates both literal and symbolic internal and external boundaries; and it evolves through time. It has a history, a present, and a future (p. 9).

While this definition outlines what many of us knew as children, it may well be a misnomer to reference the *traditional* family. Family structures have change dramatically in our society. More and more, children are raised in single-parent homes, homes with grandparents and parents, homes with only grandparents, parents in same-sex partnerships, and the list goes on. As West and Turner (2006) write, “When family members identify other individuals as family, their self-definition is their reality” (p. 9).

The changing face of family has made it imperative that a study of family communication be a part of communication curricula. Children share classrooms with others whose family structures may bear very little resemblance to one another. Helping our students understand not only the importance of family, but also the relationship between family and our own communication is central in our efforts to create competent communicators.

This program provides suggestions for integrating family communication into existing curricula. It also offers materials for

creating a course in family communication. Materials and ideas are easily applicable to both high school and collegiate classrooms. Additionally, the supplemental materials are organized into two appendixes—one for a seminar course taught at Webster University on family narratives (Appendix B), and another for a topic course taught at Webster on family communication (Appendix C). The assignments and other materials within these addendums can be utilized within the context of the courses as well as independently. These by no means reflect limits on the possibilities for teaching family communication. The common thread of family that is shared by all of us makes family communication a rich field of possible connections that we as teachers can make available for our students.

Getting Started—Make Choices

A number of considerations should be taken into account when looking at teaching family communication courses or units. First and foremost, the educator should consider the ubiquitous nature of family in our society. There are an infinite number of concepts to discuss and teaching methods to utilize. When I first constructed my family communication course I had enough graded assignments and in-class projects to cover two 16-week courses. Educators should determine which family communication concerns are both most salient to their students, and most appropriate to the goals of the course being taught. Families and value systems, for example, would be valuable for high schools students who are beginning to question their own ideologies and how they compare with those of their friends. Parenting challenges might be more ideal as a unit for college students who are contemplating starting their own families in the near future. Whatever the units that are selected, educators should understand that no course will be able to manage all the activities and concepts that are relevant to this area of study.

Utilizing the Narrative

In my view, there is no better teaching tool, particularly in a communication or performance course, than the narrative. We come to know, value, and understand through the telling of stories. In classrooms

focusing on family, the story is an invaluable tool for illustrating concepts. When teaching family communication the diversity of experiences lends important insights into family dynamics. Talking to parents from a variety of family structures, for example, can be paramount to understanding parenting choices and how family context influences those choices. Similarly, talking to parents from different generations can help to illustrate how family roles evolve over time. As Turner and West (2006) write, “Although individual cultures may enact storytelling differently or may interpret stories differently based on unique cultural mores, family stories persist across cultures” (p. 87). Students’ examination of families for specific concepts and communication dynamics is made more meaningful, and likely more immediate, when they do so through studying actual families.

Media as a Teaching Tool

It is almost irresponsible to not make use of the media resources around us when teaching communication. Family communication is certainly no exception as there are countless television series and films that center around family dynamics. Narratives have already been mentioned as an important teaching tool; media are rich with narratives that display myriad concepts and dynamics relevant to the study of family. While there is some concern that films or television shows can be stylized or otherwise less than representative of reality, there is still value in dissecting and discussing/analyzing the characters, storylines, and choices displayed in the message(s) being viewed. (A brief list of television shows and films relevant to the study of family communication is provided in Appendix A.)

Perhaps the most important consideration when using film and television, aside from the selection of the content, is how much of a film or television episode to include in the unit/course. Television episodes work well because they generally fit within the timeframe of the typical high school or collegiate course. A drawback with television is that episodes generally assume knowledge of characters and context, and may even include a continuation of storylines. Students not familiar with the series may be disadvantaged in their processing of the connection between the course and the televised illustration of the course content, even despite the instructor’s orientation to the critical details of the

series. Films work well for illustrating concepts because their narratives generally unfold in the same manner as a narrative—a beginning, middle, and end with no sense of prior knowledge of characters, context, or storyline. At the same time, films seldom fit within the timeframe of the typical class session, leaving instructors with the choice of showing films over the course of multiple days, or showing excerpts they put into context that illustrate critical concepts. Despite the shortcomings of either television or film, each has potential for positive results that justify their being incorporated into any communication curriculum, and especially family communication courses/units.

What to Teach? The Complete Course or Units Within Existing Curricula

We all, no doubt, have an endless list of courses we would like to teach, and a well-developed rationale for the importance of each of them within an overall communication curriculum. The question of whether to teach family communication as a stand-alone offering, or as units within existing courses is best answered by each institution and educator. As a stand-alone course, there are several texts, resources, and activities that can be integrated into the syllabus. Greater attention should be paid to the idea of integrating this field of study into existing courses. If an institution offers group communication, organizational communication, interpersonal communication, conflict resolution, intercultural communication, or communication theory then the integration is easy. Families serve as outstanding contexts/examples for discussing interpersonal concepts that are inherent in these courses. Courses that may appear to be less connected to family communication, but are the standard communication offerings, such as public speaking or debate, can also make use of family communication concepts by making assignments that specify family. Debating topics that are relevant to families, or assigning speaking projects that reflect family-related issues are ways to encourage student exploration of family concepts.

Encourage Personal Engagement

Like so many other speech communication courses and subjects, family communication offers tremendous opportunities for personal

student connections with the course material. Whether this is taught at the high school or collegiate level, students in both contexts are beginning to, or have already started to question their own family heritages. Similarly, they are looking ahead and thinking about their own future families. As their social circle expands they become acquainted with a number of different family dynamics. Educators should seek ways to encourage student connections with the content being taught. Journaling, oral histories of their own families, and interviews of individuals in specific family roles are only a few suggestions of ways this course or these units can become highly immediate to the student, thereby increasing the value of the learning experience.

Conclusions

With the diversity of family and ways to teach about families, educators considering teaching a course, or units on family communication have a range of options. While there are great texts dealing with family communication, there are also countless articles, stories, films, songs, and narratives that offer limitless potential for introducing students to a facet of their life that has been a part of their upbringing since birth. Because educators and their students share the presence of family in their lives, teaching this content offers unique opportunities for enlightening discussions that can bring students and educators together in a dyadic learning relationship. In the end, insights into family communication contribute invaluable to our own communication competence by heightening our self-awareness and empowering us to make informed choices about how we feel about where we have been, and where we will be in the future.

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Appendix A
Resources for Family Narratives and Dynamics:
Television Series and Films

Resources for Family Narratives and Dynamics: Television Series

<i>American Dreams</i>	<i>Boy Meets World</i>
<i>Brady Bunch</i>	<i>Cosby</i>
<i>Daddio</i>	<i>Eight Simple Rules for Dating my Teenage Daughter</i>
<i>Everybody Loves Raymond</i>	<i>Facts of Life</i>
<i>Family Guy</i>	<i>Family Matters</i>
<i>Family Ties</i>	<i>Father Knows Best</i>
<i>Fresh Prince of Bel Air</i>	<i>Full House</i>
<i>Growing Pains</i>	<i>Hannah Montana</i>
<i>Happy Days</i>	<i>Leave it to Beaver</i>
<i>Life According to Jim</i>	<i>Life with Derek</i>
<i>Married with Children</i>	<i>My Two Dads</i>
<i>My Wife and Kids</i>	<i>The Partridge Family</i>
<i>Seventh Heaven</i>	<i>Sister, Sister</i>
<i>Step by Step</i>	<i>Still Standing</i>
<i>The Simpsons</i>	

Resources for Family Narratives and Dynamics: Films

<i>Arsenic and Old Lace</i>	<i>Family Stone</i>
<i>A Family Thing</i>	<i>Father of the Bride and Father of the Bride part two</i>
<i>The Godfather</i>	<i>Hanging Up</i>
<i>In America</i>	<i>Lilo & Stitch</i>
<i>Little Miss Sunshine</i>	<i>Marvin's Room</i>
<i>Mrs. Doubtfire</i>	<i>My Big Fat Greek Wedding</i>
<i>Ordinary People</i>	<i>Raisin in the Sun</i>
<i>Riding in Cars With Boys</i>	<i>Soul Food</i>
<i>This Boy's Life</i>	<i>The Tigger Movie</i>

Appendix B
Course Syllabus
GNST 1200—Home is Where the Heart Is:
Stories and Their Shaping of Family
Webster University

GNST 1200—Freshman Seminar
“Home is Where the Heart Is:
Stories and Their Shaping of Family”
Fall 2007

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Texts

Ginsberg, D. (2005). *About My Sisters*. New York: Perennial.
Hacker, D. (2003). *A Writer's Reference*, 6th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.
Hansberry, L. (1988). *A Raisin in the Sun*. New York: Vintage.
Wiesel, E. (2006). *Night*. New York: Hill and Wang.
Wolff, T. (1989). *This Boy's Life: A Memoir*. New York: Grove.

Course Description

Narratives are stories that take place over a set time period. Many communication scholars suggest that all human communication is fundamentally storytelling. I certainly feel that stories are at the heart of what shapes family. Our families understand their past and pave their future through collective identities and relational cultures—these are shaped through the family story. Family narratives hold insights into our

heritage, ranging from holiday rituals to stories of struggle and triumph. Stories shape our family rituals, our family relationships, and our family values. Think about the tales we hear from our parents and grandparents—even the ones we have heard too many times to remember. These narratives, along with those yet to be told, define what we know as family. This seminar offers students the opportunity to understand the nature of narratives and their identity-forming potential. The semester will include an exploration of several family narratives motivated by a number of factors, including ethnicity, sibling relationship, death, aging, and lifestyle. Students will have the opportunity to explore their own individual and family narratives as part of their semester-long journey.

Course Activities

Students will devote the majority of the semester to discussion of selected films and texts. Graded activities for the semester will include the following, each to be described in greater detail as they are assigned...

“Defining Me” Paper	50 points
Annotated Bibliography	50 points
“A Family’s Collective Narrative” Paper	75 points
Tribute Speech	50 points
Contemporary Family Issues Paper	50 points
Audience Analysis Project	50 points
Contemporary Family Issues Persuasive Speech	75 points
Integrative Analysis Paper: <i>Night</i> and Holocaust Museum and Jewish Learning Center	75 points
4 Précis	100 points
Family Narrative Project/Presentation	125 points
Discussion Questions	75 points
Quizzes	80 points
Attendance/Participation	25 points
Total Points Possible	880 points

Grading

The final course grade will be determined by the sum of all points earned versus the number of points possible throughout the semester. Only percentages of .5 or above will be rounded to the next grade.

100 - 94% = A	93 - 90% = A-	
89 - 87% = B+	86 - 84% = B	83 - 80% = B-
79 - 77% = C+	76 - 74% = C	73 - 70% = C-
69 - 64% = D	63 - 60% = D-	59 - 0% = F

Attendance and Participation

Students are expected to attend class and participate in all class activities. The material in this course is presented in a way that integrates discussion and activities. In fact, the overwhelming majority of class sessions center around group discussion. While attendance is critical, it is understood that, at times, extenuating circumstances will prevent students from being able to attend a particular session.

Sickness, deaths in the family, or representing the university in an official capacity, providing they are **documented**, are **excusable** reasons for not attending class or submitting work after its due date. Any other situation should be brought to the instructor's attention at the earliest possible opportunity. **All absences or situations must be documented in order to be excusable circumstances.**

Late Work

Work submitted after the due date, for reasons that are not excused, will be graded at a 20% penalty. **No make up opportunity will be extended for in-class or oral activities (including discussion questions) that are missed for non-excused reasons.**

Academic Dishonesty

Any work found to be academically dishonest in its content is given a **zero**, with the student's name being turned in to the Dean of Student Affairs. Generally, academic dishonesty extends to cheating and plagiarism. Students should use every caution to credit others' work and thoughts when using those ideas in papers and speeches. Likewise, students should submit work that is their own original effort. Any questions about what might constitute cheating or plagiarism should be brought to the instructor. Students may also consult Webster's *Student Handbook* for further discussion on academic dishonesty.

WebsterWorksWorldwide

October 3rd is a day devoted to the university providing service hours to a variety of community groups—otherwise known as our annual WebsterWorksWorldwide. Our class will organize a service project that is open to all class members. It will be one of over 100 projects available to all of the Webster community. While you are not required to participate in this service day, you are encouraged to join the class or even another group in a service project. Check with your Wednesday instructors to see whether or not your class is canceled for that day.

Email

Each student should secure their Webster Connections email address to be shared with others in the class. These email addresses can be used to communicate changes in the schedule, syllabus, or other class-related items. It is possible that, from time to time, the instructor will use email to communicate changes and other information to class members. The system is set up to allow for discussion, posting of announcements, etc. for each course taught at Webster. Students will be notified if this system becomes used regularly throughout the semester in this course. At any rate, students should expect that other instructors will use Connections; becoming familiar with the system is to the students' advantage.

Americans with Disabilities Act

Any student who requires special provisions for completing class activities as a result of any impairment should inform the instructors.

“Home is Where the Heart Is: Stories and Their Shaping of Family” Daily Schedule—Fall 2007

M	8/20	Introduction and Orientation
W	8/22	Narratives and Identity: An Overview A: “Defining Me” Paper A: Discussion Questions A: Selection of a Case-Study Family
F	8/24	Narratives and Identity (continued)
M	8/27	Effective Writing

A: The Family Narrative Project/Presentation

A: Précis—*About my Sisters*

W	8/29	Ginsberg, Chapters Prologue – 3 D: Discussion Questions #1
F	8/31	Ginsberg, Chapters 4 – 8 D: Discussion Questions #2 D: Selection of a Case-Study Family D: “Defining Me” Paper A: Annotated Bibliography
M	9/3	NO CLASS—Labor Day Holiday
W	9/5	Ginsberg, Chapters 9 – Epilogue D: Discussion Questions #3 D: Quiz—<i>About my Sisters</i>
F	9/7	CIRP Survey
M	9/10	Library Orientation—Meet in Electronic Classroom, 1 st Floor
W	9/12	Library Orientation—Meet in Electronic Classroom, 1 st Floor
F	9/14	Research, Families, and Narratives D: Précis—<i>About my Sisters</i>
M	9/15	Film—<i>In America</i> A: Tribute Speech A: Family’s Collective Narrative Paper A: Reaction Paper—<i>In America</i> D: Annotated Bibliography
W	9/19	Film—<i>In America</i>
F	9/21	Film—<i>In America</i>
M	9/24	Discuss <i>In America</i> D: Reaction Paper—<i>In America</i> D: Discussion Questions #4
W	9/26	Effective Speaking
F	9/28	Families and Society—Past and Present D: Family’s Collective Narrative Paper
M	10/1	Families and Communication Dynamics
W	10/3	<i>WebsterWorksWorldwide</i> Service Day
F	10/5	Tribute Speeches
M	10/8	Tribute Speeches
W	10/10	Tribute Speeches

- F 10/12 Speaking and Writing Skills Inventory
A: **Assign Roles for In-Class Reading of *Raisin in the Sun***
- M 10/15 **NO CLASS—Fall Break**
- W 10/17 **NO CLASS—Fall Break**
- F 10/19 **NO CLASS—Fall Break**
- M 10/22 *Raisin in the Sun* (Act I)
D: **Discussion Questions #5**
A: **Précis—Raisin in the Sun**
- W 10/24 *Raisin in the Sun* (Act II)
D: **Discussion Questions #6**
- F 10/26 NO CLASS—Forensics at Metropolitan
Community College at Longview**
- M 10/29 *Raisin in the Sun* (Act II/III)
D: **Discussion Questions #7**
A: **Contemporary Look at Family Paper**
- W 10/31 *Raisin in the Sun* (Act III)
D: **Discussion Questions #8**
- F 11/2 *Raisin in the Sun*—(Remaining Acts/Scenes)
Wiesel—Initial Discussion
A: **Précis—Night**
A: **Integrative Analysis Paper: Night and Holocaust
Museum and Jewish Learning**
D: **Discussion Questions #9 (one Raisin & one Wiesel)**
D: **Précis—Raisin in the Sun**
D: **Quiz—Raisin in the Sun**
- S 11/4 **Tour Holocaust Museum and Jewish Learning
Center**
- M 11/5 Wiesel—Discussion
D: **Discussion Questions #10**
- W 11/7 Wolff (pp. 1-125)
D: **Discussion Questions #1**
D: **Précis—Night**
A: **Précis—This Boy’s Life**
- F 11/9 Wolff (pp. 126-225)
D: **Discussion Questions #12**
D: **Contemporary Look at the Family Paper**
A: **Persuasive Speech**

		A: Audience Analysis
		A: Persuasive Position Paper
M	11/12	Wolff (pp. 226-end) D: Discussion Questions #13 D: Quiz—<i>This Boy's Life</i> D: Précis—<i>This Boy's Life</i>
W	11/14	Film—<i>This Boy's Life</i>
F	11/16	Film—<i>This Boy's Life</i>
M	11/19	Film—<i>This Boy's Life</i> D: Integrative Analysis Paper: <i>Night and Museum</i> D: Audience Analysis
W	11/21	Discussion of Film vs. Written Text, <i>This Boy's Life</i> D: Discussion Questions #14
F	11/23	NO CLASS—Thanksgiving Holiday
<u>M</u>	<u>11/26</u>	<u>Persuasive Speeches</u> D: Position Paper
W	11/28	Persuasive Speeches
F	11/30	Persuasive Speeches D: Family Narratives Project
M	12/3	Persuasive Speeches Discuss <i>Soul Food</i> D: Discussion Questions #15
W	12/5	Presentations—Family Narrative Project
F	12/7	Presentations—Family Narrative Project
Final's Week		Presentation—Family Narrative Project

Appendix C
Course Syllabus
SPCM 3150—Family Communication
Webster University

Several activities are also available in Turner, L. & West, R.,
“Instructor’s Resource CD-Rom,” *Perspectives on Family
Communication*, 3rd ed.

**SPCM 3150—Family Communication
Spring 2007**

Instructor

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(Please, no calls after 9:00 pm)

Office Hours

Monday/Wednesday 11:30 - 12:30, Tuesday 11:30 - 1:00. Other times
by appointment

Texts

Turner, L. H. & West, R. (2006). *Perspectives on Family
Communication*, 3rd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Various readings as provided

Course Description

Family is a common characteristic in the lives of all humans. While the idea of “family” takes on a variety of definitions and characteristics, we are born into a family and rely on a family as a central influence for our relationships and communication choices. This course examines the notion of family from the perspective of communication. As such, much of the course focuses on considerations of language and interaction as they relate to familial relationships. Students will be given the opportunity to examine both their own families, as well as others within mediated and historical/social contexts. The course makes use of both

written and oral activities in individual and group formats.

Learning Outcomes

Students will leave the course understanding the complexity of conflict, as well as its potential responses and related outcomes.

1. Students will understand the uniqueness of a communication approach to studying family communication and relationships.
2. Students will better understand the uniqueness of their own families.
3. Students will respect the importance of diversity in definitions and characteristics of family.
4. Students will learn how to understand families through narratives.
5. Students will apply family communication principles to families in media, societal, and historical contexts.
6. Students will become advocates for positions on salient social issues relevant to families.
7. Students will appreciate issues and dynamics that serve as stressors on families, as well as the strategies used to address those stressors.
8. Students will gain insights into contemporary family dynamics through exchanges with others whose life experiences are diverse.

Activities

Grades will be based on performance in the following activities, each to be fully described as assigned. It is possible that additional in and out of class activities will be assigned beyond those listed below.

***American Dreams Case Study* 150**

Students will view episodes of a television drama that focuses on a 1960's Philadelphia family. Each episode will have an assigned reflection to which students will respond in writing (twice) or orally (twice).

Mediated History 100

Students will work within groups to create a mediated presentation that chronicles the history of a family of social significance. Grades will reflect individual, group, and peer evaluations.

Comparative Parenting Narratives 50

Students will interview and report stories of parents. Specific aspects of parenting will guide the interviews

and paper.

Persuasive Speech 70

Students will deliver a persuasive speech on a socio-political issue relevant to today's family.

Reflection Papers/Discussions 150

Students will write reflection papers and/or engage in class discussions based on applications of course concepts to assigned readings, films, or other such artifacts.

My Family...A Visual Depiction 25

Students will offer a visual depiction of their family via a brief oral presentation on the final night of class.

Total Points Possible 545

Grading

Grades will be determined via a percentage of total points earned compared to the total points possible. Grades will be according to the following scale...

100 - 93% = A	92 - 90% = A-	
89 - 87% = B+	86 - 83% = B	82 - 80% = B-
79 - 77% = C+	76 - 73% = C	72 - 70% = C-
69 - 67% = D+	66 - 60% = D	59 - 0% = F

Each activity will have a point value, the totals of which will be divided into the total points earned. ONLY percentages of .05 or above will be rounded to the higher grade. Extra credit points **may** be available through various activities. Extra credit points will not exceed 5% of the total points possible throughout the semester.

Attendance and Late Work

Much of the course material will be highlighted through class discussion. Additionally, there may be some in-class activities that do not appear on the syllabus. Attendance and participation are essential. Absent class attendance and participation, much of the potential learning experience that comes from sharing is lost. This class in particular relies a great deal on student sharing and discussion as a substantive dimension of each class session. Similarly, efforts will be made to begin class on time each week. While parking and traffic are often issues with night classes,

students should understand that being late will risk missing some course material.

Students can miss class for **excused** reasons at no penalty. Excused reasons include representing the school in an official capacity, illnesses, or deaths in the family. All reasons, to be excused, must be documented. (Other reasons may be considered excused. Circumstances should be brought to the attention of the instructor.) Unexcused reasons will result in (1) not making up non-written work, (2) having 20% taken off of celebrations of knowledge or other written work, and (3) a deduction in participation points from the final course grade.

Disclosure and Confidentiality

Many in-class discussions, as well as other in and out-of-class project will ask students to share applications of class concepts to their lives. While we all have families, we each have our own threshold of comfort regarding the sharing of those families. Students at no time should feel obligated to share information that they wish to remain personal. Likewise, all information shared in assignments will remain confidential between the instructor and student.

Email/Electronic Communication

It is unlikely that this course's connections page will be utilized. It is possible, however, that students will seek to email assignments, questions, etc. to the instructor. Any assignments should be sent as word attachments. At no time should students assume assignments are received unless a confirmation is sent acknowledging that receipt.

Cheating and Plagiarism

All instances of academic dishonesty will result in a "0" for the given assignment, as well as referral to both the Dean of the School of Communication and the Dean of Students. Any questions of what constitutes academic dishonesty should be brought to the instructor.

The Americans with Disabilities Act

Students with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills are encouraged and have the responsibility to contact the instructor in a timely fashion, regarding reasonable accommodation needs.

**SPCM 3150—Family Communication
Weekly Schedule
Spring 2007**

- T 1/16 Orientation and Introductions & Defining Family
View Episode of *American Dreams*
R Chapter 1
A Mediated History
A *American Dreams* Reflection #1—Written
A My Family...A Visual Depiction
- T 1/23 Theorizing About Family & Family Narratives
View *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*
R Chapters 2-3
A Persuasive Speech
A Comparative Parenting Narratives
A Reflection: *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*
D *American Dreams* Reflection #1
- T 1/30 Family Roles and Rules
View Episode of *American Dreams*
R Chapter 4
A/D *American Dreams* Reflection #2—Oral
D Reflection: *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*
- T 2/6 Conflict, Stress, and the Family
R Chapters 5 & 7
A Viewing and Reflection: *In America*
- T 2/13 Families and Intimacy
View Episode of *American Dreams*
R Chapter 6
A/D *American Dreams* Reflection #3—Oral
D Viewing and Reflection: *In America*
- T 2/20 Societal Influences on the Family
Persuasive Speeches
View Episode of *American Dreams*
R Chapter 8
A *American Dreams* Reflection #4—Written
D Comparative Parenting Narratives

- T 2/27 Managing Dialogues and Drawing Conclusions
Mediated History Presentations
My Family...A Visual Depiction Presentation
R Chapters 9-10
A Reflection: *Little Miss Sunshine*
- T 3/6 **D Reflection: *Little Miss Sunshine***
D *American Dreams* Reflection #4—Written
(Work is due via Word attachment by Saturday, March 10th)

Scott Jensen is a Professor of Speech Communication Studies and Director of Forensics at Webster University. In addition to employing narratives in each of his courses, he has co-taught a family narratives course to Webster freshman for the past four years.

**Easing the Stress and Strain:
An Examination of Forensic Educators as At-Risk Professionals and
Strategies for Coping**

Scott Jensen & Peggy Dersch

Meet at the school or in the parking lot of the hotel at 7:00 am...if that morning happens to bring with it a late start to the tournament. Of course, the 7:00 meeting time is not too extreme; after all, you did get to bed by 12:00 after leaving the tournament the night before at 9:30 and getting a well-balanced meal of pizza, Doritos, and Coke at 10:30. The real bonus in all of this is the opportunity to repeat the ritual for the next day—only that day will end with the six hour van ride home that will probably not even begin until early evening. At least Monday brings with it a break from the forensic schedule. The only worry there is the folder of papers to grade and the class lecture and activities to prepare for before the Monday morning class you teach at 8:00 am. Such is the regimen for the typical forensic educator each time s/he heads off for another forensic tournament.

While the above scenario is not at all unfamiliar to any person who has been involved in forensic education or competition, the strain suggested in the long hours, sleep deprivation, and poor diet are minimal when compared to the broader scope of challenges that face forensic educators. This program outlines factors that contribute to the claim that forensic educators are at-risk professionals. Further, a list of strategies is provided for coping with the challenges that often accompany forensic education.

An Overview of the Professional Forensic Culture

Forensic education, in many ways, is not unlike any other teaching position. Forensic educators teach classes, grade papers, mentor students, serve on committees and assist with activities, and often take their jobs home with them at night. At the same time, the depth and breadth of commitment sets the forensic educator aside from his/her colleagues. Few educators deal with as many students, for the extended hours, and with the immediacy than do forensic educators. While few teachers work the traditional “9 to 5” day, forensic educators, on average,

dedicate as many as three weeknights and as many as 15-20 weekends a year to their students in the form of coaching/teaching, traveling, and hosting tournaments. It is this time demand, more than any other challenge that ultimately places the forensic educator in an at-risk category. The weekends that most educators reserve for professional development, family time, and relaxation are often devoted to co-curricular responsibilities for forensic educators. The forensic educator is atypical in that the time available for keeping pace with their professional, social, and personal commitments is limited, but these commitments often remain the same as for their colleagues who have more flexible time to manage such responsibilities.

This is not meant to suggest that dissatisfaction characterizes the typical forensic educator's view of his/her position or its responsibilities. In fact, some research suggests that most forensic educators enter their profession fully aware of its challenges and the potential it has for creating personal and professional difficulties (see, for example, Gilstrap & Gilstrap, 2003; Jensen & Jensen, 2004; McDonald, 2001). We do claim, however, that few educators remain active in forensic education for their entire career. Again, research suggests that at the collegiate level many educators leave active forensic education after six to seven years, often to other teaching positions that do not include forensic responsibilities (Bartanen, 1996a; Bartanen, 1996b). Similarly, we argue that there is a need to acknowledge the challenges facing forensic educators and devise strategies for responding to these challenges.

Implications for At-Riskness

There are obvious implications for forensic professionals being at-risk. These potential impacts exist at both the academic and personal levels. Academically, forensic programs are often only as strong as their administration. Not only do programs require competent and dedicated professional leaders, but those leaders require appropriate support that allows them to perform their responsibilities. Forensics is a co-curricular activity, meaning that it extends the classroom to a laboratory experience. At many high schools and colleges forensic participation brings with it academic credit. This support is essential for the long-term viability of any program existing within an academic context—the more academically accountable, the greater the stability of the program. At the

same time, administrators must acknowledge that the forensic educator faces professional challenges that make their position unique. Allowing for release time or other teaching load credits for their forensic teaching affords more flexibility in a forensic educator's day-to-day teaching. Providing sufficient support staff and other resources that allow the forensic educator to devote time to all students and to him/herself is also important. In short—forensic educators should be expected to perform as professionals, but they should also be able to expect consideration commensurate with the uniqueness of their responsibilities.

Personal implications are also important to consider when questioning the challenges facing forensic educators. We have already alluded to the time challenges facing forensic educators. The loss of time is really the critical potential threat for the professional forensic educator. Scholars, many of them former forensic educators, have noted that many forensic educators come to a point at which they must balance the benefits of their forensic involvement with what can be gained with the time they would have if forensics were not a part of their professional responsibilities (see, for example, Bartanen, 1996a; Bartanen, 1996b; Brown, 2005; Burnett, 2002; Dickmeyer, 2002; Leland, 2004; Littlefield & Sellnow, 1992; Richardson, 2005). At the collegiate level sabbaticals are common benefits available to educators as a way of affording time for professional development and curricular design. While many professors are able to take advantage of this time away from normal professional responsibilities, most forensic educators are not able to take sabbaticals. Leaving a program for a semester or a year and having a temporary director administer a program poses profound risks for the immediate and long-term future of that program. Forensic programs are cultures that change as a product of new students each year; the professional educator is often the primary influence in maintaining desired norms within the program.

Coping Strategies

Forensic education is an amazing profession that brings with it incredible rewards. The opportunity to work with talented and dedicated students is special. The intellectual challenges that come with analysis of literature, current events, and policy questions is refreshing. There are more benefits associated with being a forensic educator than could be

included in this or any journal. We bring a combined 45+ years of forensic education to our programs and look back with fondness on each of those years. At the same time, it is essential that forensic professionals and their administrators understand the very real challenges that face a typical forensic professional.

What follows are two inventories: challenges that contribute to the at-riskness of forensic educators, and coping strategies for easing these challenges and creating a healthier and happier culture of professional forensic education. These suggestions come from the scholarship available regarding these issues (note the many resources provided in these materials), as well as from our own experiences as a high school and collegiate forensic educator. These are not exhaustive lists; they are central challenges and empirically successful responses to those challenges. Taking ownership of our own professional and personal lives is the best means for maintaining a rewarding forensic career that does not compete with other personal and professional opportunities.

Challenges Contributing to At-Riskness

- Time
 - Coaching Sessions
 - Weekend Tournaments and Events
 - Administrative Work
- Learning Curve for Entry into Forensic Education...Having to Hit the Ground Running
- Lack of “Seasoned” Educators as Mentors to New Educators...Too Many Have Left the Activity
- Tournament Context and Associated Challenges
 - Long Days
 - Difficulty of Scheduling Meals—and Lack of Opportunity for Healthy Eating
 - Fatigue of Typical Judging/Educator Responsibilities
 - Oversight of Large Group of Students
- Liability Concerns
- Balancing Family and Forensics—Time Trade Offs
- Restricted Social Opportunities and Limited Field of Availables for Relationships
- Emotional Labor
 - Mentoring of Students and New Colleagues
 - Needy Students Who Dominate Your Time
 - Greater Visibility to Students/More Transparency of Personal Life
- Challenges to Maintaining Professional Development Agenda
- Difficulty of Scheduling Sabbaticals
- Lack of Appreciation/Awareness from Administrators
- Complexity of Students’ Lives
- Frequent Curricular Turnover—New Debate Topics, Speech Ideas, Etc.
- Parental Support...Not Enough or Too Much

Coping Strategies

- Time Management and Our Giving Permission to Us to Take Time for Us
- Set Clear Boundaries with Students
- Set Clear Priorities that Balance Personal and Professional Responsibilities
- Establish Travel/Event Schedule that Avoids Consecutive Commitments
- Empathize with Potential Stressors for Students that are Shared by You
- Direct and Host Tournaments that Promote Wellness
- Seek Tournaments that Promote Wellness
- Seek Connections with Colleagues—In and Out of Your Institution
 - Mentoring
 - Solicit Help From Colleagues
 - Educating Colleagues About What You Do
- Create Criteria for Program Success that Promotes Education and Non-Competitive Epistemic Values
- Build Network of Alumni and Friends for Assistance and Resources
- Seek Fun and Enjoyment in Forensic Choices—Team and Personal
- Self-Monitor
 - How are Priorities Reflected in Our Choices?
 - How Do We Feel About Our Healthy and Unhealthy Choices?
- Physical/Healthy Activities
- Outline Healthy Criteria for Personal/Professional Success

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**Conversations From My Shoe:
A Playwriting Exercise for Social Development**
Laurie Melnik

Age Range: This exercise can be used for grades 6-12. Given the wide range, please note that the student's responses to this exercise may vary in tone. For example, a high school student may make bolder choices than that of a fourth grader. The facilitation of this exercise should play out the same regardless of the students' grade.

Source: This exercise was developed after researching and studying the use of playwriting for social development and was not found in one direct source by the researcher. There may be exercises that prove similar, but this particular exercise was not found in any one book. Inspiration for this exercise mainly stems from Will Weigler's *Strategies for Playbuilding: Helping Groups Translate Issues into Theatre*. This book contains a lot of information about devising new works with young people and provides a step-by-step process to follow. The step-by-step process incorporates many "on your feet" activities that can be pulled out and facilitated on their own.

Materials Needed

- Four different shoes: One sneaker, a flip flop, a high heel, and a loafer.
- Paper
- Pens

Activity

1. Line up the shoes in the front of the room where all the students can see them.
2. Have the students pick two of the shoes to analyze. The goal of this analysis is for the students to create a character for each of the shoes they have chosen. That character should have a name and have the characteristics of someone who would wear that particular shoe.
3. After the students have chosen their characters, they will write a scene between the two characters. The scene must be around the

two characters trying to resolve some sort of conflict. The scene should display how those characters communicate with each other and settle differences. It is up to the instructor how long they want their students to write.

4. The next step is to have the students read their work out loud.

Reflection: These questions can be asked to the individual student or addressed to the entire group. These questions should serve as a springboard and facilitators are encouraged to tailor this section according to their objectives.

1. How does the shoe inform the identity of your characters?
2. What if one character really wore all of the shoes and what does that mean?
3. What do our characterizations say about us?

Alternatives: In the previous activity, the facilitator provided the shoes. Another approach is to use shoes that come from your students. The facilitator needs to be aware that sensitive subjects are more likely to rise through this approach when the source come from the students. The activity would still run the same, but the facilitator may want to consider more reflection questions that address using the student's shoes rather than not knowing the source of the shoes. Questions to be considered are:

1. How does knowing where the shoe came from effect our characterization?
2. What does it mean to create character from something where we know where it comes from?
3. What happens to our writing when we know who owns the shoe, even if we create a different character?

Another approach is to use character's shoes from a book the students have just read. This is a way to connect this exercise to something the students are currently learning in their core subjects. The difference here is that students would need to consider which character would wear which shoe. In the reflection questions to consider would be:

1. How does putting shoes on the character enhance your understanding of them?

2. What does it mean to characterize the people that come from the story?
3. What have you learned about the characters that you did not know before?

Works Consulted

Weigler, Will. *Strategies for Playbuilding: Helping Groups Translate Issues Into Theatre*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Drama, 2001.

*Laurie Melnik is a teaching artist who works in the K-12 and university classroom infusing drama across the curriculum. She recently was an Artsbridge Scholar, where she spent a year residency working with fourth graders during their preparation for the writing portion of their standardized test. Her residency consisted of incorporating playwriting in the classroom as a way to boost literacy while tapping into social development. Laurie continues to work with young people using theatre as way to influence community building across diverse populations. She has written plays for young audiences including the recent adaptation of K-12 student's submissions for Orlando Repertory's Writes of Spring titled *Click, Flicker, SCREECH!* Laurie branches outside of her local community by presenting workshops at various conferences across the U.S. Laurie is currently the Education Associate at STAGES St. Louis and an MFA in Theatre for Young Audiences candidate at the University of Central Florida.*