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DEPARTMENT OF RHETORIC, WRITING, AND COMMUNICATIONS

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# Foreword

Connection is everything.

In fact, its value cannot be understated. The collective drought of connection, undergone in solidarity between everyone, everywhere, in the form of a global pandemic, posed new questions about a seemingly rudimentary concept. What does it mean to be connected? How do you exist in a space without others – and who are you without them? These questions not only guided this period of introspection, but were also areas of focus when curating a theme for this year’s journal.

Although there has never been a time where connection was not inherent to the human experience, the way we experience it now feels different, and perhaps more exciting than ever before. We are experiencing the first waves of a sort of cultural renaissance, a playful re-entry into what it means to be interlinked. The identities we forged in solidarity are now interacting with the world around them, and more importantly the people around them, in a way that feels fresh. We have been reminded that we are naturally malleable creatures, constantly able to shift in a world that changes around us. Every experience, memory, and moment in life creates the mosaic that is our unique identity; to be human is to be changed by the people we encounter.

Roots are slowly rebuilding and tangling with one another, both in ways that are shockingly beautiful and devastatingly messy. Volume eight of *Rooted in Rhetoric* explores these intricate webs through a variety of themes, such as personal identity, family, and digital media. How does society use our bodies both as a means of connection and isolation? What does it mean to be an individual tied to a collective family? How does media create or limit our ability to connect in physical and digital spaces?

These questions may not have a concrete answer, but the pieces in this volume work to deepen understanding and provoke thought on what it means to be intertwined, yet distinct. The inevitable collision of our identities is the binding theme of this year’s journal, which echoes the simple sentiment: we are all interlinked in our individuality.

– *Scott Maier (He/Him) & Em Penner (They/Them)*

# Introduction

"Interlinking Individuality" is the eighth volume of *Rooted in Rhetoric*, an academic journal that is sponsored and published by The University of Winnipeg's Rhetoric, Writing, and Communications department. This edition puts forth a wide variety of pieces in genres such as rhetorical analysis and critique, research essay, creative non-fiction, and poetry, all while centering around the idea that while we stand as distinct individuals, we are all connected. Our authors and editors come to "Interlinking Individuality" from a variety of disciplines offered by The University of Winnipeg, showcasing our journal's theme.

"Interlinking Individuality" reflects how our uniqueness comes together to form community that communicates with, challenges, and supports each other. As we come out of a heart-wrenching pandemic that paused our world and exposed who we are when removed from society, we see how our newly established individuality returns to strengthen the groups we, recently and temporarily, had to abandon. This edition shows readers how we exist in our communities as individuals and how our distinct identities allow us to strengthen who we are as a whole. Our authors, through their distinct ideas that form the collective whole of our edition, express this concept exactly.

Thank you to our authors for their efforts in writing these pieces and for submitting their work to be enjoyed by all our readers. Thank you to this year's *Rooted in Rhetoric*

supervisors, Dr. Andrew McGillivray, Dr. Helen Lepp Friesen, Dr. Bong-gi Sohn, and Dr. Eunhee Buettner, for all their support and guidance – this edition would not have been possible without their input. Lastly, we thank the Department of Rhetoric, Writing, and Communications for funding this journal and allowing vast varieties of student work to be published.

*–Kaitlynn Couto (She/Her)*



# Speaking with my Hands

*Viola Easter*

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Having deaf parents was not a typical experience to grow up with. I started to learn sign language when I was one year old so I could communicate with them. However, I was not able to have a normal speaking conversation with my parents; I always had to put in more effort to think through my words and interpret them in sign. I learned the importance of knowing how to speak with my hands later in my life.

***Viola Easter*** was born in Nagu, Finland. She is the fifth of six children born to deaf parents. She is of Finnish and Cree descent and can speak American Sign Language. Viola has spent most of her life growing up in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

When I was around 8 years old, my family and I were having lunch. I took my spot at the square kitchen table and loaded up my plate with the meal my mom had prepared. When I finished filling up my plate, I realized something was missing, I had no juice to complete my meal. I loudly called out ‘juice’ to the table and looked around at everyone still conversing with each other, unaware that I had even spoken. My mom grabbed the juice container and placed it beside my empty

cup. My brows furrowed, meeting in the middle of my forehead when I asked her how she knew I wanted juice. She smiled, her short dirty blond hair swayed when she tipped her head, and her calming blue eyes looked at me as she gave her answer. She told me that she had seen me form the word ‘juice’ with my lips. My mouth had fallen open, and I was baffled. Out of everyone at the table, my deaf mother was the only one who had heard me. From that very moment, I realized how important sign language was in my life.

While most children I knew learned English growing up, my experience acquiring languages was unique. I primarily learned to read and write from my four older siblings, watching the TV, and learning in school. While learning sign language, my senses became heightened, and I could feel and see more. I learned the art of observation, but that did not come without any consequences. Most notably, my grammar suffered. In sign language we sign the important words, so the conversation is shorter and easier to understand—a summary of what we would say if spoken aloud. As a result, I often left out words or mixed them around to the point where the words would be rendered unreadable.

As a child, I wanted to practice my writing skills so instead of using sign language to talk with my mom, I wrote to her.

I wrote “hello” on a piece of paper and handed it to my mom.

She scribbled, “hello Viola, how are you?” on the piece of paper.

And I wrote, “I’m good, how are you?”

When I handed the note back to her, I saw a pained expression on her face that she had tried to hide with a smile. I had begun to talk to her like everyone else did, and at that moment, I created a barrier between us. I had vowed to never speak to my mom by writing to her ever again.

My hands began to be my most sacred possession rather than my voice; it was my way of communicating and expressing myself to my parents. They wanted to be seen not in words or paper, but in their language, and I had the power to do that. Now, I can see the slightest change of expression and have learned to observe the things around me. I can have normal conversations with my parents, much like one speaks to their parents using their voice. The only difference is that I speak with my hands.

# The Two of Us

*Scott Maier*

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***Scott Maier*** is a fourth-year student completing a Joint Communications degree between the University of Winnipeg and Red River College Polytechnic. His preferred genre of writing is creative nonfiction. Scott hopes to work as a writer or editor and looks forward to exploring the world and culture through his writing.

## I: ME AND HIM

It has always been the two of us, me and him, even before things really began. No one knew it was going to be twins at the start, not even my mother. Jack did though. My older brother had a sort of toddler premonition, one that was fixed on the idea that my Mom's belly was home to a pair of little brothers, not just one.

"There's two in there!" Jack insisted, his finger jabbing at my Mom's tummy. "Weedee and Wodo!"

He was right, and Weedee and Wodo turned out to be my twin brother and me six months later. Nick had been eager to see the world, brazenly spearheading our joint exodus. His tenacity resulted

in a swift emergency C-section to rescue me, despite my good-natured attempts to stay put until our due date, a month and a half later. I spent the next two weeks in an incubator while my lungs developed.

Maybe that was the start of it, the first example of our polarity. We've always been riddled with differences, to the point where it's almost unbelievable we're twins at all. I take after my mother's complexion, a head full of strawberry blonde hair silhouetting my freckled, pale face. I'm tall, skinny, and practically translucent, apart from the smattering of brown spots dotting my arms and legs. Nick has the complexion I've always dreamt of. In the summertime, he can sit in the hot July sun, slowly browning to a golden caramel. His hair is dark and thick on his head. All of his features are big, like his clay-coloured eyes and full lips. When talking about us, our friend's mother had described Nick as "traditionally handsome," and me as "ginger." Despite my yearning for bronze, sun-kissed skin, I'm secure in my looks and am proud to resemble my mother. But growing up, part of me still wanted his looks, wanted the features I knew I would never have. Is it always that way?

Our personalities are converse too, and have been since we were little. Nick is intelligent, with a knack for everything science and math. Throughout high

school, I can't remember more than five occasions where he sat down and studied. Tests would roll up, and so would Nick to the classroom, with a certain finesse in his step knowing that he would ace the evaluation with no preparation at all. Calculus was no problem for him, nor chemistry, not even physics. It would enrage me. While he spent evenings watching TV or playing cards with my parents at the dining room table, I would be cooped up in my room, bent over a stack of notes as I frantically scribbled equations through teary eyes. No matter the amount of time I'd pour into my studies, Nick always managed to score higher.

While he excelled in math and science, English became my confidante. I was enthralled by stories of other lands and times, characters whose triumphs and tragedies seemed so real, perhaps more important than my own. I grew to consider words not only my friend, but a tool which I could rely on more than anything else. While Nick danced around equations, I took stride with my writing, turning letters into sprawling skies filled with possibility and stars and hope.

## II: US, TOGETHER

You might think that the fundamental differences between Nick and I would create a life of individuality – but it’s not that simple. Being twins, even fraternal ones, guarantees one thing: you’re a joint package. Growing up, I learned to respond not only to my name, but my name in conjunction with Nick’s. I rarely heard the word Scott spoken on its own. It seemed that my name was tethered to Nick’s by an unseen, unbreakable link, only able to be muttered with another name beside it.

Birthdays were a peculiar thing growing up. For most kids, birthdays are a celebration just for them. For Nick and I, it was always a shared event – cakes would sport both our names, and would be carried out to the tune of *“Happy Birthday dear Scott-and-Nick, Happy Birthday to you’s!”* Most family and friends wrote one card for the two of us, forcing us to speed-read before switching envelopes. Blowing out our birthday candles required patience too. Sitting at our long, wooden dining room table, my mother would place the cake down between us. Wish-making was expeditious out of necessity – if one of us took too long, we risked the chance of the other blowing out all the candles in a whirlwind of eagerness. Our wishes had to be made briskly before Nick and I counted down

from three and extinguished the flames, neither of us certain which ones the other had blown out. As the sharp, waxy smoke drifted through the air, I wondered whether my wishes would come true if Nick had blown out all the candles. I hoped they would.

Grade seven marked the beginning of something new. Nick and I were starting middle school at a private Mennonite school. Despite the religious aspect, which didn't particularly interest my parents, my older brother had gone based on a recommendation from our across-the-street-neighbour. He loved it and my parents loved it – and that was that. Despite my pleas to go to middle school with the rest of my friends, my parents were firm in their decision. I decided to embrace the newness of it all and the chance to make a new group of friends. Growing up only being permitted half morsels of everyone and everything, I was dazzled by the opportunity to create bonds that were entirely mine. I imagined it was a chance for a fresh start, a new beginning, one where I could be my own person, have my own friends, and have something to claim as my own.

It was too big a wish.

As Nick and I ventured through middle school and high school over the next six years, no strict borders were kept between what was mine and what was



his. Clearly this was bound to happen – I don't know how I ever imagined otherwise. With only sixty people in our grade, there was never a chance to keep our friend circles separate – and in all honesty, I grew to like sharing some of my friends. I always knew the gossip, and so did Nick, as we heard each side of the story and cross-referenced our notes with one another. Walking into parties was never daunting, as I always had someone to go in with.

But I did mourn time alone with friends, a luxury I rarely reveled in. You might not think of it, but how you present yourself to your family is different from how you are with friends. I felt my identity was in a constant state of conflict, as I was forced to perform both in front of the eyes of my family and those of my peers. I could never be as vulnerable as I wished to be with my friends, but never wanted to risk hurting Nick's feelings by not including him in my plans. An unspoken awkwardness permeated most of our friendships, as we both felt too ashamed to exclude the other from our personally forged relationships. This often left one of us with the painful feeling that we did not belong, the third wheel in a performative relationship acted out for the sake of inclusion. As the twin with a bigger circle of friends, I often felt the shame of putting Nick in this position. I despised the guilt I felt when it happened, but I knew it felt worse for him.

Identity is a funny thing to me. It's a scary thing too. I can't remember a time I wasn't on a desperate search for it. I used to feel stifled, like I wasn't a full person because of my status as a twin. I would never be Scott. I would only ever be a version of Scott with Nick. But as I'm getting older, I'm changing my perspective. I feel it in my heart. Who I am is who I want to be. An important lesson I've learned is that duality exists. I love being a twin, despite all the prickly things that come with it. There will always be blurred lines of identity – and although sometimes it's messy, I've learned it doesn't have to be binding. Having someone to share every experience with is like having a walking scrapbook – my memories, my history, my thoughts and love and feelings are written in him, and his are written in me. I'm never alone. I used to hate that, but not so much anymore. As suffocating as being a twin can feel, it also feels like jubilation.

# St. Patrick's Day Parade

*Sarah Seroy*

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I waved my Irish flag in the air as I marched across my front yard. The fabric rippled in the wind behind me. My brothers and I practiced the phrases we would yell at the people we passed.

“Happy St Patrick’s Day!”

“Erin, Go Bragh!”

“Top o’ the morning!”

***Sarah Seroy*** is completing her Honours BA in Rhetoric and Communications. Her work focuses on Indigenous representation, political rhetoric, and reconciliation. She is excited to be back with *Rooted in Rhetoric* as an editor and contributor for her third and final year.

My arms were a little cool in the early spring air, but it was going to be too warm for a sweater or jacket that day, and I didn't want to cover up my green t-shirt. My pink winter boots sunk a little in the soft, brown earth. The snow was mostly melted, but the ground hadn't dried up yet. I was ready and excited for our St. Patrick's Day parade. We were going to march from our house and down the few blocks to our elementary school, where I'd join the rest of my kindergarten class for a day of green-themed festivities.

We saw my mom walking down the street from a block away, coming home from the bus stop after a night shift in the Labour and Delivery ward. She got there just in time to take a picture of us before we headed off. We called to my brothers' friend, Joe, who was over that morning, like he was almost every morning, to join us. He refused, saying he wasn't Irish like us, and went to hide behind a bush, covering his face with one of the shamrocks we had made out of paper towel rolls and construction paper. The rest of us lined up for the picture: My brother Aidan, me, our neighbour, my dad, and my brother Sean. Sean and I waved Irish flags, and the rest held shamrocks, and we all posed in our mismatched green outfits.

My brothers and I were wearing a mix of Oakland Athletics gear. We weren't huge fans of the team, but an assortment of their clothes had shown up in a

bag of second-hand items from one of mom's work friends. And it only mattered that they were green. I secretly loved matching my older brothers. At five years old, I thought they were so much older and cooler than me, and I was always tagging along behind them and trying to be part of their gang. Getting to march with them was an added bonus to our parade.

Our neighbour, who I called Neighbour, stood in the middle of the photo beside my dad. As usual, he was sporting his classic newsboy hat, which I called an Irish schoolboy cap because my dad had to wear one when he was growing up in Northern Ireland. Neighbour joined our parade because I had asked him to. He was endlessly fulfilling requests from me, a frequent visitor and performer on his front step.

“Do you want to hear a song, Neighbour?”

“Can I tell you a story?”

“Can I wear your hat?”

“Do you want to be in our parade?”

And, of course, the answer was always yes. I never got a chance to know my own grandparents, but Neighbour was like a grandfather to me. He was always there to listen or offer advice. He and his wife, who I called Mrs. Neighbour, had a

condo on the beach, and he would make little sculptures out of the rocks and shells he collected there. Visiting his workshop was like going to a museum, with tiny works of art lining the shelves and buckets of shells and pebbles that looked like little jewels along the wall. Each time I visited, I'd dig through them and pick a few to take home, trying to artfully arrange them like he did.

My dad was good friends with Neighbour too. They were both from Ireland and could share stories from home. They'd stand on either side of the fence talking for hours, the smell of their cigarettes wafting in the air. They always reminded me of Tim Taylor and Wilson, two characters from *Home Improvement*, a show my brothers and I watched together. One time, my dad and I were invited to dinner at Neighbour's house. It was the first time I had gone beyond his front step. Mrs. Neighbour made a spicy, fragrant curry rice dish, and I liked it so much that she named it after me. I felt so mature attending a dinner party with adults, and I was excited to have a special evening with my dad. I cherished that evening and our shared friendship with Neighbour.

The only time I ever saw my dad cry was at Neighbour's funeral, as they played "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling." His death was a major loss for both of us. I lost a grandfather figure. My dad lost a friend and a connection to home.

My dad's love of Ireland influenced more than his friendship with Neighbour. It was an integral part of his life and mine. He left Northern Ireland in the 1960s and moved to Canada, working as a tramp miner before moving to Winnipeg and settling down with my mom, but his home country was never far from his thoughts. My brothers and I loved to hear about his life in Ireland, which we saw as a faraway fairyland. My parents would tell us about our grandparents, who lived in a land of green in a "big brown house" and drove a "little red car." We would make him read to us from our book of Irish Fairy Tales again and again. And we always made a big deal of St. Patrick's Day. My dad would make us green eggs and ham for breakfast, dipping hardboiled eggs in water dyed with food colouring. We would go to McDonald's for Shamrock Shakes, though I would get a vanilla ice cream instead because I don't like mint. And he would always wear his green shirt for the occasion - the same one he was wearing on the day of our St. Patrick's Day parade.

My dad's Irish heritage influenced my interest in Ireland too. Learning more about Ireland was a way for me to connect with him. He was passionate about his home country and never tired of talking about its history. In fact, any time I asked him a simple question about it, I'd get a whole lecture instead. It was hard to

stop him when he got going on a topic. When I went to see the movie *Titanic* and asked him about it after, he said everyone talks about that and told me the story of the Empress of Ireland instead. He was never scared of sharing his opinion, either. Once, in high school, I wrote a research paper on the Irish Potato famine. He was really helpful and helped me understand the more political stuff, but I had to leave out a few choice quotes about “those feckin’ Cromwells” and the British.

When I was 19, I visited Ireland for the first time. My dad made a list of all the places I had to see and helped me choose the Cliffs of Moher over the Blarney Stone when I was deciding which tour my aunt and I would go on.

“You don’t need the gift of the gab,” he laughed. “You talk enough as it is.”

When I came home, I showed him the pictures I had taken and told him what I learned, and he told me more about the history of the country and his memories of the places I had seen. He never said it, but I know he was happy that I had finally got to see where he came from.

When my dad passed away in 2013, my husband and I visited Ireland to bring his ashes home. We spent a few weeks exploring the country and seeing where my dad grew up. We visited Cogry, the small Northern Irish town where he was born, and the “big brown house” in Ballymena, where he spent most of his



childhood. We spent time with my aunts, uncles, and cousins and heard stories about him he had never shared with us. About how he and his siblings would roam the woods behind their house when they were children, collecting acorns and tying strings to them to play a game called “Conkers.” About how he would take hours to finish his paper route because he’d stop and have a chat and a bite to eat at every house he went to. About the time, he caught his brother and sister smoking and made them keep smoking the pack until they were sick, so they never did it again. “Never mind that they were his cigarettes in the first place!” said my aunt. And while we shared memories and visited the places he had held dear, I felt more connected to my dad than ever, despite losing him.

At the end of the trip, we made a final stop at a small cemetery, where my dad’s parents and brother are buried and placed his ashes with them. As I stood there looking at the beautiful scenery on the coast of Northern Ireland, I thought of how happy he would be to be home and to know that I was back in the country he loved so much. I thought, too, of that day decades ago when we had our St. Patrick’s Day parade.

# **Social Integration Activities Designed to Reduce Social Isolation among Senior Immigrants in Winnipeg: A Hope for More**

*Christiane Dunia*

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***Christiane Dunia*** is a 4<sup>th</sup> year student in the Department of Rhetoric, Writing, and Communications. As an Immigrant from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Belgium and then to Canada, Christiane enjoys exploring various immigration issues in Canada. She is also a storyteller focusing on short fiction, creative nonfiction, and poetry.

Canada receives immigrants and refugees of all ages every year. Although children and middle-aged adults are the majority, the senior immigrant population is also growing. Employment and Social Development Canada reports that the population of visible minorities among seniors has grown from 2% of Canada's senior population in 1981 to 8.1% in 2011, and about 63% of immigrant seniors (65+) who arrived in Canada between 2012 and 2016 reported that they were unable to speak either French or English (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2018). Immigration is associated with challenges related to uprooting from native culture and

adaption to a new culture and environment. Many factors related to age help or hinder a successful settlement in a new culture; therefore, exposing senior immigrants to face important settlement issues, such as social isolation.

“Social isolation is a situation in which someone has infrequent and/or poor-quality contact with other people. A person who is socially isolated typically has few social contacts or social roles, and few or no mutually rewarding relationships” (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2018, p. 3). Visible minorities who are new immigrant and refugee seniors have higher rates of social isolation than non-minority groups. Old immigrants are prone to social isolation because they are primarily at retirement age, have difficulties learning new languages, and are away from family members and friends. Cumulatively, these factors contribute to social isolation, which may lead to health, social, and economic problems (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2018).

Canada has been a world leader in identifying social isolation as a national priority, with actions taken at multiple levels: government, municipal, and community. At the community level, several organizations and community groups have been actively engaged in offering programs and services to seniors at risk for and affected by social isolation. These community-wide approaches have included

group activities, one-on-one interventions, arts and culture-based activities, leisure activities, intergenerational activities, educational activities, friendship programs, telephone support programs, Internet groups, support groups as well as other opportunities to participate in and contribute to civil society (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2018).

In Winnipeg, many senior centers and non-profit associations organize social integration activities to help senior immigrants and refugees better integrate into Canadian social life. While these activities may vary from English classes to field trips to restaurant group dinners, the goal is to allow participants to meet in large groups outside their homes. Are these activities practical? Do they fulfill the social needs of senior immigrants and refugees? This research will qualitatively and quantitatively analyze the effectiveness of these social integration activities in reducing social isolation among old immigrants and refugees.

### **Literature Review**

Senior centers are community-based facilities that offer a diverse array of recreational, educational, and health-related programs for older adults (Kim & Kim, 2021). Although Employment and Social Development Canada (2018) states dialogue among stakeholder groups and new immigrant and refugee seniors is

necessary to develop innovative local programs and find collaborative solutions to reduce social isolation. Johnson et al. (2021) argue that there is a need for more programs and services targeting senior immigrants and a need for more partnerships between various organizations and service providers to fulfill old immigrants' and refugees' needs.

Further, Stewart et al. (2011) who interviewed service providers and policymakers, confirm that many of them emphasized the lack of collaboration across health and social services at municipal, provincial, and national levels. Intersectoral collaboration, in their view, would help reduce costs for individual agencies and promote sharing of expertise and resources. Also, the lack of funding affects service delivery because there is not enough money to pay for services such as interpreters, which negatively affects the quality of services. Johnson et al. (2021) acknowledge that programs were typically supported by limited grants and government funding. Increased collaboration between the service providers could strengthen coordination for capacity-building and sustainability to support programs and services over time.

The diversity of members among senior centers also affects the quality of activity provided; therefore, the impact is different among members of ethno-

specific and ethno-diverse senior centers. Kim and Kim (2019), whose research focused on senior centers providing services in Korean to Korean-speaking seniors, explore the benefit of ethno-specific senior centers. The authors found that ethno-specific centers have no language barrier like in diverse senior centers. Korean seniors found it easy to learn English at the Korean senior center. Also, participating in a senior center with the same culture had positive outcomes. By interacting with others with the same cultural backgrounds, Korean seniors mentioned that feelings of loneliness were reduced. They developed a sense of belonging and connectedness because they met with others who share the same culture. On the other hand, Giunta et al. (2012) state that participants of diverse centers may face a higher risk of social isolation and limited access to health care than those attending nondiverse centers because they are more likely to live alone, have less contact with family, receive less social support, and are less satisfied with the social support they do receive. Kim and Kim (2019) found that participants tend to engage in senior centers where they are culturally connected.

Moreover, although senior centers can provide activities to senior immigrants, the quality of services provided is essential to assess if they satisfy the participant's needs. Stewart et al. (2011), whose paper seeks to explore varied

interrelated challenges and barriers experienced by immigrant seniors, discovered that they expressed differing sentiments regarding the suitability and appropriateness of support services and programs available to them at the study site. Some seniors were dissatisfied with the provision of support, particularly from government departments. The major criticism focused on the suitability of services and programs. On the other hand, Kim and Kim (2019) maintain the satisfaction of Korean seniors with the various programs they receive. The benefits mentioned are social and personal development.

Thus, this research will extend to the findings that there is a need for more diversified support for older immigrants. However, it challenges findings in previous studies stating that seniors participating in diverse senior centers are more prone to social isolation than those participating in ethno-diverse centers. I also used less structured interviews to identify other benefits old immigrants experienced in attending social integration activities.

## **Methodology**

### **Participants and Data Collection**

This research adopted a purposeful sampling strategy. The criteria to participate in the research were to be: (a) a senior (over 60 years old), (b) an

immigrant, (c) a participant in social integration activities organized by a senior center, and (d) speaking and understanding English or French. To recruit study participants, I contacted A&O Support Services for Older Adults located in downtown Winnipeg and had meetings with the Senior Immigrant Settlement Services manager. With the manager's permission, I was able to participate in English conversation classes where I met with participants to introduce my research.

The English conversation classes I participated in were held every Thursday from 10 am to 11: 30 am. That Thursday, ten students (five men and five women) gathered in the center boardroom, where they sat around a rounded table. The room was bright and spacious. Two younger volunteer nurse students assisted the teacher who was also a senior man. The class was casual with the teacher giving a lecture but requiring students to participate in the conversation with him or in a pair. During the coffee break, students were served coffee and chatted with each other or with the staff.

Participants who were interested in the study voluntarily gave their names and availability. Five individuals participated in this study. Four participants were men, and one was a woman. They came from various countries, such as Russia, El



Salvador, India, Syria, and Bangladesh. The duration of immigration time in Winnipeg varies from one month to 15 months to 11 years. In this paper, I will use pseudonyms to identify participants to ensure anonymity and confidentiality.

### **Interview Protocol**

Based on the literature review, a semi-structured in-depth interview protocol was developed to capture the effects of social integration activities on social isolation among senior immigrants. Interviews lasted between 10 and 30 minutes, depending on each participant and the time slot chosen for the interview. Three interviews were led at the senior center site at the end of the English conversation class and one during the coffee break. All the interviews were conducted in English, one-on-one, and in a closed space to ensure privacy. Questions were asked regarding two main themes that could help measure the effectiveness of social integration activities: social isolation and self-development. Questions on social isolation included: “Have you been able to build friendships through these activities?” or “are these activities an important component of your daily/weekly life?”. Questions on self-development included: “What other benefits do you get from these activities?”. Before in-depth interviews, I asked questions helping to collect demographic data such as the country of origin, the time spent in

Canada, and living arrangements. However, due to the small size of the group studied, none of these appear in this paper to ensure anonymity.

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis indicated that the senior center offered English conversation classes as part of educational programs designed for older immigrants. As a result of their participation in English conversation classes, senior immigrants gained benefits such as personal and social development. This study gathered information based on two major themes related to successful social integration for immigrants: (a) Reducing social isolation and (b) Experiencing self-development.

#### ***Reducing social isolation***

The participants highlighted that attending English conversation classes offered them opportunities to meet other older immigrants and share their experiences as newcomers. Conversations with others are an important element that leads many participants to return to classes even after many years. Although some participants mentioned the importance of social connections created in the classroom, others highlighted that the social relations created in these classes only remain in the classroom. After the course is over, they do not talk to each other. They would like more ways to encourage them to stay connected with others even

after classes. Also, some participants mentioned that the English conversation classes were the only social activities they had in their daily or weekly planning. Going to classes allows them to go outside of their homes — where they stay sometimes for days with only family members or by themselves — and see other areas of town. Some participants mentioned that going to the classes is also an opportunity to see the downtown parts of the city that they do not usually see while staying home.

**Table 1*****Examples of Direct Quotes from Study Participants***

Participant A	<i>“I could have been home all day if I did not have the opportunity to go to the English conversation classes. I am also looking for friends, and I have been able to make some friends here.”</i>
Participant B	<i>“I come in person twice a week and one time on zoom. These activities are a treat for me because they allow me to visit the downtown area, which is an area that I like but do not have the opportunity to see often because my children don’t like it as they say it’s dangerous.” “The friendship that we create only stays in the classroom. After class, we do not see each other. I would like to have more friends out of the classroom.”</i>
Participant C	<i>“Since I have been coming to the English Classes, I have been able to make some friends. It also helped me to integrate into Canadian social life.”</i>
Participant D	<i>“I like to come here because I meet other students and have some conversations with them. I would like to have</i>

	<i>another participant's phone number, for example, to be able to talk to them outside of the classroom."</i> <i>"Before covid, we used to go outside at the park, library, or museum, and I would like to have that more often. Now everything is on zoom".</i>
Participant E	<i>"I come here to pass the time and make good friends. Other than coming here, I could have just stayed home."</i>

### ***Experiencing self-development***

The language barrier is a challenge for senior immigrants to integrate into Canadian Social life. "Inability to speak English emerged as a major challenge that affected access to services and social support" (Stewart et al., 2011, p. 23).

Participants highlighted that offering English conversation classes to seniors helps them develop their English proficiency and conversation skills. With language improvement, participants mentioned that they could gain confidence in other aspects of their daily lives, such as going to the doctor or the bank alone. However, the English conversation classes are a mix of many different English levels.

Beginner levels are mixed with advanced. Most participants mentioned that their English level is advanced compared to the class offered to them. The low level of classes hinders their progress, and they would like the center to have separate classes for different language levels.

The multiculturalism of the center was also indicated as an element helping participants' self-development. As Canada is a multicultural country, participants mentioned that meeting other people from various countries also advances their integration into Canadian social life. However, one participant mentioned an incident regarding the political conflict in their home countries that made them feel uncomfortable in class conversations. Finally, some participants mentioned their need for other self-development activities, such as computer classes or book clubs. Also, other participants indicated the need to see the activity they used to attend before the pandemic, such as going to field trips, the library, or other outdoor activities. Most of them hope for more than what is being offered.

**Table 2**

***Examples of Direct Quotes from Study Participants***

Participant	<i>"I am here because I would like to improve my English, and the language skills might help me find a good job here in Canada."</i>
A	<i>"The level is very low, so my progress is very slow. I would prefer to attend classes at a higher level. I also would like to have free computer classes, just for basic computer lessons."</i>
	<i>"English is the common language worldwide now, and it is important to be in a center where they speak English."</i>

Participant B	<i>“When I came here, I hoped for more activities. Such as computer classes, formal English classes, and maybe books from the library to study English. The goal is to have a good time which is good. I prefer this English-speaking center because the goal is to learn English. It is important if I go to the cafeteria or restaurants”.</i>
Participant C	<i>“Not speaking good English is a barrier for me not to pass a test to be recognized in the profession I used to do back home. I have been coming here to improve my English. However, due to the level of teaching, I am not progressing much.”</i>
Participant D	<i>“Knowing English will help me to be independent and go to the doctor, at the bank, or have conversations with other people.” I would like the classes to have different levels because people who come here have different levels, and when they teach us at the same levels, it does not help those who are a little advanced.” “I like here because I meet with people from other countries; however, the conflicts in my country are affecting me a lot, and any conversation regarding that makes me really uncomfortable.”</i>
Participant E	<i>“By having conversations with others, we learn new things. I also like to meet people from other countries because I like to discuss their country’s politics. Talking with them helps me understand people more.”</i>

## **Discussion**

This qualitative study aimed to explore the effect of social integration activities on social isolation among senior immigrants. The data collected from the field study indicate that participating in English conversation classes organized by the senior center has a positive effect on the social integration of senior immigrants. The activities help seniors reduce social isolation and to experience self-development.

Some researchers consider that indicators of social isolation include dimensions such as the number and frequency of social contacts or meaningful ties and fulfilling relationships (Johnson et al., 2021). This research finds that participating in English conversation classes at the senior center allows older immigrants to have social contact with other immigrants and teachers. Meeting with other seniors who share the same experience helps increase social connections outside family settings. The frequency of activities-twice a week on average-allows participants to create a quality of friendship that can create meaningful ties. Social contact is only limited to the classroom which is problematic and hinders social integration since seniors expressed the need for extended social contact outside the senior center's activities.

Besides helping with social isolation, the senior center also helps seniors improve their English and social skills by understanding multiculturalism in Canada. Kim and Kim (2019) state that as language skill improve, participants gained confidence and self-esteem by communicating with host individuals and their grandchildren. This paper found that language improvement helps participants gain confidence to do other daily life activities independently. It is an important aspect of the seniors' integration process because language barriers are the central issue in social isolation among senior immigrants.

The literature shows that participants of ethno-diverse centers may face a higher risk of social isolation due to the language barrier (Giunta et al., 2012). Also, Kim and Kim (2019) add that the difference in culture, customs, and traditions, as well as discrimination experiences, can inhibit older Asian immigrants from using the resources and information offered by senior centers. The findings partially align with the previous results. Senior immigrants in the English-speaking center adapt more and have a higher chance of learning the language at a fast pace. Also, it facilitates their social integration into Canadian social life since the country is highly multicultural. However, conflicts in back home countries can still affect the perception of comfortability during class sessions, and affinity can develop



between members who come from non-conflicting countries. Giunta et al. (2012) point out, “As the racial-ethnic diversity of the older adult population increases and demographic changes occur in urban neighborhoods where elders seek services, senior centers will need to offer diverse, multicultural programming” (Giunta et al., 2012, p. 467).

As Johnson et al. (2021) argue, there is a need for more programs and services targeting senior immigrants and more partnerships between various organizations and service providers to fulfill old immigrants’ and refugees’ needs. Although participants reported the benefits of the English conversation classes, they also expressed a need for other programs to reduce isolation and increase self-development. Most requested computer programs since we live in an era of advanced technology, and many seniors are unfamiliar with many new platforms compared to younger generations of immigrants.

### **Limitations and future studies**

This study could be extended to provincial and national levels since there is not enough research on this topic in Canada. Employment and social development Canada found that although interventions targeting social isolation have increased over the last decade, the number of high-quality evaluation studies remains

relatively low, limiting the evidence available to assess their impact fully (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2018, p. 9). However, I should share some limitations. At the beginning of the study, I was hoping to compare two different types of senior centers. I was able to contact only one. Further studies would need to focus on other senior centers--diverse and nondiverse.

Further, in this study, I recruited only five participants due to time limits, the reduced number of students in the English conversation classes, and the language barrier. Future studies are needed with a higher number of participants who might give a broader understanding of the issue. Finally, the problem of activities organized by senior centers has two sides: The focus on senior immigrants and the focus on activities organizers (Stewart et al., 2011). Further studies should also focus on the problems service providers face that may stop them from providing various activities to respond to seniors' needs.

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## Three stars and a sun

*Rebecca Michaella Daylo*

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The three-and-a-half centuries,  
of Spanish slavery  
remain in many Filipinos memory.  
I draw the tinted ink across the paper,  
pouring out the swelling pain. The scars  
of the past are the subject of my rhymes.

The three horizontal bands of red and yellow  
scrubbed away the language of my blood.  
A million deaths, centillion tears flowed  
like red hot lava of Taal volcano  
rumbling rage and wrath.

Spanish hacienderos with Filipino slaves,  
My Filipino heroes buried in graves.

***Rebecca Michaella***

***Daylo*** is a fourth-year  
student at the University  
of Winnipeg. She aspires  
to receive a combined  
degree in Bachelor of  
Arts and Education,  
majoring in English and  
minoring in History.  
Ideally, she wishes  
to teach at the high  
school level.

I will raise my Philippine flag despite these wounds,  
The silence of the soul, no more burial mounds.

Spanish colonialism marks  
My mother tongue's vocabulary.  
Deep down in my soul, I am honored by  
My tan skin color,  
My thick Filipina accent,  
My language barrier like cement.

The crimson maple leaf, a cultural mosaic.  
A land of opportunity,  
of peace and diversity.  
To learn a foreign language,  
Is like a winding river, a linguistic voyage,  
An immense journey of learning and discovery,  
As I navigate its currents with curiosity.

Interlinking Individuality | *Poetry*

I am studying the culture of others, unaware

Of how little I knew about my ancestral homeland, so rare.

Lost in the allure of distant lands and foreign lore,

I neglected the riches that were mine to explore.

Pure blood, pure heart, pure soul

I am Filipina with a soul

Three stars and a sun; my motherland

The crimson maple leaf; my foreign land.

## “body of water”

*Emma Ko*

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**Emma Ko** is a Psychology student at the University of Winnipeg that has always had a love for creative writing. Her goal when writing is to convey dark or serious themes in the smallest number of words possible. In her own words, this “make[s] it fun to read and hard to figure out.”

I glistened as the sun rose,  
the yellow, orange, and pink hues  
reflected on my resting surface.  
I exchanged stories with visitors,  
those embarking on a new adventure,  
their fins flapping, eager for an audience.  
I embraced the presence of the others,  
sprinkling them with the tips of my fingers.

But the air has gotten warmer,  
and my body has become heavier.

I choke on the bottles and the bags,  
as if they are splinters  
stuck underneath the surface of my skin.  
I feel dirty, murky,  
as black bruises continue to spread.  
The heat in the atmosphere is stifling,  
and I think of escaping,  
climbing up and out of my body.

# Agenda Setting and Framing with Wokeness in Healthcare

*Precious Gauthier*

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## Introduction

Healthcare disparities in the United States have a long history rooted in systemic racism and exploitation of Black individuals. Medical experimentation on enslaved Black women by James Marion Sims, the non-consensual harvesting of Henrietta Lacks' cells, and the Tuskegee experiments on Black men infected with syphilis are just a few examples of the harm inflicted upon Black people by the healthcare community. False concepts about Black people's health, such as the belief that Black skin has an increased pain tolerance, have led to harmful medical practices including the undertreatment of pain for Black patients. Additionally, algorithms that factor in race, such as the vaginal Cesarean after birth

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*is working on completing two degrees in Biology and English with a minor in Rhetoric. She was the first to graduate high school in her family, and now will be the first to complete a degree. Precious has decided to pursue an education to give her family a better life and to be an example for following your dreams.*



(VCAB) and estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR), have been shown to increase mortality and inaccurately assess the severity of a patient's need for treatment. Research on the disparities gained traction in the mid-1900s, but interest teetered off until the 2010s. Black communities have fought against these disparities through a tradition of being "woke," which encourages critical thinking about social issues and injustices. As a Black North American woman, I intend to discuss how the term woke has been co-opted by non-Black communities and used in performative or harmful ways that do not address the systemic issues at the root of healthcare disparities. And the Healthcare disparities experienced by the Black community in North America and how they framed a way that carries out the agenda that comprises a history of exploitation, false narratives, and harmful experimentation.

### **Healthcare Disparities**

The healthcare system is established on the exploitation of Black people. In North America, this foundation was created through actions and fabricated narratives that are still experienced in the present day. The disparities began with inhumane testing that developed into false depictions of black people's representation within the medical system.

In the 1800s, James Marion Sims, whose titles included enslaver and surgeon, tested on enslaved Black women without anesthesia for pain relief, nor did they have any autonomy over their person to refuse consent. The experimentation resulted in Sims performing a successful vesicovaginal fistula, labelling him the "father of gynecology" (Khabele et al., 2020, p. 153). Sims is remembered for greatness, not because he tortured Black women and used them as guinea pigs for experimentation.

A century later, in the 1950s, Henrietta Lacks should be known in every household because of her contribution to science. Henrietta's cells were the first human cell to be cultured outside the body and are known as the HeLa cells. This led to many scientific breakthroughs, from cancer research to the eradication of polio. Using her cells is problematic because the cells were removed without consent, and companies to this date make millions off her stolen cells while her children live in poverty (Khan, 2011, pp. 93-94).

This terrible treatment was not exclusive to Black women. In the 1930s – 70s, a large group of Black men in Alabama infected with syphilis were not treated for it and were instead left to live with the illness, even though treatment was found in the 1940s. This harmful research is known as the Tuskegee experiments (Nix,

2017, p. 16). This lack of autonomy developed in the medical community using and maintaining false concepts about Black people's healthcare.

The belief that Black skin has an increased pain tolerance has no scientific basis and began during the era of chattel slavery to justify medical experimentation on Black people (Hoffman et al., 2016, p. 4276). Some medical students presently believe Black skin is thicker than other skin colours. Although this information has been proven false, 50% of the participants in a scientific study by Hoffman believed at least one false idea about the biological differences between Black and white people (Hoffman et al., 2016, p. 4296).

Another related example is during interviews with pharmacists regarding the low quantities of pain medications noted in specific neighbourhoods, Dr. Harold Freeman found that doctors undertreated Black patients' for pain. The doctors' justification for their undertreatment was the concern of drug abuse, founded on stereotypes and the belief that Black people have an increased pain tolerance (Freeman & Payne, 2000, pp. 1045-1046).

The false concepts perpetuated in medicine lead to the development of algorithms that factor in race, such as vaginal Cesarean after birth (VCAB) or estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR), which can increase mortality. The

eGFR is used to determine eligibility for kidney transplants. The result of this algorithm is an inaccurate decrease in the severity of need for Black patients, leading to a longer wait time. The criteria for eGFR screening is designed around the idea that Black people have more muscle mass, which has not been scientifically proven (Cai et al., 2021, p. S34-S35).

Race is also used to determine a Black mother's success of natural childbirth after a Cesarean which has increasingly harmful outcomes in childbirth due to the VCAB score, which estimates the risk of a mother being able to have a successful vaginal birth after a Cesarean. The score predicts lesser success for Black women. It can be speculated that this is due to a presumed socioeconomic status. The VCAB score does not factor in other positive social factors such as marital status or medical insurance (Darshali A. Vyas et al., 2020, p. 877). The harm accompanied by pregnancy is a legacy left by the medicalization of childbirth.

Many European countries still employ midwives for low-risk pregnancies; the United States does not while maintaining a high infant mortality rate of 5.8 per 1000 births. The rate increases to 11.4 for Black infants. (Suarez A., 2020, p. 1). During chattel enslavement between the 1600s-1900s, midwives dealt with the births of Black infants, but with the medicalization of childbirth, they were phased

out due to racism, classism and the manufactured idea of inhibiting progress or unsanitary conditions (Suarez A., 2020, p. 2-3). The discussion of these issues is only a small snapshot of the immense disparities experienced by the Black community. The Black community was left to find ways to resist the disparities internally.

### **Wokeness**

The Black community's method to fight against oppression was the concept of being alert to the conditions of the world around them. The method was a behaviour coined as the term woke. "The idea of being 'woke' was a hallmark of socially minded, Black [people]" (Pullman-Moore, 2016). The model has been passed down over many generations throughout the community. "Among Black people ... 'stay woke' might mean something like: 'stay conscious of the apparatus of white supremacy, do not automatically accept the official explanations for police violence, keep safe'" (Pullman-Moore, 2016). The term woke was more recently brought into pop culture in a 2008 Erykah Badu song, "Master Teacher" (Hess, 2016). In the present day, the term is still prominent, although non-Black communities have altered it. "Today, 'woke' [is] meant to encourage critical thinking about social issues and injustices, [it] has slowly morphed into something

that comes across as a derogatory jab" (Pullman-Moore, 2016). In some situations, the term is used to build a false social hierarchy by becoming a performative action on social media when preceded by a hashtag. This at-home activism gives the activist a sense of accomplishment. Believing they "earned the 'woke' badge is a particularly tantalizing prospect because it implies that you are down with the historical fight against prejudice" (Hess, 2016). In the media, there has been a perverse cooption of the term woke by the right-wing faction.

### **Distortion of Wokeness**

Groups like the people at the James G. Martin Centre for Academic Renew, a non-profit organization, claim to be working towards getting universities back to "proper scholarly inquiry and responsible teaching." The organization supports calls for people to speak to policymakers against what they call the "woke agenda". The claims include that medical school is no longer taking the best candidates but choosing less qualified minorities and forcing social justice training, while not once defining what the term " woke " means but eluding to it being people who view themselves as oppressed or victims of injustice and any social change supporting this idea (Hall, 2022).

Other Republican commentators believe the medical profession is under attack by woke people because they believe that the institution of medicine is racist. They are using a similar talking point found with James G. Martin Centre for Academic Renew and adding that the educational components for jobs in a medical professional now are more about catering to how minorities feel than their training and academic knowledge. There is a belief that anti-racist advocacy prevents medical school students from excelling in their education, and that the focus of their education is on white supremacy more so than scientific study. They are using the process of instilling fear that doctors will not be trained appropriately (Mac Donald, 2022).

### **Framing and Agenda Setting**

For the right-wing faction to develop this rhetoric, they used the tools of agenda-setting and framing, which "have been examined under the broad category of cognitive media effects" (Scheufele, 2000, p. 297). The process is done through "the perspectives and frames that journalists employ draw attention to specific attributes of the objects of news coverage and the objects themselves, and some of these perspectives can be very general (e.g., a "Cold War" frame)" (Weaver, 2007, p. 142). Scholars have described a media frame as "the central organizing idea for

news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration.", stating that "to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (Weaver, 2007, p. 143).

There are parts to the process of Framing and Agenda Setting. The first level of agenda setting recognizes the "issues or subjects," whereas the second level of agenda setting includes framing, which "is the selection of a restricted number of thematically related attributes for inclusion on the media agenda when a particular object is discussed" (Weaver, 2007, p. 143). "The original agenda-setting hypothesis asserts that the media are influential in deciding what issues become major themes of public opinion, while the newly developed concept of the second level of agenda setting or attribute agenda setting assumes that the media also have an influence on how people make sense of a given theme" (Takeshita, 2006, p. 275). In the most straightforward term, agenda setting is the issues that are prominently focused on in the news, and become issues that the audience adopts as important (Iyengar & Kinder, 1988, p. 16).



### **The Framing and Agenda Setting of Wokeness within Healthcare**

Once the knowledge of the horrific past of health care in North America is established in the dialogue, we have to critique all the messaging around it using the tools of agenda setting and framing. The murder of George Floyd in 2020 is an excellent situational artifact to apply this approach too, as most of the world saw or heard how he was murdered. Through this knowledge, a sizeable right-wing faction that trickled into the center and left media faction has disseminated false information and attempted to gaslight people worldwide. The gaslighting was done by stating Floyd died from pre-existing conditions, with articles from The Washington Post that bring his medical history into the dialogue, "At the heart of Derek Chauvin's trial I this question: What killed George Floyd" (Bernstein, L., & Bailey, H. 2021). Likewise, headlines like "Minneapolis cop's attorney claims George Floyd overdosed on fentanyl, says charges should be dropped" (Miles, F. 2020) and "Tucker Carlson Says George Floyd Died of Drug Overdose in Video Watched 3 Million Times" (Anglesey, 2021). The framing was done by manipulating the rhetoric around medical data in his autopsy report. The media did this by repeatedly blaming or discussing Floyd's death as drug-related or related to a pre-existing heart condition. The false claims brought awareness of racial

inequalities in healthcare. They set an agenda of remodelling the issues of being his fault or, in the broader picture, Black people's fault when police brutality happens to them (Crawford-Roberts, 2020). Once this manipulated rhetoric is formed, it develops into the opposition, creating the agenda that if you believe there is a problem in healthcare, your ideas are woke and must be refuted with anti-okeness.

### **Conclusion**

The healthcare system has deep-rooted disparities that continue to harm Black people. The system's foundation was established through the exploitation and inhumane treatment of Black people, which has resulted in the development and maintenance of false concepts and narratives about Black people's healthcare. These disparities have led to the creation of harmful algorithms and unjustifiable mistreatment of Black patients. The Black community has fought against this oppression by staying conscious of white supremacy's apparatus and vigilance in their activism. Framing and agenda-setting concepts were employed to develop and pursue harmful rhetoric. To eliminate healthcare disparities, the healthcare system must address and dismantle its historical and systemic racism and work towards equitable healthcare for all.

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# Winnipeg's Urban Density Problem: Sprawling Suburbs vs Abandoned Downtown

*Charlotte McLaren*

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## ***Charlotte McLaren***

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All cities start as towns, and all towns have centers that branch out as the population grows while small communities and suburbs become amalgamated into the city. Major historical events have shaped the city of Winnipeg and drastically affected its growth and structure, such as World Wars I and II, the Industrial Revolution, the General Strike, and the Great Depression. But cities do not just sprout and grow wide and long, especially not one that was set to become the supposed “Chicago of the North.” A major downfall of Winnipeg's planning and layout is an excess of suburbs. One of Winnipeg's original suburbs of the 1900's was Rooster Town. A Metis “shanty town,” and home of up to fourteen families

who were forcibly evicted in 1960 from the grounds that are now Grant Park High School, and Grant Avenue. Rooster Town became an example that neglected citizens of an uprising city could be swept away and forgotten.

Various agencies of municipal governance and the processes of urban development dispossessed indigenous peoples and pushed them farther onto the edges of the city until no space remained for them. The removal of Rooster Town erased the last visible evidence of a continuing Metis community. (Burley, 2013, p. 3)

However, in the last 130 years Winnipeg has lost its population density solely to suburban sprawl as Downtown and the North End neighborhoods have been vacated. So, how did suburbs become something to punish, then classist and elitist, and now the norm of Winnipeg living? In modern times, we are trying to curb suburban sprawl to no avail.

In 2017, the city tried and failed to curb urban sprawl by imposing an impact fee. The tax required developers to pay an additional \$54.73 per square meter on new builds within the city's outskirts. The fee would cover the cost of infrastructure required by new developments, it said at the time. Developers contested the tax in court and in 2020, a provincial judge struck

it down, ordering the city to refund roughly \$37 million to developers and homeowners. (Searle, 2022, para. 21)

So, this is a constant battle between the city and land developers, showing just how bleak regulation looks.

### **Context of Argument Based on the Artifact**

The Toulmin model of argument was introduced by British philosopher Stephen Toulmin in his 1958 book “The Uses of Argument” (Toulmin, 2003). Toulmin developed his model to create and construct persuasive arguments. Its essential parts are split up as claim, grounds, warrant, backing, qualifier, and rebuttal. It is explained as such in OER’s Lumen learning site:

The claim is the conclusion or argument being made. The grounds are the data and facts offered to support the claim. To logically connect the grounds to the claim, a warrant is given. The backing is used to support the warrant and the qualifiers make a statement about the strength of the claim. (Lumen Learning, n.d., para. 3).

In this paper's case, the artifact is an infographic posted as a tweet by Brent Bellamy, an architect and Winnipeg Free Press writer comparing Winnipeg's population count to urban sprawl and land use in 1971 to 2019. This is shown in a

map outlined by Winnipeg's perimeter. In purple it shows Winnipeg's population in 1971 of 525 000 people spread over the map; in pink it shows a much larger surface area being covered by the 2019 population of 725 000 (Bellamy, 2019). Below the map, it is written that the population increase was 37%, compared to the land area increase at 96%, claiming that developed land area is increasing 3 times faster than population rates (Bellamy, 2019). Bellamy (2019) goes on to discuss the relationship between Winnipeggers' property tax costs and the upkeep they cannot facilitate because of the rapidly developing infrastructure. However, the scope of this paper focuses on using the Toulmin model to dissect suburban sprawl in Winnipeg and how it has hurt the development of and massively disadvantaged the city.

A chief perspective comes from Winnipeg being a winter city. Meagan Henke discusses utilization of city planning to benefit Winnipeg's livability in the winter months at the University of Winnipeg. Urban planning in our city has often disregarded composite globalizations in technology, transport, and communication regarding climate.

Canadian cities are becoming increasingly homogenous with the advent of big box complexes, supported by seas of parking and major commercial



centers. In winter cities, this has resulted in a largely inhumane city and has adversely affected our quality of life. (Henke, 2006, p. 1)

This fact ties in with our car dependency and car-dependent suburbs. North American suburbs in the traditional sense are defined by large streets with room for parking and continuous driving in each direction, small boulevards, and large lots that have sizable front yards. They are typically sprawling with limited sidewalks on certain roads, curved and bending streets, small parks, retention ponds, and are bordered by busy, wide roadways. Suburbs will typically only have one big primary school and one secondary school not within walking distance of most occupants. As well as not having many stores within walkable distance, which perpetuates the car culture. Kids must get dropped off and picked up from school, groceries need to be purchased from big box stores, and day jobs need to be reached by vehicle due to commute times and lacking public transit.

### **Learning from our Neighbors**

While it was hard to find a lot of Winnipeg specific resources, the YouTube channel Not Just Bikes makes informational videos often featuring Canadian cities in their opposition to traditional suburbs. In their video *Suburbs that don't Suck - Streetcar Suburbs (Riverdale, Toronto)*, they look at the concept of streetcar

suburbs in Riverdale, Toronto, Ontario. Within the video they discuss this concept, which comes from suburbs being built around major streetcar lines being an asset of the neighborhood. The area was established enough that people in the original neighborhood wanted to live there to use the streetcar to their advantage (mainly preindustrial revolution) (Not Just Bikes, 2021). In its heyday, Riverdale offered many different types of houses like split level, multifamily dwellings, five story buildings, single family homes, and community living options (Not Just Bikes, 2021). They also had many different price points of property for individuals of different income status (Not Just Bikes, 2021). Other assets of the area are community shops at residential street corners, cafes, retail, laundromats, and other useful independent shops that minimize the need for occupants to travel outside the neighborhood (Not Just Bikes, 2021). This community thrives off being close to all necessities by foot or public transport (Not Just Bikes, 2021). It also uses the implementation of its varied income residents to create a more diverse community (Not Just Bikes, 2021).

Winnipeg used to have a comparable neighborhood in what is now South Osborne; the last remains of it are the skeleton of a streetcar at the Elva Fletcher Way Park. “The streetcar system has had a huge impact on Winnipeg's development

as well – acting as a conduit for people to the downtown as the city began to sprawl outwards” (Unger, para. 10). This is all to illustrate that original suburbs are not innately the problem with urban sprawl. But what we have come to know as suburbs has been a quickly contributing factor.

### **Winnipeg’s Problems and Solutions**

So, what prevents Winnipeg from having walkable suburbs like Riverdale? A lot of it lies in zoning and historic neighborhoods not being built the same anymore. Riverdale was a prewar neighborhood, i.e., pre–Industrial Revolution and Great Depression. So, it was much easier to not be car dependent, as they were not as ingrained in everyday life as cars are now. Modern zoning laws in Canada call for an allotted two parking spaces on a property per single family household. This also contributes to larger and wider streets for vehicles as predominant transportation. It is very popular for modern suburbs to not have sidewalks at all, or only have them on select streets, which makes foot traffic even more inaccessible. Older neighborhoods like Riverdale, or in Winnipeg's case, St Boniface, Wolseley, and South Osborne have narrower two-lane streets with street parking and sidewalks on either side of the road as well as slower residential speed limits. This infrastructure supports greenspace like the River Heights tree canopy, which

stretches across roadways and cools/shades homes. Further proof of this is the demand for homes in such areas, which are being sold at all-time high prices because of the demand and lack of the supply. Mel Marginet, from the Green Action Centre weighed in on a piece from Uniter: “Winnipeg, like most cities across North America, radically changed its growth pattern after the Second World War, city leadership saw the ability to develop land on Winnipeg’s outer edge as a way to increase the tax base.” (Goulet-Kilgour, 2022, para. 6). While this was initially a successful formula, Marginet notes that “to make this type of growth sustainable, the amount of tax has to not only pay to maintain all of this new infrastructure, but to rebuild it once it crumbles” (Goulet-Kilgour, 2022, para. 7). Winnipeg transit does not have the funding or resources to make transit in suburbs accessible, or the infrastructure budget to maintain these routes; thus, personal vehicles become the only suitable answer.

A popular solution that has been proposed, and one many have seen in older neighborhoods, is infill housing. Infills are typically residential lots where houses have been condemned, or victim of fire/water damage, etc., and are torn down. They can also come from abandoned homes and lots, as well as homeowners subdividing their own wide lots. Many houses in South Osborne were made on one

side of a lot, leaving a bigger side yard for gardens. In recent years, more homeowners have opted to sell off that land and have it subdivided into a 25-foot-wide home lot. This seems like an obvious solution to urban density in desirable areas; however, the process comes with its own drawbacks. Gina Sylvestre, the director of Urban Studies at the University of Winnipeg, stated her opinions on infills as such: “If done correctly, infill housing could increase population density in the city’s core neighborhoods (those within 5 kilometers of city center) and allow people with diverse economic needs to cohabitate” (Searle, 2022, para. 16). Unfortunately, this practice is less popular because it is more costly to buy and potentially tear down houses on old lots, get permits, or fulfill updated zoning requirements. Many infill homes are slim three- or four-story houses with little yard, and no windows on either side. Often, these homes clash with the neighborhood's aesthetic or style, sticking out like a metallic, modern thumb. There are also many contracting groups buying up land in older neighborhoods to subdivide and build infill houses quickly on the cheap.

### **Positives and Further Action Needed for Progress**

So, what is to come from this discussion? Winnipeg is due some credit as there are exceptions to this combating of urban density. The Forks River walk has

become a huge attraction for the city's downtown, earning international recognition as the longest walkable, skateable river trail in the world. It brings thousands of people to the city center in the dead of winter to spend time with nature and explore the downtown neighborhood. It also encourages the use of the trail to commute to work or play in the winter season. Many streets downtown have also gotten permanent meridian blocked bike paths, namely the Garry St. bike lane. This bike lane was introduced in 2016 and completed in 2019 as a two-way bike lane on the east side of the street. Affordable housing initiatives have been put in place, like The Don Togo on Osborne Street, which has multiple units at-different price points and varying designs. Another affordable housing initiative is the 175 Colony Street's West Broadway Commons, which offered units starting at \$550 a month. While this is a step in the right direction, it still does not directly affect urban population density. The global pandemic of 2020 has done irreparable damage to our now desolate downtown, removing what little corporate jobs that were left there. If a typical Winnipegger's experience with downtown is traffic jams on the way to and from a hockey game and vandalized bus shelters turned makeshift dwellings, their only incentive to repair downtown is rooted in pathos, which many have chosen to neglect. The key to curbing suburban sprawl involves many more

deeply rooted systemic issues in Winnipeg like the affordable housing crisis, food inequality and equity, cost of living increase, as well as discrimination, racism and inequality.

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# Trapped in Tradition: An Analysis of Rhetorical Strategies in Scientific Writing

*Meagan Smith*

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Disseminating findings of scholarly activities in life sciences is a vital component of the academic writing process. However, communicating innovative conclusions is habitually restricted by monotonous, rigidly structured papers bound by the disciplinary conventions of publishing in scientific journals. This paper analyzes the rhetorical strategies used by Wan et al. (2022) in *Heritability and Cross-Species Comparisons of Human Cortical Functional Organization Asymmetry*. Wan et al. (2022) establish credibility via significant empirical evidence conveyed in a logical format but fail to evoke feelings of hope for future research due to a lack of engaging emotional language. The authors' traditional scientific writing style, which uses a sizeable appeal to

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logos and ethos, serves in their effort to effectively communicate the critical findings of their research with substantial credibility. However, a lack of emotional appeal weakens supporting arguments of the importance of research in this area.

Wan et al. (2022) examined differences in the brain hemispheres between related and unrelated humans, and between humans and macaque monkeys. The results demonstrated that asymmetries in brains of humans were heritable. Additionally, their findings suggest the network involved in language and the frontoparietal region of the brain had greater asymmetries in humans compared to macaque monkeys. Ultimately, the results of this study indicate there may be a genetic basis for neural asymmetry in neural regions associated with more complex cognitive functions in humans.

Wan et al. (2022) aim to disseminate their findings to academics in the fields of neuroscience, evolutionary biology, and psychology. The authors use language suitable for a post-secondary student who is in the field of neuroscience, evolutionary biology, or psychology. For example, the authors describe the simple concept of asymmetry as “...quantitative hemispheric differences between contralateral homologous regions...” (Wan et. al., 2022, 2). An academic outside the realm of the aforementioned subdisciplines may become lost in the complicated

language and fail to understand what the authors are stating. Hemispheric asymmetry of two brain structures can be simply defined as regions on opposite sides of the brain with structural differences. The authors' convoluted description restricts the extent to which a diverse set of audiences can interact with the article. For this reason, it is unlikely the intended audience is a member of the public or a researcher outside the target field.

By restricting the audience of the article to members within its field, the decision to follow traditional disciplinary conventions is well justified. Within the academic discipline of science, researchers tend to focus on clearly defined problems established by decades of work in the field (MacDonald, 2010). Accordingly, researchers tend to ask research questions in a manner that aids in progressing the body of knowledge within the rigid, well-structured confines of their discipline. Wan et al. (2022) do not deviate from this general pattern of disciplinary discourse. Moreover, MacDonald (2010) makes note of reference studies which have demonstrated the tendency for work in the sciences to favour referencing recent research rather than older, foundational work. This is evidence of researchers within this discipline progressively building upon the current body of knowledge within the field. Once again, Wan et al. (2022) follow this disciplinary

convention, establishing credibility with other scholars within their field and aspiring scholars in the form of students.

The researchers use strong appeals to logos by using statistically driven empirical evidence which includes functional neuroimaging techniques, heritability analyses, and correlation analyses. The concepts presented in the paper are logically presented and grouped by species. The initial presentation of humans, followed by macaque monkeys, and lastly by a comparison between the two groups, allows the audience to establish connections and comparisons between the two species on their own, prior to being presented with the findings correlating the two. This strategy allows researchers in the field to ask questions about the subject matter in advance of being directed to examine a specific subset of evidence. This structural choice made by the authors is beneficial to the research community because it inspires audience members to generate novel ideas. As noted by MacDonald (2010), science is a discipline with compact problems, and the structure of this article allows the audience to produce narrowly focused solutions as well as further questions.

A strong appeal to logos is complimented by a variety of appeals to ethos. The inclusion of seven authors collaborating internationally indicates a high degree

of authority on the subject matter. This collaboration maximizes the review of each author's work by their contemporaries, and thus increases credibility as there is a decreased risk of errors approved by the researchers. Additionally, the style of writing in this paper commands respect from its audience using insider language. While insider language excludes interaction with members of the public, it increases the authors' credibility within their field of research. As the intended audience of this article is other scholars within the field and aspiring scholars in the form of students, the choice to exclude members of the public by using insider language is beneficial regarding establishing authority as a researcher.

Like many scientific publications, the authors use an extremely minimal appeal to pathos in the introduction and body of the work. However, despite this convention, there is room for the authors to evoke hopefulness in students and researchers interested in continuing work in the field. The use of a formal tone in journal articles is traditionally necessary to maintain credibility in the academic community, but a lack of emotional appeal diminishes the extent to which the audience engages with the work. As a concluding statement, it may be beneficial for the authors to emphasize how an improved understanding of the human brain is extremely important for not only establishing the groundwork for new development

and technologies in neuroscience, but also for understanding the evolutionary past of humankind. A lack of appeal to pathos in this area leaves the audience with a monotonous concluding statement, which does not entice the reader to continue exploring new developments in the field, or to contribute their own unique thoughts on the subject matter.

Wan et al. (2022) follow the traditional disciplinary conventions within the sciences and present their research in a logical manner that allows for the generation of novel ideas by their audience and continues the discourse in their specific area of research. While their ideas are communicated effectively with strong credibility, their adherence to the traditionally rigid and formal structure of scientific writing forces them to fall short of conveying the importance of their findings, which could be achieved through a non-traditional appeal to emotion.

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## Bill Burr's *Paper Tiger* and Combating Toxic Masculinity

*Saleh Bashirinia*

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***Saleh Bashirinia*** is a final year Rhetoric and Filmmaking double major with a passion for words. As an international student from Iran, he wants to use his experiences and his art to dive deeper into issues involving masculinity and feminism that plague Iranian culture as well as the Middle East.

“There are reasons to hit a woman” Bill Burr claims in his 2012 comedy special (2012a). A renowned comedian known for his provocative act, Bill Burr’s unique style and outlandish comedy uses strong language to hold a mirror up to society and force his audience to think critically about their beliefs. *Paper Tiger* builds on his first special, an equally provocative and controversial stand-up special (Burr, 2019a). At first glance, Bill Burr comes across as a provocateur who rants outrageously and makes politically incorrect statements in the hopes of getting a reaction. However, a thorough analysis of his special *Paper Tiger* reveals a deeper and substantial message that provides in-depth social commentary. Burr, who

identifies as a liberal, uses comedy to target both sides of the political spectrum and takes aim at extremists (Burr 2012b). He mocks the idea of Donald Trump's border wall and his inexperience as well as Hilary Clinton's ineffectiveness as a politician (Team Coco, 2016). In doing so, he exposes the absurdity of political tribalism and encourages his audience to think beyond their own beliefs. It is important to note that Burr's comedy is not intended to be taken at face value. Rather, he uses humour as a tool to provoke thought and encourage critical thinking. Burr's jokes often rely on absurdity and exaggeration to highlight the hypocrisy and flaws of society, and his use of strong language is a deliberate choice to shock and challenge his audience. The angry man persona and aggression are a satirical critique of himself, and people like him. His delivery often subverts the audience's expectations, and he often makes himself the punchline of the joke. The comments on hitting women are meant to reflect the difference between reason and action as he further elaborates that some women, just like men, can be annoying and worthy of getting hit although a polite society should never do it. In *Paper Tiger*, Bill Burr uses the same angry man persona and provocative language in a significant way to comment on toxic masculinity and the issues with feminism. He plays on existing stereotypes

present among men and women, and makes observations that reflect the nature of society.

The title of the special provides valuable insight into both the message of the stand-up special, as well as the persona of Bill Burr during the show. A paper tiger, according to Websters Dictionary (n.d.), means something that seems threatening and dangerous but is frail and weak. The common angry man comic trope uses small day-to-day annoyances for their rants to satirize the aggression that some people have (Smith, 2018, p. 125). Jerry Seinfeld, commercially the most successful comedian of all time, made his career with a play on the angry man persona by ranting and making observations about things from airplane food to long bank lines (Wilkinson, 2019). Burr, like other comedians such as George Carlin and Lenny Bruce, focuses his rants on important issues that his audience will have strong feelings about. Burr, however, challenges the audience as opposed to people his audience tends to dislike and disagree with. Where Carlin focused his material on conservatives and championing minority issues, Burr stays unpredictable and uses himself as a tool to reflect the absurdities of the positions he is taking.



In his special, he takes aim at White feminists and performance activism while acknowledging his privileges as a White male in the United States. The persona in stand-up comedy is based on experiences that the comic has had and how those experiences shaped him (Chattoo & Feldman, 2020, p. 71). Burr's experiences as a White man prevent him from engaging in jokes about minority issues. Many stand-up comedians, especially ones that tend to stray toward the controversial, are accused of targeting those that lack power in society or "punching down" (Linttot, 2020, p. 617). Burr on the other hand does the opposite. The premises of his jokes are always about his own experiences and privileges with the punchline being his own personal issues with society.

The context and delivery of jokes in stand-up are as important as the material itself when analyzing the deeper meaning behind the stand-up comic. (Mintz, 1985, p. 73). Burr's claim that being a White woman is slightly worse than being a White man, acknowledges his privilege living as a White man while also allowing the audience to think about minority women who have particularly difficult lives. It provides a blunt social critique of society and feminist issues. He continues by criticizing the #MeToo movement and the racism within it, citing that Black women had been trying to expose the harassment issues in Hollywood for

years to no avail. He also likens male feminism to him joining the Black Panthers and the irony of male feminism. Acknowledging that while men might empathize with the feminist movement, they will never understand their plight as they do not have to live with the same issues faced by People of Colour or women.

Burr's body language throughout the special is truly worth noting. His relaxed posture, complete with a wide, ear-to-ear grin, serves as a means of putting the audience at ease and signalling that they should not take his words to heart. By maintaining such a demeanour, he effectively communicates that his primary role as a comedian is to entertain and make people laugh, rather than to deliver hard truths or incite controversy. In addition to his inviting posture, Burr's tendency to break out in laughter during his performance further emphasizes this light-hearted atmosphere. These instances of spontaneous laughter not only showcase his amusement at the jokes he's sharing, but also serve as a reminder for the audience that the material being presented is meant to be humorous, rather than a source of offence or agitation. Burr's body language and tone throughout the special play a crucial role in keeping the audience engaged, relaxed, and eager to laugh along with him. One-way comedians hook their audience and keep them engaged is by subverting their expectations and keeping them guessing (Sankey, 1998, p. 28). Bill

Burr is the master of this form of stand-up, and it is very evident in his segment in *Paper Tiger* about watching a documentary on Elvis with his wife. He discusses the difference between him watching the documentary as a White man compared to his wife watching it as a Black woman. While jokes are made about his wife being outraged at the appropriation of Black culture, the longer punchline is about his shortcomings as a person. He acknowledges that all his wife's points were valid, but as a professional comedian, his mind has been warped to find the humour in every situation. The setup of the joke hinted that the punchline would be his wife's outrage, however the humour comes from the outrageousness of his inability to control what he says and allow his wife to have the last word. The strength of his comedy lies in its ability to reveal the nuances and complexities of these issues. When discussing his anger issues, he provides a glimpse into his life and his desire to want to change for his daughter. By using an exaggerated and absurd scenario, Burr softens the blow of his critique while still conveying his perspective.

Burr has a special relationship with his audience. His relatable style that his audience has become accustomed to is a vessel that allows for reflection and introspection. The stand-up comic's main tool is showing the audience their inadequacies and commenting on them (Smith, 2018, p. 109). Buried beneath his

rhetoric and loud delivery is the self-deprecating persona that many comedians employ, and in *Paper Tiger* he takes that character to new heights. By poking fun at himself, Burr humanizes his persona, fostering a connection with the audience and ensuring their receptiveness to his thought-provoking commentary. Arguably the most impactful segment Burr performs is his final bit about his dog. In a heartbreaking bit, Burr explains how his family dog had to be returned to the pound as it was not a suitable pet for a newborn. He uses exaggeration about his dog's behaviour to offset the serious and sad nature of the joke. Burr uses this joke to explore the difference between a man's and a woman's experience with grief, claiming that his wife let her emotions out and cried appropriately before the dog was given away. He on the other hand bottled up his emotions and lived in denial until the last moment. The joke here is not the fact that his wife was overly emotional but rather that he, like most male members of his audience, does not process the emotions he has for something he loved in a healthy manner. Burr says in his special:

“And she popped her head up, and I saw her wagging her  
fucking tail, and all of a sudden, eight years of conditional love  
all started bubbling up, and I was like, “Oh, fuck, not now! Not

now!” So, I just pushed it down. [grunts] I just walked at her like some weird game show host. “Hey, how are you? I’m smiling for no reason, all right? Now we’re going for a walk. I’m just gonna say what we’re doing so I don’t think about what I’m feeling.” And I just walked out, handed the leash to the new owner, pet her on the head, didn’t even look her in the eye, ’cause I knew I couldn’t, and just turned around and walked away from something that I had loved more than I had loved anything in my life up to that point. Don’t tell my wife...and I couldn’t help but wonder in that moment who that I love in my life is gonna pay for that in the future. [laughter] Like, where am I gonna be? Family reunion, Bed Bath & Beyond...”

(2019a)

This brings the joke back to his earlier metaphor about the shelf of anger that every man has in their chest. The bottling of emotions and lashing out at people is something that is attributed to toxic masculinity and is experienced by many men (Johnson, 2020). Burr highlights these issues with his own experiences and once again makes himself the punchline of the joke, acknowledging that his way of

processing the loss of his dog is incorrect. The audience relates to him, and the humour is found with the outrageous lashing out at his wife for no reason. Like most of his jokes, the comedy comes from the outrageous nature of his interactions with his wife.

At first glance, Bill Burr's comedy special might appear to be just another contemporary comedian ranting about cancel culture and the so-called "woke left." However, upon closer examination, the deeper meaning behind his jokes becomes apparent. While provocative and controversial, Burr's humour makes incisive observations about the nature of men and the issue of toxic masculinity. Using his comedic prowess, he undercuts the gravity of these subjects, distinguishing himself from other comedians who might lean into similar themes but rather than painting himself as the hero of his special, Burr embraces his own flawed understanding in the stories he shares, encouraging the audience not to like or agree with him, but to question their own beliefs. By doing so, he invites viewers to uncover the humour within these introspective moments, ultimately providing an engaging and thought-provoking comedic experience.

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# Decolonizing How We Educate

*Precious Gauthier*

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The teaching methods in educational institutions come from the same colonial structures that perpetrated heinous crimes on countless Black people. In Atla Jablow's 1963 dissertation, she explains Britain's influence on how the western world sees Africa. The influence of British representation transferred into many institutions, but arguably the most harmful is the educational institution. These images in education travel up from preschool to academia and then bleed out into various industries.

Literature is a staple in all forms of education and the workforce. We first begin reading stories with our parents, which is right before bed for many families. Bedtime stories help develop

## ***Precious Gauthier***

*is working on completing two degrees in Biology and English with a minor in Rhetoric. She was the first to graduate high school in her family, and now will be the first to complete a degree. Precious has decided to pursue an education to give her family a better life and to be an example for following your dreams.*

literacy skills in institutional and educational environments. For example, *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* (1837) or *Jack and the Beanstalk* (1734) are noted by several sources as two very popular bedtime stories used in Canada and the United States. While they may be silly and fun on the surface, these stories also establish a harmful precedent that it is reasonable for a young, blonde, White person to come into your home and steal from you and, with Jack, kill you if you oppose. This idea may seem farfetched, but with the information to follow, I believe it can be interpreted as the introduction of colonial brainwashing for both Black and non-Black children. If you see images of people who look like you, who are allowed to kill and steal from others, it makes it easier to feel superior to those who are different than you. In elementary, based on the teacher's top lists found on the Scholastic site, the books read in the classroom often depict a White main character. Then as you get a bit older, the popular titles are *The Hobbit*, *Harry Potter*, and *The Hunger Games*, which lack real diversity. This representation creates a situation where White becomes the standard identity.

The limited options throughout elementary to secondary education occur because of two reasons. First, a lack of diversity in the literature being used to teach and second, because of who are in the positions that teach literature in education. A

Washington Post article states that numerous non-White students in Canada and United States do not have the opportunity to be taught by an educator of the same race as themselves. This is a deficit we see in post-secondary environments as well. People of Colour, for lack of a better term, were not considered when the curriculum was developed because these institutions were designed to brainwash the people of colonized communities. This brainwashing is often done by what colonial studies scholars label as agents, which are people used to teach colonized philosophies to their communities to maintain colonized peoples' false or negative beliefs.

We see this in multiple areas of academia. For example, Chinua Achebe discusses Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* in a 2016 literature review as a staple in commonly studied fictional literature, which depicts Black people as inferior, cannibalistic beasts. Likewise, in research, medical students are taught that Black skin is thicker, stating they have an increased pain tolerance. Researcher Richard Hoffman confirms in a 2016 article that this has no scientific basis and can only be traced back to chattel slavery, where enslavers used the idea to justify horrific medical experimentation on Black bodies. Thus, biases are solidified before people

enter the workforce, and ideologies with biased or false bases are created by the deficit of Black literature in educational environments.

The Hechinger Report and Boston Consulting Group calculate that 7% of educators in the United States and 1.8 % of Canadian educators are Black. The lack of Black educators thus aids in compounding untrue philosophies about Black people and their culture, generating Black learners with incorrect self-perceptions. In many colonized countries, people write about images of lands they have never seen because their educators are also their oppressors. For example, Chimamanda Adichie discusses *The Danger of a Single Story* in her 2009 Ted Talk. She highlights how growing up in Nigeria, she wrote about snow, something she had never seen. Those were not her experiences, but ideas she developed because of the literature her educators used to teach. In a 2004 article, Milner and Howard discuss that students would have increased educational success with more Black educators. This success would occur because classroom management would change as fewer children would be reprimanded, resulting in decreased suspension and expulsion. More long-term relationships would be developed due to cultural similarities, leading to mentorship and expanded professional networks. More understanding and relatable relationships would grow with the parents of students, and educators

would advocate for their students based on firsthand experiences of being racialized.

Adichie also highlights how society is willing to believe the horrible or stereotyped ideas about Black people while simultaneously seeing only the good or, in some situations excusing away the bad, with White people. Current public examples of this are Will Smith and Donald Trump. Both men are highly recognizable in the public eye. When Will Smith made a poor decision, there were think pieces, and he was blacklisted, losing movie deals with Netflix's *Sequel to Bright*, and he was banned from numerous events, including the Oscars, for the next ten years. Whereas Donald Trump was noted by the Washington Post for making fun of a reporter with a disability, by Global News for calling countries in Africa “shitholes,” and most recently reported by CNN as publicly endorsing Mary Miller at a "Save America" rally, where she said the overturn of *Roe v. Wade* was a "historic victory for White life," all without any real consequence. To make fundamental changes, we must have a society that is actively working towards being inclusive and anti-racist.

Psychologists Stone and Moscovitz believe that with workshops, people can become conscious of their biases and make decisions that help prevent continued harmful behaviours for people who are unintentionally biased against Black people. Still, they cannot be eradicated because the development of these tactics is so deeply ingrained in society.

# Ted Bundy: The Invention of the New Face of Serial Killers

*Chris Japit*

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Arguably America's most notorious serial killer, Ted Bundy was executed by the electric chair on January 24th, 1989. What set Bundy apart from other serial killers wasn't the amount of people that died at his hands, but rather his use of fabricated charm and intellect to sway public opinion. Many believed that Bundy "just [didn't] look like the type to kill somebody" (Archive News Footage, Ted Bundy trial groupies, 01:00). This was no accident – it was a direct result of Bundy's manipulation of proofs. In this essay, I will apply a Neo-Aristotelianism framework, specifically the canon of Invention, to Ted Bundy. I will examine how Bundy exploited proofs, both the ones he created and the ones granted

to him. By examining Bundy's interactions with his victims, the media, and greater society, I will explore how someone's privilege — in this case, race and socioeconomic class — gives them the benefit of the doubt: the presumption of innocence even in the face of damning evidence.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation categorises serial murderers into two categories: organized or disorganized (Robert Worley, 00:01). Put simply, organized killers plan their offences, while disorganized killers do not. Organized serial killers are typically of average to high intelligence, possess good social skills, and are more likely to hold skilled jobs than disorganized offenders (Canter et al. 293). Ted Bundy was known to be intelligent and charismatic, having not only attended law school but also having worked for former Governor Albert Rosellini (Rule 64). Because of this experience, Bundy was familiar with the ways in which politicians convinced audiences. Since Invention is particularly useful when analyzing the aforementioned technique, I found it worthwhile to also apply it to Ted Bundy who was influenced by and learned from politicians' signature craft. In my argument, I will focus my efforts on ethos and pathos to further emphasise how Bundy manipulated his public perception.



## **Introduction to Invention**

First realised in the fifth century BCE, ethos and pathos were used to teach Athenians the art of persuasive speech to better navigate a newly democratic-based society (Keith and Lundberg, 5). Greek philosopher Aristotle, credited with being the first Rhetorical theorist, thought the art of persuasive speech to be one that could have a coherent system of its own for classification, study, and interpretation (6). This led him to develop rhetoric's five canons — Invention, Organization, Style, Memory, and Delivery (Foss 25). I will centre my efforts on the canon of Invention, focusing on the major ideas, lines of argument, and/or content of an artefact.

Invention comprises two major forms of proof: artificial and inartificial (26). These two forms can be further narrowed down into three categories, which Aristotle classified as logos, ethos, and pathos (Keith and Lundberg, 5). For the scope of this paper, I will only define ethos and pathos. Ethos is the building of credibility as it plays on the logic that we as humans trust who we perceive as good people (Sandys 6). Pathos refers to the element in an experience that makes one feel compassion, pity, or sympathy (Merriam-Webster). Pathos is interesting in that the audience themselves are the vessel of proof. It is the audience that will comprehend and judge

an artefact based upon their emotions (Sandys 6). However, pathos can be manipulated and fabricated, often through the art of acting.

### **Pursuing Powers**

As previously stated, organised killers plan their offences and many stalk their victims. In the case of Ted Bundy, his victims were almost always “young females with dark shoulder-length hair, parted in the middle” (Hickey 68). Bundy’s obsession for such women stemmed from his inability to healthily regulate his emotions after a former girlfriend, by the name of Diane Edwards, broke up with him (Rule 700). From this point on, Bundy used specific techniques to lure in women who fit his desired ‘type’. In his early days, Bundy would often wear a cast on his arm or walk with crutches to appear weaker, playing to the victims' pathos (Hickey 68). Bundy exploited the pity that he evoked by appearing injured and weak, luring victims into a false sense of security before bludgeoning them unconscious. Furthermore, Bundy often told victims that he had hurt his arm skiing. At the time, skiing was a sport primarily enjoyed by affluent members of society. By using this sport in his lie, Bundy was creating ethos, by appearing more well-off (The Infographics Show, “Ted Bundy’s Creepy Methods for Luring in His Victims,” 07:39). Bundy exploited the assumption that someone of higher socioeconomic class

and status was not capable of harm, which in turn lowered the guards of his victims. It is evident that when luring his victims, Bundy was highly effective at creating and exploiting pathos and ethos.

### **Media Manipulation**

Ted Bundy's use of pathos and ethos extended beyond his ability to lure victims. From the reading of his indictment to acting as his own defense in court, Bundy not only created proofs for himself but heavily benefitted from inartificial proofs as well. As a member of the first nationally televised trial, Bundy did what he did best: acted. It was at this time that Bundy gained a significant following. In an attempt to humiliate him, Leon County Sheriff Ken Katsaris held a public reading of the indictment of Bundy. Within a few minutes of being placed in front of the media, Bundy was able to flip the dynamic; he saw the opportunity to speak to the masses and took it. Bundy spent the little time he had in front of the media emphasising the fact that he was being silenced and implied that Sheriff Katsaris and his team were stripping him of his rights. By doing so, Bundy was yet again attempting to influence the way in which people viewed him. By claiming that he was being silenced and mistreated, he invoked pity, once again leveraging pathos from his audience ("Raw Unedited Full Ted Bundy Indictment Reading (See Descrip for Credit)").

Additionally, Bundy infamously fired his head counsel and acted as his own lawyer during his trials (Rule 396-596). In doing so, he exuded confidence. This confidence in his knowledge of the law built credibility, and in turn, created ethos. Moreover, his confidence brought forward a sense of sincerity that built pathos in the form of trustworthiness and admiration in the eyes of his audience. This feat was bolstered by him being a middle-aged white man in the 1970s, a time when the United States had just left the Jim Crow era.

Importantly, choosing to represent himself also meant that Bundy was free to dress however he liked. To create ethos, he always made sure to appear well-dressed in a suit and tie, making himself appear professional and respectable. Furthermore, newspaper articles about him often reminded readers of his law and political background. For example, one newspaper wrote: “a former University of Utah law student and one-time worker for the Republican Party in Washington, Bundy was extradited from Utah to stand trial here” (“Bundy Left Alone in Aspen Courtroom, Leaps Out Window, Escapes Into Hills”). Articles like this boosted Bundy’s credibility as an intelligent and outstanding member of society. This misrepresented the fact that not only did Bundy not finish law school, but his second application to law school was only accepted because he bombarded the administration with letters

of recommendation from professors and then Governor Dan Evans (Rule 69). Regardless of the media's claims regarding Bundy's academic and professional history, Ted still made claims that the media and newspapers were against him ("Ted Bundy's 1979 Chi Omega Trial – Bundy Addresses the Court During Sentencing in Miami: ABC Video Source: Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming: Internet Archive" 00:03). This reinforced the idea that Bundy was a victim, therefore playing to pathos and garnering pity for himself.

### **Discreet Discrimination**

Despite having his name submitted to the police numerous times and losing his composure in court on several occasions, Bundy still leveraged support from the public due to his identity as a white man. Bundy's whiteness was a key aid in luring in his victims and by gaining a following even after being convicted. His whiteness provided him with an amount of credibility that someone of a different race could not have leveraged in that time period. Even his perception as an attractive man was caused by beauty standards, which are very much based on white people (Sekayi). Hence, while not obvious, the public's perception of Bundy as attractive and intelligent was inadvertently because of his whiteness.

Ted Bundy did not need to create these proofs – he was granted them. If Ted Bundy had been a black man, he would not have been successful in luring as many women as he did. He would not have gotten quite the following as he did and would have received an entirely different media representation. The advantages of having white skin in a systemically racist country led Ted Bundy to his short-lived success and helped him in creating ethos and pathos.

### **Conclusion**

The ways in which Bundy benefitted from inartificial proofs was nothing short of racist and classist. In this essay, I have shown the ways in which Bundy was able to exploit the use of Invention to lure victims, evade police, and defend himself. His most insidious forms of manipulation were not through the proofs he created, but rather through the ones he did not. The research and criticism conducted in this paper have shown how someone's privilege can provide them with the presumption of innocence. Although Ted Bundy was found guilty and sentenced to death in the end, his identity and manipulation of ethos and pathos granted him privileges and public sway that would not have been given to someone of a different race or identity. Ted Bundy invented the new face of serial killers. As it turns out, serial killers can look like that.

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# Let's Move: Toward Fat Liberation

*Thea Ferraton*

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“She’s so fat that they are trying to kill her,” anonymous author, Kelly, writes in a small publication called *Common Lives/Lesbian Lives* in 1981 (35). In their five-page contribution, Kelly explores all the ways that fat women are oppressed because they are *just so fat*. The list spans from how weight-based oppression shows up in a fat woman’s personal life, romantic life, and mental health. As well as the impact of the popular media she sees, the doctor’s appointments she attends and eventually, even, in her death (Kelly 32-36). Anti-fat sentiments are “impervious;” they penetrate and infiltrate every aspect of our lives, including any type of rhetorical artifact (Wann xxi). Sometimes these ideologies are obvious, such as when artifacts use the words

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“overweight” or “obese.” According to author Marilyn Wann, these terms are “inherently anti-fat” because they deny the existence of a naturally occurring “bell-curve distribution of human weights” (xii). What happens when artifacts don’t explicitly use these controversial words? Are dominant ideologies still being reinforced? Such is the case in a peculiar anti-obesity ad from 2013.

In 2010, Disney announced their “Magic of Healthy Living” campaign in collaboration with the White House’s “Let’s Move” anti-obesity campaign. Michelle Obama explained that through the joint initiative, the “Let’s Move” goal of eradicating childhood obesity can be brought “directly to kids— the key stakeholders in this effort” ([thewaltdisneycompany.com](http://thewaltdisneycompany.com)). While the “Magic of Healthy Living” campaign made a host of public service announcements, one ad is of particular interest. In 2013, Disney created an English language advertisement promoting the program starring Michelle Obama as well as a slew of their teen stars, most notably Nick Jonas. In the ad, Michelle Obama stands in the middle of a sound stage, with Nick Jonas on the audience’s left and Brenda Song on their right. Another handful of Disney Channel stars stand behind them in clusters on either side. Nick and Brenda each take turns explaining different aspects of healthy living, physical activity, and diet respectively. Michelle Obama also has a line of dialogue

where she claims that these healthy habits are easy to establish. Then, Brenda Song tells the audience to stay tuned for some healthy living tips. The ad ends with Michelle Obama saying “America” with a purposeful pause and then all the other stars in the background run up into the foreground and yell, “let’s get healthy together!” accompanied by a round of applause and cheering (iSpot.tv). By using ideological criticism, I intend to reveal how the "Magic of Healthy Living" ad campaign constructs fatness and maintains dominant ideology about body size. By illuminating such ideology, I hope to prove how anti-fat sentiments can covertly be produced and reproduced as well as raise important questions about the ramifications of such ideology. I will analyze how the presented and omitted elements construct fatness and how this construction is used to “create and support the dominant ideology” (Foss 297).

On the surface, this ad seems like a happy, star-studded public service announcement relaying important information to an impressionable audience. While the presented elements can give us hints into the kind of ideology presented in the artifact, it is equally as important to pay attention to the omitted elements and how these rhetorical tools work in tandem to construct fatness, as well as maintain dominant ideology about body size. The presented elements include the visibility of

thin bodies as each speaker is a thin celebrity or public figure. The omitted elements include the express use of the word “obesity” and the invisibility of fat bodies.

The ad plays into the “nonexistent fat person” trope and constructs fat people as an elusive "them" working against the thin "us" (Cosmopolitan.com). The othering of fat bodies begins with Nick Jonas’ dialogue. The presence of thin celebrities and the omission of fat people makes it clear which bodies Nick Jonas’ assertion, that exercise makes you “look better,” alludes to (iSpot.tv 0:02).

Thinness has been associated with an “improved” physical appearance, largely since the twentieth century. Starting in the 1920’s in the United States, the anti-fat and weight loss movements gained momentum (Fraser 11-14) when the diet industry was already worth ten billion dollars (Kelly 32) and, of course, today where diets and weight loss miracle cures saturate popular media. So, the ad creators were able to create a dichotomy between the people presented on screen and the one’s omitted with just one line of dialogue, but they don’t stop there. The othering continues when the ad subtly suggests that being fat is the opposite of being healthy, again by removing fat bodies from the audience’s visibility and thus the wider discussion of what health is, means, and looks like. In doing so, the ad

evokes what is known and believed about fat people in the wider culture. For example, that “four-hundred thousand” people die from fatness every year—a statistic that has since been debunked by the original researchers (Wann, xvi). Thus, this reinforces the idea that fat is contrary to “good” health. In other words, the ad essentially defines health as better than fat and, in the process, makes fat people the enemy against the “magic” of healthy living as if they are the people who are stopping America from being a healthier and more successful country (Letsmove.gov). By othering fat bodies, the ad creates a thin utopian future which reflects the “Let’s Move” goal of eradicating childhood obesity (Letsmove.gov) as well as a common trope in media. Virgie Tovar, a fat scholar, explains how “fat people are largely absent from meaningful portrayals of the future” (75). The future of America that this ad is trying to sell, one that is “stronger, looks better and feels great,” is marked by a distinct lack of fat people, as suggested by the presence of thin bodies and omittance of fat ones (iSpot.tv 0:02). Even though fat bodies are physically absent from the ad, they are still conjured up as frightful apparitions used to scare (or “inspire”) people into losing weight. Per this construction of fat people as an elusive enemy and something to be left in the past, the ad mainly reproduces two dominant ideologies: the ideas that weight loss is possible for all as

well as a noble pursuit and that fatness is unattractive (Wann ix). Suggesting that fatness opposes health certainly maintains the dominant ideology that fat people should strive to lose weight specifically in the pursuit of health. However, the ad also maintains that fat people should lose weight to be more physically attractive or “look better” (iSpot.tv 0:02). All the celebrities are thin and conventionally beautiful which tells the audience that “getting healthy” is “easier than you think” (iSpot.tv 0:13). Concern for fat people’s health is often used as a “smokescreen” to hide what people *actually* want to address: how fat people look (Kelly 34). When I started analyzing this ad, all I could think was: what does “looking better” have to do with health? Is there any aspect of health that has anything to do with someone’s attractiveness? The answer, of course, is no; no part of health is dependent on someone’s appearance. The issue is that you can’t have an ad about fatness and health without bringing up their appearance—the two are intrinsically linked—even if biologically they are not correlated at all. Even “noble” public service announcements about the health of a nation can’t avoid calling fat people ugly; that’s how dominant the ideology is. It’s imperative to note that the maintenance of these ideologies only functions by first excluding fat people from the meaningful life the ad is selling. Such ideologies rest on the very notion that the future can,

should, and will be without fat, for reasons of health and/or attractiveness, and the belief that fat lives are not worth living (Wann xxi). So, even though words like “obesity” and “overweight” are left out of this ad, the same ideas of eradicating fatness and giving us a future that is “one hundred percent fat free” are still produced, reproduced, and transferred to the audience (Wann xxi).

This analysis leaves me wondering what the ramifications of perpetuating dominant ideology about body size are. Weight-discrimination goes well beyond not being able to find clothing in fast fashion stores; it, unfortunately, reaches all aspects of fat life. Fikkan & Rothblum found that weight discrimination negatively affected fat people in romantic relationships, the workplace, education, the media, as well as the medical field (587-588). At school, fat children are “lonelier, more worried about school and their futures and face greater ridicule from gym teachers” (Wann ix). These messages are so strong that fat people, especially women, will risk their lives to lose as much weight as possible—this includes getting surgeries with deadly risks like intestinal by-pass and gastric stapling (Kelly 35). Wann reports that researchers have admitted that weight-based discrimination in the medical sector and “barriers to care” potentially “exacerbate or even account for some of the increased health risks correlated with higher weights” (xxi).

Furthermore, Kelly writes about a small Italian American community where the bodily norm was to be fat, and where their rates of heart disease were “lower than the national American average” (34). When some of these members, specifically the women, left the community, their risk of heart disease increased to the average. It wasn’t because they were fat; it was because they received anti-fat messages and subsequently began dieting for the first time in their lives (Kelly 34). Anti-fat sentiments also infiltrate the inner world of fat people. Laura Beck describes as a child genuinely believing that one day she would “magically become skinny” because “that was obviously the only non-awful way to exist in the world” (Cosmopolitan.com). Amanda Kate Richards of the newsletter “Fat Hell” explains how hard it is to have “the shitty little reminder that the lifelong experience of my own physicality is very regularly included in a list of traumas, trials and tribulations” and exemplifies failure in the North American cultural zeitgeist (how fat feels). As Wann notes, “there is no nice, un-stigmatizing way to wish that fat people did not eat or exist” (xvii). Non-fat people are at risk too. Wann found that average sized school-aged children and teenagers who fear being fat or not being the “right weight” are “more likely to contemplate or attempt suicide” as well as develop troubled relationships with food, exercise, and steroids (Wann ix). These



public service announcements, no matter how they are packaged, aid in reinforcing these ideologies and creep into fat and non-fat lives.

While the construction of fatness and resulting maintenance of dominant ideologies about body size are subtle in this artifact, and one's like it, they have real, material consequences on fat and non-fat people alike. This makes them just as dangerous as artifacts that use grotesque depictions of fat physicality or before-and-after photos. This revelation may leave readers feeling like the future is hopeless and like the world may never move past debunked statistics and fat hate. It may leave readers wondering why: Why is our culture obsessed with thinness? Why do we risk our lives to pinch and poke ourselves into thin bodies? Fortunately, these questions don't have to go unanswered. In the last forty years, fat liberation and the academic discipline of fat studies have grown. Scholars from across many disciplines are making important contributions to this new body of work such as feminist scholars like Virgie Tovar to intersectional scholars like Sabrina Strings. This critique is but one drop in a rapidly filling bucket full of articles, essays, zines, books, an academic journal, newsletters, and podcasts. All of which are trying to find answers to the often misunderstood and underrepresented bodily reality of fatness. These social and scholarly pursuits provide us with a breadth of knowledge

and critical tools to guide us in questioning “the very questions that surround fatness” (Rothblum & Solovay 2). The fat revolution strives for a future one hundred percent saturated in fat, in joy, in diverse bodies living, and existing without restriction. Through the thicket of dominant ideology, telling us our bodies don’t count, and treating them as nothing more than cannon fodder in the war against obesity, liberation can be hard to find. It’s there, though. There’s a little community bubbling under the service ready to emerge and to build a future where diverse bodies are celebrated, valued, and cared for. Wann says that “weight discrimination will continue to thrive so long as efforts to end it focus on changing people’s bodies rather than changing people’s minds” (xviii). Fat liberation is ready to change minds; how about you?

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# Back on the Market: Tinder Analysis

Toni De Guzman

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***Toni De Guzman*** is a 20-year-old student at the University of Winnipeg, majoring in Creative Communications. She loves to travel and take photos on her film camera for every vacation. She enjoys baking, basketball, and playing the piano. One of her favorite qualities about herself is her ambition. Toni is passionate about her future career as a news reporter.

Is it coincidental that the phrase being “back on the market” pertains to products being available for sale? This term is also used from a relationship point of view, meaning that one is available to build new romantic relationships. This essay will analyze the dating market platform Tinder. As technology and communication develops, visuals are increasingly being shared and encouraged. People have become visually expressive to the point where users are willingly commodifying themselves on dating platforms. This essay will focus on the advertisements in the application, users’ motivation and goals, and self-presentation.

To fully understand the concepts, Weiser et al. (2018) explains how Tinder functions:

[I]t is a mobile phone dating app designed to introduce individuals within a proximal geographic area. There are approximately 50 million active Tinder users, and the average user accesses the app 11 times a day (Bilton, 2014). Roughly 60% of Tinder users are men and most users are under the age of 34 (McGrath, 2015). Tinder uses the GPS feature of the user's mobile phone to show nearby eligible partners' profiles. When users are interested in someone, they anonymously swipe to the right on their phone; when they are not interested in someone, they swipe to the left. When two people swipe right for each other, they are considered matched and are now able to communicate with one another. (p. 29)

### **Methodology**

I created an account with Tinder using fake photos on the internet that did not showcase an individual's face I included two mirror pictures focusing on the individual's body, and a photo of a cat to appeal to people. In a four-week time frame, the procedure was to log on every day and swipe right on the first ten people, regardless of their gender. This took less than 10 minutes a day. No decision was made regarding who to swipe right or left on, for the sake of being consistent. Through this procedure, I was able to determine the average matches per week on an

appearance focused account. On average, the account received 7.5 matches out of 10 people, I observed that being a woman who curates her photos to fit the male gaze and flaunt her body is more successful on Tinder. To supplement my ideas, I will be using the uses and gratifications theory, and the male gaze.

### **Advertisements**

Within the first few minutes of being on the platform, Tinder advertised different types of subscriptions. The advertisements appear as an account, and the user can swipe left or right to dismiss them. According to the Tinder subscription page (n.d.), different packages could offer unlimited likes, unlimited rewinds, ability to change location, hide advertisements, five super likes a week, see who likes you, new top picks every day, message before matching, prioritized likes, and see the likes you have sent in the last seven days.

### **Motivations and Goals**

Everyone's motivations to upgrade their account may differ. The ability to have different liking features increases matches, resulting in more love interests. Having the ability to change location may be convenient for others who travel often and would like to connect with others in places they are visiting short term. The app is straightforward, users can display the type of relationship they are looking for on

their profile. These could be long term, short term, new friends, still figuring out, or a variety of these selections. There are “six motivations to use Tinder: Love, Casual Sex, Ease of Communication, Self-Worth, Validation, Thrill of Excitement, and Trendiness” (Sumter et al., 2017, p. 67).

The users and gratifications theory highlights that “individuals use certain types of mass media to fulfill specific needs and desires” (Sumter et al., 2017, p. 68). In the beginning, users could be using the app to find new partners, although subliminally, the sense of validation and belonging is what they crave. Truthfully, although the pictures were not of myself, I felt a sense of validation and belonging from all the likes. It almost reminds me of the honeymoon phase when talking to a new person of interest. Timmermans & De Caluwé (2017) explain that “several participants described Tinder as an ‘ego-booster’ or a ‘self-confidence’ booster. The platform has a large market, and users are not limited to communicating with one person at a time. Multiple matches and interactions are made daily. This amplifies the external validation due to how many sources a user can receive validation from.

The thrill can be tempting: “[S]everal international academic studies on Tinder use indicate that between 18 and 25% of participants reported being in a committed relationship while using Tinder” (Timmermans et al., 2018, p. 129). I

heard several stories from my friends who have been on the application that recognize someone they know who has a significant other on the app. Timmermans et al. (2018) adds that “the swiping process is addictive because of the potential for a match, which is rewarding for the user and boosts the ego” (p. 130).

### **Self-Presentation**

Strubel & Petrie (2017) mention:

SNS’s [Social Network Services] effects on body image and psychosocial functioning, however, may be particularly pernicious because (a) photos are essential to personal narrative development, (b) information/images are public and may be evaluated 24/7, and (c) individuals make peer comparisons, becoming aware of their relative attractiveness. (p. 34)

Tinder’s promotion of the visual based world, makes society superficial and vain. Strubel & Petrie (2017) add, “Tinder users review profiles (primarily photos) and either ‘swipe right’ (like the profile) or ‘swipe left’ (reject it)” (p. 34). Users that download Tinder have different purposes. Tinder is a visual app, and to succeed users must showcase themselves for different reasons and different types of appeal. This is the purpose and nature of the application; users are willingly letting themselves be objectified and are objectifying others.



Photos are essential to personal narratives, yet various profiles I saw of women included provocatively posed images of solely their bodies (sometimes not including their faces) — making it highly apparent they are aiming to-add a sexual appeal to their profile. Has our society become so vain that we only rely on physical features and sex appeal? The effect of the male gaze is tremendously apparent in how most female users decide the types of photos they highlight on their account. Some women on the application post these photos to appeal to their viewers, resulting in acquiring more likes. I found that my fake account got more likes from the male audience based on the type of appeal the photos gave. Strubel & Petrie (2017) mention that “although being ‘liked’ can validate worth and/or feed narcissistic tendencies, the scrutiny and evaluation that defines Tinder use is an objectifying process that may increase body consciousness and psychological distress” (p. 34). I observed that Tinder uses are driven by appearance. To become successful, the photos need to attract others. The key to succeed in this application requires matches (people liking your profile), because only then can users message one another.

### **Conclusion**

People may download Tinder for different types of reasons: to find different types of relationships, for validation and sense of belonging, or for the thrill. These

users participate in a visual based application where appearance is the currency and the key to succeed. The curation of building a profile is essentially a method of attracting and marketing oneself to others. Particularly, women's photos are often tailored for the male gaze and objectification. In result of different motivations and sexualization in the app, the traditional dating ideals have been reformed and the hook-up culture has become more popular. Tinder has made users become more superficial, as people judge their partners solely on appearance and status on the platform. Users are voluntarily commodifying themselves by participating in Tinder, where the key to succeed is by curating a profile to lure and appeal to others.

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# A Future Not Very Far: The Current State of the Metaverse

*J. L. Kies*

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While the modern world as it is known now does not operate within a metaverse—an inevitable evolution of the Internet and how it maneuvers along with daily life—the destination is not as far as one may anticipate. The current state of the modern world has access to virtual domains and experiences akin to an alternate 3D reality, offering the public exploration with aspects of a future metaverse: video games, simulations, chatrooms, and even pornography. Each of these modes of virtual reality functions independently, meaning all that there is left is a digital cobweb to interconnect everything and change the human existence into a cybernetic recreation.

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The term ‘virtual reality’ stems from the definition of both words, essentially translating to ‘near-reality,’ and is “the term used to describe a three-dimensional, computer-generated environment which can be explored and interacted with by a person” (What is Virtual Reality?, 2017). This alone can refer to many things—many purposes, many activities—but most people, when prompted, will first think of the main virtual reality genre ravaging media: video games. Publicly available accessories such as the Oculus Quest and the PlayStation VR, and clips of gameplay footage appearing across social media platforms have shaped the world’s impression of virtual reality. While some individuals assumed the headsets to be gimmicky and their lifespans limited, they have continued to thrive long after their initial launch. The industry’s newest installment belongs to PlayStation, who welcomed the PSVR2 to their gaming lineup on February 22, 2023, to accompany their current entertainment console, the PlayStation 5. Its predecessor was a successful accessory, particularly for children without access to high-end computer models that other devices require, making the PS4 and its virtual reality kit much more accessible. However, the PS5 has been a different tale—supply shortages have made the machine rather infamous to retailers since its 2020 debut, and the price tag is nearly double that of the previous generation. In

addition to the lackluster library of games at this time and its nonexistence backwards compatibility with game titles released in previous years for the PSVR, “the PS5 headgear won’t even have sold 300,000 units by the end of March 2023” (Wutz, 2023), which are abysmal sales compared to the two million units produced in anticipation. A price adjustment is a likely next step now that PS5 systems are more readily available, more than two years after release, as the average consumer cannot afford to drop nearly two thousand dollars on a console and its VR set. The potential for a metaverse thrives on the idea of accessibility to the public, but technology and the state of the economy are not ready to accept that.

Assuming general affordability and ease of availability of these products, there are interesting connections to the broader Internet, such as with the existence of 3D chatrooms. In the case of *VRChat*, a game that allows ‘players’ to interact with one another and their environments, participants can converse, change their appearance and costumes, and explore environments recognizable to those of the real world. With the goal of a metaverse containing nearly all aspects of everyday life—socialization, shopping, even employment—this acts as a prototype of the overall functionality. The majority of VR experiences are game-based, allowing extended marketability of these realities as well as garnering intrigue from a wider

audience. Such ‘games’ include simulations of driving and taking on different occupations, and versions are utilized in museums—galaxies, aircraft piloting—and the workplace—low-risk training modules. Ottawa’s Canadian Museum of Nature first offered their 360-degree, oceanic VR experience of the documentary *First Life* in 2017 via Samsung Gear VR headsets, immersing visitors “in the oceans of 540 million years ago, recreated in detail by the award-winning team at ZOO VFX, as [David] Attenborough introduces some of the strange, now-extinct marine creatures that were among the first significant life forms to appear on our planet” (Pope, 2017). Combining entertainment with education is a universally successful teaching approach for children and adults alike, and exposes individuals to new interests, hobbies, and ideas in a way that would be dangerous or simply unattainable in the real world. Not everyone can train to become an astronaut in their lifetime, but anyone *can* be one within a virtual reality.

Beyond mere entertainment from games and education from simulations and training modes, virtual realities for self-satisfaction also exist. As another game-structured emulation, virtual pornography invites ‘players’ to interact with a 3D-modelled sexual partner, offering voice lines, touch-based responses, and physics that replicate motion and jiggle in people’s various fantasy scenarios. A

wider scale connection to real people has potential, with both or all participants being live instead of a programmed Artificial Intelligence, using an avatar for each party, offering a new long-distance option for people. And then, with the rise of digital sex work with platforms like OnlyFans, a VR take would not be unintelligent. Undoubtedly more immersive than viewing photographs or videos on a small screen, as accessibility increases in the future, virtual reality sex work holds the grounds to become a niche that breaks from its constraints. People would have the means of exploring kinks, desires, and new sexual activities in the safe space of a virtual world, with a body not entirely their own, without live embarrassment, judgement, or possible injury. Other technology could be a workaround for some of these aspects, however, with the implementation and slow rise of augmented reality. Instead of an alternate, computer-generated world, AR takes those ideas and brings them into the real world around someone, typically through a camera; a worldwide phenomenon example is the game *Pokémon Go*. Players use the application on their phone, which in turn utilizes the phone's camera, to see the world around them—the actual world the player sees—and incorporates characters and loot to collect, showing the distance to more items and Pokémon while forcing said players to travel physically in the room, the house, the park, the city, to obtain



and interact with new things. Although currently dependent on devices and software, the likelihood of everyday AR projections remains high, as “augmented reality is, in fact, readily available and being used in a myriad of ways including as Snapchat lenses, in apps that help you find your car in a crowded parking lot, and in variety of shopping apps that let you try on clothes without even leaving home” (What is Augmented Reality?, 2023). Now imagine, with the touch of a button or the swipe of a finger, changing how your living room looks, without the hassle of purchasing, reselling, and redecorating, and not by just adding 3D items to the space, but by changing the look of what you already have. Imagine altering the way your partner looks, so you can get into bed with a celebrity crush or even make someone—or yourself, to others—more attractive in your eyes. With a significantly lower cost to the technology, augmented reality could be the obvious stepping-stone to a bigger, more lavish metaverse, slowly transitioning from this world to a customizable world to an entirely digital universe.

As it currently stands, the potential for a metaverse in the near future is not of prospect. Too many barriers prevent the public from accessing the tools they need to make this happen, keeping products out of hands. Even if these issues were to miraculously solve sooner than later, the interconnections are still missing to

piece all the available parts together. Virtual reality video games will continue to grow in demand regardless, spanning into education and self-gratification experiences utilized by larger corporations such as workplaces, exhibits, and individuals alike. Augmented reality offers a much more accessible alternate reality to the general population and has the potential to be much more widely implemented, eventually leaning into a metaverse future not immediate but also not very far from where the Internet and technology currently reside.

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# The Station of the Translator: Toward the Ethics of Cultural Dissemination

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No discipline is immune from the insidious impact of colonial power dynamics, and the field of translation studies is no exception. This critical essay challenges the longstanding goal of translation as being “to provide [the] reader with the same image and the same pleasure as reading the work in the original language offers to the [person] educated [in that language]” (Schleiermacher and Bartscht 44). In accordance with Cronin’s rallying call of 1997 calling minority language translation the “single most important issue” of the field, this essay centers squarely on those languages that have suffered violence from the colonial and capitalist institutions bent on their

extermination (Branchadell 97). Borrowing from literary frameworks, I suggest that

for minority languages, translation activities and spaces may be reimagined as a BIPOC-lead mechanism that strengthens kinship networks, heals colonial trauma and agitates the hegemonic dominance of the majority language in multicultural spaces.

### **Changing the Target: Feeding the Right Appetite**

Written before the age of postcolonial scholarship, Benjamin's seminal essay, "The Task of the Translator," identifies the following issue: when a translator approaches a work, their interpretation and cadence will ultimately skew in favour of their native language (262). Subsequent postmodern scholars, such as Lawrence Venuti have identified this tendency as a colonial act (Hutchings 339). For Venuti, defining translation would be to define an act of "imperial appropriation" whereby a member from a colonial power initiate and oversees translation of a document originating from a colonized subordinate (41).

In literary studies, this structure would be located within the concept of cultural appropriation. Cultural appropriation (CA) has been the subject of much discussion during the past couple of years, particularly due to a large number of

scandals within the literary world. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy defines CA as the use of “cultural products” of “cultural insiders” by “cultural outsiders,” while simultaneously, outsiders attempt to assimilate and erase the identities of cultural insiders (Matthes 4.2.2). The most scandalous instances of CA involve the appropriator pretending to represent an insider group that they do not actually represent, such as the 2015 case of Michael Derrick Hudson who wrote posing as a Chinese female poet named Yi-Fen Chou (Rekdal 117). In more ambiguous instances of CA, the outsider appropriator does not literally commit identity theft, but mimics and replicates the voice from the insider group. A notable case is the poem “How-To” by Anders Carlson-Wee, in which Carlson-Wee employs African American Vernacular English (AAVE) to achieve the effect of a Black speaker, despite being a white man (Rekdal 58). This case works as a shining example of a literary application for Venuti’s translation framework. A white outsider takes curated AAVE and certain insider items of culture and ‘translates’ them into a more respectable piece that will better suit the dominant outsider majority’s tastes in an act of what Venuti might have called “ethnocentric violence” (41).

Within this framework, what are the suggestions for best practices if an

outsider still wants to write about an insider position? Venuti holds that translators should strive to make themselves visible within their translations by strategically making the text appear foreign instead of further assimilating the text under the banner of localization (Kadiu 22). Venuti does not take a position of strategic essentialism, instead implying that a multicultural reading culture can be simulated through well-meaning participants, regardless of their insider or outsider status.<sup>1</sup> Also not willing to engage with strategic essentialism, Paisley Rekdal encourages a reframing of the question. Instead of strictly defining who is and who is not allowed to commit CA, Rekdal encourages one to reflect on what appetites are being fed when they write outside the scope of their own experiences (50). For Rekdal, the vast majority of CA harm can be mitigated through the writer's increased reflexivity and better understanding of intercultural communication practices. But even if one is feeding the right appetite with their writing or translating according to Rekdal, is this model truly the best way to engage with culturally sensitive

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<sup>1</sup> Strategic essentialism is a concept first mapped out by Gayatri Spivak arguing that although racial, ethnic and linguistic essentialisms can be used to further racist ideas, sometimes their deployment is necessary for survival in social and political contexts. See Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *In Other Worlds: Essays In Cultural Politics*, Routledge, 2006.

material? Is there another way to potentially avoid any form of ‘consumption’ at all?

### **Beyond a Binary Understanding of Translator Subjects**

The issue with both Rekdal and Venuti’s frameworks is that they both address their theses to the white and outsider translator who is translating from a L2 language to English. Somehow, by implying that an insider translator would have no issue within the translation process, they do not address the long tradition of BIPOC literature that suggests an insider translator living under the conditions of a multiracial society would also struggle accessing a translating viewpoint unaffected by the twin forces of colonialism and capitalism. Building from the work of Frantz Fanon and W.E.B Du Bois, Paget Henry has argued that Blackness and colonialism is inseparable. As Black identity was forged in the shadow of conquest, each black-skinned subject inheriting a “racial double consciousness” that allows them to see “through the eyes of the white other” (Pittman 2.6). As stated at the beginning of this essay, no-one is immune from the impact of colonial power dynamics. Asian and Pacific Islander subjects assimilated into the colonial folds of North America may internalize their own set of anti-Black tenants through the Model Minority Myth (Anand and Hsu 193-194).

BIPOC understand that the premise is flawed from the start. There is no way a different language can fully convey “the same image” and “the same pleasure” from the original text as Schleiermacher once sought as the ultimate goal of translation. Inspired by Indigenous writer-scholars like Leanne Betasamosake-Simpson, Pauline Johnson and others, Metis scholar and poet Alisha Elliott reframes CA as a problem of representation. Elliott argues that the creation of diversity in literature cannot be achieved when non-white people pursue white goals using a white lens. Instead, true representation occurs when non-white people are allowed to pursue non-white goals using lenses formed by their kinship networks (Elliot 33-36). To bring Elliott into close contact with Venuti’s model of translation, Elliott would identify the moment of initiation as the most appropriative moment of the cycle and as the site where the most meaningful anti-racist intervention will be performed. The case of Indigenous languages is especially relevant for this, where the ground for the most effective advances in translation will not be mapped out by professors in the academy, but will be quietly laid down by Indigenous caretakers teaching their languages to their babies at home.



## Conclusion

Scholars in the field of translation studies often encourage heightened reflexivity as a strategy to write translations of minority languages that transcend the legacies of colonialism. However, this paper suggests a change of emphasis from the authenticity of the translated end product, to the well-being of the speakers of the language being translated.

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# ***Acting Good: Indigenous Sitcoms and the Impact of Humour in the Public Sphere***

*Sarah Seroy*

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*Acting Good* is a comedy television series that premiered on Canada's CTV Comedy network in October 2022. The show was created by star Paul Rabliauskas, an Anishinaabe stand-up comedian, and produced by Tina Keeper (Kistikan Pictures) and Jennifer Beasley (Buffalo Gal Pictures). It is a semiautobiographical series that draws on Rabliauskas' own experiences. The story follows Paul as he returns to the fictional community of Grouse Lake First Nation, inspired by Rabliauskas' home community of Poplar River, and tries to return to normal life after a failed attempt to make it big in Winnipeg (IMDB). The show's title refers to "a phrase people in Poplar River use to describe

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someone who's gotten a bit of a big head” (Dart, 2022, para. 6), and the ensemble cast of characters works hard to ensure that Paul remains humble. The sitcom, which has Indigenous creators and a predominantly Indigenous cast, is a rare example of authentic Indigenous representation in the comedy television scene.

This analysis will examine the use of humour in *Acting Good* to influence attitudes and perceptions about Indigenous Peoples in Canada and the issues that affect them. The analysis of this series is seen through the lens of Elizabeth Benacka’s discussion of the impact of humour in the public sphere, which focuses on the use of satire, parody, and irony. Additionally, a look at Michael Warner’s discussion of publics and counterpublics will help determine how Indigenous sitcoms like *Acting Good* contribute to Indigenous resistance efforts and whether they can be considered a form of counterpublic themselves.

### **Satire, Parody, and Irony**

In *Rhetoric, Humor, and the Public Sphere*, Benacka (2017) examines the power of comedy to influence public opinion and attitudes. The first chapter draws on classical rhetorical texts by Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian which employs various ways comedy is political and persuasive in speeches and texts. The chapter illustrates how, as Cicero stated, “there is no category of jokes that is not also a

source for earnest and serious thoughts” (Benacka, p. 5). Benacka’s discussion on the influence of humour in the public sphere focuses on the use of satire, parody, and irony in particular. *Acting Good* employs elements of each of these forms of humour in order to highlight some of the political and social issues faced by Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

Satire refers to the “use of ridicule, irony, sarcasm, etc., to expose folly or vice or to lampoon an individual” or society (Benacka, 2017, p. 9). There are multiple examples of satire in *Acting Good*. First, in the episode *Goosed by a Moose*, Paul attempts to impress an ex-girlfriend with the promise of a Kraft Dinner and wieners meal, followed by a surprise. When he can’t find a better alternative for the surprise, he takes her to see a dead moose’s body. While ridiculous, the moose situation highlights the lack of opportunities and entertainment often seen in remote Indigenous communities.

Additionally, Paul’s offering of Kraft Dinner as a fancy date-night meal, while also playing into stereotypes, can be seen as a commentary on the difference in food prices between these communities and urban centres in Canada. For example, food prices in remote Indigenous communities are reportedly up to 2.5 times higher than the national average (Lissner, 2022, para. 7). Another example is

in the episode *Under the B for Breakup* where in which two characters compete for a funding surplus that will otherwise be returned to the federal government to prevent a loss of the surplus to the government, a competition occurs between characters. One wants a new bingo machine, while the other wants to buy a piece of exercise equipment for the community centre. Their battle is comedic, but the fact that this would be the first piece of exercise equipment for the centre also satirizes the lack of resources available for youth and the level of financial control that the Canadian government has in Indigenous communities. These examples help show how humour can bring serious issues into the public sphere in a more approachable way than news or political debates.

*Acting Good* also relies on the use of parody which is defined as the use of imitation to expose flaws and characteristics at an individual or societal level. Through parody, “an audience member is encouraged to gain new insights on actors within the public sphere through an extreme exaggeration of characteristics” (Benacka, 2022, p. 13). One such example in the series is “Battle in the Bush.” In this episode, Grouse Lake First Nation eagerly anticipates an annual show by the NDN Wrestling Federation. When the wrestler portraying Mr. Indian Affairs, the villain in a feature fight, fails to arrive, the character of Brady, one of the show’s

few non-Indigenous characters, is asked to step in. The NDN Wrestling Federation is itself a parody of World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) matches, with the character of Mr. Indian Affairs playing the role of the heel, which is a wrestling term used to describe characters that antagonize the crowd and regularly lose to the “good guys” (Wong, 2016, para. 5). The over-the-top character of Mr. Indian Affairs, who uses catchphrases such as “I’m going to break his back like I broke your treaties” (Anthony et al., 2022 [0:24:21]) and “your funding request is denied” (Anthony et al., [0:21:34]), ridicules the role the Crown has played in the contentious relationship between Indigenous Peoples and the government that has existed throughout Canadian history. This example again helps illustrate the power of humour to critique and comment on political and social issues.

*Acting Good* also employs irony to make political and social commentary. Benacka (2017) discusses how “being able to intuit irony at work requires identifying a double meaning: the deceit or insincere use of language, as well as the opposite or authentic meaning” (p.15). An example of irony in *Acting Good* is the fact that a character is named Stephen Harper. Typically, a namesake is an honour due to admiration creating an ironic scene. However, former Prime Minister of Canada Stephen Harper has a reputation for a lack of regard for Indigenous Peoples

and a lack of action on issues impacting Indigenous communities and he was notably criticized for his empty apology on behalf of Canada for the Residential School system (APTN National News). Considering the unfavourable views held of Harper by Indigenous Peoples in Canada, the decision to name a character after him appears to be an ironic one. This use of irony in *Acting Good* helps to highlight the social and political issues Indigenous Peoples face in Canada. The ability to appreciate this instance of irony relies upon audiences “recognizing both a shared language and a social context” (Benacka , 2017, p. 14). In this case, it brings an awareness of the history of Indigenous Peoples’ marginalized status in Canadian society and Harper’s political views and actions. This highlights the importance of audience and context, further explored in the next section.

### **Audience and Context**

Rabliauskas notes that *Acting Good* is “an unapologetic sitcom and takes a very different tone and approach to Indigenous life than a lot of other media” (Dart, 2022, para. 9). The sitcom subverts traditional expectations about the representation of Indigenous Peoples in media, and that may not appeal to all viewers. Benacka (2017) notes that “persuasion is heightened when audiences are involved in the co-creation of meaning, as they must be when discerning the focus of a given satire,



parody, and irony” (p.15). This co-creation of meaning will have different results based on the varying perspectives of audience members. Seen in the mixed reviews the show has received, criticisms on the website IMBD.com include its low-budget and “amateurish” style (“Acting Good”), which is a not surprising comment for a show’s debut season. Complaints about the acting and the use of foul language are also subjective and occur in many television series. The users who state that they did not find the show funny, however, highlight how “there is no universal formal for rhetoric or humour since both must relate to a particular context and audience” (Benacka, 2017, p. 1). Seen in the way that some viewers find the portrayal of the show’s Indigenous characters to be funny, while others consider them offensive and imply that the show is racist. For example, user BA-9964 stated that *Acting Good* “takes all the stereotypes that some people have had regarding how First Nations live and place them on the screen” (“Acting Good”). While it is true that the show relies on established stereotypes and assumptions about Indigenous Peoples, it does so in a satirical and subversive manner in order to draw attention to issues and poke fun at Canada’s contentious history of settler colonialism. While some viewers may not appreciate this type of humour or understand what the show is trying to do, it has at least served the purpose of bringing these topics into public discussion.

## **Healing and Inspiring Indigenous Communities**

Humour is a powerful tool for healing and inspiring audiences. The humour in *Acting Good* aims to address some of the trauma caused by the multitude of transgressions against Indigenous Peoples through Canada's settler colonial history. Rabliauskas describes how the show's darker sense of humour, which may not appeal to all audiences, serves as a coping mechanism for Indigenous Peoples. His comment also highlights the link between comedy and serious issues noted by Benacka (2017). Rabliauskas stated:

"A lot of people say 'time plus tragedy equals comedy'... When you talk about First Nations people, there hasn't been too many people that have suffered as many tragic things as we have. So, our comedy comes from a dark place. It literally was a tool that people used to keep each other going through the residential schools, the '60s Scoop and all these bad things that happened." (Dart, 2022, para. 13).

The representation of Indigenous joy is itself a form of resistance. One of my favourite quotes that I feel exemplifies this point comes from the Indigenous horror novel *The Only Good Indians* by Stephen Graham Jones, which states, "If the only good Indian is a dead one, then she's going to be the worst Indian ever"

(Jones, 2020). And while that may seem harsh, the reality is that the history of Canada's settler colonial culture has relied upon the displacement and erasure of Indigenous Peoples and that the aim of colonizers was to eradicate the Indigenous population. Representation reinforces the fact that Indigenous Peoples are still here despite these genocidal policies and practices. Indigenous joy goes above and beyond that. It shows "that despite generations of displacement, land grabs, policies of assimilation and outright violence, Indigenous people are still here. Still surviving. And still thriving" (Wente, 2021, para. 16. Representations of Indigenous joy challenge the stereotypical representations of Indigenous Peoples as well as the negative tone seen in most media coverage about Indigenous Peoples. Author Jesse Wente discussed how "telling stories that are framed in joy may help people understand that positive emotions and experiences also exist alongside the more difficult ones, but they're just not as public" (para. 10). This can help challenge established narratives and misconceptions, which can impact attitudes and perceptions about Indigenous Peoples and reshape the public sphere.

Additionally, seeing light-hearted and authentic representations of Indigenous Peoples on television can be inspiring for Indigenous audiences. Seen in one of the more positive reviews for the show. User dearchristian says, "This

show is hilarious, I am saying that as an Indigenous person from Manitoba, so much relatable humour to what happens within our communities. Also, the use of our language is really great too. It's so nice to have a sitcom that's made about us...." ("Acting Good"). While not all viewers will appreciate these representations and the humour used in them, they can certainly have a positive impact on Indigenous audiences.

The power of Indigenous representation is in the "Battle in the Bush" episode mentioned earlier. In this storyline, the character of Brady does not want to play Mr. Indian Affairs because the crowd hates him so much. Paul's mother, Agnes, arrives to give him a stern pep talk, explaining the importance of him serving as the heel to the members of the Grouse Lake community. Referring to Mr. Indian Affairs, she says, "Every year he loses. And for one night, we get to win. Our kids get to see a wrestler who's one of us beat the [expletive] out of the system that's taken everything from us" [0:20:51]. Agnes' speech also highlights the power of *Acting Good* itself. The show is a win for Indigenous Peoples. It is a rare example of authentic Indigenous representation in the television landscape—a show created by Indigenous Peoples, about Indigenous Peoples, and with a mainly Indigenous cast. Rabliauskas was motivated to make the show because he had

never seen an Indigenous sitcom growing up and wanted to inspire the next generation, stating, “I’m hoping Indigenous kids like me on the rez can watch this and be like, I can’t believe one of us is doing that, and hopefully I can do that too” (The Social CTV, 0:03:16). With representations that subvert and challenge the stereotypes and misconceptions about Indigenous Peoples that have traditionally dominated the media landscape, the show empowers Indigenous audiences. Challenging established narratives and discussing issues that impact Indigenous Peoples can influence public opinions and attitudes and reshape the public sphere. Thus, the show is a form of Indigenous resistance. The next section will examine whether Indigenous sitcoms like *Acting Good* can also be considered a counterpublic space.

### **Indigenous Sitcoms as a Counterpublic Space**

In *Publics and Counterpublics*, Michael Warner draws upon Nancy Fraser’s work on subaltern counterpublics to establish essential aspects regarding what constitutes a counterpublic. These include that they are self-organized and constituted through attention (Warner, 2002). He also notes that counterpublics are a relation among strangers, which describes the relationship between the show’s creators and its audience, who may never come in contact with each other. Warner

also describes counterpublics as a manner of public speech that is both personal and impersonal, while addressing to strangers, it can resonate on an individual level.

Warner also provided television as an example of public speech that served this purpose. Thus, *Acting Good* can be said to demonstrate this aspect of Warner's definition of a counterpublic as well.

The criteria that Warner (2002) sets out for counterpublics include that members of counterpublics are “not merely a subset of the public but constituted through a conflictual relation to the dominant public” (p. 118). Seen in the relationship between the Canadian government and Indigenous Peoples, a relationship which is satirized and used for comedic purposes in *Acting Good*. Additionally, Warner states that “a counterpublic maintains at some level, conscious or not, an awareness of its subordinate status” (p. 119). Indigenous Peoples are aware of their minority status in Canada's settler colonial society. In an interview about the series, Rabliauskas stated, “This is crazy to say, but other than *Reservation Dogs* that airs in the States, there's no Native sitcoms out there, and it's 2022” (Dart, 2022, para. 285). This shows he is aware of the show's subordinate status in the television landscape and of Indigenous Peoples' marginalized status in the media industry.

According to Warner, counterpublics provide a space for discourse on issues impacting the public sphere. This reinforces Benacka's (2017) notion that the source material for humour and political, persuasive rhetoric is often the same, each touching on social issues. In *Comedy and Critical Thought: Laughter as Resistance*, Giappone et al. (2018) reiterated this link between comedy and serious issues, as well as the ability of this link to help reshape the public sphere, stating that that "humourists become the comic doubles of critical philosophers, challenging the established norms of culture through comedy rather than argumentation" (p. 32). *Acting Good* highlights issues such as the contentious relationship between Indigenous Peoples and the Canadian government, the lack of funding and opportunities in remote Indigenous communities, poverty, and racism, into the public sphere through humour, providing a space for discourse about these topics.

Finally, Warner (2002) refers to counterpublics as "poetic world making," describing how the "discourse or performance addressed to a public must characterize the world in which it attempts to circulate and it must attempt to realize that world through address" (p.113). *Acting Good* characterizes, exaggerates, and satirizes life on a reservation, Canada's settler colonial society,

and issues impacting Indigenous Peoples. In circulating this characterization that subverts established narratives, the show is attempting to realize a different world for Indigenous Peoples through the address of a sitcom television series. Thus, *Acting Good* can be seen as a form of poetic world making.

*Acting Good* demonstrates the essential components of Warner's definition of a counterpublic space. It is an example of an address that is self-organized, constituted through attention and relation between strangers, and is both personal and impersonal. Additionally, a community aware of its marginalized status in Canada created this series. It is an example of what Warner describes as "poetic world-making." And finally, it brings serious social and political issues that impact Indigenous Peoples into the realm of public discussion. Because it satisfies these criteria, the series *Acting Good* is an example of a counterpublic space.

### **Conclusion**

The series *Acting Good* is an example of how humour can be "a powerful tool in fusing audiences with the actors of counter-publics" (Giappone, 2018, p. 84). Humour, particularly in the forms of satire, parody, and irony, is employed by the show's creators to draw attention to and critique flaws in Canada's settler colonial society. It highlights issues impacting Indigenous Peoples in Canada, including



poverty, a lack of resources, a lack of self-determination, and the contentious relationship between Indigenous Peoples and the Canadian government. Bringing these issues to light with comedy draws them into the public sphere and allows people to debate them in a more approachable way than the divisive tactics often seen in political debate. Additionally, the use of humour and positive representations of Indigenous Peoples can be healing, inspiring, and empowering for Indigenous audiences. Subverting and satirizing tropes, stereotypes, and common misconceptions about Indigenous Peoples challenges established narratives. All of this can influence public opinions, attitudes, and perceptions about Indigenous Peoples and the social and political issues that impact them. Because of the power they have to reshape the public sphere, Indigenous sitcoms are a form of Indigenous resistance. They also meet the criteria established in Warner's discussion of publics and counterpublics. Thus, Indigenous sitcoms like *Acting Good* can be considered a counterpublic space.

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# Restoring Cultural Heritage Through Reparations from the British Museum

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Today the British Museum stands as the world's largest history museum and draws millions of visitors every year. It is also the largest warehouse of looted cultural and historical artefacts which cover more than two million years of human history (The British Museum, 2019). Most people living in the Western world believe that museums are open repositories and are the best places in disseminating these cultures, however many do not realize that of the eight million objects the British Museum holds, only 1% are on public display at any one time, and the rest are kept in storage (The British Museum, 2019). In the recent uprising of addressing the issues rooted in colonization by the British Empire, many are calling for correlated institutions to impose a

moral imperative to repatriate these antiquities. How does the repatriation of unprovenanced antiquities by The British Museum foster in restoring that state's cultural patrimony? Although The British Museum serves as an interactive space that has allowed for the dissemination of free knowledge, constituting the repatriation of most of these antiquities back to their country of provenance must occur because their acquisitions stem from illegitimate unethical practices. A careful examination of several published studies will reveal the ethical concerns and true impact of this issue.

The British Museum was founded in 1753 and is directly linked to the colonial rule of the British Empire, which at its peak directly or indirectly ruled over 500 million people by the early 20th century (Frost, 2019, p. 487). Early in history, museums emerged as active mediums for empires and other colonial powers to showcase Eurocentric ideas, racialized ideas, and ideals, and this still persists today. Every year, the British Museum receives more than six million visitors (The British Museum, 2022) each year to encounter the curated artefacts on display, but many are unaware of the dark history that it was founded upon. The origins of the museum were established on the private collections of Sir Hans Sloane, whose large collection amassing over 71,000 items was funded by the

profits from the slave trade and slave plantations in Jamaica and West Africa (Delbourgo, 2014). Such relations with the slave trade are not isolated to Sloane but are prominent amongst the benefactors and board members of the British Museum. Furthermore, these relationships are found to directly play an active role in orchestrating the unethical removal of the cultural artefacts now in possession by the British Museum.

Many of the collections in the British Museum have been illegitimately and unjustly removed from their country of provenance by colonial powers. As Lindsay (2013) states “The [British] Museum is the greatest in the world... it is also the largest depository of looted goods in the world” (p. 357). Yet remedy for the loss is unavailable today, as the British Museum continues to lock up these invaluable objects of other cultures, taken from their people by wars of aggression, theft, and duplicity by the empires that colonized them. A common position that has been brought up in the argument regarding repatriations of museum collections, is the notion that objects are actually safer under the care of Western institutions than they would be in their home countries. However, multiple poor caretaking incidents have raised concerns regarding the care of these important cultural properties. As in the 1930s, the British Museum actively damaged and deformed the acclaimed and

contested Elgin Marbles to an irreparable degree by using copper chisels and wire brushes to clean the marbles (Houser, 1972, p.129). Furthermore, the British Museum ignores the bloodstained history of colonialism and the barbarity of the British army while forcing imperial domination by putting these cultural properties on display.

Take the *Benin Bronzes*, these antiquities were looted from the palace of the King of Benin, the Oba, in 1897 (Lindsay, 2013, p. 379), and in the same decade, the *Akan Ashanti Drums* (Kesse, 2020) both were looted from punitive military missions that were vindictive, destructive, and targeted. Not only were these lootings a physical loss of thousands of people from the Benin and Ashanti Kingdoms, but they were also cultural and historical. A member of the Benin royal family poignantly says this regarding the importance of these 3000 cultural artefacts that the British pillaged “so taking them away, was like yanking off pages of our history” (Channel 4, 2021, 2:08). These bronzes were laid out in a very systematic order in accordance with the nation’s history, which were then lost when the British intentionally tore them off the palace walls and sold them to wealthy collectors and the monarchy. In both cases, the British Museum still refuses to repatriate them back to their country of provenance and continues to disregard the

appeals and protests made by the people whom they pillaged. Not only has the British Museum turned a blind eye to the illegitimate unethical acquisitions of these antiquities, but they also have chosen to “whitewash” the labels that accompany these cultural objects on display in the museum.

The dissemination of knowledge in the British Museum is written and cultivated from the colonial perspective. Although the British Museum stands as a custodian to produce cultural knowledge through the millions of visitors each year, the greater number of these gallery displays and exhibitions are accompanied by “whitewashed” labels or as Robertson (2019) evokes “have their provenance told by an anodyne sentence in a display case” (p.12). For example, a prominent article reveals that it is common for museums to remove references of violence, illicit trade, slavery, massacres, assassinations, and burnings that are part of the history of the object in the display, simply in order to preserve the integrity of the museum to the public (Green, 2017, p.11). The use of colonialist terminology and derogatory words such as “primitive,” “savages,” “Indian,” “costume,” “Eskimo,” “dwarf,” the “n-word” and many others have been and are still part of many titles and descriptions that accompany the antiquity in these museums. This can have profound impacts as every-time non-western artefacts are presented in a way that

wrongly suggests that those ethnic groups were bloodthirsty savages. It conditions the way the visitors view these cultures both then and now, and moreover, it reinforces the false narrative of Western imperialism and enhances the idea that white people or Europeans are somehow superior. Not only has the British Museum enveloped racist and derogatory terms to the accompanying texts of the antiquities in their collections, but they have also created legal barriers and ordinances in order to keep the ownership of the disputed cultural artefacts.

In 1963, the British Museum created legislation that strictly forbids the Museum from permanently removing objects from their collections (British Museum Act, 1963). The authorities who handle this legislation and requests for the return of the cultural property, are not made up of a group of anthropologists, archeologists, or historians but rather are CEOs, directors, elite partners, bankers, global investors, and other very big international capitalist corporations (Nafziger, 2009, p.330). These trustees are given the authority to make decisions regarding antiquities outside their business abilities and are not equipped with the education to fully contextualize the immense amount of ethical, cultural, and scientific variables that are demanded in making these decisions. Moreover, the British Museum demands hundreds of thousands of dollars from nations that have asked



for the repatriation of their objects. One such example was the occasion in 1980 when the government of Nigeria spent more than £800,000 in order to buy back five Nigerian works of art, which included three Benin bronzes (Nafziger, 2009, p.162). One may see this as someone robbing your house and then demanding money for the objects, they had stolen from you. These issues of legal and moral responsibilities of museums regarding the cultural properties they have ownership of and their continued means to negate the illicit acquisitions of these cultural properties must not be left out of arguments but rather brought up and contested.

International organizations, conservationists, activists, government entities, community leaders, and the general public must focus on calling for change and demand from these colonial institutions like the British Museum for transparency and accountability. Museums can use their exhibitions, educational activities, and media platforms to bring more focus on the topic of looting, illicit trade, repatriation and be open to advocacy, dialogue, and debate on their collections, instead of ignoring them (Björnberg, 2015, p.467). Practices must be fostered, and restorative justice be served to benefit the impoverished, vulnerable communities that have been inflicted by intergenerational traumas as well as cultural and historical losses from the pillages done by the British Empire. We cannot right

historical wrongs, but neither can we continue to hinder away from them and profit from them. As Sarr and Savoy (2018) have said “to let oneself be transformed by all these experiences... which are also forms of access to knowledge... cannot be reserved to the inheritors of an asymmetrical history” (p.4). All humans, no matter what ethnicity or race, should all have the right to study and be in ownership of the antiquities from their own history and culture and let it be fully integrated and enjoyed by the community, “so that it may reinstate and preserve their cultural legacy and pass it on to future generations” (Moiwana v Suriname, 2005, as cited in Robertson, 2020). We cannot change the past, but we can change how we interact with it in the present.

The research is clear that immediate concerns are raised on the unjust, illicit, and unethical acquisition of those important cultural antiquities held by the British Museum. The punitive missions, bloodstained history, and the use of colonialist terminology and derogatory racist words that are enumerated within the British Museum must not continue to be left unaddressed. If so, there would be a continuation of loose policies that will lead to further damaging cultural identity and allow for the proliferation of illicit removals and at the same time, illicit trade. As Nafziger (2009) eloquently has said “In this way, history can be unraveled by

showing a little sensitivity in a manner that touches the soul and spirit of formerly colonized people...finally for its return to its motherland, its birthplace” (p.167).

Enactment of reforms made conditional in benefiting those affected on a long-term basis, in addition to stricter measures targeted to major colonial institutions must be implemented with the greatest urgency and strictness.

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# Report Reviewers for Inter-Public Communication

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## Abstract

A controversy about the security and integrity of Canada's electoral system arose early in 2023. Many were concerned that China had influenced the results of the 2021 election. Once an investigation into the extent of interference was dismissed by the Government's opposition, the proposal for a special rapporteur was criticized in favour of a public inquiry. Major newspapers shared sides with either the Liberal government or the opposition, forming a dominant public who had the parliamentary majority and the power to decide on the way forward, and a counter public, who could not take any action themselves. Newspapers reported on the topics to persuade their readers to

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accept their opinion, but they did not weigh the counterpoints. The deliberative capacity of the public sphere could be improved if the newspapers juxtaposed their opinions with counterarguments and showed their readers the logic for one side over the other.

### **Introduction: Election Interference Concerns Build**

In the early months of 2023, Canadians were notified that their chief intelligence agency, The Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), reported to their government the Chinese authoritarian regime had been increasingly suspect of compromising election candidates who they did not deem favourable to Chinese activity in Canada. News of this came first in a Globe and Mail article describing top secret reports that detailed the Chinese strategy for attacking high-ranking Canadian politicians and business leaders.

The leaked CSIS documents, the Globe's article reads, explained Beijing's strategy and intention for obtaining intel and neutralizing its critics. China's goal in interfering with Canadians is to silence influential people who are critical of their repression of Chinese citizen free speech and their citizens' calls for fair democracy (Fife and Chase, 2023a). The documents claimed instances of Chinese intel gathering, claiming that the Chinese consul-general in Montreal used We-Chat, a

China-owned social media platform, to track Canadian business executives visiting China in November 2021, and they mentioned disinformation campaigns plus China's support of certain election candidates who are sympathetic to China (Fife and Chase, 2023a). The Globe ends by giving an example of election interference that supports the CSIS document's claim that China favours mostly Liberal candidates (Fife and Chase, 2023a). Kenny Chui, a 2021 Vancouver Conservative candidate, maintains that he lost the election because of a China-led disinformation campaign, owing largely to the area's electorate's reliance on WeChat (Fife and Chase, 2023a).

Soon after, every major Canadian news network was reporting on another intelligence document, *Report on the assessment of the 2021 Critical Election Incident Public Protocol*, a report authored by Morris Rosenberg for the Privy Council Office, who was mandated to determine the extent of Chinese interference in the 2021 Canadian election. Rosenberg (2023) explains that measuring election interference is difficult because foreign state actors often use second-party figures to spread their disinformation, something especially prevalent on social media. He explains that the way we detect foreign meddling needs to be improved if Canada is to prevent further attacks (Rosenberg, 2023). He also calls attention to the fact that

the public is only notified of election interference when a governmental panel judges the threat significant enough, and he recommends a lowering of the threshold for such an announcement to be made (Rosenburg, 2023). Rosenberg (2023) concludes that the extent of interference was not sufficient to warrant public notification on this issue under the current threshold.

The Rosenberg report led to more concerns about the integrity of Canadian democracy. So, the official opposition, led by Pierre Poilievre, began demanding a public inquiry into the fairness of the past election at issue, citing that Rosenberg only looked at the campaigning period of the election — not the nomination process, and that Rosenberg is a Liberal who used to be CEO of the Trudeau Foundation (Global News, 2023). The Liberal government, headed by Justin Trudeau, dismissed these complaints about Rosenberg and announced that a rapporteur would be appointed to determine whether a public inquiry was required, and he encouraged the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians (NSICOP) and the National Security and Intelligence Review Agency (NSIRA) to conduct their own investigation (Global News, 2023). Major newspapers — the Toronto Star and the National Post, for example — reported on



Trudeau's decision in very different ways, influencing and representing public opinion in commensurately divergent ways.

### **Partisan Rhetoric of Major Newspapers**

The following articles all responded the day after Trudeau's announcement for a special rapporteur, and all touch on some valid concerns raised by both the Government and the Opposition in Parliament. Looking at all three stories gives a better idea of the political situation than does looking at any single one. Analysis of the articles also exposes the partisan tones of the newspapers.

The National Post cites an observation about the Trudeau government's track record of failing to heed the recommendations of government agencies external to the Government itself. It explains that the NSICOP is a committee created by the Liberal government in 2017 consisting of elected politicians authorized to view classified information (Tumilty, 2023). The article seizes upon NSICOP's complaints that the Liberals had not responded to a 2019 report that warned about a multi-faceted foreign interference program (Tumilty, 2023). Neither had the government acknowledged other similar reports, the Post reported (Tumilty, 2023). The article ends abruptly by briefly discussing Trudeau's response in which he said the Liberals would consider the reports (Tumilty, 2023). Though not

directly stated, the open-endedness and context of the article suggests that Trudeau's announcement is baseless since he does not typically follow through with the recommendations of the committees he appointed for these investigations.

Similarly, the *Globe* was critical of Trudeau as it raised concerns about the secrecy the agencies and rapporteur Trudeau charged with the investigation are required to maintain. The *Globe's* report echoed Conservative and NDP concerns that neither NSICOP, nor the NSIRA, make their meeting discussions public, and the reports of both agencies are only published after the Prime Minister's Office has a chance to censor them (Fife and Chase, 2023b). The *Globe* reports that Conservative and NDP MPs are highly critical of the Liberal's resistance to a public inquiry, quoting them accusing the benefit Trudeau enjoys from inference and their discontent with the partisan committees and lack of transparency (Fife and Chase, 2023b). The report continues into the Chinese support of the Pierre Elliot Trudeau Foundation and acknowledges that the foundation returned the money after the *Globe* made their first report on election interference (Fife and Chase, 2023b). The article concludes with additional critical rhetoric, referencing the foreign-agent registries of the U.S., Australia, and Britain, and the Opposition's not-yet-answered calls for something similar in Canada (Fife and Chase, 2023b). The *Globe* describes

the situation as a suspect Liberal government whose actions are highly unsatisfying to all the other parties. In the Globe's report, Trudeau appears to be an unpopular and secretive Prime Minister who is not trusted in Parliament.

On a very different note, The Star approaches Trudeau's announcement by emphasizing that the Liberals are acting to affirm citizens' trust in Canadian democracy. The report discusses the early stages in the creation of a foreign-agent registry, restating Trudeau's words that imply such a registry could be discriminatory if not well-thought-out, and that non-governmental organizations should be enlisted to help combat foreign interference because such a task is too big for the government to handle itself (MacCharles, 2023). The Star then discusses the NDP and Conservative response, noting that the NDP's leader, Jagmeet Singh, is "playing politics with the issue," and Poilievre is criticizing the idea of Trudeau choosing a rapporteur (MacCharles, 2023, para. 11). The article ends by mentioning that the earlier CSIS media leaks have not sparked any major elections law investigations and that the Rosenberg documents have been reviewed and confirmed that the 2021 election was fair (MacCharles, 2023). The article, overall, is dismissive of the attacks by opposition parties. It resolves the idea that the foreign-agent registry question is not being well-managed; and it portrays the

NDPs' complaints as frivolous and the Conservatives' qualms as trivial. Perhaps more importantly, it discounts the accusations of an unfair election that followed the Globe's CSIS document leaks and presumes that Rosenberg was correct in saying the election was fair.

### **The Long-Lost Deliberative Public Sphere**

While a myriad of conflicting opinions may appear unstable, the divergent opinions are no doubt valuable to the function of a democratic legislative system. Jurgen Habermas purported that communication among the early modern bourgeois in the form of rational debate within the world of letters “confirmed each other’s subjectivity” (Habermas, 1989, p.54). That is, the worldviews others had formed in their conjugal spheres were gratified by others, which allowed the members of that society to do something physiocrats considered an insight into the natural order of things; they could determine truths through discussion of differing views, eventually coming to conclusions that affirmed the most persuasive truths (Habermas, 1989). Drawing on Hobbes’ and Locke’s social contract theory, Habermas says rulers had to accent to the natural order the bourgeois had found (Habermas 1989). This was not to last, unfortunately — we have not inherited it, he says (Habermas 1989). Habermas (1996) explains that the contemporary public

climate is unanalogous to the bourgeois instance because of the rise of opinion leaders who monopolize the formation of public opinion and are driven by interests whose goals are not primarily concerned with the search for natural truths (Habermas 1996).

The rise of opinion leaders is apparent in the reporting of the newspapers under discussion. Instead of the individual-led discussions in local venues described by Habermas, the world of letters, as exhibited in the discussed newspapers, has taken on its own authority without the individual citizen's input (Habermas 1996). The journalists, who have their loyalties, write in a way that persuades the reader to think of political issues in a very specific way. In this situation, there is no negotiation from the reader's conjugal worldviews to an ever-larger arena that eventually manifests in print (Habermas 1996). Rather, the process of opinion formation is reversed as journalists, who are privy to the latest information, interpret and disseminate information, opinion, and all — meaning the search for natural truth has been entrusted to opinion leaders (Habermas 1996). These manufactured worldviews are communicated to the masses and the only deliberative thing about it is whether the public is willing to read this paper or another (Habermas 1996).

While the rise of opinion leaders has become an unavoidable reality of the current media climate, which may well have degraded the extent that public opinion reflects the reasoning of the majority, the rise of these powerful networks has been accompanied, and indeed, is spurred on by consumer-choice capitalism, which pressures newscasters to produce ever higher-quality media, and this has pressured politicians to become ever more transparent (McNair, 2002). Opinion leaders are capitalists who compete for readership, so they must do as much as possible to ensure their content is appealing to current and prospective subscribers (McNair, 2002). Throughout the lifetime of newspapers, they have had to slowly increase the quality of their reporting to beat out their competitors (McNair, 2002). Massive media also provides an arena where the commodification of content makes parliamentary debate ever more accessible and revealing of what politicians may not otherwise share (McNair, 2002). That opinion leaders are driven by profit is not in itself dangerous to democracy because healthy competition improves the reliability and rigor of the fourth estate (McNair, 2002). It would therefore be unwise to excoriate contemporary newspapers for becoming driven by profit because competition is holding the newspapers accountable (McNair, 2002).

## **Political Loyalties of Opinion Leaders**

But the problem of reinvigorating Habermas's rational-critical debate is not resolved in realizing the value of competitive opinion formation. It is useful to investigate what interests motivate newspapers to report in divergent ways. Here, we would want to look at the political tendencies of the newspapers. But first we need to understand Canadian politics. Parliament is designed to confront opposing views; it offers non-dominant groups opportunities to express their criticism (Malcolmson, 2021). In Canada, MPs are either government members, — if they sit in cabinet — government MPs, or opposition MPs (Malcolmson, 2021). The party not forming government who also has the largest number of seats is the Official Opposition (Malcolmson, 2021). Just as the Government has a cabinet separated into committees to research and draft bill proposals, the Opposition has a “shadow cabinet” to critique the government cabinet's work (Malcolmson, 2021, p. 91). Sittings in parliament are the formal meetings of the House of Commons. During sittings, government MPs and opposition MPs are physically separated to face one another, like a football teams' linemen (Malcolmson, 2021). The Prime Minister and the Official Opposition leader always face each other directly (Malcolmson, 2021).

To elucidate the political tendencies of newspapers, we also need to pay homage to Micheal Warner's (2002) keystone work *Publics and Counter publics*. With it, we can surmise that the especially strong ideological viewpoints found in parliamentary debate in Canada are examples of publics. Warner (2002) defines a public as a general association of strangers who are connected by their simultaneous attention to a communicable worldview. MPs, being strangers from across the country and coming together around their ideological similarities, form a public as they engage with bills together. A counter public is a public too, except its key distinction is that it defines itself as being critical of another, more dominant public (Warner 2002). The party in power takes on the dominant role as it defends its actions, and the opposition adopts the role of counter public as it critiques the party in power (Warner, 2002). At the time of the election interference controversy, the Liberal party was in power. In parliament, Trudeau and the Liberals sat opposite the Conservatives, the NDP, and the Bloc Quebecois. Poilievre, of the Conservative party, was the opposition leader. Liberals formed the government, — as they have most of the seats — so they are the dominant “public,” and the Conservatives are the official “counter public.” This enables us to answer the first question: How does



the partisanship of Canada's top newspapers reflect the positions of publics and counter publics in Parliament?

The content of the newspaper articles discussed earlier shows that their authors take on the role of either political public or political counter public. The National Post's article takes on a position critical of the Liberal party and the NSICOP, so the article is part of the counter public discourse. The Globe's report is a counter public dialogue as well because it voices concerns about the censoring of the NSICOP and NSIRA reports, the Chinese support of the Trudeau Foundation, and the lack of a foreign agent registry. The Star takes on a different tone, making it part of the dominant (Liberal) public. The Star's article defends the Liberal government from an opposition it portrays as unduly critical, and it legitimizes the public's dominance by referencing the reviews that confirmed the Liberal's right to form a government. While it would be helpful at this point to review an instance in which another party formed government — so we could determine if these loyalties are maintained — this nonetheless demonstrates that the reports of the newspapers are not necessarily concerned with the search for natural truths, but rather with the goal of persuading readers to adopt the worldviews of the political party the newspaper supports.

### **Fostering Inter-Public Communication**

My analysis has borne out findings of a politically charged media climate, major news networks on both sides of the spectrum report using worldviews that conflict with each other, but they do not attempt resolve their differences. While it is perhaps comforting to know we can determine the tendencies of the giants of the public climate, it is equally disconcerting to feel helpless as powerful, potentially unrepresentative entities sway mass opinion. Surely, Canadian society can do better than a public opinion dictatorship. This raises the age-old quandary: How can such a media climate ever uncover the natural truths that the bourgeois were supposedly able to? Nancy Fraser (1990) provides a clue to answering this in her paper *Rethinking the Public Sphere*. She theorizes an ideal public sphere wherein the existence of multiple publics can influence public policy when individuals participate in more than one public (Fraser, 1990).

This, I believe, is the ideal for which a democratic media environment should strive to realize more fully. Opinion pieces and editorials are valuable because they provide the arena for persons to express their reasons for holding their views. Their problem, however, lays in the fact that too often newspapers only express the viewpoint their news teams wish to spread. The decline of salons and

coffeehouses has marked a trust given to the journalists to carry out the function of public opinion formation (Habermas, 1996). It is only right that these newspapers represent competing publics by providing more than one viewpoint — and to do so impartially. To further the moderation of sentiment, distinguished intellectual authorities should be asked to pass judgement on the reasons given by both the public and the counter publics. I will refer to these passers of judgement as “Report Reviewers,” since they review newspaper reports. The report reviewers’ opinions would be published in more than one newspaper, and their discussion could be disseminated in other media forms, like social media. The most important proviso is that the reviewers in a debate must decide which truth is most persuasive based solely on the situation, not the parties involved. This system would ensure Fraser’s cultural mixing and would diminish the extent that a newspaper’s loyalties would tarnish the deliberative function of the public sphere. What follows is a preliminary sketch of how a reportorial review would be carried out.

1. At the end of the week, media leaders choose which story they all reported on was the most important and for which there is political contention. On the weeks that the topics discussed do not align, such a week may be one to either not post a

reportorial review, find another newspaper that aligned with the other two, or to rehash an older unresolved issue.

2. From among a list of candidates, they choose three persons who will each conduct their own review of the reports. The newspaper leaders would have to negotiate with the others, so if there are any biased reviewers, they would ideally be offset by the biases of the reviewers preferred by the other leaders.

3. The reviewers are instructed to identify the main point of each of the reports, then write how each of the newspapers differ from each other and give an expert opinion about the merits and disadvantages of their preferred position. The main point excerpts allow the readers to engage all publics without having to read them. Each review would also summarize each article in their own words, give an opinion, provide a counterargument to their position, then resolve the counterargument.

4. A main point excerpt from each story followed by the three reviews is posted in each newspaper for the reader to observe the analyses of the multiple publics at play. The idea of reportorial review is to help the masses evaluate a multiple public media climate, so the reviews do not have to be confined to the newspapers and

could be disseminated by other means so that more people could catch up on politics.

### **Why Report Reviewers?**

A reportorial review would have improved the quality of the reporting on the issue described in this paper because it would have enabled readers to quickly access and understand the arguments in Parliament. Reviewers would have provided an opportunity where the quality of the reporting and the claims of the newspapers would be evaluated in the mass public's eye. The reviewers would have provided a clear line of reasoning in favour of one point of view or another, and it would have provided the masses a logical way of thinking so they could determine what they thought was the correct course of action. Provided information in this manner, citizens could hold views about natural truths based on logic, rather than the journalists' use of rhetoric. This would restore Habermas' ideal public sphere because truths would be based on deliberation, and political leaders would be held responsible when citizens vote.

The mass public would be better off for being exposed to such inclusive debate because currently, digital media has exasperated the shortcomings of the newspapers to make sense of the political debates. My proposal could be criticized

for arguing a paternalistic public sphere, but I respond that report reviewers are what far-right extremists are searching for anyway (Soto-Vasquez 2021). My doubling and juxtaposition of opinion in highly circulated media is an improvement both to what digital extremist followers and the opinion leaders are disposed of currently because it helps confused and overwhelmed citizens make sense of complex topics, so they do not have to turn to alternative media to find an understandable narrative.

### **Conclusion**

The Chinese election interference controversy of early 2023 ignited debate among major newspapers. The National Post and The Globe and Mail were critical of Trudeau's announcement that a special rapporteur would be selected, rather than holding a public inquiry. The Toronto Star, on the other hand, supported Trudeau's decision. It is certainly desirable for competing opinions to be debated in the public sphere, but Habermas does not believe opinion leaders are conducting adequate searches for truth. Major newspapers neglect the implicit mandate of the public sphere to reason to a conclusion, and instead spew rhetoric aimed at persuading the reader rather than presenting a balanced account of competing views. The commerce-driven aspect of the contemporary public sphere ensures the newspapers

must compete for readership, improving their credibility; but despite this, reporting has taken on political polarization characteristic of parliamentary custom. A healthy public sphere requires the negotiation of competing views to decide the correct course of action, so newspapers may consider introducing report reviewers. Report reviewers would provide expert rationales on controversial topics to show the readers why one newspaper argument is superior to the other, and opposing viewpoints would be presented in their counterpart newspapers to facilitate idea exposure across the political spectrum. Such an addition to the public sphere would improve collective reasoning and may even reduce extremism by encouraging ideological tolerance.

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