



Oshkosh Scholar

Volume XIV, 2019
University of
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Preface

The philosopher Aristotle argues that human beings gain knowledge incrementally and communally. We begin any inquiry by taking our understanding of some phenomenon and subjecting it to careful scrutiny. The result is typically that when we find the truth, we have at the same time discovered that our initial judgments were in error. Thus, for Aristotle, the value of research consists in its dual functions of discovering the truth and displacing false or incomplete modes of understanding. The context of research, and of its successes and failures, is one of shared knowledge and shared goals. Inquiry that leads to new knowledge typically begins from the efforts of others both past and present and represents a culmination of the shared enterprise of discovery. The eight articles presented here represent high-quality undergraduate research that, in the most general terms, upholds Aristotle's ideals. These papers seek both to reveal truths and to correct misconceptions, faulty theorizing, or inattention to detail—all of which have led to our holding mistaken beliefs. The research reported in these papers represents new knowledge gained through careful scrutiny of past and present resources of all kinds—textual, empirical, theoretical, practical, ethical, and more.

I am proud to present the fourteenth volume of *Oshkosh Scholar* for many reasons. This volume represents a worthy contribution to a tradition that sets UW Oshkosh apart from similar institutions in Wisconsin and beyond. Our commitment to undergraduate research is, as it should be, a point of pride for an institution of higher learning. The papers included here represent both the high quality of research and the breadth of intellectual curiosity at UW Oshkosh. These papers should give us all confidence that, despite the challenges we face as an institution, our students are succeeding.

The papers in this volume can be seen as falling into three distinct groups. The first three papers are guided by empirical research questions in different fields. The first two focus on environmental and social problems specific (though perhaps not unique) to the Fox Valley. As such, they represent the important role the UW Oshkosh community, and in particular its student researchers, plays in recognizing and addressing local problems. In the first paper, "The Effects of Anthropogenic Noise on Bird Feeder Communities in the Fox River Valley," author Phillip Gruber presents his findings about the effects of anthropogenic noise on the behavior of birds in three different habitats in Wisconsin. His findings suggest that how noise affects avian behavior is related to features of the birds' normal habitats—specifically to the levels of human development. In the second paper, "Environmental Factors and Refugee Resettlement Success in Oshkosh and the Fox Valley," author Sarah Reed presents her research on refugee resettlement in the Fox Valley. Reed argues that standard measures of successful resettlement often fail to account for the individual experiences of refugees. Her research suggests that certain environmental factors—especially social and cultural factors—are especially important in determining whether resettlement is successful. In her paper, Reed proposes that her findings be implemented by agencies seeking to improve resettlement success. Finally, in the third paper in this group, "Big Impact on Small Business: Mitigating Resource Poverty with Effective Cost Management," author Benjamin Kleist argues that, in order for small businesses to be successful, it is vital that decision makers adopt a new paradigm for thinking about and meeting the typical challenges small businesses face.

Specifically, Kleist develops and defends the importance of cost-management techniques for small businesses.

The next two papers focus on philosophical questions of a more theoretical nature. In her paper, “Suicide in the Paradigm of Indefinitely Extended Life,” author Madeline Hass approaches questions about the ethics of suicide by considering a hypothetical context in which medical knowledge and practice have succeeded in providing cures for all fatal illnesses. In this context, Hass argues, the moral permissibility of suicide appears well-grounded given that the only other means of death would be death by accident. In the next paper, “Happiness and Other Good Things: How the Desire-Satisfaction Theory Best Accounts for the Roles of Morality, Authenticity, and Freedom in the Happy Life,” author Charity LaBuy argues that, among the available theories of happiness, the desire-satisfaction theory—a theory that claims human happiness is to be understood in terms of whether individuals’ desires are satisfied—offers the most plausible and comprehensive theory of human happiness. LaBuy’s argument focuses on the desire-satisfaction theory’s capacity to include other values such as morality, authenticity, and freedom.

The final three papers share a commitment to the value of textual and historical analysis to our understanding of complex social issues. In her essay, “Together but Unequal: Perceptions of the White-Black Sisterhood from 1830 to 1870,” Khaila Miles-Semons investigates texts from the antebellum period for evidence of shared experiences and, in particular, experiences of reciprocity between black and white women during slavery. Miles-Semons investigates slave narratives, letters, and other primary sources and argues that, although black and white women were “together” in various ways, the institution of slavery prevented the genuine equality and reciprocity that define sisterhood. In the next paper, “Pink Gauze, Cold Spirits: Asexual Criticism and Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*,” author constance bougie brings an emerging field of literary criticism—asexual criticism—to bear on Virginia Woolf’s novel. While carefully navigating the interpretive traditions that have been applied to *Mrs. Dalloway*, bougie offers an interactive reading and re-writing of the novel and, in so doing, offers both a challenge to the tradition and an argument for their asexual reading of the novel. In the final paper, “‘It will not fetch thee much in our Nantucket market’: Whales and Tobacco as Symbolic Condemnations of Manifest Destiny in Herman Melville’s *Moby-Dick*; or, *The Whale*,” author Colton Schlotman argues that understanding Melville’s use of symbolism—particularly, his use of whales and tobacco as symbols—is vital for understanding the contours of his critique of American society and, especially, the American commitment to Manifest Destiny. Schlotman’s argument proceeds on the evidence of the text itself while engaging a vast interpretive literature.

Oshkosh Scholar is the product of a great deal of collaboration involving students, faculty, and staff from all corners of our University. I am grateful to all faculty members who have devoted their time and expertise to serve as mentors to our student authors. Faculty mentorship is an indispensable part of undergraduate research and of this journal’s success. I am also grateful to faculty members who reviewed papers for this volume. I would like, in particular, to thank Dr. Stewart Cole, Dr. Pascale Manning, and Dr. Misty McPhee for serving on the Selection Committee for this volume. For her tireless efforts to make each paper the best possible version of itself, I am especially grateful to the journal’s managing editor, Susan Surendonk. For their exceptional work and dedication, I am also grateful to our very talented student editors Natalie Dillon and Macrina Schry. We are grateful for the continued financial support of the Provost’s

Office and for the support and leadership of Dr. Stephen Kercher and the Office of Student Research and Creative Activity. Finally, I am especially grateful to the students and recent graduates who submitted work for this volume of *Oshkosh Scholar*. Without the work of these motivated and talented individuals, a volume such as this would not be possible. I hope that readers will share my assessment that this volume represents exemplary undergraduate research.

Dr. Robert Wagoner

Associate Professor, Philosophy
Faculty Editor, *Oshkosh Scholar*

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“I chose to use the Wisconsin Street bridge for this design for its visual appeal, as well as its representation. A bridge is used to connect two points, similar to the *Oshkosh Scholar* being a publication for connecting readers with ideas and research.”

—Heather Dickerson

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Contents

The Effects of Anthropogenic Noise on Bird Feeder Communities in the Fox River Valley

Phillip Gruber..... 8

Environmental Factors and Refugee Resettlement Success in Oshkosh and the Fox Valley

Sarah Reed 18

Big Impact on Small Business: Mitigating Resource Poverty with Effective Cost Management

Benjamin G. Kleist..... 40

Suicide in the Paradigm of Indefinitely Extended Life

Madeline Hass..... 52

Happiness and Other Good Things: How the Desire-Satisfaction Theory Best Accounts for the Roles of Morality, Authenticity, and Freedom in the Happy Life

Charity LaBuy..... 64

Together but Unequal: Perceptions on the White-Black Sisterhood from 1830 to 1870

Khaila Miles-Semons..... 82

Pink Gauze, Cold Spirits: Asexual Criticism and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*

constance bougie..... 96

“It will not fetch thee much in our Nantucket market”: Whales and Tobacco as Symbolic Condemnations of Manifest Destiny in Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick; or, The Whale*

Colton Schlotman..... 111

The Effects of Anthropogenic Noise on Bird Feeder Communities in the Fox River Valley

Phillip Gruber, author

Dr. M. Elsbeth McPhee, Environmental Studies and Biology, faculty mentor

Phillip Gruber is a 2018 graduate of UW Oshkosh with a biology major (ecology and organismal emphasis) and a microbiology minor. Phillip enjoys hunting and kayaking, and many other outdoor activities. During his third year at UW Oshkosh, Phillip became interested in studying animal behavior and birds. Under the advisement of Dr. McPhee, this interest developed into a successful Honors thesis project, which is represented today in this publication. Today, Phillip continues to pursue his love of the outdoors in Stevens Point, Wisconsin. He plans to continue serving the people in his community by working to preserve and protect the environment, and encourages all readers to pursue their dreams.

Dr. M. Elsbeth McPhee is an associate professor of environmental science and wildlife behavior at UW Oshkosh, where she has served as a member of the faculty since 2009. She received her degree as well as an award for top dissertation from the University of Michigan. After graduation, she went on to work as a research biologist with the University of Missouri St. Louis in the Galapagos Islands, where she studied the behavior of the Galapagos mockingbird. Later, she served as a research associate at Cornell University, leading field research on Syrian hamsters in southern Turkey. Her primary interests revolve around the effects of captivity on behavior and how those effects alter the outcomes of reintroduction programs using captive-reared endangered wildlife. She is currently a member of the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership and collaborates with many member organizations/institutions on research designed to increase the success of the whooping crane reintroduction program in Wisconsin.

Abstract

Many animals are negatively affected by noise pollution. My study focused on the effects of anthropogenic noise on bird feeder communities and how habitat affects the reaction toward that noise. I observed bird feeders at six different sites while exposing them to anthropogenic noise (sounds produced by humans) or prerecorded wind. I measured whether behavior and/or the number of species changed as a function of the noise. My data show that birds exhibited varying responses to the noises depending on the habitat. Birds in the city experienced an increase of individuals present during noise production, while birds in woodland and agricultural habitats experienced a decrease. The data suggest that birds in city habitats are acclimated to environments with high levels of anthropogenic noise, and birds in agricultural and woodland habitats are not. These findings indicate that noise pollution could alter typical behaviors in birds depending on their habitat. To my knowledge, this is the first study to investigate how noise and development levels affect the number of birds present at a feeder.

Introduction

Pollution is a growing issue for a variety of communities. One type of pollution

that is less well-known is anthropogenic noise pollution, which is an excess of noise caused by human populations that may be detrimental to individual organisms (Menzel et al. 1977). Whether noise pollution alters behavior is difficult to determine because individuals may change metabolically so no obvious effects are recognized (Menzel et al. 1977). This is true for a variety of different animal populations.

The consequences of anthropogenic noise are not exclusive to individuals; they affect species interactions as well (Slabbekoorn and Halfwerk 2009). The methods of communication between members of a species are primarily vocal, typically consisting of interaction in mating, competition, or predator-prey responses (Slabbekoorn and Halfwerk 2009). Some examples include mating calls between birds or predator-prey alarm calls in prairie dogs.

Gareth Jones (2008), professor of biological sciences at the University of Bristol (UK), assessed how various species were affected by anthropogenic noise and found that species such as nightingales (*Luscinia megarhynchos*) sang louder on weekdays because of anthropogenic noise caused by commuter traffic. Greater mouse-eared bats (*Myotis myotis*) suffered as a result of traffic noise, which covers up the sounds produced by the moving arthropods they consume, leading to reduced foraging efforts (Jones 2008). Anthropogenic noise, such as commuter traffic, is problematic for a variety of animals, from bats to whales, all of which rely on aural senses for feeding.

As previously noted, marine animals suffer effects from anthropogenic noise similar to terrestrial animals. For example, a study on the impacts of anthropogenic ocean noise found that pilot whale whistles occurred more frequently during and just after military sonar output (Weilgart 2007). This is because military sonar interferes with pilot whale communication, forcing the whales to adapt in order to communicate with other individuals more effectively. Sperm whales, killer whales, and bottlenose dolphins also increase the number or frequency of vocalizations to counteract anthropogenic ocean noise (Weilgart 2007). This noise, which is caused by an increase in sound wave pollution traveling through the water, interferes with marine mammals' vocalizations. This causes a disruption that will either deter animals from that area or require them to alter their vocalization patterns.

Bird populations are negatively affected by novel acoustic noises as well. For example, populations that rely on acoustic communication may be forced to abandon suitable habitats because of noise pollution interference (Francis et al. 2011). This could ultimately alter the makeup of communities and interactions between species.

While observing the effects of traffic noise on vocalizations of grey shrike-thrushes (*Colluricincla harmonica*), researchers found that the birds increased the typical acoustic frequency of their vocalizations (Parris 2009). In contrast, the grey fantail (*Rhipidura fuliginosa*) that were observed showed little to no change in vocalization in response to nearby traffic (Parris 2009). The only difference between the two species is that the grey shrike-thrush typically uses vocalizations of lower frequency than those of the grey fantail (Parris 2009). Aside from the differences in vocalization, both species reacted similarly to traffic noise (Parris 2009).

In the pinyon woodlands of northwest New Mexico, United States, researchers observed a reduction in species richness in direct relation to the location of noise pollution. Three different species of birds were observed nesting near compressor stations in natural gas fields (Barber et al. 2010). In the nearby woodlands, which lack

noise pollution, 14 different bird species were observed nesting (Barber et al. 2010). The researchers concluded that species richness of nesting birds was reduced because of anthropogenic noise pollution in natural gas fields.

Bird species that are negatively affected by anthropogenic noise may also increase their vocal activity to communicate effectively with other individuals. For example, serins (*Serinus serinus*) responded to varying levels of anthropogenic noise by changing their levels of vocal activity (amount of time singing) during weekdays (Díaz et al. 2011). Serins even changed vocal activity between weekdays and weekends because of the different levels of anthropogenic noise pollution (Díaz et al. 2011).

The great tit (*Parus major*) exhibited the negative effects of noise pollution in an experiment analyzing the effect of traffic noise on the alarm calls of great tits. Templeton et al. (2016) demonstrated that great tit responses to alarm calls varied depending on the presence and level of traffic noise. In a laboratory setting, great tits modified the production of their alarm calls by increasing the call amplitude in reaction to anthropogenic noise (Templeton et al. 2016). The study also found that, in a wild setting, anti-predator responses by great tits were greatly reduced when alarm calls were coupled with traffic noise (Templeton et al. 2016).

In some cases, birds do not exhibit a negative response to anthropogenic noise pollution. This is exemplified by the habitat selection of numerous bird species (*Pinus edulis* and *Juniperus osteosperma*) in the pinyon woodlands of northwest New Mexico (Barber et al. 2010). There was no reduction in nesting density near the loud compressor stations in natural gas fields, which was interpreted as birds showing no nesting preference in response to the anthropogenic noise levels. The researchers concluded that nesting density was not reduced near compressor stations because common predators, like the scrub jay (*Aphelocoma californica*), exhibited a negative response to the noise pollution and avoided the compressor station areas, thus making it safe for prey species (Barber et al. 2010). This allowed for an equal nesting density between woodland areas and compressor station areas.

While the effects of anthropogenic noise have been a focus of much research, few studies have examined the effects of anthropogenic noise pollution in varying environments. This study takes a closer look at the effects of anthropogenic noise on bird feeder communities in city, agricultural, and woodland settings in the Fox River Valley of northeast Wisconsin. I hypothesized that anthropogenic noise causes birds to alter their behaviors and that the habitat in which birds are found affects the magnitude of that change. Specifically, I predicted that the birds in a city habitat would experience less of an effect (i.e., change their behavior or use of feeder) from natural and anthropogenic noise than birds in agricultural or woodland habitats. I also predicted that aggressive behaviors would increase in all habitats with the addition of anthropogenic noise because of the stressful noise that is present.

Methods

During April, July, and October in the year 2018, for one week during each month, birds at six feeders were exposed to either human-induced (VectorsBearings 2010) or natural (Nature Relaxation Films 2014) recorded noises. They were played with a Samsung Galaxy S5[®] connected to a Bose Bluetooth[®] speaker at 55 decibels, which were measured with an Extech[®] Instruments sound level meter. The observation/treatment periods took place in the morning (sunrise plus three hours) and evening (sunset minus

three hours) with two feeders observed per period. Bird feeders were placed in each of the six sites two weeks before beginning observations and were removed in October after the last observations had been completed. Data were only collected if the weather was dry and not severely windy (20 mph winds or greater). The first and second weeks showed similar numbers of total individuals, while the third week showed a significantly lower number of individuals. My data were primarily based on the first two weeks of observation.

Two of the bird feeders were placed in a city setting, two in an agricultural setting, and two in a woodland setting. The two city locations were a backyard west of the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh (44.021938, -88.571342), and a backyard south of the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh (43.999904, -88.561905). The two agricultural locations were a backyard south of Oshkosh, Wisconsin (43.899070, -88.482605), and a field east of Eden, Wisconsin (43.692233, -88.300607). The two woodland locations were a forest east of Eden, Wisconsin (43.692083, -88.305008), and the Waukau Creek Nature Preserve west of Oshkosh, Wisconsin (44.000439, -88.776311). The agricultural and woodland settings were at a distance greater than one mile from any four-lane highway. These three environments were chosen to sample completely altered, semialtered, and relatively unaltered environments respectively. Prior to data collection, I constructed an ethogram based on what I described as aggressive behaviors birds exhibited while in a bird feeder community (table 1).

Table 1. An ethogram describing observed aggressive behavior at a feeder.

Aggressive Behavior	One bird, of the same or different species, performs an action directed to another individual that results in the recipient leaving the area. This can be either physical or verbal confrontation.
Physical Confrontation	One bird flies after another individual, or one bird makes direct physical contact with another individual.
Verbal Confrontation	One bird vocalizes in the direction of another individual in close proximity.

Upon arriving at the feeder (at the time of observation), I refilled it to the four-cup mark and placed a Bose Bluetooth® speaker at the bottom of the feeder. I then proceeded to the observation position 20 meters from the feeder and waited for 10 minutes. After 10 minutes, I began an hour-long observation period. I collected all-occurrence data of bird aggression and recorded the number of bird species present at the feeder every minute. The number of individuals never became large enough to encounter a problem with doing so. For the first 20 minutes of observations, I observed the feeder with no recorded noise present, the second 20 minutes had the treatment noise, and the last 20 minutes again had no recorded noise. After data collection, I replenished the bird feeder and moved on to the next site.

I analyzed the data with a multivariate ANOVA that included treatment, habitat, noise type, and week. Within this, pairwise relationships were tested with a TukeyHSD multiple comparison test. This was to compare each variable in my study and conclude whether there were significant correlations. All analysis was conducted in R (R Core Team 2016). This software program was best suitable for my research.

Results

In this study, aggressive behavior was not observed frequently enough to analyze. Across the three different weeks of observations, aggression was recorded on only three occasions. I did, however, find significance when comparing the number of individuals to the week of observations (first, second, third; $F = 8.115$, $p < 0.001$). I observed significantly more birds in weeks 1 and 2 as compared to week 3 (week 1 mean = 4.917, week 2 mean = 3.861, week 3 mean = 0.417). Thus, the following results are mostly based on weeks 1 and 2.

The proportion of individuals present at the feeder differed as a function of treatment and habitat (pre = 0.344, during = 0.283, post = 0.374; $F = 4.126$, $p = 0.007$) and as a function of the interaction between treatment, habitat, and noise type (anthropological or wind; $F = 4.501$, $p = 0.00407$).

In the city environment, the proportion of individuals was greater during treatment than before or after treatments (pre = 0.352, during = 0.454, post = 0.194) (figure 1). In contrast, the proportion of individuals during treatment decreased in agricultural and woodland environments (agriculture pre = 0.322, during = 0.198, post = 0.48), with woodlands decreasing to a lower proportion of individuals than the agricultural areas (woodland pre = 0.364, during = 0.045, post = 0.591). After noise was played, individuals in the city decreased while individuals in the woodlands increased significantly (city during = 0.454, post = 0.194; woodland during = 0.045, post = 0.591).

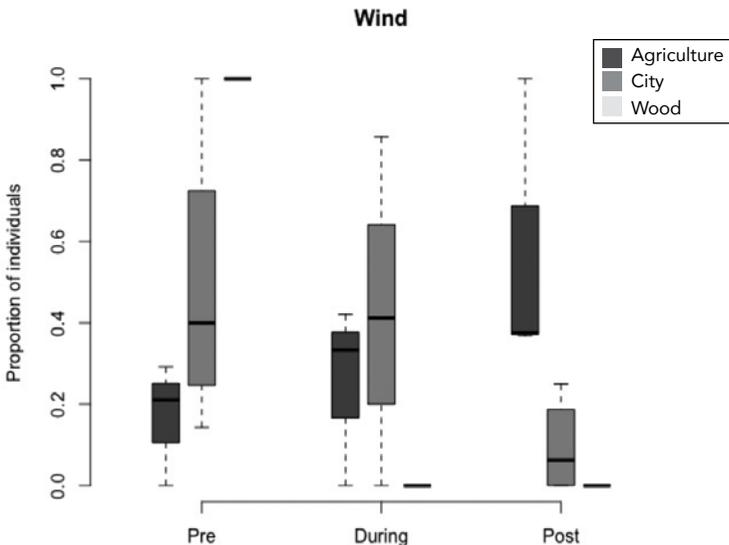


Figure 1. The proportion of individuals as a function of treatment for birds exposed to wind noise. X-axis is treatment. Y-axis is proportion of individuals.

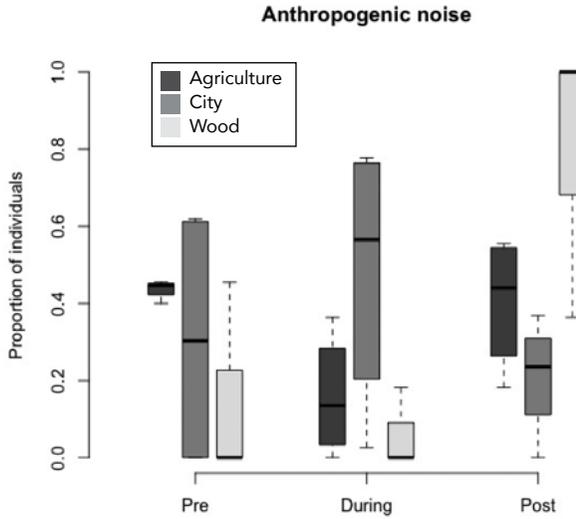


Figure 2. The proportion of individuals as a function of treatment for birds exposed to anthropogenic noise. X-axis is treatment. Y-axis is proportion of individuals.

Comparing the proportion of individuals at the feeder to the treatment, habitat, and noise type was significant. Birds in agricultural habitats showed a stronger reaction to anthropogenic noise than wind noise (figures 1 and 2). City habitats showed an increase in individuals during noise and a decrease after in both anthropogenic and wind noise types (figures 1 and 2). Woodland habitats showed a complete disappearance of individuals after wind noise (figure 1). During anthropogenic noise, the woodlands showed a decrease in number of individuals during the noise and a significant increase after the noise (figure 2).

Discussion

These data support my hypothesis that the habitat in which birds are found affects the magnitude of change caused by anthropogenic noise. The proportion of individuals present at the feeder changed in a different manner for each habitat while noise was being played.

In the city habitat, noise type had minimal effect on the reaction during the treatments. While noise was being played, the proportion of individuals slightly increased as compared to before noise was played. This suggests that individuals present at the feeder were not affected by the production of noise near the feeder. There is a possibility of birds being acclimated to the constant presence of noise in city habitats. If this is the case, the addition of noise would not be a significant change from birds’ existing habitats.

After both noises were played in the city, the proportion of individuals decreased as compared to the proportion observed during the noise. I was unable to find an explanation for this in published works. I hypothesize that this decrease after the use of anthropogenic noise may be due to birds being acclimated to the constant presence of noise. When the noise is absent, this creates a novel environment for birds that are

acclimated to an existing environment. This, however, does not explain why birds were present before the treatment was played.

There is also the possibility that birds present at the city feeders during treatment fled the feeder before the sudden shift to reduced noise in posttreatment. This sudden shift to less noise may have been enough to cause birds to leave the feeder. If so, this does not explain why the proportion of birds present increased during treatment. This phenomenon must undergo further experimentation to determine what is occurring.

In the agricultural habitat, noise type had an effect on the presence of individuals as a function of treatment. When anthropogenic noise was being played, the proportion of individuals decreased but increased after the noise stopped. When wind noise was being played, the proportion of individuals slightly increased. This demonstrated that individuals responded negatively to anthropogenic noise, while not appearing to be affected by the use of wind noise near the feeder.

Noise type also had an effect on presence as a function of treatment in the woodland habitat. When wind noise was played, no individuals were observed on the feeder, and that trend continued into posttreatment. When anthropogenic noise was played, the proportion of individuals decreased and then increased posttreatment. In either noise type, a negative response was observed. This could be because a prerecorded wind or anthropogenic noise would be unnatural for the woodland setting. Unless excessive, wind is not commonly heard at the ground level of a woodland habitat. Likewise, anthropogenic noise is also not commonly heard in these habitats.

After anthropogenic noise was played in the woodland habitat, the proportion of individuals increased. This might be the result of a connection between humans and the predator-prey relationship (Muhly et al. 2011). In some predator-prey relationships, prey appear to be attracted to human activity, whether it is the noise of humans or the presence of human-made, novel environments (Muhly et al. 2011). I suggest this is why birds in the woodland habitat are attracted to the feeder after the anthropogenic noise is played and not after the wind noise is played.

Implications

My work suggests that noise has an impact on the presence of birds in agricultural and woodland habitats. If noise were to permanently occur in these habitats, it could cause individuals to vacate the areas and possibly not return. This has already occurred in New Mexico, where birds avoid noisy natural gas stations because of the noise levels (Barber et al. 2010). For many bird species, a different habitat may be of higher quality than the noisy habitat.

This exodus of bird species could have negative consequences. With a smaller number of individuals in the noisy habitat, there is a reduced chance for reproduction (Slabbekoorn et al. 2008). If reproduction is lower, more individuals will leave the noisy habitat. Over time, some bird species may return to the noisy area as they acclimate to the unideal conditions, but this is neither guaranteed nor beneficial to the community already present.

It was found that great tits (*Parus major*) suffer as a result of traffic noise and are forced to alter the amplitude of their vocalizations in order to adapt to the disturbance during the breeding season (Templeton et al. 2016). One way to manage noise in critical bird habitats, like that of the great tit, would be to close roadways during crucial times

in the breeding season (Parris and Schneider 2009). Reproduction requires not only the presence of birds, but effective vocal communication between them as well (Slabbekoorn et al. 2008). Closing roadways during critical breeding times would create the quiet necessary for better communication, allowing a larger portion of the bird population to reproduce.

Another way to manage the impacts of noise is by creating sound barriers constructed from natural materials. Environmental sound barriers, constructed as stands of thick vegetation or mounds of soil, can be used to reduce the amount of traffic noise in certain areas; however, careful environmental planning is required (Arenas 2008). There are always risks of affecting the already present community and potentially damaging it by introducing invasive/foreign species (Arenas 2008).

Noise ordinances are a practical approach to reducing anthropogenic noise in specific areas as well. As illustrated by serins (*Serinus serinus*), which vocalize more frequently during the night and on weekends, many bird species change their vocalization patterns in correlation to when noise occurs (Díaz et al. 2011). By reducing noises over a certain decibel or during a specific time of day, we may be able to effectively diminish the amount of noise pollution, thus limiting the effect it has on both local and distant bird populations. For example, a mandated decrease of noise during evening hours may allow for better exchange between individual birds at night, a time when vocal communication is crucial.

Conclusion

In conclusion, anthropogenic noise is a source of pollution that affects a variety of animal populations, particularly birds. Because they rely on vocal communication, birds may change vocalizations in response to noise. In other cases, birds may avoid areas with increased levels of noise altogether. This response may be more or less severe depending on how anthropogenically altered the environment is. This is important when it comes to the protection and conservation of specific communities of birds that are being affected by anthropogenic noise. If action is not taken soon, a continual decline in bird populations could be the result.

Acknowledgments

I designed this experiment, conducted all of the observations needed, analyzed the results, wrote a final manuscript, and submitted it for publication.

Dr. McPhee was the supervisor of the project. She oversaw the project and assisted or gave advice wherever needed. Dr. McPhee also prepared and submitted the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) protocol application needed to conduct the experiment. Some of her other contributions included advising experimental design, collecting and analyzing data, and writing.

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The IACUC guidelines were followed throughout this study.

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Environmental Factors and Refugee Resettlement Success in Oshkosh and the Fox Valley

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Abstract

While most refugee settlement studies focus on integration and large cities, our study explores how short-term (independence) and long-term (integration) resettlement *success* is impacted by the environmental factors (social, cultural, political, economic, human, built, and natural) of a small- or mid-sized city through an applied sociological perspective. We also define success and explore how perceptions of success vary based upon residents with refugee backgrounds (RRBs) and service providers. The purpose of this study is not to state how successful individuals are, but rather to determine where they measure against short-term and long-term success frameworks. With this, service providers can better understand how large-scale factors of resettled environments intersect with individual factors, identify trends in resettlement, address systematic barriers within specific aspects of environmental factors, and meet the growing needs of RRBs more effectively through refugee resettlement programs and related services. Our data suggest social and cultural capitals have the greatest potential to help RRBs achieve resettlement success with fewer barriers. We suggest that improving social connections, social support, and community members' cultural knowledge would facilitate greater RRB success with fewer barriers and greater quality.

Introduction

According to the United Nations (UN), by the end of 2017 there were nearly 68.5 million individuals forcibly displaced due to reasonable fear of persecution on account of race, religion, or ethnicity; a "record total for the fifth year straight" as described by the organization. Since 2000, the United States has resettled over one million refugees (Refugee Processing Center 2018), but the influx of resettled individuals ". . . has fluctuated with global events and U.S. priorities" (Krogstad, Manuel, and Radford 2017). In Wisconsin, the number of resettled individuals totals nearly 15,000 with common resettlement locations in Milwaukee, Appleton, Oshkosh, and Green Bay. Oshkosh has resettled the second largest number of individuals in the state since 2002 (Gordon 2017).

Purpose

Oshkosh and cities of the Fox Valley, including Appleton, Neenah, Menasha, and Kaukauna, experience both initial resettlement rates (considered the first “migration,” which occurs when individuals travel to resettlement placement sites determined by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) and secondary migration rates (occurs when individuals leave initial placement sites for personal motivations and migrate to new areas). In addition, the local refugee resettlement services provided by the World Relief Organization are only available to residents with refugee backgrounds (RRBs) for three months.¹ This study serves to provide measurable data that details the specific aspects of each environmental factor influencing short-term (independence) and long-term (integration) resettlement success while discussing major resettlement patterns reflected in individuals’ experiences. The structure for this research is unique because it is applied in nature and seeks to understand how large-scale environmental factors interact with individual characteristics:²

Because [World Relief] has been overwhelmed with serving them [RRBs] during this period, they have no data about how they fare after that point, only anecdotes. The Oshkosh Resettlement Task Force (RTF) is a voluntary, grassroots coalition of nonprofit and governmental organizations involved with providing services to RRBs. The RTF asked us (University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Department of Sociology) to carry out a research project to inform their work. . . . We believe the project can lead to innovations in the resettlement arena that yield workforce and community development. (Van Auken 2018, 3)

This research is designed to inform RRB services on the potential origins of resettlement success patterns and how these factors are reflected in shared experiences of RRBs. It also aims to provide a greater understanding of the service and program improvements required to meet the needs and demands of individuals more effectively, thus encouraging greater resettlement success. Although resettlement programs are often principally responsible for defining individuals’ indicators of success, these reflections are crucial to future program structure and development; they provide RRBs with the tools and skills needed to meet their own definitions of success. By analyzing the structural and environmental factor origins of shared experiences and resettlement patterns, barriers to short-term and long-term success are more easily predicted.

Literature Review

Previous literature focuses on which structural environmental factors—physical (built or natural), cultural, social, economic, political³—impact RRBs on the individual and interdependent level. These current data, however, are limited. There is little existing research conducted from a large-scale sociological perspective that examines the frameworks measuring resettlement success, nor is there much consideration of what constitutes success for individuals who resettle in small cities⁴ (Marks 2014).

Moreover, since individual perceptions of success vary, one cannot assume that integration delineates success for all individuals with refugee backgrounds. The resettlement experience only becomes successful when the individual perceives it as such through his or her own definition. Thus, the link between integration and success is merely an assumption.

Because of their small-city feel (decreased cost of living, safety, and social networks) Oshkosh and the Fox Valley (primarily Appleton) experience secondary migration in addition to primary resettlement.⁵ Therefore, it is important to understand how barriers in achieving short-term and long-term success differ between large and small cities. Most services like World Relief focus only on individual level patterns. In my research, I proposed the utilization of environmental factors would effectively determine these barriers and distinctions, thus providing different results than those previously seen by local RRB services. Although some sources argue that national origins are more predictive of resettlement success than resettlement location (Brick et al. 2010), it would be unreasonable not to consider the role that location may play in creating or reducing barriers, especially if there are observable patterns across several distinct cultural groups. In resettlement success literature, the complex intersection of the individual and the environment deserves greater attention. A sociological perspective emphasizes the interaction between the individual and the larger society, and therefore this study could provide a unique understanding of refugee resettlement in a larger context. The following literature describes commonly cited experiences and barriers resettled individuals face.

Built and Physical Barriers

Often, RRBs are resettled in larger, populous cities because they provide aspects of built capital that offset resettlement challenges (e.g., developed public transport) as well as greater access to services, including affordable housing and employment (Singer and Wilson 2006; Ott 2011). If the only affordable housing available is limited to specific areas, however, individuals can feel isolated from others. Factors including convenient transportation, housing location, and overall accessibility to goods and services can impact employment (Frankum 2002; Srinivasan, O'Fallon, and Dearry 2003) and social opportunities while influencing feelings of belonging. Segregated housing locations can subsequently limit interactions between different social groups and unintentionally promote homogeneity (Frankum 2002), restricting opportunities to increase bridging social capital⁶ and, thus, reducing opportunities to create diverse social connections and support.

Cultural and Social Barriers

Prior literature discusses the culture shock experienced by RRBs when arriving in the United States, which can often be attributed to the transition from a collective-based society to an individualistic one. As a result, resettled individuals may find Americans unfriendly or American cities “lacking community,” further discouraging individuals. They may also struggle reconciling their preconceived expectations of the United States with reality (Covington-Ward 2017).

There are a number of factors related to social capital that act as barriers for those trying to integrate into American society. Some of these impediments include financial capital (institutions and processes that deal with money and generate money: taxes, loans, income, savings, investments) and human capital (health, formal education, skills, knowledge, leadership, and potential) (Harris and Maxwell 2000; Tomlinson and Egan 2002). In order to successfully integrate, individuals must feel supported by and welcomed in the community. Strong cultural competency from the surrounding community fosters a positive environment and encourages social interaction, engendering social bonds and support (Marks 2014). Collectively, these factors strengthen an individual's social

capital and feelings of belonging. Their absence, however, could contribute to feelings of social isolation and negatively impact an individual's social and mental well-being.

Economic and Political Barriers

Language often poses a barrier to quality employment and comprehension of cultural norms and expectations of the new, resettled environment (Shaw and Poulin 2014). Enhanced language ability often results in stronger feelings of acceptance through increased social interactions and cultural understanding, but groups that experience discrimination or negative labeling (which can be provoked through political climate or lack of cultural knowledge) tend to feel less welcomed (Wickham and Shakespeare-Finch 2010). Prior literature suggests that strong social capital can offset the demands for financial capital due to expanded social networks and resources. Strong social capital functions like a "higher quality of employment" (Lamba and Krahn 2003).

Integration Frameworks

While there is limited literature on theoretical frameworks that consider RRB perceptions of success, there is much published debate about frameworks of integration and the conceptualization of integration (Castles et al. 2011). One example of this is the divide between integration definitions from the perspective of the RRB versus the service provider (Ballard 2017).

Integration cannot be accurately measured independently, but researchers and policymakers often create a proxy for it based upon achievement of indicators including employment, housing, education, and health (Ballard 2017). Although specific elements of integration frameworks vary, those mentioned previously are widely believed to influence an RRB's ability to integrate into society. Therefore, achieving these components is often thought to indicate integration (Ager and Eyber 2002; Ager and Strang 2004). Policymakers, the government, and social services use integration frameworks to define what conditions and situations constitute integration (Office of Refugee Resettlement n.d.; Ager and Strang 2004; Ager and Strang 2008; Ballard 2017). Thus, these frameworks guide the structure of resettlement agencies to meet benchmarks and continue receiving funding, regardless of their effectiveness on the individual RRB level.

Methods

The original resettlement study began in March 2016 and was completed in August 2018. The research collected was collaborative in its structure with data (surveys and RRB/service provider interviews) from a larger refugee resettlement study with participant sites in Wisconsin (Green Bay, Fox Valley, Oshkosh, Milwaukee, Madison) and Washington (Seattle). This study focused on participants from Oshkosh and the cities of the Fox Valley as these places have similar social and cultural aspects and are served by the same resettlement organization.

The methodology employed for this study consisted of surveys and interviews. RRB surveys recorded data about demographics and background, migration and resettlement history, services used (local, state, and federal), economic and employment history, physical and mental health, children's educational experiences, and experiences and motivations related to migration and resettling. RRB participants also had the

option to complete a semi-structured interview that focused on understanding how local environmental factors impacted their experiences, and their definition and conceptualization of success. In addition, the interview sought participants' feedback on current services available in the area. Providers completed interviews and focused on their organization's contribution, its definition and conceptualization of resettlement success, and barriers and advantages of resettling in Oshkosh or the Fox Valley.

Thirty-seven RRBs' stories and 13 service providers' experiences were used to draw trends in which environmental factors and their specific components often created barriers for individuals.⁷ Patterns in resettlement success were identified as well. At the time of the study, completed transcripts were used for qualitative data although there were other interviews that had not been transcribed due to time constraints. Further summary and descriptive characteristics of participants are provided in table 1 (see appendix).

Recruitment

RRB participants had to meet three requirements: identify as an individual of refugee background, live in the United States for at least eight months, and be eighteen years or older.⁸ Eligible service providers served RRBs in a professional (e.g., resettlement agency, employment agency, or housing services) or voluntary (e.g., volunteers for formal organizations) capacity. Individuals who met eligibility requirements were recruited through purposive snowball sampling (e.g., social connections and attending cultural events).

Measuring Success

The resettlement agency defined both short-term success (indicators related to independence) and long-term success (indicators related to integration). Although success cannot be measured outright, resettlement agencies often utilize specific frameworks or definitions to measure resettlement success through certain indicators (e.g., feeling safe, social connections, and securing employment). In this study, specific short-term (Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, figure 1; see appendix) and long-term frameworks (Emery and Floras Community Capitals, figure 2; see appendix) were used to measure success. Long-term success was further identified as such:

World Relief has adopted the Ager and Strang (2008) definition of integration: "The process that takes place when refugees are empowered to achieve their full potential as members of society, to contribute to the community, and become fully able to exercise the rights and responsibilities that they share with other residents."

We use the following indicators to assist in determining progress toward integration:

Housing, Employment, Health, Finances, Community Connections, English, Transportation, Parenting/Youth and Legal Status. (McLaughlin 2018)

Ager and Strang note that although it "is problematic to see achievement in these areas [housing, employment, education, health] purely as a 'marker' of integration[, t]hey may serve as such, but they also clearly serve as potential means to support the achievement of integration." Relying on meeting specific individual indicators as a measurement

of success does not necessarily reveal the larger structural influences that create the barriers, nor do these benchmarks denote success for the resettled individual (Ager and Strang 2008). While Ager and Strang's framework acknowledges safety and stability as facilitators to integration, a commonly cited indicator of success in our study, their framework structure suggests the bottom tiers, defined as *foundation* and *facilitators*, must be adequately achieved to successfully build upon feelings of integration (figure 3; see appendix).⁹ There were multiple instances throughout the study where RRBs achieved the markers and means first—a potential consequence of the limited time RRB services can spend working with individuals. To make the resettlement process easier, an RRB participant proposed providing knowledge about American culture: “They explained to us certain things but didn’t have people show you where to go or how stuff works. . . . They gave basic information, but I wish they would give information about the American culture, like basic behaviors and expectations. If you don’t understand the culture, you don’t know how to act” (RRB 44, A). Moreover, because independence is often reflective of American values, it was crucial to incorporate RRBs’ perceptions and definitions of success in the study’s analysis. The perspective of the RRB is not usually considered in the previously defined measurement framework. Even though an individual measures at a particular point on the framework for success, we cannot assume that it automatically meets the individual’s personal interpretation of success. Therefore, the goal of the framework should be to measure and understand which of the indicators equate to success in the perspective of the RRB (Ballard 2017). This way, providers are able to see which specific aspects of each environmental factor impact RRBs the greatest, as well as what advantages or barriers exist within the community from the perspective of the RRB.

Because definitions of integration are loosely specified and vary by culture (Castles et al. 2011), Emery and Flora’s Community Capital’s Framework (figure 2; see appendix) can be used to consider the perspective of the RRB in defining integration. Although their framework focuses on the necessary components for sustainable communities, this framework can be used to understand what resources and experiences RRBs would need to achieve “successful” resettlement based upon their own definitions. Once all the needs of each individual (in each capital) are met, then he or she is considered to have achieved integration. With this framework, long-term success is defined solely by the expectations and perceptions of the individual—not by meeting specific indicators like housing, employment, or education (although these indicators can surely be included).

Data Collection and Analysis

The data collected in this study suggest that similar characteristics impacted residents in both environments. Despite Oshkosh and the Fox Valley creating additional barriers due to their small- to mid-size populations (e.g., less cultural diversity, weaker public transport, limited options for housing and employment), participants stated that the environment promoted feelings of safety and quietness—characteristics that were experienced less in larger cities. These factors often encouraged secondary migration to the area, evidenced by the fact that nearly one-third of all RRB participants were secondary migrants (table 1; see appendix). Commonly cited motivations for migrating to the area included reuniting with family, educational opportunities for children, and a safe place to live. The general trends observed in Oshkosh and the Fox Valley are provided in the next section.¹⁰

Environmental Factors on RRB Resettlement Success

Built Environment

The housing location affected opportunities to meet basic needs and achieve independence based on surrounding services, diversity of land space, transportation options, and overall social environment. A service provider commented that individuals who live in areas with fewer resources “are just more isolated and more dependent” (Service Provider 2) than those living in areas with more resources. If the environment did not provide the resources necessary for achieving independence, basic needs were not met, and, typically, individuals remained isolated, finding it difficult to achieve long-term goals of integration. In spite of this, transportation could overcome these barriers by acting as a connector, linking individuals to additional resources or social interactions outside of their neighborhoods.

Because transportation and housing location impacted multiple community capitals interdependently, these factors are considered barriers to achieving resettlement success on multiple dimensions. Not only are individuals isolated physically, but this combination of factors can also make individuals feel socially isolated and further disconnected from the community, impacting additional capitals (e.g., human, social, cultural, and economic).

Natural Environment

The only reported aspect of natural capital that impacted RRBs was the weather. Because many participants were coming from tropical or desert-like climates, the Wisconsin weather was a shock, especially during the winter. Participants stated that extremes in weather made them miss home even more. One participant, however, stated that he preferred Wisconsin weather as it reminded him of his home in Eastern Europe. For this participant, originally resettling in Arizona was challenging because the climate there was the complete opposite of that of his native home in Poland: “At some point, I would like to move but they [my children] are happy here because this is home. Wisconsin reminds me of Eastern Europe, it reminds me of home and feels familiar. The other places I lived before Oshkosh did not” (RRB 103).

Social and Cultural Environment

Perceptions of social groups, social connections, and language ability seemed particularly impactful for our RRB participants, and data suggested that social and cultural capitals had the greatest potential to reduce or create barriers to success. Frequently, community members’ limited cultural knowledge, exacerbated by the influence of media sources, led to the reinforcement of incorrect, stereotypical, or negative perceptions of RRBs and the process of resettlement. A service provider criticized the media’s portrayal of RRBs saying that they were “not [being] accurately represented in media sources . . . [because] refugees are persecuted minorities” (Service Provider 10). In response, community members often relied on RRBs’ physical appearance to identify who they were and what country they were from. Features like skin color or clothing were used to type individuals like those from Sudan as African American, which impacted how Sudanese RRBs viewed themselves (Service Provider 19, A). RRB individuals tried to combat these perceptions by teaching community members about their cultures: “I am

not another person. I am a person just like them, maybe there is a difference of cultures . . . it can be good. In culture, there is [*sic*], some good things and there are bad things. Maybe you can learn the good from me” (RRB 47).

Our data suggested that RRBs found it challenging to overcome incorrect or negative understandings regarding their native cultures. Although survey responses indicated fewer than 20% (± 8.71) of RRB participants strongly agreed or agreed that they felt others expected them to change their cultural identity, these results conflicted with other findings suggesting RRBs felt pressured to limit the practice of their native language. Some RRBs felt that the United States’ current political climate impacted language use as certain individuals chose not to speak any language other than English in public “because some people don’t like when you speak other languages [not English] here” (RRB 101, A). Because the media from which community members gained information about RRBs was so powerful in creating perceptions, community awareness and education influenced whether the community was seen as open and welcoming. In regard to barriers to successful resettlement, one service provider commented on the importance of cultural knowledge to overcome such stereotypes exacerbated by media:

I think getting local residents to understand why refugees are here and trying to get over some of those stereotypes and stigmas that some local residents might have about refugees. Things like, “they are just going to utilize our resources and not give anything back.” . . . But some people think they are only here to take away jobs from Americans, or that they don’t want to work and just want to receive welfare. (SP 17)

To increase neighborhood awareness and cultural knowledge, organizations responded by providing events for community members and employers to combat these perceptions (e.g., Unity in the Community, job fairs centered around diversity, and police liaison with World Relief). Reaching the target population, however, was difficult, as those who held negative stereotypes did not necessarily attend or were unmotivated to speak to individuals directly. If community members were to practice bonding social capital interactions, or connecting with others who share similar perspectives and experiences regarding RRBs, their perceptions of RRBs will not be as strongly affected as if they were to interact with RRBs directly (Flora, Flora, and Gasteyer 2016).

For those working to engender feelings of community amongst the RRB population, finding ways for fellow citizens to relate to the incoming refugees despite any potential cultural differences is crucial to the RRB integration process. During their interviews, many RRBs expressed that they perceived Americans as unfriendly, unwelcoming, or unknowledgeable about their cultures. One RRB even noted a “lack of community” because Americans “did not knock and welcome them” (Service Provider 20) or attempt conversation with them when they first arrived. As a result, other RRB participants from community-based cultures often felt “closed off and isolated here” (RRB 101, A) because of the United States’ individualistic culture.

Despite resettlement barriers RRBs faced, both service providers and RRBs discussed the power of social connections. Because Oshkosh and the Fox Valley cities have smaller populations, it was easier for RRBs to gain access to resources in comparison to “most places [larger cities] where that wouldn’t happen” (Service Provider 19, B). The social connections more readily available in smaller cities provided individuals with

opportunities that would have been otherwise unachievable. These resources helped reduce barriers to the achievement of short-term success, and have the potential to aid in the achievement of long-term success, perhaps even improving its overall quality. Additionally, participants felt that social connections helped them overcome some political and economic barriers that would have impeded their achievement of short-term success as well.

Economic Environment

Data suggested economic barriers were influential toward a myriad of other environmental factors such as social, economic, and human (education/training) opportunities.¹¹ Survey results showed that the median combined family monthly income was \$2,001–\$2,500, with diverse ranges from < \$1,000 per month to ≥ \$4,001, which included zero to six working adults. More than 55% (± 13.07) of participants indicated that they spent everything they earned each month and, thus, were unable to put money aside for savings or retirement. Although nearly 55% (± 12.89) of RRBs expressed that their economic standard in the United States was much better than the places they lived before their resettlement, many found the cost of living very expensive by comparison.¹²

Most individuals were torn between furthering their English language skills and the need to work to provide for their families, but they also understood that greater language ability often led to improved employment opportunities. Language ability and transportation barriers create a limiting, interdependent cycle. “. . . If she could afford a car, she could get a better job, but she can’t get a better job until she gets better English. It’s a cycle” (Service Provider 19, C).

As a result of language barriers, many skilled RRBs were working in industries unrelated to their skills or training. Of the 21.05% (± 8.63) of individuals who reported that their family made >\$4,000 per month, 62.5% (± 15.1) of them held degrees or advanced degrees (table 1; see appendix). Of these participants, most strongly agreed or agreed (87.5% ± 17.68) that they spoke and wrote English well.

Political Environment

The largest political barrier included an “anti-Muslim sentiment,” most likely influenced by poor cultural knowledge and media portrayal of the East. Even RRB participants who identified as Muslim, but were not from the Middle East (often from Africa or Asia), were categorized as Middle Eastern. A Somali participant stated that people are “culturally uneducated or ignorant” and type “the whole Middle East as the main part of Islam” (RRB 44, B). RRBs who identified as Muslim stated they experienced negative encounters in which community members harassed them and questioned their motives for coming to the United States.

Conceptualizing Resettlement Success

RRBs and service providers were divided when it came to defining success. RRBs often defined success by achieving housing, food, employment, and the confidence to travel the city, indicators that are associated more commonly with independence or short-term success. Participants overwhelmingly agreed that success meant feeling safe, but many also noted the importance of family, freedom of speech, and other human rights.¹³ Less common answers included the importance of feeling accepted or integrated into the community, perceiving success through long-term success definitions.

Although it was suggested that a longer resettlement period should result in long-term success, several participants who had been resettled in the United States for over five years¹⁴ stated they were still having trouble “meeting expectations” of having a “good paying job” (RRB 101, B) or meeting indicators of short-term success. Yet, despite these disquieting feelings, funding and access to RRB services ends after five years, leaving many RRBs still financially unsecure, without the aid and resources they needed to get by. These findings suggest that what is considered short-term and long-term success depends on the individual. Furthermore, short-term success (independence) and long-term success (integration) can occur concurrently, or aspects of long-term success can be observed before completing all indicators of short-term success. Longer resettlement time should theoretically provide more opportunities to create social connections and become involved in the community, which would then lead to integration and inclusion. The greatest predictors of RRBs’ long-term success related directly to their ability to create social connections and the quality of community support, not the length of resettlement time.

Service providers’ definitions of success (table 2; see appendix) aligned better with long-term goals (integration). Although they did not suggest indicators of independence as the overall goal, they nonetheless considered feeling safe and confident enough to travel the city to be a major accomplishment given that most individuals were coming from unsafe countries. They provided no defined time frame, however, within which an individual should achieve such success, despite the fact that services for RRBs stop at five years.¹⁵

Short-Term Success

In reference to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (figure 1; see appendix), Oshkosh and the Fox Valley fulfilled basic needs, often motivating other RRBs to resettle here. Psychological needs, or belongingness and love needs, were often fulfilled by family members and other RRBs of a similar cultural background. While 83.33% (± 14.97) of RRB participants strongly agreed or agreed that they had friendships with American-born community members, participants thought that they would have had more friends or that it would have been easier to create these relationships. Because RRBs perceived community members as unwelcome or uninviting, this impacted how RRBs perceived the strength of integration into the community. This observation ultimately impacts long-term success if RRBs feel social needs (figure 2; see appendix) are unmet. Esteem needs were measured by the achievement of goals. RRB participants set objectives prior to coming to the United States and felt a lack of confidence if they were not achieved; these goals were mostly linked to career and education. Finally, self-fulfillment needs were heavily impacted by language ability. If RRBs had advanced degrees or specific careers back home but lacked the language ability to perform them in the United States, they often had to work in unrelated fields. RRBs’ potentials are severely limited when placed in unideal jobs, which is undoubtedly counterproductive to fostering feelings of success.

Long-Term Success

For most participants, feelings of integration (figure 2; see appendix) were impacted by financial, social, human, and built capitals. Because these capitals interact with each other, it is challenging to state which barrier belongs to which capital. Moreover, even

though RRBs can experience long-term success before meeting all short-term indicators, those unfulfilled short-term benchmarks often pose barriers to the quality of integration (long-term success) RRBs experience.

A New Framework

A new framework could combine both Maslow's (figure 1; see appendix) and Emery and Flora's (figure 2; see appendix) but also take into consideration the progression of indicators in a non-linear movement, unlike Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which requires a linear progression. In this combined model, individuals could complete any part of the framework without having to fulfill the bottom tiers. As suggested through our data, some RRBs experienced long-term success before fulfilling all of the short-term indicators, while others experienced short-term and long-term indicators at the same time. A pyramid model, however, suggests that each tier below another tier acts as a foundation for all higher tiers, and its strength can impact those tiers. Additionally, the topmost part of Maslow's framework, self-actualization, could indicate fulfilling all community capitals from Emery and Flora's model because once all needs in each capital are met, the individual is said to have the resources and experiences to meet his or her full potential. Combining both models removes the definitions of short-term and long-term success and replaces them with common indicators or experiences of resettlement success, regardless of resettled time. This new framework would also consider RRBs' perceptions of success, like feelings of safety.

Summary

In terms of resettlement success, there were no defined time limits to reach short-term or long-term success as participants achieved these concurrently or experienced long-term success before meeting all indicators of short-term success. Much of resettlement success is dependent upon RRBs' perceptions, which in turn influence the goals they would like to achieve. Most RRB participants felt short-term goals of safety needs were easily met, and while some gaps in "physiological needs" and "love and belongingness" existed, they were not completely unachievable (figure 1; see appendix). Esteem needs and self-actualization were dependent upon whether the individual reached his or her personal goals. Gaps in long-term success were mostly related to financial, social, built, and human capitals (figure 2; see appendix).

Environmental factors intersected with individual characteristics such as age, sex, or nationality created unique but sometimes patternable "success" outcomes for RRBs. Oshkosh and the Fox Valley cities' small- to mid-size resettled environments offered "safety, quietness, and good schooling" in exchange for less diversity, fewer services and opportunities (affordable housing, employment), and a weaker infrastructure (transportation). Due to these characteristics, large-scale factors created barriers in all environmental factors, which lead to patternable outcomes in resettlement success across diverse groups.

Economic barriers often led to limited opportunities for education and extracurricular activities for children. In addition, economic barriers potentially impacted health, especially for those with limited insurance status. Economic barriers also created transportation difficulties and reliance on public transport, and limited opportunities for social networks. Yet, when expanded and diverse social networks were provided, RRBs

gained access to services and resources they were unaware existed (e.g., BadgerCare). These social networks and ties also helped reduce the impact of other barriers (e.g., reduce transportation barriers by providing rides to work), increased individuals' power (e.g., political, social mobility), and provided additional opportunities that were once inaccessible due to a lack of available resources (e.g., traveling and college tours). Built capital factors intersected with such previously mentioned barriers, as housing location and transportation were highly influential in impacting RRBs accessibility to resources, services, social networks, and employment opportunities among others. Natural capital barriers included factors of weather and climate that made individuals homesick or reminded them of their home.

Because these specific barriers were repeatedly mentioned within RRBs' experiences, resettlement services would benefit from addressing these factors from an environmental perspective. Improvements in social and cultural capitals, specifically in cultural education, opportunities for expanded and diverse social networks, and improved language ability would promote an inclusive environment by reducing stereotypical perceptions, motivating and providing individuals with greater resources, and fostering an ideal social environment structured to reduce those barriers commonly associated with short-term or long-term success and improve the quality of short-term and long-term success.

Although RRB resettlement success is often conceptualized and predicted through individual-level factors such as nationality, gender, and spirituality/religious beliefs among others, our study provided a unique framework for investigating how intermediary determinants, or environmental factors, created patternable outcomes in resettlement success across diverse RRB participants in Oshkosh and the Fox Valley. Because our study indicated patterns within community- and neighborhood-level barriers, we suggest an environmental perspective should be implemented in resettlement programs because this encourages a more effective approach through trickle-down effects, where the origin of the environmental factor barrier would be targeted instead of emphasizing and relying on individual-level factors to mitigate. While this study investigated the influence of environmental factors on resettlement success, it did not incorporate an intersectional analysis or consider the interaction of intermediary determinants in combination with individual-level factors when trying to conceptualize variations in resettlement success. Future studies should utilize such an analysis because an interdisciplinary approach could be applied to investigate how structural determinants interact with varying social identifiers on social axes (e.g., age, race/ethnicity, gender). These analyses effectively illustrate how such combinations impact the lived experiences and embodiment of individuals through varying levels of social power based on identification of the social hierarchy (Johnson 2018).

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Notes

1. Within the three months World Relief is provided funding to work with individuals, the agency assists and educates families on housing, employment, language classes, and transportation.
2. Major categories of environmental factors include physical (natural and built), social, cultural, economic, and political.
3. For further explanation of each environmental factors' specific components look to the methods section.
4. Appleton has a population of 74,370 and Oshkosh of 66,579 (United States Census Bureau 2016). While these populations fit the definition of mid-sized cities, their structure is small in comparison to the participants' perceptions of traditional gateway cities and metropolitan areas (Singer and Wilson 2007, 2016; Bose and Grigi 2017).
5. Secondary migration refers to individuals who migrate from their initial resettlement location to a different city due to personal reasons or motivations.
6. Bridging social capital refers to the social interactions within diverse groups of individuals. Most often, this capital requires greater conscious efforts (instead of bonding social capital) to seek out opportunities but results in understanding experiences of diverse persons, which reduces social inequalities like poverty and racism (Flora, Flora, and Gasteyer 2016, 158–82).
7. Although this study only considered participants from the Oshkosh and the Fox Valley region, the larger study included more than 100 RRB and 30 service provider participants.
8. Both immigrants and individuals with refugee backgrounds were welcome to participate in this study. If individuals felt their immigration experience and motivations for leaving their country fit the definition of a refugee, they were eligible to participate in the study. Thus, if the individual's motivations for leaving his or her country fit the definition of a refugee: “. . . Someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so” (UNHCR 2018), this person's experience was identified as a refugee and was allowed to participate in the study.
9. At the end of the survey, RRB participants were asked if there was anything else we should know about their resettlement experiences, including what success meant to them. Safety and stability indicators were common themes. Here are some of their responses:

“Safety, stability, no war, quietness.” (RRB 11)

“There's peace here . . . freedom . . . not scared to go around.” (RRB 15)

“Nice neighbors, nice police, people not fighting or killing each other.” (RRB 26)

“Feel safe and have my family here . . . able to find good work.” (RRB 104)

10. Participant data from Green Bay was used to further understand the influence of social and cultural factors as the social environment and population is similar to

the Fox Valley (mid-size city, population 105,139) (US Census Bureau 2016). Data from Green Bay was not used to draw conclusions on resettlement success in Green Bay.

11. Stated RRB examples of limited opportunities include:
 1. *Social*: Unable to participate in or travel to opportunities where social bonding and bridging capital could occur.
 2. *Economic*: Lack of economic capital exacerbated transportation barriers, which limited available employment opportunities (if not on bus line), difficulties attending and enrolling in school-related events, etc.
 3. *Human*: Unable to attend language classes or school because these interfere with work schedule, need to work to put food on the table, unable to go to the doctor or dentist because of cost despite insurance.
12. Economic standing refers to the ability to provide a good standard of living and to purchase food, clothing, housing, etc.
13. We conclude that, because many of the newly resettled RRB participants came from countries of extreme conflict and violence, feeling safe and confident was a large accomplishment and, therefore, created feelings of success.
14. Although there is no defined time to achieve short-term or long-term success, five years is the maximum time that World Relief provides services.
15. Individual characteristics that impacted resettlement success included demographic factors (age, gender, religion, spiritual identity, etc.) and length of resettlement time.

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Appendix

Expanded Service Provider Quotes

Service Provider 2:

"The location [housing] is very important because I think there is no comparison. I see my refugee families that live in certain areas that are very close to some of the shops like what I told you and they adapt much quicker . . . the ones that don't are just more isolated and more dependent . . . they can't do as much on their own, and they can't even with the bussing. . . ."

Service Provider 10:

"Oftentimes, though, refugees are persecuted minorities. Therefore, their culture is not represented in that online research that staff would undertake to understand the culture of the student. So, it was finding cultural background information about the minority culture, the persecuted culture, rather than the majority culture."

Service Provider 19:

A: "You can say you are Sudanese, but you don't know the language and people are typing you as African American, and that's what you become. In those neighborhoods, these are kinds who are out and about. They think about these Americans, and what are they doing? They just stay inside. These kids own the street. Then people think it's just these black people who own it."

B: "It's the other thing of the size of Oshkosh, we all know each other. In most places, that wouldn't happen. But the thing is, I'm a middle-aged white man, and then things get moving. It's sad but it's true. This is the system."

C: “It’s not hard to get a job if you speak some English, but it’s hard to get a good job. This lady is a housekeeper and goes to FVTC [Fox Valley Technical School] for English classes; she was dead set on getting a car. She had a refund check for \$3,000, but I was afraid it wasn’t enough for a car. I told her to put it in the bank, but she was hesitant to do so. She thought if she deposited the money then she would lose her assistance [welfare benefits]. She knows she needs to improve her English so that means spending money at the tech [FVTC], but then that means she can’t work full time. Working full time brings along additional stress factors. You add in a full-time job that requires commuting and transportation issues. If she could afford a car, she could get a better job, but she can’t get a better job until she gets better English. It’s a cycle.”

Service Provider 20:

“. . . They also said their neighbors weren’t friendly because they didn’t knock or welcome them.”

Expanded RRB Quotes

RRB 44

A

Interviewer: “What are some suggestions for improvements in the resettlement programs here?”

RRB 44: “Offer more one-on-one experiences. They explained to us certain things but didn’t have people show you where to go or how stuff works. They gave basic information, but I wish they would give information about the American culture, like basic behaviors and expectations. If you don’t understand the culture, you don’t know how to act.”

B

“In Somali, we have terrorist group and I came here [to America] because of terrorists but people think I am a terrorist. People are culturally uneducated or ignorant, people assume because I am a Muslim we are all bad, because I am Muslim I am a terrorist. People take things out of context [passages in the Quran] to present my culture negatively. . . . In order to learn from people, we must talk to them. People stereotype the whole Middle East as the main part of Islam. You should talk to people to ask if it is true or not. When you ask, it means you have respect.”

RRB 101

A

Interviewer: “What languages do you speak? Do you speak a different language in public versus at home?”

RRB 101: “I speak Russian, Chinese, and Kyrgyz. We only speak English in public.”

Interviewer: “Why?”

RRB 101: “Some people don’t like it when you speak other languages here.”

B

“... People are closed off and isolated here. I feel as I am the only one from my country here in the United States; I have even tried to find others. I just stay home.”

C

“Even though we have been here for five years they [resettlement agency] expects [sic] us to have a good-paying job, but we don’t.”

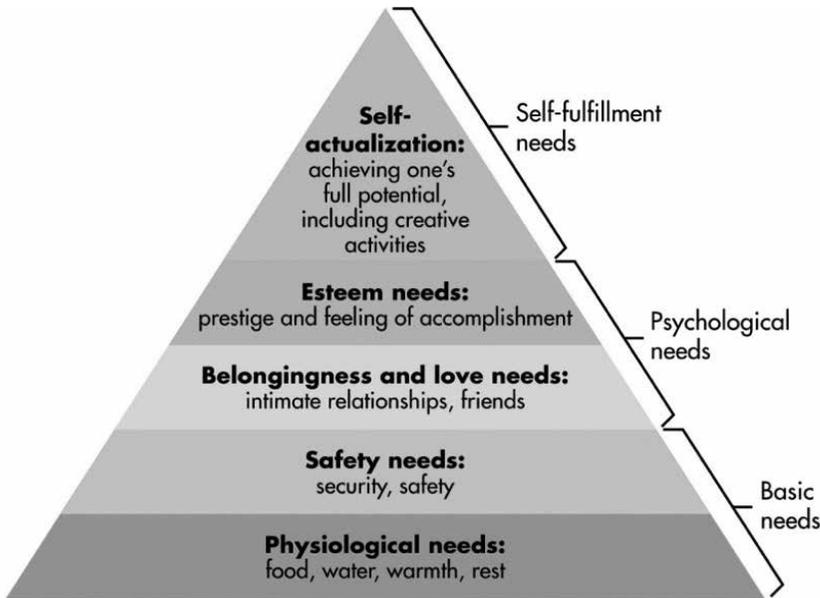


Figure 1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory (1943), Short-Term Success Framework.

Note: Success is measured through Maslow's pyramid, where individuals are only able to move up a tier when the needs of the previous tier are fulfilled. Thus, the lowest tier is considered the most basic needs of all individuals.

Source: McLeod 2018.

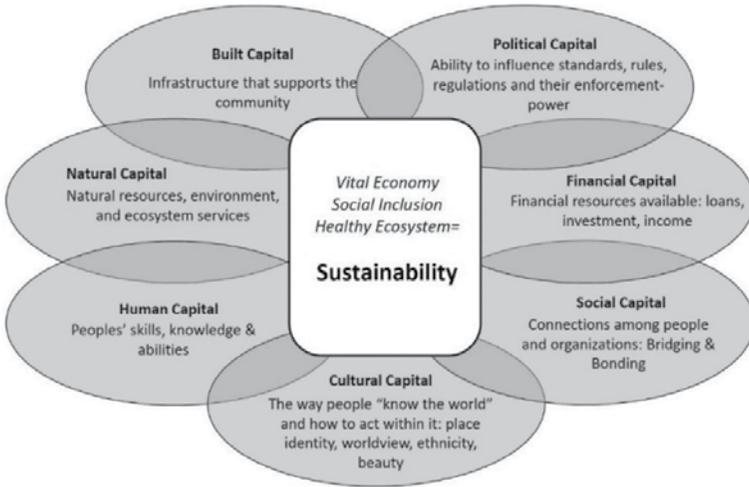


Figure 2. Emery and Flora Community Capitals Framework (2006, 19–35), Long-Term Success Framework.

Source: <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/8/3/284/htm#>.



Figure 3. Ager and Strang’s “A Conceptual Framework Defining Core Domains of Integration” (2008).

Note: Common indicators of refugee integration are presented in a pyramid fashion.

Source: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110218141321/http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/dpr28.pdf>.

Table 1. Socio-demographics of RRB survey participants.

<u>RRBs</u>	
<i>Participants</i>	N = 37
<i>Individuals with secondary migration background</i>	N = 15
<i>Gender</i>	Male: 23 Female: 14
<i>Age (Years)</i>	Median: 1983 (35 years) Range: 1954–1999 (19–64 years)
<i>Year of arrival in the United States</i>	Median: 2014 (4 years) Range: 1971–2017 (1–47 years)
<i>Educational level achieved (in home country)</i>	Less than HS: 15 HS or equivalent: 6 2 years or less college: 8 4 years or less college: 2 Advanced degree (Ph.D., MD, MBA): 0 No response: 6
<i>Educational level achieved (in the United States)</i>	Less than HS: 5 HS or equivalent: 2 2 years or less college: 9 4 years or less college: 1 Bachelor degree: 1 Advanced Degree (Ph.D., MD, MBA): 3 No response: 17
<i>Religious or spiritual identity</i>	Christian: 14 Islam: 12 Shamanism: 4 N/A: 3 No response: 2
<i>Current City</i>	Oshkosh: 28 Appleton: 5 Green Bay: 4

<i>Country</i>	Democratic Republic of Congo: 11 Syria: 4 Iraq: 4 Pakistan: 1 Kyrgyzstan: 1 Poland: 1 Bosnia: 1 Thailand: 3 Laos: 2 Somalia: 1 South Sudan: 4 Afghanistan: 1 Burundi: 1 Kurdistan (region): 1 No response: 1
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Note: Table 1 summarizes socio-demographic characteristics for participating RRB individuals where (N) = 37.

Table 2. Professional and Service Categories for Service Provider Participants.

<i>Education: 3</i>	<i>Hospitality: 1</i>
<i>Public Safety: 1</i>	<i>Religious: 1</i>
<i>Charitable: 3</i>	<i>Employment Services: 2</i>
<i>Government: 2</i>	

Note: Table 2 describes the professional and service categories for service provider participants where (N) = 13.

Big Impact on Small Business: Mitigating Resource Poverty with Effective Cost Management

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Abstract

Small businesses represent a large portion of total business in the United States today. The impact of small businesses on the global economy will continue to grow as the use of online shopping and improved technology increases the connectivity between smaller firms and their customers. Smaller companies, however, operate in a unique environment that forces owners and managers to do more with less. To mitigate challenges created primarily by a lack of both tangible and intangible resources, cost management focused on planning and controlling is vitally important. Currently, cost-management techniques are being used dispassionately by small businesses across all industries. This essay will argue that, by making cost-management information a primary tool in strategic decision-making, smaller firms can better allocate their finite resources to create a lasting, successful future.

Introduction

According to the Small Business Advocacy Office (SBA) (2016), US businesses are considered small when they employ fewer than 500 employees. Small businesses represent over 98% of firms and nearly 48% of private-sector (nongovernmental) employees in the United States. This equates to approximately 118 million employees, according to information published by the SBA in 2016. Small businesses range from the local mom-and-pop ice cream shop to the .com start-up in Silicon Valley. Although the goals and strategies of these companies may be different, the use of cost-management information will continue to be vital for small businesses to enhance growth and stay afloat in competitive markets. Cost management is a subset of management accounting, or the financial data used by management to make decisions, and focuses on planning and controlling costs (Georgas and Vallenge 1986). Without cost management, many small businesses will struggle in a unique environment defined by having the workload

of a large business while being constrained by a lack of resources, short-term vision, and variability of cash flows.

Problem

In terms of general business decisions, all companies, large and small, have to think strategically, as one decision can impact current and future operational success. In practice, when it comes to cost-management decisions, smaller companies tend to have more on the line due to risks and costs associated with the decision (Nandan 2010). These risks are corroborated by the fact that approximately 50% of small firms survive longer than five years—that number drops to nearly 33% for firms lasting 10 years or longer (United States Small Business Advocacy Office 2016). A current analysis of small-business operations has shown that many businesses ignore or fail to identify the need for cost-management information and instead only work on high-impact activities critical to survival (Armitage et al. 2016). This practice, especially during stages of growth, can put a strain on an already tight resource pool, and has a negative effect on costs as output demand increases. Therefore, a more efficient, educated, and urgent use of cost-management techniques related to planning and controlling is needed to alleviate pressures and create stability in a small-business community that is heterogeneous in size, motivations, and environment.

Background

To better understand how small businesses can use specific cost-management techniques to overcome challenges arising during rapid growth, one must first understand the basic cost-management principles related to planning and controlling functions. I will explain these principles; then, I will define the term *resource poverty* and describe how it impacts small-business operations. Next, I will introduce the three key obstacles for small businesses, followed by the current cost-management techniques used by these firms relative to larger organizations. Finally, I will aggregate this information and describe its impact on the longevity of operations for smaller companies. By default, this analysis will show many of the plights small firms face relative to their large counterparts. It is a necessary step, however, to bridge the gap between evaluating the distinct characteristics of cost-management information in a small-business environment and how this information can be utilized to impact current and future business operations during stages of growth.

Essential Cost-Management Principles

Cost management, the subset of management accounting focused primarily on planning and controlling the costs of an enterprise, has adapted as decision makers of businesses continue to shift their priorities away from simply deciding what to spend for the current period and toward reducing costs and allocating resources in the most efficient way possible (Clinton and White 2012; Lepadatu 2012). Even with this refinement of cost management, however, many of the traditional cost-management techniques, such as budgeting, forecasting, and standard costing, are still used today in various forms (Ilian et al. 2010). These activities will be the main focus of this essay, as small enterprises must rely heavily on basic tools due to various constraints unique to their environment.

A specific emphasis will be placed on the planning and controlling functions related to cost management, which I argue are most important for the success of small businesses. Planning is the process of selecting the goal of an organization, deciding how to obtain this goal, and communicating the goal throughout the entire organization to ensure its success. Control is the process of implementing and evaluating decisions and making changes as needed when the organization reaches its goal (Shelleman and Shields 2016). Throughout the rest of the discussion on the use of cost management by small businesses, these two activities will be referred to frequently. Their place within the realm of cost management cannot go unnoticed, because without a plan, a business cannot know where it is headed. After a direction is determined, a business cannot know whether it has succeeded or failed unless it looks at the previous operating results, adapts, and implements changes to its strategic plan. Although the cost-management system and related techniques for each organization will be unique due to its particular informational requirement, I maintain that this system provides smaller firms the best data in a pool of imperfect information to make financial decisions. This is in light of any constraints or outside forces impacting operations during the growth stage of the life cycle (Slavica and Sopta 2017).

Defining Resource Poverty

Smaller businesses inherently have fewer accessible resources than their larger counterparts. In an article about the disparities between large and small businesses by authors John A. Welsh and Jerry F. White (1981), this idea has been termed *resource poverty*. Resource poverty represents the lack of labor, capital, customers, and knowledge available to small firms (Welsh and White 1981). This problem is placed at the forefront of all other issues smaller firms face because it not only limits tangible resources such as inventory, lines of credit, or machinery, but it also affects intangible resources such as employees' ability to learn, to gain insight, and to explore new techniques (Henderson and Kelliher 2006).

Resource poverty creates time and financial constraints on small businesses, which often results in a lack of a growing environment and common organizational knowledge (Henderson and Kelliher 2006). Thus, smaller firms tend to focus on niche markets, developing a single product and lacking differentiation relative to larger competitors (Brush and Chaganti 1998). Although this point may be true in some respects, it is important to note that most small entrepreneurs originally enter their business with a unique skill set or human capital that would provide them the competencies necessary to succeed. Moving forward in this discussion, it will be resource poverty that acts as the pivotal piece driving a wedge between large and small companies. I argue all other problems faced by small businesses during the growth stage of their life cycles and beyond hinge on this single issue. Even with differing goals and strategies, these small companies can limit the effect resource poverty has on operations through the use of planning and controlling cost-management techniques.

Symptoms

Small Business, Big Obstacle #1: Diseconomies of Scale

According to Neil Churchill and Virginia Lewis (1983) in their article titled "The

Five Stages of Small Business Growth,” following a stage of early existence when most firms are trying to develop a customer base and find their place in the market, there is typically a stage characterized by large amounts of growth and increased sales. This increase in output, however, can lead to “delayed or faulty decisions” that result from “weakened or distorted” managerial assumptions, which are derived from poor cost-management information related to planning and control. In practice, these distorted assumptions often arise from ignoring the impact *diseconomies of scale* have on the business operations (McGuigan and Moyer 1989). Diseconomies of scale are defined as the phenomena where long-run average costs increase at higher levels of output as shown in figure 1 (McGuigan and Moyer 1989).

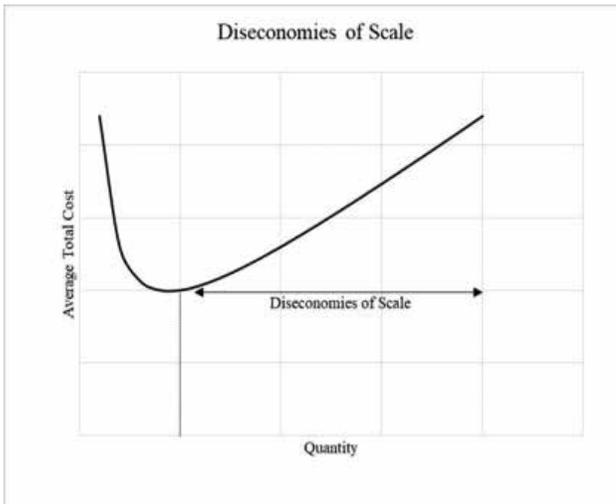


Figure 1. Diseconomies of scale.

The difficulty for small businesses is finding a balance between fast-paced growth and stability while always keeping their resource constraints in mind. As a business begins to grow in number of sales, the demand placed on its supply of inputs begins to increase as well. These demands come not only from the increase in sales, but also from increased competition and other externalities that cannot be controlled by decision makers of a business (Borukhov 1971). This forces managers to consciously think about the impact of diseconomies of scale on their businesses when making strategic planning decisions and setting objectives. Although the phenomenon of increased revenue is great for morale and operations, there is often a lag time between the amount of resources demanded and the amount of capacity available to keep up with this demand, which is impacted greatly by resource poverty (Borukhov 1971). Eventually, managers must begin looking at ways to either reduce costs or increase capacity to avoid losing revenue while keeping their goals and objectives in mind. To avoid losing sales and maintain growth, many managers will often make the strategic decisions to shift from a broad focus and a large target market to a niche strategy and narrowed target market, which

means taking a narrow view of their product and service offerings (Brush and Chaganti 1998). This strategy may provide low barriers and relief from resource poverty in the interim, but this plan stunts the long-term growth of small businesses as managers are more apt to become conservative in their financial decision-making and unwilling to take necessary risks to grow.

Some authors, such as Armitage et al. (2016), Clinton and White (2012), Akroyd et al. (2003), and Nandan (2010), explain the issues small companies face in decision-making as a lack of complexity in business operations—which is defined by the authors as companies having less market share, less product differentiation, smaller numbers of employees, and less available information for decisions. However, I argue that diseconomies of scale and the lack of complexity in business operations, as defined by the authors, are rooted in the same issue; small businesses lack the resources that large companies have in all facets, which, by default, creates more risks associated with financial decision-making (Nandan 2010). Furthermore, this lack of complexity forces many small businesses into a strategy focused on one specific target market or one specific product line, which can be harmful if that one product goes out of style or that target market is hit hard during an economic downturn. If resources were more abundant, as they are for many larger companies, small businesses would have the strategic opportunity to diversify products, services, and markets—reducing their overall risk. The danger of making an incorrect or short-sighted decision could then be mitigated before it has a major impact on operations. In a small business, where resource poverty and the threat of diseconomies of scale play a significant role in both day-to-day and strategic operations, one misguided decision can impede growth and limit future possibilities.

Small Business, Big Obstacle #2: Short-Term Focus

Instead of focusing on activities that will create long-term sustainability and growth for the business, many small-business owners are forced to focus on shallow or low-impact activities critical to survival (Clinton and White 2012). These activities employ a short-term focus, where success this week, this month, or this year acts as a guiding light for strategic decision-making, instead of a long-term approach that emphasizes planning for the future, controlling costs, and profiting (Clinton and White 2012). Although it is nearly impossible to separate this idea from resource poverty—many small businesses must focus on month-to-month performance to make sure the bills are paid—it cannot be ignored that many growing small businesses fail to plan for their future. This, in turn, acts as a gateway to higher costs and diseconomies of scale as discussed previously. In a 2016 survey of Australian and Canadian companies, which for our purposes reflect similar business practices as those for US companies, fewer than 50% of small- and medium-sized enterprises surveyed utilized operating budgets on a high level; 91% of those companies also do not use any form of flexible budgeting techniques (Armitage et al. 2016; Akroyd et al. 2003). Eventually, this lack of strategic direction gives way to the inefficient use of resources and higher costs, and it forces managers to take *fire measures*. This term, coined by economics professors Ante Slavica and Martina Sopta (2017), means providing short-term relief to costs by reducing wages, using lower-quality products, and providing less customer service, among other tactics. Although cutting low-impact activities provides quick relief, these types of decisions often lack

sustainability, and while they can lower costs and make the business more competitive in the short-run, they do not correct the root cause of the issue.

Unless small businesses develop long-term strategies for growth and success with planning and controlling in mind, they will soon find themselves in a vicious cycle of putting out fires by cutting costs. With resource poverty already acting as a limiting factor for performance, however, eventually there will be no more costs to cut. Complications from diseconomies of scale will set in, and small businesses will succumb to the various pressures put on them by outside forces. Even with wide-ranging strategies, environments, and motives, all business owners must keep in mind the short-term effects of each decision on their businesses. It is vitally important, however, for businesses to keep the end goal of profitability and sustainability in mind to survive long-term. Resource poverty and other restraints unique to small businesses may limit their applied strategic cost-management practices related to planning for the future and controlling costs, but they do not deter the need or the importance of these activities in developing a long-term, strategic plan to best allocate resources for success (Clinton and White 2012).

Small Business, Big Obstacle #3: Liquidity

When evaluating small-business cost-management techniques during the growth stage of the life cycle, it is impossible to ignore the major impact cash has on growth. For smaller businesses, cash is king; what is coming into the business, what is going out, and what will be needed in the near future all are questions that act as basic principles for operations, planning, and control (Armitage et al. 2016). Therefore, it would only be logical to implement a cash budget or cash flow analysis on a weekly or monthly basis to ensure a healthy cash balance is maintained. Small businesses, however, struggle with their inability to get large amounts of financing from banks, the seasonality of revenue streams, and the major fluctuations in cash balances. The cash fluctuations are commonly caused, in part, either by the seasonality of operations and a lax credit policy or management's lack of knowledge of proper cash-management techniques. These issues make static budgets ineffective; they do not shift from month to month relative to changes in sales or other factors (Schweser 1978; Welsh and White 1981).

Unfortunately, many small-business owners fail to see these issues and often wind up with either a shortage of cash or a large excess at the end of the month. They lack the background or knowledge to cope with these issues and end up losing the opportunity to make a return on excess holdings (Schweser 1978). These factors, combined with the lack of capital small businesses typically begin with, act as a unique obstacle that makes cash management for these firms extremely difficult. For example, if a sign in front of a restaurant franchise were to burn out, there would likely be excess capital available from the parent company, and the sign would be fixed quickly. If the restaurant were, instead, a mom-and-pop breakfast cafe, fixing that sign might not be so easy. Likely it would represent a major expense where cash may not be readily available unless proper planning and controlling techniques were in place.

Large companies' growth rates are relatively slow and revenue streams are steady under normal business operations and conditions when compared to smaller enterprises (Welsh and White 1981). This stability allows larger companies to develop and sustain a steady cash balance, which can translate into a better long-term strategy for growth and less uncertainty in day-to-day operations. Although the example provided is simplistic,

it is important to keep the bigger picture in mind; the operations of a small business rely heavily on cash as a resource. Even with large variability in cash balances and growth rates, utilizing some form of cash-management techniques can provide owners and decision-makers the information necessary to plan for the future and mitigate risks related to a shortage of cash or unforeseen issues (Cooley and Pullen 1979).

Solutions

Small Business, Big Changes: Current Cost-Management Techniques

Many small businesses tend to make only light use of a few basic cost-management techniques. The primary argument of this essay is that small businesses often lack the resources of their larger counterparts, thus limiting their capabilities to use cost-management information in financial decision-making. Although I understand that small businesses need to focus on primary activities for business operations while often neglecting to provide resources for secondary activities like cost management, it should be argued that cost management is as critical to the survival of small companies as it is for all others. Professor Gheorghe Lepadatu (2012) affirms this idea and argues in his article that, although cost-management information and techniques will be unique to each individual company regardless of size, motives, and strategy, their importance in the decision-making process is undisputed.

The future of every firm is uncertain, but the use of cost information, specifically related to planning for the future and controlling expenses, can lessen this uncertainty in the decision-making process (Lepadatu 2012). Without cost-management information such as cash flow analysis, budgeting, and forecasting, small businesses miss out on evaluating opportunities such as the profitability of new products or customer segments (Shelleman and Shields 2016), which can allow for diversification and reduce risks, as discussed previously. For many small businesses, budgeting and basic cost analysis (fixed vs. variable costs) on a small scale are the most commonly used cost-management tools. While larger businesses leverage cash flow analysis, customer profitability analysis, and economic value added assessment, smaller businesses rarely use these techniques (Ilian et al. 2010; Slavica and Sopta 2017). It should not be recommended that all small businesses take on highly technical cost-management techniques that utilize complicated algorithms or use an abundance of resources because that would be ignoring the basic principles of a cost vs. benefit analysis and the premise that small businesses must operate through resource poverty. Neglecting to explore or actively choosing to overlook specific techniques related to planning and control functions and continuing to manage the business based on misguided information or prior experience will create more problems than it solves.

Authors Chris Akroyd, Julie Harrison, and Frederick Ng argue in their article on management accounting practices of small businesses that “simple management accounting information can be sufficient if the managers have a detailed understanding of the underlying process” (2003, 96). However, I argue that managers of businesses can gain a greater knowledge of their own business processes by looking at cost-management information. By using cash flow analysis, managers can have a better understanding of the amount of cash that is earned and spent to pay bills, purchase inventory, and cover other expenses, and can better understand when their operations need to be running at

peak. More data (raw facts and figures) can provide more information (organized data with context) for making more accurate financial decisions. If a manager can better plan for when he or she will have excess cash, more revenue, and a need for faster production, then better investment decisions and greater knowledge of business operations can be attained. Without some basic cost information, owners and managers will struggle to get a firm grasp on how to manage their scarce resources and create customer value during times of growth and profitability (Nandan 2010). Although one may argue that small-business owners who started their own businesses, developed the policies and management-reporting practices, and know their business inside and out should not need excessive cost-management techniques to be successful, I believe this idea is what creates the statistic shown in figure 2; for each business that opens, nearly three others will fail within the first five years of operation (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics 2017). If designing and implementing specific cost-management techniques related to planning and controlling are not high priorities in the early years of operation, small companies are feeding into the theory that small businesses do not need this information due to lack of market share, product diversity, employees, available information, or other misguided notions. Instead, I argue that smaller enterprises face many of the same complexities and issues larger businesses face; yet, as discussed previously, they lack the resources and strategic direction, which can be alleviated through exploring cost-management tools (Nandan 2010).

Ratio of Closed: Open Small Businesses Since 1994

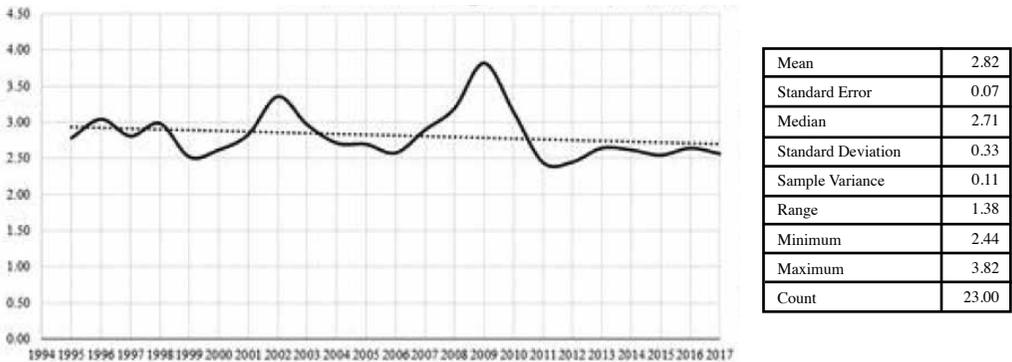


Figure 2. Ratio of number of small businesses (under 500 employees) closed within five years to new establishments opened.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Small Business, Big Impact: Future Outlook and Limitations

With nearly all firms in the United States being considered small businesses (over 98%), their future economic impact cannot be ignored. So many of these firms fail, however, for a variety of reasons, one of which is a lack of business knowledge on planning and controlling resources—the lifeblood of cost-management techniques (Shelleman and Shields 2016). As of 2014, nearly 50% of all US employees were working

for small businesses, as shown by the trend line in figure 3 (United States Small Business Advocacy Office 2014). Although most businesses are small, it is difficult to pinpoint a single practice or technique essential for success (Akroyd et al. 2003). This statement is not made to contradict prior arguments in this essay advocating for the use of cost-management techniques related to planning and control; instead, it is made to highlight the commonly known fact that what may work extremely well for one business does not necessarily translate to others. In fact, because there is no one-size-fits-all solution to a successful small business, it is all the more important for business owners and managers to collect information on their operations and utilize cost-management techniques to prepare for the future and constrain current costs.

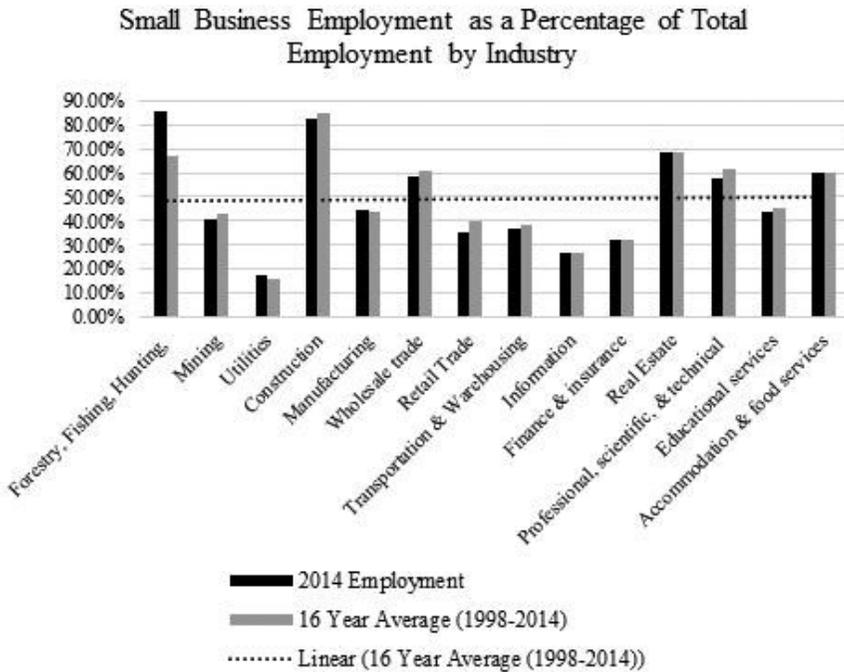


Figure 3. Number of small business employees as a percentage of total employees.

Source: United States Small Business Advocacy Office.

The heterogeneous nature of small businesses makes comparisons across companies extremely difficult, which often leaves many new businesses following in the footsteps of their larger counterparts or using cookie-cutter plans prescribed by experts claiming to get businesses booming. Such plans, however, are often ineffective due to the unique set of circumstances small businesses face, among other disparities, in terms of resource availability, market-share ownership, and logistics (Welsh and White 1981). A more effective approach for many businesses would be to look within their own economic environment, regardless of their industry, to get a better understanding of how to operate and work under the difficult conditions many small businesses face (Dodge and Robbins 1992). This practice is not only more economical for many small enterprises, but can

also provide more beneficial information and useful cost-management tools than they would have had otherwise. Therefore, the genuine difference between large and small companies does not lie in the need for cost-management information but rather which techniques best suit their operations for the current stage in their business's life cycle.

Conclusion

It is clear that challenges faced by small businesses are often unique to those commonly experienced by large firms. That being said, one of the major issues small-business owners faced decades ago is the same issue plaguing owners and decision makers today—what is the best way to allocate a scarce amount of resources to create the most profit for a growing business? I argue that this question cannot be determined simply, but specific functions related to planning and controlling such as cash flow analysis, budgeting, and forecasting must be used to alleviate constraints small businesses face due to resource poverty, a short-term focus, and volatility of cash flows. As small businesses continue to make headway in a growing economy that is being further interconnected by online networks, it will be extremely vital for the owners and decision makers of small businesses to use the cost-management techniques described previously. Without them, diseconomies of scale will only continue to constrict the tight resource pool businesses already face as demand increases, and inefficient techniques born from short-term views and prior experiences will continue to fail. Although there will always be some level of ambiguity when making estimates about the future, with cost-management techniques, small businesses will be better prepared to strategize and handle this uncertainty.

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Suicide in the Paradigm of Indefinitely Extended Life

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Abstract

If medical science is successful in finding cures for all fatal illnesses, then it will bring about a world in which everyone dies either in an accident or by suicide. This would mean the beginning of a paradigm of indefinitely extended life that would necessarily affect our relationship with death. The purpose of this work is to clarify our thinking about suicide within the paradigm of indefinitely extended life. I argue this context would affect our calculus concerning the moral permissibility of suicide because it would increase our certainty about the eventual circumstances surrounding our deaths. While most would consider the endeavor of medical science to find cures for terminal illnesses morally good, the consequences of complete success deserve consideration. Death is an unavoidable human reality; therefore it is vitally important that we understand potential changes to our relationship with death before they occur.

Introduction

Many people seem to believe that suicide is always the wrong choice, always something that should be discouraged, even if they do not have an argument for why suicide is morally impermissible. In practical application, suicide-prevention facilities make use of rhetoric including the idea that suicide is never the answer. In this paper, I will argue that some of the beliefs or assumptions that bring about this view are based on incidental features of the way we view suicide that do not always hold true. In order to illustrate this, I propose a thought experiment that I will refer to as the paradigm of indefinitely extended life. The structure of my paper will be as follows: first, I will begin by articulating this thought experiment and explaining why it is a legitimate and useful context in which to consider the issue; second, I will make an argument in brief for why suicide is, at least sometimes, morally permissible as justified by the principle of autonomy; third, I will examine the reasons why we attach significant disvalue to suicide even in cases where it is not clearly or explicitly immoral and argue that concerns regarding this disvalue would be significantly diminished within the context of this thought experiment. Finally, I will briefly examine several implications of these ideas and suggest a direction for further work on the topic.

The Thought Experiment

The thought experiment I propose begins with the possibility of the total success of medical science in its current endeavor. Medical science is currently working toward cures for all fatal diseases and illnesses; if this is successful, it will effectively bring about a world in which everyone dies either in an accident or by suicide.¹ A world such as this serves as the domain of the thought experiment that I call the paradigm of indefinitely extended life.² Within this world, medical science has advanced to the point where cancer, Alzheimer's, heart disease, etc. have all been eradicated. Fatal illness, chronic or acute in all its various forms, has been overcome and no longer leads to death.

It might seem like this paradigm would leave people to die peacefully, free of illness at advanced ages, but this end is not necessarily the case. Researchers like Aubrey de Grey have argued that aging could be cured with sufficient research, thus removing the hard stop that exists after approximately a century of life within human genetics. This perspective—that old age represents not an inevitability but one more variety of illness that may be cured—has been gaining traction. De Grey's work has already resulted in the founding of the SENS Research Foundation, an organization dedicated to finding a treatment for aging.³

The idea that senescence, or biological aging, is another illness to be cured should not be taken lightly, of course. If we reject the idea that senescence should be cured, then the complete success of medical science would result in a world in which the majority of people die of old age. This choice, to view senescence as an illness to be cured or not, creates a fork in the road. Both paths raise questions that deserve exploration, but an examination of the reasons for and implications of one view or the other is outside the scope of this paper. The existence of organizations, like SENS Research, that are working to cure biological aging provides evidence that senescence-as-illness may be the perspective toward which our current medical science is heading, for better or worse. If the conclusion of this paper seems unsatisfactory, then this may be the assumption that requires examination, and this outcome would have interesting implications of its own. If we do take the perspective that senescence is not an inevitability but another illness, however, then triumph over illness and disease would include conquering old age. Since this is the perspective that I wish to examine in this paper, the paradigm of indefinitely extended life would include the removal of the hard limit of life expectancy.

Success over fatal illness and disease, even to the point of success over aging, does not translate to immortality, however. We could definitively defeat fatal illness, but this does not mean that the human organism would become impervious to other forms of destruction. Although sensationalists phrase the total success of medical science in terms of immortality, in the absence of additional advances, each of us will remain fragile and mortal; the range of potential causes of death will have simply been reduced.⁴ Medical science will have eliminated certain causes of death, not death itself. Even if a few incredibly lucky and extremely careful people end up living through several millennia, the underlying reality of their inherent mortality would not change. Unless we succeed in escaping the final result of entropy, then the heat death of the universe will provide the ultimate hard stop that was once provided by life expectancy.⁵ What this paradigm means—and what I examine in this thought experiment—is indefinitely extended life: life that may continue for an unknown amount of time but only until an external cause results in its termination.

Although I am proposing this paradigm as a thought experiment rather than a likely or imminent future, we should still recognize that it is a potential result of the endeavor that is currently being undertaken by medical science. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the three leading causes of death in the United States in 2015 were heart disease, cancer, and chronic lower respiratory disease, each of which is the research subject of various institutes and organizations. Of the top ten leading causes of death in the United States as of 2015, all but two were medical issues of some sort. The remaining two were accidents (phrased as unintentional injury) and suicide.⁶ If science succeeds in eliminating the medically treatable causes of death, it would not mean that fewer total people would die, but that the people who might have died of some since-eliminated medical malady would die instead from another cause.

The limitation of potential causes of death is the feature of indefinitely extended life with which I am most concerned. As mentioned, potential causes of death within this thought experiment would be limited to accidents or suicide. This plausible—if unlikely—reduction of possible causes of death provides a useful scenario in which to examine the features of potential ways to die that cause us to view suicide as particularly bad. If I am correct, it should also bring into focus the ways in which our assumptions about the relative badness of these two deaths is faulty. Ultimately, it allows us to clearly look at suicide and see it as one option that may be better or worse than constrained alternatives.

Autonomy and the Moral Permissibility of Suicide

The argument I will employ for the moral permissibility of suicide comes from the principle of autonomy: each of us has the right to make decisions about our lives, as long as our decisions do not directly interfere with the lives and autonomy of others. This principle is found in numerous moral theories, including both utilitarian and deontological theories, and can be seen in both the foundational texts and contemporary defenses of these theories. This is the central argument of the right-to-die movement that has sprung up over the past half century: if a person has the right to make decisions that do not directly harm or interfere with others, then other things being equal, they should have the right to decide to die as well. The argument does not end here, of course, but this is the foundation. Taken to its logical conclusion, the right to control one's life should include the right to control the end of one's life: one's death.

We do, of course, think it justifiable to restrict autonomy in certain familiar cases. The most obvious limitation on autonomy is that it cannot be used as justification for choice or action that significantly interferes with the life or autonomy of others. Thus, in the same way that murder and theft may not be justified under the principle of autonomy, we might conclude that, when suicide directly interferes with the lives or rights of others, it becomes comparably unacceptable. To illustrate, a healthy parent of small children or someone who has just signed a 30-year lease may be ethically prohibited from choosing suicide, since doing so would result in neglect or the failure to fulfill agreed-upon responsibilities.

An objector might suggest that every instance of suicide seriously affects others; however, this is not necessarily correct. What seriously affects others is not suicide per se but rather death, and death is not an optional activity. One does not have control over whether they die but only the potential to choose the cause and timing of an otherwise

inevitable death. This becomes especially significant within the paradigm of indefinitely extended life, where the potential causes of death are limited to suicide or accident. If someone refrains from suicide within this paradigm, they will eventually die an accidental and, therefore, unexpected and unprepared for death. This objection to suicide is against acting in a way that affects the lives and autonomy of others, but suicide where notice is given and the consequences discussed and planned for would interfere less radically with others' lives and rights than the alternative accidental death would. The negative effect is not the result of suicide specifically but of death, which is unavoidable and, therefore, outside the realm of the discourse of autonomy.

Another limitation of autonomy is against the incompetent. We generally do not take the autonomy of small children, the intoxicated, or those in the throes of an obviously temporary state of madness seriously.⁷ We do not allow children to sign contracts, we do not accept the consent of the inebriated, and we restrain or temporarily commit people to psychiatric hospitals. When someone is unequipped to make an informed, rational decision, we do not consider them to have autonomy in a strong sense. This provides a reason to dissuade or restrain children, the intoxicated, the temporarily insane, etc. from committing suicide, but it does not provide an objection to the suicide of rational adults.

The question whether suicide can ever be rationally chosen or whether it is inherently a sign of irrationality has become a central feature of the philosophical debate over suicide, and it plays a significant role in much of the recent writing on the topic.⁸ While a comprehensive consideration of the factors necessary for rational choice of suicide is outside the scope of this paper, the work of Margaret Battin, a professor of philosophy and medical ethics at the University of Utah, is particularly illuminating here. Battin offers several necessary features for rational choice: the ability to reason, a realistic world view, adequacy of information, and alignment with the agent's interests. While Battin's proposal presents only one among many ways we might understand the factors that are necessary for rational choice, it does highlight the relevant concerns involved in the discourse.

Within the thought experiment I have outlined, it seems that suicide could easily meet each of these requirements for rationality. Since the case does not involve the presence of factors such as late-stage dementia or heavy sedation that might interfere with a person's ability to reason, people could certainly meet this requirement. We can also assume the presence of a realistic worldview for similar reasons, since there are no immediate factors that might interfere with a person's worldview in this context.

The third criterion, adequacy of information, might be challenged, since we never have full information about what it might be like (or, perhaps more accurately, what it might not be like) to be dead. Richard Brandt, a professor of philosophy at the University of Michigan in the late twentieth century, addresses this, however, with the argument that suicide is not a choice between two states, one of which is unknown, but a choice between different possible lengths of one's life: "The person who is contemplating suicide is obviously making a choice between future world-courses: the world-course that includes his demise, say, an hour from now, and several possible ones that contain his demise at a later point."⁹ If this is the actual dynamic, then we can grant adequacy of information, since we do have information about world-courses that include our demise soon and those that include our demise later. Some might still want to point to lack of information, since we do not know all of what might happen in these future world-

courses, but, as Brandt points out, “we always have to live our lives by probabilities and make our estimates as best we can.”¹⁰

The fourth criterion for rationality—alignment with one’s interests—may be reached when we consider, as Battin does, suicide as the avoidance of harm. As per Battin, “suicide to avoid likely future evil . . . is not irrational as a consideration of future interests.”¹¹ Within the context of the paradigm of indefinitely extended life, the future evil to be avoided is a painful and unexpected death via accident. Even though this thought experiment explicitly assumes the absence of extreme suffering from illness, it does still provide a known, unavoidable future evil. If avoidance of this specific future evil is given sufficient weight by the agent deciding to choose suicide, then the agent seems to be able to say that suicide is aligned with their interests. This means that suicide can, at least sometimes, be rationally chosen, and the thought experiment I have illustrated provides a prime example of the sort of situation in which it might be.

Various objections have been raised against this argument for the moral permissibility of suicide, many of which have a religious component. One is that we should not play God (literally or metaphorically) by making direct decisions over life and death. This might be based either literally on belief in a higher power whose area of authority we should not trespass, or metaphorically in pragmatic concerns about making fundamental changes that could have significant and unforeseen consequences. While suicide may be the sort of act that falls into the category against which this objection might be leveraged, the societal domination over illness and disease required by this thought experiment would fall into this category just as well. Medicine that can extend life beyond where it would have otherwise ended constitutes the playing of God over life and death as much as ending life before it would have otherwise. The two directions are not materially dissimilar when viewed from the perspective of this objection; it seems that, as long as we are willing to play God when it extends life, we cannot rely on opposition to playing God as an absolute principle that forbids suicide.

Yet another objection is that suicide inherently violates a principle of the sanctity of life, as discussed by philosophers such as Jonathan Glover.¹² While this principle has been argued against wholesale by the likes of Peter Singer, professor of philosophy and major voice in the contemporary ethics literature, it is also not clear that the principle really condemns all suicides even if accepted.¹³ Proponents of the sanctity of life principle do not seem to mean that life should be preserved at all costs or that life must be extended as long as it possibly can be. They still find it morally permissible for people to make risky choices that will foreseeably shorten their lives, such as smoking or engaging in high-risk activities like extreme sports. Furthermore, given the specific confines of the thought experiment under examination, it seems especially unclear that condemning everyone to an eventual violent death via accident is more in line with a view that emphasizes the sanctity of life than allowance of suicide that facilitates a less chaotic and violent death.

The Nonmoral Disvalue of Suicide

If objections are ultimately unsuccessful and this line of argumentation holds, then it seems that suicide must be morally permissible in at least certain cases. Nevertheless, many people think suicide carries significant disvalue in every case, even if it is morally permissible in some. This disvalue seems to be primarily due to the way we tend to imagine suicide and the factors that precede it in current Western English-speaking

society.¹⁴ The paradigm of indefinitely extended life facilitates the imagination of circumstances that are sufficiently altered so that some of the factors influencing this belief in disvalue are illuminated.

The most significant difference made by the thought experiment is the limitation of potential causes of death other than suicide to one: accidents. This helps clarify the relevant question, not why suicide is bad, but why suicide is worse, less preferable, the object of some greater (not obviously moral) disvalue than other forms of death. In other words, why do we retain the desire to discourage suicide even if it is not morally wrong? What is it about suicide that makes us recoil from it more than from the prospect of other forms of death?

The intuitive reasons for suicide's disvalue are as follows. Suicide is usually the result of debilitating mental illness: a cocktail of depression, anxiety, and other regrettable factors. It comes as a shock to friends and family. It cuts short a life that would have otherwise gone on, so it removes all of the possibilities for positive experiences a person might have had. Additionally, it may be a clearly painful way to die, depending on the method chosen.

As I have said, the factors that create these concerns are incidental features of our perception of suicide today and would be significantly diminished within the paradigm of indefinitely extended life. First, a diagnosable mental illness, the final consequence of which is death, is a fatal illness, and would thus fall into the category of diseases we are presuming have been cured within the context of this thought experiment, the parameters of which need not be limited to what we consider bodily illness. The proper realization of this paradigm would include the effective treatment of fatal illness in all its forms, rather than just the most commonly recognized ones. Even if such a facsimile of the paradigm is produced wherein mental illness remains, suicide that is prompted by the distortion of thought and ability to reason about one's likely future and the value of one's continued life, especially when the suffering that suicide is often sought to relieve is already significantly treatable, does not meet the requirements for rational choice and may be excluded.¹⁵

Second, there is little reason for suicide to come as a surprise to loved ones within this thought experiment. Currently, it does come as a surprise because individuals who are seriously contemplating the decision feel unable to discuss it with loved ones due to the fear of losing their autonomy, which is a byproduct of the societal disapproval.¹⁶ This would likely not be the case within the paradigm we are imagining. If suicide is viewed as the only way to avoid the unexpected, unpredictable, and painful end that would eventually come from an accident, it would be reasonable to expect that people would be more willing to discuss the possibility with loved ones, thus reducing or removing the surprise we associate with the phenomenon today.

An additional point that one might make is that loved ones would be hurt by the knowledge that a loved one desires to die. This contention is baseless, however, absent other factors and the presumed suffering of mental illness. Within the bounds of the thought experiment I have defined, suicide would look more like the peaceful end, the route one chooses in order to take control of their personal narrative rather than await an unknown fate. If suicide comes to be seen more as a purposeful closing of one's life than as the desperate cry for help it tends to be portrayed as today, the suggestion that individuals would be hurt to know their loved ones are ready to die becomes much less certain.

Third, we think of suicide as cutting a life short, precluding opportunities that would have arisen in the future, but our view of accidents seems to be similar. Any individual accident may be theoretically preventable. This bus could have been stopped, that human error avoided, but as a category within this thought experiment, accidents are inevitable. The counterfactual argument that someone might have had further opportunities does not go very far as a result. If both accidents and suicide seem to cut life prematurely short, at least suicide may be chosen at a time when one's goals have been accomplished and the loose ends of one's life have been tied up to whatever extent is possible in the course of a human life.

Finally, suicide, unlike accidental death, need not be painful. It is likely to be so only when people circumvent established medicine to find a means. Effective, painless means for bringing about death exist and are relatively easy to provide. Accidents, on the other hand, are definitionally the result of unintentional bodily harm traumatic enough to become fatal. This sort of bodily harm—being hit by a bus, for example—is likely to cause significant pain if death is not instantaneous.

When we look at the world of this thought experiment, death by accident seems to be less preferable than suicide on each concern raised against suicide. Even more, the factors that make these particular causes of death bad seem to be due to features inherent to accidents but only incidental to suicide. Accidents, by definition, are unexpected and unplanned for. They must always come as a surprise. Accidents cut a life short at whatever moment they occur and preclude additional possibilities, while suicide can be planned for and loose ends tied up. Fatal accidents are the product of significant bodily harm and, if death is not instant, it certainly will be painful. Based on all of these concerns, suicide seems to be the preferable option when compared to accidental death.

Bringing the Thought Experiment Back to Earth

This said, it is not clear that the conception of suicide conveyed through these concerns matches the reality of the phenomenon. The paradigmatic case of suicide seems to be the tragic depressed youth likely to have lived a full and happy life if not for irrationally cutting short their own time. Tragic figures such as Ophelia or Romeo and Juliet, though clearly dramatized, are the epitome of this concept. But this view of suicide does not fit the majority of suicide cases.

According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, the highest suicide rate in 2016 was among middle-aged adults between 45 and 54 years old, with individuals over 85 coming in second, and those between 55 and 64 coming in third. All statistics combined, the demographic group most likely to die by suicide is middle-aged, white men.¹⁷ This contradicts the popular conception of suicide as the tragedy of depressed youths and indicates that society needs to think more broadly about the motivations and life situations of those who choose suicide.

Additionally, there are many ways in which the factors seen within this thought experiment are present already in the real world given the current state of medical science. In a direct way, people die in horrible, unexpected accidents every day. Indirectly, current potential causes of death include descent into Alzheimer's or the end stages of some other horrible disease. These are the undesirable, but likely, deaths that many people face today. Both in the thought experiment and in these cases, every person has some limited but imperfectly known amount of time left, and they must consider the trade-off between cutting short their time and avoiding an undesirable future death.

In fact, a person always has some limited but imperfectly known amount of time left, and while we cannot narrow down potential causes of death in reality with the same certainty as we may in the thought experiment, we may still be more realistic about what causes of death are likely to occur. Given the advances in medical science that have already occurred, it is, and has become increasingly likely, that one's eventual death will come in the form of some long and drawn-out illness rather than from senescence. Most deaths today occur in hospitals or hospice care facilities rather than at home, and this goes against many people's expressed wishes.¹⁸ This reality already places each of us in the position of facing either an eventual choice to die at a time and in circumstances we choose or very likely in a hospital or hospice center under circumstances that we likely prefer to avoid.

To further complicate the matter, patients must frequently choose either to have some procedure that would probably extend life but makes a painful and drawn-out death more likely, or to forego the procedure and face a sudden and painless death sooner. This phenomenon is illustrated by the case of cardiologist Dr. Sandeep Jauhar, who had to advise a patient about receiving a medical procedure that would do just this, a process that he detailed in an article he published for the *New York Times*. The patient had a choice either to have a small defibrillator implanted or not. The implantation was likely to extend the patient's life and keep them from dying suddenly from an arrhythmia but would also likely result in a protracted and painful death from heart pump failure later on. Without the implant, the person would likely live a shorter amount of time, but their eventual death would likely be sudden and painless. With the implant, it would likely be drawn out and painful but an unknown amount of time later.¹⁹ While the choice is not directly about suicide, given the degree of uncertainty involved, it is a choice about a preferable death sooner versus a less preferable death later. It is a choice about the timing and manner of eventual death that involves similar considerations about what makes a particular form of death better or worse than others as illustrated in the thought experiment.

Additionally, the idea that a person may meet the qualifications for rationality and simply want to choose how and when their life ends, absent imminent pain or death, may seem strange and be difficult to imagine for some, but this does occur at least sometimes. Philip Nitschke, a doctor who developed a machine to assist people in suicide, has mentioned that some of his patients seem to express just this desire. One particular example he mentioned in an interview is that of a woman who thought 80 would be a beautiful age at which to die and did not see how it was anyone else's business to stop her. She was not motivated by terminal illness or intense psychological suffering; she believed that that was when her life would be complete, and she wanted the power to bring her own story to a close rather than wait for worse circumstances to do so.²⁰ Perhaps this sort of case is rare, but as long as it exists, it is worth taking into account.

While the circumstances of the thought experiment make the critical points clearer and easier to assess, the serious application can be seen within our current reality. One point the argument highlights is that, if we care at all about the way in which we eventually die, we may want to spend more time considering what possibilities are open to us, why we associate such strong disvalue with certain options, and how our choices make certain possibilities more or less likely than others.

Implications and Directions for Further Work

This argument brings to light several ways in which our conceptualization of and reaction to suicide may be faulty and requires additional consideration. At least some of our intuitions, perhaps those about it being less bad for someone who is 80 and has accomplished their life goals to choose suicide than for someone who is 17, for example, seem to be driven significantly by ideas about what constitutes a complete life. This also seems to be implicitly at play in arguments that involve the idea that a life has been cut short. To understand what is going on here, we may need to better understand what it means for a life to be complete and what it means for a life to be cut short. Especially in the thought experiment examined here, our intuitions might be complicated by the possibility that, if people are living extended lives, the conception of what constitutes a complete life is liable to change in significant ways that we may not anticipate. Perhaps this would affect the intuition that it is more reasonable for an 80-year-old to choose suicide than a 17-year-old or a 30-year-old, but it might require reevaluating age as a determinate for what it means to live a good, full, or complete life.

While philosophers have written about the badness of death and suicide, more work must be done to understand not only what makes death bad, but what makes life worth living. To address this concern, further work might be done to bring theories of personal identity and conceptions of the good life to bear on the question of suicide, and the cases in which suicide seems to carry significant disvalue despite its apparent moral permissibility.

Work that examines not only why particular types of death are bad but why continued living is good is especially important because it is the sort of work likely to equip us with better arguments with which to confront those we believe are contemplating suicide foolishly. If we are able to articulate arguments that more clearly explain the cases where suicide is a bad choice, without having to rely on the rhetoric that it always is, then we will be better equipped to confront those we strongly suspect are contemplating suicide on unstable grounds. If we do maintain the belief, as I do, that there are many cases of suicide (e.g., those that are highly irrational or poorly thought-through, or those that are motivated by crippling but highly treatable forms of mental illness, for example) that should be discouraged, then we need to find better arguments with which to confront those with suicidal intentions. Currently, there seems to be a dearth of arguments that address these concerns holistically enough that they may be of value in practical settings.

Death is one of the very few realities that we absolutely cannot escape, even when our exposure to the concept is limited to its sanitized or sensationalized portrayal in media and the occasional death of a loved one. Our cultural relationship with death has changed as it has shifted from an omnipresent reality to an occasional occurrence found primarily within the walls of a hospital or senior care facility, and this relationship may continue to change as medical abilities develop.²¹ It is possible that we never reach the paradigm that I have outlined here. We may encounter new or evolved forms of diseases or simply be unable to gain mastery over human physiology. The thought experiment could certainly only come about, to borrow from astrophysicist and science communicator Carl Sagan, “if we do not destroy ourselves.”²² Even if this paradigm is never realized, however, it describes what success in the current endeavor of medical science would look like and raises a serious concern about our current attitude toward death that is relevant even without radical change in our circumstances. Most significantly, even if we never reach

this paradigm, the consideration describes at least one context in which suicide could be both rationally chosen and morally acceptable. If there is at least one circumstance where this is the case, then there cannot be an absolute principle against suicide, and we must more carefully consider when and why suicide may be condoned.

Notes

1. An additional possibility within the confines of this paradigm would be death by homicide. Since there seems to be little risk of the objection that death by homicide is preferable to the other two options, however, I shall exclude it from my considerations.
2. While I recognize that “paradigm” has a specific meaning within the philosophy of science, I do not use it in a technical sense, but colloquially.
3. SENS Research Foundation, “About SENS Research Foundation,” *SENS Research Foundation*, <http://www.sens.org/about/about-the-foundation> (accessed January 22, 2018).
4. An example of one such sensationalist news story: Alex Beam, “Will We Be the Last Generation to Die?,” *Boston Globe*, <https://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/2016/07/10/will-last-generation-die/mMmYoxmbaHsOwFjQsD7rQO/story.html> (accessed November 22, 2018).
5. For creative and speculative commentary on this point, see Isaac Asimov’s short story, “The Last Question.”
6. *Leading Causes of Death in 1975 and 2015: United States, 1975*, figure, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and National Center for Health Statistics, *Health, United States, 2016: With Chartbook on Long-term Trends in Health* (Hyattsville, MD: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2017).
7. While there may be debate over the definition, bounds, and applicability of categories like temporary insanity, the specifics are irrelevant for my purposes since I will be focusing specifically on cases where the reasons for ignoring a person’s autonomy do not apply.
8. For recent examples of the debate where the question of rationality is central, see Michael J. Cholbi, “Suicide Intervention and Non-Ideal Kantian Theory,” *Journal of Applied Ethics* 19, no. 3 (2002): 245–59; Ryan S. Tonken, “A Reply to Cholbi’s ‘Suicide Intervention and Non-Ideal Kantian Theory,’” *Journal of Applied Ethics* 24, no. 4 (2007): 397–407; Michael J. Cholbi, “What is Wrong with ‘What is Wrong with Rational Suicide,’” *Philosophia* 40 (2012): 285–93; Christopher Cowley, “Suicide is Neither Rational nor Irrational,” *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 9 (2006): 495–504.
9. Richard Brandt, “The Morality and Rationality of Suicide,” in *Suicide: Right or Wrong?*, ed. John Donnelly 226–37 (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 1998), 232.
10. *Ibid.*, 233.
11. Margaret Pabst Battin, *Ethical Issues in Suicide* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1995), 140.
12. Jonathan Glover, “The Sanctity of Life,” in *Bioethics an Anthology*, ed. Helga Kuhse, Udo Schüklenk, and Peter Singer 225–34 (West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2016).

13. Peter Singer, "Is the Sanctity of Life Ethic Terminally Ill?," in *Bioethics an Anthology*, ed. Helga Kuhse, Udo Schüklenk, and Peter Singer 321–30 (West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2016).
14. This seeming appearance does not necessarily reflect the reality, as I will discuss later.
15. "Education Campaign Stresses Treatability of Depression," *Public Health Reports* 103, no. 4 (1988): 436.
16. Chris Hill, "The Note," in *Bioethics an Anthology*, ed. Helga Kuhse, Udo Schüklenk, and Peter Singer 353–56 (West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2016), 356.
17. American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, "Suicide Statistics," *AFSD.org*, <https://afsp.org/about-suicide/suicide-statistics/> (accessed November 22, 2018).
18. Broad, Joanna B., Merryn Gott, Hongsoo Kim, Michal Boyd, He Chen and Martin J. Connolly, "Where Do People Die? An International Comparison of the Percentage of Deaths Occurring in Hospital and Residential Aged Care Settings in 45 Populations, Using Published and Available Statistics," *International Journal of Public Health* 58, no. 2 (2013): 257–67, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00038-012-0394-5>.
19. Sandeep Jauhar, "Why Your Cardiologist Should Ask About Your Love Life," *New York Times*, September 14, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/14/opinion/sunday/heart-health-emotions.html> (accessed November 22, 2018).
20. Marjolein de Jong, "A Doctor Built a Machine That Helps People Die," *Vice*, December 4, 2017, https://tonic.vice.com/en_us/article/434yaj/a-doctor-built-a-machine-that-helps-people-die (accessed November 22, 2018).
21. Broad et al.
22. "The Backbone of Night," *Cosmos: A Personal Voyage*, directed by Carl Sagan (Studio City, CA: Cosmos Studios, 2000), DVD.

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Happiness and Other Good Things: How the Desire-Satisfaction Theory Best Accounts for the Roles of Morality, Authenticity, and Freedom in the Happy Life

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Abstract

We, as humans, want to be happy. We desire to understand happiness so we might achieve it ourselves. In addition to happiness, we care about the values of morality, authenticity, and freedom. Ideally, we want an account of happiness that accommodates our thinking about these other three values. Different theories of happiness deliver different recommendations about what is important for a happy life, so subscribing to one account of happiness rather than another has far-reaching implications. The goal of this paper is to argue that the desire-satisfaction theory of happiness best considers the roles of morality, authenticity, and freedom in a happy life. Specifically, I argue that these values are embedded within the structure of a desire-satisfaction theory since desires that count toward happiness are often influenced by these values.

Introduction

Philosophers have long had much to say about happiness, but their failure to achieve consensus has left the concept indefinite and difficult to grasp. The word *happiness* has been used in different ways and can carry different meanings, ranging from the psychological state of feeling to the description of what is good for a given person (also often denoted as *well-being*). It is for this reason that the present inquiry will explore the nature of happiness and how best to achieve the happy life. This paper is divided into three distinct parts. The first section is dedicated to the discussion of three prominent classes of theories: nature-fulfillment, hedonism, and desire-satisfaction. I examine and evaluate how each of these theories describes happiness and how best to achieve it. The second part of the inquiry is an examination of three virtues that we value independently of happiness: *morality*, *authenticity*, and *freedom*. In this section, I will discuss what the three theories of happiness have to say about these values and how they can play a role in a happy life. Finally, the third section will defend the view that desire-satisfaction theories provide the superior account of happiness, for not only can they respond to various objections, but such theories are best able to account for the importance of the values of morality, authenticity, and freedom in a happy life.

Theories of Happiness

Three prominent perspectives on happiness are *nature-fulfillment theories*, *hedonism*, and *desire-satisfaction theories*. Nature-fulfillment argues that happiness is achieved by realizing one's potential, which is determined by nature. Hedonism asserts that happiness is pleasure and the avoidance of pain. Desire-satisfaction claims that satisfying one's important life desires is the means to achieving a happy life. These theories of happiness differ, not just in small details, but also in key claims about whether happiness is objective or subjective, who is capable of achieving happiness, and how happiness manifests in the real world. So, it is important to consider the implications of each theory to determine which fares better.

Nature-Fulfillment Theories

Nature-fulfillment theories hold that happiness lies in the realization of one's own potential, which is rooted in a view of human nature. In addition, these theories may also include a list of other necessary conditions that must be met to achieve happiness. These conditions are objective, meaning they are fixed and independent of subjective evaluation. According to this class of theories, meeting the relevant conditions results in happiness.

Evaluation of Nature-Fulfillment Theories

At face value, the idea of a nature-fulfillment account of happiness is appealing for several reasons. One advantage is that they can offer a coherent and systematic approach to obtaining a happy life, unlike subjective accounts of happiness (Hurka 1993). Additionally, when the standards for happiness are laid out systematically, they provide not only a proposed path for achieving happiness, but also often offer a justification for why the elements included constitute a happy life, independent of how we may regard them (Hurka 1993). Under the assumption that these components are intrinsically good and necessary for achieving happiness, these accounts may also hold people accountable for failing to achieve their potential or failing to promote other people's potential (Hurka 1993).

However, several objections can be leveled against such accounts. To begin, there is the general problem of objectivity in any understanding of happiness. Nature-fulfillment theories propose that there are specific criteria necessary for happiness, regardless of whether someone feels as though their life is made happier because of it (Sumner 1996). It is difficult to explain how failing to have a positive evaluation would result in happiness. In addition, it would be difficult to say that a person is happy when achieving their potential brings them suffering. It would be a mistake to dismiss an individual's own evaluation of happiness as insignificant.

Another issue with nature-fulfillment theories is that no clearly detailed and plausible account has been conceived. Even if such a theory existed, there would be neither a precise way to discern each person's ideal standard, nor a feasible method to measure their progression (Kraut 1979). Suppose, however, that such an account could provide a defensible mean of measurement and was able to determine an ideal standard for each person to achieve. What guarantee would there be that the included properties were the correct ones that were necessary for a happy life? This problem, commonly described as the wrong-properties objection, asserts that nature-fulfillment theories may ascribe importance to a certain property while, in actuality, they are inconsequential in achieving a happy life (Hurka 1993).

Despite the advantages, these and other difficulties pose considerable challenges to nature-fulfillment theories of happiness. While we should be wary of such accounts, these challenges do not altogether exclude nature-fulfillment theories from consideration as a successful account of happiness. They still may be better able to account for the importance of values that are independent of happiness.

Hedonism

Hedonism is chiefly concerned with pleasure and the avoidance of pain as a means to achieving happiness. This form of hedonism should be distinguished as the psychological form, as opposed to the ethical form; the former is a theory of happiness and the latter a theory of right-action (Sumner 1996).

Perhaps the most popular account of hedonism comes from philosopher Jeremy Bentham's principle of utility. The basis of *utilitarianism* is pleasure, which is synonymous with happiness and pain. The value of a pleasure is based on its intensity, duration, certainty or uncertainty, and propinquity or remoteness (Bentham 1789). In line with Bentham, philosopher and political economist John Stuart Mill provides an account of utilitarianism that examines the quality as well as the quantity of pleasure when considering happiness. Mill (1861) argues that there are certain pleasures that appeal to our higher faculties and, thus, are an essential component to a person's happiness. These are to be preferred over lower pleasures, which are identified as those fit for beasts. While hedonism is foremost concerned with pleasure and pain, it may also argue why some pleasures ought to be preferred over others, why some ought to be avoided, or why some may ultimately not contribute to happiness.

Evaluation of Hedonism

There are several compelling arguments that could be made in favor of the hedonistic account of happiness. First, in hedonism's most basic form, happiness is subjectively evaluated. This allows the individual to determine what is pleasurable or painful to them. Furthermore, it would seem to be that our happiness is seriously compromised when we experience extended periods of pain, physical or otherwise (Sumner 1996). Pain's significant impact on human lives is illustrated by the fact that doctors do not merely treat the cause of the disease but the symptoms of pain that the disease causes as well. Our alleviating of pain demonstrates the real burden that pain produces, and how it can be an obstacle to happiness (Sumner 1996).

However, hedonistic accounts of happiness suffer from several difficulties as well. Hedonism struggles with inclusivity and the ability to provide an account that discounts pleasures appearing irrelevant to happiness. As philosopher Daniel Haybron (2008) points out, someone may derive pleasure from eating a hamburger but is not necessarily made happier by it. The problem of inclusivity also includes the common objection that if pleasure always ought to be pursued, what is to be said of cases where someone finds pleasure in activities that seem intrinsically evil. We certainly would not want an account of happiness that would allow people to cheat and steal simply because they find it pleasurable to do so.

In response to this problem, the hedonist could argue that, while happiness is indeed dependent on subjective feelings of pleasure and pain, people ought to pursue only certain kinds of pleasures or, on Mill's (1861) account, that people should prefer things

that provide higher pleasure. This qualification, however, compromises one of the most attractive features of hedonism, which is the role of individual decision-making in a happy life. By removing from the individual the ability to determine for themselves what is pleasurable or painful, hedonism would require people to disregard their own preferences in exchange for a supposedly higher hedonistic payoff (Sumner 1996).

Perhaps the strongest objection to hedonism is philosopher Robert Nozick's *experience machine objection*, which illustrates why mind-dependent accounts of happiness may be inferior to those who are reality-dependent. The experience machine objection proposes if a machine that could provide the maximum amount of pleasure existed, the majority of people would not use it. This unwillingness to use the machine suggests that things other than pleasure matter to our happiness (Nozick 1974). There is more to a happy life than state of mind, for we generally prefer reality over illusion, even if the illusion is the more pleasurable of the two (Sumner 1996).

On the face of it, hedonism is alluring insofar as it appeals to a subjective notion of happiness in which it is up to the individual to evaluate the happiness of their own life. However, as the various objections suggest, it is unclear whether grounding the happiness of one's life in pleasure and pain fully captures what it means to be happy.

Desire-Satisfaction Theories

Desire-satisfaction theories propose that happiness comes from the satisfaction of one's desires or a person's satisfaction with their own life. Several features distinguish this class of theories from hedonism. First, it is possible for a person to be happy regardless of the pleasure or pain associated with satisfying desires. In addition, some desire-satisfaction theories maintain that the pursuit of certain pleasures may actually be detrimental to achieving a happy life insofar as the pursuit of pleasure interferes with our satisfaction of important life desires (Kekes 1982). Secondly, the desire-satisfaction account goes beyond considerations of a person's state of mind because it requires the actual satisfaction of desires, which designates it as a state-of-the-world account.

According to desire-satisfaction theories, there are two aspects of happiness: the *episodic* aspect and the *attitudinal* aspect. The episodic aspect of happiness consists of the satisfaction derived from "goals achieved, obstacles overcome, experiences enjoyed, or just a seamless continuation of the approved pattern of one's life" (Kekes 1982, 180). Whereas the attitudinal aspect of happiness consists of the collection of episodes that contribute to the overall evaluation of one's whole life as satisfying (Kekes 1982).

While satisfaction with one's life is a necessary condition, it is not typically considered a sufficient one. To live happily, people must find their values genuinely satisfying and recognize that they are achieving those values (Kraut 1979). Furthermore, happiness may also require an *epistemologically objective evaluation*, wherein claims of happiness can be rationally accepted or rejected independently of what the person whose happiness is in question thinks or does (Kekes 1982). Such a condition is often referred to as an *informed-desire requirement*, which maintains that the desires that count toward happiness are the ones in which we are adequately informed about a variety of factors, both internal and external (Haybron 2008). This requirement is meant to address issues concerning what types of desires count toward our happiness and when satisfying them impacts our lives.

Desire-satisfaction theories highlight the importance of satisfying major life desires and a strong sense of this satisfaction as necessary for happiness. The incorporation of

additional criteria, however, allows the desire-satisfaction theorist to set limits on what constitutes a happy life.

Evaluation of Desire-Satisfaction Theories

Desire-satisfaction theories are appealing in many ways. Like hedonism, desire-satisfaction theories use an individual's subjective evaluation as a means of assessing happiness. The desire-satisfaction account, however, is more encompassing than hedonism since it does not ground happiness in pleasure alone. This class of theories, instead, argues that happiness may be rooted in what a person regards as important (Sumner 1996). Under the desire-satisfaction account, it would seem reasonable to conclude that I am happy when I am actually achieving my goals, overcoming challenges, and having enjoyable experiences. Furthermore, since desire-satisfaction theories are reality-dependent, they avoid the experience machine objection that threatens hedonism.

Desire-satisfaction theories also allow for flexibility in determining what contributes to a person's happiness as the theories are able to explain that people have different desires and may satisfy these desires in different ways. The desire-satisfaction account may also be able to acknowledge the existence of shared values. For example, suppose that every person desires friendship. From this, we may reach the conclusion that, since friendship is valued universally, it is good for its own sake. Based on this information, it would be reasonable to conclude that these common desires may be intrinsic goods critical to a happy life (Sumner 1996).

The desire-satisfaction account is also supported by the idea that the measurement of happiness is intuitive. People can decide for themselves what is important to them, what their desires are, when and how to satisfy these desires, and why some of these desires are held to a higher level of importance than others. They do not need to consult a formula or expert opinion to determine whether they are living happy lives. This assertion would help explain the trade-offs between desires when they occur; some desires are more meaningful than others, and it is in these cases that one desire is sacrificed for the sake of a more important desire (Sumner 1996).

Like the other accounts of happiness, objections can be raised against desire-satisfaction theories. First, these theories are considered inherently vague for they do not offer an explicit guide for a happy life or how to achieve it aside from the satisfaction. This would be unhelpful to those who are uncertain about what they desire and the goals they have for their lives (Kraut 1979). Another criticism leveled against such accounts is their lack of clarity as to when and where satisfying our desires makes our lives happier. If a desire is satisfied posthumously, would this really make a happier life (Sumner 1996)? The answer would seem to be no. Desire-satisfaction theories, however, may employ an experience requirement that depends upon the awareness of the occurrence in order for it to contribute to happiness in response to these objections (Sumner 1996).

A stronger objection to desire-satisfaction theories is what philosopher L. W. Sumner calls "the problem of prospectivity." Our desires are always future-directed, thus representing our expectations of what we think is important to us and what we think will make us happy, rather than what actually will. It is for this reason that we may sometimes be disappointed, rather than happy, when our experience fails to live up to our expectations. Since our expectations can be mistaken, it follows that the satisfaction of our desires does not guarantee our happiness (Sumner 1996). The problem

of prospectivity could be addressed by claiming that our expectations may be mistaken because satisfying one desire may come at the expense of other, more important, desires, which, therefore, leave us unhappy. It could be, however, that the disappointment did not come at the expense of other desires; all the right actions were taken to satisfy the desire, yet the gap remains (Sumner 1996).

The question of disinterested desires and their impact on altruism raises another problem for desire-satisfaction theories. All of our desires have a *ground*, which is the reason for the desire. A desire's ground can be *interested*, which is based on some expected self-interest or pay-off from the desire's satisfaction, or it can be *disinterested*, which does not directly entail any discernible benefit to one's self (Sumner 1996). The problem for the desire-satisfaction account, however, is that there cannot be such a notion as a truly disinterested desire, because even when desires with no direct benefit are satisfied, it still makes us happy. We benefit from the happiness we receive when we satisfy these seemingly selfless desires. For example, donating money to a charitable organization does not directly benefit me, but this act still makes me happy because a desire of mine has been satisfied. In donating money, I have made no real sacrifice for I have been benefited by satisfying a desire. If this example, and others like it, do indeed stand, then these types of desires threaten to erase altruism. No matter how great a sacrifice I make for the benefit of others, it is no sacrifice at all, for I will have gotten what I wanted most (Sumner 1996).

Like nature-fulfillment and hedonist theories, desire-satisfaction theories have advantages and disadvantages. While the advantages of this account are intuitively appealing and adhere well to a common sense understanding of happiness, the objections illustrate the troubles associated with these theories, nonetheless. The utility of these three types of theories will become apparent when they are analyzed in association with important values held independent of happiness. The question, therefore, is no longer how to overcome these objections, but rather how open each theory is to our values, and to what extent the incorporation of these values impacts the advantages or flaws of a given account of happiness.

The Other Good Things

Now I turn to a consideration of morality, authenticity, and freedom, which we value independently of happiness. A distinction must be made before continuing. Some may argue that all value is grounded in morality, but in the following discussion, we will be operating under the assumption that there are values outside morality. For example, we do not value authenticity or freedom based on notions of right or wrong, rather they are intrinsically valuable, and our lives are better for having them.

When it comes to an account of happiness, intuitively there are things that we want to include and others that we want to exclude. Ideally, we want an account that allows for all three values to some extent. We want an account of happiness that excludes immoral people. We also do not want an account that ascribes happiness to a person whose life is inauthentic. Finally, we do not want to deny the importance of freedom in a happy life. These preferences are uncontroversial since they align with our commonsense intuition about happiness.

Morality

Whichever theory of happiness we adhere to will have implications for how happiness interacts with the standards set forth by a given moral theory. The goal of this section is to identify how morality can be an important component of happiness (as opposed to being the foundation of happiness or overriding happiness completely), and which theory is best equipped to deal with the trade-offs that exist between the two. This relationship will largely be a function of how well each theory of happiness suits a given system of morality.

Ethical theories, which serve as guides to right action, provide a specific context to assess the extent happiness may or may not be compatible with moral considerations. The examination of ethical theory as it pertains to happiness asks whether it is possible to live a happy life that is also moral. This question will be examined from the perspective of three major ethical theories: virtue ethics, utilitarianism, and deontology. Virtue ethics and utilitarianism can function as both ethical theories and theories of happiness. In contrast, deontology, in some forms, may be at odds with happiness.

Virtue ethics emphasizes the moral character of an individual and believes that right action ought to be informed by virtues. In other words, moral practice is favored over moral rules. When we figure out how a virtuous person would act, we discover how to best behave morally by developing and living out our own virtues (Melnick 2014). Since there are not necessarily any moral laws embedded in virtue ethics, rules governing how to live and act virtuously may be dependent on context, and virtues are to be exercised as is appropriate to the situation. This allows for a person-centered account of how best to conduct oneself as a virtuous person would. In virtue ethics, it is our character, rather than moral law, that serves as the basis for morality.

Utilitarianism promotes the maximization of pleasure, referred to in this theory as “happiness” and “the good,” and maintains that the rightness of an action is informed by its consequences. Based on the principle of utility, this theory demands that the happiness of all parties involved be maximized, so in some cases, doing the right thing may make the agent unhappy. According to the utilitarian, the sum of value is worth more than any individual values alone (Melnick 2014).

Lastly, deontology proposes a duty-based morality. According to philosopher Immanuel Kant, the sole duty is to follow the *categorical imperative*, which commands that actions ought to be done “in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that to become a universal law.” In other words, the rightness of an action is determined from its conception insofar as it is done in accordance with duty, regardless of the outcome. Furthermore, Kant (1785) argues that universal happiness is unknowable; therefore, there is no imperative that would command mankind to happiness.

Although Kant’s view seems inhospitable to happiness, the concerns central to deontology may well figure prominently in theories of happiness. A more inclusive deontological account of morality is provided by philosopher W. D. Ross. In his view, there are several *prima facie* moral duties, which include duties of fidelity, reparation, gratitude, justice, beneficence, self-improvement, and nonmaleficence. According to Ross (1930), these general principles of duty are self-evident, and we come to recognize them as such through reason. There are instances, however, when duties may come into conflict while undertaking a particular action; for example, when one duty may be

sacrificed for the sake of fulfilling another (Ross 1930). When facing a trade-off, our actual duty is much less clear than the *prima facie* duties themselves. But by reflecting on actions and the *prima facie* rightness or wrongness we perceive them to have, we increase our likelihood of acting in accordance with our actual duty (Ross 1930). Ross's form of deontology is more compatible with happiness than Kant's account. For Ross, but not for Kant, there may be times when promoting our happiness is our duty.

Despite the vast differences between these three ethical theories, all of them emphasize doing what is right. It seems fitting not to argue for or against a specific account of morality but to acknowledge the variety of moral accounts as representing our everyday understanding of what morality ought to entail. If we accept some level of truth in each account, it is not necessary to ground our acts in a specific formula. By being open to a variety of moral considerations, we can simultaneously account for the uncertainty associated with determining how to act morally while also making room for a wider, more inclusive, understanding of it. Nonetheless, it is still important to understand and acknowledge each account's differences as unique and impacting the relationship that morality has with happiness.

Now that we have discussed the essential details of the three most common moral theories, I argue that, since desire-satisfaction theories are inherently more vague than the other theories of happiness, desire-satisfaction theories allow for greater flexibility in how open they are to moral considerations. This is especially true once we appeal to the informed-desire requirement, since our desires are often informed by our values, including morality. By comparison, the nature-fulfillment account struggles to reconcile the fulfilling of our nature with actions we would deem to be moral, and, thus, may force us to exclude a vast variety of things we consider to be good and right. On the other hand, hedonism contends that pleasure is happiness. This forces us to either identify morality with pleasure, which seems intuitively incorrect, or accept instances where our pursuit of happiness is immoral.

Desire-Satisfaction and Morality

By appealing to the informed-desire requirement, desire-satisfaction theories are able to accommodate virtue ethics better than competing theories. Rather than presenting an incompatibility between happiness and morality, virtue ethics may aid in establishing guidelines as to which desires contribute to happiness and are morally permissible. In comparison, nature-fulfillment theories allow virtue ethics only when they align with our development. Similarly, hedonism would only allow acting out a virtue if it was pleasurable. Intuitively, it would seem that acting virtuously ought to be pursued despite the pleasure or pain associated with a given action (Hurka 1993).

The desire-satisfaction account struggles with utilitarianism's principle of *maximization*, since it is not altogether clear how promoting the satisfaction of other people's desires would significantly contribute to my own happiness. Furthermore, it would seem that the maximizing of such consequences would impede my own happiness if it involved sacrificing my own desires. There are instances of overlap, however, in which satisfying a desire involves maximization—cases in which we have a specific desire to act in ways that bring others happiness. Nature-fulfillment theories struggle with utilitarian considerations, since it only allows for the maximization of our potential while excluding other things that we would typically consider good or right to be maximized.

Hedonism fits well with utilitarianism, believing that pleasure be maximized among all people. This raises the question, however, to what extent we ought to give up our own pleasures for the sake of others, and to what extent this pairing would permit actions that we would normally consider immoral.

Desire-satisfaction theories are more open to deontology than the rival accounts of happiness. While deontology demands that duty be put before happiness, this does not altogether mean that we always sacrifice our own happiness for the sake of duty. By pairing deontology with the informed-desire requirement, a sense of duty may be represented in our desires. In this way, the desire-satisfaction account and deontology may be more likely to overlap since we can, and often do, have a desire to adhere to a variety of duties. On the other hand, nature-fulfillment theories would have to accept that there are many duties outside of achieving our potential, thus creating a conflict between morality and happiness. Such a relationship would require us to either act immorally for the sake of developing our nature, or sacrifice our happiness for the sake of duty. Likewise, the hedonistic account cannot allow the centrality of duty that deontological theories require. Hedonism maintains that happiness comes from pursuing pleasure, but deontology contends that to be moral we ought to follow duty. These two demands seem fundamentally incompatible with each other.

The tension between happiness and morality entails trade-offs. The desire-satisfaction theory best accounts for the importance of morality because our desires can be, and often are, informed by moral considerations. Happiness and morality coincide when we satisfy our desire to be virtuous, to benefit others, or to fulfill our duty.

Authenticity

We value authenticity as an intrinsic good because our lives are made better by having it. We care about authenticity in two different senses of the term. The first kind identifies the importance of our lives being genuine in the real world, which I will refer to as *reality-based authenticity*. This type of authenticity yields the condition that our happiness ought to be grounded in a faithful grasp of reality. Intuitively, it seems that living with an accurate awareness of our lives is to be preferred over living in deception. We would not want to concede that the happy life is one in which we are being deceived about important parts of our lives (Sumner 1996).

Reality-based authenticity as it relates to happiness is best illustrated by a case proposed by philosopher Richard Kraut. Suppose that a man finds happiness in being loved by his friends. Naturally, he would hate to have friends who pretended to love him, and if this were the case, he would prefer to know and have no friends than not know it and have fake friends. If the man had only fake friends but did not realize it, we would say that the deceived man may feel happy, but we would not say that he is leading a happy life (Kraut 1979). This case illustrates that reality-based authenticity seems instrumental to living a genuinely happy life and that feelings of happiness alone are not sufficient.

The second kind of authenticity, *identity-based authenticity*, represents the value of being true to ourselves, or living in ways that reflect who we are. In this way, for happiness to be authentic, a person should be able to endorse their happiness as their own, reflecting central aspects of themselves. This type of authenticity matters since it highlights our ability to identify with the aspects of our life that are important to us. Being forced

to act inauthentically can lead to feelings of anxiety, frustration, and depression. It is by living authentically that we can affirm our life as reflecting who we are as individuals.

Ideally, we want to be ourselves and to be happy, and any theory of happiness that compels us to be someone we are not would certainly infringe on our ability to be authentic. What point would there be in pursuing happiness if it meant sacrificing who we are as unique individuals? The significance of identity-based authenticity as it relates to happiness can be illustrated by the following example. Suppose I live in a society that constricts the occupational options available to women. I would like to become a doctor, but the only options available to me are homemaker, secretary, or childcare worker. Does the ability to choose one of these options make me happier? No, it does not because happiness is not found in choosing the best from a set of unappealing options (Kraut 1979).

Both reality-based and identity-based authenticity set standards for what we understand genuine happiness to be. Intuitively, there is more to a happy life than simply happy feelings. Our happiness should reflect who we are. In the following section, I consider the problems that nature-fulfillment and hedonist accounts face and then argue that desire-satisfaction theories are best able to account for the importance of both types of authenticity.

Desire-Satisfaction and Authenticity

Nature-fulfillment theories, which ground happiness in people achieving their potential, require reality-based authenticity but may not be able to account for the importance of identity-based considerations. Nature-fulfillment theories typically would concede that happiness demands the actual fulfillment of our nature; it cannot be obtained through means other than the individual developing in reality. However, this type of nature-fulfillment account may struggle with identity-based authenticity because it fails to consider the subjective interests of the individual.

The hedonist account is better equipped to incorporate identity-based authenticity into its formulation of happiness but may struggle to accommodate the importance of our happiness being authentic in reality. This class of theories allows individuals to determine what is pleasurable to them based on their personal evaluation of the situation and the possible pleasure associated with a given act. There may be cases, though, in which hedonist theories allow for too much authenticity. Certain actions that some consider to be greatly pleasurable are not actions that we would endorse pursuing. The main problem hedonism faces, however, is its seeming inability to account for the importance of reality-based authenticity. Since pleasure is all that matters on this account, we would be forced to say that people living in simulations (i.e., the experience machine) or in deception are happy. Normally, we would not want to say that such people are living happy lives even though they may be experiencing feelings of happiness. Their lives are unreal, or they are being deceived; therefore, their happiness is not authentic.

Desire-satisfaction theories, which place happiness in the actual satisfaction of desires, have the virtue of being state-of-the-world accounts. These theories avoid experience machine objections by upholding the importance of reality-based authenticity. This class of theories is also open to identity-based authenticity in regard to our desires, with some qualifications.

While most people would opt not to use the experience machine, someone might choose to trade in an authentic life for an all-encompassing illusion. It would be hard

to argue that this man experiences no happiness since he is authentically embracing the illusion and the man's "*real* happiness exactly lies in what may be unreal about his life" (Melnick 2014, 39). However, the machine would undoubtedly cut the man off from the possibility of forming and fulfilling other important life desires—i.e., those outside of the will to use the machine. While this man may be experiencing feelings of happiness, we would not say that he is living a genuinely happy life, for nothing was actually achieved, nor was any other desire genuinely satisfied.

Let's consider a less severe case involving minor illusions and suppose that a man willfully chooses some deception over an accurate view of reality, preferring to view his life through rose-tinted glasses. What can be said of the man who does not want to know about certain circumstances of his life? Haybron (2008) would argue that more authenticity is not always better, and it may be worth maintaining minor illusions for the sake of feeling happy. He brings up a reasonable point here, as there may be times, say when our loved ones tell us white lies to spare our feelings, when we would not want to know the truth. But it is a virtue of the desire-satisfaction account that it can allow for cases like these since the desire for contentment may surpass our desire for authenticity. Taken together, people desire to live an authentically happy life but may desire small instances of deception to satisfy the desire for happy feelings. Thus they avoid the unpleasantness that is sometimes associated with the truth of reality.

Next, we consider to what extent we may be authentic to our identity under the desire-satisfaction account. If we consider desires themselves, we may contend that a desire is authentic insofar as it is genuinely important, either consciously or subconsciously, by the person whose desire it is. Desires ought to be informed by a person's wants, beliefs and values, and ultimately rooted in who the person is as a unique individual. While our desires can be authentic in that we genuinely desire them, two problems emerge: authentic desires that do not add to happiness and addressing the satisfaction of desires we would normally find objectionable. Fortunately, both can be addressed by the informed-desire requirement that is often embedded in desire-satisfaction theories.

There is no guarantee that the satisfaction of an authentically held desire will lead to happiness. After all, there are numerous ways in which such desires can be ill-suited to a given individual or unexpectedly come into contact with other desires. Some desire-satisfaction theorists argue that these types of desires are not properly informed and, therefore, do not count toward a person's happiness. This explains why the satisfaction of some desires, even though they may be authentic to the individual who holds them, do not contribute to a happy life and may even cause sadness. The informed component makes room for other considerations—not merely authenticity—in the formation and evaluation of our desires, while also addressing the issue of problematic desires (authentically held but not adequately informed by other considerations). This combination thus provides the caveat that one should not satisfy every desire simply because they have it. Unlike nature-fulfillment theories and hedonism, the desire-satisfaction account provides for the importance of both reality-based and identity-based authenticity, while also putting forth the nuance that we do not wish for authenticity to be absolute. The theory limits the prominence of reality-based authenticity in consideration of other important values, thereby avoiding an absolute authenticity that would constantly trouble us with the often painful truth of reality. Likewise, this account places limitations on identity-based authenticity by citing other important considerations needed for informed desires, thus prohibiting authenticity that is immoral or does not produce happy lives.

Freedom

Freedom can be defined as the ability to act without restriction or the ability to be free from the will of others. The ability to act freely, to pursue happiness, is inherently an important element for each theory since the inability to engage in activities that promote happiness is problematic. Thus, each theory demands this sort of freedom to actively pursue happiness. The second notion of freedom, however, will be the focus of this section. Freedom, in this sense, is not being subject to the will of others, which underscores the notion that the grounds of our happiness should be our own and not determined by anyone else. It is important to acknowledge that socialization processes undoubtedly influence the kind of person one turns out to be, so we need to distinguish normal processes from manipulative ones, which are most detrimental to an individual's freedom. Specifically, manipulative socialization processes are ones that "[deny] the subject the opportunity for critical reflection on the process itself and its outcome" as it relates to happiness (Sumner 1996, 170).

This sort of freedom is closely related to identity-based authenticity. We cannot be true to ourselves, if we are the product of manipulative socialization processes. Therefore, authentic evaluations of happiness should only be accepted as such when they are free of corrupt influence. We may question the authenticity of one's happiness when social indoctrination, exploitation, oppression, or other societal pressures impact an individual's ability to think freely (Sumner 1996). For example, a man believes he is living a happy, authentic life, but suppose there is reason to believe his authority on the matter should be questioned. Even though the man views his beliefs, values, aims, decisions, and actions as authentic, it is possible that he never had the opportunity to form them of his own accord (Sumner 1996). This case illustrates why an oppressed person may experience happy feelings but why we would not typically consider this person to be living a happy life; an evaluation can be positive and faulty. In such cases, a person only finds their life to be authentic because their perception has been manipulated in some way. Consequently, we cannot consider their evaluation to be accurate since it is not caused by being their true self (Melnick 2014). When the grounds on which an individual evaluates their life as authentic are manipulated, we can reject the claim that their life is truly authentic and question the extent to which they are genuinely living a happy life.

The importance of freedom is demonstrated by our wanting to be able to think freely, reflect openly, and make our own decisions without the influence of others. In the following section I argue that the desire-satisfaction theory best accounts for the importance of freedom in our lives.

Desire-Satisfaction and Freedom

In general, pure desire-satisfaction accounts are more inclusive than rival accounts. They potentially suffer from issues concerning their openness to freedom without reference to requirements that place restrictions on what counts toward happiness. Desire-satisfaction accounts, however, are rarely formulated in unrestricted ways. Instead, these accounts typically incorporate certain limiting conditions, such as the informed-desire requirement.

In appealing to the informed-desire requirement, the desire-satisfaction account may necessitate freedom in the formation of desires. While people hold desires based on their own wants, aspirations, values, and so on, that they consider to be authentic, we should be

reluctant to count the satisfaction of these desires toward happiness if their development is rooted in manipulative processes. These kinds of desires fail to meet the standards set forth by the requirement because the individual is not adequately informed about the circumstances under which the desire was formed. When our desires are constrained by oppressive forces, we cannot say they are adequately informed since we never had the opportunity to freely form them ourselves.

While the desire-satisfaction account is open to the importance of freedom, the nature-fulfillment and hedonist accounts struggle with this point. Recall that nature-fulfillment theories identify happiness as a person's ability to reach their highest potential as determined by their nature. Freedom may be helpful for achieving one's potential but it is not necessary in all cases. A lack of freedom seems to be objectionable for this class of theories insofar as it restricts our ability to fulfill our potential. There may even be cases in which freedom prevents the fulfillment of one's nature, depending on the specific theory. In hedonism, what matters foremost is the experience of pleasure; its origin of the pleasure is of lesser importance. Because people feel no difference between the pleasure experienced via illusion and reality, they would also not feel a difference between the pleasure experienced via freedom and manipulation. Since felt pleasure is pleasure regardless of its origins, it seems that it does not matter whether an individual's subjective evaluation of pleasure is free of manipulation.

All things considered, desire-satisfaction theories are best able to account for the importance of freedom in a happy life. Nature-fulfillment theories have mixed results in their openness to freedom, depending on the specific theory. Generally the importance of freedom is not highlighted as necessary for a happy life, however. Hedonism seems indifferent to freedom since this class of theories typically maintains that pleasure alone, regardless of its origin, is necessary for happiness. The desire-satisfaction account is distinguished from its rivals because it demands that the individual be free from manipulative influence on the basis of the informed-desire requirement.

Desire-Satisfaction and the Happy Life

Thus far, I have examined three different theories of happiness, the strengths and weaknesses of these accounts, and how each account makes room for morality, authenticity, and freedom. Taken together, the account that has fared best is the desire-satisfaction theory of happiness. Here, I will argue that desire-satisfaction theories are able to maintain their strengths and are able to overcome, or at least acknowledge, their weaknesses. They are also open to our values as grounds for our desires, providing an account of happiness that is superior to its rivals.

The desire-satisfaction theory has the virtue of adhering to our common-sense understanding of happiness, which is that happiness requires that one has something to be happy about. We are happy about what is important to us, and are not made happy by that about which we do not care. Furthermore, an advantage of this account is that it acknowledges a vast variety of factors that can contribute to happiness when satisfied through a desire. This allows room for both minor and major desires to be organized into a hierarchy with many minor ones occupying the bottom and a few major ones occupying the top. Both types of desires can contribute to happiness but at levels proportional to their importance to the individual. Satisfying major desires does not require that all minor desires already be satisfied.

Rival theories fail to adequately account for these everyday sources of happiness. Nature-fulfillment theories tell us that we must become what it is in our nature to become in order to be happy, while hedonism identifies pleasure alone with happiness. Ultimately, neither of these accounts falls in line with what we intuitively consider to be happiness or the means for achieving a happy life, since the desire-satisfaction account is much more extensive than its competing theories in incorporating what we typically find to contribute to happiness. For this, and for the reasons discussed above, this account is superior to its rivals.

This theory, even with its focus on the importance of desires, is still able to incorporate both an individual's cognitive and affective evaluations while avoiding the problems associated with hedonism. According to the desire-satisfaction theories, happiness is comprised of both a collection of episodes and an attitude toward those episodes. This aspect of happiness represents our desires and requires cognitive evaluation, for in order to receive satisfaction, we must recognize we are attaining what we desire (Kraut 1979). This contention addresses the problem of clarity regarding when and where the satisfaction of our desires makes us happier. On this view, we must recognize that the desire has been satisfied, at least on some level, for we cannot be wholly unaware of the satisfaction or else it would not be able to impact our evaluation of happiness.

The attitudinal aspect of happiness represents the affective evaluation of one's whole life as satisfying in response to the episodes that make up our lives (Kekes 1982). So, when we recognize that we are achieving the goals that are important to us and are affirmed with feelings of satisfaction, we are able to determine that we are indeed leading happy lives.

On this account, however, it is possible to satisfy a given desire and recognize that the desire has been satisfied, but still find that its satisfaction does not contribute to our happiness. Sometimes a desire can come at the expense of another more important desire. This being the case, we may appeal to the informed-desire requirement, which addresses issues related to desires that have incompatible elements, are not humanly possible, are not well suited to the given individual, or are solely committed to satisfying temporary or shallow, minor desires (Kekes 1982).

Suppose, however, that we satisfy a given desire, and we come to find that the satisfaction failed to live up to our expectations; rather than experiencing happiness, we are left disappointed. This is the problem of prospectivity. Since our desires are future-directed, there exists a disconnect between our expectation and the outcomes. To address this issue, we must first acknowledge the epistemic limitation inherent in the theory; we do not have access to all the factors that may influence a desire, thus there is no guarantee that satisfying a given desire will lead to a favorable outcome. This is not just a limitation of desire-satisfaction theories, rather an epistemic problem inherent in the rival theories of happiness as well. For example, in nature-fulfillment theories, it is impossible to specify what exactly human nature is to determine the maximum fulfillment of one's potential. In hedonist theories of happiness, we cannot predict to what extent a given act may produce pleasure, nor, if we accept Mill's account, can we objectively designate what ought to be considered a higher pleasure. In response to this epistemic limitation, the desire-satisfaction account may counter that it is the tendency for desires to be informed that is important for happiness.

Like W. D. Ross's method for determining the rightness or wrongness of a possible act, the desire-satisfaction theorists may employ a similar method when acknowledging

we cannot definitively know whether or not satisfying a given desire will yield happiness. Through reflection we may, to the best of our ability, consider all the known factors and possible outcomes of satisfying a given desire. When we reflect on our desires, and when they are informed as far as it is possible, we can be more confident in estimating the degree to which satisfying a given desire will contribute to our happiness.

Critics of the desire-satisfaction account may argue that there is vagueness in this class of theories since the account does not provide a guide as to what to desire or how to satisfy desires. In reply, we could point out that the informed-desire requirement, when added to the desire-satisfaction theory, provides guidance on what to desire. Thus, we can be more confident that satisfying informed desires will result in happiness. While it is important for our desires to be informed by a variety of factors, the desires that are informed by our values are the ones that ought to be satisfied. Broadly speaking, our desires are a reflection of our values and are important to who we are as individuals (Haybron 2008).

Since this account has the ability to recognize a variety of values as being an important part of happiness, it also includes the possibility that our desires be informed by moral considerations while avoiding the implication that happiness is somehow dependent on morality. Nonetheless, the importance of morality cannot be understated since acting in line with our moral intuitions certainly has a profound impact on our happiness. When we deviate from these moral intuitions or seek to satisfy desires that are not adequately informed by them, we often feel guilty and disappointed or find that the desires have come at a cost to our happiness as a whole.

When making trade-offs between happiness and morality, we may sometimes sacrifice our happiness for doing the right thing or may ignore moral considerations in favor of our happiness. However, morally informed desires need not trump all others. Instead, other major desires that are informed by values other than morality may exist. This brings us back to the importance of reflection when we are weighing our values. By reflecting on our values, we can at least have a greater tendency to accurately weigh the importance level of a given desire and act in accordance with the values that best fit a given situation.

In further consideration of the role of values in addition to happiness, we come to find that desire-satisfaction theories best make room for the importance of both reality-based and identity-based authenticity. The virtue of accepting the desire-satisfaction account is that it necessitates satisfaction in reality, and desires ought to reflect an individual's own values, attitudes, properties, and so on. Appealing to the informed-desire requirement, if a desire is to be properly informed and, therefore, count toward happiness, then it ought to be authentic, both in reality and in identity. It cannot be said that a desire is informed without knowledge regarding the actual circumstances of the desire's fulfillment nor without it being an accurate reflection of the given individual. A desire that is not actually fulfilled (or that we mistakenly believe to be fulfilled) cannot add to our actual happiness. Moreover, a desire that is fulfilled but that we do not identify as important does not add to our happiness.

While the desire-satisfaction account is open to reality-based and identity-based authenticity, the rival theories of happiness struggle to support both types of authenticity. Hedonism faces some challenges in how to best accommodate reality-based authenticity since, at its core, hedonism is a mind-dependent account rather than a reality-dependent

account. On the other hand, nature-fulfillment theories are unable to account for identity-based authenticity since happiness, on its account, is based not on subjective evaluation but rather on objective standards. Thus, this class of theories is indifferent to an individual's ability to identify with their own happiness. This presents another reason why the desire-satisfaction theory is the superior account in considering our values, as its openness to authenticity cannot be rivaled by either the nature-fulfillment theory or hedonism.

Closely tied to the importance of authenticity is the value of freedom. While the ability to act without restriction is necessary for the pursuit of happiness, the type of freedom that we refer to is the freedom from manipulative forces and the ability to think freely. Desire-satisfaction theories best account for this type of freedom in that it is important to desire formation.

By appealing to the informed-desire requirement, we find that individuals ought to be free from manipulative social processes for satisfaction of desires to count toward happiness. In the presence of manipulation we cannot say that a given desire is adequately informed since the individual is not able to accurately reflect on the circumstances under which the desire was formed nor was the individual given the opportunity to freely form desires of their own. Therefore, desires formed under manipulative processes cannot be accepted as adequately informed or authentic, and as a result such desires cannot count toward genuine happiness.

Both of the rival theories of happiness struggle in their relationship with freedom. The nature-fulfillment account produces mixed results in its openness to freedom, for it is largely dependent on what we identify human nature as. While the hedonist may attempt to incorporate freedom with the addition of certain requirements or conditions, the grounds for this inclusion are questionable and further complications raise doubts about whether or not we could accept such an account as pure hedonism. Given these issues, we find that the desire-satisfaction account does the best of the three in its openness to freedom; thus acting as another reason why this account ought to be accepted.

Conclusion

As a philosophical account, desire-satisfaction theories are the best at (a) accounting for the importance of the other things we value—like morality, authenticity, and freedom—as being a part of a happy life and (b) answering the various objections against the theory itself, which can be addressed through the informed-desire requirement or are simply limitations associated with any account of happiness.

In an everyday sense of happiness, the desire-satisfaction account does the best job at capturing the various things we care about. With this in mind, I present the following picture: A person achieves most of what they desire, frequently experiences pleasant feelings, finds their life as a whole as satisfying, and would like for it to continue in the same manner. Their desires align with their values. While there may be trade-offs at times, they generally find that their happiness is consistent with doing the right thing. This person is experiencing no major deception that would prevent them from accurately reflecting on their life, and they find that their desires mirror their attitudes, goals, preferences, and other values. Their desires are formed freely. Altogether, this person is happy and is living a happy life. It is on this picture that I argue that the desire-satisfaction theory best captures our everyday experience of happiness and the importance of our values.

Neither the nature-fulfillment nor hedonism accounts would describe this person as happy. The nature-fulfillment theorist would argue that while this person may experience feelings of happiness and would describe their own life as a happy one, ultimately the person's own evaluation of their life would have to be disregarded. Instead, their happiness would be determined solely on whether or not they were achieving their fullest potential. The hedonist would dismiss many of these details as unimportant to the person's happiness and instead place the person's happiness solely in the experience of pleasant feelings. Both accounts fail to capture the importance of the various facets of the person's life that seem to intuitively impact happiness. Only the desire-satisfaction account can uphold the claim that the person's life is a genuinely happy one.

We intuitively care about happiness and want to have a happy life. As well, we care about other things—things that make our lives better by having them. I have shown that, when it comes to selecting a theory of happiness, we should accept the one that reflects our everyday thinking about happiness and the things that we value and one that ultimately informs us about how we may achieve a happy life.

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Together but Unequal: Perceptions on the White-Black Sisterhood from 1830 to 1870

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Abstract

Within the institution of slavery, black and white women's lives paralleled one another within the plantation household. The works of antebellum women like Harriet Jacobs and Angelina Grimke support a fantasy of *sisterhood*, which I define as a reciprocated bond between women that crosses over socially constructed lines and is sustained by commonality. Jacobs, a former enslaved woman, used motherhood as a tool to encourage white female abolitionists to empathize with her distress. Grimke, a Quaker abolitionist, compared herself to black enslaved women because she felt restrained by the constricting roles and expectations of white women in the antebellum era. Inside the plantation household, white and black women occupied the same space and worked alongside each other. These relationships could be considered *racial closeness*. In fact, according to many accounts, in-house slaves often shared moments of intimacy with their masters' families, with many of the black women even caring for the children in the home. However, in these instances, there was still the belief that one race was better and had ownership of the other, which is understood as *racial distance*. This is what I call the *antebellum paradox*: together but unequal. This anomaly both prefigures and challenges the separate-but-equal agenda. Despite the possibilities for the community that Jacobs and Grimke attest to, sisterhood for white and black women was only desired by black women and never achieved. This argument is supported by an investigation of published slave narratives, oral interviews of former slaves, and monographs about female abolitionism.

Introduction and Literature Review

It is no mystery that abolitionists have protested against the inhumane treatment of black slaves. Their efforts consisted of rallies, pamphlets, and coins used to humanize black people. In 1837, white female abolitionists backed a reimagined coin that originally supported black enslaved men (“Am I not a Woman and a Sister?”). The new coin (figure 1) created by George Bourne in his work *Slavery Illustrated in Its Effects upon Women*, advocated for the humanity of black enslaved women; the coin read, “Am I not a Woman and a Sister” (“Am I not a Woman and a Sister?”). Scholars have debated the desire for cross-racial sisterhood in the abolitionist movement. The potential sisterhood described by scholars was between white female abolitionists and free and enslaved black women. One would assume during this time that the idea of a cross-racial sisterhood between black and white women was unfathomable. Nonetheless, abolitionists used this coin to support black humanness.



Figure 1. “Am I Not a Woman and a Sister?”

Source: *History Matters*, <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6726/>.

One of the first to speak to the cross-racial relationship between black and white women was Jean Fagan Yellin, a scholar who discusses the idea that both black female slaves and white female abolitionists challenged the patriarchal standards that defined what a woman should be (Yellin 1992, 10). During this time, white women were inferior by virtue of their sex and black women were inferior by virtue of their race. Both Yellin and Jennifer Fleischner, a historian, ascertain that it is this subordination that creates a sense of commonality and sisterhood between these two marginalized groups during the antebellum period. According to Angelina Grimke, white and black women were connected by their “chains.” The white women were figuratively bound by the chains of gender, while the black slave women were literally bound by the chains of race (quoted in Yellin 1992, 22).

Fleischner’s ideals of motherhood leave room to make further connections between white and black women. For some women, bearing and raising children was a shared experience upon which several scholars built the foundation for a cross-racial sisterhood. White mothers related to their black counterparts through their maternal duties, with many white women raised by surrogate black mothers.

Beth Maclay Doriani, associate professor of English at Northwestern College, writes: “The formulation of womanhood was so powerful in nineteenth-century America that not only did White, middle-class women aspire to this standard, but so did many Black women, at least publicly, as seen in early Afro-American novels and other sources, according to Foster” (Maclay Doriani 1991, 205). During the antebellum era, the actions of women, both black and white, were heavily regulated by a patriarchal, predominantly white society. Therefore, the expectations of how women should conduct themselves were modeled after the gender performances of the so-called proper women within the predominant race. This heavy regulation and oppression of white and black women’s identities, interactions, and gender performances contributed to the possibility of sisterhood. For example, as a result of the expectations upheld by the patriarchy, the white female abolitionists were seen as too outspoken for society’s conventions, thereby failing to conform to stereotypical ideals of femininity. It is important to note, however, that the societally imposed distance between the races does create an inherent disparity, as white women were still afforded more opportunities and freedoms than black women, despite their mutual oppression. Black women were forced to derive their gender identity from the representation provided by white society, setting the two groups of women apart as the aspiring (black women) and the source for the aspired (white women) (Fox-Genovese 1988, 193). Additionally, the white women, by virtue of their status as members of the predominant race, could redeem their feminine status in the eyes of society simply by justifying their actions with religion. Black women were afforded no such opportunity, thus suggesting an unconscious dependency on societal standards (Kellow 2013, 1015). While black and white women appear to be united under shared struggles, some scholars argue that such a connection did not exist. Fox-Genovese declared that sisterhood was not present during the antebellum period. She writes, “[white and black] women were bound to each other in the household, not in sisterhood, but by their specific and different relations to its master” (Fox-Genovese 1988, 101). This understanding of white and black female relationships recognizes the male head of the plantation household as the core that all interpersonal relationships in the household revolved around. Fox-Genovese’s denial of sisterhood closed a door on related debates. However, I seek to re-investigate relationships between white and black women in the plantation household to examine the cross-racial relationships that existed between them.

In response to this debate, I decided to explore the phenomenon of cross-racial sisterhood. I analyzed sources that recognized published and unpublished voices of black women to determine if sisterhood was possible during this era, despite Fox-Genovese’s claim. Throughout the antebellum period, both white and black women faced patriarchal oppression but were not equal in the plantation household. These women coexisted to maintain the home and to raise white children but black women were still considered property and therefore societally inferior to their white mistresses. Although there were several select instances in which white and black women united during this time, such moments do not rectify the objectification of the black body. While premature relationships and fantasies of cross-racial sisterhood blossomed between the two races, the white supremacist ideology and brutalities of slavery would never allow such bonds to be accepted or realized. The white-black sisterhood could never have thrived in the plantation households of the antebellum period.

Historical Context

The nation's history and the legacy of slavery are tightly intertwined. In the early colonial period, large groups of African citizens were stolen from their native lands and transported to America where they were put to work on plantations. Here they produced the agricultural profit that would be the foundation of the American economy. On the plantation, the master and his family upheld and reinforced slavery. There were two main classes of slaves that existed on the plantation: field slaves and house slaves. The field slaves worked primarily outside in the field handling crops and other products, and they likely lived in cabins in the slave quarters. The house slaves, on the other hand, were women who handled the domestic duties like cooking, cleaning, washing, and looking after the master's children.

As outlined previously, white women during the antebellum period were expected to uphold certain standards. According to historian Barbara Welter, "purity was as essential as piety to a young woman, its absence as unnatural and unfeminine. Without it she was, in fact, no woman at all, but a member of some lower order. A 'fallen woman' was a 'fallen angel,' unworthy of the celestial company of her sex" (Welter 1966, 154). A woman's reputation in society had a strong influence on her perceived womanhood. White women had to remain accordant with the Bible and womanly virtues or they would be considered less than a woman.

White women's stance in society largely determined black women's position in society as well, resulting in an intersectionality of women's and racial issues. By virtue of their gender, black women were held to the same expectations of purity and femininity as white women while also being subject to the degradation that came from being members of an enslaved race. Daina Ramey Berry, a historian, mentions that "enslaved women's bodies were catalysts of nineteenth-century economic development, distinguishing US slavery from bondage in other parts of the world" (Berry 2017, 14). Whereas black males were valued only for their physical strengths, black women were commonly reduced to their body parts during the antebellum era. Black women were viewed as property that created more property and deemed only as valuable as their wombs. This commodification of black women's reproductive organs created an attitude of hypersexualization that persisted in white society, resulting in many masters raping and sexually assaulting their "exotic" pieces of property. This only further confirmed to white slaveholders that black women were considered inferior because of their lack of purity. The master would disassociate black women from humanity as much as possible so that his sex crimes could be justified. Black women were property and, according to racial assumptions, could not be sympathized or empathized with.

Because they were viewed as property, female slaves' positions on the plantation influenced internalized profitability. Tempie Herndon Durham (figure 2) was 31 years old when the Civil War ended. At the time of her interview she was 103, living in Durham, North Carolina. Tempie reflects on the past when her children were born:

Nine was bawn befo' surrender an' two after we was set free. So I had two chillun dat wuzn' bawn in bondage. I was worth a heap to Marse George kaze I had so many chillun. De more chillun a slave had de more dey was worth. Lucy Carter was de only nigger on de plantation dat had more dey was worth. Lucy Carter was de only nigger on de plantation dat had more chillun den I had. She had twelve, but

her chillun was sickly an' mine was muley strong an' healthy. Dey never was sick. (Federal Writer's Project 1941c, 288)



Figure 2. Tempie Herndon Durham, age 103, between 1936 and 1938.

Source: Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/item/mesnp111284/.

Tempie was proud for having multiple children because each healthy child increased her value. She could produce good-quality slaves, unlike her peer, Lucy Carter. At this time, a slave's worth was based on economic potential, not morality or creed. In some cases, like Tempie's, masters trained their slaves to internalize racism and objectify themselves. Tempie took pride in the number of children she had because she was conditioned to follow the expectations of the current economic structure. Seen as a tool to produce many offspring, Tempie became a part of the gendered experience that female slaves endured. As mentioned earlier, black women were often reduced to their body parts and for Durham, her womb made her more valuable in her master's eyes.

Theory

The expectations of society shape how women would act based on gender and race, thus regulating their relationships. Because gender and race are socially constructed, they change over time. Unfortunately, gender and race can also clash with one's identity and obligations. As a result, people may be inclined to align themselves with one over the other. Patricia Hills-Collins, a sociology professor at the University of Maryland, argues that there have been times in history and contemporary society when black women were sidelined by black men and white people according to the argument presented in *Black Feminist Thought* (2000, 3–4). The distance between white and black women can also be seen in the antebellum era; therefore, I argue that sisterhood between the two was a failed concept.

Methods and Limitations

An in-depth qualitative historical and literary analysis is required to understand

the possible white-black sisterhood. This research will investigate a combination of published slave narratives, oral interviews of former slaves, and monographs about female abolitionism while simultaneously highlighting a cross-class component between the former enslaved women who published their narratives and those women who were featured in the interviews and did not have the access to publish their stories during slavery. The twenty-eight oral testimonies and two archived letters used in this research are from a collection of sources from Duke University and the Library of Congress. When selecting sources, the goal was to choose those which identified women who recalled primary or secondary accounts involving interactions with white mistresses. The oral testimonies and archived letters purposefully did not feature malicious mistresses who were abusive to their female slaves since the goal of the research is to reveal and analyze seemingly positive relationships between black enslaved women and their white mistresses in search for a white-black sisterhood.

It is important to note that the slave narratives featured in this research may contain personal biases and coercion from those of higher socioeconomic status. I have done a fair job in identifying potential fallacies; however, the narratives that will be discussed include individuals' differences that are highlighted through their experiences. I must also point out that some of the testimonies might not fully represent the experiences of the former slaves due to possible selective memory, which may paint slavery as a flowery experience (*The Limitations of the Slave Narrative Collection: Problems of Memory* 1941). All of the interviews I gathered feature ex-slaves who were 70–103 years old at the time of their interviews in the 1930s. It is also important to consider the interviewees' ages during slavery. Some of the women were only children and young teens at the end of the Civil War. I am aware of the flaws of these sources; however, I also see the value of pinpointing the narratives that could have been influenced and investigating the possible motives behind the suggested fallacies.

Sisterhood Fantasy

Harriet Jacobs, an ex-slave, and Angelina Grimke, a white Quaker abolitionist, both display an understanding of sisterhood by their shared experiences that cross racial lines. The connections these women made with each other display the presence of ideal sisterhood: women reaching out and connecting with other women due to their shared experiences, despite race.

Harriet Jacobs

Author of the popular slave narrative *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Harriet Jacobs (figure 3) shared the events of her life during bondage. Harriet was born in 1813 and passed in 1897. She changed the names in her narrative, including her own, to protect those people's identities. Harriet's master constantly plotted ways to get her alone so that he could rape her. For years, Harriet's terror of her master caused her to escape her master's house and remain hidden in a secret shed attached to her grandmother's home. Time and time again, she "shuddered at the sound of his footsteps, and trembled within hearing of his voice" (Jacobs 1969, 86). The shed where she sought asylum allowed Harriet only enough room to crawl back and forth. The summers and winters were very tough on her body; the shelter offered no protection from the elements. The only solace she had was the voices of her children, but Harriet was unable to see them because she did not want them to accidentally reveal her location to her master. For years her master

did not give up his search; instead, he only seemed more and more eager to hunt her down. Her narrative was written to appeal to white female abolitionists who empathized and sympathized with her struggles as a mother, condition as a woman, and treatment as a slave. In an effort to reach northern women, she writes:

I have not written my experiences in order to attract attention to myself; on the contrary, it would have been more pleasant to me to have been silent about my own history. Neither do I care to excite sympathy for my own sufferings. But I do earnestly desire to arouse the women of the North to a realizing sense of the condition of two millions of women at the South, still in bondage, suffering what I suffered, and most of them far worse. I want to add my testimony to that of abler pens to convince the people of the Free States what Slavery really is. Only by experience can anyone realize how deep, and dark, and foul is that pit of abominations. (Jacobs 1969, 6)

Harriet wanted white female abolitionists, who shared the same nurturing and maternal desire that she did, to push further for the abolishment of slavery. She also wanted them to see the sexual terrorism she was subject to.



Figure 3. Harriet Jacobs.

Source: Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harriet_Jacobs.

Angelina Grimke

Angelina Grimke, a popular white female abolitionist from the north, also considered herself enslaved, and argued, “We too wear chains” (quoted in Yellin 1992, 22). Grimke implies that, as a woman, she is seen as the property of her husband much like black women are seen as property of their masters. Abolitionists were commonly driven by the Bible verse, “Let us break their bonds asunder and cast away their chains. Psalm II.3” (quoted in Yellin 1992, 21). Grimke aligned herself with black women, regardless of racial differences, because she saw herself fighting a similar battle.

To reiterate, I define sisterhood as a reciprocated bond between women sustained by commonality, which crosses over socially constructed lines. These two women exemplify this idea of cross-racial sisterhood in the antebellum period. The connections Jacobs and Grimke were able to make with women outside of their own races, based off similar experiences, suggest an unripened version of the white-black sisterhood. However, their understanding of the world comes from their access to resources and their social standings. Both women were able to reach large audiences to aid their calls. Alas, this fantasy of sisterhood is present for these women, but it is still to be determined if the sisterhood existed for women who did not have the privilege to share their stories during slavery.

Together but Unequal

Antebellum Paradox

Racial closeness can be defined as different races functioning in a shared space either together or juxtaposed. Racial distance, therefore, is when one stays socially separate from another due to their race. In other words, it describes the system of racism. The antebellum paradox is a phrase I coined from my understanding of racial closeness and racial distance, which are terms I came across while reading “Mothers’ Milk: Slavery, Wet-Nursing, and Black and White Women in the Antebellum South” by Emily West and R. J. Knight (2017). The updated definitions, however, are my creation. Racist ideology exists on the premise of superior versus inferior or subhuman races. During the antebellum period, black and white women lived in the same space and worked to raise the white children of the plantation household. However, this interaction was not a partnership between the two women. It was a slave performing the duties given to her by her master or mistress.

Testimonies gathered after the abolition of slavery revealed the truth that occurred between the walls of the plantation home. Unlike Harriet Jacobs, house slaves Hannah Valentine and Lethe Jackson and the women from the Federal Writers’ Project interviews did not have the chance to publish their stories in an effort to end slavery. The works I read concerning Harriet Jacobs and Angelina Grimke gave one perspective, but the oral testimonies I read from former enslaved women gave another. These women reported both good and bad times of slavery while revealing how their domestic lives played a role in the perceptions of sisterhood.

Racial Closeness and Racial Distance

Within the plantation household, white and black women lived in the same space and worked alongside each other. Black women cared for the children inside the house while white women managed activity in the house. The master’s family and the slaves who worked in the house could be quite kind to each other, as was the case of Diana Alexander, a woman born into slavery in Mississippi. When she was young, she was very close to her master’s family, and she says they were good to her (Hannah Valentine and Lethe Jackson Slave Letter in the Campbell Family Papers 1996). During the war, Yankees came to the plantation house where Alexander lived, and her mistress hid her own daughter and Alexander in the attic (Hannah Valentine and Lethe Jackson Slave Letter in the Campbell Family Papers 1996). Even though Alexander was a slave, she was treated and protected as if she was her owner’s child.

These sentiments were also seen between Hannah Valentine and her mistress. In 1838, Valentine wrote a letter (figure 4) to her mistress who was away, expressing how concerned she was about her mistress's health. In the letter, she also updated her mistress on other slaves' behavior (Hannah Valentine and Lethe Jackson Slave Letter in the Campbell Family Papers 1996). It is clear from the letter that Valentine has a close and intimate relationship with her mistress. Valentine ends her letter by saying, "I hope I shall see you in August looking as well as ever such is the sincere wish of your affectionate servant" (quoted in Hannah Valentine and Lethe Jackson Slave Letter in the Campbell Family Papers 1996).

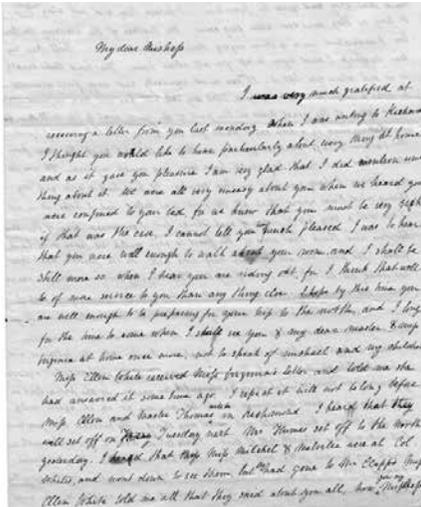


Figure 4. Hannah Valentine's letter to her mistress.

Source: Duke University's Special Collections Library: The Digital Scriptorium, <https://library.duke.edu/specialcollections/scriptorium/campbell/>.

Although Hannah Valentine and Diana Alexander had close relationships with their mistresses, they were still seen as property to be owned. It is not revealed in the letters if Valentine's relationship with her mistress was one-sided, because the mistress's personal emotions were not represented. The women's strong connections with their mistresses were not enough to gain their freedom. Their continual enslavement reinforced the stigma that black was unequal to white. These ideals of strong connections between black and white women can also be traced in themes of motherhood during the antebellum period.

Motherhood

Motherhood is not an experience guaranteed for all women nor is maternal instinct an innate ability. In that vein, one does not have to be a mother to have nurturing capabilities. Motherhood can be defined as a maternal bond shared between a woman and a child figure. It has been used as a tool to connect women, as shown in Jacobs's narrative. Despite this commonality, which has led to a deeper relationship between

women, sisterhood did not exist in the antebellum era. Motherhood opened the door for white and black women to connect, but, ultimately, race is what stopped them from crossing the threshold into sisterhood.

Slave masters exerted power over black women in many ways, including exploiting their maternal capacity. Often, black mothers were separated from their children after being sold to another master. They also could have been separated by performing child care duties, or dying. Black women of prime age and health would be put to use as wet nurses in the plantation household. By severing family ties, slave traders and owners disembodied the black community. Frederick Douglass, an ex-slave and abolitionist, declared the separation of mother and child during slavery as “the inevitable result” (Douglass 1845, 2). Douglass was stripped of the possibility of having a close relationship with his mother when she was sold to another master (Douglass 1845, 2). Like Douglass, Lillie Baccus was born into slavery in West Point, Mississippi, in approximately 1863. Her mother was separated from her older children before Baccus was born. It was not until after the Civil War and the emancipation of the slaves that Baccus and her mother were reunited with Baccus’s older sisters. Baccus said, “I heard ma say she was sold. She said Patrick sold her. She had to leave her two children Cherry and Ann. Mama was a field hand. So was grandma yet she working in the house some she said. After freedom Cherry and Ann come to mama” (Slave Narratives: Arkansas 1936, 76). Like Baccus, many other black families’ fates were in the hands of their masters, which led to separation within families. This displacement in the premature black family altered the dynamic of motherhood and was coupled with mothers raising children who were not of their own blood.

Slaves who primarily worked in homes had duties that consisted of cleaning, cooking, and caring for the children of the house (White 1985, 50, 56). In fact, black mothers who were lactating would become wet nurses for the master’s children. Breastfeeding seemed to be a distasteful practice in society for the sophisticated women and, sometimes, white women would push this task into the hands of their slaves (West and Knight 2017, 37). Because a black woman’s bodily resources were used to meet the needs of the master’s children, she did not have time to nurture her own. This was true for Harriet Jacobs’s grandmother, who was the primary nurser for her master’s children.

While their mothers worked in masters’ households, black children who worked in the fields were raised mostly by the enslaved community. Just as there were designated wet nurses for masters’ children, there were also nurses for the neglected black babies. These women would take on the role of a mother figure for many children. At times, these wet nurses would be more of a mother to the other children than children’s own mothers. For Harriet Jacobs, motherhood was a tool to bring her and white women together, but for women like Baccus, motherhood further separated the two races.

An example of a black woman in a wet-nurse role is Mirriam McCommons, who was born a slave in Stephens, Georgia. When she grew older, she nursed her master’s and mistress’s children. She was treated well by her mistress and loved the children she looked after like they were her own. When one of the children grew up, McCommons nursed her child as well:

I used to nuss Miss Calline Davis, and she done got married and left here, but I still hears from ’er. She done married one of dem northern mens, Mr. Hope. I ’members

one time whilst dey wuz visitin' I stayed wid 'em to nuss deir baby. One of Mr. Hope's friends from New York wuz wid 'em. When dey got to de train to go home, Miss Calline kissed me good-bye and de yankee didn't know what to say. (Federal Writer's Project 1941b, 55)

This quote shows how affectionate Miss Calline was to Mirriam. A white man who witnessed this affection was appalled. McCommons's experience illustrates how motherhood could be used to bring black and white women together regardless of racial barriers. In reality, however, McCommons's relationship with the white women in her life cannot be reciprocated due to racial closeness and racial distance; the affection she experienced represents racial closeness. At the same time, the affection also represents racial distance. Even though her mistress was fond of Mirriam, she was still seen as property and the difference in power was always reinforced.

Contrary to popular belief, white women shared a bond with black women. According to historians Emily West and R. J. Knight, this was because "wet-nursing fostered both physical closeness and [r]acial [d]istance between enslaved and [w]hite women, and opportunities for resistance on the part of enslaved wet nurses remained severely limited" (West and Knight 2017, 38). Within plantation households, white women were essentially raised by black women. The racial closeness that existed in these environments produced friendships and other bonds but were not completely reciprocated due to the continued reinforcement of the social hierarchy that black was beneath white. These feeble bonds of affection and fondness meant nothing if black women were still the property of the white children they were nursing and the mistresses with whom they worked.

Unbeknownst to masters, the black community began to form over generations. In the absence of their mothers, in some cases, black children would instead lean on a surrogate mother. These surrogate mothers were nanny figures or wet nurses in their lives. These women had child-caring roles for both white and black families. The female caretakers took on the name "Nanny," "Auntie," or "Aunt." This non-biological familial bond was not just specific to the black community. Historian Joan E. Cashin argues that the "distinctions between nuclear relatives and other kinfolk were much less pronounced than scholars have assumed" (1990, 70). For instance, Aunt Adeline was a woman born into slavery around 1848 in Hickmon County, Tennessee. As she got older, she became a caretaker for her mistress's family:

I was about 15 years old when the Civil War ended and was still living with Mrs. Blakely and helped care for her little children. Her daughter, Miss Lenora, later married H. M. Hudgens and I went to live with her and cared for her children. When her daughter Miss Helen married Professor Wiggins, I took care of her little daughter, and this made five generations that I have cared for. (Federal Writer's Project 1941a, 13)

Aunt Adeline's experience as a consistent caretaker for her master's family shows how close black women were to white families. Although these relationships existed during this time, they were not completely reciprocated.

As a consequence of slavery, black families were displaced, separated, and torn apart. Instead of remaining isolated, slaves formed spiritual connections. This aided the physical

and mental stress that slaves had to endure. It could also be seen in the white community as well. At this time, some women were able to connect to one another through a mutual maternal experience; however, this connection was not enough to bring white and black women together in the sisterhood because of the remaining inequalities brought on by bondage. While slavery was economically beneficial for the larger society, it was mentally detrimental for the enslaved black people. In stressful conditions, communities can be common coping mechanisms. The division of families in the black community was used to stop generations of slaves from building foundations; however, the lack of present blood ties did not stop members of the black community from reconstructing the definition of family.

Evaluation of Slavery

Historically, women have been seen as second-class citizens to men. Unfortunately, this commonality did not lead to sisterhood between white and black women. While it is true that race kept these women apart, motherhood and other shared gender experiences brought them together. The together-but-unequal idea highlights that, though the society during the antebellum period was largely racist, most black and white people were still able to coexist. This challenges the weaponized, xenophobic propaganda of the separate-but-unequal era. Black and white women, though separated by race, found each other through gender. Unfortunately, this discovery did not lead to the immediate abolishment of slavery. Sisterhood failed in the antebellum period because no matter how close black women were to white women, black women were still seen as slaves.

I became interested in these issues because I have noticed that society tends to pit white and black women against each other as if they were opposites. After a while, this stigma is learned and reinforced in new generations. As a result, these two women are missing out on the positive effects attributed to their alliance. In the 2017–2018 UW Oshkosh school year, I served on the executive board as the co-activities coordinator for Sisterhood, which is a multicultural women’s organization that focuses on female upliftment and community service. During this time, I was able to see how cross-racial interactions between women can lead to positive gains for the campus community through inspirational guest speakers, creative bonding events, and team-building and community-service activities. Cross-racial relationships are necessary to increase people’s cultural competency, thus making them more adept citizens in the melting pot known as the United States.

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Pink Gauze, Cold Spirits: Asexual Criticism and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*

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Abstract

While the main character of Virginia Woolf's 1925 novel *Mrs. Dalloway* can be (and has been) read as straight, lesbian, and bisexual, I read (and rewrite) her, in this essay, as asexual. In doing so, I experiment with the kind of bad reading scholar Tyler Bradway has argued "can provoke us to make contact with radical social possibilities that seem to exist merely as flickerings of feeling"¹ and with the practice of rewriting, an act University of Lorraine professor Monica Latham claims constitutes "a connection and interaction between past and present literature," an "invoking [of] one's literary heritage [. . .] while endeavouring to find a place on the literary scene and consequently a new, singular voice."² As an embodied critic, asexual myself, through these processes, I explore the queer manners in which readers can find and play with resonances of contemporary queer identities in literature published before such terms as *asexual* and *aromantic* were in popular use.

ANDREA: But do you believe that man can live alone, without ever putting himself out for another person in a reciprocal exchange of attractions and reactions? Do you really think that man can live without loving?

THE POET: Perfectly, Madame, because happiness in this case would only be a sort of sickness; without this, one would never need periodically to take "lozenges of love" in order to arrive at a state of fulfillment, which is no more than a simulacrum, Madame.

—Tristan Tzara, *Handkerchief of Clouds: A Tragedy in 15 Acts*³

Decorating for my college graduation party, I bought fake pink roses from a dollar store and scissored off their heads, then set them to float in bowls of water that later sat on card tables in my father's garage. Doing this, I imagined I was Virginia Woolf's character Sally Seton, who, in *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf's fourth novel, "went out, picked hollyhocks, dahlias—all sorts of flowers that had never been seen together—cut their heads off, and made them swim on the top of water in bowls."⁴ *Mrs. Dalloway*'s protagonist, Clarissa Dalloway, notes that the effect of this display "was extraordinary [. . .] Of course," she adds, her "Aunt Helena thought it wicked to treat flowers like that."⁵ Planning my own party, I dreamed I was also Clarissa—Woolf's novel is, after all, as scholar Francine Prose notes, "nominally about a woman getting ready for a party during a single day in London."⁶ And as *Mrs. Dalloway*'s well-recalled first line reads, "Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself."⁷

I share these thoughts because, in this essay, I intend to perform a reading of Woolf's 1925 novel in an anti-traditionalist spirit not unlike Sally's flower-decapitating one. Many university classes on literary criticism reference the rhetorical triangle of author, reader, and (literary) work as a means of explaining the differences between literary theories—some approaches will focus their attentions on the work, declaring its author dead in doing so; others read works much more biographically. In my graduation party imaginings of myself as Sally or Clarissa, I layer my own person into other areas of the triangle than that of the reader, playing as if I myself were a part of Woolf's work rather than only its audience. I am inspired to utilize this mode of criticism by literary theorist Roland Barthes, who distinguishes in his landmark essay "From Work to Text" (1971) between the literary work and the literary Text: when we read objects as existing under the latter category, we view them as things without authors, singular meanings, or closure, and, as a result, are able to interact with them using new manners of criticism (perhaps of the sort Clarissa's Aunt Helena might call "wicked").⁸ According to Barthes, we read a work; when it comes to the Text, we are at play. We experience, in this play, *jouissance*, the "pleasure without separation" that stems from the joy we find in the social utopia that is ourselves, the readers, on an equal level with authors like Woolf, in "that space where no language has a hold over any other."⁹

Barthes' is a fittingly queer approach for me to take on in this paper, as my *Mrs. Dalloway* reading itself is queer in multiple senses: I read the novel's titular character, Clarissa Dalloway, as asexual, examining as I do so the critical repercussions of such an imagining. I do so as an embodied critic, asexual myself. Scholar Toni A. H. McNaron has written a reflective essay called "A Lesbian Reading Virginia Woolf" in which she "trace[s] the progress of [her] continuous exploration of Virginia Woolf's works and the parallels that intellectual path has with [her] personal development."¹⁰ Similarly, though not to the same extent, I am very much present in this essay. The stakes are personal: I came of age not recognizing my own asexuality in large part because that sexual orientation was not a topic of popular discussion in 2014, when I found the term (and a large, widespread community of other asexual-identified individuals) online via a series of Google searches. There is an argument to be made for looking to the past (nearly 100 years now) in search of traces of asexuality in *Mrs. Dalloway*; I write, though, less to justify my orientation by giving it a history (although I certainly could) than to build on previous criticism, asexual and otherwise, in an attempt to push what we might term "asexual criticism" more firmly into its much-deserved, much-awaited-for, and much-

needed place within both contemporary literary criticism and that of the future. Clarissa Dalloway is not necessarily straight. From this statement, I construct myself.

Picking a Flower

One scene in *Mrs. Dalloway* runs as follows, following Clarissa's perspective:

She was wearing pink gauze—was that possible? She *seemed*, anyhow, all light, glowing, like some bird or air ball that has flown in, attached itself for a moment to a bramble. But nothing is so strange when one is in love (and what was this except being in love?) as the complete indifference of other people [. . .]

All this was only a background for Sally. She stood by the fireplace talking, in that beautiful voice which made everything she said sound like a caress [. . .] when suddenly she said, "What a shame to sit indoors!" and they all went out on to the terrace and walked up and down. Peter Walsh and Joseph Breilkopf went on about Wagner. She and Sally fell a little behind. Then came the most exquisite moment of her whole life passing a stone urn with flowers in it. Sally stopped; picked a flower; kissed her on the lips. The whole world might have turned upside down! The others disappeared; there she was alone with Sally. And she felt that she had been given a present, wrapped up, and told just to keep it, not to look at it—a diamond, something infinitely precious, wrapped up [. . .]¹¹

It is on this section of Woolf's novel that so many of her critics and readers alike have concentrated their analytical interests. McNaron refers to it as "the crucial scene" of *Mrs. Dalloway*, although she recalls finishing the novel several times before the scene's significance "finally pierced [her] consciousness."¹² Contemplating why this might have happened, she comes to the conclusion that "I had been so thoroughly and successfully trained (brainwashed?) to read [literature] for heterosexual romance that nothing else registered as excitement or eroticism. The fact of my own passionate relationships with women did not offset that indoctrination into compulsory heterosexuality as a literary scholar."¹³ McNaron's references to consciousness in reading recall feminist theorist Judith Fetterley's *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction*, a book in which Fetterley argues that "[t]o examine American fictions in light of how attitudes toward women shape their form and content is to make available to consciousness that which has been largely left unconscious and thus to change our understanding of these fictions, our relation to them, and their effect on us."¹⁴ Consciousness, she writes, "is power," and, by performing readings of literature in which we seek to understand it in new ways—in her case, by foregrounding its varying treatments and representations of women—we "make possible [not only] a new effect of that literature on us" but also "the conditions for changing the culture that the literature reflects."¹⁵ For McNaron, resistant reading takes the form of a lesbian-feminist criticism of *Mrs. Dalloway*; in a similar vein, I resist reading Woolf's novel with the assumption that its characters are universally allosexual (or, to define that term, not asexual).

Exigency

It has become the norm for writers publishing essays on asexuality to begin by first defining what exactly they mean by the term *asexual*, a necessity I, too, will

acknowledge here. While our goal as asexual activists (if we identify as such) is beyond (one) mere public visibility, (two) understanding, even (three) acceptance, we find that we must, in our arguments, first cycle through those three stages before we come to the one that comes after: the integration of asexual perspectives into popular thought. In the name of brevity, I present these preliminary steps in the form of a list:

1. Asexuality exists (as do asexual people).
2. The definition those writing in asexuality studies use in papers is typically taken from the website of the Asexuality Visibility and Education Network (AVEN): an asexual person, they say rather succinctly, “does not experience sexual attraction.”¹⁶ I contextualize this popular line as, given in short, it seems to allude to an asexual/nonasexual binary that does not exist. An individual could identify themselves as existing between or outside the terms *asexual* and *allosexual*—and many do. The term *gray-asexual*, for example, is sometimes used by those who experience sexual attraction to others on occasion, but not frequently. AVEN is quick to note that “[a]sexual people can have romantic feelings and form romantic relationships around those feelings just like anyone of any orientation can,” and they rightly make this distinction—a person who does not or infrequently experiences romantic attraction to others might identify not on the asexual spectrum but, rather, on the aromantic spectrum.¹⁷
3. This one must come on its own.

In the title of their introduction to one of the first academic books on asexuality studies, Megan Milks and Karli June Cerankowski ask their audience: “Why asexuality? Why now?”¹⁸ A better question for me to ask of myself here might be: “Why then?”

For the asexual individual, the stakes of representation are high. The amount of literature, contemporary or otherwise, that features characters we might refer to as being asexual is miniscule; it is apparent, too, that the number of those fictional people who actually self-identify as such is even smaller. One significant facet of this lack of acknowledgment in media of today’s asexual community is the constant depiction in all kinds of literature (but especially the plot-driven formats of novels and films) of an allosexual individual who is regarded as universal in that orientation. (The very term *orientation*, in fact, so often used to describe an individual’s sexual identity, points to the presence of both a subject and an object—that of one’s affection. Orientation as a measure of sexual identity does not take into account the subject who does not see themselves as oriented, in sexual attraction, toward anyone.)

As asexual blogger @theacetheist has noted, it can be argued that, in a large number of narratives, sexual attraction to others is used as a tool “for constructing a subject position, in that a subject looks sexually at another person and that act alone is supposed to establish them as the experiencer (as opposed to the experienced),” the result of which is that “sexuality becomes akin to a synecdoche for perception and agency.”¹⁹ Sexual attraction to others, under such assumptions, is implied to be the physical *stuff* that proves a character’s humanity, that which verifies their role as Self rather than Other. In such a context, those who identify as asexual, inundated as is common by such norms of what we might refer to as allonormativity, are left, as blogger @theacetheist notes, with only two theses with which to incorrectly regard their existences: “I am not a sexual being, therefore I am not human,” or, alternatively, “I am human, therefore I am a sexual being.”²⁰ Indeed, many of the fictional characters we might imagine are asexual

are negative, alien representations of those asexual people who do exist. (Examples in popular television, for example, include *The Big Bang Theory*'s Sheldon Cooper, *Game of Thrones*' Varys, *Sirens*' Voodoo, and *Dexter*'s eponymous character.) In a manner similar to Fetterley's described erasure of women from literature (and subsequent misrepresentation), the asexual person in literature (or, perhaps even more often, the idea of asexuality as a whole) is rendered powerless and described as inhuman, not only in stories but in popular discourse as well. This misrepresentation makes up the exigency of my argument—that it is when we acknowledge those references to asexuality that do present themselves, however subtly, in narratives, that we are engaging ourselves as critics and readers in the revolutionary act of carrying such minority queernesses out of silence and into popular light.

Love, for Virginia Woolf

Prose's choice to use the word *nominally* to describe *Mrs. Dalloway* as a text about a party is an apt one: dipping into Woolf's story, readers quickly realize that it is also very much an interwar novel, representing a London population affected in different degrees by the First World War. Woolf writes fiction that often seems to describe, uncannily, those human feelings of uncertainty that feel, so often, indescribable to us, and *Mrs. Dalloway* is no exception. Its protagonist Clarissa Dalloway is an upper-class Londoner who, from the novel's second and third pages, is pondering life, death, and the manner in which we present ourselves to others in the midst of and in spite of the larger fears that plague us. The very style in which the novel is written is distinct in its use of a stream-of-consciousness narrative that skips seemingly at will between its characters, enough so that scholar Monica Latham refers to its "Dallowaysian voice,"²¹ calling its "formal, structural, thematic and narrative features" *Dallowayisms*.²²

Latham's coining of these terms makes more sense when we recognize the immense influence *Mrs. Dalloway* has had on all manners of literature following it. In a book on rewriting *Mrs. Dalloway*, Latham articulates the importance of all those texts that have remade or seem to have been inspired by Woolf's novel (some better-known examples being Stephen Daldry's 2002 film *The Hours* and Christopher Isherwood's 1964 novel *A Single Man*). Latham claims, significantly, that "[t]he current impulse of rewriting a successful, well-known canonical story, explicitly or implicitly, is not a craven literary endeavour but, on the contrary, a way to renew, retell and reinterpret the past."²³ She clarifies elsewhere in her book that, "[a]s a literary practice, rewriting implies a connection and interaction between past and present literature; it consists in invoking one's literary heritage [. . .] while endeavouring to find a place on the literary scene and consequently a new, singular voice."²⁴ This essay, then, is both queer and traditional in that its intention to rewrite *Mrs. Dalloway* as an asexual novel is hardly a new endeavor. Within English studies as a whole, however, asexual readings of texts are far and few. In an essay titled, appropriately, "A Work of My Own" (recalling Woolf's essay "A Room of One's Own"), author Jeanette Winterson writes that "[w]hat I am seeking to do in my work is to make a form that answers to twenty-first-century needs."²⁵ In summary, I am reading Woolf's novel in the manner that I am for my own pleasure—I love her—and because such an essay is, in the context of contemporary literature and its criticism, needed.

Illuminations

Mrs. Dalloway's title character is not a straight woman. I say this both as a matter of ostensible fact—in reference, at least at first, to her expressing potentially romantic and sexual affection toward a woman throughout the section of the novel I have quoted previously—and in order to pointedly commence the interpretation of her character with a blank slate rather than a checklist in hand, refusing to assume of her any hetero- or allosexual identity. In doing so, I walk along footsteps left by Fetterley, who notes that “the first act of a feminist critic must be to become a resisting rather than an assenting reader,” clarifying that in doing so, we “begin the process of exorcising the male mind that has been implanted in us.”²⁶ Because so much of contemporary and older media and criticism has perpetuated the notion that a character is straight until proven queer, we as a populace have internalized not only the male mind to which Fetterley refers but also one which regards the world as one that is traditionally and naturally straight and allosexual. We see this in the very use of the word *queer* (or *strange*), to describe those who cease to fit the given norms of sexuality and gender.²⁷ In resisting this common urge to assume from the outset that Clarissa is allosexual and straight until proven otherwise, we open ourselves up to finding in her character myriad combinations of significant identities too often rendered invisible.

I begin my examination of Clarissa with that which is most spoken of in regards to queer aspects of Woolf's novel: her apparent homo- or bisexuality. Clarissa can “dimly perceive,” Woolf writes, the notion that a nonplatonic relationship can exist between both men and women and women and women.²⁸ Numerous similar allusions to light, perception, and sight permeate the text examined here: Clarissa, for instance, describes moments of attraction to women as “a sudden revelation,” noting that in such instances she sees “an illumination; a match burning in a crocus; an inner meaning almost expressed” that concludes as quickly as it starts.²⁹ Woolf's image of partial sight is an interesting one when taken in association with her character's potential queerness; she seems to imply a kind of almost-knowledge, or near-enlightenment on Clarissa's part of her sexuality that never reaches lasting fruition, only flaring up now and then, aloof as anything. Her language begs of the reader a closer examination, as if by peering with enough meticulous care we might find ourselves capable of grasping in our fingers a word for Clarissa's elusive orientation.

Clarissa's possible asexuality is described, in fact, in even vaguer terms, less as a certain “something” than as a lack of something altogether. The evidence for her being on the asexual spectrum (at one end of which we might find strict asexuality, and, in another area, gray-asexuality, or the experience of sexual attraction to others on occasion) is perhaps nearly as obvious to the asexual-identified reader as that of her experiencing attraction to women. One line in *Mrs. Dalloway* refers to Clarissa as moving upstairs “[like] a nun withdrawing, or a child exploring a tower,” a line that compares her via simile to two traditionally nonsexual figures.³⁰ This passage goes on to describe the circumstances by which Clarissa has developed the practice of sleeping alone and reading in bed in an attic bedroom after an old illness, noting that she “could not dispel a virginity preserved through childbirth which clung to her like a sheet.”³¹ Woolf goes on to note of her character that, “[I]ovely in girlhood, suddenly there came a moment [. . .] when, through some contraction of this *cold spirit*, she had failed him. And then at Constantinople, and again and again” (emphasis added).³² Clarissa does not overtly

specify the man she refers to in her internal monologue, although we might guess at his being Richard; more importantly, we might note the feeling of failure she references as a common one for the asexual person, who often feels their lack of sexual attraction to others to be a kind of inadequacy or basic tenet of humanity lost on their part. “She could see what she lacked,” writes Woolf: “It was not beauty; it was not mind. It was something central which permeated; something warm which broke up surfaces and rippled the cold contact of man and woman, or of women together.”³³

Viewing this “something central” as attraction to others, whether sexual or romantic, we could read from these lines some brand of asexuality on Clarissa’s part, whose consistency is not that of “something” but rather that of its absence. I posit the notion here that one reason Clarissa’s queerness in terms of attraction to women has been studied far more than her potential lack of attraction to others is that, while such attraction can be described in positive terms, a lack of any such feelings is often disregarded by readers as literal nothingness (if not some manner of sickness delaying or eating at the inevitable libido that lies underneath ostensible nonsexuality).³⁴ Clarissa, then, and, by extension, any literary character who might be considered asexual, is not defined by what she lacks; if defined at all, it is by that which she actively demonstrates in thought and action. *Mrs. Dalloway*, in this respect, is a fascinating text with which to regard such a philosophy, given its overt references to lack in addition to its opposite.

While a- or nonsexuality as a concept has not been explored before in scholarship of *Mrs. Dalloway* in the way I mean to here, similar approaches others have taken with the novel might be compared to my own: Modernist scholar Patricia Oudek Laurence, for instance, argues for the significance of silence in Woolf’s novels. The quiet Woolf so carefully implements in her work, Laurence writes, “reveals the obscurities of self and human relationships and the difficulty of knowing anyone . . . [and] points out language’s masks: the uncertainties and limitations of interpretation in literature and life.”³⁵ In this interpretation, that which goes unsaid in *Mrs. Dalloway* is equally significant to that which is said. Indeed, the fact that the novel delves so deeply into the thoughts of its characters can be considered to be producing a contrasting echo between such thoughts and that which those characters leave vocally unsaid. We pay attention to the differences between the two dialogues, and watch Clarissa for evidence of such differences. One, of course, exists between Clarissa’s “cold spirit” and the decisions she has made throughout her life in spite of that internal feeling (for example, marrying her husband, Richard Dalloway). Laurence goes on to write that, “[i]n narrating silence, Woolf implicates the readers of her novels in new ways by creating a space for them to interpret. Since silence has no one single meaning, the ambiguities of language and life are revealed.”³⁶ Faced with those several allusions in *Mrs. Dalloway* to the title character’s nonsexuality that exist, we are left to wonder just what their purpose in the novel could be—and because the novel gives no strict answer to that question, it leaves that purpose all the more up to potential interpretation. (*Purpose* is very likely the wrong word here, as it might imply there being only one meaning to be gotten from such allusions.) For instance: “some contraction of this cold spirit” is a vague statement both because Woolf uses the waffling “some” rather than referring, more specifically, to a specific instance of a contraction, and the phrase “cold spirit” itself does not give Woolf’s readers anything more than an abstract idea of what experience of Clarissa’s is being described in this line. As an asexual reader, however, I find myself in lines like this one, right or wrong (or good or bad) as this might be in terms of literary criticism. I, too, have something like a “cold spirit.”

A Base

In her essay on reading bisexuality in *Mrs. Dalloway*, scholar Nowell Marshall makes a number of points about previous readings of Clarissa that inspire my own in their refusal to accommodate a hetero-/homosexual binary of identities.³⁷ When Clarissa is read as exclusively straight or lesbian, such logic, Marshall suggests, has only been backed up by “the discursive effacement of bisexuality.”³⁸ Acknowledging that “lesbian readings of *Mrs. Dalloway* have undoubtedly helped to establish the field of lesbian and gay studies,” Marshall argues in her paper that, as a whole, critics “invested in queer readings must be willing to explore the full spectrum of queerness extant in a given text, regardless of what they want to see or what they assume that the author intended.”³⁹ Her words, while intended to promote the potentiality of a bisexual Clarissa, are open enough that they apply to my asexual reading of Woolf’s character as well. My aim with this paper is not to discount the importance or logic of a reading like Marshall’s; on the contrary, I only seek to add to it. Clarissa can and ought to be considered a great many things, not merely asexual—I focus on providing a base for such a reading of Woolf’s novel because it does not yet exist.

Leaving the Table

It might be noted that other critics have interpreted Clarissa’s lack of “something central which permeated” as the absence of “a firm sense of autonomous identity that yet makes content with other identities” (as scholar Jeremy Hawthorn wrote in 1975), a kind of criticism I hesitate, reading as I do, to promote.⁴⁰ Louise A. Poresky, author of *The Elusive Self: Psyche and Spirit in Virginia Woolf’s Novels*, argues, for instance, that, “[i]n psychological terms, Clarissa fears that she has no Selfhood that could generate love in her for others, and lacking this Selfhood, Clarissa fears that she also has nothing that could attract the love from others.”⁴¹ Hawthorn goes on to reinforce a point made previously by scholar Jean M. Wyatt: “Peter Walsh,” he writes, “is perhaps correct to date the death of [Clarissa’s] soul from that moment of prudishness when she left the table in embarrassment at Sally Seton’s ‘daring’ remark.”⁴² Clarissa as a character is read in this way—as partly dead—not only by critics of Woolf’s novel but by its own characters, too. Her friends Peter Walsh and Sally Seton (both of whom, notably, are romantically entangled with her at one or more points in the novel) regard Clarissa’s decision to live her life in higher classes as a denial of her human desire for adventure in favor of obtaining a stable, passionless livelihood. I take issue with this often unquestioned assumption that Clarissa’s lack of “something central” is equated to a lack of personal autonomy, or even the death of her soul—such a notion unnecessarily assumes that there is an innate passion Clarissa is denying by marrying herself into the world of the ostensibly bland Richard Dalloway (the partner whom she chooses, in the end). In rejecting that assumption, we can acknowledge more possibilities for her character: Clarissa might, for instance, be innately nonsexual (not to mention nonromantic). We can read her, then, not as sacrificing some ostensibly human inner passion for the sake of stability or money, but as a character whose life decisions are perhaps unnecessarily questioned by those potential life partners whom she has rejected, according to her own endlessly possible desires, in favor of Richard. Along these lines, Modernist scholar Jesse Wolfe notes that, “unlike Peter’s love, Richard’s is not oppressive. It provides Clarissa with space, both physically (a room and ominously narrow bed of her own) and psychically (in which

to work through her problems, to live a private life).⁴³ We could, with this thought in mind, read Richard as accepting of Clarissa's potential asexuality—further rationalizing her choice to marry him. “Far from a ‘dungeon,’” writes Wolfe, “Clarissa’s household can always be decorated with flowers; it is where her ‘atheist’s religion’ of life-love finds its fullest expression.”⁴⁴ We can argue that Clarissa’s soul has neither a dead spot nor an empty hole in need of future filling—it is a living, curious thing idiosyncratic to her person.

Pink Gauze

In my first draft of this section, I engaged in a kind of Barthesian play with Woolf’s novel by rewriting in my own words its scene in which Clarissa recalls kissing Sally. As wicked as this act may have been, I find a precedent for it in Barthes’ “From Work to Text.” In that essay, Barthes suggests that an engagement with “[t]he theory of the Text can coincide only with a practice of writing,” providing as an example of such writing the manner in which any musician will play the same sheet of music differently from another.⁴⁵ With this precedent in mind, I presented my playing in the form of a table: in the left column lay Woolf’s original text, and in the right lay my attempt to, as Latham might say, rewrite that original text. When I presented the draft in front of others, I had a friend read Woolf’s words at the same time that I read my own; on a white screen beside us, the table was projected in pink light and superimposed over a GIF of the kiss as it went in Marleen Gorris’ 1998 film adaptation.⁴⁶ Acts such as this and the one I described in the beginning of this essay are important ones, I think, in that they can serve as examples of the kind of queering play with aging texts that many contemporary readers and critics may not allow themselves to attempt, feeling, perhaps, that such readings prove invalid when placed inside a traditionally scholarly discourse. Barthes acknowledges this feeling in “From Work to Text,” noting that “[c]ertainly there exists a pleasure of the work (of certain works); I can delight in reading and re-reading Proust, Flaubert, Balzac, even—why not?—Alexandre Dumas. But this pleasure [. . .] remains in part [. . .] a pleasure of consumption; for if I can read these authors, I also know that I cannot re-write them (that it is impossible today to write ‘like that’) and this knowledge, depressing enough, suffices to cut me off from the production of these works.”⁴⁷ The act of rewriting, which Barthes refers to as impossible here, is, of course, entirely possible, as he later notes.

Proponents of reader-response or literary affect theory are among the growing number of scholars who might advocate for this kind of play with words. Tyler Bradway, author of *Experimental Literature: The Affective Politics of Bad Reading*, has argued, for instance, for the validity of “bad readings,” in which reactions to texts such as “masturbatory fantasy, perverse titillation, [and] exuberant sentimentality” are all regarded as useful tools for reading a text in new ways rather than as obstacles to an ideal textual engagement.⁴⁸ “Bad reading,” he writes, “can provoke us to make contact with radical social possibilities that seem to exist merely as flickerings of feeling.”⁴⁹ My own radical social possibility I have already mentioned: the integration of asexual perspectives into popular thought. My flickerings went as follows:

she is wearing pink gauze pink gauze pink

their memory is imperfect in the sense that it is biased; peeking through rose-colored glasses everything is pink and they love it—her—everything is beautiful and she is beautiful and clarissa is not sure how to deal with the strange feeling. they watch this girl this sally seton from the corner of the room while the dj spins a melody off the tips of his fingers. what melody! what melody? they only see like the focused lens of a camera. sally's mouth pink knees pink. she's got a leather jacket on over the dress, a box of cigarettes peeking out a pocket, and it's so good. there's a whole party here, and it's a background, really.

(sally is beautiful and all, but since when has this been relevant? they've thought themselves asexual for years.)

who stands talking by the bar and spilling her drink on a man's book of poems.

sally who says "let's get out of here" and drags clarissa out of themselves, and they stumble around the block behind the others and pause at a corner and kiss! clarissa, who has never been one for romance or sex, but kind of likes this one kiss—sally who—who gave them this thing and practically told them slip it in your pocket for a rainy day—a shower or a dream—they want to say "sallyi'masexualandaromantic butigoogledittheotherday and ithinkthisisalterousattractionwhati haveforyou—notromantic orplatonict butsomethinginbetween—emotional . . .

Writing these lines, I rather pointedly revamped aspects of Woolf's text, and, examining them now, I can examine some of the manners in which I initially connected with *Mrs. Dalloway*. My text is, for instance, (perhaps rebelliously) in all lowercase letters, and I refer to Clarissa with the pronouns *they*, *them*, and *theirs* rather than the set with which she is referred to in *Mrs. Dalloway*, an act that perhaps was merely an indulgence on my part—I myself go by *they*. The setting of my text is contemporary with my own time rather than that of Woolf's, and, while I, too, write in a stream-of-consciousness mode here, my style more closely mimics Beat Generation literature than any Dallowayism in Woolf's original text. A reader from another era or area from my own would not make all of these associations in the same way that I did; I bring my own baggage into this reading. I read *Mrs. Dalloway* selfishly, I might say, looking for aspects and echoes of my own identities in its characters and narrative and then stubbornly clinging to the ones that I did find. I read with what Winterson called "twenty-first-century needs," and I did not put such needs aside in an effort to be objective. That I did this perhaps speaks to the importance of the needs that I had and to the stakes at play in asexual representation (and lack thereof). I repeat my intentions for drawing out those resonances of asexuality that exist within Woolf's text: in acknowledging those references to such queer minorities that do present themselves, however subtly, in a narrative, we are engaging ourselves as critics and readers in the revolutionary act of carrying queer idiosyncrasies out of silence and into popular light.

Cold Spirits

I see fit here to point out that the spirit of asexuality (in the contemporary sense, as referred to in this essay) is not, in fact, a contemporary phenomenon. We can find allusions to asexualities in sexology texts published as early as 1875 (and, in other genres of texts, earlier).⁵⁰ In spite of the very real existence of a history of such people, however, the contemporary asexual community still suffers from a lack of popular visibility and adequate representation in media, as do myriad other similar communities. The number of those who would deny the existence or validity of asexual people is significant—but we're out here, and asexuality is out here, drifting through world history from person to person, nameless. It must, then, be found somewhere in the literature of these historical people or those who knew them and their nonsexuality. By recognizing such elements or traces of asexualities when they do appear in the works we read, for the first time in a certain area of discourse, we might be acknowledging a very real truth: such works did encapsulate asexualities despite, perhaps, not realizing the gospel at which they hinted. It might be noted that the sentiment expressed here almost seems to be one which, if enacted, could alter the manner in which we view historical idiosyncrasies of gender and sexuality. Such is the manner Fetterley might offer to us, in which criticism proves itself significant to the reality that it studies. Such is the manner in which we alter itself “the culture that the literature reflects.”⁵¹

The Poet

Coming back, finally, to my epigraph: that culture to which Fetterley refers—which, traditionally, has read sexual attraction as *somethingness* and its lack as *nothingness*—has believed in (to take a word from Dadaist writer Tristan Tzara) a *simulacrum*, a false notion that asexuality is necessarily equivalent to lack, even sickness, and that, in comparison, (allo)sexuality is, as Tzara calls it in his play *Handkerchief of Clouds* (1924), “a state of fulfillment.”⁵² The protagonist of *Handkerchief*, simply called The Poet, queers this conception of reality by claiming, reversely, that he has “arrived at last at a state at which I have leveled all sensations; an equilibrium which, even in the Spring, cannot submit to the love of another human without being troubled.”⁵³ He specifies: “I am not empty, however. On the contrary,” he says, he is the opposite.⁵⁴ Whether we read The Poet as asexual or aromantic here, we are led to read some kind of lack on his part (if we even want to call it that) not as a negative attribute but, instead, as a positive one. The happiness of love, “in this case[,] would only be a sort of sickness.”⁵⁵ In reading and rewriting Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* as I have in this essay, I have played The Poet’s role. I read Clarissa as asexual just as I am, in part, for selfish reasons; in doing so, however, I have acknowledged to myself and to others precisely what does and does not allow me to reach toward fulfillment.

Notes

1. Tyler Bradway, *Queer Experimental Literature: The Affective Politics of Bad Reading* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), lii.
2. Monica Latham, *A Poetics of Postmodernism and Neomodernism: Rewriting Mrs Dalloway* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 3.
3. Tristan Tzara, “A Handkerchief of Clouds: ‘A Tragedy in 15 Acts,’” trans. Aileen Robbins, *The Drama Review: TDR* 15, no. 4 (1972): 113.
4. Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* (Orlando: Harcourt, Inc., 2005), 33.

5. Ibid.
6. Francine Prose, introduction to *The Mrs. Dalloway Reader*, ed. Francine Prose (Orlando: Harcourt, Inc., 2003), 5.
7. Woolf, 3.
8. Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text," in *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*, ed. David H. Richter, 3rd ed. (Boston: Bedford St. Martin's, 2016), 512–16.
9. Ibid., 516.
10. Toni A. H. McNaron, "A Lesbian Reading Virginia Woolf," in *Virginia Woolf: Lesbian Readings*, ed. Eileen Barrett and Patricia Cramer (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 10.
11. Woolf, 34–35.
12. McNaron, 12.
13. Ibid.
14. Judith Fetterley, "Introduction to *The Resisting Reader*," in *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*, ed. David H. Richter, 3rd ed. (Boston: Bedford St. Martin's, 2016), 605.
15. Ibid., 609.
16. The Asexuality Visibility and Education Network, "General FAQ," *The Asexuality Visibility and Education Network*, <https://www.asexuality.org/?q=general.html> (accessed December 23, 2019).
17. Ibid.
18. Megan Milks and Karli June Cerankowski, "Introduction: Why Asexuality? Why Now?" in *Asexualities: Feminist and Queer Perspectives*, ed. Karli June Cerankowski and Megan Milks (New York: Routledge, 2014), 1.
19. theacetheist [Coyote], "Allonormativity, Self vs. Other, and the Delayed Realization," *The Ace Theist* (blog). WordPress. May 8, 2014, <https://theacetheist.wordpress.com/2014/05/08/allonormativity-self-vs-other-and-the-delayed-realization/#more-3547>.
20. Ibid.
21. Latham, 6.
22. Ibid., 210.
23. Ibid., 4.
24. Ibid., 3.
25. Jeanette Winterson, "A Work of My Own," in *Art Objects: Essays on Ecstasy and Effrontery* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), 191.
26. Fetterley, 610.
27. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the adjective as "[strange], odd, peculiar, eccentric" in addition to "of questionable character; suspicious, dubious."
28. Woolf, 31.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid., 30.
31. Ibid. Interestingly, this depiction of a sheet-clad Clarissa seems rather sexual while at the same time referring to a virginity that has apparently remained with her in spite of her kissing Sally Seton, marrying Richard Dalloway, and apparently consummating the latter union (evidenced by the existence of Clarissa's most likely

biological daughter in the text). Can we read this image as evidence of a kind of hypersexualization of Clarissa's character?

32. Ibid., 31.
33. Ibid.
34. In a 2012 episode of *House*, for instance, the eponymous doctor character comments that “[lots] of people don’t have sex. The only people who don’t want it are either sick, dead, or lying.”
35. Patricia Ondek Laurence, *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 12.
36. Ibid.
37. Nowell Marshall, “Refusing Butler’s Binary: Bisexuality and Performative Melancholia in *Mrs. Dalloway*,” *Journal of Bisexuality* 9, no. 3/4 (2009): 317–41.
38. Ibid., 321.
39. Ibid., 338.
40. Jeremy Hawthorn, *Virginia Woolf’s Mrs Dalloway: A Study in Alienation* (London: Sussex University Press, 1975), 54.
41. Louise A. Poresky, *The Elusive Self: Psyche and Spirit in Virginia Woolf’s Novels* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1981), 110.
42. Hawthorn, 54.
43. Woolf, 36.
44. Ibid.
45. Barthes, 516.
46. Marleen Gorris, dir., *Mrs. Dalloway* (Century City, CA: First Look International, 1997), film.
47. Barthes, 516.
48. Bradway, v.
49. Ibid., lii.
50. See William Acton’s *The Functions and Disorders of the Reproductive Organs in Childhood, Youth, Adult Age, and Advanced Life Considered in Their Physiological, Social, and Moral Relations* (London: John Churchill, New Burlington Street, 1875) 168–69. What Acton refers to as “true impotence” here is characterized by a “permanent absence of desire” that is “so unusual a phenomenon” and “an alarming and suspicious circumstance.” For a slightly more upbeat perspective on the subject, see William Alexander Hammon’s *Sexual Impotence in the Male and Female* (Detroit: George S. Davis, 1887) 278–383.
51. Fetterley, 609.
52. Tzara, 113.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.

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“It will not fetch thee much in our Nantucket market”: Whales and Tobacco as Symbolic Condemnations of Manifest Destiny in Herman Melville’s *Moby-Dick; or, The Whale*

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Abstract

Herman Melville’s *Moby-Dick; or, The Whale* (1851) is a monolith of American culture. It endures partly as an examination of the national psyche in antebellum America, a time brimming with social diversity and rife with ethnic discrimination engendered by Manifest Destiny. Industry and slavery ran rampant, oppressing the downtrodden, while stitching deeper pockets for the wealthy. Anything and everything was judged by its economic potential. *Moby-Dick*’s outward focus on the scientific—via whale anatomy—and the metaphysical—via whale art—prompt deliberative interaction with industrial American society through whaling. Melville’s subtle and pervasive utilization of tobacco primes the reader for such philosophical quandaries as social inequity and inequality before Ishmael ever reflects on them. In antebellum America, tobacco could accentuate the sophistication of a person or label someone a savage. Therefore, scenes with tobacco become critical in establishing a socio-cultural framework in which to analyze the book and its characters. Whales and tobacco are resources not just for industry but also for readers, giving us a basis to understand a time period haunted by a belief in Providential expansion.

Introduction

In nineteenth-century America, the first Industrial Revolution had severely altered the American landscape. Urban centers became increasingly more populated. Skilled trades were replaced with machines and wage labor; the once hand-crafted clothing and tools were now mass-produced. Agriculture transformed from a microcosm of self-sufficiency to a macro enterprise designed to feed cities and make a profit doing so. Necessities and luxuries alike became cheap to produce and to purchase, birthing a

consumer culture. Competition to secure large swathes of goods was cut-throat, as raw materials were incredibly valuable to companies wanting to process them. Chief among such commodities were whale oil and tobacco. Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick; or, The Whale* (1851) situates itself on the coattails of the American Industrial Revolution, exploring the exploitation of resources and peoples that accompanied commodification. Consider Melville's (1851, 371–72, 331, 333) descriptions of the sperm whale: “. . . so the tun of the whale contains by far the most precious of all his oily vintages; namely, the highly prized spermaceti, in its absolute pure, limpid, and odoriferous state”; “now as the blubber envelopes the whale precisely as the rind does an orange, so is it stripped off from the body precisely as an orange is sometimes stripped by spiraling it”; “assuming the blubber to be the skin of the whale; then, when this skin, as in the case of a very large Sperm Whale, will yield the bulk of one hundred barrels of oil.” Here the whale is reduced to little more than an organic factory. Whales were prized for the machine-lubricating oil that could be made from their blubber, the spermaceti that could be turned into high-quality candles and lamp oil, and the baleen—so often found in corsets of the era—that served as a primitive plastic. Due to their incredible economic potential, whales' well-being was ignored. Similarly, minority workers and slaves were valued solely as a labor resource. Scholarship has explored the tie between whales and minority workers thoroughly, but scholars have not noticed that Melville employs tobacco as a symbol alongside the whale, using the commodity to ironically denote the commodification of characters' social standing and worth.

There are two major categories that Melville uses to depict whales in his narrative: art—which Fulbright Scholar Elizabeth Schultz explores in her book *Unpainted to the Last: Moby-Dick and Twentieth-Century American Art*—and science—which University of California Berkeley English professor Samuel Otter dissects in his book *Melville's Anatomies*. Both categories of depiction seek to convey truth—art through evocation and metaphor, science through the empirical. The portrayals could easily be co-opted to serve a specific purpose. In his article “Narrative Trauma and Civil War History Painting, of Why Are These Pictures so Terrible?,” history professor Steven Conn (2002, 24) asserts that American paintings depicting historical events and panoramas “should be understood not simply as an attempt to record on canvas important historical moments for their own sake, but as a way of using particular kinds of events to express ‘truth’ as defined by a specific historical consciousness.” Similarly, science could be evoked through fallacious practices, like that of phrenology, wherein “ethnologists” deduced the intellectual capacity and character traits of a person, or even a whole ethnic group, from measurements of the skull. In nineteenth-century America, a religious country dominated by economic growth that was fueled by scientific breakthrough and rapid technological change, art and science were weaponized as propaganda, coalescing into *Manifest Destiny*. Coined by American columnist John L. O'Sullivan, this term denotes America's duty “to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions” (Wilsey 2017, 70). When this concept is contextualized as the product of industrialization, it becomes natural—if morally repugnant—to value the “saviors” (Caucasians) and commodify the minorities (Afro-Americans, Native-Americans, Pacific Islanders, etc.).

As whales and tobacco were major components of nineteenth-century American industry, both held symbolic and social importance, something that Melville employs

throughout his opus. Thus, by examining *Moby-Dick's* scientific and artistic depictions of whales and the related scholarship, Melville's utilization of tobacco—by socially categorizing characters, and their associated nationalities, via smoking—exposes itself as social commentary, tying its use into *Moby-Dick's* larger condemnation of Manifest Destiny and the subsequent exploitation and commodification of peoples.

Whale Anatomy

By focusing on whale anatomy, Melville critiques the means by which antebellum America utilized science to legitimize viewpoints and actions under Manifest Destiny. There are at least six chapters in *Moby-Dick* whose titles refer directly to whales and their anatomy (seven, if one counts “The Whiteness of the Whale”): “Cetology,” “The Sperm Whale’s Head,” “The Right Whale’s Head,” “The Tail,” “Measurement of a Whale’s Skeleton,” and “The Fossil Whale.” The first chapter to blatantly address the scientific consideration of whales is the satirical “Cetology,” which Otter (1999, 163) asserts is Melville’s “extended critique of racial science.” In it, Ishmael notes the many authors, poets, and scholars’ work on studying whales is nothing more than “the classification of a constituents [*sic*] of a chaos” (Melville 1851, 145). Thus, Ishmael starts the chapter by trying to legitimize himself, but instead invalidates himself by lumping his own view in with those he criticizes. By decrying the ubiquity of Captain Scoresby’s observations—the captain of a whaler whose accounts of whales have been relegated to common knowledge—Ishmael is deposing the utility of personal classifications, exercised through ironic counterclaim:

And here it be said, that the Greenland whale is an usurper upon the throne of the seas. He is not even by any means the largest of whales. Yet owing to the long priority of [Scoresby’s] claims, and the profound ignorance which, till some seventy years back, invested the then fabulous or utterly unknown sperm-whale, and which ignorance to this present day reigns in all but some few scientific retreats and whaleports; this usurpation has been in every way complete. Reference to nearly all the leviathanic allusions in the great poets of past days, will satisfy you that the Greenland whale, without one rival, was to them the monarch of the seas. But time has at last come for a new proclamation. This is Charing Cross; hear ye! good people all,—the Greenland whale is deposed,—the great sperm whale now reigneth! (Melville 1851, 146)

The proclamation rings hollow, as the reader has no reason to trust Ishmael—the novice whaler—any more than scientists or the captain of a whaling ship. Ishmael later expands upon the sentiment, claiming that “as yet, however, the sperm whale, scientific or poetic, lives not complete in any literature. Far above all other hunted whales his is an unwritten life” (Melville 1851, 147). Melville, through Ishmael, is noting that any conclusions are singularities of those making them; that is, observations are subjective and exclusive, as they are informed by biases, prejudices, cultures, etc. The danger of asserting singular observations as truth allows for wrongful behavior, such as slavery, to be justified. As historian Holland Thompson (1910, 134) states in the article “Effects of Industrialism upon Political and Social Ideas,” “men hold steadfastly to opinions, which may be only prejudices, but they are willing to go to the stake for them, and their influence steadies

[their] wavering.” Ishmael acknowledges this danger: “I promise nothing complete; because any human thing supposed to be complete, must for that very reason be faulty” (Melville 1851, 147). One viewpoint does not and cannot represent the whole and vice versa; therefore, delegitimizing the ability to prove any given truth solely with science enforces the multiplicity of being, meaning, and symbolism. As Captain Ahab states, “Truth hath no confines” (Melville 1851, 178). By exploring the different cultural meanings of whales and the linguistic origins of their names, Melville’s “Etymology” and “Extracts” sections outwardly posit that diverse—and possibly conflicting—viewpoints are the norm, not the exception.

Cetology and anatomy double as both metaphor and analogy for the exploitation of minority laborers in antebellum America by highlighting cultural inequality. As English professor Philip Armstrong (2004, 1040) argues in his article “‘Leviathan is a Skein of Networks’: Translations of Nature and Culture in *Moby-Dick*,” American perception was being rewritten: “in the mid-nineteenth century this entailed a transition from Christian to evolutionary notions of the ‘chain of being,’ which simultaneously broke down received divisions between the human and the animal, and installed new ones.” Throughout *Moby-Dick*, Melville (1851, 61, 165, 359, 364) describes minority characters and whales using similar ennobling language, thematically binding them: Queequeg, Ishmael’s shipmate and ethnic amalgam, had “excellent blood in his veins—royal stuff”; Daggoo was “wonderfully abstemious, not to say dainty . . . the vitality diffused through so broad, baronial, and superb a person”; as one observed the Sperm whale, “you involuntarily yield the immense superiority to him, in point of pervading dignity”; the Right whale is “a diademed king of the sea.” The whales’ noble traits, discerned in the “The Sperm Whale’s Head” and “The Right Whale’s Head” chapters, serve as Ishmael’s taxonomic phrenology; these chapters are preceded by Ishmael’s flattering phrenological judgment of Queequeg:

But certain it was [that Queequeg’s] head was phrenologically an excellent one. It may seem ridiculous, but it reminded me of General Washington’s head, as seen in the popular busts of him. It had the same long regularly graded retreating slope from above the brows, which were likewise very projecting, like two long promontories thickly wooded on top. Queequeg was George Washington cannibalistically developed. (Melville 1851, 56)

Similarly, Queequeg and whales are connected via the marking of skin. He is tattooed quite thoroughly, his arm described like a quilt, a “counterpane of patchwork, full of odd little parti-colored squares and triangles” and his face as consisting of “a dark, purplish, yellow color, here and there stuck over with large blackish looking squares” (Melville 1851, 28, 23). The Sperm whale’s skin, its blubber, is described as a blanket and is covered in “those linear marks, as in a veritable engraving, but afford the ground for other delineations. These are hieroglyphical” (Melville 1851, 333). The consistent likening between whale and minority creates a symbiotic association; as Otter (1999, 163) claims, “Melville’s analysis of the ethnological effort to discern human character in bodily characteristics and his fictional effort to represent character on the surface of the page illuminate one another.” Hence, when a whale is “one of those problematic whales that seem to dry up and die . . . leaving their defunct bodies almost entirely bankrupt of

anything like oil,” that whale can be easily associated with a sick slave unable to work and is thus no longer useful (Melville 1851, 441). Consequently, “*Moby-Dick* insistently parallels the commodification of the animal and that of nonwhite labor” (Armstrong 2004, 1050).

Melville’s authorial figures subjugate and commodify both minorities and whales, thus completing the symbolic and literal dehumanization of minorities and non-Americans. Characters like Captain Bildad, who “got an inordinate quantity of cruel, unmitigated hard work out of [his crew],” or Captain Ahab, who was “[his crew’s] supreme lord and dictator,” verify *Moby-Dick* as an “allegory of the totalitarian tendencies within modern so-called democracies, particularly the management of racial difference in the service of capitalist endeavor” (Melville 1851, 83, 133; Armstrong 2004, 1050). In her book *Shadow Over the Promised Land: Slavery, Race, and Violence in Melville’s America*, Carolyn L. Karcher (1980, 2, 3), professor of American studies, also notes Melville’s first-hand experience with exploitative tyrants: “instead of making slavery his single, overriding concern [. . .] Melville focused on the oppression and exploitation he had known as a sailor and generalized about slavery by analogy”; “Melville consistently exhibits tyranny as unbearable and resistance to it as essential if the victim of oppression is to preserve his manhood.” The abundance of laborers exacerbated the discriminatory efforts of nineteenth-century American hegemony. American historian Marcus W. Jernegan notes this in his reflective 1920 article “Slavery and the Beginnings of Industrialism in the American Colonies”:

The eighteenth century witnessed a rapid and large increase in the number of slaves, both from importation and from births. There was therefore a large supply. Negroes were of two general classes: first, “raw” or “Guinea” negroes, those imported directly from Africa; secondly, those “country-born” . . . [“country-born” slaves] would be more docile, more adaptable to their environment, more familiar with methods of production, and in general more civilized than freshly imported negroes. (Jernegan 1920, 225–26)

The slaves are discussed like draft animals, their breeding being indicative of their quality and worth: “it is generally admitted that the effect of crossing the races made most of the mulattos more intelligent than the negroes of pure blood . . . this fact was reflected in the higher prices paid for mulattos throughout history” (Jernegan 1920, 226). The commodification and dehumanization were reinforced by the goods produced; kings’ and queens’ heads being “solemnly oiled” with refined spermaceti or “the world buy[ing] tobacco grown and manufactured in the South” affect the value of those goods (Melville 1851, 123; Thompson 1910, 136). When that economy fluctuates, so does the worth of the worker manufacturing them. Naturally, with “low prices of exported products, especially tobacco” laborers and slaves garnered little—if any—social worth (Jernegan 1920, 221). As people multiplied, the labor required to extract resources grew, production of goods surged, the demand on industrial resources increased, and the call for expansion turned from pipe-dream to necessity. All that was left was convincing America that its destiny was expansion, a task met by art.

Whale Art

Melville critiques art as being unable to portray—or even incorrectly portraying—

the essence and encompassing context of its subject. To willfully ignore context is to create propaganda. There are three successive chapters in *Moby-Dick* that address this in name and content: “Of the Monstrous Pictures of Whales,” “Of the Less Erroneous Pictures of Whales, and the True Pictures of Whaling Scenes,” and “Of Whales in Paint; in Teeth; in Wood; in Sheet-Iron; in Stone; in Mountains; in Stars.” In the first of these chapters, Ishmael states:

Any way you look at it, you must needs conclude that the great Leviathan is that one creature in the world which remains unpainted to the last. True, one portrait may hit the mark much nearer than another, but none can hit it with any very considerable degree of exactness. So there is no earthly way of finding out precisely what the whale really looks like. (Melville 1851, 289)

Ishmael considers artful renditions including Hindu, Chinese, Biblical, and Grecian ones, as well as the “sober, scientific delineations,” concluding that “the living whale, in his full majesty and significance, is only to be seen at sea in unfathomable waters” (Melville 1851, 287, 288). The whale depicted physically removed from its environment neither adequately portrays the subject nor its environment. According to Ishmael, the best depictions are Garnery’s engravings of frightening whaling scenes, which show whales interacting with their environment and humans in a natural way: “the action of the whole [scene] is wonderfully good and true” (Melville 1851, 291). It should be noted that the portrayal of these scenes—the first of Garnery’s works depicts a whale sinking a ship, the second, a small boat attempting to keep stride with a whale—does not show the whale being bested or killed by humans. The implied reason for the depictions being “good and true” is that the whales remain untouched by human hands. As Schultz (1995, 1) describes in the introduction to *Unpainted to the Last*, “Ishmael cannot be content merely looking at picture books or at nature as if it were a picture book. He insists upon interpreting the pictures created by his fellows as well as those created by nature; he insists upon reading them for meaning.” Quoting the *Moby-Dick* “Whales in Paint” chapter, Schultz (1995, 2) asserts that “this visual imperative derives from [Ishmael’s] conviction that ‘some certain significance links in all things, else all things are little worth, and the round world itself but an empty cipher.’” Ishmael creates meaning for the reader and himself by deciding what details to focus on. In this way, Melville—through Ishmael—distills nature into experience and experience into art.

Much of nineteenth-century American art depicts taming of the natural landscape; this art, by imposing human order onto the chaos of nature, relays a Colonialist experience, which *Moby-Dick* refuses to purvey. In his essay “Moby-Dick: Work of Art,” Walter E. Bezanson (1953, 57 emphasis in original) proposes a three-part structure (hitherto twice alluded to) that can be utilized to create meaning in a work: 1. “Nature, *ultimately*, is chaos,” and any meaning is created “through more or less systematic ordering of what seems to be there”; 2. Experience is nature “filtered through a sensibility” wherein nature “begins to show patterns qualified by the temperament and the culture of the observer”; 3. Art is the experience of nature transformed “into patterns that are meaningful and communicable.” By this definition, art is a product of the human mind and cultural preconceptions of beauty, not a natural state of being. Art historian William H. Gerdts provides an example of this mentality in an *American Art Journal* article from 1789 titled

“Rules for Painting. Founded on Reason.” The examined article gives the following guidelines:

Nature must be the foundation. This must still and ever appear, *but nature must be raised and improved*, not only from what is commonly seen to what is but rarely; but even yet higher, from a judicious and beautiful idea in the painter’s mind, so that grace and greatness may shine throughout. (Gerdt 1995, 31, emphasis mine)

Implied herein is that beauty is not intrinsic to nature but rather it is a perception of the artist and the audience. Indeed, as America was tamed and had “expanded, the frontier with its dangers receded,” its citizens gained “a new appreciation of American nature and its pictorial possibilities” (Gerdt 1995, 33). Such statements convey how, even in its most beneficent state, the nineteenth-century American psyche opposed nature to some extent. American paintings of the late eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries employed “common themes of individual heroism, racial conquest, and national identity” (Conn 2002, 26). These themes translate into paintings unabashedly portraying cultivation, construction, and vehicular movement. Consider John Gast’s iconic painting *American Progress*. The sun shines on tool-laden colonists in trains and wagons moving from the right side (eastern America) of the picture to the left side (the Wild West), driving the Native Americans out of frame and into the gray gloom of displacement and disenfranchisement. At one point, the painting held another title: *Manifest Destiny*. Obsession with westward movement—and thus, glorious conquest for God and country—has created, as photographer Roger Cushing Aikin (2000, 83) claims in his article “Paintings of Manifest Destiny: Mapping the Nation,” an “imprint of this national directional grid on the American consciousness” making “map and compass . . . part of the national culture.” Thus, illustrations of vast nature, like the sea or prairies, are populated with images of moving vehicles showing “people trying to get somewhere and not lingering to contemplate the [nature’s] frightening vastness” (Aikin 86). Ishmael’s “good and true” tableaus stand in sharp relief to these Colonialist paintings, as does the haunting image of the *Pequod* sinking: “now small fowls flew screaming over the yet yawning gulf; a sullen white surf beat up against its steep sides; then all collapsed, and the great shroud of the sea rolled on as it rolled five thousand years ago” (Melville 1851, 624). It is imperative here to understand that the name *Pequod* alludes to the Pequot War, which lasted from 1636 to 1638, wherein New England colonists slaughtered and sold hundreds of the Pequot tribe into slavery. The *Pequod*, then, is symbolic of Colonial greatness achieved through exploitation and conquest. The fact that it can be dismantled so thoroughly by nature is a warning to nineteenth-century America, as Karcher (1980, 63) shrewdly notes: “American citizens might still avert the tempest that threatened to engulf their ship of state.” By having nature master humanity, Melville asserts that America as a country—the “ship of state”—will rip itself apart if such exploitation continues. Whales, representative of the minorities and the misused, live in the ocean—a realm of nature still unconquerable by even twenty-first century human ingenuity. As a result of mistreatment of crew and nature, the whole ship is lost, including its diverse American crew. The expectancy of exceptionalism and aggrandization is subverted, and with it, the Colonialist hubris is unfulfilled. No longer is there beauty in the whaling ship processing a whale; no longer is there beauty in the tobacco field being worked by slaves. Artwork of exploitation is no longer celebrated.

Tobacco

Like the whale, tobacco is not just a commodity, but a symbol used to identify one's place in society. Not only does this include the smoker, but those in the vicinity of the act as well. Tobacco's christening happens early in *Moby-Dick*, where Melville first uses it to delineate the savage "other." This happens during "The Spouter-Inn" chapter, when Ishmael observes Queequeg smoking after praying to "his Congo idol" (Melville 1851, 25):

Taking up his tomahawk from the table, he examined the head of it for an instant, and then holding it to the light, with his mouth at the handle, he puffed out great clouds of tobacco smoke. The next moment the light was extinguished, and this wild cannibal, tomahawk between his teeth, sprang into bed with me. I sang out, I could not help it now; and giving a sudden grunt of astonishment he began feeling me. (Melville 1851, 25)

This passage reinforces the stereotype of the non-Caucasian as savage and dangerous while posing Ishmael as the reflective and pure American citizen. By having Queequeg smoke, the pagan reasons for tobacco use—as defined by R. T. Ravenholt (1990, 215) in his succinct timeline of international tobacco usage, "Tobacco's Global Death March"—are implied: "among native [*sic*] Americans from Canada to Brazil, tobacco was widely smoked for its intoxicating effects, as a medicinal, and for ceremonial purposes." The next page of *Moby-Dick* further reinforces Queequeg as savage via association with tobacco:

"Speak-e! tell-ee me who-ee be, or dam-me, I kill-e!" again growled the cannibal, while his horrid flourishings of the tomahawk scattered hit tobacco ashes about me till I thought my linen would get on fire. But thank heaven, at that moment the landlord came into the room light in hand, and leaping from my bed I ran to him. (Melville 1851, 26)

As an uncivilized "cannibal," Queequeg can barely speak English. His wild and thoughtless show of savagery—his "horrid flourishings"—endangers the Colonialist way of life—Ishmael's worry that "[his] linen would get on fire," as if sheets and a bed were not a luxury, but a necessity. Thanks to God and the civilized American landholder—"heaven" and "landlord" respectively—Ishmael is saved. After this pseudo divine intervention, the still smoking Queequeg is reduced to the comic and loveable but domesticated savage who, after being told to act civilized, complies, implying that civilizing the savage "other" is good, even necessary:

"You gette in," [Queequeg] added, motioning to me with his tomahawk, and throwing the clothes to one side. He really did this not only in a civil but a really kind and charitable way. I stood looking at him a moment. For all his tattooings he was on the whole a clean, comely looking cannibal. What's all the fuss I have been making about, I thought to myself—the man's a human being just as I am: he has just as much reason to fear me, as I have to be afraid of him. Better sleep with a sober cannibal than a drunken Christian.

“Landlord,” said I, “tell him to stash his tomahawk there, or pipe, or whatever you call it; tell him to stop smoking, in short, and I will turn in with him. But I don’t fancy having a smoking man in bed with me. It’s dangerous. Besides, I ain’t insured.”

This being told to Queequeg, he at once complied, and again politely motioned me to get into bed—rolling over to one side as much to say—I wont [*sic*] touch a leg of ye. (Melville 1851, 26–27)

Queequeg, now acting “politely” and in a “civil” manner, has been assimilated by the landlord. As Queequeg has paid his fare, he is the rightful “owner” of the room, yet he must comply with the intruding Ishmael’s demands, as Ishmael, the symbolic American, refuses to sustain intimate contact with a lifestyle different than his own: “I won’t have a smoking man in bed with me.” The analogy (even allegory) to American Colonialist usurpation of Native American lands is readily apparent. Not only does Ishmael inhabit the role of the stereotypical antebellum American, but also that of the self-conscious American. This is evidenced by his proposition of a “social smoke” where he and Queequeg “sat exchanging puffs from that wild pipe of his, and [kept] it regularly passing between us,” along with his newfound intimacy with Queequeg (Melville 1851, 57): “I was only alive to the condensed confidential comfortableness of sharing a pipe and a blanket with a real friend”; “his story being ended with his pipe’s last dying puff, Queequeg embraced me, pressed his forehead against mine” (Melville 1851, 60, 63). This self-consciousness, however, associates Ishmael with the “other” in the eyes of many of Melville’s Nantucket characters.

By demonstrating the “civil” use of tobacco after its “savage” introduction, Melville condemns the hypocrisy of nineteenth-century America. After boarding the *Pequod*, Starbuck—the first person Ishmael and Queequeg interact with—before saying anything else, asks for the motley couple’s identity—“who be ye smokers?”—recognizing them by the product they are using and thus categorizing them accordingly (Melville 1851, 109). Juxtaposing Queequeg’s conspicuous tomahawk pipe is Stubb’s “short, black little pipe” that “helped to bring about that almost impious good humor of his” (Melville 1851, 128–29). Here, tobacco symbolizes the polar opposite of savagery as smoking was “a fashionable and polite éclat” for Caucasian Americans due to its popularity among royalty and the upper class of Europe (Ravenholt 1990, 214); its popularity was so overwhelming that “the conveniences of a gentleman were considered imperfect without a box of pipes and tobacco” (Ravenholt 1990, 214). The use of tobacco was a pastiche of Western vogue. Despite the different effect that smoking had on negotiating social status between the two groups, Western cultures retained the Native Americans’ perceptions regarding tobacco’s medicinal properties: “tobacco resolves, cleanses, purges, vomits, stupefies the brain, resists poison and is a very great vulnerary . . . made into an ointment or balsam, it cures all manner of tumors, ulcers, old sores . . .”; the list is over a page long (Ravenholt 1990, 215). To avoid being disingenuous, there were those who also believed tobacco to be harmful. The consumption of the plant was so desirous, however, that when King James I heavily taxed the import and sale of tobacco because of its perceived symptoms, “smuggling increased,” resulting in a lowered tax rate and the king’s “[selling] a monopoly to collect it” (Ravenholt 1990, 216). Such historical evidence demonstrates that Western societies’ consumption of tobacco was ubiquitous and the only reason for

the difference in perceptions of smokers was who was doing the smoking. Antebellum attitudes toward Caucasian smokers are showcased in Stubb's proper introduction:

For, like his nose, his short, black little pipe was one of the regular features of his face. You would almost as soon have expected him to turn out of his bunk without his nose as without his pipe. He kept a whole row of pipes there ready loaded, stuck in a rack, within easy reach of his hand; and, whenever he turned in, he smoked them all out in succession, lighting one from the other to the end of the chapter; then loading them again to be in readiness anew. For, when Stubb dressed, instead of first putting his legs into his trowsers, he put his pipe into his mouth. (Melville 1851, 129)

Stubb is perpetually smoking. Melville highlights Stubb's—supposedly—clean-cut and orderly nature through Ishmael's likening of Stubb's smoking routine to reading: “. . . lighting one [pipe] from the other to the end of the chapter.” As a smoker, Stubb is someone who is prepared and thoughtful, careful in planning, and deliberate. After all, how could someone who smoked while methodically dressing be anything like the smoker Queequeg, “the wild cannibal” who “sprung into bed” with Ishmael (Melville 1851, 25)?

Through Ahab, Melville directly comments on the goodness of tobacco, further illustrating the hypocritical distinctions between smokers of different social classes and ethnic distinctions. Ahab, not in spite of, but due to his monomaniacal fixation on *Moby Dick*, removes himself from American capitalist mores, particularly that of fiscal furtherance. Ahab proves this by rebuking Starbuck's proclamation that *Moby Dick* “fairly comes in the way of the business to follow; but I came here to hunt whales, not my commander's vengeance. How many barrels of vengeance yield thee even if thou gettest it, Captain Ahab? it will not fetch thee much in our Nantucket market” with an almost Puritanical expletive: “Nantucket market? Hoot!” (Melville 1851, 177, 178). Ahab is so enthralled in his vengeance that he has denounced that which propels forward the entrepreneurial American spirit. His soliloquized ruminations about tobacco can then be seen as caused by, yet a critique of, the American ideals:

Some moments passed, during which the thick vapor came from his mouth in quick constant puffs, which blew back again into his face. “How now,” he soliloquized at last, withdrawing the tube, “this smoking no longer soothes. Oh, my pipe! hard must it go with me if thy charm be gone! Here have been unconsciously toiling, not pleasuring,—aye, and ignorantly smoking to windward all the while; to windward, and with such nervous whiffs, as if, like the dying whale, my final jets were the strongest and fullest of trouble. What business have I with this pipe? This thing that is meant for sereneness, to send up mild white vapors among mild white hairs, not among torn iron-grey locks like mine. I'll smoke no more. . . .” (Melville 1851, 141)

Ahab, realizing that he is smoking for no other purpose than to consume, presciently acknowledges, through calm and airy diction, the disgraceful act of taking part in luxury without appreciating it. This is a denial of commodification, as he is acknowledging the worth of something beyond its economic possibilities. Here, the foil of tobacco and whales appears explicitly. Ahab likens the act of smoking to that of a whale's death

knell. However, he isn't the only person to assert the tie between the two. In the chapter "Stubb Kills a Whale" Ishmael recounts: "Lazily undulating in the trough of the sea, and ever and anon tranquilly spouting his vapory jet, the whale looked like a portly burgher smoking his pipe of a warm afternoon. But that pipe, poor whale, was thy last" (Melville 1851, 308). The whale is directly linked to the pipe, intentionally tying the whale, with its symbolism of ethnic discrimination and Colonialist propaganda, to tobacco, a commodity that improperly portrays those who smoke it based on ethnic distinctions. Tobacco, just like the whales, is employed to showcase exploitation.

Conclusion

In his essay "Symbolism in *Moby-Dick*," Elmer E. Stoll (1951, 440) chastises critics of the novel for finding new symbols as societal consciousness shifts, calling such readings "Narcissism! . . . reverie!" Stoll (1951, 440) is dismayed at the notion that "the story [is] given meaning instead of imparting its own, as for a century and a half has been the lot of *Hamlet*!" Ishmael's observation is quite prescient when regarded with such a statement: "Men hold steadfastly to opinions, which may be only prejudices" (Melville 1851, 134). Such a canonical adherence disallows that the author may have observed and wrote down certain things that had been prevalent but unnoticed or ignored in their time. As history professor Leo Marx (1956, 28) succinctly states in his article "The Machine in the Garden," a work "set in a factory need no more be about industrialization than *Hamlet* about living in castles." Symbolic multiplicity in texts arises as symbols gain new meanings over time and changes in cultural perceptions. These new additions do not erase the old, but augment them, situating them in richer, multiplicative narrative. Manifest Destiny may not have seemed problematic to those in power when it was happening, but that doesn't mean that others didn't feel that way. The predominant, historical view is only one view, and to limit oneself to it is self-deprivation. As Bezanson (1953, 56) astutely observes, "the experience of *Moby-Dick* is a participation in the act of creation. Find a key word or metaphor, start to pick it as you would a wild flower, and you will find yourself ripping up the whole forest floor."

The pipe and the whale are both vessels for antebellum commodities; the pipe is used to consume one, the whale is source of one. The pipe defines its users' social worth, the whale shows the commodification of people. Melville used economic staples as symbols to ironically denounce Manifest Destiny. Resources and goods once used to generate wealth and increase Caucasian social status are subverted into magnifying glasses for Colonialist hypocrisy and exploitation. By understanding one of their literary purposes in *Moby-Dick*, the symbols of whale and tobacco acknowledge the plight of the marginalized, who, despite their oppression, helped America realize the Romantic and grandiose ideal of Manifest Destiny.

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Call for Submissions

The regular submission deadline is **June 22, 2020**, for the upcoming issue. We will accept manuscripts anytime for subsequent issues.

Oshkosh Scholar accepts scholarly, analytical, and creative works on a rolling basis. Enrolled UW Oshkosh students are eligible to submit their work. Recent UW Oshkosh graduates can submit work that they completed as undergraduates for up to one year after graduation. Students who wish to submit must have a faculty mentor to support their submission.

Analytical works must have substantial original research as defined by their field, citations, and an engagement with the secondary literature. Examples of appropriate articles include those written for independent study projects, honors theses, Undergraduate Student/Faculty Collaborative Research projects, or senior seminar projects.

Creative work includes musical scores, creative nonfiction, visual art, poetry, drama, scripts, or short fiction. All creative work must be accompanied by a brief (150–300 words) artist's statement that addresses *at least two* of the following considerations: 1) how the piece engages with the work of others, such as masters of the craft, 2) what traditions it contributes to, 3) what genre it resides in, or 4) an explanation of the medium or technique used.

For more information regarding submission guidelines, evaluation criteria, and process overview, visit uwosh.edu/osrca/present/oshkosh-scholar/ or email us at ugjournal@uwosh.edu.

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