



...DISTINCTIONS...

Kingsborough Honors Journal
Volume 10 Number 01

DISTINCTIONS

Volume 10 | Number 01

Fall 2014

DISTINCTIONS, the journal of the Honors Program of Kingsborough Community College of the City University of New York, welcomes scholarly articles and creative works that explore important issues in all aspects of humanistic endeavor, not confined to a specific academic discipline. Our editorial staff is sympathetic to a broad range of theoretical and critical approaches; however, the views expressed in articles are solely those of the authors.

EDITORIAL STAFF

Associate Professor **Robert Cowan** | *Editor*
Graduate Writing Fellow **Samuel Nicolosi** | *Faculty Editor*

ADVISORY BOARD

Associate Provost **Reza Fakhari** | *Office of Academic Affairs*
Dr. **Rachelle Goldsmith** | *Director of the Honors Program*

Book Layout by
Tsubasa Berg
Kingsborough Center for Advanced Technology Training (KCAT²T)

Cover Art by
Diana Ng

Tribute

At a recent meeting of honors students, they were asked what kinds of obstacles they face in their personal lives that hinder their progress in college. The answers were the standard ones you hear at Kingsborough and at community colleges across the country: fulltime work, taking care of children or parents, the isolation of being new immigrants.... But one of the aspects of our students' lives that comes up every semester, that I have never really given due consideration, is dealing with the loss of loved ones.

Every week or so, I have students who miss class because of the death of a peer from a shooting or a car accident. Or they are out because they've lost an uncle or aunt back in their home country or another state and they have to return for the ceremonies that will lay that person to rest. Or they are out because they are having an abortion and dealing with the grief and guilt of that unfortunate circumstance. Or they are grieving for a lost parent.

Everyone experiences loss, but some of us are privileged with the time, space, and money to deal with that loss slowly and fully and in our own time. Many of my students talk to me about losing their jobs because they've missed too much work when a loved one dies, and falling behind in their classwork and having to drop or fail a class or more than one.

Given all of this, I am consistently amazed and inspired by Kingsborough students' ability to persevere and to work through loss, and I've seen that very often they become stronger for it. In dealing with my own loss this autumn—I can only hope a fraction as well as my students have—I would like to dedicate this issue of *Distinctions* to the memory of my father, Dick Cowan, a teacher of children and teachers for over thirty years, whose love of knowledge and enthusiasm for sharing it has been a profound inspiration to me throughout my own career.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Cowan', followed by a horizontal line and a dash.

Robert Cowan, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, Department of English

Brooklyn Economic and Commercial Boom¹

Lev Seleznov

For decades the borough of Brooklyn has been seen as a dangerous and economically stagnant part of New York's metropolis. Ever since the end of the 1950's Brooklyn's status and reputation has been scolded by many. Forcing a mass exodus of the middle class population, Brooklyn became a poverty stricken district which attracted little to no economic prosperity. This process of decay went unchanged until the later stages of the 1990's where a slow revival took place. Over the next two decades Brooklyn's borough gained real ground in attracting business, employment and severely diminishing its chronic crime rate. Brooklyn has made such drastic improvements in its overall economy that some begin to question whether it can truly compete toe to toe with Manhattan or if it can rearrange New York City's hierarchy. Is Brooklyn's economic and commercial boom shifting the balance of economic power from the other boroughs and Manhattan?

Brooklyn's infamous global brand has given it more prestige and reputation than anything else. The borough is renowned for its outgoing scene of hipster Dom, which is world recognized. There are Bedford Stuyvesant Cafes in Amsterdam, Holland and there are food trucks in Paris, France. There is specific content that is being created and branded by organizations that sponsor Brooklyn-based companies, like BKLYN1834, that are specifically "dedicated to selling the borough's image beyond its borders". Such companies seek to finance artists and work in partnerships that use their work; this relationship is seen as a "mutually beneficial partnership". Associations like Clubhouse fund cooperative communities where residents produce material that subsidizes and promotes Brooklyn as a lifestyle all around the world, as stated by Kim Velsey, "hopes to fund others arts communes whose denizens will produce content, like a Converse ad that the company recently created, subsidizing and fostering a lifestyle that can sell stuff—"Brooklyn is cool now". Hip companies which attract adolescents and other age groups, like Converse, produce ads that further enrich the project. Organizations such as Clubhouse directly help the overall

¹ Completed under the mentorship of Prof. Joseph Consolo for Micro-Economics.

economy as they host numerous positions like marketing directors, creative directors and art directors.

The borough of Brooklyn can rival any global city with its new and acclaimed Barclays Center which is the home of the Brooklyn Nets. Almost any major city has its own stadium and its own sports team. The Brooklyn Nets partnered with a private developing company (Forest City Ratner) which not only financed the building of the Barclays Center but brought substantial commercial expansion to the region as well as sponsoring 16 residential apartment buildings that would assist the area with further affordable housing. The 22 acres of land, where these projects are located, also provide much needed space for retail and administrative buildings that can be used for office space. The project overall had a cost of approximately 1 billion dollars. The Barclays Center holds a seat count of 18,200 and debuted in 2012. It houses the NBA's Brooklyn Nets which is Brooklyn's first notable sports team since the Dodgers. The arena has acquired 14 million dollars in tax revenue in its first year of operation and the total output from the Barclays Center was around 145 million dollars in its first year. The center was also given the honor of hosting the most concerts amongst all other similar venues within the country from 2012-2013. The full economic activity of the Barclays Center on Brooklyn's economy is tremendous, around 250 million dollars was produced indirectly in the first year of operation. Over the next 30 years the arena is projected to bring in around 400 million dollars in tax revenue. On the other hand it is still very debatable on the impact that the center is having as Phyllis Furman states: "In spite of the arena's strides, critics say it has yet to generate enough jobs to justify the public subsidies it has received. And some local businesses near the arena say they have yet to see a much expected increase in revenues." Marty Markowitz on the other hand, who was Brooklyn's borough president at the time of the approval of the arena, to the time during its first year of business, sees the center as a major positive for the borough saying, "The return of professional sports to Brooklyn can provide the same unifying identity today as it did in the past—and further add to the attraction of Brooklyn." And goes on to further say, "No other single decision could have had as significant an impact on economic development in this area as locating a professional sports team in Brooklyn and building an arena at Atlantic Yards".

From the 1950's to the 1970's the crime rate in Brooklyn shot up, which forced large amounts of white settlers—especially in East New York—to move to areas such as Long Island and New Jersey. Between the 1985 and 1995 the crime rate was severe, fueled by the drug epidemic, which directly and indirectly clogged Brooklyn's economic growth. Businesses and people had a limited amount of confidence or feeling of safety within the Borough, which cut the supply of much needed capital throughout the district. Condos and wealthy real estate projects were not a possibility then, as there were no customers or any financial backing for their development. Brooklyn's crime rate has severely diminished over the past few decades. During the height of the crime wave in 1990, 158,000 crimes were documented; while in 2013 fewer than 36,000 were reported which is an estimated 80% decrease.

In February of 2013 JPMorgan Chase & Co, the country's largest lender, planned to transfer approximately 2,000 employees from its headquarters in the Chase Manhattan

Plaza to Brooklyn's newly renovated Metro Tech Plaza. The Metro Tech Center houses JP Morgan and Forest City Ratner affiliates. Office space in Brooklyn's business district in Downtown Brooklyn is severely limited as 96% of the 15.5 million square feet of offices are in use as stated by CBRE Group Inc., while Manhattan's most occupied area (30th to Canal Street) has an occupancy rate of 93% as suggested by the Real Estate Services Firm. Space for offices around the Metro Tech Plaza are some of the most in demand real estate within the city, attracting entrepreneurs and tech companies. There is an array of different companies from all fields and all backgrounds that make Downtown Brooklyn an attractive destination, according to Ali Esmaeilzadeh, Vice President of Commercial Development and Leasing at Forest City Ratner, who says "Downtown Brooklyn has now become a very diverse ecosystem of varied companies that are more reflective of all of Brooklyn and all of New York City," and goes on to say "There's still the presence of government and back-office, there's also a surge in technology-based firms, entrepreneurial-type companies."

Jobs within the borough of Brooklyn have been on a steady increase. Brooklyn's private sector job growth rate has surpassed not only the American average and of neighboring boroughs, but most importantly of Manhattan. Private sector jobs within Brooklyn have enlarged by 26% between 2003 and 2013, from 401,071 to 503,572, the biggest improvement by any other borough within the decade, according to Labor Department data. Manhattan, on the other hand, faced a more stagnant growth rate as jobs rose 13 % in the same decade, yet the number of jobs created were 250,000 (from 1,750,000 to 2,000,000). The great recession has taken its toll on Brooklyn: before the recession its the unemployment rate was 4.7% in December 2006, its lowest unemployment rate within four decades; and at the height of the recession it rose to 11.1% in January 2010. Manhattan's unemployment rate was 3.7% in December 2006 and 9.1% in January 2010, compared to Brooklyn's. The unemployment rate within Kings County (Brooklyn) has declined within the last 2 years. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Kings County's unemployment rate was 10.2 % in June 2012 and 9.4% in June of 2013, a 0.8% decrease. Manhattan's unemployment rate went from 9.6% in June of 2012 to 8.7% in June of 2013, a 0.9% decrease. By comparison, the national unemployment rate decreased by 0.7% from June 2012 to June 2013 (8.2% to 7.5% respectively) . Yet, the unemployment rate in Kings County is one of the highest rates within the state. Currently the unemployment rate within Kings County is 8.8% (March 2014) while Manhattan's unemployment rate is 6.7% (March 2014). By comparison the national unemployment rate was 6.7% in March of 2014. The labor market within Brooklyn is flourishing, keeping pace with Manhattan and the national averages.

As crime levels lowered throughout the years, the streets of Brooklyn became safer for the average citizen. This ultimately led to a rise in the demand and price in real estate in the borough. According to Miller Samuel Inc., a real-estate appraiser, the average residential price in Brooklyn rose tremendously from \$336,238 to \$688,334, which are record-setting numbers for Kings County. In comparison, Manhattan's average price rose 92%, from \$800,967 to \$1.5 million. Low interest rates and increasing rent costs within Manhattan have created a large demand for Brooklyn-based real estate, even though the

number of units for supply are becoming more elusive. The demand and price of condos and family houses especially, faced an increase. According to brokerage firm.

Douglas Elliman Real Estate, the median price of condos and one to three family houses from 2010 to 2011 went up 13% to \$478,000, and went up 15% from 2012 to 2013, to a record high of \$550,000. The demand shortens the supply, as the inventory of listings fell 19% to 4,704, as stated by Miller Samuel Inc., a New York based appraiser. The shortage of supply and the increase in prices all affect the demand according to Jonathan Miller, the president of Miller Samuel Inc. He says, “You choke off supply, you have a slowly improving economy, and prices rise,” and further says, “And then you compound it by widening your source of demand, when one of your competitors --Manhattan-- is experiencing the same inventory problem”. Rent increases throughout New York and mortgage rates at remarkable lows are attracting consumers and have expanded Brooklyn as a formidable market that’s more affordable than Manhattan. Yet, homeowners aren’t selling or listing their properties as they don’t have the equity to sell, which effectively is creating a lack of supply.

Apartment rents in Brooklyn have increased substantially around the whole borough. According to Miller Samuel and Douglas Elliman, Brooklyn rents have increased 14% from June 2012 to June 2013 to a median of \$2,737. This is the highest rate since the appraiser firm began recording data in 2008. In comparison, in Manhattan, rents rose 1.9% to a median of \$3,195 in June of 2013; this is the highest rate for Manhattan, surpassing 2006 by 2.1%. Mortgage rates are necessary for acquiring new real estate and is the alternative option to renting. According to Freddie Mac, the average rate for a 30 year mortgage was 4.19% in May of 2014, a slight decrease in the past months. While that is higher than the near record low of May 2013, which was at 3.54%. Some of Brooklyn’s most acclaimed and sought-after properties reside in Williamsburg and the Greenpoint neighborhoods. For example, the median price of a condo or family house in Greenpoint rose 24% from summer 2012 to summer 2013 to \$ 716,011 and to \$860,000 in May of 2014, according to Miller Samuel and Douglas Elliman. Whereas Williamsburg, one of Brooklyn’s most desirable neighborhoods, increased its median price for a home by 45.9% in one year from 2013 to 2014. Williamsburg is 40.98% higher than the median sales of a home on average in Brooklyn. In other areas such as Park Slope and Carroll Gardens, the median price of a family home increased 22% from 2012 to 2013 to \$1.6million. There are specific neighborhoods within Brooklyn that account for the rising average cost of real estate within the borough.

Properties are in high demand in Brooklyn, spending an approximate 146 days in 2013 on the market before being bought. This is an 8.2% decrease from 2012, according to Miller Samuel and Douglas Elliman. The shortage of supply for homes will continue until the markets and jobs improve to appropriate levels for consumers, as stated by Michael Guerra, the Douglas Elliman executive vice president who is in charge of Brooklyn sales, who says “We have fewer people choosing to move because we have less job mobility than we had pre-recession,” and goes on to say “So if you didn’t get a new job or promotion, you’re going to stay put and you don’t list your property”. This new push for real estate has its negative effects. The populous who inhabited the area of Fort Greene

and new and acclaimed Dumbo (which means “down under the Manhattan Bridge Overpass”), were made up of a majority of African Americans and Hispanics, who are now being forced to move as prices rise. There are areas that are failing to accommodate these ethnic groups or are raising rents, which makes it unbearable for individuals to continue living there, as filmmaker Spike Lee, a native Brooklyn, says: “So why did it take this great influx of white people to get the schools better? Why’s there more police protection in Bed Stuy and Harlem now? Why’s the garbage getting picked up more regularly? We been here!”.

Brooklyn is New York’s largest borough with a population of 2,592,149 residents, according to the U.S. Census Bureau for July of 2013. In 2010 the population of the borough was at 2,504,700, meaning the population increased by 87,449, a 3.5% rise, making Brooklyn the fastest growing area within the city. By comparison, Manhattan, which had a population of 8,175,133 in 2010 rose to 8,405,837, a 2.8% increase. The size of Brooklyn reflects its political standing throughout the city, as it holds a 16 member commission, making it the largest delegation of any borough within the 51-seat council. The 2013 mayoral election said a lot about the power of Brooklyn’s political sphere, as three of the top runners were all Brooklyners: Republican Joe Lhota, Democratic runner-up Bill Thompson, and Democrat Bill de Blasio. New York City’s current mayor, Bill De Blasio, is a Brooklyn, who took over office from former mayor Michael Bloomberg. New York City has been run, nearly unchallenged, by Manhattanites, and there hasn’t been a Brooklyn in office since 1973. Bill De Blasio is very hopeful for the prospect of Brooklyn, as it has a lot to offer: “Whether you enjoy walks in Prospect Park, a Nets game, a show at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, art exhibits or great dining, it’s happening in Brooklyn” and goes on to say “The sleeping giant is awakening,” referring to Brooklyn and its economic and political potential. Politicians within Brooklyn are confident of the strides that their borough is making, as Carlo Scissura, president of the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce, says: “The winds have shifted across the East River,”.

The television and film industry in Brooklyn attracts major attention and capital to the borough. The industry employs around 130,000 employees and creates \$7.1 billion in revenue for the year of 2013 in New York City, according to the city’s Office of Film, Theater & Broadcasting. The film industry in New York City was in charge of 29 television shows in 2013, a huge increase from the 7 made in 2003. Out of the total 29 television series, 14 of them were shot in Brooklyn, which include HBO’s “Boardwalk Empire” and CBS’s “The Good Wife” and “Blue Bloods.” Steiner Studios, a Brooklyn-based studio complex, is the largest complex outside of Hollywood. It has featured 40 films and 19 television series since its opening in 2004. New York City is attempting to attract production for films and TV shows with more than just the setting and location of New York, along with an array of specialists. This would make New York City a media center for web design, animation, graphic arts and digital effects. In the case of Boardwalk Empire, HBO’s \$18 billion budget show, HBO chose a Brooklyn based digital effects firm “Brainstorm Digital” instead of turning to Hollywood or Silicon Valley. These kinds of trends are important for the success of Brooklyn not only in the film industry but in terms of creating a powerful job network that would take this sector to a new level.

In recent years, Brooklyn has emerged as an economically bustling part of New York. The borough which is just across the East River, has become a thriving competitor to Manhattan. With its multi-million real estate development at Dumbo, the construction of the illustrious Barclays Arena and a fierce housing market, Brooklyn is now a player on the global stage. With immense development and progress over the last decade, Brooklyn has gained much notoriety, but it is much too early to declare that Brooklyn's economy can compare to that of Manhattan. Instead of rivaling against each other these two boroughs work together to ensure the future development of the City as a whole. When discussing the major growth that has taken place within the borough, it largely focuses on a few areas of Brooklyn. The Northern part of the borough gained most of the growth and the attention that came with it. Area's such as Fort Greene, Williamsburg, Dumbo, Bedford Stuyvesant and Carroll Gardens are facing the brunt of the development. This expansion is chastising many of Brooklyn's inhabitants directly or indirectly, as many minorities and other groups are forced to leave as demographics change and conditions such as rent rise. Spreading this economic growth throughout the borough would provide more stability for the average citizen.

Works Cited

- Goldman, Henry. "*Brooklyn's Hipster Economy Challenges Manhattan Supremacy.*" Bloomberg.com. N.p., n.d. April 4, 2104; Web. 14 Apr. 2014.
- Markowitz, Marty, Larry Rohter, and Mick Cornett. "*Does Hosting Sporting Events Promote Social and Economic Development?*" Americasquarterly. N.p., Summer 2011. Web. 10 Apr. 2014.
- Velsey, Kim. "*Brooklyn Is Now Officially Over.*" Observer. N.p., 03 May 2014. Web. 5 May 2014.
- "*Chase Moves Workers to Brooklyn, Slims Branches.*" Nywcc.org. N.p., 6 Apr. 2014. Web. 29 Mar. 2014.
- United States. New York State Department of Labor. Labor.ny.gov. N.p., 20 May 2014. Web. 22 May 2014.
- Mejeur, Jeanne. "*National Employment Monthly Update.*" Ncsl.org. N.p., 6 June 2014. Web. 7 June 2014
- Carniel, Oshrat. "*Brooklyn Home Prices Rise to Record in N.Y. Sales Frenzy.*" Bloomberg.com. N.p., 11 July 2013. Web. 29 Apr. 2014.

United States. Department of City Planning. Nyc.gov. N.p., n.d. Web. 4 May 2014.

Roberts, Sam. "Brooklyn Emerged as Big Winner in Primaries." Nytimes.com. N.p., 11 Sept. 2013. Web. 30 Apr. 2014.

Mcquilkin, Alexander. "The Proposed Made in NY Media Center and The Film Industry in New York City." Untappedcities.com. N.p., 17 Oct. 2012. Web. 3 May 2014.

Furman, Phyllis. "Barclays Center Scores: City Says Arena Generated \$14 Million in Tax Revenues in Its First Year [Http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/barclays-center-scores-city-arena-generated-14-million-tax-revenues-year-article-1.1472100#ixzz34N4WL9Zt](http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/barclays-center-scores-city-arena-generated-14-million-tax-revenues-year-article-1.1472100#ixzz34N4WL9Zt)." Nytimes.com. N.p., 1 Oct. 2013. Web. 29 Apr. 2014.

Mancuso, Vinnie. "Cashing In: JPMorgan to Inject Brooklyn With 2,000 Employees [Http://observer.com/2014/02/cashing-in-jpmorgan-to-inject-brooklyn-with-2000-employees/#ixzz34N5yvHrp](http://observer.com/2014/02/cashing-in-jpmorgan-to-inject-brooklyn-with-2000-employees/#ixzz34N5yvHrp)" Observer.com. N.p., 26 Feb. 2014. Web. 16 Apr. 2014.

Chinese Zodiac Calendar¹

Diana Ng



¹ Completed under the mentorship of Prof. Valerie Sokolova.



2015



January						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

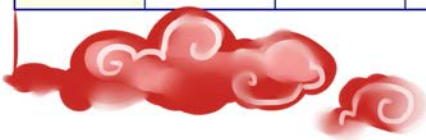




2015



February						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

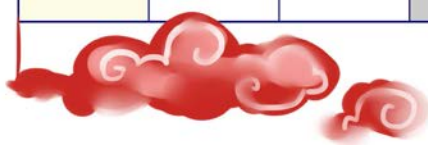




2015



March						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	Notes:			





2015



April						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	Notes:	





2015



May						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	Notes:					





2015



◀ May 2015		June						Jul 2015 ▶
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat		
	1	2	3	4	5	6		
7	8	9	10	11	12	13		
14	15	16	17	18	19	20		
21	22	23	24	25	26	27		
28	29	30	Notes:					





2015



July						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	Notes:





2015



August						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	Notes:				

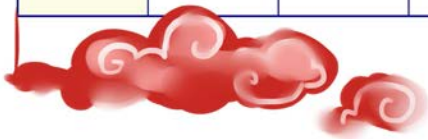




2015



September							
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
		1	2	3	4	5	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
27	28	29	30	Notes:			

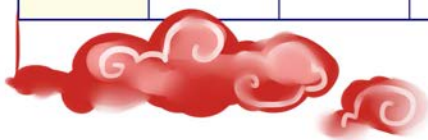




2015



October						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31





2015



November							Dec 2015 ▶
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
29	30	Notes:					

More Calendars from WinCalendar: 2011 Calendar, 2012 Calendar, Reference Calendar

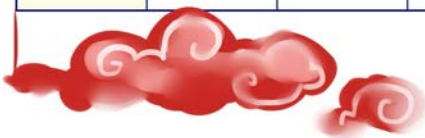




2015



December							
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
		1	2	3	4	5	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
27	28	29	30	31	Notes:		



The Crisis of African-American Hunger

Food Insecurity in the Social Construct of Race and Justice¹

Frances Noel

Abstract

This paper examined a gnawing problem: the lack of food security initiatives in African-American low-income communities is a direct result of racial bias inherently dismissive of a health crisis looming in those communities, and that if left unchecked it would be a crisis specific to an exogenous depression that unleashes socio-cultural and politico-economic turmoil as never before. The paper juxtaposes efforts to uproot racism in the food assistance programs and close the food gap with the quest for food justice in African-American low-income communities. In the context of social values and responsibilities, this paper provides an unvarnished overview of disruptive African-American food traditions and a peoples' historic distrust of anti-malnutrition campaigns. Finally, the paper concludes that intervention should be the linchpin of the anti-hunger strategy in which urban farmers (1) argue that community supported agriculture indeed is sustainable; (2) attempt to overcome the perception of urban farming as an extreme retrogression to slavery (by assuaging suspicion of the eat-healthy-to-live movement); (3) expose the deceptive marketing schemes by the powerful junk food lobby (who thwart awareness of the risks of gratuitous food consumption); and (4) aggressively circumvent the destructive eating habits of impoverished African-Americans.

“Them belly full, but we hungry/Ah hungry mob is ah angry mob.”

—Bob Marley, *Them Belly Full*

¹ Completed under the mentorship of Prof. Sekou Luke for CA 6000: Beverage Management.

Food insecurity is defined as households having trouble putting food on the table: and when situated in the wider context of racial inequality and injustice—because “[a] large body of research exists relating race to the production, distribution and consumption of food” (Slocum, 1)—heretofore assumptions about hunger belie the lived experience of a vast sector of the African-American population who are poor, malnourished, disease-prone and often relegated to forage the world’s most bountiful, yet prohibitive bread basket.

With little or no emergency food outlets or initiatives promoting an active, healthy life coming to the rescue, food insecure African-American low-income communities teeter on the brink of disaster. But it’s even worse than it looks. One qualitative study, which examined the relationship between health, hunger, and food insecurity among African-American women in Philadelphia, revealed that the “experience of food insecurity was related to violence and poor mental health. Women described [two] kinds of hunger: ‘hunger of the body’ and ‘hunger of the mind.’ Hunger of the body referred to the outright painful sensation of hunger caused by insufficient funds. Hunger of the mind was related to trauma, encompassing feelings of depression and hopelessness. Both forms of hunger may be a physical manifestation of structural and interpersonal violence” (Booth and Chilton, 116). In Minnesota, another study discovered that the “shocking rates of the less than ‘poor’ health status in the African-American community [there] does not lend to the overall beliefs, perceptions, and self-report knowledge as is relates food, nutrition, and health. Historically, when asked about their diet, African-Americans will repeatedly state that they ‘just know’ how to eat healthy because it was ‘passed down.’ However, an increase in the prevalence of nutrition related diseases in African-American communities lead one to conclude that ‘knowing’ about the importance of nutrition is not enough to encourage positive behavior changes that may lead to a reduction in nutrition related diseases such as hypertension, heart disease, and those related to obesity” (Brown and Marczak, 1). According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, adult obesity rates are 51 percent higher for African-Americans than whites and 21 percent higher for Latinos. Black and Latino children are more likely to become obese than white children (Treuhaft and Karpyn, 5).

In this paper, I argue that proponents of community supported agriculture (CSA) in the inner city must view the lack of food security initiatives in African-American low-income communities as a direct result of racial bias inherently dismissive of a health crisis looming in those communities: if left unchecked, it would be a crisis specific to an exogenous depression that unleashes social, cultural, economic and political turmoil we could scarcely fathom. My research juxtaposes efforts to uproot racism in the food system and close the food gap with Dennis Derryck’s quest for food justice in African-American low-income communities and the new paradigm shift in farm-to-table production that ultimately will achieve said justice. Finally, in the construct of social values and responsibilities, *The Crisis of African-American Hunger* provides an unvarnished overview of African-American food traditions, a peoples’ historic distrust of anti-malnutrition campaigns and taps into Rachel Slocum’s “arguments about how racism shapes food systems [and] how food might enable different theorizations of race” (Slocum, 1).

In 2011, *Bread for the World Institute* drew attention to the fact that “[o]ne in four African-American households struggle to put food on the table, compared to about one in seven of all U.S. households.” In addition, “African-American children experience hunger

at higher rates than adults [and] [a]lmost 35 percent of African-American children live in families that struggle to put food on the table” (“Fact Sheet: Poverty...” 1). In its 2012 report (the last time it monitored the extent and severity of food insecurity in U.S. households), the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) found that food insecurity for the entire U.S. was relatively stable from 2008 to 2012 (Coleman-Jensen et al, v). The report also claimed that food insecurity remained steady for African-American households within that same period, noting that it was 25.1 percent in 2011 and had dropped to the “not statistically significant” 24.6 percent in 2012. Overall, only 25.7 percent of African-American and non-Hispanic households were food insecure between 2008 and 2012 (Coleman-Jensen et al, i).

Despite the findings of the USDA, African-American households essentially fall more frequently into the “very low food security” subgroup, which is the severe range of food insecurity in which people have disruptive eating patterns and are skipping meals because they are not getting enough to eat. And when comparisons between African Americans, Hispanics and whites are factored in, those attributes are more prevalent among African American and non-Hispanic and Hispanic households than among white non-Hispanic households.

In 2012, “[r]ates of food insecurity were higher than the national average for... Black, non-Hispanic households (24.6 percent) and Hispanic households (23.3 percent)” and “[v]ery low food security was more prevalent than the national average (5.7 percent) for... Black, non-Hispanic households (10.4 percent) and Hispanic households (7.4 percent)” (Coleman-Jensen et al, 14). Although it belabors the fact that 85.5 percent of U.S. households were food secure at one time or another in 2012 (Coleman-Jensen et al, i), a consistent finding is that food insecurity is more prevalent among African-American households than Hispanic and white households.

In a worst-case scenario, one can plausibly infer that the remaining 14.5 percent (17.6 million) (Coleman-Jensen et al, i)—presumably those mostly food insecure African American households—would suffer catastrophic socio-economic consequences were it not for their participation in each of the three largest Federal food and nutrition assistance programs: the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly the Food Stamp Program, the National School Lunch Program, and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) (Coleman-Jensen et al, i). African-Americans make up 12.4 percent of the population, but are 19.6 percent of participants in the WIC program and 22.5 percent of the participants in SNAP. And 90 percent of African American children will receive SNAP benefits at some point before age 20, compared to 49 percent of all U.S. children (“Fact Sheet: Poverty...” 2).

In 2010, after conducting an independent analysis of data it had collected from 31 states, *The New York Times* discovered an “overlooked subgroup that is growing especially fast: recipients with no cash income” (DeParle and Gebeloff). It found that “[a]bout six million Americans receiving food stamps report they have no other income...no welfare, no unemployment insurance, and no pensions, child support or disability pay...About one in 50 Americans now lives in a household...that consists of nothing but a food-stamp card” (DeParle and Gebeloff). Though this “precarious way of life” is “racially mixed as well” (DeParle and Gebeloff), can it be argued that African Americans bear the brunt of its impact.

Since the publication of the USDA report, far-right Republican conservatives, “bending to the demands” of T.E.A. Party extremists, have cut \$8 billion in funding for

food stamps (and “would have slashed \$40 billion in SNAP money” had they gotten their way) (O’Keefe). As in the case of the Philadelphia and Minnesota studies, research has shown a clear correlation between draconian cutbacks in federal assistance programs and increased levels of poverty, including extreme child poverty, homelessness, hunger and crime (“The State of America’s Children,” v). Every day in Black America, 761 babies are born into poverty, 236 are born at low birthweight and 24 die before their first birthdays (“The State of America’s Children,” xxi). And “hundreds of thousands” more are sucked into the prison pipeline that leads often to premature death. “Nationally, one in three Black...boys born in 2001 [is] at risk of imprisonment during their lifetime” (“The State of America’s Children,” vii).

A major determinant is the racial politics enmeshed in our food assistance programs. Republican hardliners have imperiled African American low income communities by making them food insecure: they use “racism as a strategy” or “dog whistle politics” (“Ian Haney López...”). When they are not openly using “term[s] like ‘welfare queen’ or ‘food stamp president,’” (“Ian Haney López...”) as a signal to white voters to support the evisceration of anti-poverty programs, they muster an inventive array of insults. All of America remembers Mitt Romney’s infamous attack on the “47 percent”—those mooching Obamaites, “who are dependent upon government, who believe that they are victims, who believe the government has a responsibility to care for them, who believe that they are entitled to health care, to food, to housing, to you-name-it” (Corn). In his book, *Dog Whistle Politics: How Coded Racial Appeals Have Reinvented Racism and Wrecked the Middle Class*, Ian Haney López breaks “the code on the racist politics of the last 50 years (Moyers)” (“Ian Haney López...”), exposing politicians who have “mastered the use of dog whistles (Moyers)” (“Ian Haney López...”). Ronald Reagan perfected the art:

So we know Ronald Reagan used to talk about ‘welfare queens.’ But he also had this other stump speech that he would give. He would speak to his audiences and he would say, ‘I understand how frustrating it is for you when you’re standing in line at a grocery store waiting to buy hamburger and there’s some young fellow ahead of you buying T-bone steak with food stamps. Now the first time he told that tale, it wasn’t some young fellow. He said, some ‘young buck.’ And a young buck was a racially-coded term that stood for a strong African American man. And so that term, that moved from being a dog whistle to an outright racial provocation. Reagan backed off and he started talking about, some young fellow buying a T-bone steak with food stamps...And that’s conjuring the image of the lazy minority who’s strong, who could work, but who doesn’t want to work, and prefers to be on welfare. But the other image is the ‘you’ in that story, who Reagan’s talking to...that’s white. So there you can see this racial narrative. ‘You,’ Reagan is saying to white audiences, you’re being taken advantage of (“Ian Haney López...”).

So when African Americans “eat well” they are making “a statement not only against junk food” (Slocum, 4), but about taking food from the mouths of whites? An inconvenient truth is that “a large and consistent body of evidence supports what residents have long observed (Treuhaft and Karpyn, 5):” the T-bone steak may be all their neighbor-

hood grocery has to offer in terms of privileged, *white food*. “Full-service grocery stores, farmers’ markets, and other vendors that sell fresh fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods cannot be found in their neighborhoods. What can be found, often in great abundance, are convenience stores and fast food restaurants that mainly sell cheap, high-fat, high-sugar, processed foods and offer few healthy options” (Treuhaft and Karpyn, 7). But “[w]hat difference does race make in the fields where food is grown, the places it is sold and the manner in which it is eaten?” (Slocum, 2). Except for the “safety net” provided by those limited, government-controlled food security initiatives, one of the most important components in the generally assumed war against hunger in African-American communities has been the unsung proponents of community supported agriculture (CSA) in the inner-city, who, as one “envision a black relationship to land,” (Mistinguette) is not your stereotypical picture of the black farmer.

In 2011, Dennis Derryck and his merry band of Harlem-based “Community Chefs,” cooked up *The Corbin Hill Project*, “a values-based supply chain serving the vulnerable,” who make up the “50 percent of the households [with] incomes less than 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines” (Derryck) and live in food insecure African-American low-income communities in New York City. Since hunger and poverty “often places disproportionate health risks on people who are already the most vulnerable or susceptible to those risks” (Clark et al), Corbin Hill’s Community Health Partners administer to the needs of “the formerly homeless, homeless youth, formerly incarcerated, Head Start [and] adult day care centers for those with HIV/AIDS” (Derryck).

A lifelong community organizer “committed to social justice and equity,” Derryck grew frustrated with “other communities that do not look like us,” particularly upstate New York white farmers purporting to find middle ground in the often skewed discussions around the causes of hunger in African American low income communities and how best to quench this hunger. “Everyone talks about us when it comes to food, food policy, the allocation of food resources including what we need, and most often deciding what is best for us.” The plan by the nonprofit Corbin Hill was to join the “very complex networks” of wealthy, white, value-based supply chains and “change the existing paradigm.” But the concept of “sovereignty” and “ownership” seemed offensive to the farmers. What Corbin Hill proposed was disruptive: “We, in our community, even if we were SNAP recipients, who happened to be poor, were Shareholders of Corbin Hill Farm.” As Derryck recalled, the strategy was to introduce a whole new “vocabulary” to the farmers “from a demand perspective,” not to confound or disrespect them, but to “provide a way to connect our vision as we redefined the conversation.” The farmers, Derryck suggested, henceforth should refer to Corbin Hill’s people as “Community Organizers, not simply outreach workers,” and its “cooks” as “Community Chefs with knowledge about nutrition”: as a matter of fact, calling them “nutritionists” or “Community Health Partners, given the health disparities in our community,” neither would be a slip of the tongue nor viewed as gratuitous kowtowing. “With less than four percent of all produce grown in the state reaching the city, it was clear as we got to know farmers; that they were invisible; had no access to markets; did not know our community [or] were too small or not interested in starting a CSA in the city or being part of a farmers market” (Derryck).

With nearly \$80,000 in venture capital, Corbin Hill “put some skin in the game” and later pumped more than one million dollars into the networks, which “provided us the space to think boldly, to introduce new ideas.” As intended, the initiative created shockwaves, causing a tectonic shift within America’s farm industry, forever changing how

it does business with African-American proponents of community supported agriculture in the inner-city. For Derryck, fighting in “the hunger games,” armed only with a new “vocabulary,” had paid off by putting “some real meaning behind all the talk about food justice...” (Derryck).

Amid the histrionic outburst—black hunger is allowed to continue unabated even under the watch of the nation’s first African American president—the perception persists among some African-Americans that proponents of sustainable agriculture in Black communities perpetuate an extreme retrogression to slavery rather than full bellies. These detractors contend that a proliferation of the CSAs will conjure the image of their ancestors picking cotton or tilling land on “massa’s” plantation. “Shrinking enrollments in...agricultural programs...can be partly explained by negative attitudes of Blacks toward agriculture. This attitude has roots in the historical experiences of African Americans and has negative implication for...agricultural programs...A collection of data from a sample of Black Louisiana Farmers lends credence to the claim that Black Farmers are not encouraging their children to go into farming” (Hunte, 11). But this deep cultural malaise has augured badly for African-Americans afflicted by the scourge of hunger and malnutrition: failure to supplant ideology that eschew agriculture with the proactive exhortation, “grow what you eat, eat what you grow” will have negative, far-reaching consequences for black life as we know it.

It is no secret that some African American low income communities are putting up barriers to food secure initiatives and have contributed, albeit unwittingly, to the onset of the health crisis in question. In 2007, in an attempt to enhance program participation in Nutrition Education Programs provided by the University of Minnesota Extension, the institution reached out to African Americans in the state, but encountered stiff resistance: “Participants were suspicious of educators coming into the community to conduct research or provide nutrition education. They stated that the information ‘will be eventually utilized against us...even if we may say one thing...it might get published another way’” (Brown and Marczak, 2). Most unnerving is the fact that those food insecure African Americans insisted they were providing “good nutrition” for their children. “[Y]ou know, the more of the products that you find such as milk, the noodles, the beans and stuff like that, we try to get that because of our culture, we grew up on all of that...so to us it’s food that’s gonna stick to us...and not just run through my children and the next ten minutes they’re going to be hungry again” (Brown and Marczak, 2).

In arguing that “[c]ooking and eating are theorized as means to resist assimilation and racialized heteropatriarchy inscribed on bodies” (Slocum, 4), Professor Rachel Slocum implies that African American culinary experts are complicit in spreading the Minnesota study participants’ way of thinking—and might not be doing anything unethical when one “[brings] together anti-racist theory and food research” (Slocum, 1):

Similarly, African American cookbook authors write against negative depictions of black food, seeking to eradicate culinary racism (Zafar, 1999). Black chef/activist Bryant Terry wrote his cookbook *Vegan Soul Kitchen* (2009) partly out of anger that soul food was being blamed for African American obesity. He also wanted to address the question of local food, arguing that soul food originates in African American backyard gardens and through the practice of bartering...‘Eating black’ becomes of primal importance to identity

as African Americans fragment, stratify and become more diverse (Zafar, 1999). Embracing soul food is a statement of racial pride precisely because it reclaims foods previously despised—those animal parts that slaves had to eat and those that their owners would not (Bailey, 2007). While younger African Americans may not want to identify with the past of black America through its food (Zafar, 1999), [they] have often rejected vegetarianism and veganism as choices of the privileged (Bailey, 2007) (Slocum 4).

In conclusion, therefore, it can be said that in the face of incontrovertible proof that hunger and malnutrition is more prevalent among African-Americans, proponents of sustainable agriculture in the inner-city eventually will interpret the relative paucity of food security initiatives in predominantly Black communities as an impending health crisis. An updated and truly nonpartisan USDA report would paint a more devastating picture of food insecure African American low income households and possibly accept the notion of black bodies atrophied from malnutrition or starved to death in “food desert” communities throughout the land of plenty as not so far-fetched after all. To ward off such tragic consequences, food secure initiatives, like the politically pilfered SNAP and WIC, needs an infusion of the more than \$400 million President Obama had promised to help establish a national Healthy Food Financing Initiative (Treuhaft and Karpyn, 5). Intervention should be the linchpin of the anti-hunger strategy in which urban farmers (1) argue that community supported agriculture indeed is sustainable; (2) attempt to overcome the stigma of farming as slavery (by assuaging suspicion of the eat-healthy-to-live movement); (3) expose the deceptive marketing schemes by the powerful junk food lobby (who thwart awareness of the risks of gratuitous food consumption); and (4) aggressively circumvent the destructive eating habits of impoverished African-Americans. Such coherent strategies must become part of the national policy debate and activated with the fierce urgency of now.

Works Cited

- Booth, Sue and Chilton, Mariana. “*Hunger of the Body and Hunger of the Mind: African American Women’s Perceptions of Food Insecurity, Health and Violence.*” Abstract. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, centerforhungerfreecomunities.org vol. 39 (2007): 116. Web. 28 May, 2014. PDF File.
- Brown, Arthur and Marczak, Mary. “*Nutrition for the Underserved: The Implications.*” Health & Nutrition Final Evaluation Report (2007). Web. 15 May, 2014. PDF File.
- Clark, Lara, Millet, Dylan, and Marshall, Julian. “*National Patterns in Environmental Injustice and Inequality: Outdoor NO₂ Air Pollution in the United States.*” PLOS ONE. plosone.org, 15 April, 2014. Web. 28 May, 2014. PDF File.

- Coleman-Jensen, Alisha, Mark Nord, and Anita Singh. “*Household Food Security in the United States in 2012*,” Abstract. ERR-155, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, (2013): i-14. Web. 15 May, 2014. PDF File.
- Corn, David. “*Secret Video: Romney Tells Millionaire Donors What He REALLY Thinks of Obama Voters*.” Politics. Mother Jones, 17 Sept. 2012. Web. 15 May, 2014.
- Deparle, Jason and Gebeloff, Robert. “*The Safety Net: Living on Nothing but Food Stamps*.” New York Times, 3 Jan. 2010. Web. 15 May, 2014.
- Derryck, Dennis. “*Food Talk- Connecting the Dots: A Values Based Supply Chain Serving the Vulnerable*.” Just Food Conference. New York: Columbia University, 4-5 April 2014.
- “*Fact Sheet: Poverty and Hunger among African-Americans*.” Bread for the World Institute, Feb. 2011. Web. 28 May, 2014. PDF File.
- Hunte, Christopher N. “*The African American experience in agriculture*.” Agriculture and Human Values vol. 9 (1992):11. Web. 15 May, 2014. PDF File.
- “*Ian Haney López on the Dog Whistle Politics of Race, Part I*.” Bill Moyers & Company. billmoyers.com, 28 Feb. 2014. Web. 15 May, 2014. Transcript.
- Mistinguette. “*Today’s Black Farmer*.” Black Land Project. blacklandproject.org, 20 Feb. 2012. Web. 28 May, 2014.
- O’Keefe, Ed. “*Farm bill passes after three years of talks*.” Washington Post. Post-Politics, 4 Feb. 2014. Web. 15 May, 2014.
- Slocum, Rachel. “*Race in the study of food*.” Abstract. Progress In Human Geography, vol. 35 (2010): 1-4. SAGE Publications Ltd. Web. 15 May, 2014. PDF File.
- “*The State of America’s Children*.” Children’s Defense Fund Leave No Child Behind, 2010. Web. 28 May, 2014. PDF File.
- Treuhافت, Sarah and Karpyn, Allison. Preface. “*The Grocery Gap: Who Has Access to Healthy Food and Why It Matters*.” Community-Wealth (2010): 5-7. Web. 15 May, 2014. PDF File.

Irena Sendlerowa: A True WWII Hero¹

Patricia Pjatakova

Abstract

This research paper focuses on the Holocaust, specifically Irena Sendlerowa, a Polish social worker who smuggled 2,500 Jewish children out of the Warsaw Ghetto saving them from elimination in death camps. Irena, A True WWII Hero, went above and beyond, doing anything within her power to save as many Jews as she could without getting caught by the Germans. Despite being viewed as a Hero today, Irena had not been acknowledged for her work until 1999, when several students from Kansas stumbled upon an article about her and later began a project “Life in a Jar: The Irena Sendler Project.” Later, Irena has been presented with several awards, including Poland’s highest honor, The Order of the White Eagle.

Irena Sendlerowa, sometimes referred to as Sendler in America, was a Polish social worker who put her own life at risk throughout World War II, to save the lives of thousands of Jews as well as innocent Jewish children, who along with their families were forced into the Warsaw Ghetto and soon to face elimination. Irena was born in Otwock, Poland on February 15, 1910 to Dr. Stanislaw Krzyzanowski and his wife Janina. Dr. Krzyzanowski was a physician who devoted himself to caring for Jewish patients as the typhus epidemic broke out during the war (Kroll). The epidemic was very severe, and since many doctors refused to treat the Jews in fear of contracting the disease, Dr. Krzyzanowski volunteered to help out (Irena Sendler). Nonetheless, he himself was infected with the typhus epidemic while caring for his patients and suddenly passed away. At the time of her father’s passing, Irena was only seven years old. Although times were not easy for her and her mother, Irena completed school and later enrolled into the Warsaw University (Kroll).

Irena did not have it easy while studying at the University of Warsaw, mainly due to the strict separation of student’s by religion into Jewish and non-Jewish. The rules disallowed students of different religions to spend time together, or even to sit next to each

¹ Completed under the mentorship of Prof. Margot Nasti for ENG2400: Freshman English II.

other whether inside or outside of the classroom. Irena, still a student at the University refused to acknowledge the assigned rules. This action later caused her one year suspension from the University. Nevertheless, after her suspension, Irena completed her studies and soon enough began working as a social worker in the Warsaw Welfare Department (Kroll).

Irena's biggest inspiration for doing what she did was her father, since he was one of the first Polish Socialists who as a physician cared mainly for poor Jews (Irena Sendler). Although not standing by her side any more, Irena recalled Dr. Krzyzanowski's last words to his daughter "You see a man drowning, you must try to save him even if you cannot swim" (Irena Sendler) proposing the idea that helping a person in need should not be a hard decision, it's a must, as well as that you don't have to be perfect in order to give someone you're helping hand because it's your will that counts. During one of her interviews Irena also mentioned a saying that her parents always wanted her to remember, and guide her in whatever she does. "My parents taught me, that if a man is drowning, it is irrelevant what is his religion or nationality. One must help him" (Kroll) tying to her father's words, but from her perspective. Irena truly acknowledged her parent's lessons and took them close to her heart, because after all she saved 2,500 Jewish children; innocent people of a different religion "drowning" with no hope left for life.

Germany invaded Poland on September 1st 1939, marking the start of World War II. In October of 1940 Germans established the Warsaw Ghetto, forcing all Jews, children and adults, from around the area to move in (Warsaw). The Ghetto, enclosed by a large wall and barbed wire housed approximately 400,000 Jews that were forced in by the Germans, treated under terrible conditions such as: large groups of people being crowded in one room with no personal space, no proper clothing suited for the weather, and an insufficient amount of food—each resident receiving about 300 calories a day (Warsaw). "Children starving to death" as well as adults dying from starvation and contagious diseases daily, resulting in about 83,000 deaths between 1940-mid 1942 (Warsaw).

Between July and September of 1942, resettlement of about 265,000 Jews was happening between the Warsaw Ghetto and death camps, resulting in massive deaths (Warsaw). Many non-Jewish citizens did not interfere with the actions of the Germans, not wanting to cause problems for themselves through these rough times. However, then there were those such as Irena Sendlerowa, willing to do anything within her power to save the innocent Jews, especially the children since she has always been thought to help anyone who she sees needs help.

Germany's invasion of Poland, marking the beginning of World War II in Europe, was not a good sign of anything. Jews were mistreated and dehumanized, deprived of their humanity, for no other reason than being born Jewish. Despite all the hatred and inhumane treatment of Jews, Irena did not let anything or anyone get in her way, and did what she has been brought up to do since childhood: help those in need, despite their religion or nationality. According to Chana Kroll, the author of *Irena Sendler: Rescuer of the Children of Warsaw*, Irena never left the side of her Jewish friends after the Nazi occupation of Poland, and helped them in any way that she possibly could to save them from the

Ghetto (Kroll). One of the first things Irena did for her Jewish friends was make forged documents through her connections, changing their identities to avoid being placed in the Ghetto in the first place. Within the three years between 1939 and 1942, Irena along with several other people she trusted forged over 3,000 documents to save the lives of innocent Jewish families (Kroll). Besides forging documents and helping Jews get new Christian identities, Irena also used her connections to get false reports from social workers and physicians, stating that several Jews were contracted with a serious and contagious disease, in order to avoid inspection (Portrait of Irena Sendlerowa). Another solution Irena came up with in order to save Jews from going to the Ghetto, was to convince superintendents and home owners to register them as their tenants (Portrait), knowing that if this plan works out they will be saved, at least for now. Regardless of helping out only her Jewish friends, Irena also extended her helping hand to the rest of the Jewish population, offering them food and shelter throughout this difficult time.

Risking your own life to save the lives of hundreds of thousands Jewish individuals who are being sent out for persecution is not an easy task, but it was a challenge that Irena accepted. Even after witnessing the imprisonment of nearly 500,000 Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto (Kroll), Irena did not back down, despite the petrifying number. This convinced her that she has the ability to do even more to help these people, and decided to participate and involve herself in to save as many people as she could, although it was impossible to save them all.

Irena was one of the few non-Jewish individuals who tuned her back on regular Poles, those who were against Jews, and extended her assistance to the Jews that needed it. Although not many people had the heart to do what she did, several others felt the sorrow and found ways to help out. One of the ideas that became a reality was to create an organization to help aid Jews. This organization became known as Zegota, which is the Council for Aid to Jews in Nazi-occupied Poland, also known as “Rada Pomocy Zydom” in Polish (Portrait), was located outside the Ghetto Walls, offering assistance such as food or medicine to those who needed it inside the Ghetto (Kroll). Zofia Kossak-Sczucka and Wanda Krahelska-Filipowicz, the founders of Zegota in fall of 1942, approached Irena offering her a position to be the head of the Children’s Department within the organization. Irena, whose nature was to help those in need even if the process wasn’t easy, could not say no, and happily agreed saying “I lost no time in reflecting [on the danger], knowing that I and my heart had to be there, had to be a part of the rescue” (Kroll).

As the head of the Children’s Department of Zegota, and her strong connections with other Socialists in various departments, Irena was able to illegally forge different passes with access to the Ghetto. According to the “Portrait of Irena Sendlerowa,” an article from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum archive, “...Sendlerowa obtained special passes from physicians in the epidemic control department that allowed her and her co-conspirator, Irena Schultz, to enter the Ghetto at will” (Portrait). Irena took advantage of the privilege to enter the Ghetto at any time, and made as many trips daily as necessary. At this point, she always brought food, medicine, clothing and money whenever entering the Ghetto to help the Jews that were captured inside. However, there was only a certain amount of things a woman, under cover, could sneak into the Ghetto past the

guards. Therefore, according to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum article, plumbers, electricians, and other workers Irena knew with the permission to drive their trucks inside the district helped transport the considerable amount of necessities inside the Ghetto (Portrait).

Sneaking food, medicine, clothes and money—simply put, any inanimate objects were forbidden—past the Ghetto guards without getting caught was a hassle. Now, imagine smuggling living and breathing human beings; children ranging in different ages, outside of the Ghetto, once again passing by the guards. This must have been an absolutely terrifying and nerve-racking moment for Irena, her co-workers who were in this with her, and even for the children who other than knowing they had to keep quiet and stay on their best behavior had no clue what was happening. However, Irena was able to do it no matter how difficult the obstacles became. Here, every time she entered the Ghetto she left with a child. Although sneaking the children out of the Ghetto was difficult “...Irena would place them in gunny sacks or toolboxes and carry them out of the Ghetto, or she would hide them under potatoes in a cart” (Kroll), it was even harder for parents to let go of their children, and give them away to a stranger that says they will take care of them, especially during this difficult time of war when you don’t know who you can and cannot trust. According to Irena Sendler: Rescuer of the Children of Warsaw, an article by Chana Kroll, “at first, Irena and her helpers took orphans living on the streets of the Ghetto. Later, she would meet with parents and ask them to let her take their children out” (Kroll), stressing that she wants to help them, and is capable of it, all she needs is trust from the parents. Irena also made it clear to all the families whom she took children away for safety purposes, that their identities will be kept safe, and the children will be returned to their families once the war is over, promising a family reunion (Kroll).

Children were given away, promises to the parents were made, and over 2,500 children were smuggled out of the Ghetto healthy and alive and brought to safety. After the dangerous journey taken from the Ghetto, Irena “...would take the children to the home of her friends, the Piotrowski family, where the children would change their clothing, and have a chance to eat and rest...” (Kroll). Although the children were now in a safer place, Irena had to write up her records of the children she took. “She provided each child with birth and baptismal certificates and a new identity. In addition, she carefully recorded in code the original names of all the children and where they were being placed so that after the war they could be claimed by surviving relatives” (Portrait).

The idea of writing up a list of children’s names and places where they were homed was phenomenal; keeping a record of all that she has done since “...Sendlerowa placed more than 2,500 Jewish children in orphanages, convents, schools, hospitals and private homes” (Portrait). With the war going on outside people’s windows, it was difficult for Irena to keep the secret coded list with her at all times, and therefore decided to save all her notes by placing it in a jar, and burying it under an apple tree in her friend’s back yard, knowing this secret will be kept safe there.

Although Poland wasn’t in the best conditions during the war, Irena managed to keep her children safe no matter where she assigned them to be. However, on October 20, 1943 an unexpected tragedy occurred. Irena Sendlerowa was arrested by the Gestapo,

five months after the destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto. An anonymous individual had reported her for interacting with the Jews in the Ghetto, resulting in severe torture and beating. The outcome of this brutal beating was a broken leg and foot, leaving her permanently crippled (Kroll). Despite the heartless and vicious actions, Irena refused to reveal her networks, keeping her jar full of notes a secret.

As a punishment for her “heroism” and “courage,” as seen by the Jews, but as a refusal to accept terms and regulations provided by the Germans, Irena was scheduled to be executed. However, as the members of Żegota heard of what was in plan with Irena, they bribed the guard to keep her alive (Kroll). Although she was kept alive, her name was printed on the public list of those who were sentenced by the Gestapo. From this point on, until the end of the war, Irena, similar to the Jewish children she smuggled out of the Ghetto, had to hide and live under a fake identity (Kroll).

Hard work and dedication pays off, and so did the hard work of Irena Sendlerowa throughout her lifetime. Irena’s work throughout World War II was unbelievable and indescribable, and therefore she is looked upon not only as a “mother” figure by those whom she saved, but a true World War II hero by other people around the world, even though she has not been acknowledged for all these years. It has not been until the year 1999, Irena already being 91 years old, that a group of Kansas students stumbled upon the statistic of Irena saving 2,500 children from the Warsaw Ghetto during the time of war. Sounding like an unrealistic statistic at that point in time, the students conducted further research on Irena to clarify that the statistic was correct. As a result, they realized their findings were correct, however, strange that no one has ever heard of this courageous woman who saved nearly 2,500 children from the Ghetto (Conard).

Irena’s story fascinated this group of students, and therefore they decided to take it a step further. In honor of Irena, they directed a play titled “Life in a Jar: The Irena Sendler Project” to illustrate the strength of this woman during World War II. The play has been presented hundreds of times around the United States, as well as Poland, and even for Irena Sendlerowa herself, as the students from rural Kansas were able to communicate with her through letters, with the help of a Polish translator, and eventually meet her in person in early 2000 (Conard).

Besides being recognized for her tremendous deeds in aiding Jews during the Nazi occupation of Poland and the inspiring “Life in a Jar: The Irena Sendler Project,” which projected her powerful story even decades after the war was over, Irena was also presented with numerous awards. Along with being recognized as Righteous among the Nations by the State of Israel in 1965, Irena has later won the Jan Karski Award for Valor and Courage in 2003—where she has been nominated by Norman Conrad and his students, along with Stephanie Seltzer, president of the World Federation of Jewish Survivors of the Holocaust (Kroll). Irena was also awarded with the Order of the White Eagle in 2003, Poland’s highest honor for her war time humanitarian efforts. Then, in 2007, Irena was nominated as a candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize. Unfortunately, this award was given to Al Gore for his Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (Kroll). In 2009, even after her death, Irena was recognized by the Audrey Hepburn Foundation, and awarded with a Humanitarian Award (Kroll).

Louis Bulow once said “In those times there was darkness everywhere. In heaven and on earth, all the gates of compassion seemed to have been closed. The killer killed and the Jews died and the outside world adopted an attitude either of complicity or of indifference. Only a few had the courage to care...” (Bulow). Despite all the hatred and negativity of Germans towards the Jews, Irena was one of the few individuals that found the courage to stand up for them and do all in her power to keep them safe, since she knew what the Germans had planned for them. Although it was not easy smuggling children out of the Ghetto, whether in gunnysacks, potato sacks, tool boxes or coffins, Irena had the courage to risk her life for the sake of the Jews. Although it wasn’t until decades after the war was over that Irena was recognized for her heroism and acknowledged with numerous awards before her passing in May of 2008. Even though Irena Sendlerowa is one of the few member of Zegota recognized for her bravery today, she once told Dr. Joachim Wieler “...I am the only person still alive of that rescuing group but I want everyone to know that, while I was coordinating our efforts, we were about twenty to twenty five people. I did not do it alone” (Wieler) emphasizing that although she was the coordinator, the outcome was a group effort.

Works Cited

- Bulow, Louis. “*Irena Sendler: An Unsung Heroine.*” *The Holocaust: Crimes, Heroes and Villains.* N.p., 2012. Web. 01 June 2014.
- Conard, Norm. “*Life in a Jar: The Irena Sendler Project.*” *Life in a Jar: The Irena Sendler Project.* N.p., 2006. Web. 10 Apr. 2014.
- Kroll, Chana. “*Irena Sendler: Rescuer of the Children of Warsaw.*” *The Jewish Woman.* Chabad-Lubavitch Media Center. 2014. Web. 31 Mar. 2014.
- “*Irena Sendler.*” *Jewish Virtual Library.* American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise. 2014. Web. 28 Apr. 2014.
- “*Irena Sendler.*” *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.* n.d. Web. 31 Mar. 2014.
- “*Portrait of Irena Sendlerowa.*” *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.* n.d. Web. 31 Mar. 2014.

“*Warsaw*.” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, United States Holocaust Memorial Council, 10 June 2013. Web. 01 June 2014.

Wieler, Joachim, Prof. Dr. “*The Long Path to Irena Sendler - Mother of the Holocaust Children*.” Social Work and Society International Online Journal. Social Work & Society. 2006. Web. 31 Mar. 2014.

It's a bird! It's a plane! It's your government!'¹

Boluwaji Olugbamila

Abstract

This paper is an examination of the emergence of comic book superheroes and how they were used as a tool of manipulation by the United States government during heightened periods of the 20th century. The United States government used super heroes to perpetuate fear in the general population during several heightened periods of the 20th century. The United States government did this by asking comic book writers or the patriotic writers to put forward a pro government message. Fear in the general population was created through persuasion. Persuasion is psychologically defined as having three parts: message source, characteristics of the message and characteristics of the sender. By using images, language and caricatures of the particular “enemy”, this paper shows that the United States government was able to attain the necessary support during the great depression, World War II, the Cold War and the Vietnam War. In conclusion, comic book superheroes were used during these heightened periods of the 20th century, by the United States government as tools of persuasion to invoke fear into the American people.

Every civilization has a defining cultural deity. The Greeks had Hercules, the Romans had Cincinnatus, and the English had King Arthur. These deities were not just stories passed down from generation to generation, these were morals passed down from generation to generation. These *morals* taught the younger generation what it meant to be of that respective civilization. For example, Hercules taught Greek children what it means to Greek. Hercules was an incredibly strong man who was fair and just. Therefore young Greek males should and would aspire to be incredibly strong men who were fair and just. Cincinnatus taught Roman children the state comes before everything; one must drop everything to defend her. And King Arthur taught English children how to fight for honor. These cultural deities and what they represented became even more

¹ Completed under the mentorship of Prof. Keisha Thompson for PSY 1100: Introduction to Psychology.

important when each of these respective civilizations' ways of life were threatened.

But where are our gods? Who are our Gods? The United States of America has existed on this planet for 238 years. But for 114 years, our founding fathers were more than adequate enough to inspire and teach our future generations. Even as the nation expanded from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, the threats were primarily domestic. Native Americans, Mexicans and the British tend to sum up the enemies of America from the inception of the country to about the late 19th century. It's a bird! It's a plane! It's an empire?! The United States, before the 20th century, was not by any means a world power. This is why the western frontier superhero was enough for most of the 19th century, for it was a very individualistic perspective on the frontier. One was not worried about American values per se, but more importantly how to survive in this new, uncharted land, reflected in the image of the western frontier hero. The 20th century ushered America in as a world power and this individualistic perspective would have to give way to a more nationalistic perspective, if the nation were going to survive two World Wars, an economic collapse, and an ideological war across the world, the Cold War, which itself would lead to two actual wars on the opposite hemisphere and the near annihilation of the world on repeated occasions. The United States had to change the ideology of Americans from "me" to "we" in order to face the challenges the 20th century presented. Therefore, through persuasion, the United States government used comic book superheroes to perpetuate fear in the general population during the 20th century.

The beginning of the American empire in the late 19th century was not started just by the government but by the emerging power of mediums like the newspaper. Yellow journalism arguably stimulated America to declare war on Spain. D.R. Spencer observes: ".Feelings were inflamed by the U.S. "yellow press," especially W. R. Hearst's *New York Journal* and Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World*, which distorted and slanted the news from Cuba" (Spencer, 2007). Yellow journalism was arguably the first actualized form of mass propaganda used on such a grand scale.

Who were the cultural heroes before Superman? According to Bradford Wright in *Comic Book Nation* (2001), the most known heroes were Daniel Boone, Natty Bumpo and Wyatt Earp, who were all western frontier heroes that resolved tensions between the wilderness and American civilization while embodying the best virtues of both environments themselves. While they were great for the expanding America of the 19th century, they were no longer relevant for the 20th century's increasingly urban and consumer-driven America.

Can a word, image or pamphlet really cause a war? No, but the concept of *total war* required that the government use nearly every means necessary to make sure that the entire population (civilian and military) were all committed to helping the cause for war. It was not enough for soldiers to go fight the war while women and children stayed back home and went about their lives. Everyone had to sacrifice for the war. President Wilson and Congress created a national state with unprecedented powers and a sharply increased presence in Americans' everyday lives. To control domestic public opinion, the administration established a Committee on Public Information, which supplied American media with overwhelming quantities of facts and propaganda. Together with the Department of

Justice and the Post Office, the Committee on Public Information defined what Americans were permitted to say in wartime. The government's portrayal of a monstrous enemy and its attacks on dissenters, together with the reports of casualties suffered in battle at enemy hands, helped promote a frenzy of anti-German and anti-German-American feelings in parts of the nation (John Whiteclay Chambers II, 2000).

Propaganda during the 20th century in America was the most extreme version of persuasion. There were no two sides, there was only one. The field of psychology defines "persuasion" as having three parts: message source, characteristics of the message, and characteristics of the target. First, the "message source" asks: who is sending the message? What are the characteristics of the sender? Can they be trusted? Second, the "characteristics of the message" include not only what the message contains but the tone of the message as well. Is the message slightly leaning towards one way or is it extreme? Does the message present a two-sided argument or only one side? Finally, we have the "characteristics of the target." According to Feldman in *Understanding The Essentials Of Everyday Psychology* (2013), once a communicator has delivered a message, characteristics of the target of the message may determine whether the message will be accepted (page 529). For example, intelligent people are more resistant to persuasion than those who are less intelligent. In the 20th century, in times of actual social instability, like the Great Depression, or in war, as with World Wars 1 and 2, or with the heightened periods of the Cold War, the government targeted the entire population because, frankly, it sought that it was war.

Within the American population was the government's most important audience: children. Children are the most impressionable age group, especially from early adolescence to emerging adulthood. Why? Children's identities are impressionable. Identity is defined in psychology as "the distinguishing character of the individual: who each of us is, what our roles are, and what we are capable of." While adults have already determined who they are, with children the possibilities are endless. Children are still viewing the world from an egocentric thought perspective, a way of thinking in which the child views the world entirely from his or her own perspective. Add in that child's main source for rational thinking and reason, his or her cerebral cortex, is not fully developed until the age of 25. The lack of a completed development of rational thinking and reason processes, the ongoing search for identity, and the impulse to view the world from almost entirely from one's own perspective, taken together, makes children a perfect target audience for propaganda.

Before Superman was saving the world from the plans from Lex Luthor or evil robots, he was saving America. The creators of Superman, Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, created a hero that was "champion of the oppressed...devoted to helping those in need" (Wright 2001). This was no coincidence that Superman was "champion of the oppressed" during a time in America where the everyday family was suffering incredibly. Wright (2001) states that in the comic's initial episode, Superman saves a falsely accused prisoner from a lynch mob, produces evidence that frees an innocent woman on death row, and defends a woman about to be beaten by her husband. Superman is not fighting these terrifying large villains yet, but he is fighting the worst in humanity. A mob, unjust execution, and domestic violence -- these were not only prevalent in 1930s American society but

remain so today. Although Superman was not made by the United States government, in his early adventures he was able to establish the sense of fairness and morality that is often (and supposed) to be associated with the United States government. Superman was not a Kryptonian savior, He was an American savior.

According to Wright (2001), such morality tales, attacking the evil of greed, dominate the first several years of Superman's adventures. Nowhere could Americans find a man without a political ideology to push (all due respect to Roosevelt), one who truly identified all the problems that Americans were facing because of greed, *and* solved them in the most honest and moral way possible. For example, one early story of Superman opens with the caped crusader rescuing a miner trapped by a cave-in. The injured miner later tells reporter Clark Kent that the mine tragedy could have been avoided if the owner and foreman had heeded warnings about unsafe working conditions. Later Kent interviews the mine owner and asks him if he has arranged compensation for the injured miner. The owner refuses and says, "There are no safety hazards in my mine! But if there were...what of it? I'm a businessman, not a humanitarian!" Superman traps the owner in a cave in and lets him experience the misery that the miners have to endure until the owner succumbs and promises better conditions for his workers. But the most relevant examples to Superman's battles and American society in the 30s were in regard to corporate greed and public welfare. In one Superman episode, he crushes a plot made by wealthy American financiers working for a foreign power to manipulate the stock exchange and plunge the nation into another depression. In another story, the caped crusader stops a pair of wealthy and murderous stockbrokers who sell worthless stocks to hundreds of clients, some of whom commit suicide after losing their life savings. This bore an eerie resemblance to real events: "On the morning of Thursday, October 24, 1929, stock prices plummeted. People across the country watched the ticker as the numbers it spit out spelled their doom. The ticker was so overwhelmed that it quickly fell behind. A crowd gathered outside of the New York Stock Exchange on Wall Street, stunned at the downturn. Rumors circulated of people committing suicide" (Rosenberg). Superman once again was not fighting random villains, but he was fighting against the perceived powers that created the situation which the nation was in. The ordinary masses in America were angry and felt abandoned in their own country; Victorian values, such as that hard work equals success, were shattered during the Great Depression. Such values that were celebrated were the John Dillingers and the Bonnie & Clydes of America.

The legal authorities and government in the early Superman comics appeared slow, ineffective, *and* corrupt once again echoing the idea that the depression and inequality were because of greedy wealthy businessmen and the American government. According to Wright, Superman's America was the opposite of the real America. In Superman's America the virtue of the poor and weak triumphed over that of the wealthy and powerful. The common man could not expect to prevail on his own in this America, the America in which big business controlled politics and politics catered to big business; only righteous violence could resolve the deep social problems in American society. Superman gave a voice to the Average Joe in America. Superman showed that the Average Joe was not wrong in the way he viewed his America. It was Superman's promise that something

can be done that soothed the population from complete revolution.

As we know, the Roosevelt Administration created a series of programs to save America from the economic chaos that was the Great Depression. These programs were all put under the term “The New Deal”. According to Wright (2001), the New Deal was a potent cultural idea that worked to knit together an inclusive and enduring liberal coalition for collective action and government intervention. Wright (2001) states that “comic books implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, underscored key New Deal assumptions. Most often they did so through targeting the forces of corporate greed in stories that echoed Roosevelt’s rhetoric against economic royalists.”

Who would have thought that a superhero with a green ring would be one of Roosevelt’s biggest supporters? The Green Lantern continued Superman’s premise of celebrating the common man, with the main difference being the view of the government. Superman empathized with the Average Joe because it seemed that the Average Joe had no allies except Superman. Corporations and the government cost the American but Superman would protect him. The Green Lantern however, persuaded Americans to trust the government again, or at least to distrust who Uncle Sam said was the enemy. As stated in Feldman’s *Understanding the Everyday Essentials of Psychology* (2013), what is critical to successful persuasion is that the message source (the sender of message) can be trusted. FDR’s approval during his presidency reached as high as 84% (job performance ratings). His trustworthiness was rarely in question. But instead of explicitly having his policies stated in comic books, he continued to build the trust with the American population by not only he himself stating the effect of his policies but having comics state the affect as well. For example, In “The Tycoon’s Legacy” The Green Lantern investigates the Jeffers Mortgage and Loan Company, which has been seeing the property of borrowers who meet with mysterious “accidents” that leave them unable to repay their loans. The Green Lantern then meets with these victims and urges them to sue the company, but they can’t match the corporation’s expensive and powerful legal team. What does the Green Lantern do? Wright states “In a typical Rooseveltian move, the hero (Green Lantern) intervenes and leads the citizens in collective action. Notice how the Green Lantern did not immediately beat up the owners of company but led a move in which was very much promoted by the Roosevelt administration” (2001). Consider, for example, Roosevelt’s reform policies: “During the Hundred Days, Congress passed more than a dozen significant pieces of reform and relief legislation. Never again would Roosevelt’s New Deal carry so much momentum or have so much bipartisan support. In the years that followed, Roosevelt clashed with big business and conservative groups over his increasingly interventionist legislation” (PBS). As seen in the comic below (figure 1), the green lantern uncovers a scheme by two men to rip off the average man.

But the Green Lantern was not the only hero that reflected the good of FDR’s policies. According to Wright, Superheroes repeatedly sounded the warning that business dealings free of public scrutiny and government regulation inevitably led to corruption and crime. Dr Mid Nite protected coal miners from an abusive mining company and ensured access for government safety inspectors. Adventurer Barry O’Neill prevented crooks from sabotaging the city’s plan to place the subway system under public ownership. Hour-

man ended an abusive child labor racket and lobbied for closer government supervision of private reform schools (2001).

As much as Roosevelt's policies tried to address the Great Depression, the worry increasingly shifted from domestic problems to foreign problems. Hitler was conquering majority of Europe. Mussolini became dictator of Europe and Japan was taking control of China. Before even the United States entered World War 2, comic books were already at war. "The ruthless war-mongers of Europe have cast their sights on a peace-loving America and the youth of the country heed the call to arm for defense. As foreign agents carry out a wave of sabotage and treason against the United States, the president authorizes a top secret defense plan. A patriotic young American named Steve Rogers, too sickly and weak to qualify for standard enlistment, volunteers for a dangerous scientific experiment conducted by the nation's top scientist, Professor Reinstein. Injected with a strange seething liquid, Rogers undergoes a startling transformation. Growing in height and mass, Rogers's muscles expand and tighten to the peak of human perfection. No longer a frail patriot, he now has a massive physique, a proud new name and a bold mission. The nation's newest super soldier, Captain America, is born" (Wright, 2001).

Captain America very much defined the comic book industry before and during World War 2. His shield of stars and stripes and red white and blue costume epitomized what the World War 2 hero would be. As seen in the comic below, in Captain America's very first issue he was slugging Hitler in the face almost a full year before the United States declared War on the Axis. The cover (figure 2) clearly depicts to the reader who the enemy and what he looks like. Also there are notebooks of Hitler's "sabotage" plans for the USA. These visual images made it crystal clear to the reader (normally children) whom Americans should fear. It wasn't just about Captain America being a hero but it was that Hitler was threatening the American way of life. As radio and newspapers made the ever-growing crisis in Europe real, so did comic books like the one above made the enemy real for children and young adults.

Captain America's dramatic debut was a call to arms, urging the nation to unite against foreign aggression. Superman urged readers to give to the American Red Cross. Batman and Robin asked boys and girls to "keep the American eagle flying" by purchasing war bonds and stamps. These were children's favorite superheroes and these heroes were the best people to persuade children to do a certain task for them because every kid wanted to be Superman. In fact, the Office of War Information asked the entertainment industry to raise American morale, encourage public cooperation and participation in the war effort, identify the menace of Axis powers, and inform audiences about the progressive war aims pursued by the United States and its allies (Wright, 2001, pg 34-35). As the war intensified in Europe (1940-41), so did the war in comic books: the United States itself became a battleground where Nazi spies and saboteurs conspired against American defense buildups. Marvel's Human Torch defended U.S munitions plants from foreign saboteurs. Captain America fought German agents and fifth columnists in nearly every issue (Wright, 2001, pg 40-41).

But Hitler was not the overseas enemy to America in comic books. There were the imperial comic books most often set in Africa, Asia or sometimes Latin America. The

hero was always a white male or female who championed Western interests and sensibilities in “savage” lands plagued by internal chaos and external threats. The hero almost always understood the ways of the savage land better than the native people. The western intervention was necessary because the childlike nonwhite people showed that they were woefully incapable of self-government and if these people were left to themselves, they fell prey to manipulation and domination by false prophets, evil chieftains, and hostile foreign agents. Africans appeared as brute savages or stereotypes with huge white eyes and white rimmed eyes and white rimmed lips, often speaking a hybrid of pidgin English and exaggerated African American slang. Above all, they were stupid (Wright, pg. 37, 2001).

In these comics, the enemy was an entire *race*. These were American comics given to children. As with all the comics since the industry first emerged with Superman, the writers always had a subtle message in the story. It was either something like how Superman understands that you feel forgotten and wronged because of the great depression, or that FDR and the Green Lantern are fighting for you or even that Hitler is threatening America. But they never went as far as to push an imperialistic attitude. It was always clear to see how the comics were pushing an agenda or message to children but they were good messages: Hitler was a terrible man, Roosevelt was trying to restore America from the Great Depression and Superman did understand the problems of the common man. Children that read these jungle comics, as opposed to the domestic ones set in America, had no means to know or understand that these depicted overseas lands and cultures; these comics became that much more powerful because they depicted a world that the children and most of their parents did know at all. The message source, the comic book writers, was trusted much more with these jungle comics because they explained a world that was unknown and people who did not look like them. As seen in the comic book image below, the heroine is surrounded by savage Africans with the tribal attire, thick lips, dark skin and rudimentary weapons.

In one story, an African American murderer named Broot escapes from a chain gang in the United States to the jungles of West Africa. There he constructs a phony idol and dupes the superstitious natives into worshipping him as a god. The “simple” Africans obey Broot and call him “Massah” as he orders them to brutalize neighboring tribespeople and white colonists. The hero Kanga (a blonde version of Tarzan) defeats Broot and exposes the false god to the natives, who stop fighting and humbly promise the white jungle lord that they will behave in the future. But the true hate of a race for remained for the Japanese.

According to Wright, Americans may have never hated a foreign population as intensely as they did the Japanese during the months following the stunning attack on Pearl Harbor. (Wright, 2001,pg.45) Comic books drew the Japanese as a sinister, ugly subhuman creature. The Japanese were ghastly yellow demons with fangs and claws or bucktoothed yellow monkeys with oversized spectacles. Stories had titles like “The terror of the slimy Japs”, “The Slant Eye of Satan” and “Funeral for Yellow Dogs” glorified the American violence unleashed on “yellow apes”, “yellow babies”, “yellow punks”, “dirty yellow devils” and “little yellow doggies”. Comic books also warned of a Japanese “fifth column” operating in America. This idea clearly justified the internment of Japanese Americans. As seen

in the comic below, the enemy looks like a stereotypical Japanese villain and of course the Green Lantern defeats him. “Comic books urged all Americans, including children, to participate in the war effort. Those who remained aloof or pursued selfish interests appeared as misguided fools at best, traitors at worst. The comic book war effort left no room for ambiguity or debate on most issues. Direct, emotional, and naïve, comic books contributed to the widespread popular impression, which still persists that World War 2 was a good war” (Wright, 2001, pg 44).

World War 2 ushered in the “Golden Age of Comics”. It marked the rare meeting of interests between the creators, readers and government policy. Comic book fans often look to this era before the Cold War with nostalgia because things seemed simple. The same formula of superheroes in wars was used but none succeeded like those during World War 2. The Korean War for example did not spark any renewed interest in comic superheroes, it was more the American servicemen that was celebrated. Marvel Comics revived its original superheroes, Captain America, the Sub mariner, and the human torch and enlisted them aggressively against the Communism. In one tale, the United States and the Soviet Union agree to construct a tunnel from Siberia to Alaska. The U.S government and Sub mariner hope that this joint project will encourage peaceful commerce but the Soviets had other plans. They conspire to use the tunnel for a surprise invasion of Alaska. The sub Mariner defeats the “god less” communist and learns to never again be conned into anything by a Red” (Wright pg 121, 2001). The superhero revival totally failed.

Once the 1950s ended comic books superheroes were growing less and less relevant. Superheroes seemed to be to unrealistic for readers and comic books as a whole had a recession with the emergence of television and the “growing up” of a population. Despite the comic book recession, DC comics was the leader of the industry. The Justice League of America had the stalwarts: Superman, Batman, and Wonder Woman would set the standard for new era of superheroes in the era of television. But a new kind of superhero was wanted. A superhero with clear personality flaws that we can all identify with.

Spiderman would be that hero. According to Wright, Marvel’s chief editor, Stan Lee, wanted to feature a superhero who himself was an adolescent, one who had to contend with his own insecurities and confusion even as he had to fight the bad guys (Wright, pg211, 2001). Wright states that Spider Man was the most brilliant concept for a comic book superhero since Superman. Peter Parker furnished readers with an instant point of identification. All but the emotionally secure adolescents could relate to Peter’s self-absorbed obsessions with rejection, inadequacy and loneliness. .But Iron Man was marvel’s most political of Marvel’s superheroes. In his first act as a superhero, he demolishes a Viet Cong military base and overthrows a sadistic communist warlord (2001). Wright states “As Tony Stark, he serves vital function in America’s military-industrial complex, both as a weapons inventor and a defense contractor. As Iron man, he foils Communist agents and battles Soviet supervillians in symbolic Cold War contests of power and will. Iron Man’s victory against Titanium Man underscored America’s determination to confront Communist aggression in whatever form it should take (Wright, pg 221, 2001). Because Spider Man appealed to huge audiences, it allowed him to attain more trust and power as a message source. Spiderman endorsed liberal solutions to social problems while still reject-

ing the extreme violent responses of the left and right. This was during the late 1960s in which violent political protests and assassinations were happening all across the nation. In order to stem peace and the anger towards Vietnam War or to social inequality, instead of resorting to the typical superhero violence, Spiderman and many other comic book superheroes mediated conflicts.

While during the 1960s there was not clear linkage between the messages comic books and the United States government, there would be at the start of the 1970s. In 1970, the Nixon administration's Department of Health, Education and Welfare sent Stan Lee, chief editor of Marvel comics, a letter asking him to incorporate an antidrug message into one of Marvel's leading titles. Wright states "Lee wove a cautionary message on the dangers of drug use into a three part story appearing in its top selling *The Amazing Spiderman* title. In one of the opening scenes, a young African American is "stoned right out of his mind" walks off a rooftop thinking he can fly. Spiderman rescues him and while the hero departs "any drug strong enough to give you that kind of trip can damage your brain but bad" Later in the story, Peter Parker's best friend starts popping pills in order to escape depression after being jilted by his girlfriend. Peter Parker confronts the drug dealers supplying his friend and thrashes them without even changing into his costume. As the dealers drift into unconsciousness, Peter warns them "If I ever see you pushing that stuff – anywhere again – you'll think this was just a playful picnic (2001)". Once again in order for persuasion to be successful, the message source has to be trusted so that the message that the message source is trying to receive can be trusted as well. Since Spiderman was Marvel's top selling comic book because readers identified intensely with Spiderman, he would be the best person to push an anti-drug message. Because if Spiderman doesn't do drugs, Why should I?

The response to the increasingly political tone in comic books during the 1970s was not good. Declining sales indicated that comic book marketers that the crusades that superheroes made to create a more just society was too far from what superheroes were supposed to be and : an escape from the real world. Comic book superheroes never attained a mass audience again. As the industry became a niche, the more profitable venture was for these superheroes to be licensed and used in other mediums like television, motion pictures and toys.

The link between the United States government and comic book superheroes was never explicit, often comic book writers themselves would volunteer their own propaganda in order to associate with all that is good with patriotism as seen with Captain America during World War 2 and Iron Man during the Cold War. However what this paper wanted to investigate is to question the influence that these superheroes were able to have by telling us what the world is like. Especially with messages of racial stereotypes, drug use and governmental policies being pushed onto the most impressionable of age groups. The 20th century brought many enemies to America's front door and they were not always physical. But the fluctuation between when it seemed to be correct to be calm and fearful was dictated by the government. During the great Depression, comic books superheroes pushed for retribution against the economic royalists and sympathized with the fact that the entire system had failed the common man. In the years leading up to and

during World War 2, it was a growing fear of foreigners like Germans and the Japanese almost to the point of justifying the internment of Japanese Americans. After the War, the fear of anything foreign and the justification of imperialism because of the “barbaric” and “stupid” natives. During the early 1950s, it was once again calm with Superman and Batman residing in affluent neighborhoods residing with all things American and hating all things communist. Then in the late 1950s, it took a more America vs Soviet Union stance as seen with the revival of Captain America, The Sub Mariner and Iron Man. Then in the 1960s, it was a call for peace and mediation while America was rocked by cultural upheaval by extremists on the left and on the right. Then in the 1970s, it was all drugs are bad and don't be a racist. Honestly, there was nothing that could have been done because the comic book superheroes reflected what popular culture wanted at a respective time but it has to be understood who is telling me what I want? And do I actually want it? During the 20th century, how Americans thought or saw the world was not at all independent of government propaganda or individual propaganda pushed through in comic books. Therefore the United States government did use comic book superheroes to persuade the general population during the 20th century.

Works Cited

- Ales Panacek , Libor Kvittek , Robert Prucek , Milan Kolar , Renata Vecerova , Nadezda Pizurova & Neveena Radek Zboril. 2006. “*Silver Colloid Nanoparticles: synthesis, characterization and their Antibacterial Activity*”. American Chemical Society Published on Web.16248-16253.
- Altemeyer, B. (1988). *Enemies of freedom: Understanding right-wing authoritarianism*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- FDR: *Domestic Politics* . (n.d.). . Retrieved June 7, 2014, from <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/fdr-domestic/>
- Feldman, R. *Social Psychology: Essentials of Understanding Psychology*.
- Job Performance Ratings for President Roosevelt. (n.d.). . Retrieved June 7, 2014, from http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/CFIDE/roper/presidential/webroot/presidential_rating_detail.cfm?allRate=True&presidentName=Roosevelt
- John Whiteclay Chambers II. “*World War I (1914–18)*.” The Oxford Companion to American Military History. 2000. Encyclopedia.com. 30 May. 2014

Spencer, D. R. (2007). *The Yellow Journalism: The Press and America's Emergence as a World Power*. Chicago, IL: Northwestern UP.

Wright, B. (2001). *Race, Politics and Propaganda Comic Books Go to War: Comic Book Nation: The transformation of Youth Culture in America* (). Baltimore, Maryland: The John Hopkins UP.

Appendix A



Figure 1



Figure 2

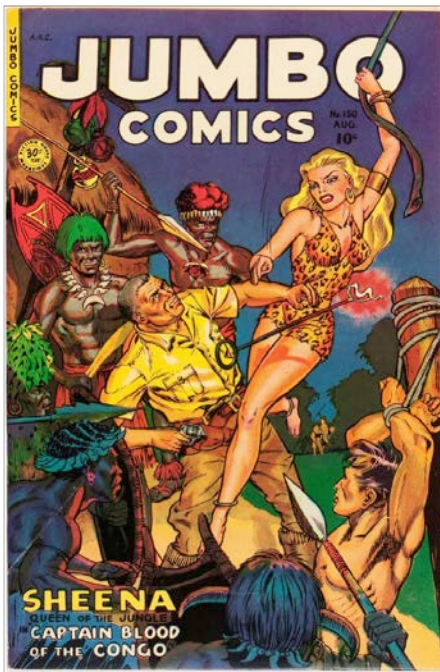


Figure 3



Figure 4

The Musical Standard We Accept but Few Know About¹

Jeffrey Rodriguez

Abstract

The tuning of musical instruments, keyboards especially, is based on how they are tempered. Temperament refers to the layout of how instruments will sound in certain key signatures, with each type having some form of compromise to make a key work. Equal temperament tries to fix this problem by giving the fifths an identical ratio so that none will sound too high or too low no matter what key you are playing in. Equal temperament has become the standard temperament used in western music and despite its benefits to keyboard instruments and holding this status for almost a century, it still has its flaws that should not be overlooked. To further understand this subject, resources describing equal and other temperaments, their history, their relation to tuning, and how music today has been affected were examined.

One of the things with which every musician has (or should have) experience is tuning their instrument(s). This is done for almost all instruments, whether it's a violin or guitar, a piano, a trombone or flute, or even percussion instruments such as the timpani. Tuning is the process of adjusting the instrument to determine the pitch of its notes when played, whether it be from the pluck of a string, finger placement and blowing on a brass instrument, or pressing a key on a keyboard instrument. Intertwined with tuning is an aspect many people today are unfamiliar with: temperaments. A musical temperament is essentially the layout for how the instrument will be tuned so that it can work when played in certain keys. Not all temperaments work with every key signature, but the standard temperament used today, equal temperament, tries to make all key signatures playable on keyboard instruments. John Meffen's *A Guide to Tuning Musical Instruments* further expands on how temperaments apply to the tuning of instruments. Ross W. Duffin's *How Equal Temperament Ruined Harmony (and Why You Should Care)*, discusses

¹ Completed under the mentorship of Prof. Marvin Williams for MUS 3000: Rudiments of Theory.

this standard along with its history, as well as how the harmony of music we know today has been affected. Both of these books also discuss other types of temperaments seen throughout history and the conflicts over what would be optimal to use, as well as how equal temperament has become our standard.

Whereas tuning is the adjustment of an instrument to determine its pitches, tempering refers to “the adjustments of relationships between musical intervals” (Meffen 7). When a note is played, the instrument sends vibrations, which creates a sound, determining the musical pitch and providing a measurable frequency (Duffin 20). The standard pitch used to measure these notes when tuning is at A=440 HZ, adopted as such at an international conference held in London in 1939 by the International Standards Association (Meffen 12-13), refers to the frequency of vibrations per second of a note. Two notes played creates a ratio. For example, if one note is played along with another note of an identical pitch, they create a 1:1 ratio based on their vibration frequency. This relationship between one note and another is called an interval, and what Duffin calls the “harmonic series” (20-21). If a note is played with the same note, but higher, it creates the interval known as an octave, a 2:1 ratio. This frequency would be 440 (the root note) and 880 (the octave). A note played with the third note in its major scale creates a major third (5:4), while a note played with the third note in its minor scale creates a minor third (6:5). What is referred to as “the adjustments of relationships between musical intervals” is the act of tuning these notes to emit higher or lower frequencies than they would in a pure (untempered) tuning (Meffen 7).

Yuval Nov states in “Explaining the Equal Temperament”, “Keyboard instruments [...] have only a limited number of keys, and can therefore produce only a limited number of notes”. If one were to play a G# on the violin, by placing their finger a little lower on that part of the string, there would be a discernible difference, compared to if they were to place their finger higher and play it as an A \flat . On the other hand, keyboard instruments, with a series of black and white keys are laid out in front of the player, are not this flexible. Each key is assigned to a specific pitch, and cannot be so simply modified. On keyboard instruments, black keys play the role of both a sharp and flat note, thus producing the same sound. This is unlike the previous example of the violin where this sound can be changed depending on how high or low one’s finger is placed. This is why temperaments are needed. While a violin would be playable simply when tuned, the keyboard, which lacks the violin’s flexibility, requires sounds that these frequencies are appropriately organized so that everything sounds well together.

Tempering involves fixing intervals while tuning or performing to find what will give the best compromise for the instrument and the music being played (Meffen 22). This introduces the problem that comes with temperament, why there have been many throughout time, and why the current standard we use is flawed: they all require the compromising of intervals. For many temperaments, the fifth interval would be narrowed or widened from its 660 frequency, meaning that the cents (measure of the frequency of one semitone to the next, or half of an interval) of a note are decreased or increased. Temperaments in which the distance of one fifth to the next (such as C-G and then G-D) have the same size of cents are known as “regular temperaments,” and temperaments in which the

fifths are not all the same size are known as “irregular temperaments” (Duffin 39). An example of an irregular temperament would be meantone temperament, “in which all the fifths except one are tempered the same amount” (39). The compromise of this temperament is that “certain intervals and chords [...] are well out of tune (the ‘wolves’)” (Meffen 36). By widening or narrowing these fifths in different amounts, at least one note is going to sound too high pitched, making our ears think they are wrong and sound out of tune; the ‘wolves’ that Meffen refers to.

Equal temperament is a regular temperament, with its specific origins unknown, but there were “discussions of it by around 1640, if not earlier”. It is often falsely accredited to Johann Sebastian Bach due to his composition *Well-Tempered Clavier*, but this was actually created for irregular temperaments, and was “shaded to favor slightly some keys over others” (Duffin 2007). This particular temperament strives is to eliminate the ‘wolves’, and create an identical amount of cents from one semitone to the next semitone. With this, keyboard instruments would not need to be restricted to only a few key signatures. Instead, they would be able to (and still are) able to play in all keys, without any notes sounding too high or too low pitched. However, this has caused the major and minor third to not sound as pure and harmonious as they can. By attempting the narrow the fifths equally, the major thirds sound much higher and the minor thirds sound much lower than they would in pure tuning when played alone (43-45).

To better illustrate this, Duffin provides the example of an orchestra playing Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, with the orchestra playing a D minor chord (D–F–A) followed by a B \flat major chord (B \flat –D–F) (153). Due to the widening of thirds in equal temperament, and every instrument having different timbre (quality of the notes), the orchestra could never feel comfortable with how the D minor chord flowed into the B \flat major chord. The F note (minor third of D and perfect fifth of B \flat) would need to be “a little higher than in ET,” and closer to its pure frequency to make these two flow better. While it may work at first, we see how two different chords using a note can cause harmonic problems. Additionally, the B \flat note would need to be higher to “make a slightly better major third with the D”. The F being tempered higher alone will help, but B \flat as well would need to be higher for these two the flow together. Doing this however would not make all fifths tempered equally, meaning that a different temperament would be required for the orchestra to have something that sounds good.

Although the thirds have been compromised, there are benefits brought by equal temperament. As previously stated, it allows keyboard instruments to already be played in any key signature. Due to certain notes sounding “wrong” in one key signature, the ‘wolves,’ instruments would have to be retuned just to be played in a certain key (48). By equally narrowing the fifths however, equal temperament allows these intervals to sound better in any key signature, and although the thirds may be much higher or lower than pure and irregular counterparts, this difference is not as drastic as what is heard in the case of ‘wolves.’ And it is not just to the player’s benefit that equal temperament allows all of these signatures to be playable.

Two other groups can be viewed as positively affected by this: those playing together with the keyboard players and those who create the instruments. If a pianist and

violinist wanted to play together, the pianist may need to temper with their instrument so that it will sound proper when playing along with the violinist. As stated earlier, in other temperaments not all key signatures would be playable without tempering again, but in temperament, that is not a problem. A pianist, no longer blocked out from certain keys and having to temper again and again, can simply play along with others immediately. And this accessibility is exactly what makes it easier for the instrument creators.

Towards the late 19th century, there was a “tremendous rise in the number of amateur bands in America,” (141) requiring more instruments to be manufactured. The simplest way to satisfy this market, of course, would be to build instruments with equal temperament in mind. With this, it is easier to build and tune the instruments, not needing to worry about what can or can't be played, or how to build them for specific temperaments.

Among the pros brought about by equal temperaments, they also bring many cons. All temperaments have a compromise, and while this one narrows the fifths in an equal way, simultaneously allowing for an equal ratio of the octave, there is still the problem of compromised thirds that do not sound as pure and harmonious as they can. By narrowing the fifths this way, we see that it is not just accidentals (flats and sharps), that are forced into one sound, but also intervals such as diminished (one half step lower than a minor interval) or augmented (one half step higher than a major interval) intervals are affected (163), as they too become enharmonic (what should be two different notes but instead play the same sound). Other temperaments allow for a difference when one plays an augmented 2nd (C-D#) versus a minor 3rd (C-Eb) as the instruments are built different and therefore can emit different frequencies. So yes, it may be easier to manufacture and sell for equal temperament, but in terms of quality, other temperaments would be beneficial for musicians as they are less restricted. Although more accessibility to people who want to play piano is a good thing, this approach was more of a lazy, money and time saving method to satisfy the market. Originally, “musicians were not willing to tolerate thirds that were so dissonant”, but with the sudden rise in becoming a standard to make manufacturing simpler, these disagreements diminished (Duffin 38).

Furthermore, there is the previously brought up case of a temperament and the different intonations of instruments not agreeing. While an instrument may sound fine one way, when played with another as in the case of the orchestra, these equally tempered notes do not sound well together as they need to be higher or lower than they currently are. Additionally, notes that while equal temperament allows octaves to be divided equally (880 and 440, or 2:1), it prevents the fifths we call perfect from being perfectly divided into what should be a frequency of 660 (np).

There is also an element of philosophy that led to equal temperament becoming and remaining as a standard. Duffin discusses positivism, a philosophy started in the middle of the 19th century by Auguste Comte (141). “. . .positivism looks for empirical data to justify knowledge or beliefs” (141). By trying to make justifications with the use of our senses, rather than reasoning, “something so complex and irrational as the division of sounds into a musical scale” is seen as pointless to debate when it can be perceived as simple.

With the knowledge of other temperaments and how they were formed, one can experiment and find other types of sounds they may enjoy. If some are fine playing only in equal temperament after hearing what others sound like, that's fine, but there are others who will find joy in the uncompromised thirds, not too far from their pure sounds. There is also the issue of lack of education. Being a standard since 1917 (Duffin 138), few people today know what temperaments are now, let alone equal temperament, but it is important to have an understanding of these systems, rather than simply tune. Instead of simply accepting this temperament as is and rarely bringing it up, this subject should be taught in music classes so that more people can become aware of temperaments. With this, people can experiment further, playing with different timbres and not have everything sound the same. If one does not own any keyboard instruments, but would like to someday, then with this knowledge, they can play in different temperaments and find other enjoyable sounds, rather than stick to the same one that weakens the third intervals.

Works Cited

- Duffin, R. W. (2007) *How Equal Temperament Ruined Harmony (and Why You Should Care)* New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company Ltd.
- Meffen, J. (1982) *A Guide to Tuning Musical Instruments* North Pomfret, Vermont: David & Charles Inc
- Nov, Y. (2004, January 21) Explaining the Equal Temperament Haayal Hakore Retrieved from <http://www.yuvalnov.org/temperament/>

Philosophical Analysis: Deception & Truth¹

Zineb Baghdadi

Abstract

The main focus of this project is to explore the concepts of deception, honesty and truth using classroom discussions, dictionary baseline definitions, the viewpoints of some of the great philosophers and scholars in history, contemporary authors, as well as my own personal perceptions and experience. The research effort included a critical examination of five books, an essay, a famous poem, a Shakespearean play and defined words in two dictionaries in search of What is Truth? What is Honesty? How do Deception and Bullshit alter the landscape of our understanding of these concepts? – to help me develop inferences about the concept of truth. There are three major findings developed: While truth remains a reasonably clear concept, each person defines truth, honesty and deception differently based upon given situations and potential outcomes; Most people recognize that truthfulness and honesty are preeminent virtues which are not always rewarded. It therefore promotes lying and deception to avoid the consequences of truth and honesty; Lies and deception in our fundamental understanding of truth have more profound consequences on human relationships than almost any other concept of the human condition.

This paper explores the concept of deception and honesty through the lenses of our classroom discussions as well as my own perception and personal experience. My first objective was to read dictionary definitions to establish a baseline for how “truth” is defined in the literature. The 4th Edition *American Heritage College Dictionary* defines ‘truth’ as “conformity to fact, knowledge, actuality, or logic”. The 11th Edition *Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary* defines ‘truth’ as “sincerity in action, character, and utterance; the state of being the case”. These definitions seem to be at odds with each other. The former stresses facts as being truthful, whereas Merriam Webster stresses sincerity in action. In other words, sincerity implies being genuine or from the heart. Is it

¹ Completed under the mentorship of Prof. Margot Nasti for ENG2400: Freshman English II.

the truth if one believes it to be so, even though it is inaccurate or misguided? These two literary sources, taken together, have broadened the definition of “truth” and created a greater challenge for me in achieving my first objective.

In researching the orations of some of the great scholars and philosophers in history, I found no pristine definition of “truth”. But several renowned philosophers spoke or wrote frequently on the quintessential virtue of truth and the evils of lying. Plato wrote in his most influential work, *The Republic*, that “Truth is its own reward,” “Truth is the beginning of every good thing,” and “Truthfulness. He will never willingly tolerate an untruth, but will hate it as much as he loves truth... And is there anything more closely connected with wisdom than truth?” (Plato, Books 1-10). *The Republic* also quotes Socrates as saying, “They must be without falsehood – they must refuse to accept what is false, hate it, and have a love for the truth,” and “Reality is the sight of truth” (Plato, 159). It became clear to me that these scholars and philosophers held strong beliefs that “truthfulness” is the cardinal virtue of their time. It is the most admired virtue and anything less than total truthfulness is to be rejected, despised and hated. My sense, in reading through their writings, is that an untrustworthy person is so despicable and considered to be less than human, he or she should be banned from the community-at-large and isolated within a lepers’ colony.

The classic 17th century William Shakespeare play, *Hamlet*, weighed in on truth and honesty: “This above all: To thine own self be true, And it must follow, as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man.” (Act 1, Scene 3, Page 3). I translate this to mean that if you are truthful with yourself, then by default, you will be truthful with others. However, if you lie to yourself, then you are doomed, just as sure as night follows day, to a fate of lying to others as well.

Honesty and truth were also very much on the minds of 3rd century BC philosophers. In a book by Robin Hart, *Diogenes the Cynic*, on the life and times of the 3rd century BC Greek philosopher, Diogenes Laertius, he is portrayed as the original cynic on the subject of people and honesty. Diogenes was convinced that people lived their lives dictated by rules and taboos and, consequently, no one was really truthful or honest. He then embarked on an exploration for “truth”, a crusade of sorts in Greece: “He lit a lantern and in broad daylight walked the streets of Athens with it; and when asked why, replied that he was looking for an honest man” (Hart, page ix). Coincidentally, Diogenes is on record as having never found that honest man.

In analyzing the cited words of these ancient scholars, it’s clear they placed a premium on truth as the preeminent virtue of their time and contrasted truth to lies in much the same proportion as right versus wrong, good versus evil, god versus the devil and a blessing versus a curse. So while they did not articulate an academic definition of “truth”, it is obvious that they knew exactly what it was. That helped me to better understand and correlate centuries - old concepts of truth with what modern day scholars and literature offer. In my judgment, the concepts of truth-telling and honesty have remained remarkably consistent down through the Ages. There is, however, one more approach I would like to explore on truth to validate what I have concluded thus far in my research and analyses. Perhaps it is easier to get at the meaning of truth by applying a backdoor approach

through a methodology of reading additional sources that deal with the opposite of truth.

If the opposite of “truth” is “a lie – a false statement regardless of whether intentional or unintentional” designed to deceive - then truth must be ‘conformity with fact or reality’ (4th Edition *American Heritage College Dictionary*). In his fascinating essay, *On Bullshit*, Harry Frankfurt claims that a “liar is someone who essentially promulgates a falsehood, is knowingly opposed to the truth and revels in deception, whereas a bullshitter is someone who is indifferent to the truth” (Frankfurt, page 46-48). Frankfurt suggests that being indifferent to the truth is probably worse than being opposed to the truth and he quotes another source, R.J. Deferrari, as saying “There is a distinction between a person who tells a lie and a liar. The former is one who tells a lie unwillingly, while the liar loves to lie and passes his time in the joy of lying . . . The latter takes delight in lying, rejoicing in the falsehood itself” (Frankfurt, page 58). Frankfurt further indicates that the bullshitter disregards the truth and talks without knowing or caring if he or she is right or wrong. I evaluate Frankfurt’s words to mean it is in the telling and not the substance that carries importance for such a talker.

Make no mistake, liars and bullshitters are challenged in significant and different ways. And I feel there is a clear line between the two. Bullshitters are not liars (liars care about what the truth is, but hide the truth). Bullshitters at the end of the day don’t care whether what they say is true or not, as long as they get their way or achieve their desired result. In my mind, a bullshitter obfuscates the truth and wastes your time with unrelated verbiage or filibusters. On the other hand, a liar hits you squarely between the eyes with a lie and then hopes and prays that you accept it as truth or fact.

I have problems with bullshitters and liars as defined in the Frankfurt book. But if I were forced to choose between having a close personal relationship with a liar or a bullshitter, I would choose the latter because the Frankfurt essay paints the bullshitter as “someone with conviction” (Frankfurt, page 55), “who stops short of lying” (page 19), “for the essence of bullshit is not that it is false, but that it is phony” (page 47). Simply put, it is better to bullshit your way out of a situation than to use lies as an exit strategy. Frankfurt offers that “Bullshit is unavoidable whenever circumstances require someone to talk without knowing what he or she is talking about” (page 63). And he writes, “The problem of understanding why our attitude toward bullshit is generally more benign than our attitude toward lying is an important one” (page 50). Unfortunately, Frankfurt stops short of providing a reason for this difference in attitudes and challenges the reader to determine why there is a difference, by indicating, “which I shall leave as an exercise for the reader” (page 50).

In my mind, bullshitters and liars are less than virtuous and leave a lot to be desired. Here’s my analysis on why the discrepancy in attitudes: Most of my friends and I harbor considerable outrage and disdain for liars. We hate, resent, and will not associate with liars as being totally untrustworthy. On the other hand, my friends and I will tolerate a bullshitter as having a good heart with no malicious intent, an engaging sense of humor, and both entertaining and probably ignorant who needs help becoming more informed on a particular subject. We view bullshitters through a sympathetic lens. Their heart is in the right place even though their intellect might be lacking. This makes them under-

developed intellectual wannabes that don't have the motivation or drive to increase their knowledge level.

As a child of 12 years old in Casablanca, I remember a day when my father was entertaining quotes from air conditioning contractors to have a central AC system installed in our home. He asked one contractor about the pros and cons of different AC systems. The man talked for 10 or 15 minutes and my father did not understand what he said. So my father asked him the same question a different way and received the same answer. I recall feeling sorry for the man as he struggled to please my father in hopes of winning the contract. The man had a look of desperation on his face. My father politely thanked him for coming and when he left, my father turned to us and called the contractor a "hadak hadartou khawya" which in Moroccan dialect means "he is a bullshitter". My father (and most Moroccans) equated a bullshitter with lying and being untrustworthy. But according to Frankfurt, it would be more accurate to label that contractor as incompetent, but not a liar or untrustworthy. So there is a continental and cultural divide on how one defines bullshitters and liars. My father's view is different from those expressed by Frankfurt. In the final analysis, though, within Frankfurt's concept, it is likely my father would have ended up with an AC system that was defective with poor workmanship (bullshitter's ignorance or incompetence). In my father's concept, he would have ended up with a much higher price than expected (liar).

It was interesting to learn during my research on this project that some writers assert that different lies are universally widespread and very acceptable and understandable in society, depending upon the resultant harm to the recipient. In other words, no harm, no foul! Judith Viorst, in *The Truth about Lying* essay, outlines four classifications of lies and the corresponding series of 'moral puzzles' that make up the widespread practice of lying. She indicates these lies are considered culturally acceptable as long as there is no harm done to the other person. Viorst freely admits to telling evasive social lies and peacekeeping lies and she laments, "I feel I'm a bit of a coward, I feel I'm dodging responsibility" (Viorst, page 2). Yet she is conflicted on trust-keeping lies, "It's my belief that once we've promised to keep a trust, we must tell lies to keep it. I also believe that we can't tell Watergate lies. . . these two statements are quite contradictory. But for now they're the best I can do" (Viorst, page 4).

Frankly, I'm at odds with the Viorst essay. While I agree with her contention that there is widespread lying, Viorst and I hold different views about truth and lying. And every time Viorst put the "What about you?" question to the reader at the end of each section, my answer was always that I do not want anyone to lie to me or shade the truth. If one does not like my shoes, tell me straight up. If one does not like my soup, tell me how I can improve its taste. If I am not a good lover, let's discuss how I can give you more pleasure next time.

Another point of view in the Viorst essay with which I agree is the slippery slope that one ventures out on when the first lie is told. Viorst writes, "And we can never be sure, once we start to juggle lies, just where they'll land, exactly where they'll roll. And furthermore, we may find ourselves lying in order to back up the lies that are backing up the lies we initially told" (Viorst, page 3). The 19th century Scottish poet, Sir Wal-

ter Scott, penned one of the most famous and quoted excerpts in history on truth in his *Marmion* poem that is right on point with Viorst's concerns, "Oh! What a tangled web we weave, When first we practice to deceive!" (Scott, Canto VI, Stanza 17). My interpretation of this quote is that deviations from the truth mean that lies generate more lies as one struggles to remember the trail of untruths. Supporting lies with more lies creates a cascading arrangement of falsehoods, a pyramid structure that is likely to collapse like a house of cards. The lesson in all this is to avoid these potential pitfalls by simply sticking to the truth.

My values align more with the friend in the Viorst essay who refuses to tell social lies because he feels that telling lies is morally wrong. Perhaps it's my religious faith or respect for my fellow human beings, but my tolerance limit is zero lies. That's why I refused recently to tell, what the Viorst essay classifies as, a social lie. Here was the situation: My best friend, Julia, is dating a guy that happens to be rich. She claims its true love that drew her to him and not his money, but I have my doubts. She lies to our boss to take days off to spend time with this guy. And he spends lots of money on her at the finest restaurants, on expensive gifts and romantic weekend getaways. All of this lavishness came at a steep emotional price for Julia to endure. He felt he owned her and treated her in a possessive, manipulative, overly-controlling and verbally-abusive way. I watched their relationship develop but kept my thoughts to myself. (Was my silence being disingenuous to my best friend? Was my silence golden or just another form of deception or lying on my part?) I felt that it was just as bad to remain silent as to overtly tell her a lie. Neither choice is virtuous.

I was silent until one day she asked my opinion. She said she deeply loved him and I certainly did not wish to hurt her. Yet I felt an obligation not to bullshit or lie to her. I gave her my unvarnished opinion. She vehemently disagreed and did not like it. Tears swelled in her eyes and I did not hear from her for a week. After she had time to reflect on my feedback, she called and admitted that I was right. She had a long talk with the guy about dignity, mutual respect, ground rules, communication, decision-making in partnership and sharing/caring values. As of this writing, so far so good for them. They are planning a week-long trip to Italy during an upcoming holiday.

I would like to think that, had I not been honest, she would have continued down the road of her low self-esteem, destructive relationship with this man, and my honest prevented this outcome. I practice what I preach when it comes to honesty and truth. I feel strongly that all one needs to do to be a constant truth-teller and avoid using any of the four classifications of lies outlined by Viorst is to have a great command of the English (or other) language, an ability to express oneself with empathy for the other person and a sensitivity to communicate with sincerity and tact. That is precisely what I did with Julia and we remain the best of friends to this day!

It's clear to me in the Viorst essay that she will likely keep on lying and avoiding the truth in certain situations. But how many lies are too many? And while I applaud her openness and forthrightness in the essay, Viorst can never be a personal friend of mine as long as she harbors these convictions. She is morally challenged and her credibility is suspect in dealing honestly with her family members and friends. In *The (Honest) Truth About*

Dishonesty: How We Lie to Everyone – Especially Ourselves, Dan Ariely writes that, “Each of us has a limit to how much we can lie before it becomes absolutely ‘sinful’ ” (Ariely, page 29). And how are intentional liars able to circumvent the truth and live with their lies – have they no moral principles by which to live? One can reasonably infer from Stephen Costello’s book, *The Truth about Lying: With Some Differences between Men & Women*, that liars have an identity disorder and are able to compartmentalize and, therefore, rationalize their behavior: “We lie for our own benefit while maintaining a positive view of ourselves – a facet of our behavior that enables much of our dishonesty” (page 8). I interpret this to mean liars have sufficient internal moral compasses to understand what truth is, but are in need of a (defense) mechanism to help stabilize the compass during the onset of lies. My sense is that compartmentalization allows the conflicting concepts of truth and lies to co-exist in the liar’s mind by inhibiting direct or explicit acknowledgement and using denial or indifference to protect against any indications of contradictory evidence. In short, the motivation for this defense mechanism is so the liar can feel good - virtuous or truthful - about him or herself.

After having read the Frankfurt and Viorst essays, and in grappling with the classic philosophical questions of What is truth? What is honesty? - it’s my view that truth and honesty are closely related and inseparable. Truth essentially relates to the cold hard facts, and honesty humanizes the truth-teller with attributes of empathy, sincerity, integrity, honor and high moral character. If truth is reality, then in my judgment, honesty has a personal or emotional component, including the style or manner in which the truth is delivered. If one delivers the truth in the absence of sensitivity or sincerity, that truth may be rejected strictly on the basis of interpersonal style points. In other words, if the truth is delivered in an angry, bombastic or condescending fashion, the receiver may find it unacceptable. But delivery style can be a double-edged sword. One can also deliver a lie sincerely and empathetically and have it be more readily accepted than the truth delivered in an opposing delivery style. On the other hand, a sincere, empathetic and honest delivery may reap greater results or benefits than would otherwise be the case.

Here is a good illustration of what I mean along with the real-life struggles one can encounter in dealing with truth and honesty and the potential consequences: Last summer, I was stopped by the NYPD in Bay Ridge for using my cell phone while driving. The patrol officer pulled me over with flashing red lights, walked up to my car window, asked for my driver’s license and car registration and, before walking back to her patrol car to run a check, she asked if I had been using my cell phone for emergency purposes (a permissible exception in the cell phone law).

My options flashed quickly through my mind before I replied to her question, thinking that perhaps I had an opportunity to wriggle out of getting a moving violation summons, paying a hefty fine, adding points to my license and a subsequent surcharge on my auto insurance premium. Believe me, I really wanted to lie and fabricate a credible “emergency” story to tell the officer in an attempt to make life easier for me. But for some reason, a cool head prevailed. I knew that I was wrong and had broken the law. I quickly decided that the officer had done her job and it was now time for me to take responsibility for my indiscretion, accept the penalty, pay the fine, move on and learn from my mistake.

I turned to the officer and in a calm and apologetic manner said, “No officer, there was no emergency.”

The officer went back to her patrol car, entered my data into her computer and, I presumed, when my good driving history was confirmed with no outstanding warrants, discussed the results and my demeanor with her partner who had remained in the patrol car. She then walked back to my car window, returned my license and registration, and then shocked me by saying, “Miss Baghdadi, I am just going to give you a verbal warning this time. But you must stay off your cell phone while operating a motor vehicle for your own and the public’s safety. Get yourself a hands-free device”. I was so happy I thanked her profusely, shook her hand and wrote down her last name from her name tag.

As I drove off, it dawned on me that maybe, just maybe, the reason she gave me a break was because of my truthfulness, my sincere honesty in giving her a straightforward, no-nonsense answer with the full understanding of the potential consequences. She must get constant lies, denials, belligerence, profanity-laced tirades and “bullshit” from drivers who are stopped for cell phone violations. It must have been extremely refreshing for her to pull a motorist over who was honest and willing to calmly accept the consequence of my actions. And out of a sense of appreciation, respect and gratitude, she did not write me a ticket. My truthfulness and honesty were rewarded!

In summary, after having explored the concepts of deception, truth and honesty, here is what I have learned and can conclude: truth can be a broad concept perceived differently by others. Put another way, every person defines what the truth is themselves. For instance, ten people can look at a lake and see that same lake differently, and each individual vision can be the truth. And to tell the truth may present a person in an unflattering light to others as being insensitive and uncaring. The greatest scholars and philosophers throughout history recognized that truthfulness and honesty are supreme virtues which take courage and conviction to achieve, even though in reality, as Viorst said, honesty is not consistently rewarded. From all those sources and my own thoughts, I have concluded that truth-telling and honesty have remained remarkably consistent down through the Ages. Truth-telling and honesty are not always seen as virtues unless one understands that to be virtuous is to have rewards and at times, consequences. But my perception is that one will gain respect from most people for being truthful and honest. That helps neutralize some of the criticism from those offended by one’s forthrightness. Hopefully, these will become widely agreed upon tenets for what we collectively agree is “truth” and become accepted and admired in our society.

I have further concluded that because truth is so fundamental and vital in human relationships, it follows that lies and deception in our understanding of truth have more far reaching consequences than mistakes in the understanding of almost any other concept or idea of the human condition. The concept of “truth” in the literature has multiple definitions. My research has convinced me that the various definitions have sufficient crystal clarity which all rational, reasonable people can understand and make decisions within the paradigms of truth, honesty and deception. Sadly, it is inevitable that those among us who are looking to lie and deceive will over-analyze these definitions in search of escape clauses and wiggle room in order to rationalize their behavior, and improvise positively

inflated views of themselves in an attempt to justify their deceptive behavior.

Works Cited

American Heritage College Dictionary 4th Edition. (2004) ISBN-13: 9780618453009.

Ariely, Dan. *The (Honest) Truth About Dishonesty: How We Lie to Everyone – Especially Ourselves*. (2013) ISBN-13: 978-0062183613.

Costello, Stephen J. *The Truth about Lying: With Some Differences between Men & Women*. (2014) ISBN-13: 978-1908308467.

Hart, Robin. *Diogenes the Cynic*. (2012) ISBN-13: 978-0199589241.

Frankfurt, Harry G. *On Bullshit*. (2005) ISBN-13: 978-0691122946.

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 11th Edition. (2003) ISBN-13: 9780877798071.

Plato., Grube, G.M.A., Reeve, C.D.C. *Republic*. (1992) ISBN-13: 978-0872201361.

Scott, Sir Walter. *Marmion*. (2008) ISBN-13: 978-0554311371.

Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*. (2003) ISBN-13: 978-0743477123.

Viorst, Judith. *The Truth about Lying*. Redbook. March 1981: 34-42.

Prescription Drug Abuse Among the Community of Staten Island¹

Nancy Bello

Abstract

After reading about the rise of prescription drug abuse on Staten Island and listening to the news channel it led me to discover that there is a rise of drug abuse in my community. I wanted to understand who is being held responsible for the misuse of prescription drugs, including but not limited to the pharmacists, physicians, parents or adolescents.

As I started my journey researching prescription drug abuse among adolescents, I needed to make clear to myself and others what the meaning of a prescription is, the terms “drug abuse,” “drug dependence,” and “drug addiction” all mean. These terms are important to understand the level of danger, so that accurate information is passed on to our adolescents and teens. To begin with, a prescription drug is “a direction, usually written, by the physician to the pharmacist for the preparation and use of a medicine or remedy” (Prescription n.d.). Drug abuse is, “the recurrent use of illegal drugs or the misuse of prescription or over-the-counter drugs with negative consequences” (Prescription n.d.). A person who needs the drug to function normally is considered to have a drug dependence; abruptly stopping the drug leads to withdrawal symptoms. Drug addiction “is a compulsive use of a substance, despite its negative or dangerous effects” (Prescription n.d.). To some extent, misuse of a medication can involve problems at work, at school, or in personal relationships and, unfortunately, can lead to death. A lot of people, especially teens feel taking prescription drugs are safer than taking street drugs because it comes from a professional specialist. However, this is the message that needs to be strictly enforced to all school aged children: just because it comes from a physician, does not mean it is safe when taken the wrong way.

After doing research to teach myself the terms and definitions, I decided to start speaking with community members regarding the issue of prescription drug abuse. I was

¹ Completed under the mentorship of Prof. Kevicha Echols for COH11: Introduction to Community Health.

nervous to speak about such a sensitive subject. Everyone I spoke to was open to discuss a story they knew about. One lady spoke to me for about a half-hour telling her personal story regarding her sister who has been abusing prescription drugs since her teenage years. She did enlighten to me the known doctors in my area who write prescription drugs readily. While listening, I got the impression that she and her family are at the end of their ropes because she had stated that she had even called some doctors and requested them to stop writing her sister prescriptions; they told her they could not discuss patients due to patient confidentiality. She told them she would call to let them know the funeral arrangements.

Not everyone I spoke with had a story, however many people did state they knew of someone who was either still doing or have done drugs in the past. As I write this research paper, I have read about three boys who have overdosed, two boys in my area. I give their families so much respect to come out and tell their experience. By opening themselves up they are enlightening other families that this problem is real and is affecting our community. A problem needs a face in order to be real, and unfortunately Staten Island is able to put that face on the front page of the paper.

A major part of my report comes from Staten Island Partnership for Community Wellness. They are responsible for putting together: Tackling Youth Substance Abuse Initiative Survey and Focus Group Results, which was intended to report on the consumption of alcohol and drug use among Staten Island youth. The goal is to decrease the consumption of alcohol and prescription drug use among Staten Island youth. A professional research firm was hired to place a survey and focus group throughout the community, evenly reaching all areas of income and ethnic groups. The main point of this report was to see the perception of how the community feels about the growing problem of alcohol and prescription drug use. The results of both alcohol and drug use were insightfully interesting to read on how people think and perceive issues. However, my main focus on this report and survey is the prescription drug use portion. Personally I found the focus groups to be the most honest because the majority of them have dealt with addiction issues in their own families and they are at the point where all they want to do is be honest and help someone else who's going through this same problem.

In order to get a perspective of what my friends are actually doing in their homes regarding this drug issue, I put together a survey also, taking some questions from Tackling Substance Abuse Initiative Community Attitude Survey, and I added some of my own questions (Alemany, J., Mastrorilli T., & Messina L. 2012). (For details on the survey and results, see Appendices A and B.) My participants were all parents, 21 females and five males; the ages of their children were mostly between 11-17 years of age, with a count of 26 boys and 22 girls. The range of adolescents was from middle school and high school. This is the population most effected by prescription drugs. After asking a few questions to identify who was participating, I asked the question, "Do you think it would be OKAY for you to use prescription drugs without a prescription or in a manner other than prescribed?" to which all participants answered "no." Not counting the participants who indicated that there were no prescription drugs in their home, there was a higher number of no's when asked "If prescription drugs were stored in a secure place" also including in

that higher number of no's was the question "If participants had taken inventory of their unused prescription drugs?"

Considering that the drug problem has appeared in the newspaper almost daily, I was surprised to see out of 26 participants, 11 people have not spoken to their children about drug abuse. Twenty-three participants felt they did have a lot of influence over their children regarding their decision to use prescription drugs. I personally hope and pray that my feeling on prescription drug abuse will influence my children to stay away from using also.

All 26 participants thought it was not okay to use marijuana as a youth or adult. I was not surprised by the results for the question regarding youths; however, I was surprised with all participants agreeing that it is not okay for adults to smoke marijuana because, when speaking to adults regarding the legalization of marijuana. it seemed to me that people did not think of it as a significant problem. Eighteen participants believed that adolescents should speak to the parent first, with the school counselor coming in second; however, my son stated he would never speak to the counselor due to the fact it is not private and felt everyone would see him go into the office. This is an understandable concern that may need to be addressed in certain schools.

Twenty-two participants thought their adolescent as not educated enough when it came to prescription drug abuse. I feel this is an area my community needs to look into, to see how we can add more educational aspects regarding prescription drug abuse problems affecting our community. When asked who should be responsible for educating children on the dangers of prescription drug abuse, twenty-one participants stated both parents and educators should be responsible for educating adolescents. I feel since it seems most people feel this way, it is an important concept to consider improving on. Asking participants if they felt prescription drug abuse was a problem among our community, only one participant thought it wasn't. This is a positive step that many people felt prescription drug abuse is bad; because we have to recognize there is a problem before we can come to terms with how to fix it. All participants agreed that prescription drugs taken incorrectly are not safer than street drugs. Twenty-four participants wish they knew better what to say to their children regarding prescription drug abuse. This concern should also be addressed within the community to better educate adults.

Participants of my survey were split between agreeing and disagreeing when it comes to the question of "adults in your neighborhood look down on people who are in prescription drug treatment programs." I feel torn when having to answer this question also, since people are judgmental; however, I personally feel if the adolescent is in treatment then they should be supported and not judged. We all have issues. The question that I was most interested in was "who should be held responsible if children are found using prescription drugs?" Twenty-four participants agreed it should be the parent and two participants think it should be the adolescent. This is the question that has compelled me to talk and educate myself and others as I proceed with my report.

I decided to seek the opinion of a respectable pediatric doctor on Staten Island and ask him what he thought about the prescription drug abuse among the teens in our community. I will refer to him as Dr. X to protect his statements, and also because he is

well known throughout the community. The first thing he declared was I needed to make sure I included adolescents because his youngest patient to be treated for drug abuse is twelve years old. He feels people do not understand the depth of this problem and how young drug users really are. Dr. X stated that the drug problem that we are seeing right now is like playing Russian roulette and we are going to see a lot worse, including more deaths if we do not get this problem under control. I asked him what drugs he is seeing; he stated many physicians are reporting the use of benzodiazepines (Ativan, Xanax), opioids (OxyContin, Vicodin) and amphetamines (Adderall, Ritalin). When the need sets in for more and resources run out, he is finding more usage of heroine. He agreed that the gateway drug most likely are cigarettes, however, he is concerned with the usage of marijuana. Dr. X. expressed it is a stronger drug than ever before and even though he knows many people consider it no big deal, it is still considered a mind altering drug with psychoactive ingredient of THC. THC is much stronger these days than many years ago because of the way it is processed. Marijuana is located under Schedule 1, which means “drugs have no currently accepted medical use in the United States and are drugs deemed to have high potential for abuse.” (Mignon, S. 2009) I asked Dr. X what he thought about legalizing marijuana. He stated it would be a mistake; we would be losing our footing on policing drugs. I asked him about the amount of adolescents and teens he has treated himself. Dr. X says that he sees at least a minimum of two kids a week in the emergency room due to drug use. In his regular office he maintains a busy schedule of follow-ups with many patients.

The explosion of drug abuse among this young population is still mind-blowing even for a doctor of his status. I then questioned, “with all the drug abuse you see, who do you think is to blame?” Without a hesitation he blames everyone who has touched that written prescription. Dr. X mentioned that at a conference it was recommended that only a short supply of controlled drugs (such as five day supply instead of thirty day supply) should be given. However, the argument that most physicians had was that patients complain about paying two co-pays, so it is not followed by many physicians. He agreed with my thought of if they really need it they would go back and if not then they would think twice before paying the co-pay and being checked by the physician. Everyone needs to be on the same page to make the system work correctly. He did bring to my attention the Prescription Monitoring Program (established in 2013), which prevents patients from doctor jumping to receive controlled prescription drugs. As far as blaming parents, he felt many parents are too relaxed when storing medications and turning a blind eye to what their children are doing. He feels more communication is needed and more monitoring of actions. If something doesn’t seem right, it usually isn’t.

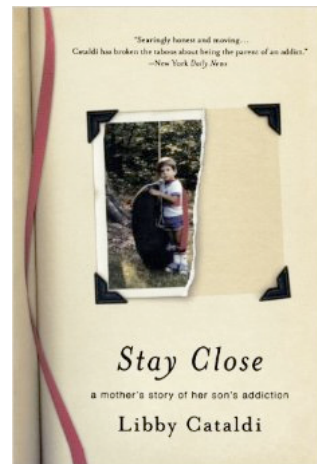
I feel parenting relationships and friendship with their children are blurred. However, he also blames the system of turning in unused portions of controlled substances. They only have two days a year scheduled to turn in unused portions of controlled medication and people are told not to flush it because then it becomes an environmental issue. So what happens? The medication is put into the medicine cabinet and forgotten about or is found by the adolescent or teen living in the house or visiting. Many cases have been reported that medication has been taken out of someone else’s medicine cabinet. Dr. X

also mentioned that he does not believe the rehab system works and more attention should be on the underlying reason why this group is using. Rehab patients needs counseling in a one-on-one basis to look back into the window of time around when this problem began. When asked about the new drug Naloxone, he feels it is only a bandage to the underlying problem, unless the person using is going to get the correct psychological treatment. Therefore, each person within this spiraling out of control drug circle has some level of blame.

There is some level of blame on each individual. This spiraling-out-of-control drug cycle is a community problem. He felt more people need to be involved and to put a stop to the corner pharmacies that everyone knows about. He attends community board meetings and most of the time it is the same people. Unfortunately, those are the people who have lost loved ones. He also feels strongly about setting up programs in schools where recovering teens speak to the students. My last question to him was, did he feel commercials would help (using the examples of the cigarette commercials, nasty ones that show the results of smoking). He agreed with me because one conversation leads to a change. Obviously those commercials made an impact because people are still talking about them. On a personal level he feels all his patients are his children, and it breaks his heart when he receives that phone call from the emergency room.

My take on this interview was that I felt Dr. X was really speaking from his heart and honestly I was not surprised when he spoke about doctors needing to closely monitor controlled substance users. I also agree that each person touching this controlled prescription is responsible.

I was given the choice to research blog sites and by doing this I was able to feel the empathy coming from people responding to others. We know that in order to combat this drug abuse problem it needs to be spoken about within the community. However, it is also a private problem within the family and I feel the love of a parent wanting to protect their child is a natural instinct. So what I found reading these blogs were feelings of sympathy, empathy and tough love. My first blog was *Adolescent drug abuse: are parents to blame?* It did not surprise me to read that parents did not like being blamed for their child's addiction problem. Some were open to the idea except one particular person was very strongly against blaming anyone but the addict. (Adolescent, 2010) I came across a blog website called *The Hope Share – your story can change someone else's*. Within this blog I was able to listen to short documentaries and stories of personal feelings and inspirations. One story was told by a mother named Libby Cataldi; she explained the difficulty of wrapping her mind around the idea that her sensitive loving son was addicted to heroin. She explains the embarrassment of living in a small town and not wanting the town members to know. She finally surrendered and attended an Al-Anon group. At first there were only three other parents there for drug addicted children. Now years later she



still attends and the room is full of parents with addicted children. Libby Cataldi shares her story in her book called: *Stay Close: A Mother's Story of Her Son's Addiction*. As I was reading the comments, I came across this particular statement from an unknown blogger which stated: "shows how false encouragement of a child can unintentionally lead to addictive tendencies, while honesty and discipline lead to healing, Stop trying to befriend them and be a parent." I've read many blogs and stories which seem to have an underlining message that the child needs to live up to a level that is not reachable for them, be it school grades or sports. The pattern of low self-esteem and low self-worth seems to be a trigger. Being a parent myself I have known parents who have pushed their children to that point. It wasn't done to harm their child; it was done with the thinking it would help their child get into a better college. I also see many parents being friends with their children because they feel that then that their child will speak with them regarding all issues. Sometimes I wonder if the parent is living their own life over again? My situation with my children is different, I encourage them to work to do their best, stand behind them when they are passionate about something, and guide them through a maze of teen questions. My role as a parent is to guide my children in the right direction, love them unconditionally and to let them know I am here for them with no judgment.

Everyone needs to understand that being chemically addicted to drugs or alcohol does not identify age, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, and or economic backgrounds. There are many books on this subject and one book that stands out from my research is called *Overcoming Your Alcohol or Drug Problem: Effective Recovery Strategies* by Daley & Marlatt. They write: "They encourage the substance using client to examine their motivation toward recovery by weighing the positives and negatives of deciding to continue using or stop using. With the help of a holistic treatment team, including social worker or other clinician, self-help fellowship, and family and significant others, addicted individuals begin to walk the road to recovery when they examine their motivation to change and recognize that substance use is causing problems" (Daley, D.C. & Marlatt, G.A., 2006). The importance of knowledge, once an addict admits to having a problem, becomes crucial to the community that must be able to provide this person with the best care for recovery.

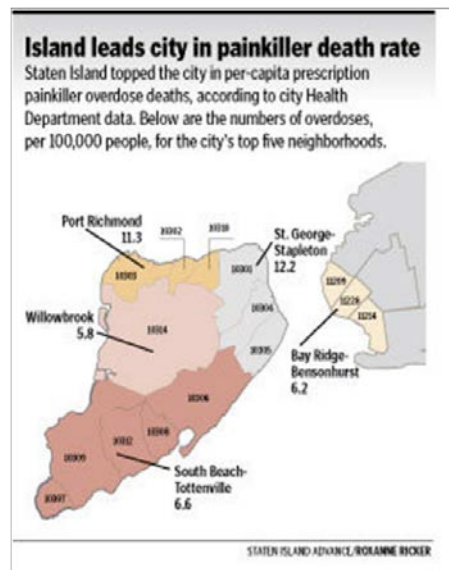
Many times parents are unaware of programs, which rehabs are available in their area, and if the need of in-patient care is needed; this person will need a support system to go into once hospitalization is finished. As Dr. X had said when I interviewed him the drug problem is caused by something deeply rooted and, unless proper counseling is done on one-on-one basis to dig down into that dark area, relapse is certain to happen. This is where I feel a strong advocacy for the adolescent needs to be in place, and sometimes having to take control away from the parents. Some parents hinder the process by either having their own substance problems or by anger. This subject was discussed in my Introduction to Substance Abuse class, in which a professional counselor stated that many families are supportive of the addict. However, there are many that are not supportive due to various reasons. Since addiction is a progressive disease, this means that its effects multiply as time passes causing many families to become dysfunctional. There is a chance that the family unit will break down once the adolescent reaches rehab due to many influencing factors involved in the situation of dealing with an addictive person, especially a

young family member.

The importance of having a healthy mental status needs to be addressed for the family members whom are involved within the addicts circle. Family members need to attend their own support groups. Various groups are formed which are affiliated with co-dependency programs. Some well-known groups include: Al-Anon, which is a support group that focuses on helping the families of alcoholics find contentment whether the person is drinking or sober. During meetings, they discuss issues such as excessive caretaking, attempts to control other people's behavior and self-blame. Another is called Nar-Anon, is a group similar to Al-Anon; however this group focuses on the friends and family members of addicts. Family members can share their experiences with people who understand the challenges of living with an addict as they learn to care for themselves first. Yet another group is called Co-Dependents Anonymous that focuses on a twelve-step program, which helps families develop functional and healthy relationships within the addicts circle. These groups have proven to be beneficial to everyone involved. It is important that the people who will be in contact with the recovering addict are healthy themselves. Family counseling is recommended down the road to resolve unfinished issues.

A lot of important information was learned by doing this research paper. I am pleased to report more people are aware of this problem than not. There are programs in school that speak about drugs, but since this epidemic of drug abuse programs are being rewritten with emphasis on the dangers of prescription drugs and heroin usage. The difference now is some students can put a face on the discussion, having lost a friend or family member due to a drug overdose. We need to keep talking, educating, and listening as a community to fight this drug abuse problem.

The author Malcom Gladwell wrote a book called *The Tipping Point*. In his book he summarizes that the connection point that people have is what makes a product fly off the shelves or die at the production line. The connection point that people made with other people can and will make a difference. It is like playing telephone except we want the message to stay strong. My goal for this paper is to inspire just one conversation on this subject, which can lead to many.



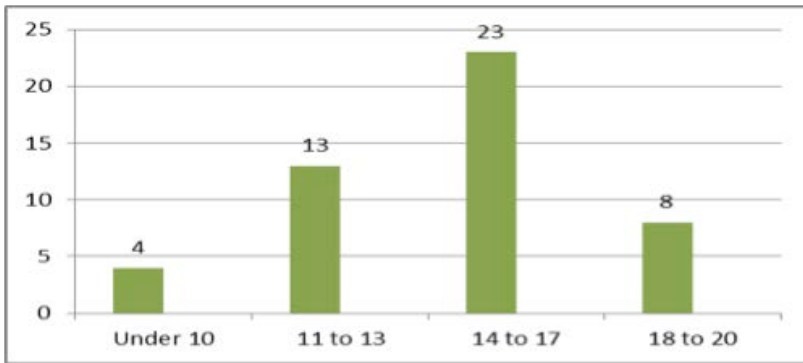


Figure 1 – What is the age of your children?

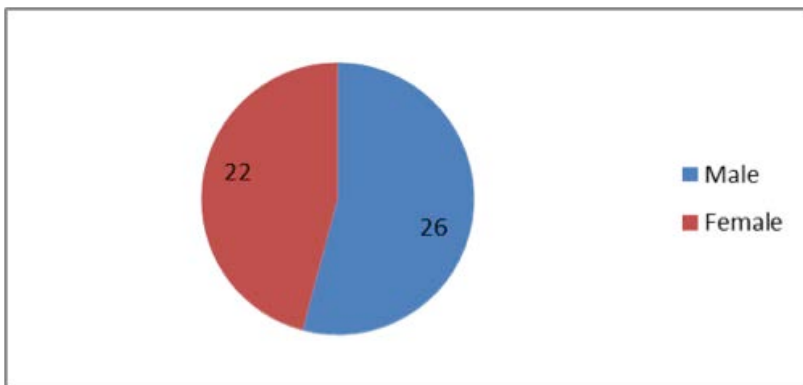


Figure 2 – What is the gender of your child/children?

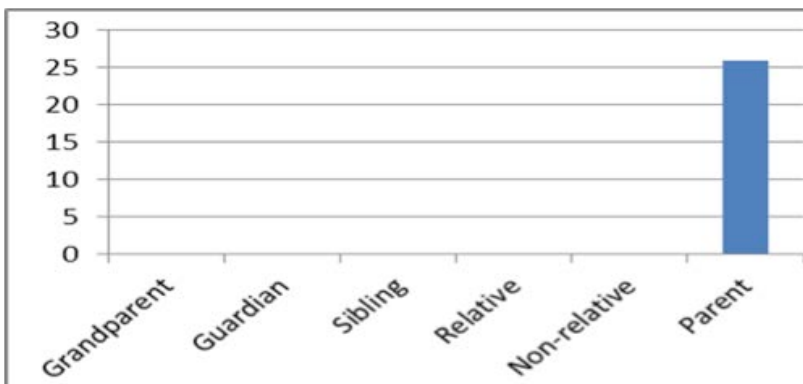


Figure 3 – What is your relationship to these child/children?

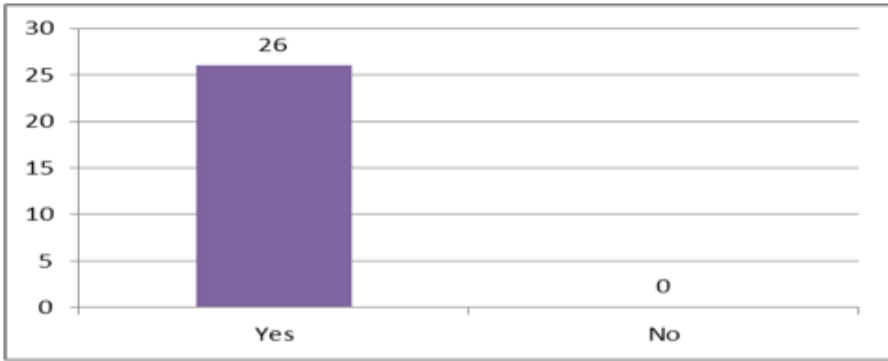


Figure 4 - Are you the primary caregiver of this/these child/children

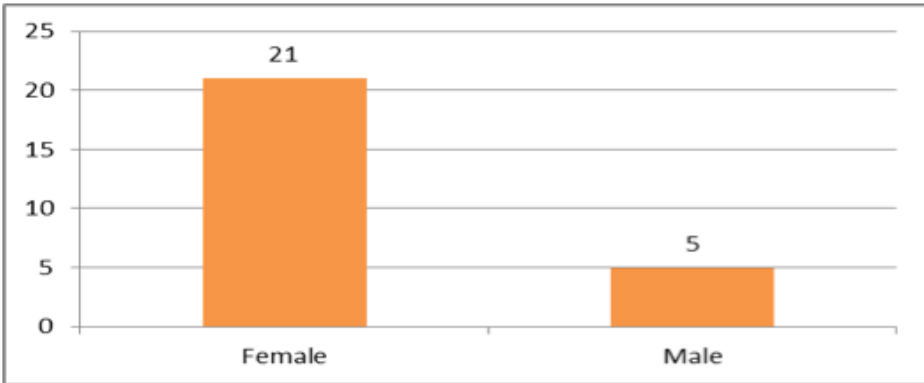


Figure 5 – What is your gender?

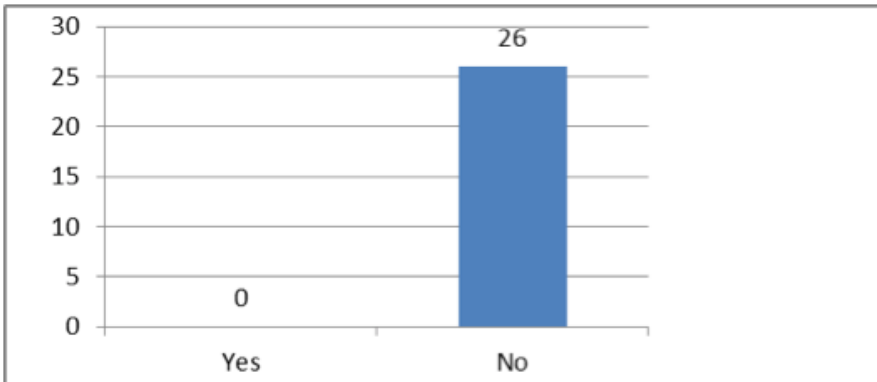


Figure 6 – Do you think it would be Okay for you to use prescription drugs without a prescription or in a manner other than prescribed?

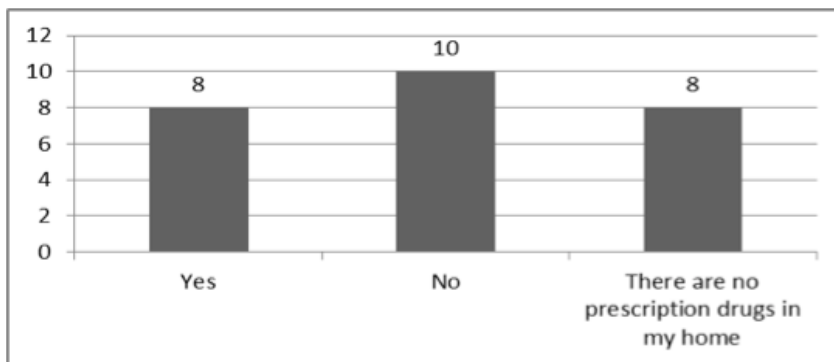


Figure 7 – Are the prescription drugs in your home locked up in a cabinet or stored in a secure place?

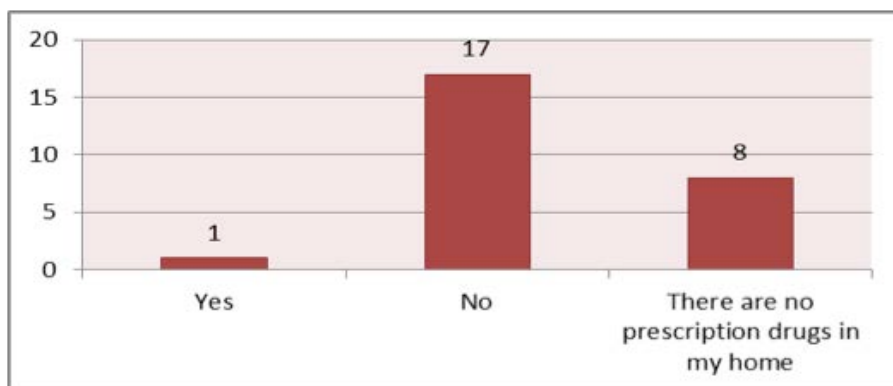


Figure 8 – Do you keep an inventory of the prescription drugs in your home?

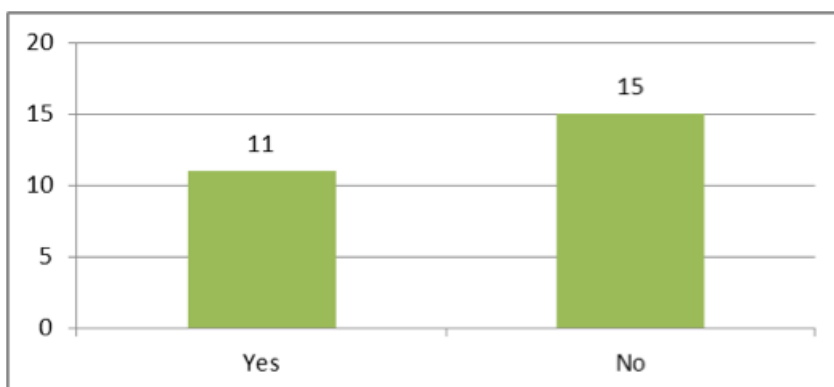


Figure 9 - During the past year, have you talked with the child/children in your household about the risks of using prescription drugs without a prescription or in a manner other than prescribed?

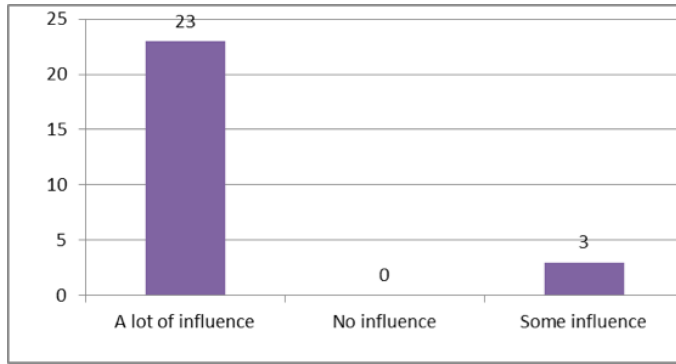


Figure 10 - How much influence do you think you have on the children who live in your household or who are close to you regarding their decision to use prescription drugs in a way other than prescribed?

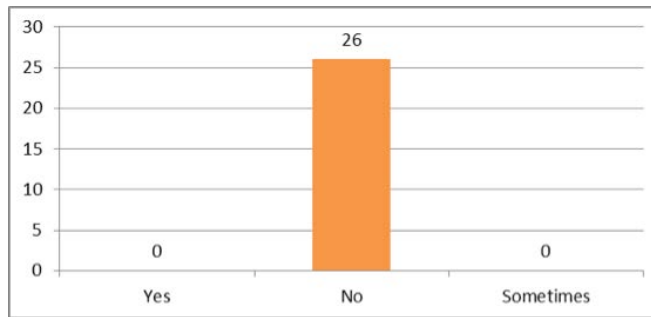


Figure 11 - Is it OKAY for youth to use marijuana (grass, pot) or hashish (hash, hash oil)?

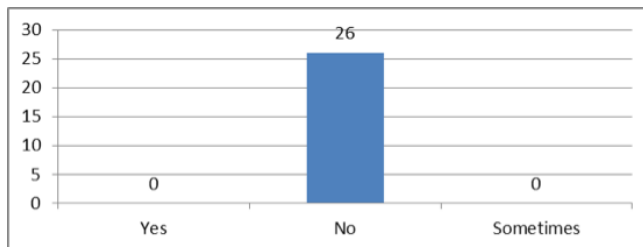


Figure 12 - Is it OKAY for adults to use marijuana (grass, pot) or hashish (hash, hash oil)?

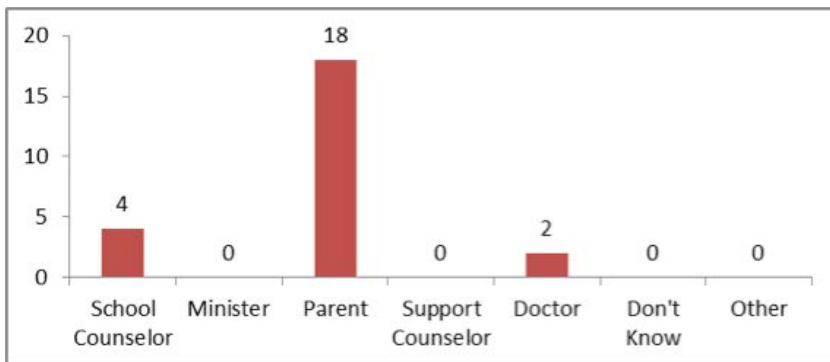


Figure 13 - If a child or youth that you know needed treatment or counseling for a prescription drug problem, who is the first person, you would tell them to talk to?

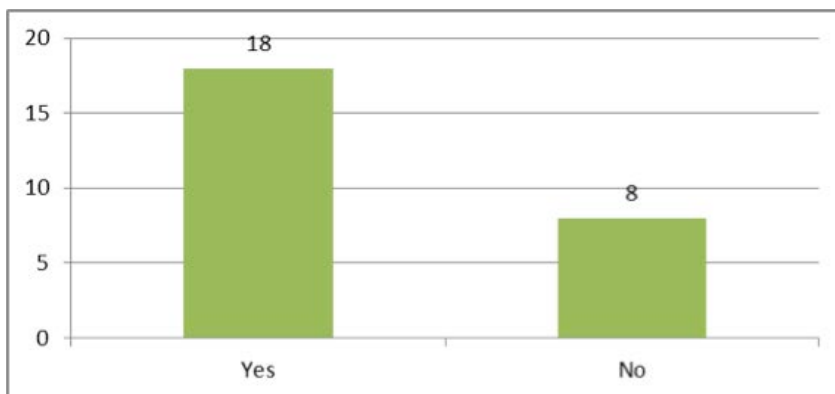


Figure 14 - If a child or youth that you know had a prescription drug use problem would you know where to go to get help?

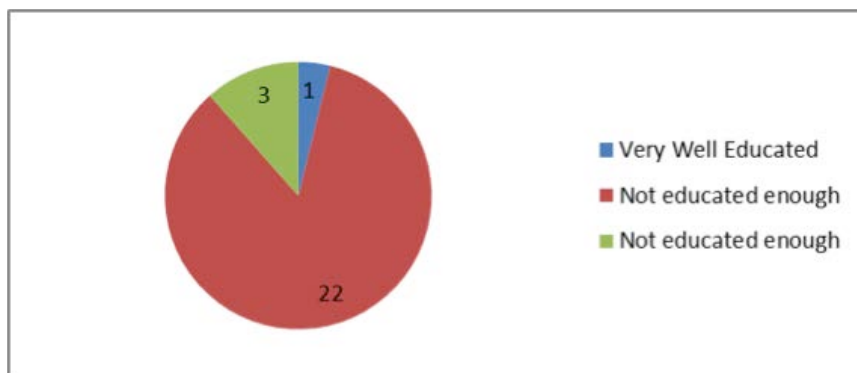


Figure 15 - How well educated do you feel your child/children are to the dangers of using prescription drugs?

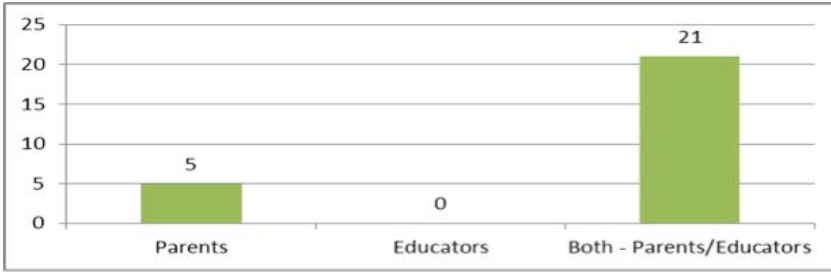


Figure 16 - Who should be responsible for educating children on the dangers of prescription drug abuse.

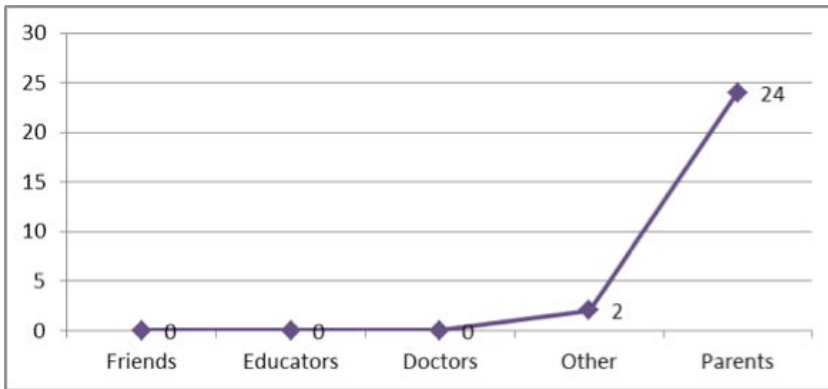


Figure 17 - Who should be held responsible if children are found using prescription drugs?

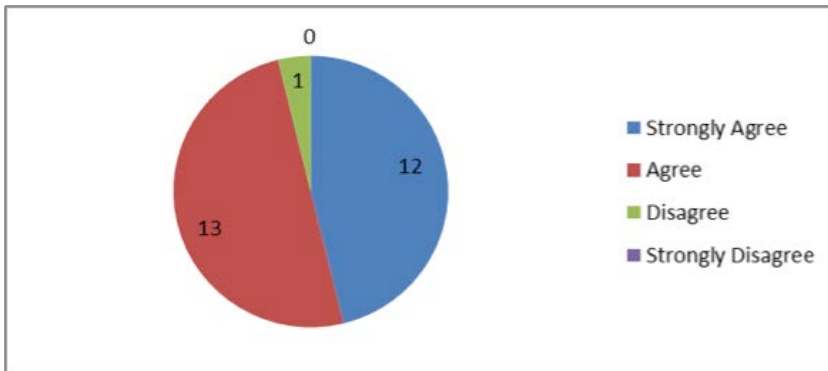


Figure 18 - The non-prescribed use of prescription drugs is a problem among the youth in my neighborhood.

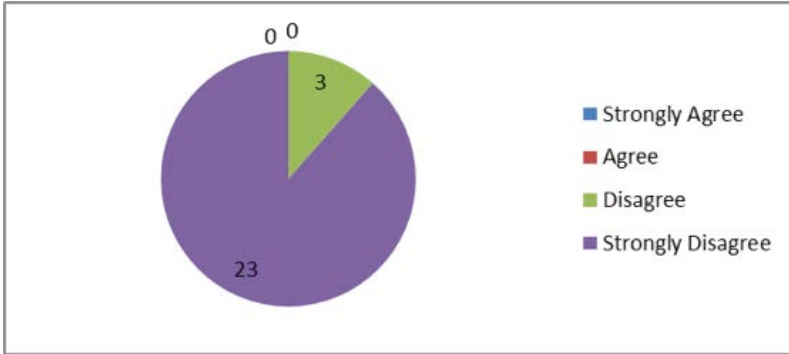


Figure 19 - Taking prescription drugs without a prescription or in a manner other than prescribed is safer than doing street drugs, such as heroin or cocaine.

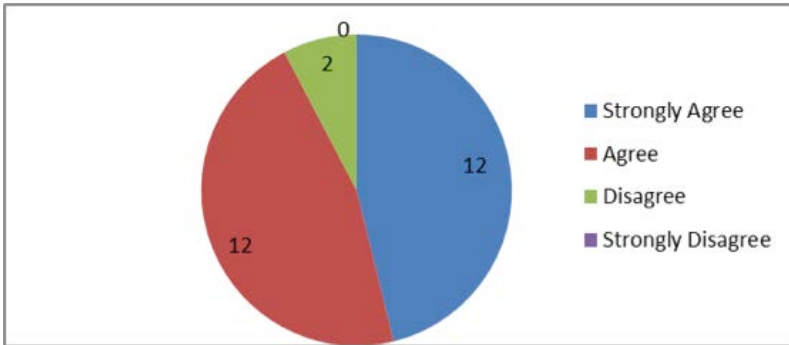


Figure 20 – I wish I knew better what to say to youth about the risks of non-prescription use of prescription drugs.

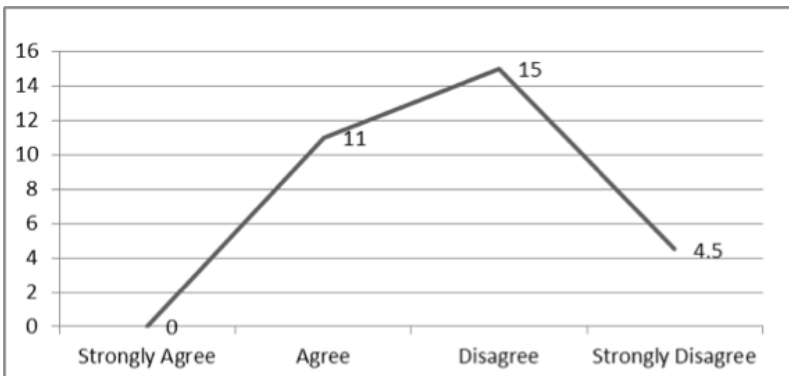


Figure 21 – Adults in your neighborhood look down on people who are in prescription drug treatment programs.

Works Cited

- Adolescent drug abuse: are parents to blame?*. (2010, November 1). . Retrieved March 1, 2014, from <http://addictionblog.org/the-news/adolescent-drug-abuse-are-parents-to-blame/>
- Aleman, J., Mastroilli, T., & Messina, L. (2012, December 1). *Tackling Youth Substance Abuse Initiative Survey and Focus Group Results*. Welcome to the Staten Island Partnership for Community Wellness Website. Retrieved March 1, 2014, from www.sipcw.org
- Daley, D. C., & Marlatt, G. A. (2006). *Recognizing Your Substance Use Problem & Stages of Change. Overcoming Your Alcohol or Drug Problem: Effective Recovery Strategies* (2nd ed ed.,). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gladwell, M. (2000). *The Tipping Point*. (1st ed). New York: Little Brown Company.
- Mignon, S. I. (2009). *Drug Classification and Scheduling. Substance use and abuse: exploring alcohol and drug issues* (). Boulder, Colo., Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Prescription. (n.d.). *Collins English Dictionary - Complete & Unabridged* 10th Edition. Retrieved April 13, 2014, from Dictionary.com website: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/prescription>
- Dr. X, *Personal Interview*, April 2014

Textures¹

Lu Xue



¹ Completed under the mentorship of Prof. Linda Butti for ART 5500: Design I.



Title IX and Gender Inequalities in Sports¹

Dwaine Williamson

Introduction

The intention of Title IX was to create equity for the women in all things pertaining to education in America. When the bill was first passed in 1972, it was highly regarded as a great idea. However, Title IX became controversial once it was realized that women could use the law to gain access to the same benefits that men have in sports as well as education. Women had been forced to take a backseat to men for a very long time in numerous things, but especially in sports. The journey of the implementation of Title IX is interesting because the pattern from the conception of the law to the implementation of the law is similar to the Civil Rights Bill of 1964. Similar to the Civil Rights Bill, although the Bill was passed, the slow progress of implementation meant the underrepresented still had no voice and change was a very long process. The purpose of this paper is to give the reader a brief history about Title IX, its journey, its effects on both genders, and the benefits of gender equality in sports.

History

On June 23, 1972, President Richard Nixon signed into effect Title IX of the higher education act into law. The idea behind Title IX was to ban sex discrimination in athletics at all educational institutes that were receiving federal monies, including scholarships, grants, and all government contributions. Once the bill was signed, sealed, and delivered, some advocated the bill and some opposed the bill. The advocates took a position proclaiming women should indeed have the same entitlements as men in relation to education. Simultaneously, the opponents argued against this position. However, the real controversy began once it was realized that women could use Title IX to gain access to the same entitlements as men, in relation to sports.

From the moment that the Title IX bill was passed, it has had an amazing journey.

¹ Completed under the mentorship of Prof. Nick Skirka for RPE40: Sport and American Society.

IX to be passed in 1972 was the social movement at that time. Title IX was passed in the midst of the Women's Rights movement of the 1970's. America was beginning to change socially toward women in relation to physical fitness and general health. Traditionally, women were labeled as "soft" and the sentiment within the country was that a woman was not equipped for physical activities. Women were moving away from the house mom mold. They began entering the work force. In addition, many were enrolling into institutions of higher learning at a fervent pace. The country's new trend toward women made the education portion of the bill easier to accept.

A major contributing factor, as to why men vehemently staked their claim to sports, is because they are responsible for creating, sponsoring, developing, and organizing the rules for every major sport in the world. Therefore, the sense of entitlement that men display is not surprising. The passing of the Title IX bill had great intentions, but it caused many to resist the change that was apparently on the horizon. A major factor why the resistance to enforce against Title IX was so strong, was that men realized that if the law was enforced properly, women would gain leverage in their battle for equity in sports. Men did not want to lose their grip on sports. The reason why is because men have always used sports as way to demonstrate their dominance and power on a global scale. During the early days of Greece dating back to (1000 B.C. - 100 B.C.) the games were used primarily to exhibit the strength, power, and physical endurance of the competitors who were exclusively men.

Funding

Title IX addressed gender inequality in various ways. First, it affected the way men's varsity sports were funded in comparison to women's athletics in general. Before 1972, the budget for sports was reallocated so that men received the majority of the government funding. In fact, male interscholastic and intercollegiate sports received on average 99 cents of each dollar received to fund and operate their various sport teams (Coakley pg. 234). In most cases schools had no options for female athletes because of the way the funds were allocated between the two genders. According to Coakley, women's intercollegiate programs received only 1 percent of the athletic budget even though student's fees paid by female students and taxes paid by female workers were used to fund intercollegiate athletic programs for both genders (Coakley pg. 234). At the very least that is disrespectful to have the underrepresented gender fund programs that they were not allowed to participate in.

The limited funding of women's sports had an adverse effect, and it was a major factor in limiting the amount of women athletes. Prior to 1972, sports were almost exclusively a "guy thing" in American schools. In 1971 there were approximately 3.7 million boys and 295,000 girls playing high school sports. For every 12.5 boys on a team, there was only 1 girl on a team (Coakley pg. 234). At the college level the numbers were lop-sided as well. In 1971, there were 180,000 men compared to 32,000 women playing on intercollegiate teams. The ratio was 1 of every 10 men played sports compared to 1 of every 100 women playing intercollegiate sports (Coakley pg.234).

Change

There have been definite changes in the allocation of funding after Title IX was signed. Today, women received more funding than in years past. Title IX requires women to have access and benefit from the equipment, uniforms, supplies, training, practice, and locker-room facilities, quality coaches and opponents, awards and banquets, and cheer-leading and bands at games (Greenberg pg.68). The impact has been positive for women and their advocates. Gradually, woman's sports have become more popular both on the national and international scale. In addition, women's sport is on the rise especially in Basketball the WNBA has become very popular, and Tennis star Serena Williams is spear heading the charge in her sport. Woman now have the option to earn a salary while playing professionally in various leagues and in multiple sports across the globe.

The Journey

For nearly 3 years the law was undermined by those who opposed it. They claimed that there wasn't a clear interpretation of the law. In retrospect, it is safe to assume that the real reason was that they were unwilling to allow the process of Title IX to force them to reallocate their government funding. The government remained idle and passively allowed athletic directors and coaches to continue to disregard the bill. The law was compromised solely on the basis of the claim that there was not a clear interpretation of the law. Therefore, the misinterpretation of the bill led to a plethora of lawsuits. The office of Civil Rights (OCR) received more than 10,000 comments and complaints regarding compliance. By, 1979 the OCR intervened by publishing legal clarifications regarding Title IX. The new standard to gauge if a school was in compliance of the Title IX law would be measured by a 3 part test. The first guideline is the proportionality test, which forced schools to split their scholarships among men and women at no more than a 45% - 55% ratio either way. The second guideline of the test is the history of progress report, which would force athletic departments to prove that an attempt to meet compliancy has been made. The final guideline of the test is the accommodation of interest test. This test measured the interest of the underrepresented group, by taking surveys to gauge their interest in any particular sport, among the student body. According to the OCR, a school only had to meet 1 of the 3 regulations to prove that they were compliant. (Coakley pg. 235). In addition the OCR required each high school to comply within a year and each university and college to comply within 3 years (Coakley pg. 235).

The new published clarifications of the OCR had little impact on what was really happening in the country. In large part Title IX and the new published clarifications were still being ignored by many institutions that were receiving government funding. In response to the challenge for compliancy, women began to bypass the administration process at their institutions, and decided to take their fight up the ladder. They lobbied President Ronald Regan and Congress for help and filed lawsuits to overturn the law (Coakley pg. 236). Until that point woman only made small advances. The struggle between Title

IX advocates and their opponents continued, and it led up to the 1984 supreme court ruling that stated “Title IX only applied to programs that directly received money from the government and because varsity sports did not directly receive federal funds the law did not apply to them” (Coakley pg. 236). At least on the surface, what that translated to was schools had to either comply or not receive government funding. Since the ruling, there are now more scholarships and funding for women’s sports due to Title IX.

Women’s sports continued to suffer until 1987. In 1987, Congress re-visited the law and passed the Civil Rights Restoration Act (Coakley pg. 236). This act revised the 1984 ruling by admitting that the government made a mistake, by not enforcing Title IX. The Civil Rights Restoration Act originally intended Title IX to be applied to sport programs because schools sports were educational (Coakley pg. 236). Some seemed to still struggle with the interpretation of the law, so in 1990 the OCR published an 11 point detailed guide that elaborated even more on exactly what Title IX enforced. The expansion of the law concerned equity for females in all aspects concerning their athletic programs such as scholarships, facilities, scheduling, coaching, and all other forms of support for female athletics, teams, and their programs (Coakley pg. 236).

A New Day

This marked a new day for women sports because now women and their advocates had legal ground to file lawsuits against any school that wasn’t compliant with the law. In addition, the new law would grant monetary damages to individuals who were affected by discrimination. By the year 1992 Title IX was enforceable in every high school and college campus (Coakley pg. 236). Title IX grew a few more teeth when in 1994 Congress passed the Equity in athletics Disclosure Act. The law required an annual report of every student receiving financial aid from the government to provide a report containing specific data on athletic participation, staffing, and budgets for all men and women’s sports (Coakley pg. 236).

Benefits

Title IX and their advocates still have work to do; the road is by no means fully paved. For example, male athletes are awarded 179 million more dollars than female athletes, in scholarship money annually. (Greenberg pg.67). In the meanwhile, at least some women can enjoy many of the same benefits that men have in sports. Title IX is important for woman in our society for various reasons. First, woman would receive equal treatment in the realm of sports. It is important for young girls to grow up and not feel as if they are subordinate to anyone. Second, Title IX opens the door for many young women to remain active in sports which is directly correlated to better health, and better careers for women. Third, the opportunity to play interscholastic and then intercollegiate sports may raise a young woman’s focus and confidence. According to Greenberg, females who participate in sports during their adolescent years tend to do the same in high school and college (Greenberg pg. 68). Today, women athletes are putting Title IX into practice. There has

been a rise in participation in women's sports. According to Coakley, "Between 1971 and 2008 the number of girls playing varsity sports in high school has increased from 295,000 to approximately 3.06 million, which is a 1000-percent increase." Coakley also mentioned that "instead of 1 of every 27 high school girls playing; now the ratio is 1 in 3 girls play some type of high school sport." (Coakley pg. 236). The rise of women playing sports in college and universities is revealing as well. In the same time span there has been a 600 percent increase from 32,000 to over 180,000 female athletes.

Ramifications

Title IX has been a blessing for women in sports, but it has created some downfalls for women. Before Title IX the men and women's program were basically operated as two separate departments. That gave women more jobs in the realm of administration and coaching. Title IX created opportunities for men to coach women. It may be lawful for men to coach women's basketball, but where is the equality? There are women who have successfully coached men in high school varsity sports such as Ruth Lovelace who coaches boys' varsity basketball at Boys and Girls high school in Brooklyn, New York (NY times) and Natalie Randolph (CNN) who coaches boys' varsity football in Washington, D.C. despite their achievements, women have been granted zero opportunities to coach men on the college level in any of the major sports. Title IX has been great as far as granting women access in relation to sports, but it has been comparable to a double edged sword. Title IX open up possibilities for women, and simultaneously gave men access to coaching and administration jobs on the women's side. A negative by-product of that action is that women have not received any opportunities to coach men's college sports.

Notable Athletes

Title IX is important because it sheds light on the obvious fact that women are good athletes too. Men have always trivialized women's sports. The traditional view about women in relation to sports is that they are to slow, to small, and not strong enough when compared to men. However, if you take the time to examine the history of women's sports, it will reveal that woman have proven their ability to compete on a high level, and in some cases compete with men for decades. There have been some very notable female athletes throughout history. In the 1930's there was Mildred "Babe" Didrikson Zaharias. She was born in 1914 to immigrant parents from Norway. By 1930 at 16 years old she was already a star athlete. Babe starred in women's basketball and AAU track and field. During the 1932 Olympic Games she competed in 3 events. In the javelin throw she beat the world record by more than 2 meters; she tied for first place in the high jump, and she won a gold medal for the 80 meter hurdles (Greenberg pg. 46). Babe Didrikson was also good at playing golf (Greenberg pg.47). She thrived in an era where women were considered non-athletic to say the very least.

Before the Babe there was Gertrude "Trudy" Ederle. On August 6, 1926 she became the seventh person and first woman to swim across the English Channel. She broke

the current world record by swimming the English Channel in 14 hours and 31 minutes she was 19 years old at the time. At the age of 17 she won an Olympic gold medal as part of the 1924 American 400 meter relay team.

Some other notable women athletes that I would like to mention are Donna Mae Mins in 1964, she defeated 31 men to become the first woman to win a sports car club of America championship in racing. Roberta Gibb Bingay was the first woman to enter and finish the Boston marathon. She had to wear a hooded sweatshirt to mask her gender because of how sensitive of a subject it was before Title IX.

Truly, I could continue to list prominent women in sports for an indefinite amount of time. There are so many notable women in sports such as Wilma Randolph, Ann Meyers, Sheryl Miller, and Sheryl Swoops. Women athletes have been great performers in sports for a very long time. Title IX is important to me on a personal level. I have a 12 year old daughter who loves to play basketball. Already my daughter is talking about playing college basketball and establishing a career in the WNBA. I think that it is absurd for anyone to be denied any opportunity to better themselves in this great country of America. Sports provide so many benefits and both genders should have an equal slice of the pie. The reality of the situation is that for now, and into the foreseeable future, things may never quite even out between the genders. That is apparent when we compare the ratings between the WNBA and the NBA, or the NCAA men and women's championship games. In reality, it is no longer appropriate to use phrases such as "play like a girl", or any other cliché that is derogatory toward a female's ability to play sports. My hope is that Title IX advocates continue to push against the door until it falls off its hinges and women and men are treated with equality in sports.

Summary

Gender equality in sports is important because it benefits both genders. It may help women to gain confidence, become goal-orientated, obtain and maintain health, and gain occupation within the sports realm. Gender equity in sports is important for men also. It may help them finally put an end to their trivial and frivolous thinking about Gender dominance and help society raise a generation of young girls to be confident, brave, smart, and goal-orientated women.

Works Cited

Coakley, Jay. *Sports in Society: Issues and Controversies* 10th edition. New York. McGraw-Hill. 2009.

Danios, Alejandro. "A Women Coach at Boy's and Girl's high." New York Times 21 Feb. 2004. Web. 18 May 2014.

Judith, E. Greenberg. *Woman and Sports: Getting into the Game*. Danbury, CT. Grolier Publishing. 1997

Hanna, Jason. "Woman named high school's head varsity football coach." CNN. 15 Mar. 2010. Web. 18 May 2014.

The Viability of the Eastern Oyster in Lower New York Bay¹

Adina Tulkoff

Abstract

Being that New York was the oyster capital of the world in the late 1800 through the early 1900 and served as an economic and environmental asset, the reintroduction of the species to our bay is a beneficial prospect. However, due to the common belief that New York waters are highly polluted and would not sustain a healthy environment for oyster reefs, the study and observation of oyster viability in the waters is imperative for the opportunity of future induction of the oysters. 300 juvenile oysters were obtained, measured and monitored monthly for growth and survivability for the duration of two years. The data collected showed that the quality of Lower New York Bay waters are satisfactory for oyster cultivation.

In the 1800's, the oyster reigned as the quintessential New York food. In New York's early history, the city was world-renowned for its oysters. When thinking of New York, one would associate it with its oysters. By the late 1800's, 50,000 oysters were being sold by the Fulton Fish Market each day and along the shore there were mountains of empty shells from their consumption. The industry in New York gave rise to the oyster culinary businesses "The oyster cellar was a ubiquitous eatery in NYC from early in city history until the closing of the oyster beds" (Nigro, 2011). The oyster cellars in New York City were similar in popularity to Starbucks until the oyster industry was shut down in New York in 1927. Due to the amount of oyster beds in the New York Bay, oysters were cheap and readily available. Street vendors, cheap eateries, as well as restaurants that catered to the elite New Yorkers, all served oysters. The oysters were so inexpensive that even the poor could afford to live off of this nutritional sea food.

The oyster population increased to nearly 27 million bushels by the 1890's, but

¹ Completed under the mentorship of Prof. Thomas Greene for CHM 5100: Chemistry and the Environment.

by 2004 the population was reported to have declined by 99% to a count of 0.35 million bushels. Although overharvesting was mainly blamed for the drastic decline, there were additional contributing factors which caused the reduction of the oyster populace.

During the Industrialization era, the farmlands and forests in the Hudson River Valley were converted into industrial and residential areas. The freshwater tributaries were either filled to provide more space or used for sewage disposal. Islands in the East River were used for either garbage disposal, psychiatric wards, housing for the poor, or as disease quarantine areas resulting in an influx of pollutants. In addition, New York harbor was a key port for the oil industry and the treatment of important agricultural products; industrial waste was emptied into the bay and petroleum oil spills were not infrequent. As New York grew to be one of the world's busiest seaports, it became necessary to dredge the bay so the entry of large vessels would be possible. Due to the increase in pollutants and channel dredging, toxicity and the newfound awareness that oysters contain pathogens found in the water, the oyster industry of New York declined and was shut down in 1927. In order to understand the cause of the decline in the industry, we must understand the biological makeup of the oyster.

Oysters are bivalve mollusks. They are made up of a two-part hinged shell that contains a soft-bodied invertebrate. Bivalve mollusks such as the oyster, are filter feeders, breathing and taking in nutrients through gills; their gills are larger than necessary for respiration and, in addition to respiration, serve as a filter system for suspended materials in the water. The inside of the oyster shell contains hair-like filaments named cilia. The cilia serves the purpose of water filtration "By means of beating cilia, the mussel draws water into the posterior portion of the shell, forces it through the gills, and blasts it back out the exterior" (Ingmason, Wallace 1989). Due to this method the oyster is capable of filtering water at a rapid rate "Oysters can filter 2 gallons of water an hour" (Sowell, 2011) a process which improves both water clarity and quality in their habitats.

Oysters grow best in estuaries; these are coastal areas that contain brackish water, which is a mixture of salt water from the ocean and fresh water from rivers. These areas are exposed to the most sunlight, which increases photosynthesis; the process which produces oxygen and increases the presence of living organisms and sustenance for the oysters. These bivalve mollusks are considered 'keystone species', since they serve multiple purposes and greatly contribute to the quality, health and vitality of the environment. Oysters create reefs which provide a habitat for many other aquatic creatures. In addition, the reefs that the oysters form, protect the shores from erosion and diminish the effects of storm surges. Oysters have an extensive lifespan and can serve as a reef for an extended period of time.

Oysters can live up to approximately twenty years and grow to a length between 8cm and 36cm. Oysters begin their adult lives as males and within a few years continue to develop into females; spawning eggs, making them a protandric species. Towards the end of June, as the water temperatures increase, both male and female adult oysters begin the reproduction process. They release eggs and sperm into the water, where the eggs become fertilized by the sperm and develop into free swimming larvae for about three weeks. At the end of the planktonic stage, the larva develop a foot which protrudes from their

shell. During this stage “Oysters cement their left shell to a hard surface, often the shell of another oyster” (Castro, 1997) and morph into a tiny oyster shell, called spat. Spat are juvenile shells, smaller than 25mm. The process of larvae setting on top of adult oysters is repetitive and is the way in which oyster reefs are formed.

Oysters have defense mechanisms to protect them from pathogens, and enable them to survive in waters that contain: coliform bacteria, industrial wastes, and untreated agricultural fertilizers. Yet oysters residing in polluted waters will not thrive. The general belief is that the estuaries of Lower NY Bay (Figure 2) are too polluted for oysters to be viable in, in order to serve as an economic and environmental asset.



Figure 1 – Aerial Map of New York Harbor



Figure 2 – Close Up View of Area of Study

Materials and Methods



Figure 3 – Oyster cage

Materials

- 300 juvenile oysters
- Oyster cage (Figure 3)
- Caliper (Figure 4)
- Data sheets
- Access to pier in an estuary
- Gloves
- Rope

Methods

Viability is measured by the growth and mortality rate of the oysters. Growth is the rate at which the oysters increase in size and mortality rate is the death rate measured in percentages. Kingsborough Community College is partaking in this study in order to potentially have oysters returned to Jamaica Bay. KBCC obtained 300 juvenile Eastern Oysters from the NY/NJ Bay-keeper and started an oyster garden. The juvenile oysters were placed in a mesh oyster cage.

Oyster cage comprised of two compartments: a small section containing 50 oysters which are monitored for growth and mortality rates, a second section containing the additional 250 oysters, which was suspended from a floating dock, 2-3 feet below the surface. The depths at which the cage is submerged is to prevent sediments on the bottom from covering the oysters and predators burrowing into the shells. In addition, the oysters being close to the surface provides them with a warmer environment to prevent them from freezing in the winter.

Each month, 50 oysters were removed from the smaller section of the cage and placed in a separate container. The oysters were then measured individually using a caliper and the results were recorded in a data table. Both living and dead oysters were recorded, since each oyster affects the mean. After obtaining the measurements of the oysters, the sizes were averaged out to obtain the mean measurement, and recorded in a final data sheet which tracked the oyster growth throughout the year.

In addition to measuring growth rate, the mortality rate was recorded as well. The mortality rate reflects the survivability of the oyster's and is used to analyze their viability. Mortality rate is measured in percentage of dead oyster out of the 50 that have been measured. Based on both the growth rate and mortality rate of the oysters, the viability of the oysters can be determined.

Results

Table 1. Growth in mm of 50 Eastern Oysters (July 2012 - July 2013)

Table 2. Mortality Rate of Eastern Oysters Reflected in Percentages (July 2012 - July 2013)

Growth in mm 50 Eastern Oysters July 2012-July2013	
Date	Average Size (mm)
7/9/2012	43.8
8/15/2012	56.6
9/16/2012	62.8
10/19/2012	86.4
11/16/2012	87.3
1/17/2013	91.6
2/15/2013	94.7
4/15/2013	94.1
5/17/2013	99.1
7/11/2013	108
Total average growth	64.2

Table 1

% Mortality Rate 50 Eastern Oysters July 2012-July2013	
Date	% Mortality
7/9/2012	0
8/15/2012	22
9/16/2012	26
10/19/2012	40
11/16/2012	46
1/17/2013	46
2/15/2013	50
4/15/2013	50
5/17/2013	50
7/11/2013	50

Table 2

The placement of Table 2 beside Table 1 is to simplify the correlation between growth rate and mortality rate in order to analyze viability.

The juvenile spat received in July were recorded at an average of 43.8mm and the adult oysters, returned to NY/NJ Bay-keeper the following year, were an average size of 108mm. However, although the oysters grew significantly and seemed to thrive in Jamaica Bay throughout the 2012/2013 year, the Mortality Rate chart shows the low rate of survivability, which was 50%.

Table 3. Growth in mm of 50 Eastern Oysters (July 2013 - July 2014)

Table 4. Mortality Rate of Eastern Oysters Reflected in Percentages (July 2013 - July 2014)

Growth in mm 50 Eastern Oysters July 2013-May2014	
Date	Average Size (mm)
7/12/2013	46.3
8/28/2013	72.1
9/19/2013	79.7
10/11/2013	84.6
11/15/2013	86.2
12/13/2013	85.4
1/27/2014	84.9
2/2/2014	84.6
3/21/2014	84.3
4/25/2014	84.2
5/16/2014	84.1
Total average growth	37.8

Table 3

% Mortality Rate 50 Eastern Oysters July 2013-May2014	
Date	% Mortality
7/12/2013	0
8/28/2013	4
9/19/2013	4
10/11/2013	4
11/15/2013	4
12/13/2013	4
1/27/2014	4
2/2/2014	6
3/21/2014	6
4/25/2014	10
5/16/2014	10

Table 4

The placement of Table 4 beside Table 3 is to simplify the correlation between growth rate and mortality rate in order to analyze viability.

During the second year, beginning in July 2013 and ending in May 2014 the total growth recorded was 37.8mm. The juvenile spat received at the beginning of the growth cycle were 46.3mm and were an average of 84.1mm by May. The mortality rate during the second year is 10%; 30 oysters of the 300 received in July died.

Conclusion

Based on the data collected by the students and faculty of Kingsborough Community College, oysters are viable in Lower New York Bay. The mortality rate, having decreased by 40% from the first year of study to the second year, projects a favorable outcome for oyster cultivating.

In July 2012, the oyster garden started with 300 oysters and by the following year, 50% of the oysters perished. According to the data, September was the month during which the oysters increased most in size, yet in addition, the month in which the greatest percentage of oysters died. During the first year of oyster gardening in Kingsborough Community College, the oysters doubled in size. The last recorded average in July 2013, indicated that the adult oysters were 2.46 times larger than they were upon their arrival at Kingsborough, in July of the previous year .

Although the growth rate was not as significant as the previous year, the mortality rate data from 2013-14 indicates the survival rate of the oysters to have improved. Of the 300 juvenile oysters to be raised, 30 oysters perished in contrast with the 150 oysters which died during the first year of research. During 2013-14, the month in which the oysters thrived was August, increasing their size by 7.6mm. The month during which the greatest percentage of oysters perished was April, when the percent of dead oysters increased by 4%.

An examination of the data tables from 2013-14 will show that the recorded size averages do not follow a logical succession. Between the months of October and November, the average growth recorded is 1.6mm, yet the following month the average dropped by 0.8mm and an additional 0.5mm by the next month. Since the data is recorded in measurements taken by faculty and students of the college, this fluctuation in size can be explained by the presence of human error.

The calipers (see fig. 4) which were used to assess the oyster's size show an accurate reading, yet the measurements taken by humans and not machines cannot guarantee their accuracy.

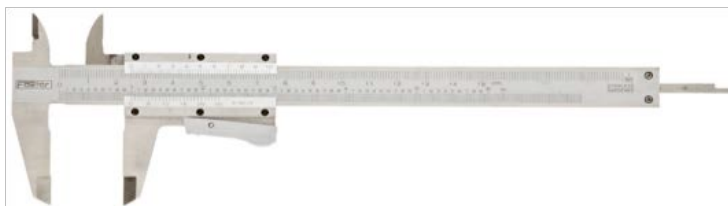


Figure 4 – Caliper

A caliper is a measuring instrument consisting of an L-shaped frame with a liner scale along its longer arm with a Vernier, used to read directly the dimensions of an object represented by the separation between the inner and outer edges of the two shorter arms” (The American Heritage Dictionary, 2009)

Additional factors contribute to the growth and mortality rates of the oysters. Amongst these factors are water temperature, salinity, turbidity, low current velocities, food availability and the disease, *Perkinsus marinus*. Since oysters are euryhaline organisms, possessing the ability to alter their behavior to survive in shifting water salinity, the salinity levels do not regularly affect their survivability. However, “Most Pacific and Atlantic coast species thrive in water with a salinity of 26‰ to 28‰” (Pinet, 2006). Data collected by Kingsborough faculty and students between the Fall of 2013 and the Spring of 2014 show that the average salinity in Jamaica Bay was 31.2‰, which was 3‰ higher than the ideal salinity for oyster growth. The high salinity levels in Jamaica Bay may have increased the oysters’ rate of growth while serving as a poor environmental stimuli, which can lead to diseased oysters and higher mortality rates. While oysters grow at a faster rate in waters containing higher salinity, susceptibility to diseases increases as well. The biggest threat to oyster survivability is a species of protist belonging to the phylum *Perkinsozoa* called *Perkinsus marinus* which causes a high rate of death in the oyster populace.

Oyster growth rate varies seasonally based on the water temperatures. As the water temperatures increase, during the summer months, infections are more common due to the decreased chemical defenses of the oyster, such as its lysozymes. Therefore, the data showing that the temperature of Jamaica Bay waters from September 2013 until May 2014 which was an average of 12.13°C may have caused the oysters to grow rapidly, yet simultaneously become infected.

Oysters generally thrive in waters ranging from 0° to 25°C. They grow at a more rapid rate in late June when temperatures are between 15.5° and 20°C and the spawning process triggers. In contrast, when water temperatures drop below 4.4°C, oysters go into hibernation by clamping their shells shut and trapping water inside, which keeps the oyster alive until the waters warm up, and prevents it from becoming inhibited by infections.

Another variable that can affect oyster growth and mortality is turbidity. Turbidity is the clarity or transparency of a body of water and is measured with the aid of a Secchi Disk. (fig. 5)

A Secchi Disk is a white and black weighted plastic disk attached to a rope which is lowered into a body of water until it reaches a depth at which it is no longer visible. Once the disk is no longer visible the length of the rope from the surface of the water to the disk is measured in metric units and logged as the turbidity of the water.

Low turbidity is determined by the excessive presence of suspended matter which may contain fine organic or inorganic matter, clay or microscopic organisms in the body of water. Natural conditions such as tidal change, wave action and seasonal fluctuations in plankton concentration affect turbidity. Unnatural conditions caused by humans such as chemical run-off from land, water traffic, and sewage pollution will influence water clarity as well.

Albeit oysters being filter-feeding mollusks, excessive cloudiness can lead to the



Figure 5 – Secchi disk

oysters shutting down. The oyster can filter cloudy water up until a certain point; “High turbidity can affect clam, mussel and oyster feeding causing these filter-feeders to shut down and ‘clam-up’. In addition to the above effects, turbidity can affect an organism’s immunological, physiological and histopathological systems, increasing disease.” (Milbrandt, 2014). However, since adult oysters are generally cemented to hard substrates for the majority of their lifespan, they’re completely dependent on tidal currents and water turbidity for their food supply. Therefore, low current velocities and limited flushing can severely stunt oyster growth.

Despite the fact that the water quality in Lower New York Bay can sustain a productive oyster habitat, the standards and regulations implemented by the EPA for commercial oyster harvesting are not met. From an environmental and economic standpoint, the reintroduction of oysters to the Lower New York Bay area can yield great benefits to both the city and its occupants.

By advancing the formation of a large oyster reef along the coast of Jamaica Bay, the oysters will filter the polluted waters, and water turbidity will be permanently altered, seeing as a single filter-feeding oyster is capable of filtering an estimate of eight liters per hour.

The return of oysters and the consequential forming of oyster reefs will create additional habitats for an array of aquatic life and can result in the continuous growth of private and commercial fisheries in the area. In addition, oyster reefs serve as a barrier between the ocean and shore, preventing shore erosion, storm surges, and possible devastating damage caused by natural disaster. Oyster reefs may have served as a great asset during super storm Sandy in October of 2012, by decreasing the wave surges and minimizing the damage caused. The protection of New York shores afforded by the return of oyster reefs may have subsequently saved the city, the insurance companies, and shorefront property owners from losing funds on damage control and restoration.

Further research and monitoring of oysters in New York Bay may continue to reflect the viability of the Eastern oyster and prove to be a source of economic and environmental benefactor.

Works Cited

- Castro, P., Huber, M. 1997. *Marine Biology*, 2nd edition. Brown Publishing, Dubuque IA, 294pps
- Ingmason, D., Wallace, W. 1985. *Oceanography: An Introduction*. Wadsworth: Belmont, CA, 433 pps.
- Milbrandt, E. (2014). *Turbidity*. SCCF RECON [Online]. <http://recon.sccf.org/definitions/turbidity.shtml>. [June 4, 2014]
- Niger, C. (2011). *History on the Half-Shell: The Story of New York City and its Oysters*. New York Public Library. [Online]. <http://www.nypl.org/blog/2011/06/01/history-half-shell-intertwined-story-new-york-city-and-its-oysters>. [June 6, 2014].
- Pinet, P. 2006. *Invitation to Oceanography*, 6th edition. Jones and Bartlett Publishing, Burlington MA, 274 pps.
- Sowell, S. (2011). *Oysters: Shucking Pollution with our Help! Environmental Protection Agency* [Online]. <http://blog.epa.gov/healthywaters/2011/01/oysters-shucking-pollution-with-our-help/>. [June 4, 2014]

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

General Guidelines

All manuscripts should be submitted electronically as Microsoft Word 2007 (or later) attachments to Professor Robert Cowan (robert.cowan@kbcc.cuny.edu) and include a working e-mail address and telephone number for both the student and mentor. Submissions should be in 12-point font and double-spaced throughout in a legible typeface like Times New Roman or Cambria.

Lists of Works Cited

The biggest problem with our submissions is that the citations are woefully insufficient. Articles should include a list of Works Cited and be properly referenced according to the guidelines of the Modern Language Association, American Psychological Association, or other citation system appropriate to the discipline for which they were written. Please do not give incomplete bibliographic references.

We do not publish:

- Computer science papers that consist mostly of many pages of code
- Art reviews of exhibits that are no longer running
- Class assignments that are letters to officials
- Papers that are basically biographies of famous persons
- Class journals

We are unlikely to publish:

- Papers that are hand-written, unless they include exceptionally beautifully drawn diagrams
- Overviews of topics, unless they include a summary of recent developments in the field
- Art history papers that have no illustrations of the work being discussed
- Papers by students we have already published, unless they are really much better than other related submissions for that issue
- Personal essays, unless they also make an argument about a topic

What we are looking for:

- Articles approximately 3,000-5,000 words, which may include notes, diagrams, and/or illustrations
- An argument, not just a summary of other's arguments
- In-paragraph citations that are clearly connected to the Works Cited list
- As few reference sources as possible

Deadlines

August 1 for the Fall issue and February 1 for the Spring issue.

CONTENTS

Lev Seleznov

Brooklyn's Economic and Commercial Boom

Diana Ng

Chinese Zodiac Calendar

Frances Noel

The Crisis of African-American Hunger

Patricia Pjatakova

Irena Sendlerowa: A True WWII Hero

Boluwaji Olugbamila

It's a bird! It's a plane! It's your government!

Jeffrey Rodriguez

The Musical Standard We Accept but Few Know About

Zineb Baghdadi

Philosophical Analysis: Deception & Truth

Nancy Bello

Prescription Drug Abuse in the Staten Island Community

Lu Xue

Textures

Dwaine Williamson

Title IX and Gender Inequalities in Sports

Adina Tulkoff

The Viability of the Eastern Oyster in Lower New York Bay

