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ALCOHOL AND AGGRESSION IN WVU STUDENTS

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Abstract

The current study hypothesized that there was a positive correlation between consuming alcohol and aggressive behavior among college students. A correlational research method was used to show relations between the factors influencing alcohol consumption and aggression. A survey was given to 74 undergraduate West Virginia University students. The survey was designed to measure verbal and physical aggression while sober and intoxicated, as reported by participants. A positive correlation was found between alcohol consumption and aggression among the sample. A significant main effect was found in the frequency of alcohol consumption and physical and verbal aggression.

Introduction

Alcohol consumption has become a normalcy within most college and university campuses for many students across the country. Binge drinking, associated with drinking large amounts of alcohol in one sitting, poses a threat to the well being of students across the country. Binge drinking is considered to be persistent drinking that produces a blood alcohol concentration higher than the legal limit of 0.08 (Dougherty, D. M., et. al., 2012). On average, males who consume five drinks or more and females who consume four drinks or more are considered to be binge drinking.

Students consuming heavy amounts of alcohol are in danger of aggression-related behavior associated with alcohol consumption. Heavy alcohol consumption has the potential to lower one’s inhibitions,
as well as alter, how one might normally behave while not intoxicated. Quigley, Corbett, and Tedeschi (2002) suggest that alcohol intoxication can be linked with aggressive tendencies in both men and women. Supported research has shown that people under the influence of alcohol have a higher chance of becoming aggressive than people who are not under the influence of alcohol (Aviles, Earleywine, Pollock, Stratton, & Miller, 2005).

In one study, participants under the influence of alcohol and participants who had not consumed any alcohol were asked for their reactions to a simulated scenario, in which the researchers attempted to taunt the participants in hopes of gaining a response (Aviles, et al., 2005). Participants that were drinking alcohol not only acted in a more aggressive manner than sober participants, but they also had a greater response to the simulated scenario than sober participants (Aviles, et al., 2005). Alcohol changed the way intoxicated participants viewed the simulated scenario and heightened their levels of aggression.

While under the influence of alcohol, research has suggested that men and women may display aggressive behavior in the forms of verbal and physical aggression. Verbal aggression can be defined as a form of communication meant to cause another person some type of psychological hurt (Vissing, Y. M., Straus, M. A., Gelles, R. J., & Harrop, J. W., 1991). Physical aggression is said to be an intentional use of force to another person without any justification that results in distress or injury (Ferns, T., 2006).

Research has suggested that intoxicated men are more likely to act in a physically aggressive way than women. In particular, men are 8 to 11 times more likely to act in physical violence on days where they consumed alcohol as opposed to days when they consumed no alcohol (Moore, Elkins, McNulty, Kivisto & Handsel, 2011). In a study measuring the relationship between drinking and violence, men and women were asked to report the times they had been involved in an alcohol-related physical fight over the last year (Quigley, et al., 2002). The results of the study indicated that while both men and women had been involved in an alcohol-related fight, men were more likely than women to engage in a physical confrontation while under the influence (Quigley, et al., 2002).

Biological differences in men and women may also affect the way men and women display aggression. Giancola attempted to study the relationship between empathy and aggression in men and women (2003). The results concluded that having less empathy was a
contributing factor of aggression in men; however, women with varied levels of empathy saw little change in aggression outcome (Giancola, 2003).

In subsequent studies, researchers tried to explain the gender differences between men and women that may account for contrasts in aggressive behavior. A study conducted by Giancola et al. (2009), argued that men display patterns of “direct aggression,” while women tend to display patterns of “indirect aggression.” Direct aggression refers to physical forms of aggressive behavior and indirect aggression is representative of verbal aggression (Giancola et al., 2009). The patterns for these styles of aggressive behavior while intoxicated have been suggested to be a result of a combination of environmental factors. Giancola et al. (2009) suggested that factors, such as gender stereotypes, primed women to respond to aggression in a less confrontational manner than men. In addition, gender victimization has been linked to aggressive behavior in women while intoxicated. Victimized women have been shown to use alcohol to escape problems (Parks, Hsieh, Bradizza, & Romosz, 2008). Differences in cognitive functioning may also be associated with the variation in aggressive tendencies among men and women. On a whole, it has been found that alcohol is involved in 63% of violent crimes (Quigley, et al., 2002). Research conducted by Parks, et al., found that women might abuse alcohol to compensate for psychological disorders (2008).

These differences in gender and societal hierarchy may account for conflicted trends in aggressive behavior. This research was used in the current study to support the hypothesis that West Virginia University undergraduate women will show the tendency to be more verbally aggressive than West Virginia University undergraduate men while under the influence of alcohol. Adversely, West Virginia University undergraduate women may show the tendency to be less physically aggressive than West Virginia University undergraduate men while intoxicated. This research also shows that women have provided reasons for abusing alcohol that differs from those of men. Women may be abusing alcohol as a means of expression and escape from daily stressors or to compensate for psychological illness.

Another factor that may have contributed to the relationship between alcohol and aggression in men is perception. Research conducted by Levinson, Giancola, Parrott, and Dominic found participants who viewed aggression positively, showed more aggressive
behavior while intoxicated than participants with opposing views of aggression (2011). In this study, for example, power of perception influenced the outcome of participants’ behavior. This suggested the notion that self-perception is strong enough to influence one’s behavior. The current study attempted to find relations between self-perceived views of aggression and how alcohol consumption influenced aggressive behavior for the sample of West Virginia University undergraduate students.

For the purposes of this paper, the current study examined the influence that alcohol intoxication has on physical and verbal aggression in male and female West Virginia University undergraduates. The current study attempted to use these previous findings to support the hypothesis that West Virginia University undergraduate men may act in more physically aggressive ways than West Virginia University undergraduate women while under the influence of alcohol; West Virginia University undergraduate men may not act nearly as verbally aggressive as West Virginia University undergraduate women while intoxicated.

This study also aimed at understanding how self-perceived aggression influenced the behavior of intoxicated people; our study investigated the connection between self-reported aggressive traits and self-reported physical or aggressive behavior while intoxicated.

We hypothesized that there is a positive correlation between alcohol consumption and aggressive behavior among college students. A correlational research method was used to develop an understanding of the relationship between alcohol and aggression. The results yielded from this study will be beneficial in gaining insight into alcohol abuse and aggressive behavior on the West Virginia University college campus.

Method

Participants

Seventy-four West Virginia University undergraduate students (40 males, 34 females) participated in this study. Students from around the main campus were selected to complete the survey. Participants were asked to identify their rank in school including freshmen (7), sophomore (19), junior (31), senior (7), and second-year senior (10). The participants were asked to identify their age from 18 to 21 plus
years old (6 eighteen-year olds, 15 nineteen-year olds, 28 twenty-year olds, 12 twenty-one year-olds, and 13 over twenty-one year olds). Participants did not receive compensation for completing the survey.

**Materials**

The researchers used a four-page, 33 question survey to measure relations between alcohol and aggression. The first page of the survey measured three demographics questions that asked participants to identify their gender, age, and class rank. The first, second, and third pages of the survey used six questions to ask students about their alcohol consumption: usage, frequency, setting, and preference of alcoholic beverages. The first, second, third, and fourth pages asked 24 questions designed to measure aggressive behavior. These questions asked participants to identify various intimate details about their personality and aggressive tendencies while sober and intoxicated: frequency of happiness while sober and intoxicated, frequency of anger while sober and intoxicated, frequency of being outgoing while sober and intoxicated, likelihood of being verbally aggressive while sober and intoxicated, and likelihood of being physically aggressive while sober and intoxicated. See Appendix A for a copy of the survey used in this study.

**Procedure**

The survey was given to the participants in person. Participants were encouraged to complete all 33 questions. Participants answered all questions. Students that chose to participate in the study were ensured that confidentiality would be maintained throughout the course of the study. Students were told that the study would ask them to self-report their usage of alcohol, but were not informed that the study attempted to correlate alcohol usage and aggressive tendencies. The survey was completed by the participants in one sitting, upon supervision from the experimenters. The participants did not need help completing the survey.
Results

The mean score of the number of days that the participants consumed alcohol was 2.49 with a standard deviation of .78 (See Table 1). The mean amount of drinks that participants consumed at one sitting was 3.51 with a standard deviation of 1.09. The mean amount of verbal aggression reported by participants was 2.16 with a standard deviation of 1.24, while the mean amount of physical aggression reported by the participants was 2.36 with a standard deviation of 1.38.

The researchers hypothesized that there is a positive correlation between alcohol consumption and aggressive behavior among college students. A regression analysis was used to examine the hypothesis. Statistical significance was measured based on a p value of p< 0.05.

The model displayed a significant amount of variance in the physical aggression outcome variable (Adjusted $R^2 = 18.2\%$; $p = 0.001$). A significant main effect was found in the frequency of consuming alcohol; the more often men and women drink, the more likely they are to become physically aggressive ($\beta=0.393, p=0.001$). There was no significant main effect found in gender and physical aggression ($\beta= -0.067, p=0.541$). There was no significant main effect found in the amount of alcoholic drinks consumed at one sitting and physical aggression ($\beta= 0.116, p=0.312$).

The model displayed a significant amount of variance in the verbal aggression outcome variable (Adjusted $R^2 = 15.5\%$; $p=0.002$). A significant main effect was found in the frequency of consuming alcohol ($\beta=0.404, p=0.001$); the more often men and women drink, the more likely they are to become verbally aggressive. There was no significant main effect found in gender and verbal aggression ($\beta=0.044, p=0.688$). There was no significant main effect found in the amount of amount of alcoholic drinks consumed at one sitting and verbal aggression ($\beta=0.082, p=0.482$).

Discussion

The researchers hypothesized that there is a positive correlation between alcohol consumption and aggressive behavior among college students. Male and female college students are both likely to display physical and verbal levels of aggression while intoxicated, however,
gender differences may not account for the likelihood of verbal and physical aggression reported in men and women. According to previous research, men are noted to act in more physically aggressive ways while intoxicated, than women (Quigley, et al., 2002). Conversely, women have been shown to display indirect patterns of aggressiveness most commonly represented through verbal aggression (Giancola et al., 2009).

After testing the hypothesis, research supported that among our sample of West Virginia University undergraduate male and female students alcohol consumption was correlated to increased levels of aggression while intoxicated. The findings from our study indicate a strong positive correlation between alcohol consumption on the West Virginia University college campus and aggressive behavior while intoxicated. Significant main effects were found in the frequency of consuming alcohol and physical and verbal aggressive tendencies while intoxicated. However, no significant correlation was found between gender-specific aggression or the amount of drinks consumed and physical and verbal aggression.

This study was subject to several limitations. First, participants may have been influenced by social desirability. Self-report data often falls victim to social desirability, because the participants may feel a need to maintain a favorable image to the researcher or surrounding persons. Therefore, a participant may not answer questions as accurately as he or she may have, had it been taken without the researchers present. Questions with sensitive subject matter may also have been perceived as too personal for some participants to feel comfortable answering truthfully in front of the researcher. Furthermore, this study may have been more effective had participants been asked to self-report their age versus having to choose from the age ranges of 18, 19, 20, 21, and 21+. Upon further review of the self-report information, the age ranges of 21 and 21+ may have confused participants. This may have resulted in an inaccurate description of participants involved in the study. Lastly, students of the West Virginia University campus may not be representative of all students across the United States. The students that attend West Virginia University may share similar qualities or interests that encouraged them to attend West Virginia University, compared to other colleges across the country. Significant main effects in gender and aggressive tendencies may not have been found within this sample, because West Virginia University
campus culture may create an environment where aggressive behavior is thought of as acceptable regardless of gender. As a result, the verbal and physical aggressiveness findings may not be generalized to all college campuses.

This study was subject to several implications. These high levels of underage students can present a problem for the West Virginia University campus. Underage drinking, associated with binge drinking, is a growing epidemic on college campuses. The current study found that the more often West Virginia University students consume alcoholic beverages the more likely they are to act in physically and verbally aggressive ways. This may suggest that the likelihood of acting in a physically or verbally aggressive way while intoxicated will increase with the amount of days that students “party.”

Given the amount of riots that have occurred throughout the West Virginia University campus in the fall of 2012, West Virginia University would be able to use this study to further reinforce increased need for change around campus. West Virginia University should use this research to implement a solution to decrease the amount of underage drinking on campus. West Virginia University has used the fall of 2012 as an opportunity to eliminate “slum housing” in areas of Sunnyside, where sites for riots and couch burnings seem to be most popular. In addition, a solution for targeting future generations of underage drinkers may be to mandate incoming freshmen to participate in alcohol classes throughout the fall and spring of their freshman year. Incoming freshmen should also be required to take aggression classes offered through the university as a psychology course or through the West Virginia University Caruth Counseling Center. These classes would provide students with the resources necessary to learn to cope with aggressive or negative emotions.

This study opened the possibilities for future researchers to expound upon the results of this study. To further improve and expand on the research conducted in this study, an experiment may be most useful. The current study found that West Virginia University underage students were the majority of respondents to the survey. Future research should aim to create an experiment involving underage West Virginia University students. Although West Virginia University underage students cannot legally participate in an experiment where alcohol is given to participants, these students may be asked to participate in a study that measures their levels of verbal and physical
aggressive tendencies in manipulated scenarios. By focusing future research efforts on studying West Virginia University underage drinkers, research can help promote a safer campus by reducing underage drinking.

Future research may also consider creating a survey targeted to only underage- undergraduate West Virginia University students. Future research may take into consideration that the social desirability effect may threaten the accuracy of self-report questions. The current study may have prevented some social desirability effects if it had been offered in an online format. Future research may aim to make a survey that is only offered online, to prevent social desirability. To avoid confusion from participants, future researchers should design a survey that allows participants to self-report age.

Although the current study could benefit from future research, the findings presented in the current study have been significant. Binge drinking and underage drinking are problems on college campuses throughout the country. Binge drinking and underage drinking can impact the choices that students make while intoxicated. Intoxication can lead to aggressive behavior while intoxicated for both males and females (Quigley, et al., 2002). The findings presented in the current study find a positive correlation between alcohol consumption and aggression in male and female undergraduate West Virginia University students. A significant main effect was found in the frequency of consuming alcohol and physical aggression, and a significant main effect was found in the frequency of consuming alcohol and verbal aggression. These findings suggest that the more students consume alcohol, the more likely they are to become verbally and physically aggressive. West Virginia University should consider using the current study to fund educational alcohol and aggression classes around campus, to keep promote a healthier environment for current and incoming students.
References


Appendix A

**Please circle the answer that you feel most accurately pertains to you. This is a completely anonymous and confidential survey.**

1. Are you male or female?
   a. Male
   b. Female

2. How old are you?
   a. 18
   b. 19
   c. 20
   d. 21
   e. 21+

3. What year are you at West Virginia University?
   a. Freshman
   b. Sophomore
   c. Junior
   d. Senior
   e. Second Year Senior

For the following questions please know that we mean the standard legal alcohol serving size. 1.5 ounces of liquor OR 5 ounces of wine OR 12 ounces of beer counts as 1 alcoholic beverage.**

4. How many alcoholic drinks do you consume in an average sitting?
   a. 0
   b. 1-3
   c. 4-6
   d. 6-8
   e. 8+

5. How many days a week do you consume alcohol?
   a. 0
   b. 1-2
   c. 3-4
   d. 5-6
   e. 7

6. Where do you prefer to drink alcohol?
   a. Bars
   b. Clubs
   c. House party
   d. Fraternity / Sorority
e. Small Gathering
f. By yourself
7. How outgoing do you consider yourself to be around new people when sober?
a. Extremely sociable
b. Somewhat sociable
c. Neutral
d. Somewhat unsociable
e. Extremely unsociable
8. How outgoing do you consider yourself to be around new people when intoxicated?
a. Extremely sociable
b. Somewhat sociable
c. Neutral
d. Somewhat unsociable
e. Extremely unsociable
9. How likely are you to get into a fight when angry and sober?
a. Extremely likely
b. Somewhat likely
c. Neutral
d. Somewhat unlikely
e. Extremely unlikely
10. How likely are you to get into a fight when angry and intoxicated?
a. Extremely likely
b. Somewhat likely
c. Neutral
d. Somewhat unlikely
e. Extremely unlikely
11. What alcohol are you most likely to drink?
a. Liquor
b. Beer
c. Wine
12. How many times per week do you feel angry?
a. 0
b. 1-2
c. 3-4
d. 5+
13. Do you consider yourself an angry person while sober?
a. Yes
14. Do you consider yourself an angry person when intoxicated?
   a. Yes
   b. Somewhat
   c. No

15. How many times a week do you feel happy?
   a. 0
   b. 1-2
   c. 3-4
   d. 5+

16. Do you consider yourself a happy person when sober?
   a. Yes
   b. Somewhat
   c. No

17. Do you consider yourself a happy person when intoxicated?
   a. Yes
   b. Somewhat
   c. No

18. How many times have you seen a physical fight occur this year at West Virginia University?
   a. 0
   b. 1-2
   c. 3-4
   d. 5+

19. How many times have you personally ever been in a physical fight this year at West Virginia University?
   a. 0
   b. 1-2
   c. 3-4
   d. 5+

20. If you answered yes to question 19, had you consumed at least 1 alcoholic beverage when in the physical fight?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Not applicable

21. When you get angry while sober are you more likely to act in a verbal or physically violent way?
   a. Verbal
22. When you get angry while intoxicated are you more likely to act in a verbal or physically violent way?
   a. Verbal
   b. Physical
   c. Both

23. Do you consider alcohol to play a key role in college life?
   a. Yes
   b. Somewhat
   c. No

24. Which genders have you observed fighting most?
   a. Male & Male
   b. Male & Female
   c. Female & Female

25. How much of your free time does drinking alcohol consume weekly?
   a. 0 hours
   b. 1-10 hours
   c. 11-20 hours
   d. 21-30 hours
   e. 30+ hours

26. I am typically an even-tempered person.
   a. Extremely uncharacteristic of me
   b. Somewhat uncharacteristic of me
   c. Neither characteristic nor uncharacteristic
   d. Somewhat characteristic of me
   e. Extremely characteristic of me

27. In the past I have threatened people I know while intoxicated.
   a. Extremely uncharacteristic of me
   b. Somewhat uncharacteristic of me
   c. Neither characteristic nor uncharacteristic
   d. Somewhat characteristic of me
   e. Extremely characteristic of me

28. In the past I have threatened people I know while sober.
   a. Extremely uncharacteristic of me
   b. Somewhat uncharacteristic of me
   c. Neither characteristic nor uncharacteristic
   d. Somewhat characteristic of me
   e. Extremely characteristic of me
29. I have become so mad that I have broken things when intoxicated.
   a. Extremely uncharacteristic of me
   b. Somewhat uncharacteristic of me
   c. Neither characteristic nor uncharacteristic
   d. Somewhat characteristic of me
   e. Extremely characteristic of me

30. I have become so mad that I have broken things while sober.
   a. Extremely uncharacteristic of me
   b. Somewhat uncharacteristic of me
   c. Neither characteristic nor uncharacteristic
   d. Somewhat characteristic of me
   e. Extremely characteristic of me

31. I get into fights a little more than the average person.
   a. Extremely uncharacteristic of me
   b. Somewhat uncharacteristic of me
   c. Neither characteristic nor uncharacteristic
   d. Somewhat characteristic of me
   e. Extremely characteristic of me

32. I would say that I get verbally aggressive by displaying loud noises, threatening others or cursing.
   a. Extremely uncharacteristic of me
   b. Somewhat uncharacteristic of me
   c. Neither characteristic nor uncharacteristic
   d. Somewhat characteristic of me
   e. Extremely characteristic of me

33. When irritated I display physical aggression more often than talking the problem out.
   a. Extremely uncharacteristic of me
   b. Somewhat uncharacteristic of me
   c. Neither characteristic nor uncharacteristic
   d. Somewhat characteristic of me
   e. Extremely characteristic of me
Table 1

Variables used to correlate aggression on the survey given to participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol 1</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Aggression</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>1.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Aggression</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Alcohol 1 is representative of the average serving size of alcohol consumed per sitting.*
THE RIGHT TO TRADITIONAL LIFE: THE STRUGGLE FOR NATIVE HUNTING AND FISHING RIGHTS

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Abstract

This research report examines the ongoing struggle for Native American groups to maintain their traditional hunting and fishing rights. Since the establishment of the United States federal government these rights have been continuously eroded through use of congressional legislation, as well as federal court rulings. These decisions have had devastating effects on the economic, social, and spiritual well being of many of these Native American groups. This piece will attempt to provide an accurate chronology of critical events, which has led to the depredation of these rights. In addition, it will provide a possible blueprint unto how the country of the United States, along with the various Native American entities, should assess these problems into the 21st century. By providing the historical background of these laws and court ruling, this piece hopes to make evident the base causes and forces, which has led to this ever-growing issue. In closing this paper will seek to make aware the general population on this issue not only as it pertains to Native American’s but to the population at large.
Since the advent of colonial rule, the courts have been used to hinder the rights of Native Americans. This been prevalent in the restrictions placed on the fishing and hunting rights of Native Americans. These rights are usually included in the concept of usufructuary rights. “An usufructuary right is a right of enjoyment, enabling a holder to derive profit or benefit from property that either is titled to another person or which is held in common ownership, as long as the property is not damaged or destroyed”. ¹ Restrictions on these usufructuary rights of Native tribes have often been upheld by the courts and have been used to extinguish the traditional way of life for many Native peoples. These laws and decisions, which restrict hunting and fishing rights, restrict Native Americans from living as they have for thousands of years. This paper will examine; basic ideas and legislation which formed the basis for Native American hunting and fishing rights; influential court decisions that have affected these rights (both positively and negatively), and how these court decisions have affected the way of life for many Indian nations.

One piece of legislation that continues to affect Native hunting and fishing rights is U.S. Senate Bill 18. The main component of SB 18 is it establishes the right of “eminent domain authority” in any territory currently inside the boundaries of the jurisdiction of the United States. Eminent domain authority is “the legal right of an entity, whether governmental or non-governmental, to seize private property for public use, public safety or, in some cases, economic development, in exchange for fair and reasonable compensation to the owner.” ²In essence, this bill allows the government, as well as certain private organizations, to claim the property of private citizens (or organizations) as long as: 1) Fair compensation is made for the property taken, and 2) The property is deemed necessary for the welfare of the general community. This is important because the wording of the Bill allows the interpretation that Tribal Reservation lands fall within this realm of eminent domain authority.

Though the basic nature of this bill seems threatening to Native hunting and fishing rights, a provision is included within the bill which directly affects how Tribal property should be handled with respect to the bill’s authority. To summarize, this provision states that ‘the

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organization acting upon its right of eminent domain authority, must consult with the respecting Tribe, should they encroach upon their property. This Bill provides guidelines for when Native Tribes should be consulted, along with under what provisions they should be able to reject the doctrine of eminent domain authority; including places with intense spiritual meaning, as well as areas crucial to their Native way of life. The provisions within this Senate Bill are often used as instructional guidelines in the establishment or removal of Native hunting and fishing rights.

The other piece of legislation that affects Native hunting and fishing rights includes the various Tribal Termination Acts enacted by the U.S. government. Indian Tribe termination was the policy of the United States from the mid-1940s to the mid-1960s. During this era, the U.S. government passed many Termination Acts, whose main intention was to grant Native Americans all the rights and privileges of citizenship, thereby, reducing their dependence on a bureaucracy, which had a well-documented history of being extremely corrupt and inefficient. Though these pieces of legislation were supposedly in the best interest of the Native people they governed, the Acts had far reaching effects, which would later be used to restrict the rights of Native Tribes as sovereign nations. In cases such as Kimball v. Callahan, 1974 (discussed later), various parties would use the Termination Acts and citizenship movement as evidence that these Native Tribes forfeited their access to things such as exclusive hunting and fishing rights. The idea that Termination Acts abolished rights guaranteed to Native tribes by their earlier treaties is one of the major problems tribes would have to overcome in their quest for reserving Native hunting and fishing rights.

The final idea that contributes to modern decisions and laws about Native hunting and fishing rights is the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples (UNDRIP). This declaration was presented in an effort to establish “guidelines for Nations in the dealings and treatment of aboriginal peoples.”

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U.N.D.R.I.P condemned many actions that were pervasive in U.S.-Indian relations in previous decades. These actions range from issues of grave repatriation and freedom of Native religion, to traditional hunting and fishing rights. One distinctive aspect of the U.N. declaration is that it was not initially adopted by either the United States or Canada (nations with large populations of indigenous peoples). Despite this blatant factor, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples has become a driving force in the establishment of the rights of indigenous peoples, including those rights that are associated with traditional hunting and fishing practices.

A main factor in any court decisions involving Native hunting and fishing rights is the treaties that many Indian nations signed with the United States throughout their history. The rights provided for by these treaties, or treaty rights, may provide guaranteed hunting and fishing rights for the tribes involved. To get a basic understanding of these treaty rights and how they affect modern hunting and fishing court decisions, we will examine a few court cases in which treaty rights of usufructuary were cited by the Native Tribe in question.

In many cases, the courts have been used as a tool of Native Americans, by which they can retain their hunting and fishing rights. One example of a tribe exercising its treaty right of guaranteed hunting and fishing can be found among the Umatilla, Walla Walla, and Cayuse peoples of Oregon. These tribal groups are discussed together because they currently share the Umatilla Reservation in northeastern Oregon. In 1855 the U.S. Government and the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla Tribes signed a treaty. In this treaty, the tribes ceded more than “6.4 million acres to the U.S. in exchange for a parcel of land designated as the Umatilla Indian Reservation, which the tribes would retain as a permanent homeland.”\(^6\) Another portion of the treaty would be used to reserve the right of the tribe to fish, hunt, and gather traditional foods and medicines throughout the ceded lands. It is important to use the term reserve here, as these tribes were not given the right to hunt and fish on these lands, rather those who negotiated the Treaty of 1855 wished to “maintain these rights so that the tribe's future generations would be able to exercise their traditions and customs.”\(^7\)


\(^7\) Beckham, Stephen Dow. Oregon Indians: Voices from Two Centuries. Corvallis, Or.: Oregon State UP, 2006
provisions in the treaty, the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla Tribes reserved their right to hunt and fish within the 6.4 million acres of ceded land in modern day Oregon and Washington.

However, a mere fifty years after the signing of this treaty, the usufructuary rights of the Umatilla people would be brought into debate in United States v. Winan. This case arose due to Lineas and Audubon Winans use of a “fish wheel”, a device used in rivers or large streams, capable of catching fish (in this case salmon) by the ton. The Winans brothers obtained a license from the State of Washington to operate said fish wheel, however, the wheel seriously depleted the supply of fish reaching the Umatilla peoples, as well as other Native Tribes. Perhaps the most crucial aspect of the fishing wheel incident is that the brothers “forcibly prevented the Yakama Indians from crossing the land recently purchased by the brothers, blocking their passage to the traditional fishing grounds of the tribe.”

This is important as the Treaty of 1855 directly guaranteed those at the Walla Walla Council “the right of taking fish at all usual and accustomed places in common with the citizens of the territory.” Therefore, the brothers’ refusal to allow the Yakama Indians from crossing their land, this preventing them from being able to reach their traditional fishing grounds, directly interfered with the rights reserved to them in the Treaty of 1855. The United States Circuit Court for the District of Washington ruled in favor of the Winan brothers, claiming that their exclusive property rights granted them the right to prohibit the Umatilla and Yamaka peoples from crossing their land. The Supreme Court in 1969 would eventually reverse this decision in Sohappy v. Smith, citing that “At the treaty council the United States negotiators promised, and the Indians understood, that the Yakamas would forever be able to continue the same off-reservation food gathering and fishing practices as to time, place, method, species and extent as they had or were exercising.”

The Winans brothers’ use of the fish wheel and use of force in preventing the Yamaka and Umatilla

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9 Film by Ben Kempas; produced by Joachim Schroeder; written, photographed and directed by Ben Kempas. Upstream battle [videorecording]: a case study in Native American fishing rights. Hamilton, Nj: Films for the Humanities & Sciences, c2009
10 Film by Ben Kempas; produced by Joachim Schroeder; written, photographed and directed by Ben Kempas. Upstream battle [videorecording]: a case study in Native American fishing rights. Hamilton, Nj: Films for the Humanities & Sciences, c2009
peoples from crossing their land clearly violated the meaning of the Treaty of 1855 allowing the Supreme Court to rule in favor of the Native Tribes and establish their fishing rights in the area.

Another example of a tribe that had provisions in its treaty regarding the maintaining of hunting and fishing rights was the Ojibwe Tribe (also known as Chippewa), based in what is modern day Wisconsin and Minnesota. The Ojibwe people have signed several treaties with the United States throughout their history, but the ones of most interests to us here are the Treaties of 1837 and 1842. The Treaty of 1837 was the first treaty in which the Ojibwe agreed to cede part of their land holdings to the United States. A final provision within this treaty reasserted the Ojibwes right to hunt, fish, and gather wild rice on ceded lands. Both parties, however, agreed this to due to increasing pressure from white settlers and the U.S. government, the Ojibwe’s was forced to cede the remainder of their land in the Treaty of 1842. The initial plan for this treaty was to relocate the Ojibwe to another area and establish them unto a reservation there; in addition, the Ojibwe “would reserve their right to hunt, fish, and gather on the lands they ceded to the United States until they left the area.” However, another provision in the treaty established that for the document to be binding, “all Ojibwe bands in Upper Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota had to agree to the provisions.” Despite pressure from federal commissioners, the Ojibwe “refused to sell the land until the United States guaranteed that the Ojibwe could remain on their current homelands and continue to use lands already ceded to the United States.” The federal commissioners agreed to establish four Ojibwe reservations in Wisconsin and the treaty was agreed upon.

The Treaties of 1837 and 1842 are crucial components in the 1989 decision of the courts, which has become known as the Voigt Decision. In the Voigt Decision, the treaty rights guaranteed to the Ojibwes would be called into question as it pertains to their right to fish off reservation. The issue of treaty rights exploded in northern Wisconsin during the 1980’s as more and more members of Ojibwe tribes began to exercise their right to hunt and fish outside their reservations. While many court decisions existed which had addressed the Ojibwe right to off-reservation fishing, it was not until 1989 that the

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United States Supreme Court upheld a lower court ruling that favored the Ojibwe. In the Voigt Decision, the court ruled “The 1837 and 1842 treaties between the United States and the Ojibwe guaranteed Ojibwe rights to hunt and fish off-reservation without regulation by the State of Wisconsin.” 15 Though this was a tremendous victory for the establishing of Ojibwe fishing rights, it was not the last time that the fishing and hunting rights guaranteed to them in the Treaties of 1837 and 1842 would be called into question.

The fishing rights acknowledged for the Ojibwe Tribe in the Voigt Decision would again be called into question in the case of Minnesota v. Mille Lacs Band of Chippewa Indians. In this controversial case on Native American hunting and fishing rights, the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Indians sued the state of Minnesota for violating their usufructuary rights for the land they ceded in the Treaties of 1837 and 1842. This case resulted due to an 1850 Executive Order by President Taylor, which ordered the removal of the Mille Lacs Band and revoked their usufructuary rights. Later in this conflict, a treaty was signed in 1855, which reestablished reservation lands for the Mille Lacs Band. This 1855 treaty however, did not include provision concerned with usufructuary rights. This landmark case in Native American treaty rights questioned if the federal government is able to cancel previous treaty law (like that established by the Treaties of 1837 and 1842) by use of an Executive Order. In March 1999 the court ruled in favor of the Mille Lacs Band stating “the 1850 Executive Order was ineffective to terminate the Mille Lacs Band's usufructuary rights, that the Mille Lacs Band did not relinquish its 1837 treaty rights in the 1855 treaty, and that the Mille Lacs Band's usufructuary rights were not extinguished when Minnesota was admitted to the Union.” 16 The case of Minnesota v. Mille Lacs Band of Chippewa Indians has become a landmark case in the protection of Native American usufructuary rights.

A particularly interesting case that relates to Native hunting and fishing rights is Kimball v. Callahan (1969). This case is especially interesting as it deals with the rights of Native Americans after the Termination Act had affected them. This case is a prime example of the conflict between the guaranteed treaty rights of Native Americans (in

this case the Klamath Tribe of Washington State) and the Klamath Termination Act, which “severed all federal supervision over the Klamath, Modoc, and Yahooskin Bands of Indians, more commonly known as the Klamath Tribe.” Due to this Act, the state of Washington refused the rights of the Klamath Tribe to fish on the land, which had been their reservation prior to the Termination Act. The Klamath tribe as a whole, and nine individual members, sued on the basis that their original treaty reserved their fishing rights on their (former) reservation lands. The actual wording of the treaty describes the tribes’ rights as “the exclusive right of taking fish in the streams or lakes, from said reservation” referring to the lands originally set aside for the Klamath people in this same treaty. 17 Therefore, in its most basic essence, this case calls into question whether the Termination Act completely abolished the fishing rights granted to the Klamaths by their original treaty. The state of Washington argued that the Termination Act overrode the earlier treaties due to the Supremacy Clause of Public Law 83-280, which claimed that certain states had jurisdiction over any criminal offenses perpetrated by or against Natives in “Indian Country”. 18 This would give the state jurisdiction over unlawful fishing, which they claimed the Klamaths would be perpetrating. However, an earlier statute passed by Congress would sway this case in favor of the Klamaths’ right to fish on their former reservation. The Klamaths’ saving grace would be a clause in Public Law 280 which stated “nothing in this section.... shall deprive any Indian, or Indian Tribe, band or community, of any right, privilege, or immunity afforded under Federal Treaty, agreement, or statute with regard to hunting, trapping, or fishing in the control, licensing, or regulation thereof.” 19 Due largely to this provision, the Court ruled in favor of the Klamath Tribe and members, granting them their continued right to fish/hunt on their original reservation lands. Though this case could be seen as a victory for Native hunting and fishing rights, it did not determine the issue of which was superior, Treaty Rights vs. Federal legislation such as the Termination Acts.

Though the courts have often been used as a tool to reinforce Native hunting and fishing rights, not all court decisions on

this matter have had a positive effect on these rights. One case that is often cited as being perhaps the worst decision for Native hunting and fishing rights is *Montana v. United States*, decided in 1981. Non-tribal members on tribal lands based this controversial case on the question of the Crow Nation’s authority to regulate hunting and fishing. This case represents a complex issue as it delves into the question of tribal sovereignty versus the authority of the federal and state governments. This case arose due to the Crow Tribal Council enacting of Resolution Tribal Edict No. 74-05 l. The purpose of this edict was to “restrict fishing in response to increasing food prices and tribal enrollment, coupled with decreasing supplies of fish and game on the reservation.”  

This edict began to cause friction when James Junior Finch, a non-tribal member, went fishing in areas under tribal authority in open defiance of the tribal resolution. The question of *Montana v. United States* brings into question whether Indian Nations (such as the Crow), have the authority to prosecute non-tribal members for offenses, which violate their tribal law. This well-known case brought to the forefront the issue of Native hunting and fishing rights.

After several rounds of appeals by both sides, this case would eventually find itself being heard before the U.S. Supreme Court. In March 1981 the court sided against the Crow Nation. The Court would rule that the “exercise of tribal power beyond what is necessary to protect tribal self-government or to control internal relations is inconsistent with the dependent status of the tribes, and so cannot survive without express congressional delegation.” Citing the previous case of *Oliphant v. Suquamish Indian Tribe*, the court would claim that the tribe only had the authority to regulate issues of civil authority in which the non-tribal party agreed to enter into a consensual contract. Obviously in the situation of Mr. Finch, the non-tribal fisherman had never entered into this sort of contract, which would convey this sort of relationship. One justice would explain his decision by explaining “Congress did not intend for tribes to exercise criminal jurisdiction over

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20 Film by Ben Kempas; produced by Joachim Schroeder; written, photographed and directed by Ben Kempas. Upstream battle [videorecording] : a case study in Native American fishing rights. Hamilton, Nj : Films for the Humanities & Sciences, c2009

21 Film by Ben Kempas; produced by Joachim Schroeder; written, photographed and directed by Ben Kempas. Upstream battle [videorecording] : a case study in Native American fishing rights. Hamilton, Nj : Films for the Humanities & Sciences, c2009
non-Indians.” This view and the decision of the court in Montana v. United States would not only have a negative effect on the fight for tribal sovereignty, but also on the battle for Native hunting and fishing rights.

Similar to many other issues, one way that Native Tribes have sought to reaffirm their Native hunting and fishing rights is through intertribal relations. Intertribal relations are a mode of strategy in which members of separate Indian Nations work together in an effort to achieve a common goal. One example where this pertains to Native hunting and fishing rights is the work of the Inter-Tribal Sinkyone Wilderness Council. The Wilderness Council, more commonly known as the ITSWC, is a consortium of ten federally recognized tribes from northern California. This multi-tribal organization was formed in the 1980’s due to the actions of a timber company, Georgia-Pacific, which was attempting to log ancient coastal redwoods in the Sinkyone area of northern California, with the approval of the California Department of Forestry (CDF). In response, native people from the area, the International Indian Treaty Council, the Sierra Club and the Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC) all sued in order to prevent the harvest of these redwoods. In its decision, the California Court of Appeals handed down its ruling for the Sinkyone people stating that the CDF had violated California’s environmental laws. In addition, the Court ruled, "The CDF’s response addressing sufficiency of measures to mitigate damages to Native American archaeological sites was inadequate." As a result of this legal battle over the logging of these redwood trees, the Inter-Tribal Sinkyone Wilderness Council was formed. Intertribal organizations like the ITSWC are very crucial in the ongoing fight for the preservation of Native hunting and fishing rights.

Those interested in the preservation of Native hunting and fishing rights, like the ITSWC, face a variety of issues in their quest to reserve these rights. Perhaps the most well known example of environmental activists clashing with tribal members on hunting and fishing rights is the controversy over the “whaling issue.” Though several tribes in the U.S. and Canada traditionally relied on whales for food, spiritual practices, and other resources, the main focus of this conflict has centered on the Makah tribe of the Pacific Northwest. For the Makah

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people whales were “a form of sustenance, used for clothing and the making of fine handicrafts.” This issue gained prominence in 1998 when the Makah began a program to resume their tradition of whaling. Immediately the tribe faced fierce opposition from environmental and animal rights groups such as the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society and The Progressive Animal Welfare Society (PAWS). Organizations such as PAWS claimed that the Makah intend to sell whale meat on the open market and “do not have a need to hunt the gray beast because the animal is not necessary to the survival of the people.” The Makah nation refuted this vigorously and began a campaign to bring their struggle to the forefront of Native issues. In a letter printed in the Seattle Times, the president of the whaling commission, Keith Johnson, explains that “the claims of these groups are unfounded due to the tribe being bound to tribal and federal law not to sell any whale meat.” The Makah people also claim that the right to whale was explicit in the Treaty of Neah Bay in 1855. Through the efforts of the tribe, and thanks in large part to the Treaty of Neah Bay, the Makah people have been granted the legal right to continue their whaling practices (with restrictions). Despite these legal victories, the Makah people still face enormous pressure from environmental groups such as PAWS, which condemns these whaling practices as “thoughtless and savage.”

One issue that gains a significant amount of attention is the conflict between the rights of Native tribes and the views and ideas of many environmental groups who disapprove of many of these traditional practices. An example that we in the United States may be familiar with is whether Native tribes should be able to hunt bald eagles (or other endangered species) if the Native peoples in question traditionally hunted this animal. This issue was called into question when the Northern Arapaho Tribe sued in order to gain permission to kill two bald eagles in order to conduct their religious ceremony. This caused much outrage in the environmental activist community because the bald eagle had been on the endangered species list for quite some

time. This is an ongoing situation as the Arapaho’s traditional ceremony continues to be protested by environmental activists who don’t believe that the Arapaho’s religious freedom grants them the right to kill an animal that appears on the endangered species list.

To truly understand the complexity of this issue, you must look not only at the issues of Native hunting and fishing rights, but also at the devastating effects that restricting these rights can have on Native tribes not only economically, but also culturally and spiritually as well. The most glaring of these issues is obviously the economic problems that occur due to a restriction in Native hunting and fishing rights. Though it is wrong to generalize these peoples as a obtaining their sustenance from one outlet, many of these Native peoples continue to depend on fish and wildlife to maintain their way of life and “economic prosperity”.

28 The removal of the hunting and fishing rights of Native Nations can have wide ranging repercussions, which can severely harm and even devastate these tribes. One tribe in which the economic effects of the loss of hunting and fishing rights are clearly evident is the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin. The issues for the Menominee people began April 30, 1961 when they fell victim to the Termination Acts. According to federal and state governments, Tribal Termination effectively abolished the hunting and fishing rights guaranteed to the Menominee people by their earlier treaties. The loss of their hunting and fishing rights (along with other losses) would devastate the economy of the Menominee people for many years following the Termination Acts. The removal of these guaranteed hunting and fishing rights resulted in diminished standards of living for the members of the tribe. For example, the tribe had to close the hospital and some schools in response to the lack of a productive industry. During this period, Menominee County, Wisconsin, was the poorest and least populated Wisconsin county at the time. “Tribal crafts and produce alone could not sustain the community, and the tax base, lacking industry, could not fund basic services for the Menominee.” 29 Tribal funds, which totaled $10 million in 1954, dwindled to $300,000 by 1964. Struggles such as those suffered by the Menominee are just one example of the economic

hardships that many Native Tribes face as a result of the loss of fishing and hunting rights.

Though economic issues are often brought to the forefront of these battles over Native hunting and fishing rights, it is also important to recognize the cultural and in some cases spiritual aspects that these rights have on Native peoples. Historian Hilary Stewart portrayed the devastating effects that restrictions on these traditional practices could have on the psyche of individual Natives and Tribal Nations as a whole when she stated “The right to resort to the fishing places in controversy was a part of larger rights possessed by the Indians, upon the exercise of which there was not a shadow of impediment, and which were not much less necessary to the existence of the Indians than the atmosphere they breathed.”

Mrs. Stewart’s quote is an attempt to show that by restricting Native hunting and fishing rights (which are typically guaranteed to them by their treaties), the government is restricting the Native way of life, which is just as important to them as the air they breathe. In addition, these hunting and fishing traditions are often so woven into the fabric of the society of these respective Native Tribes, that the prevention of these traditional activities creates a “disconnect between the Tribal members and their traditional cultural ways.”

Maintaining traditional hunting and fishing rights continues to be important not only due to economic and legal reasons, but also to avoid the cultural disconnect that could occur should these rights be taken away.

Since the 1960's, many strides have been made in the acknowledgement of Native hunting and fishing rights. Through the efforts of Native leaders, as well as justice-centered non-Native humanitarians, Native hunting and fishing rights have become recognized with increasing regularity. Despite this progress, factors such as the ideas and legislation which developed the basis for Native American hunting and fishing rights and influential court decisions that have affected these rights (both positive and negative), continue to be debated by those in the affected areas. As this issue continues to be disputed it is important to realize not only the economic effects that the abolishment of these rights have on Native peoples, but also the


devastation of the affected Tribes spiritual and cultural life. For many Native Tribes, the right to hunt and fish guaranteed to them in their Tribal Treaties not only affects their right to thrive as sovereign entities, but their very right to live as they have for thousands of years.
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THE PROSPECT AND PROGRESS OF
ROCKWELL KENT ON MONHEGAN ISLAND

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Abstract

This capstone examines the artistic and personal impact Monhegan Island, Maine had on the artist Rockwell Kent (1882-1971). This is accomplished by evaluating what qualities Monhegan Island has that makes it an attractive location for an artist colony. Afterwards, focus will be directed towards Kent; specifically, a selection of landscape paintings from his residency on Monhegan Island (1905-1910; 1917; and 1947-1953), will be analyzed chronologically. They will be evaluated using Jay Appleton’s prospect – refuge theory commenting on humans’ interactions with particular environments. These analyses are then compared to personal events that occurred at the time the artwork in question was created. This information was collected using archives, journals, interviews, and books. When this is completed, the results show that Monhegan Island did in fact have a positive impact on Kent’s artistic career and on his life, as this location influenced his future destinations.
The artist, Rockwell Kent (1882-1971), believed that “art is a by-product of living.”¹ This philosophy suggests it is important to take biographical significance into account when considering Kent’s work. This paper will demonstrate that living on Monhegan Island, Maine, had an artistic, as well as a personal impact on Rockwell Kent. This claim will be analyzed by the use of the prospect-refuge theory developed by Jay Appleton in 1975. The framework of this theory identifies symbolical markers present in landscape environments. Many of the artworks that Kent produced while on Monhegan are landscape paintings, and by implementing this theory when examining Kent’s work, his artwork reveals biographical information. The information analyzed from the paintings can be compared to the many other primary and secondary sources detailing Kent’s life to determine its accuracy. Once these selected artworks have been analyzed and evaluated, it will be clear that Monhegan Island affected Rockwell Kent personally and artistically.

It is hard to fathom that Kent came close to not becoming an artist at all. Kent was exposed to the arts early in life by his aunt, Jo, who was a ceramics painter. He accompanied her on a journey to Europe at the age of thirteen. Then, in the summer of 1900, Kent attended the Shinnecock Hills art class in Long Island where William Merritt Chase taught. While here, Chase granted the young Kent a full scholarship to the New York School of Art.² Kent did not accept the proposal at this time, as his family believed that the occupation of an artist could not offer a satisfactory way of life.³ He did not completely abandon his artistic talents but chose to use them in a different manner when he began to study architecture at Columbia University. Apparently, Kent was still not satisfied with his unexplored artistic skill. He accepted Chase’s offer and began taking evening classes at the renamed Art Students League under the tutelage of Robert Henri and Kenneth Hayes Miller. Kent then made a bold commitment to his art when he quit Columbia in his final semester to focus on his studies as an artist.⁴ The instructors at the Art Students League, particularly Robert Henri, are important to the works discussed in this paper, as their artistic The instructors at the Art Students League,

particularly Robert Henri, are important to the works discussed in this paper, as their artistic styles are not only present in Kent’s early work, but it was Henri that introduced the idea of Monhegan Island to Kent. Robert Henri ventured to Monhegan Island during the summer of 1903 and strongly advocated that his students go there as well. Kent became the first of Henri’s students to make the voyage during the summer of 1905, and then he made the island his permanent residence until his departure in 1910.5

Although Kent did not produce his first artwork on Monhegan, the island did inspire his first cohesive body of work. In fact, it has been noted that almost all of his series of paintings were completed on islands.6 Monhegan was the first of these islands with locations such as Newfoundland, Tierra del Fuego, and Greenland, following. The characteristics of Monhegan Island appear in these future destinations. Monhegan influenced Kent’s future decisions personally and artistically and suggests further investigations.

Monhegan Island is over six hundred miles of wilderness that sits just ten miles from the coast of Maine. In 1900, 94 residents were recorded on what was then referred to as Monhegan Plantation.7 Today, the island has a little over seventy permanent residents, but this number swells to six hundred from the incoming of the part-time residents and artists during the summer months. Just as in the past, the sea is one of the main sources of income for the permanent residents, with many of them working as lobstermen. In 2004, it was documented that twelve of the seventy residents were lobstermen.8

Like other parts of the northeast, such as Ogunquit and Provincetown, Monhegan Island also developed an art colony. In 1858, Aaron Draper Shattuck, the first artist on record, arrived on the island by schooner. The villagers took note of his presence, and he often wrote letters from Monhegan speaking of his experiences.9 An artist did not permanently settle on Monhegan until S.P. Rolt Triscott did in 1903.10 It was not much later that Kent arrived on the island.

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It is not a complete mystery as to why art colonies were so popular at this time. They allowed artists to venture out of the city and experience scenery that was more open and differed from what they encountered in their urban setting. However, for artists to make the trip by boat, as this is the only way to reach Monhegan, seems to be a bit extreme when there were many other locations for artists to choose from. Yet, the answer might not be as complex as the question seems. The island simply has so much to offer.

Even though the island is barely one square mile, the diversity of landscapes it offers is typically difficult to find in a compact space. Not only is the ocean, with its powerful waves, an attraction and a popular subject matter, but also bluffs, commonly referred to as headlands, are frequently featured in artwork. The island also contains what is commonly referred to as Cathedral Woods, a forested area that is today preserved by a land trust, the Monhegan Associates formed by Ted Edison, the son of Thomas Edison, to preserve the area from being sold and transformed into building lots in 1954. The artists not only depicted the environmental aspects of the island, but also the village and the people that permanently inhabit the island were and still remain of interest to many artists due to their humble way of living. One thing has consistently fascinated artists - the quality of light. One active artist on the island even went so far as to say, “I think John Singer Sargent would have given his right arm for this light.” It was these factors that captivated Robert Henri and encouraged Rockwell Kent to experience Monhegan Island for himself. With the publication of his book, *The Experience of Landscape*, in 1975, Jay Appleton put into circulation the notion of prospect-refuge theory. The British geographer’s work builds on Charles Darwin’s habitat theory that hypothesized humans feel more secure or react to particular environments. According to Appleton, one of the main characteristics of prospect-refuge theory is that an environment should be secure or facilitate one’s needs, such as shelter or safety, which is a prospect and a refuge. These two terms often compliment each other, as a prospect is

the unobstructed opportunity to see without being seen because there is the opportunity for refuge or shelter.13

Appleton devotes a large portion of his book to prospect-refuge symbolism that is present in landscapes and how the symbols are exhibited, whether it is through landscape architecture or painting. This theory will be applied to Rockwell Kent’s landscapes, focusing on how Kent perceived the landscape through his paintings. Appleton refers to this concept of prospect and refuge as not being about the objects themselves, but rather about what the objects reveal about how the viewer perceives his or her environment and how it is assessed in terms of behavioral opportunities.14 Monhegan Island exemplifies this idea of prospect and refuge, as Kent was able to be productive in his work with the comfort of being in a secluded location. This environment provided him the shelter and resources that are necessary for survival, while these same elements often became his subject matter.

Kent’s emotion towards the island was instantaneous as he recounts the event of arriving on the island fifty years later in his autobiography, It’s Me, O Lord: “... And like a puppy let out of his pen I’m off at a run to see, to climb, to touch and feel this wonder island that I’ve come to.”15 This rush of emotion did not leave after he arrived. If anything, it could be said that it intensified. For Kent mentions that he began to work in frenzy, often not being able to sleep because he was painting. Although, it is likely the accounts discussed by Kent in his autobiography are true, it is possible that there was some embellishment used in his narratives or forgotten details as he was relying on his memory.

Potentially one of Kent’s first paintings created on the island, Harbor, Monhegan, from 1905, is an oil on canvas that provides the scene from Monhegan’s harbor looking out into the ocean. (Figure 1) This scene is stylistically similar to the work that he was producing prior to arriving on Monhegan Island, but the prospects and refuges are evident in this new environment for Kent.

This composition has the viewer facing Manana Island that is adjacent to Monhegan. In the distance, creating a barrier between the sky and the ocean is a mountainous ridge. This land mass likely represents the coast of Maine that is roughly ten miles from Monhegan.

Portions of Manana obstruct the viewer’s line of sight, but the rocks form a valley in the middle of the artwork to allow clear visibility. More than likely, *Harbor, Monhegan* reflects the idea that Kent was content in his new surroundings because there is a generous amount of sunlight on Monhegan and Manana islands, while the main land is masked in shadow. This painting shows that Kent felt more comfortable that he had the freedom to venture back to the main land with little stress. Kent would in fact leave Monhegan for short amounts of time during his tenure until 1910.

Another important biological need that is addressed in the prospect-refuge theory is the need for exploration. Exploring is a basic biological action, as humans observe and seek out ways to use the land to their advantage. It could be claimed that this is heightened for a landscape artist, as he or she should intimately understand the environment that they are attempting to recreate in order to be successful in their task. The element of exploration with the possibility of discovery provides a constant source of satisfaction. It was documented that Kent was very engaged with the environment that he was painting, as he would paint from the cliffs, toting along his supplies. The photograph taken of Kent painting on the rocks at Blackhead demonstrate how engaged he became in his surroundings when working on a landscape. (Figure 2) *Rocks, Monhegan* is an example of the type of painting that might result from Kent’s inclusion into the environment.

This oil on canvas painting from 1906 focuses on the rocks that border the ocean. The viewer is positioned at a higher elevation and is looking down at the slope of the rocks and into the ocean. The position of the viewer is a prospect, as he or she is able to see a great distance into the ocean with the cliffs serving as a refuge. The bluff acts as a barrier that shelters the viewer by separating them from the ocean, which appears to have turbulent waters. The rocks can also shelter the viewer from other potential dangers, such as an unwanted intruder.

In one of his early landscapes from 1907, *Maine Coast*, Kent exhibits a snowy hillside enveloped by pine trees. (Figure 3) In the distant, right portion of the painting a boat travelling on the ocean can be distinguished. There are many prospects that are easy to classify in

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this oil on canvas work. The high elevation that is created by the hillside can be considered a prospect, as it would afford a person to see great distances. The visible ocean is also a prospect, according to Appleton, because even though it appears to have an end point, it is commonly understood that the ocean goes on for a great distance. The choice made by Kent to portray a daytime winter scene is significant as it adds another prospect to the artwork. Light is considered a prospect, as it allows for greater visibility, and by making the decision to depict sun shine on a snowy ground, Kent has enhanced the bright environment. The light from the sun, which cannot be directly observed is visible through the clouds, enhances the whiteness of the snow and increases the ability to see. The ship, although difficult to determine the details about the vessel, represents both prospect and refuge symbols. The mast and the sails are the promise of a prospect as they reach up towards the sky, while the hull of the ship is the refuge against the sea.

Refuges are often indicated by their ability to provide shelter. Appleton states that, “When we talk of a ‘refuge’ we may mean, on the one hand, a hiding-place screening us from a hostile observer, or a cottage sheltering us from the real adversities of the weather or, on the other, a sense of being enclosed, over shadowed, protected by some ineffective barrier.” In landscapes, a concave environment that does not allow the subject to be visible often represents a refuge. From the vantage point Kent created in Maine Coast, 1907, the landscape is mostly seen as inclining up towards the hill that sits in the center of the painting. However, in this painting the clustering of trees provides an area of refuge and shows that there are slopes in the landscape before reaching the apex of the land.

Kent’s artworks prior to his first journey to Monhegan Island were not always prospect dominant. In the summer of 1903, Kent assisted Abbott Handerson Thayer in creating his work in Dublin, New Hampshire. Most of the art that he created at this time was not his own, but with the encouragement of Thayer, he began to produce his own paintings. He began developing a body of work in 1903 that included paintings such as Dublin Pond and A New England Landscape (Figure 4) While Maine Coast exhibited a balance of prospect and refuge

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in the composition, *A New England Landscape* contained an imbalance of prospects and refuges.

In this oil on canvas painting, the viewer is inserted onto a hill during a sunny day. This positioning of the observer is evident due to the low elevation in the rest of the artwork. The higher elevation on which the spectator is situated allows for an extended quantity of land to be seen, but due to the scarce amount of protection or refuge in the vicinity of the viewer, the viewer is at risk of being seen. The few, visible trees in the area prevent this look-out point from being a true prospect as there is little opportunity to see without being seen.

The sparse clouds depicted allow for the sun to appear and illuminate the landscape. In the background, there is some use of shadow, but the majority of the area is enveloped by sunlight. The portion of the painting that is closest to the foreground and the observer is darkened by the shadows of the sun. This is an intriguing combination of prospect and refuge, as the light is a characteristic of a prospect and darkness is typically a refuge.\(^{24}\)

This could be reflective of what was occurring in Kent’s life, just as his works from Monhegan allude to what events were happening during the time that particular piece was created. Kent was apprenticing for a successful artist and as previously mentioned, was not initially focused on creating artwork of his own. When analyzing this from a metaphorical aspect, Kent emerged from the shadows, if you will, of a more successful artist to attempt a career of his own. Where he stands now, there are not a lot of positive events occurring, as he is just beginning, but he is aware that there is the prospect of accomplishment in the distance.

It was the island fishermen that caught Kent’s attention and helped him recognize his feelings of discontent. In a letter to Robert Henri, Kent comments on this particular group of individuals: “I love the fishermen here. I never in my life saw such a fine kindhearted set of people. I’d like to be one of them.”\(^ {25}\) In his autobiography, Kent explicitly mentions he envied the fishermen and the dignity that they possessed from performing manual labor with the land.\(^ {26}\) Kent came up with the practical solution of engaging in his own manual labor. It should also be mentioned that another possible reason he began taking on extra work at this time was due to a lack of funds. Either way, this work acted as a way for him to support himself in addition to satisfying his desire for adequacy.
Due to Monhegan’s remoteness, there were not many job options. Kent first took up well drilling with a local, Hiriam Cazallis. This job entailed either swinging a sledgehammer repeatedly at a nail held by Hiriam or vice versa. When discussing his new found employment, Kent had this to say: “...I now felt myself to be no longer a mere spectator but an integral part...an indigenous inhabitant by natural right. I earned my living. I belonged. It is a great, proud feeling – to belong!” In this statement, Kent himself recognizes how through his involvement with the land he has a greater feeling of significance. Beyond his work as a well driller, he would occasionally clean out privies for ten dollars a day and later he became what he envied, a lobsterman.

He served as a sternman, an assistant to Hiriam’s brother, George, beginning in 1907. Kent’s artwork reflected this change in occupations. His subject matter began to be filled with scenes of lobstermen and fishermen laboring on the sea. His oil on canvas, Toilers of the Sea, from 1907 is an example of Kent’s changing interests. (Figure 5) This work shows fishermen on their boats in the process of catching their lobsters for the day. The boat closest to the viewer is positioned in the center and depicts a lobsterman pulling his net from the ocean, while his sternman struggles with the oars against the ocean’s waves. According to Appleton, movement, whether it is achieved or imagined, is an important aspect of participating in the surrounding landscape. It would not be a peculiar assumption to presume that Kent’s active participation in the act of lobstering assisted him when he began to imagine the scene that would soon fill his blank canvas.

The decision to position the boat so close in the foreground gives the illusion that this prospect is attainable. The second boat in this painting, referred to as a dory due to its narrow, flat bottom, high bow, and flaring sides, is much more active, as it breaks the horizon line created by the ocean. With the vantage point that Kent uses for this second boat, it seems that he is alluding to a desire for a more physical interaction with the sea, as it is battling the oncoming waves.

Kent later commented that he lobstered with George Cazallis more to keep Cazallis company than for the assistance he provided. Therefore, Kent received the satisfaction he obtained through physical labor, but the presence of the second boat and its placement in the composition could represent his desire for more. His desire would later

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24 The Experience of Landscape, 82. 25 Call of the Coast, 110. 26 It’s Me, O Lord, 122. 27 It’s Me, O Lord, 123-124. 28 Ibid, 126. 29 The Experience of Landscape, 119.
be satisfied when he began lobstering with Mansfield “Manse” Davis, another well-known fishermen on the island. Kent stepped in for Manse when his regular partner was injured prior to the lobstering season. The job of working on Manse’s boat was much more demanding than working on George’s vessel, mainly due to the fact that George was the only individual on the island to have a one-cylinder marine engine on his boat alleviating much of the demanding rowing of the oars. While Kent worked to push and pull the oars as Manse hauled and rebaited the traps, he also kept the lobsterman company. This companionship differed from the one he had with George because Manse held opposing views from Kent on almost every topic that was discussed: politics, religion, labor, and even Kent’s vegetarianism. As events throughout Kent’s life have shown, he was a very strong willed and freethinking individual. The ability to debate and discuss what was on his mind without being judged only added to the attraction that lobstering possessed.

The surroundings that lobstering provided became a prospect and a refuge for Kent. While out to sea, he was able to reach multiple vantage points without much worry about objects obstructing his view: scenes that he would not obtain while on the island. Also, the act of lobstering and the dory provided refuge not only from the ocean but also from living a life of poverty, as this was Kent’s main source of income at this time. The ocean provided a daily routine that consisted of “…were days of hard work, with all the excitement of a new and dangerous vocation. I liked the cold. It was stimulating. It became an obsession to me.”

During this time, Kent also began to build a personal home on the island. Up to this point, Kent was able to find shelter by living at the Inn on the island, but this endeavor to have his own home shows his desire to have a more permanent place on Monhegan. Kent did not originally intend to build the house himself, but due to constant delays, he took on the operation using his architectural knowledge from Columbia.

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Kent did not stop at building his own home. Over the years on Monhegan Island, he built five of the houses on the island, including two of the first homes with modern plumbing.37

Kent’s permanent connection with the land through the building of his personal home and the homes of others is reflected in his subject matter. On several occasions, like the artists before him, he chose to depict Monhegan village. Monhegan Village, Maine: Morning from 1907 is a prime example. This oil on canvas does not appear to have been composed on Monhegan. It appears to have been created from a vantage point on the smaller Manana Island, which sits adjacent to Monhegan Island. This is due to the geographical features and composition of the buildings on Monhegan. Monhegan Village, Maine: Morning states that it was created in the morning, but if it were indeed created to mimic the morning scenery, the shadowing in the foreground would be wrong. Manana Island is to the west of Monhegan, meaning the sun would rise over Monhegan and would gradually set behind Manana. The shadow in the foreground, in the shape of a sitting figure, would only be possible were the sun behind him or her, at sunset. The incorrect use of shadowing for the indicated time of day can also be seen in the figures and houses on the island. None of this information means this artwork should be discounted; if anything, it says that there was a modest quality to the village that Kent wanted this work to express.

This painting provides insight as to how Kent viewed Monhegan. The fact that the village takes up the vast majority of the horizon alludes to the fact that he saw it as a prospect. By placing the island in a perspective where the surrounding ocean could be seen, this indicates how this small patch of land served as a refuge from the ocean; however, it is important to remember that the ocean also symbolizes prospect, as previously mentioned. While there is no visible foliage on the island to provide refuge, the dwellings serve that same purpose. The largest building, almost centrally located in the painting, is the inn where Kent resided until he built his home; however, Kent did not include his newly built home in the composition, which would be just over the right hillside if he was accurate on his building locations.

The foreground of this oil on canvas is populated with trees and shrubbery that provide a refuge for the viewer; however, the area closest to the observer is not densely covered, which allows for him or her to view the island and be seen. Both Manana and Monhegan Islands are elevated pieces of land. In this composition, it appears that they are
of equal height from the position that that the viewer is in. This means that both locations function as prospects because of their raised elevations, while the ocean being placed in a lower lying valley reinforces its symbolism as a refuge.

In a 1969 interview with Paul Cummings, Kent explained that the foremost thing that interested him in those early days was working as a common laborer, specifically as a carpenter and a lobsterman in a two man dory for two years: “It’s had more influence on my whole life and way of thinking than anything I ever did, outside of painting itself - working on Monhegan and living among those people as one of themselves; getting to know working people instead of dilettantes like picture painters - this was more to me than anything else in my life.”38 While Kent was finding purpose through labor and taking steps towards settling on the island, he was also making connections with the local community. A remote village such as Monhegan is not always one to welcome visitors, or “rusticators” as they are commonly referred to on the island.39 However, Kent established himself within the village and gained acceptance among the people. Kent took to participating in the almost daily softball game that took place in the open field near the lighthouse. This game united artists, the fishermen, and others who inhabited the island. It was through this initial contact with the fishermen that Kent mentions he was introduced to the island men and began to know them, and it was from this that he grew envious of them and the strength they possessed.40

Kent’s interaction with the community is well documented in the Rockwell Kent papers housed in the Smithsonian Archives of American Art. Photographs taken by the artist while on the island record the interaction he had with the residents of Monhegan. An example of this is shown in photos taken of a wedding ceremony that took place on the island in August of 1906. It is not only his photographs that show Kent’s growing involvement with the Monhegan residents. Kent has also produced several paintings that reference his interaction with the village and its people.

One of Kent’s paintings involving the community was completed

in what he believed would be his final year on Monhegan. *Down to the Sea* is an oil on canvas that was completed in 1910. (Figure 6) The work is composed of a group of villagers saying farewell to the fishermen as the boats float idly in the background. The work was originally titled *Fisherman’s Farewell*, but Kent changed the name after reading a passage from Psalms 107. The portion that inspired him states, “They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters."41 While living on Monhegan, Kent took a trip off the island in 1908 to get married to Kathleen Whiting, a relative of one of his former mentors, Abbott Handerson Thayer.42 Not long after the nuptials, Rockwell Kent began an affair with one of the women on Monhegan. Kathleen did not discover the indiscretion until 1909, when she promptly returned to her parent’s home in Berkshire, Massachusetts.

The following year, Kathleen made the stipulation that if they were going to remain married Kent must leave Monhegan Island.43 Kent granted this request and left in December of 1910. The traits *Down to the Sea* possesses gives the impression of it serving almost as a farewell artwork or a personal reminder of what Monhegan came to mean to him.

This work is very prospect heavy in its symbolism associated with the features Kent employs mainly due to its perspective, use of light and shadow, and compositional arrangement. The angle that this work is portrayed from suggests that the viewer watches this interaction occur from a distance. The people that are the main focus of this painting are standing on an elevated ground level. This can be determined because of the small groups of people that are visible in the lower right portion of the composition. The ground line severs their bodies around hip level, suggesting that they are farther from the viewer and on lower ground. This places the land in an area that represents a prospect; however, this can be analyzed even further. There is a shadow cast on a majority of the land in the foreground. This is then abruptly interrupted to place the villagers in sunlight.

This use of light emphasizes the villagers of the island serving as a prospect for Kent. In the center of the composition, the masts from six ships are visible. Their vertical orientation is regarded as a prospect, as they are directed toward the sky. The close orientation of the masts creates an almost halo affect that encompasses the central group of villagers. To the right of this main group, almost in the shadows, is a man playing with a border collie. This is said to be Rockwell Kent and
his own dog. This adds to the idea that Kent is among the villagers, but he already senses the strain of separation.

It should be mentioned that Kent likely created this scene from his imagination or witnessed it at another time of day. The villagers are bidding their loved ones and fellow villagers farewell before they cast off to sea. As lobstering is the primary fishing that is performed on Monhegan, it is likely that these individuals pictured are the lobstermen of the island. The problem regarding the time of day is that the majority of lobstermen start to sea very early in the morning, often before dawn, in order to get their catch and have the rest of the day to perform other necessary duties. It is possible that these individuals are greeting the lobstermen upon their return, but it is very unlikely for lobstermen to return as a group if they lobster individually. In this situation, it is not about portraying an accurate scene but creating a composition that best represents the emotions Kent was experiencing.

Kent’s departure from Monhegan was not as permanent as he believed, as he would return to the island during the summer of 1917. Oddly enough, 1917 was an unproductive summer for Kent in terms of his art. He wrote that the island was “too beautiful to paint.” During this summer, he did not have the peace or the carefree life that he had previously possessed while there. This time he had several members of his family accompanying him, which he recounts as being annoying.47 Upon his subsequent departure from Monhegan, he ventured to Fox Island, Alaska, with his son, Rockwell III, where he lived from the summer of 1918 till winter of 1919.48 In addition to traveling to Fox Island, Kent would eventually travel to Tierra del Fuego, France, Ireland, and Greenland before making a final return to Monhegan Island in the spring of 1947.

During this thirty-year period, Kent was not always traveling to remote locations. He was often living close to New York and focusing on promoting and selling his artwork.49 According to Appleton, “Most are still able to live in an urban setting because they find aspects of it that closely resemble their prospect-refuge nature.”50 Kent was able to do this successfully for small increments of time, but clearly, he did not find

it completely satisfying since he was an avid traveler to largely under populated areas that shared similar characteristics with Monhegan.

After his initial visit to Monhegan Island, Kent also discovered a new way to earn money: illustrating. In 1916, Kent began to regularly submit comical illustrations for publications such as Harper’s Weekly and Vanity Fair under the pseudonym, Hogarth, Jr. A decade later, in 1926, Kent was hired by William Kittredge to create woodblock printing illustrations for Moby Dick. Kent had great success through illustrating and later made images for Paul Bunyan and Canterbury Tales, in addition to his own publications.

In the book, Monhegan: The Artist’s Island, the author states that with all of Kent’s extensive traveling, it was as if he kept on searching for another Monhegan. If this is indeed true, it is possible that Kent failed in his quest, for he returned to the island again in 1947. At this point, his third wife, Shirley “Sally” Johnstone, accompanied him on the voyage. They did not initially plan to take up residency on the island again, but in the winter of 1948, Rockwell Kent purchased and repaired the house he had built for himself on the island. Unlike Kent’s trip to the island in 1917, this period of time saw Kent producing work. Kent created little work in the six-year time frame before he left the island once again in 1953.

A painting that Kent did complete while still on the island is the Wreck of the D.T. Sheridan. (Figure 7) This oil on canvas from around 1949 depicts the tugboat, D.T. Sheridan, that landed on the shores of Monhegan Island after losing track of its position in dense fog and running upon the rocks on November 5, 1948. It is apparent that his artistic style changed over the years with a crisper application of paint and a wider ranging color palette that included very strong blues. The structure of the composition also shifted. This painting has been referred to as one of his most haunting late works.

When analyzed through prospect-refuge theory, it is possible to infer that Kent was commenting on the power that this nature possessed: the same nature that he had admired for so many years.

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The hull of a ship is considered to be the refuge portion of the ship, and here, the hull of the tugboat is the central focus of this composition as it lies on its side, rusted, and immersed in water. This contradicts the belief that this portion of the vessel might be able to provide shelter, as it failed for the crew of the D.T. Sheridan. The saturated yellow that is visible just above the horizon line created by the ocean, leads one to believe that this is where the prospect lies, as that is where the light is. There are three seagulls positioned on the top of the stationary hull, while the two gulls to the right are in the process of landing on the carcass of the boat, and the remaining two are making their way from the ocean to the hull. Even though doves are commonly thought of as the bird that represents rebirth, it is likely that the white bird indigenous to Monhegan Island, the seagull, serves the same purpose in this composition. Another possibility is that the seagulls represent scavengers, as they have appeared at the ship to investigate what is left of the remains. This may have been reflective of Kent’s personal thoughts at the time, as he was around 67 when he created *Wreck of the D.T. Sheridan*.

On July 9, 1953, Sally Moran was presumed to have drowned in the ocean, while staying in Kent’s cottage during his absence from the island.57 Moran often sat as a model for many of Kent’s studies and became a good friend to him. Her death is believed to have noticeably affected Kent because this same year, he permanently departed the island, never to return.58 Others hypothesize that the islanders were no longer as friendly towards Kent after his hearing with Senator Joseph McCarthy regarding his associations with Communism and that he felt he had finally outstayed his welcome.59 Either theory is possible, or it could have been a combination of the two. Either way, Kent was aware he was leaving and just as in 1910, he made one last painting on Monhegan Island.

*Village at Night* from around 1953 is widely recognized as Kent’s farewell to the island before his departure.60 (Figure 8) This scene is in stark contrast to the *Wreck of the D.T. Sheridan* or even the earlier *Monhegan Village, Maine: Morning*. A blanket of streaked cloud cover slowly looms over the darkened village, only illuminated by the glowing lanterns placed outside select houses. The dwellings appear to be mere

57 “Woman Vanishes at Summer Home of Rockwell Kent,” Cedar Rapids Gazette, July 12, 1953, 1. 58 Call of the Coast, 84. 59 It’s Me, O Lord, 498-499. 60 Monhegan: The Artist’s Island, 172.
outlines, as from the distance and the darkness, it has become too difficult to make any distinctions about their characteristics. What was once considered to be a refuge no longer has the inviting welcome of a shelter. The composition of this scene still suggests that the village is the refuge, while the viewer is positioned in a spot of prospect, as he or she is able to see such a great distance. It is as if Kent recognizes what this place has meant to him, but he realizes the curtain must fall on this portion of his life as well. Unlike Down to the Sea, there are no people present. It is assumed that they are there within the houses, but they are not visible to the viewer. These factors contribute to the work's overall meaning, as the main light source is over the horizon, off to the sea. Even after his permanent departure from the island, it is clear that Monhegan Island was still on Kent's mind. In 1955, two years after he said good-bye to Monhegan, he created Maine Lobsterman. This oil on canvas features a single lobsterman rowing his dory into the harbor while individuals look out to the sea atop of the bluff. The viewer is standing on a rock as well, looking upon the lobsterman. This composition is prospect heavy as the viewer is on elevated ground and has a large sight of visibility. The scene is very bright with the light from the sun shining out from the ocean towards the island, emphasizing not only the lobsterman, but the observers as well.

Often times, lobstermen will not fish by themselves because of the potential risks that come with the job. The lobsterman is fishing alone in this composition. It also appears that there is nothing in his basket, meaning that he was not successful in catching anything for the day. While this is possible, this is highly unlikely. Finally, the style of boat is inaccurate to the time period Maine Lobsterman was painted in. Dory boats were the traditional style of boat used in lobstering around the early 20th century, but in 1910, small motors became a popular addition to lobster boats as they increased the distance the lobstermen could fish in the ocean. By 1955, motorized lobster boats were a common staple for the typical lobsterman. Kent would have observed this on his return to the island in 1947; however, he chose to depict a more personal memory. With the changes that have been made to the scene, it is possible that the lobsterman is Kent himself. This would not be the first time he included himself in his own work, as he depicted himself in Down to the Sea. Kent was vocal in discussing how much being involved with lobstering meant to him, and he reinforced this by creating this painting after his departure.
Throughout Kent’s life, he recounted the influence Monhegan Island had on him and his career on several occasions. Even though Kent’s comments help to solidify Monhegan’s place in the artist’s history, more can be analyzed through the artwork he produced. The saying, “a picture is worth a thousand words,” is certainly true in regards to art history and is applicable in this situation. By analyzing Kent’s paintings using Appleton’s prospect-refuge theory, a timeline begins to emerge that reflects how Kent perceived his present environment and the events that occurred within that environment. Overall, it can be determined that from the selection of paintings created on Monhegan Island, Rockwell Kent had a close connection with the location that set the bar for what he would look for in his future artistic journeys: a small, working community, a preferably cold region, isolation, and a picturesque landscape. In essence, Kent continuously attempted to duplicate his experience on Monhegan Island, Maine.

PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS RELATED TO EXERCISE BEHAVIORS AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Abstract

With the prevalence of obesity steadily increasing throughout the United States, promotion of healthy behavior is as important as ever. Positive exercise and dietary habits promoted during the years an individual is in college can perpetuate a lifestyle change that ideally prolongs an entire lifespan. Researchers gathered data from 108 full time students, 18 years of age or older from the West Virginia University Student Recreation Center. Participants were recruited using convenient sampling and completed a 74-item questionnaire comprised of both qualitative and quantitative questions. The collected data, in collaboration with previous literature, has empowered the research team with suitable information to identify motives and barriers of exercise among the sample population. One significant finding suggests there is a moderate relationship between exerciser efficacy and how enjoyable exercise is perceived. These findings are in line with previous research, and propose that individuals will enjoy exercise more if they are more confident in their abilities to properly and effectively exercise.

Keywords: exercise, obesity, physical activity, college students

Introduction

Obesity has become a hot button topic within society, predominantly due to the consequences in which it is associated. There is an increasing
amount of evidence that suggests the problem is getting worse without any signs of stopping. One of the antecedents of obesity in adulthood is being overweight or obese as an adolescent. It is a worldwide epidemic that is not slowing down and is projected to continue growing. According to the World Health Organization approximately 1.5 billion adults over the age of 20 are overweight and of these, 500 million are considered obese, as of 2008 (World Health Organization, 2012). In the United States alone, approximately 1/3 are considered obese and more than 2/3 are either overweight or obese (LaCaille, Dauner, Krambeer & Pedersen, 2011). It is alarming that over two-thirds of adults in America are overweight or obese and this number will continue to rise as childhood obesity in America continues to be a growing problem. In order to prevent the rise in obesity as a society, we must change the way people think about dieting and exercise. The researchers of this study plan on studying the latter factor of obesity prevention, looking at the psychological factors that influence exercise.

With 1.5 billion adults worldwide being either overweight or obese (Rappange, Brouwer, Hoogenveen, & Baal, 2009), it comes at no surprise that much attention has been focused on the promotion of healthy behaviors. A poor diet, combined with a sedentary lifestyle, puts individuals at much greater risk for disease(s) connected to premature death. Explicitly lethal side-effects of poor eating habits combined with negligible regular physical activity, raises a major question: Why do about 43% of college undergraduate students report that they are neither moderately or vigorously physically active (Sailors, Jackson, McFarlin, Turpin, Ellis, Foreyt, Hoelscher, & Bray, 2010)? Exercise habits and nutritional patterns implemented during this time are powerful predictors of physical activity patterns later in life as adults. In fact, overweight or obese adolescents are 6.2 times more likely to evolve into overweight or obese adults (Topp, Edwards, Ridner, Jacks, Newton, Keiffner, Woodall, & Conte, 2011).

Addressing the population of sedentary college students is a crucial component in attempting to manage the prevalence of obesity in efforts to eventually lower the rates of overweight and obese individuals. Previous investigations have identified factors that would increase physical activity among moderately active college students if they had: more time where they do not have to make time commitments to either work or school so that they may do activities they choose, more motivation to get to the gym and exercise, and if they had sport to
train for (Ebben & Brudzynski, 2008). These factors among moderately active students are considered barriers among sedentary college students. A majority of these barriers are introduced to college students as freshman and continue to persist throughout the duration of their schooling. However, the noted barriers to physical activity among college students can be anticipated to continue outside of college. Traditionally, college students will graduate or drop out and begin a career in the workforce where “more time,” “fewer time commitments,” and “a sport to train for” will continue to subsist as barriers to physical activity. Despite researchers who claimed prior investigations illustrated improvements in psychological states following single bouts of exercise (Focht, Knapp, Gavin, Raedeke, & Hickner, 2007), many college students perceive barriers as being too much to overcome and hence continue a sedentary lifestyle.

The sedentary trends exhibited by college students will not change without a catalyst. There is an increase in behaviors that disregard the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and a decrease in engagement of physical activity among this population (Gomez-Lopez, Gallegos, & Extermera, 2010). College students, predominantly freshman, are at a unique point in their lives making a transition from late adolescence to becoming adults capable of living on their own. During this psychological transition, many college students endure increased levels of stress and deal with frequent emotional turmoil (Lerner, Burns, & Roiste, 2011). These psychological predicaments may be perceived as barriers to physical activity, regardless of the positive affective states correlated with regular physical activity (Focht, et al., 2007). In some situations, the seemingly insurmountable stress and emotional confusion can perpetuate feelings of hopelessness and depression. Males and females who engaged in weekly regular physical activity demonstrated reduced feelings of hopelessness, depression, and were at a reduced risk of suicide (Taliaferro, Rienzo, Pigg, Miller, & Dodd, 2008). Therefore, stress and conflicting emotions, which are perceived as barriers to exercise can in fact be treated by the body’s physiological responses to exercise.

A surplus of researchers have discussed in their literature, numerous barriers to exercise identified by a variety of individuals. Gomes-Lopez and colleagues (2010) determined that barriers to physical activity could be classified as internal or external. Prior investigations claimed that their participants mentioned internal
barriers as being “too tired (for physical activity),” “Don’t like physical activity,” and also “don’t see the use,” or “not capable” of being regularly active. Also identified was the idea that of external barriers relating to a general “lack of time.” External barriers are perceived by the individual and are influenced by the perception of internal barriers. Research has been done to determine the effectiveness of interventions on increasing physical activity; these interventions ask subjects to adhere to an exercise program (Murru & Ginis, 2010). One group of participants received no intervention and acted as a control, while the other two groups received an intervention which asked the participants to picture themselves in the future, either as a competent frequent exerciser or an overly obese, sedentary adult. The results of the survey showed that the two groups receiving either intervention reported longer durations of exercise when compared to the control group. The findings of Murru and Ginis (2010) support the concept that positive exercise behavior can be increased through a physical activity intervention while at the same time diminish the perception of internal barriers.

If levels of physical activity do not increase among the college population, the result will be young adults that finish college with negative exercise habits and barriers preventing them from obtaining regular exercise embedded deeply into their psychological core. The habits obtained and barriers established among sedentary students during late adolescence will place this particular population at six times greater risk (Topp, et al., 2011) to join the approximately 66% of overweight and obese adults in the United States (Ebben & Brudzynski, 2008). Rappange and colleagues (2009) report that obese individuals are at a greater risk of coronary heart disease, hypertension, Type 2 Diabetes as well as certain types of cancers. However, an ever increasing obesity rate not only affects those who are overweight or obese, but also healthy individuals from a financial point of view. The greatest difference between healthy and obese adults occurs in medication spending, where obese adults spend 25% more on medication than healthy adults do (Rappange, et al., 2009). This can be financially detrimental to healthy individuals who may be forced to pay greater insurance premiums or more in taxes. As part of the research conducted by Rappange and colleagues (2009), a statistical analysis measuring the costs associated with being obese was compared with the costs of being a “healthy adult.” The results of this hypothetical scenario conclusively determined that during the first 50 years, converting obese adults into
healthy adults would save costs in long-term care, hospital fees, primary care, and medication. Therefore, the consequences of obesity as a result of neglecting physical activity can be detrimental for the obese individual as well as other healthy adults in regards to a financial aspect. It is conclusive that if nothing is done to promote physical activity among sedentary college students, they will most likely remain sedentary and potentially become obese adults. Previous literature has examined the affective responses to exercise, differences in motivation for different levels of activity among college students, and reasons why college students exercise. Previous research has found that the dominant reason for exercising is for enjoyment (Kilpatrick, Hebert, & Bartholomew, 2005). This study attempted to discover internal reasons and motives for college students to engage in exercise or remain sedentary. Psychological factors such as self-efficacy, motivation, social support, and perceived importance of exercise were identified through the mix-methods survey that participants filled out. It is the goal of the researchers to recognize common psychological trends among active college students. If successful, the noted psychological factors can be integrated into interventions attempting to promote physical activity. The researchers hypothesized that college students who are regularly active are also confident in their abilities to exercise properly (self-efficacy), value the importance of exercise in a healthy lifestyle, have a social support group (friends or family), and have a desire to exercise (motivation). Furthermore, the researchers predicted the motives for exercise that previous literature had identified would correlate with these psychological factors from the collected research. Therefore, the researchers predicted that individuals who have higher levels of self-efficacy, have a strong and supportive social group, possess more positive views of physical activity in regards to health and health behavior will exude the motivation necessary for positive exercise behavior and will also display more enjoyment for exercise, thusly increasing their adherence to a positive health and exercise regimen.

Methods

Participants

A cross-sectional and mixed-method design guided this investigation. Participants in this study were selected using convenience sampling at
the West Virginia University Student Recreation Center. In order to be included in this study, all participants were required to be 18 years of age or older and full time students at West Virginia University with free access to the Student Recreation Center. This type of sampling was advantageous because it enabled the researchers to gain access to a large number of participants who are likely regularly exercisers with ease and minimal financial obligation. The downfall of this type of sampling was the similarity of the participants among the population, which led to a slight bias in the results, as seen where 92.2% of the participants reported being regularly physically active based on the 2008 CDC guidelines, despite the national average of adults meeting these guidelines being 20% (CDC). The researchers gained a sample size of 120 participants; however 14 surveys were thrown out due to incomplete information, three were unreturned and one participant did not meet inclusion criteria. This left the researchers with 102 complete surveys for quantitative analysis; however, 108 were eligible for qualitative analysis. Of the 102 participants analyzed for the quantitative data, 52% of the participants were female, compared to 48% male, which made for a representative sample of the population of students at WVU. Ninety-six participants were Caucasian, three Black/African American, two Asian, and one Hispanic. Upon completion of the survey, participants were compensated for their time with free bottled water and small candies.

**Measures**

To obtain data, the researchers constructed a mixed-method survey to elicit responses about participants exercise behaviors (Appendix A). Ideas, concepts and questions were gathered from various validated surveys issued by agencies including the World Health Organization, the United States Center for Disease Control and the Karolinska Institutet in Sweden. Questions and ideas were combined into one self-constructed survey in order to address topics and questions directly to a college demographic compared to a general adult population in which these surveys addressed (Center for Disease Control [CDC], 2012; Karolinska Institutet, 2002; World Health Organization [WHO], 2006). Demographic questions were asked at the beginning of the survey to acquire information about the background of the participants.
Quantitative questions were asked next, using a five-point Likert-type scale asking participants to circle a selection that most closely resembled their feelings for each question. The questionnaire contains a not applicable option for each question to make choices exhaustive. A scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much) was used for each question. The final four questions of the survey asked participants to write their responses for each, giving way to the qualitative data. The qualitative results supplemented the quantitative results to collaborate for a well-rounded perspective of the psychological factors influencing exercise behavior. The survey was completed by a majority of the participants in 15-20 minutes.

**Procedures**

After receiving approval from the West Virginia University Institutional Review Board, the researchers proceeded to the West Virginia University Student Recreation Center and asked participants to be involved in our study. A cover letter (Appendix B) was attached to ensure that the participants were at least 18 years of age or older, and to explain to participants that their results on the survey would remain anonymous. The researchers passed out the survey to various students keeping the survey process as random as possible. Participants completed a survey without adding any identifiable information to ensure confidentiality. Participants filled out the survey within the student recreation center in any area they felt private enough to do so. Completed surveys were placed in an unmarked, unidentifiable box with a slit for the surveys to keep the identity of the participants completely private. To ensure the protection of the data, it was kept with a researcher in a locked room to ensure security.

**Results**

**Exercise Behavior Patterns**

Demographic data of exercise behaviors revealed that most participants exercised at the West Virginia University Recreation Center three days per week (27.8%); additionally, 24.1% of participants reporting exercise at the recreation center five days per week, with slightly over
21% reporting using the facility four days per week. Among the same population, an overwhelming majority (38.9%) reported exercising outside of the West Virginia University Recreation Center zero days per week. While at the West Virginia University Recreation Center, 31.5% of participants reported the duration of their exercise to be between 45-59 minutes, compared to 21.1% of participants who claim to exercise for 60-74 minutes per visit. Among the participants, nearly all (99.1%) perceive physical activity to be beneficial to their overall health. Furthermore, 92.2% of participants identified themselves as being regularly physically active (meeting 2008 CDC requirements for regular physical activity, as elucidated in the survey) compared to 68.5% of the same participants claiming their immediately family members meet the same guidelines.

Descriptive data of exercise behaviors has discovered it is slightly more important to keep exercise an enjoyable as possible ($M=4.41$, $SD=0.825$) than it is to focus on the outcome of exercise relating to appearance ($M=3.98$, $SD=1.08$). Additionally, participants reported the quality of their workout at the West Virginia University Recreation Center ($M=4.26$, $SD=0.717$) to be greater than that of their perceived quality of exercise outside of the facility ($M=3.47$, $SD=1.49$). In a social context, participants are more likely to identify themselves as “exercisers” or being “fit” ($M=4.02$, $SD=1.05$), than they are to believe exercise takes time away from friends ($M=1.86$, $SD=1.19$) or miss social events because of exercise ($M=1.98$, $SD=1.21$). Finally, participants who were all full time students did not perceive exercise to negatively affect schoolwork ($M=2.11$, $SD=1.25$) or cause their GPA to suffer ($M=1.57$, $SD=0.939$). All of the preceding scores are noted below in Table 1.

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Statistics of Exercise Behavior

Note. The mean score noted is based on an anchor system of 1-5 where 1 represents “not at all” and 5 represents “very much.”

Relationships Between Exercise Factors

A Person-Product Moment correlation was conducted to examine any relationship between research variables. We compared responses to our created survey using SPSS data software to see if there was a relationship between efficacy ($M=4.29$, $SD=0.88$) and exercise enjoyment.
as well as motivation during exercise (M=3.94, SD=0.88) and the perception of a crowd (M=10.02, SD=2.09, based on an analysis of three questions). The analysis provided a correlation explaining the extent to which two variables were related, if at all. The results of the Person-Product Moment correlation revealed a significant positive relationship between efficacy and exercise enjoyment: r(102)=0.469, p < .001; and a significant positive relationship between motivation during exercise and the perception of a crowd. These results indicated that higher levels of exercise efficacy correlated with higher levels of exercise enjoyment. Furthermore, the results also revealed that as perceptions of an observing crowd increase, so does motivation during exercise. However, the results cannot conclusively prove one factor caused another factor to increase/decrease.

In order to determine the difference between categorical variables, interdependent t-tests were conducted to examine how, if at all, responses to particular descriptive questions varied. A significant finding showed participants who believed exercise was beneficial to their overall health (M=4.29, SD=0.88) did so regardless of appearance as opposed to those who believed physical activity was only “a little bit” beneficial to their overall health (M=2.00, SD=0.0, t(100) = 2.603, p=0.011). Contrary to what the researchers hypothesized, there was no significant difference found for enjoyment in an exercise group run by an exercise instructor across gender (Males, M=2.67, SD=1.60, Female, M=3.40, SD=1.37), t(100) = -2.462, p=0.135). The final independent t-test showed no significant difference in an individual’s perception of exercise relating to personal goals between former high school athletes (M=4.34, SD=0.87) and former non-athletes (M=4.08, SD=1.44, t(99)=.928, p=0.110).

**Qualitative Analysis**

Qualitative questions were coded to determine factors influencing exercise behaviors, factors preventing positive exercise behaviors, and factors influencing efficacy. The top five reported factors influencing positive exercise behaviors were: health (66%), appearance (61%), weight management / loss (30%), muscle growth (26%), and stress relief (24%). The top five reported factors preventing positive exercise behaviors were: school work / class (71%), tired / lazy (50%), social
obligations (30%), lack of time in day (18.5%), and having a job (17%). Finally, the top three reported factors influencing exercise efficacy were experience (14%), mastery (12%), and current appearance (6.5%).

**Discussion**

The analyses revealed a relationship between efficacy as an exerciser and perceived enjoyment of exercise. The findings suggest an individual who enjoys exercise feels confident in their ability to exercise. Furthermore, the results also imply the more confident an individual is in their ability to exercise, the more they enjoy the activity of exercise.

Previous findings have showed a relationship between efficacy during exercise and fatigue (Focht et al., 2007). Although the results illustrated a relationship between efficacy and enjoyment, based on the previous research, it can be implied that the less fatigue felt during exercise, the more exercise is perceived as enjoyable. Efficacy as an exerciser has a relationship with both fatigue and enjoyment. The more confident individuals are in their ability to perform and execute a task, the less fatigue they will identify as problematic, and the more enjoyable exercise will be perceived. It can be recommend that to increase enjoyment of exercise, which would ideally lead to more activity, the confidence people have in their ability to exercise should be increased.

Based on the study by Focht and colleagues (2007), an increase in confidence to exercise correlated with less feelings of fatigue, which in addition to enjoyment, can also lead to more positive exercise behaviors.

In addition, the analyses found a significant positive correlation between perception of observers and motivation to exercise. It is extremely unlikely that the more motivated an individual is to exercise, the greater the perception of a crowd. With that said, if an exerciser becomes more motivated by noticeable actions such as yelling, screaming, and jumping, then that may cause the perception of a crowd to be greater, which could possibly explain these findings within the population studied. However, based on social psychology principles, it is most likely the crowd that influences the motivation of an exerciser. Other researchers have found differences in exercise preference across genders, which would support the findings in this study that suggest a relationship between a crowd and motivation. Females are more likely
to engage in exercise classes with other people run by an instructor, while males are more likely to engage in recreational sport participation (Kilpatrick, Hebert, & Bartholomew, 2005). In both circumstances, there is a crowd observing or evaluating one's activity, which based on the findings, would increase motivation.

From the findings, there are important discoveries that can be implemented during physical activity interventions in order to make them more successful. Firstly, based off the results attained within this sample population of exercisers, interventions should be in a group setting. This conclusion is based on the findings of this study where motivation tends to increase in the presence of a group. Group interventions will increase individual’s adherence to the group and motivate them during these interventions, considering their similarities to the population observed in this study. It is of note that these findings may not be applicable to those individuals with different demographics and backgrounds without further and more encompassing study including a larger demographic including non-regular exercisers and sedentary individuals in order to suggest possible interventions. This is to incorporate those individuals that were not included in this study such as non-regular exercisers, sedentary individuals or those with low self-efficacy as well as others, of which prescribed interventions may be different than suggested ones in this study.

Furthermore, interventions should focus on increasing the confidence of sedentary individuals who may be obese, in order to make them feel confident in their ability to exercise properly. The results can be weight loss and a healthier lifestyle, while bringing up past experiences of positive exercise behaviors and successes can increase efficacy. Perhaps individuals in specific group interventions were once high school athletes and were regularly active as an athlete; however, after entering college where they are no longer an athlete experienced a drop off in exercise behavior. During these group interventions, individuals can be asked to relive those moments when exercise played a positive role and was effective in their life. Having personal trainers that can work with sedentary non-exercisers can increase efficacy because they will feel confident in their ability to exercise, since an exercise professional showed them proper technique as well as individualized exercises to perform. Although the results do not say anything about efficacy and time and of exercise, the researchers hypothesized the more efficacious a person is in their ability to exercise,
the less time they will spend not exercising at the gym. A more confident exerciser will not waste as much time being indecisive on what to do for their next exercise as much as a less confident exerciser. Based on the analysis of the participants who are already active, results show a relationship between efficacy and exercise, and as a result, in order to increase how enjoyable exercise is perceived, it would be advantageous to make those exercising more confident in their ability to do such.

By examining the results of the additional independent t-tests, there proved to be no significant difference in exercising in a group run by an instructor across gender. Males and females both feel relatively similar in their opinions to exercise in a group. The researchers had anticipated females to predominantly favor exercising in a group based on what research had previously concluded (Kilpatrick, Hebert, & Bartholomew, 2005). However, the results of the independent t-test claim there was no significant difference. Instead, the results of the Pearson-Product Moment correlation suggested both males and females enjoy working out in groups as it increases motivation.

It was also in the interest of the research team to determine if playing a high school sport influenced people to set goals related to their exercise. The researchers had considered the notion that athletes were more goal oriented, based on personal experience, and their exercise behaviors would prove those factors compared to exercisers who were non athletes. However, analysis of the results explained there to be no significant difference in personal goals relating to exercise between former high school athletes and non-athletes, perhaps because the participants of this study are already an active population. With that said, it is not to discredit the effectiveness of goal setting. Mental physical activity interventions have shown the effectiveness of imagining one’s self in the future as either regularly active or unhealthy and sedentary (Murru & Martin Ginis, 2010). The results of this previous study suggest that setting goals, and imagining accomplishing those goals in the future can improve the frequency of physical activity among individuals, regardless of their participation in high school athletics or not.
Limitations

In this study, there were many limitations that will be elucidated below; however, despite the limitations, the results of the study did attain similar results as those of various peer reviewed articles. The results of the qualitative portion of the mix-methods survey coincide with previous literature to an extent. However, one of the limitations of the study may have altered the qualitative results. The survey used in this research was created by the research team, and was not piloted or tested by any professionals. In retrospect, the survey was too lengthy, and questions seemed systematic. The results of the qualitative questions at the conclusion of the survey may have been predisposed by the quantitative questions in the beginning of the survey. Perhaps the results would have been different if the qualitative questions were placed at the start of the survey, or if the 75 item questionnaire had been shortened. Another limitation is the reliability of the sample population to be a microcosm of a broader general population. The participants in our study reported being regularly physical active at a much greater rate than that of college aged individuals throughout the country. More than 90 percent of the participants claimed to meet the 2008 CDC guidelines for regular physical activity, much more than what would be found among other populations. A reason for this could be the type of sample used, and the location at which data was collected. The research team used convenience sampling and asked willing volunteers to complete the survey. The researchers gathered data at the West Virginia University Student Recreation Center, which is the reason why it is believed that the population exhibited such high levels of activity. The type of sampling used led to a homogeneous population, which negatively affected the external validity of the population.

Practical Application

It is the aim and hope that the results of this study upon physically active individuals would be applied to a sedentary population in hopes of introducing characteristics of active individuals to sedentary individuals to increase weekly physical activity. It can be beneficial for exercise psychology consultants or physical education teachers to educate their subordinates on the negative side effects of obesity.
Furthermore, it is useful to explain how obesity is a combination of the calories consumed daily through food and drink, and the calories expended via physical activity. It is important that individuals view obesity as a result of negative personal choices to eat unhealthily and remain sedentary. It is equally important that individuals realize they can gradually develop positive eating and exercise behavior the same way they developed negative lifestyle habits. Illustrating the consequences of life-long obesity and internalizing the responsibility of one’s own health can augment the value of good health among a sedentary population.

Ideally, a sedentary population will become aware of their negative lifestyle behavior, and decide to implement a long-term physical activity program to become healthier. Emphasizing appearance among a sedentary, obese population may be counter-productive, despite appearance being the second most popular reason for positive exercise behaviors noted by participants in this study. If visual changes do not occur expeditently, it may lead to large rates of dropout due to health benefits being overshadowed by appearance. Based on the findings in the research, health is a predominant factor influencing individuals to be active. Stressing the importance of health in completing daily activities and life longevity can induce greater amounts of weekly physical activity among an inactive population.

Having previously non-active individuals engage in weekly physical activity is an important first step that exercise psychology consultants can help perpetuate. Emphasizing the importance of physical activity on overall health is an effective way to encourage sedentary individuals to begin an exercise regimen. However, if exercise is not perceived as somewhat enjoyable it will undermine the importance of physical activity on overall health. Based on the analysis of data, one way to increase enjoyment of exercise is to make individuals more confident in their ability to exercise. Exercise psychologists along with personal trainers can collaborate to ensure new exercisers feel confident in their abilities to exercise both physiologically and psychologically. Mental training skills such as imagery, and positive self-talk can relieve the amount of anxiety that a new exerciser may experience, while at the same time increasing efficacy. Having individuals visualize themselves doing an exercise perfectly, can lead to an increase in confidence when the time comes to physically perform that particular exercise. Positive self-talk can
increase confidence by having key words that block thoughts of doubt. By means of implementing a few simple mental techniques, exercise psychology consultants can increase how confident new exercisers are in properly developing and executing a workout, which based on findings of the researchers, can inevitably increase the enjoyment of physical activity.

Finally, conducting exercise-interventions in a group setting may increase motivation to exercise based on the correlation between motivation and a crowd, proved significant by the data analysis. As the perception of a crowd observing begins to increases, motivation to exercise increases as well, in regards to this more active population of participants. This finding can be applied to interventions, in hopes that motivation to begin to exercise among a sedentary group of people increases if there are others experiencing the same intervention in a group, as opposed to individual interventions. Moreover, the same group receiving the physical activity intervention can exercise together. Since the same group is motivated to exercise while in the intervention together, it is believed that motivation will remain present during the actual exercise.

**Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study with a highly active population, a group atmosphere will increase motivation during exercise, and the presence of an exercise professional will increase confidence of individuals within a group of a similar demographic. A newfound confidence to exercise correctly can result from the supervision of an exercise professional, and will lead to exercise being more enjoyable. With enjoyable bouts of exercise helping individuals obtain their long-term goal of getting healthy in order to reduce the consequences of being obese, greater amounts of individuals will become regularly active. The more people engaging in regular physical activity who also encompass the knowledge necessary to make healthy eating choices will result in a lowering of the prevalence of obesity overtime.
References


Appendix A

Mix-Methods Survey

Please complete the survey to the best of your knowledge. All questions are optional and any question may be skipped. You have the right to stop taking the survey at any point. Your responses will remain confidential. Your answers on the survey will be used for research purposes only and will not affect your standing as a student and/or access to the recreation center.

We thank you for your participation.

Directions: Please circle one letter for each of the following questions.

1) Are you a full-time or part-time West Virginia University Student with full access to the student recreation center?
   a.i.1.a. Yes
   a.i.1.b. No

2) Are you regularly physically active based on the 2008 guidelines, which state that regular physical activity is at least 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) per week of moderate-intensity, or 75 minutes (1 hour and 15 minutes) a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity, or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous intensity aerobic activity?
   a.i.1.a. Yes
   a.i.1.b. No

3) What is your race?
   a. Caucasian
   b. Black/ African American
   c. Hispanic
   d. Other Please Specify
      _______________________

4) What is your gender?
   a.i.1.a. Male
   a.i.1.b. Female
5) What is your major ____________________________________________

6) Do you live in campus housing or off campus housing 
   a. In campus housing 
   b. Off campus housing 

7) Approximately how long does it take you to get to the West Virginia University Recreation Center (on average) 
   a. Less than 5 minutes 
   b. 5-10 minutes 
   c. 10-15 minutes 
   d. 15-20 minutes 
   e. 20-35 minutes 
   f. 25-30 minutes 
   g. Greater than 30 minutes 

8) What is your age, in years? 
   a.i.1.a. Younger than 18 
   a.i.1.b. 18 
   a.i.1.c. 19 
   a.i.1.d. 20 
   a.i.1.e. 21 
   a.i.1.f. 22 
   a.i.1.g. Older than 22 

9) What is your class rank? 
   a.i.1.a. Freshman 
   a.i.1.b. Sophomore 
   a.i.1.c. Junior 
   a.i.1.d. Senior 
   a.i.1.e. 5th year Senior 
   a.i.1.f. Not a student 
   a.i.1.g. Graduate Student 

10) How many full years have you attended WVU? 
    a. Less than 1 
    b. 1 
    c. 2 
    d. 3 
    e. 4
11) Were you involved in high school athletics?
   a. Yes
   b. No

12) Are you a part of a West Virginia University Varsity or Club sport?
   a.i.1.a. Yes
   a.i.1.b. No

13) Is/was anybody in your immediate family (siblings/parents) part of varsity sport at the collegiate or professional level?
   a.i.1.a. Yes
   a.i.1.b. No

14) Does anybody in your immediate family (siblings/parents) meet the 2008 guidelines for regular physical activity listed in question two?
   a.i.1.a. Yes
   a.i.1.b. No

15) Do you perceive regular physical activity to be beneficial to your overall health?
   a.i.1.a. Yes
   a.i.1.b. No
   a.i.1.c. A little bit
   a.i.1.d. Not sure

16) How many credit hours are you currently taking?
   a.i.1.a. Less than 12
   a.i.1.b. 13
   a.i.1.c. 14
   a.i.1.d. 15
   a.i.1.e. 16
   a.i.1.f. 17
   a.i.1.g. 18 or more
   a.i.1.h. Not a student
17) On average, how many days a week do you go to the West Virginia University recreation center?
   
   a.i.1.a. None
   a.i.1.b. 1
   a.i.1.c. 2
   a.i.1.d. 3
   a.i.1.e. 4
   a.i.1.f. 5
   a.i.1.g. 6
   a.i.1.h. 7

18) On average, how many days a week do you exercise outside of the West Virginia University recreation center?

   a.i.1.a. None
   a.i.1.b. 1
   a.i.1.c. 2
   a.i.1.d. 3
   a.i.1.e. 4
   a.i.1.f. 5
   a.i.1.g. 6
   a.i.1.h. 7

19) On average, approximately what is the duration of your visit to the West Virginia University Recreation center?

   a.i.1.a. Zero minutes
   a.i.1.b. Less than 30 minutes
   a.i.1.c. 30 – 44 minutes
   a.i.1.d. 45 – 59 minutes
   a.i.1.e. 60 – 74 minutes
   a.i.1.f. 75 – 89 minutes
   a.i.1.g. 90 minutes or more

20) On average, approximately what is the duration of your exercise when you are not in the West Virginia University recreation center?

   a.i.1.a. Zero minutes
   a.i.1.b. Less than 30 minutes
   a.i.1.c. 30 – 44 minutes
   a.i.1.d. 45 – 59 minutes
Directions: Please circle which number represents your feeling(s) towards each statement most accurately on a scale from N/A being not applicable, 1 being not at all, and 5 being very much. Use this scale for questions 21-73.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Very Much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21) I am usually satisfied with the quality of my workouts at the West Virginia University recreation center.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22) I am usually satisfied with the quality of my workouts outside of the West Virginia University recreation center.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23) I am confident in my ability to do exercises correctly while at the West Virginia University recreation center.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24) I am confident in my ability to do exercises correctly while not at the West Virginia University recreation center.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25) I enjoy working out in an exercise class ran by an exercise instructor.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26) Working out in exercise classes increases the intensity of my workouts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27) I feel comfortable working out in exercise classes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28) I would be willing to exercise in a class if it was a type of exercised that I would enjoy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
29) Large crowds at the West Virginia University recreation center make me second guess if I am doing my exercises correctly.

30) I tend to feel that I have a higher quality workout when more people are at the West Virginia University recreation center.

31) Once I get tired, I become less confident that the exercises I am doing are correct.

32) I tend not to use or ask to use workout equipment if others are already using it.

33) The quality of my workouts increases when there are less people at the West Virginia University recreation center.

34) I would rather exercise on my own at a neutral location than use the West Virginia University recreation center.

35) I feel highly motivated before the majority of my workouts.

36) Having confidence in being able to do exercises correctly makes me more motivated to exercise each time.

37) Working out in a small group (one, two, or three other people) makes the workout more enjoyable.

38) Working out in a small group (one, two, or three other people) gives me more confidence in the exercises I am doing.
39) The more I feel fatigued, the less motivated I become to continue my workout.
N/A  1  2  3  4  5

40) I believe that daily exercise will increase my physical appearance in a beneficial way.
N/A  1  2  3  4  5

41) I primarily use the West Virginia University recreation center or exercise on my own to lose weight related to fat.
N/A  1  2  3  4  5

42) I primarily use the West Virginia University recreation center or exercise on my own to maintain my current weight related to fat.
N/A  1  2  3  4  5

43) I primarily use the West Virginia University recreation center or exercise on my own to lose weight related to fat and maintain muscle mass.
N/A  1  2  3  4  5

44) I primarily use the West Virginia University recreation center or exercise on my own to lose weight related to fat and increase muscle mass.
N/A  1  2  3  4  5

45) I primarily use the West Virginia University recreation center or exercise on my own to maintain weight related to fat, and increase muscle mass.
N/A  1  2  3  4  5

46) When I workout at the West Virginia University recreation center or exercise on my own, I like to watch myself in a mirror.
N/A  1  2  3  4  5

47) The quality and intensity of my exercise suffers or is less than usual when I perceive others are watching me.
N/A  1  2  3  4  5
48) I am comfortable asking other exercises for a spot or assistance with an exercise at the West Virginia University recreation center.

N/A 1 2 3 4 5

49) I exercise because it relates to a goal of mine.

N/A 1 2 3 4 5

50) I exercise because I believe it is good for my overall health regardless of my physical appearance.

N/A 1 2 3 4 5

51) I exercise because it relieves or lowers my perceived stress.

N/A 1 2 3 4 5

52) I exercise because I enjoy when other people comment on my physical appears in a positive way.

N/A 1 2 3 4 5

53) I tend to only do exercise that I enjoy to do

N/A 1 2 3 4 5

54) I will find alternate exercise to work a muscle or muscle group if I do not like a specific exercise.

N/A 1 2 3 4 5

55) I enjoy exercise.

N/A 1 2 3 4 5

56) I exercise outside as much as possible

N/A 1 2 3 4 5

57) I feel that when I exercise, I am missing out on social events/functions.

N/A 1 2 3 4 5

58) I feel that exercise takes time away from my friends or relationship partner.
59) I identify myself as “active” “fit” or as an “exerciser”

60) I enjoy when others describe me as “active” “fit” or as an “exerciser”

61) The time I spend exercising puts me behind on my schoolwork.

62) My GPA or work suffers because I exercise too much.

63) I would exercise more if I had no school obligation.

64) It is important to keep exercise as enjoyable as possible

65) The majority of the time I spend at the West Virginia University recreation center or exercising on my own focuses on muscle growth.

66) The majority of time I spend at the West Virginia University recreation center or exercising on my own focuses on cardio vascular endurance. (e.g. Running)

67) The majority of time I spend at the West Virginia University recreation center or exercising on my own focuses on enjoyment of the activity.

68) I focus more on the outcomes of my exercise, such as physical appearance and strength, more than enjoyment.
Having fun and enjoying my workout is more important than physical strength or appearance.

One reason why I exercise is because it will make me healthier as an older aged adult.

I feel motivated to exercise most days of the week.

Please list your 3 most important factors that influence you to exercise

1.
2.
3.

I do not exercise as much as I would like to.

Please list your 3 most important factors that influence you not to exercise

1.
2.
3.

I feel confident in myself as an exerciser.

Please list any or all reasons that lead to confidence or lack of confidence and note whether that reason gives you confidence or does not give you confidence

Directions: Please complete the following sentence for question 74.

I do or do not exercise because...
Appendix B

Cover Letter

Dear Participant,

This letter is a request for you to take part in a research project that attempts to identify the psychological factors influencing exercise behaviors among college students. This project is being conducted by Phillip Dillulio, Eric Jenkins, Fernando Said, Stuart Squires, and Tim Stamper, Sport and Exercise psychology undergraduate students at WVU with supervision of Dr. Vanessa Shannon, a professor of sport and exercise psychology in the College of Physical Activity and Sport Sciences. Your participation in this project is greatly appreciated and will take approximately 12 minutes to fill out the attached questionnaire.

Your involvement in this project will be kept as confidential as legally possible. All data will be reported in the aggregate. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate. I will not ask any information that should lead back to your identity as a participant. Your participation is completely voluntary. You may skip any question that you do not wish to answer and you may discontinue at any time. Your class standing will not be affected if you decide either not to participate or to withdraw. West Virginia University’s Institutional Review Board acknowledgement of this project is on file.

I hope that you will participate in this research project, as it could be beneficial in understanding what psychological factors influence regularly physical activity and what barriers are in the way of regular physical activity. Thank you very much for your time. Should you have any questions about this letter or the research project, please feel free to contact our professor Dr. Shannon at Vanessa.shannon@mail.wvu.edu

Thank you for your time and help with this project.

Sincerely,

Phillip Dillulio
Eric Jenkins
Fernando Said
Stuart Squires
Tim Stamper
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATH: GENDER INEQUITY IN STEM AND 4H

Kathleen Baker with Dr. Jackson
Department of Women’s and Gender Studies, West Virginia University

Abstract

As a female STEM Ambassador, a representative who encourages k-12 youth to go into the STEM fields for 4H camps in West Virginia, I observed and analyzed multiple counties in regards to identity, privilege and community. Being a very inclusive program, 4H is a youth development program that teaches leadership and community through hands on experience. Based on field observations, this paper discusses and analyzes with an intersectional framework how gender impacts STEM education and potential ways to improve upon such a foundation with works from both Feminist and Post-Structural Theory.

Introduction

In almost every facet of our society, women and girls are treated in a too often degrading fashion. One way in particular is women historically have been barred, socially, from being encouraged to enter the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) fields which are predominantly male. One study showed that there is a turning point for young girls in middle and high school with their relationship to science and math (Seymour & Hewitt 1997). At this age, they start to lose interest, lack confidence, and want to avoid engaging with the subject entirely. Girls are not encouraged to pursue careers in sciences, because it is not expected of a woman to go into a hard science in our society. Seymour and Hewitt’s study focused primarily on undergraduates, but it is important to look at where women learn the ideology of lacking confidence in their abilities in the sciences to begin with.
In response to the paucity of female professionals in the sciences, programs and opportunities have been created to encourage girls -- primarily middle and high school girls -- to pursue careers in the STEM fields. These are often university based programs such as the one at Duke University called FEMMES (Females Excelling More in Math, Engineering, and Science) (Bonhivert et al 2008). This program, in particular, was a one day event that had activities relating to engineering, math, and science that was taught by female faculty. Surveys were conducted before and after the event, assessing the youth’s interest, knowledge, and confidence in the aforementioned fields. Their findings concluded that interest in all three areas surveyed increased, most notably engineering. Though this was geared towards girls specifically, it shows the possibility of the program and other programs like it being a confidence builder for youth and their relationship to STEM, giving them a solid foundation with which to launch into college and maybe even a career.

Programs which encourage girls to go into the STEM fields, usually take one of two main approaches to get them involved. The first focuses on the gender stereotypes, using them in a way so as to garner interest (Nerd Girls 2013). In these types of programs, being smart is considered sexy as well as being highly feminine. The site is colored pink, both showing and blatantly stating that being in a STEM field as a woman does not require the loss of femininity. It could be argued the image of girls’ femininity and how they are perceived by external sources is more important than the actual material being taught in these types of programs. These programs are making the assumptions that girls love pink, are highly feminine, and that they are, “Developing real world projects using your all your talents, not just your book smart talents, to solve problems in your community or in the environment” (Nerd Girls 2013). These programs not only use gender roles to their advantage but also take advantage of the fact that socialization of peer groups impacts what subject girls are motivated to do well in (Farkas, Brown, and Leaper 2012). With this presentation, girls may or may not be more inclined to join a program relating to the STEM fields like this, depending on that girl’s relationship to her peers and her own gender expression.

The other type of program that is used to recruit girls to the STEM fields are ones that are more focused on giving girls the skills they need to succeed at jobs within the STEM fields (Techbridge 2013). In these
programs, girls work on projects such as computer-animations and remotely operated vehicles after school. Girls get hands on experience and build confidence to further their education in the STEM fields by participating in STEM related projects that require them to learn new skills such as working with their peers and adults and working with technology they might not otherwise have had the opportunity to do. Gender is less a factor in these types of programs, because the only factor for them is that it is tailored to girls only.

Even though these programs, at first, seem very beneficial, it is important to keep in mind that their goals may not have been reached and they are not as effective as hoped for (Salmon-Stephens, Peters, and Landgraf 2008). Salmon-Stephens, Peters, and Landgraf looked at the preliminary results of some of the outreach programs within the University of Wisconsin. They found that the effectiveness of these programs is reduced over time. Young girls in this program did not maintain interest in the sciences until they choose a college, because the programs Salmon-Stephens et al. looked at did not target specific ages and were not funded in a manner that made them very consistent. Also, data for the study were only looked at for the older girls who went to their own college.

Another component to consider is that there are other variables when looking at an adolescent girl’s interest level in a STEM field such as the social relationships with their parents and peers as well as personal factors (Brown, Farkas, and Leaper 2011). Measuring the academic motivation and how it is impacted by both the relationships with their parents and peers proved that peer support was the biggest factor for girls’ in Math/Science or English but never all three subjects. To pique the girls’ interest in Math/Science, it was speculated and briefly discussed by Brown et al. that if parents encouraged their daughters to join a STEM-related extracurricular program, then their interest in the STEM fields may rise. Therefore, the style of socialization each of these girls’ had impacted them on how they interfaced with gender-typed school subjects. Within part of that socialization, there may be girls who have been taught either directly or indirectly by their parents or peers to believe that they were not capable of being a part of a STEM field. These educational outreach programs which encourage youth, in general, and sometimes specifically girls to gain a better understanding and empowered level of confidence in STEM oriented curriculum can help shift the current attitudes of women in science. By
working for such a program, there is the opportunity to re-gender the way middle and high school girls view their relationship to the STEM fields by showing them the social deconstruction of women being in such fields.

One such program is the STEM Ambassador program of which I am a member. Within this paper, I will discuss my involvement in this program. I undertook this research by taking field observations on gender and its relationship to the sciences across different county camps within 4H. Looking at only the immediate effects of the program after camps and the attitude and perceptions that girl’s had with science before and after participation; ways to further increase their interest will be discussed.

Methods

The STEM Ambassador Program

The STEM Ambassador program is specific to West Virginia University (WVU) that works with youth involved in the 4H program’s summer camps to recruit youth into working towards or even gaining a career in a STEM field at WVU. Not only does it encourage enrollment at WVU but also general interest in the sciences. The program is made possible through the WVU Extension Service which is a service dedicated to taking the academia of the university and utilizing it in other public communities. A primary community outreach program of Extension is 4H and is made possible through land grant universities like WVU. The STEM Ambassador program is through Extension but interacts primarily with the 4H Summer camps.

Being a STEM Ambassador means travelling across the state of West Virginia to different counties that have 4H camps, teaching STEM oriented curriculum to youth aged 9 to 21. The 4H program is a national youth development program that fosters hands on experience for k-12 youth, proving to be extremely good at skill building and confidence for youth. In West Virginia, 4H is broken down by county, and each county has a 4H agent who oversees everything at camp. Within each 4H camp, the youth are divided into groups known as tribes. They are named after Native American tribes or cultures such as the Cherokees and Senecas.
Camp Structure and Role

Each ambassador in the program has four or five camps that they work over the course for a summer. Most are county camps, but some camps are state camps where youth all over the state can come and participate. Each camp only last a week, and they typically start on Monday and last until Friday. Though, some counties have their staff arrive on a Sunday to make their arrangements and get settled in for the week.

The role of a STEM Ambassador at these camps is to be both a teacher and a counselor. They are a teacher when teaching their class and a camp/cabin counselor the rest of the time. As a camp counselor, they help supervise the youth and prepare for camp activities, meals, etc. STEM Ambassadors also serve as a cabin counselor, making sure that all of the youth are in their appropriate cabin and accounted for before bed time and that general rules and guidelines are followed by everyone. Cabins were assigned by age and gender as the following: younger boys, younger girls, middle boys, middle girls, high school/college boys, and high school/college girls.

A day at a camp normally began at 7 AM in the morning and ended around roughly 10 PM. STEM classes were either taught in the morning or the afternoon, depending on how the camp schedule was laid out. Either way, throughout teaching and being a counselor, there was plenty of time during the day to have to one’s self. It was during these times, mainly before bed time, when field observations could be written down and events were recounted to share, specifically in regards to gender and its relationship to the STEM fields observed in the youth at that camp and their attitudes towards it as well as their opinion and attitudes towards me.

Observations and Relationships

In addition to the aforementioned variables, the STEM Ambassador was a stranger to these youth. Both the campers and counselors had never met this person before. Often times, they did not know the local area. The ambassadors were also unaware of the dynamics in the existing relationships among campers, counselors, and parents with one exception – the researcher did serve as a counselor and STEM teacher at
the day camp for her own county of residence. Often times, STEM ambassadors were constantly asking for help on finding cabins, stores, and understanding the nicknames of everything at the rest of the counties.

Being such a foreigner in the county, though, allowed for minimal bias in how the youth treated the ambassadors and how they were perceived by them as well as how they interfaced with them. The newness of relationships with the youth made it easier to communicate with the youth at these various camps, because they had no prior relationship with or opinion of the ambassadors. Knowing this, it was easy to make observations because of the ease with which one could be objective. Recounting each day’s events at camp that stood out to the STEM Ambassador or related back to girls and their relationship to STEM was done each night before bed or immediately after the event happened. The observations were then broken down by age group and type of interaction throughout all five camps (see table 1).

Table 1 Breakdown of Age Groups for Youth at Camp, By Age Group and Ages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>8-9 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>10-13 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>13-18 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>19+ years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Camp Order</th>
<th>County Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Hampshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ritchie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Marion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Fayette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Monongalia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

STEM Curriculum and Class

The STEM oriented curriculum that was used in classes was taught for one week at a training camp to the ambassadors where they learned how to adapt and modify their lesson plans based on how each camp was set up which varied from county to county. There were eight different curriculums available for the STEM ambassadors to teach from. They were the following: Bridge Building, Legos, Forensic Science,
Agriculture, Chemistry, Solar Cars, Geocaching, and Circuitry. Youth at the camps were most excited about Forensic Science, Solar Cars, and Geocaching, because those had the youth involved in activities that they had either not been exposed to or had a personal interest in. A significant portion of youth at each camp had participated in the same program the year before and had talked about it excitedly, since this was the program’s second year.

Resource kits for each subject were given to the ambassadors at training camp; they were to bring their supplies to camps with them. Materials included things like Legos, powder for dusting fingerprints, crime scene tape, and soap and buckets for bubbles to name just a few. It was also understood that the time given to teach varied from each camp and that which curriculum was taught was either at our own discretion or requested by the agent of the county. Some of the curriculum was so adaptable that a couple of times a theme at one of the camps was an opportunity to incorporate the material that the STEM Ambassador was expected to teach.

Typically, a STEM Ambassador teaches two to three classes a day to the same group of campers ranging in size from 7-22. Most of the youth ranged in education from elementary school all the way to college. They were often taught without any extra adult supervision or assistance except for when another counselor was checking in on what the class was doing, or it was a camp wide activity. Teaching time was anywhere from thirty to fifty minutes per class, but this also varied from camp to camp. However, at most camps, there were activities that were camp-wide activities, meaning one person was in charge of an assembly or an event for the entire camp to do with the help of the rest of the counselors. A STEM Ambassador almost always had at least one of these activities to do per camp.

**Results**

In observing the youth at these five counties, there were two very common trends with the girls across all camp. The first is that nearly all of the girls in both middle and high school had low interest in the sciences, and the second is that after participation in the program, those same girls appeared to feel more confident in their ability to do activities relating to the STEM curriculum. Not only did a shift in
attitude occur with the girls, but there was also a shift in perception among the boys as well about who could participate in STEM based activities.

*Girls’ Relationship with Science*

At the beginning of the week, the girls were shy or insecure or scared to ask questions or even claim any label considered “nerdy” The youth not knowing the STEM Ambassador, were very inquisitive about the ambassador’s current occupation, my school, and where she was from, though, so the topic of gender and STEM fields came up frequently. In one incident I observed the following which was marked as an Uncomfortable interaction and will be referred to as Example 1:

A girl asked me what I was writing down just now, and I told her it was for one of my classes. She said to me, “No offense, but that’s nerdy.” I asked if she knew the previous STEM Ambassador, because he worked this camp last year. She said no. I asked what classes she was in. Mine is one of them (Weird Science). She said, “Don’t ask me to do anything nerdy, because I’ll suck at it.” One of the male counselors, an elderly gentleman, said, “No you don’t. You’re in my club, and that’s nerdy!” The girl denied this and retaliated by messing up his hair as he walked by her top bunk.

By the end of the week, they were much more open minded and forward in regards to asking questions about the material and about their skill level with that material. Some of them wanted to be walked through certain activities. Others kept asking how much were materials and where could their parents buy the materials for a solar car. Many of the kids in the classes would request one specific activity that they had heard about from last year or had heard was available.

Even though classes were comprised primarily boys who wanted to play with Legos or build robots, the girls that were in the class told their friends, counselors, and even parents when they came to pick their child up. This was observed as multiple youth brought their parents to the STEM Ambassador to introduce them as their friend and express the lessons that had been taught to them throughout the week as well as to counselors during other activities and when exchanging pleasantries in their cabin with friends. Many girls who were not in the class and had
queried me about what was done that day in class were jealous or disappointed that they were not going to have the opportunity to build a burglar alarm or go geocaching. Some of them wanted to spend their free time doing such activities, but most of them thought they could not or should not or that it was “gross” to be a part of something so “nerdy” However, there were a couple of moments where girls were positive in expressing their enjoyment of the sciences, but there were other girls who responded negatively to their peer being interested in a subject they lacked confidence in or disliked. One such example was marked as a Friendly interaction and will be referred to as Example 2:

A girl just asked me if I was good at math, and I told her somewhat. She said she loved math, and it is her favorite subject. She’s going into 5th grade. She’s a Cherokee, and she told me her great-grandmother was one too. We tried to figure out what fraction of Cherokee she’d be then, and a girl came by and said, “I hate fractions and division and big numbers. I like 0 x 0!”

The girls that were in those classes, however, worked much harder than the boys did in completing their assigned tasks. There was one class where Robotics was taught for thirty minutes, and there were two boys and one girl all high school aged in the class. Their assigned task was to have the robot run through an obstacle course that had been made using masking tape. The first boy believed he was above doing the work for the class and so did nothing. The second boy attempted to work with the girl in completing the task but eventually grew frustrated and gave up. Yet, the girl stayed for not only the length of the class but also for both her snack time and free time just to prove that she could do it which she did. This is not representative of all the girls in that were in my classes, however.

Not only were these changes observed in the girls’ attitudes about science and their ability to do it, but the STEM Ambassador did not fit their typical idea of what a woman my age (20) should act or look like. I was and am not a feminine woman, and this really confused the majority of the girls that I interacted with. There was one such incident at the pool which was marked as a Traditional interaction and will be referred to as Example 3:
The entire camp went to North Bend State Park to go swimming for the afternoon. I wore swimtrunks and a tank top to the pool. As we were leaving one girl from my cabin who could not have been older than 13 said to me, “Why are you wearing trunks?” I told her they were more comfortable and liked them better than a bikini. She told me I should be wearing a bikini instead of swim trunks, because swim trunks were for boys.

One girl was shocked I did not do my nails or even really know how to. On top of being in a STEM field as a woman, I was continuing to exhibit a non-stereotypical style of femininity and not conform to the gender roles that had been set up by our society through my dress and general expression which further perplexed the girls that I interacted with. At first, they were mean and degrading about this. Yet, as the week progressed, they grew more familiar and comfortable with the presentation I gave, and some even began to ask why I behaved or dressed in a certain way.

**Boys’ Relationship with Science**

It was not just the girls, though, that were surprised by my actions. The boys in my class could not believe that I was a gamer who had an Xbox Live account and enjoyed Call of Duty which is a very popular video game. Once I let them know I gamed, they shifted their viewpoint of me completely, and I was no longer in a teacher/motherly role but instead in a cool, friendly role. Engaging with their teacher on that level allowed for a much more informal discussion and a sharing of interests and ideas.

Along with this, the boys were also surprised that I was the robotics teacher, because they expected the robotics teacher to be a male, so I was not just questioning the girls’ mentality of who could do STEM based curriculum but also the boys’. By the end of their week, they had all asked me to add them on Xbox Live, so we could play a match of Call of Duty, a first person shooter game, and had given me a long list of Skyrim, a role playing video game, quests to complete.

**Inference from My Observations**
The majority of my observations were done outside of my class, because those were times when youth were more comfortable sharing their thoughts. This is reflected in my observations, seeing as there was only four times the Class interaction occurred, showing that the most interaction I had with people on gender was outside of the class. These outside of class interactions were categorized as Traditional, Uncomfortable, and Friendly with Friendly and Traditional being the two highest (see table 2).

Table 2 Definition and Categorization of Field Observations, By Type of Interactions and Definitions of Interactions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interactions</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friendly</td>
<td>Informal/Casual interactions outside of the STEM class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>Implied/Perceived gender roles about girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
<td>Youth appearing to feel insecure or unsure of topics (both gender and science)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Having made observations throughout all of camp, the interaction that I labeled as Traditional reappeared more than five times as much as the Uncomfortable interaction which shows that youth at these camps were comfortable with the stereotypical gender roles that they were being exposed to and dealing with (see table 3 and Appendix).

As can be seen in the Appendix, the types of interactions that were present among adults was primarily Traditional whereas with the youth had a multitude of type of interactions, though, their majority type were also Traditional. Traditional was the primary interaction throughout all camps, and Class interaction was the smallest. Majority of the comments or conversations that dealt with gender and identity and their relationship to STEM fields occurred outside of the classroom which means there were more opportunities to discuss such topics with the youth during these times than during actual time to teach.

Table 3 Total Number of Out of Class Observations Observed, By Type of Interaction and Total Observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friendly</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The adults also did not have issue with stereotypical gender roles that were expressed by other adults as well as youth, and this may be because they were either unaware of what they said meant or firmly believed in what they said. Having counselors at these camps are role models for these youth, and having counselors who are not very aware of the gender disparities, it becomes much more challenging to encourage youth to go into a field where the adults are not encouraging them either. This was not the case for every camp I attended. There were only pockets of this in the staff, and I am unsure of how much they interfaced with the youth at camp.

Conclusion

Reviewing the field observations once all of the camps were completed showed that most of the girls at these 4H camps doubted their ability to be involved in anything relating to the STEM fields but were still open to the idea of doing STEM based activities. The girls, though, required much more encouragement than the boys. Some girls were too scared to engage in STEM based activities and hid behind stereotypical gender roles, stating that they could not or were not allowed to participate in those things. This is not surprising, since many of the Traditional interactions I observed had some aspect of or referenced girls being unable to be involved in male-gendered activities. Multiple middle school aged girls at all of the camps I worked told me that Legos were for boys and that they were not allowed to play with them. This meant that aside from initial exposure, these girls also had to be encouraged and told that they could do it, because they already had ingrained in their minds that they could not. Unfortunately, the long term result of this exposure and encouragement has not yet been evaluated. If questionnaires were gathered every year from each camp, then maybe further analysis and inference on what they mean could be done to see if the same kids are staying involved each summer and if exposure and encouragement has any lasting effects.

Since most of the time a child’s parent was not a counselor at camp and the youth were not at home, peer support and perceived peer support were obvious factors in letting girls be involved in STEM based activities. If one of the girls wanted to be involved in the STEM activity, they had to try and convince one or more of their friends to do it with
them. They were too uncomfortable in doing it on their own. Often times, they came as a group rather than independently, and this shows how socialization can be excluding girls from the STEM fields. Perhaps if youth could have been given a survey, asking them why they chose the class that they did and to supply at least one or two reasons why, then maybe a better understanding of to what extent socialization is a factor could be seen.

Not only was exposure and verbal encouragement as well as peers crucial in getting these young girls involved in STEM activities, but it was also giving them the opportunity to do it by themselves with little to no guidance or help from an adult. Once they were successful in building a robot or a solar car or a light switch on a breadboard, it fed the notion that they could do it again and do something bigger or better or brand new. It fostered a foundation of encouragement and confidence that is likely lacking or nonexistent in other areas of that girl’s life. This program tried to teach youth a skill through hands on experience rather than tell them in an abstract format that requires them to go out on their own and learn it. In this aspect, the STEM Ambassador program did a good job achieving that.

Overall, this program is one that uses appropriate curriculum to engage with k-12 youth, and even though it does not target girls specifically, it has great opportunity for transforming the perceptions about girls’ working in the STEM fields, dependent somewhat on the STEM Ambassador. Their position allows a lot of flexibility in terms of how curriculum is taught which can open up countless possibilities for altering the way in which youth see gender identity and expression in relation to their careers. With this, being enrolled in such outreach programs can improve a girl’s confidence and encourage her to pursue a field she might not otherwise have pursued because of our societal constructs around women having a career in the STEM fields.
References


## Appendix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Camp</th>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Type of interaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>Friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>Friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Traditional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>All Ages</td>
<td>Friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>All Ages</td>
<td>Friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Friendly</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>High</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Middle</td>
<td>Friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Class</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Uncomfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Middle</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
“A CONTAINER RESHAPED BY ITS CONTENTS: THE BOYNDARIES OF LANGUAGE IN CRAIG THOMPSON’S ‘HABIBI’”

Rebeccah Griffith
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Abstract

Craig Thompson’s graphic novel “Habibi” is an intricate tracing of the lines that shape and separate religion, sexuality, language, possession, and storytelling, both from one another and within their own orders. The main vein of the story runs through the depiction of the physical body as a linguistically translatable unit, and conversely, language as a corporeal entity that operates in the same complex manner as a physical being. This accurately depicts the relationship between language and the physical world outside of stories as well. The storyline is largely based on themes of possession, sexuality and the intermingling of the two- the body is often depicted as something to be used for or against its owner depending on context and often, gender. The relationship between physical actions and bonds formal and informal is the main corpus for the text’s demonstration of the ties between the physical world and the ways we name and tame it. Examination of the narrative becomes more intricate alongside Thompson’s illustrations, which lend depth and weight to the words and reinforces the notion of their physical presence. The particular details of these illustrations add the dimension of symbolic familiarity that allows the narrative to be more recognizable in the light of our highly visual cultural lens; the language/body relationship is strengthened by this translation into visuals by converting the narrative into a visual realm that is more closely associated with physical presence than language’s seemingly anonymous presence as a framework. This paper attempts to uncover the implications of this body/language relationship as depicted by the
novel and explicitly demonstrated through its integration of written language with physical representation.

Keywords: linguistics, agency, sexuality, identity, naming, visual, narrative

When a reader picks up Craig Thompson’s latest work, Habibi, it instantly makes an impression. The hardcover version (the only version) is a weighty, ornate book that commands respect- every time I’ve left it on a coffee table, a roommate or friend notices its presence and comments on its appearance, inevitably flipping through it and getting stuck regardless of what page they turn to first. The book centers on a pair of orphans, the young girl Dodola as she’s shuffled through a series of male “caregivers” who are essentially legal rapists, and Cham/Zam/Habibi, the young boy she adopts while in slavery. The younger boy takes on a variety of names as his relationship with Dodola grows and becomes more complex, though he is referred to by his second name, Zam, for the majority of the novel. The story meanders through their lives and separations, exploring the many facets of their relationship, particularly Zam’s sexual awakening and idolization of Dodola and Dodola’s inability to define her own body. Intricate ink illustrations deepen the thematic power of “Habibi,” adding complex, questioning layers to the text. The novel takes place in an unidentified, stereotyped Arabic landscape complete with harems, camels and an overbearing male gaze. Because of this, Thompson has been met with charges of Orientalism and sexualizing rape, but these fall short in light of the broader themes of the book (The Comics Journal). His use of sensationalized landscapes and women who exist only in a sexual realm is obviously meant as a criticism, and serves as a platform for showcasing the presiding theme of the book - the language of the body and the body as a language. This theme rides on top of the book’s storyline, contained expertly in the space between the written text and illustrations; the graphic novel medium in general examines the relationship between written and visualized language, and “Habibi’s” narrative themes of sexual and physical agency lends this particular book a magnifying glass for this purpose. Through his depiction of sexuality and relationships in both text and visual art, Thompson’s “Habibi” addresses the implication of a physical body as a linguistically translatable unit, and conversely, language as a corporeal entity that
operates in the physical world.

The nature of this novel requires a debriefing of the plot before we can begin, as it does not appear in chronological order and contains information conveyed in illustration rather than text. As stated in the introduction, “Habibi” is the story of two orphans who find each other in a slave marketplace set in a fictional, Arabic-inspired world. Twelve-year-old Dodola meets the toddler Zam and the two escape into the desert, where Dodola acts as Zam’s surrogate mother for the next eight years. Abducted again, Dodola spends years in a harem lamenting their separation, tormented by the fact that Zam has been abandoned yet again, and finds herself impregnated with a child that is biologically hers. Meanwhile, Zam tries to survive on his own while attempting to reconcile his conflicted longing for Dodola—does he miss his mother, or his ideal lover? Searching for his identity and crushed by longing for both spiritual and sexual fulfillment, Zam travels through a variety of changes and personalities that only serve to fragment his identity. The two go through physical changes and experiences that are at odds with their physical identities, from pregnancy to castration to sexual commerce. Alongside the changes going on outside of their bodies, the pair also wrestles with their internal identities and the words they use to contain them, frequently brought to them in the forms of cultural and social norms shaped by their experiences. Their interweaving story and eventual reunion explores relationships with one’s own body and with others’, and examines the factors that impact how these relationships are formed and handled. Dodola and Zam find themselves caught in a limbo between what they feel and how they define themselves, ultimately dictated by the constraints of human language and its impact on the world. The progression of this trajectory are best examined alongside scrutiny of various themes and arguments in the following pages.

The notion of the body as a language has long been considered in many fields, including but not limited to linguistics, biology, psychology, and our own literary analysis. The phrase “body language” is so much a part of our society that even young children recognize the idea, associating bad posture and shuffling steps with negativity, and a smiling embrace as positive. Leaving the explanation of “body language” at these often-defined signs is very short-sighted; however, as they imply that the popularly-referred to “body language” has a one-to-one correspondence and translatability. A language as defined in linguistics
is “an abstract cognitive system that uniquely allows humans to produce and comprehend meaningful utterances.” (pg. 660, Language Files) If the movements of the body are to be considered a language, we must associate it with the constraints also placed on verbal and signed languages—they are made up of a finite lexicon from which an infinite number of ideas can be communicated (Saussure). Muscular and skeletal systems only permit a certain range of motion from the human body, but that motion translates into the long- and short-term physical activities and responses that define a person. The interpretation of singular actions is not the main focus here, but the overall reading of bodies as they exist simultaneously in several spaces—physical existence (the body literally occupies space on Earth), emotional response (things happen to bodies and they react/bodies do things and they react), and socio-cultural existence (the space a body occupies in society). These spaces and the entities within them are inarguably affected by the corporeal language that defines and ultimately contains them, a “container reshaped by its contents” (Thompson, pg 84).

Many authors, philosophers, artists and scientists have explored the intersection of language and body, and to trace this history would take warehouses of ink, so just a few perspectives will be provided to set up a basic framework. One of the most pervasive readings of bodies is the body seen through a social lens, and feminist philosophy does a good job of outlining the ways in which this is done. Elizabeth Grosz’s “Volatile Bodies” examines this in detail, explaining the variety of methods in which a body is “inscribed.” The “Body as Inscriptive Surface” chapter speaks specifically of physical markings, but is also clearly referencing the less visible forms of social “marking” that define physical bodies. Grosz says “[...] scarifications mark the body as a public, collective, social category, in modes of inclusion of membership; they form maps of social needs, requirements and excesses. The body and its privileged zones of sensation, reception, and projection are coded by objects, categories, affiliations, lineages, which engender and make real the subject’s social, sexual, familial, marital, or economic position or identity within a social hierarchy. [...] It is crucial to note that these different procedures of corporeal inscription do not simply adorn or add to a body that is basically given through biology; they help constitute the very biological organization of the subject.” (pg. 140) Essentially, the things we do with and to our bodies (and others’) define us from the first moment of our lives. A prime example from Habibi is
the way in which familial titles of “mother” and “son” become convoluted and murky—Dodola nurtures Zam like he is her son, feeding him in both body and mind. But she later finds herself unable to feel connected to her biological son, even moments after his birth, confusing her notions of motherhood. On the other side of the relationship we have Zam, who is unable to reconcile his opposing views of Dodola. As the only woman Zam has come in contact with prior to her abduction, Dodola ends up serving as both his maternal figure and the source of his first sexual yearning. BOTH characters eventually view the other as the only recipient of any of their love, romantic and familial. So what can we call this pair? Social definition and taboo grapples for a pathology to contain their relationship (and their individual identities, this confusion isn’t their only crisis at the hands of language) and falls short; we only have words that contradict one another in their singularity—surely Zam can’t be both a son and a not-son! But he is, just as Dodola is both a maternal figure and the source of his sexual awakening. And this linguistic constraint demonstrates exactly how a language can impose itself on physical reality, affecting the choices that Zam and Dodola allow themselves to make and the emotions they attempt to control in order to achieve harmony with what they define themselves as.

Conversely, their bodies serve as a method for subjugating themselves to language—by merely existing, a physical body demands distinction and categorization and affects the ways in which this is done. As Grosz says on page 144 of Volatile Bodies: “All of us [...] are caught up in modes of self-production and self-observation; these modes may entwine us in various networks of power, but never do they render us merely passive and compliant. [...] It is not as if a subject outside of these regimes is in any sense more free of constraint, less amenable to social power relations, or any closer to a state of nature. At best such a subject remains indeterminate, nonfunctional, as incapable of social resistance as of social compliance.” This argues the idea that without defining ourselves and others, we are unable to function, and that proves largely true, even in daily life. If one were reading this paper unaware of why it had ended up on their desk or what exactly they were expected to do with it, it would be rather difficult to discern, much of anything other than that it was a stack of papers with ink on them. Scott McCloud addresses this more tangibly on page 26 of “Understanding Comics,” showing us Magritte’s “The Treachery of Images” alongside images of cows, stop signs and cheeseburgers, telling us that “this is not
a cow. This is not law. This is not food. [...] Welcome to the strange and wonderful world of the icon!”

Applied to our physical reality, bodies take on the definition of icons—no body is innately a victim, a rapist, a slave or a sultan until their bodily experiences allow their culture to define them as such.

So now we can see how the content of the story supports the notion of body as language and vice versa, but how is this representation organized? *Habibi* is a graphic novel or a comic book, both names serve the necessary purpose, and this lends itself quite nicely to the examination of body as text. McCloud explains in “Understanding Comics” the underlying reasons that comics have such a resonance on the reader. One of the many reasons is that “Our identities belong permanently to the conceptual world. They can't be seen, heard, smelled, touched, or tasted. They’re merely ideas. And everything else—at the start—belongs to the sensual world, the world outside us. Gradually we reach beyond ourselves. We encounter the sight, smell, touch, taste and sound of our own bodies. And of the world around us. And soon we discover that the objects of our physical world can also cross over and possess identities of their own. Or, as extensions begin to glow with the life we lend to them. [...] By de-emphasizing the appearance of the physical world in favor of the idea of form, the cartoon places itself in the world of concepts (40-41).” McCloud essentially argues that this use of comics to place the reader in the realm of concept while showing them physical detail allows for a more tangible view of concepts in regard to our reality by intersecting words and visual art. Our lives, as demonstrated by Dodola and Zam, are often an intersection of the physical realities we deal with and our conceptualized expectation of these realities, a notion that the graphic form of this novel illuminates in convincing detail. By rendering concepts as physical entities on the page, such as the literal demonization of Dodola’s sexuality or Zam’s all-consuming rage at his own desires, Craig Thompson demonstrates their physical realities more efficiently than a textual narrative would have. This is not to discount the value of textual accounts of these phenomena, but to show how the form of this book very closely resembles the themes which it examines.

Turning to the first page of Chapter One, “River Map,” Thompson immediately invites introspection about the aim of the story. The first two panels show a black spot, developing into a raging river and reads:
“From the Divine Pen fell the first drop of ink. And from the drop, a river.” The next panels depict a drought, and the young girl who comes to be known as Dodola staring at the sun in ceremonial clothing. In a flashback later in the book, Dodola describes how she got her name- Dodola was “the rain goddess from the far northwest.” Her parents would strip and then dress her in plants and flowers and lead her in a parade, dousing her with water and “waiting for the heavenly bodies to open up and give us rain.” Following the devastation of the drought, Dodola is sold by her father into marriage to a scribe. Their marriage is consummated, and the young Dodola sits crying on her husband’s bed, who tells her “I am your husband. There is no shame,” as he holds up the bloodstained sheet reminiscent of the ink spot on the first page, “You should be proud of this mark. It proves you were pure.” These few opening pages begins the inquest into the relationship between the word and the body- when the purity of water failed her family and the stories of the heavens failed to deliver, Dodola’s virginity is turned into the symbolic raindrop. At this point in their lives, her family can no longer rely on the hope from stories and tradition to bring prosperity, they can only act on physical imperatives- in order to save their own bodies from dehydration and starvation, they exchange Dodola’s body. Dodola’s husband teaches her to read and write, starting with the “bā’” character (ب), telling her “This line is the veil...and this point is the divine essence.” Again, the point resembles the ink/bloodstain left from the loss of Dodola’s virginity. This divine essence that makes up the meaning of the bā’ directly parallels Dodola’s own “divine essence,”- underneath her veil of innocence was first her virginity, now replaced by her ability to tell stories with both these letters and her body. This is a new veil in itself, in that the ambiguity of language and the body veil the “divine essence” of the stories’ messages. Dodola teaches Zam to read, and this character holds special meaning for him as well, as the beginning of the Arabic phrase that Dodola teaches him to keep himself safe: “bismi-llāhi r-raḥmāni r-raḥīm,” or “In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.” The bā’ recurs frequently throughout the story, and as stated on pages 38-39, “Bismillah becomes a circle. It can be tangled up in many forms.” These frames show the Bismillah phrase twisted into traditional forms such as a pear or a bird. Dodola tells Zam of an ancient Chinese myth in which magic squares are revealed, each with corresponding letters and numbers- bā’s number is two. She tells Zam that if he keeps the magic squares and remembers the words
“bismi-lâhi r-raḥmâni r-raḥîm,” he will be safe from evil. Thompson interjects here with a quotation from Rumi’s poem “Bismillah:” “Say Bismillah, In the name of God / as the priest does with a knife when he offers an animal. / Bismillah your old self / To find your real name.” He tells the story of Zam’s renaming based on the story of Ishmael and Hagar being left in the desert, but for our purposes this focus on “Bismillah” serves to influence Zam’s sexuality and guilt in the future. On multiple occasions, Zam reinvents himself to try to escape his lust for Dodola, each time desperate to devote his life to God and cast aside his corporeal, suffering desire. These words of Rumi’s follow Zam throughout the story, exemplifying his attempts to rid himself of bodily sins: as he attacks his erections (Thompson, 166), especially when he becomes a eunuch and later as he contemplates suicide in order to escape from his ruined body. Despite all of his renaming, Zam is never able to become what he considers his true self since he feels unable to reconnect with God, ultimately due to the “sinful” nature of his lusts.

Zam’s transformations are one of the key examples of the written/spoken word’s ability to function in the physical realm—due to the word of God and the words he has heard from the mouths of men (Dodola’s rapists), he is consumed with self-loathing and unable to escape his arousal, leading to his physical violence against his genitals. He is voluntarily castrated and entered into the world of the hijra, though he doesn’t truly feel a “feminine spirit” within him. He merely wishes to remove what makes him physically male and thus leave the realm of other males, who he cannot see without remembering Dodola’s rape. Zam cannot translate the words of others into his own body’s actions, so he changes his body in order to suit the rules governing him, an ultimately failing errand of denial that merely leaves his self-loathing to turn within, lacking a physical expression to blame.

One of the most troublesome roles a body can take on is that of a mother, and Dodola’s maternal identity is at odds on every page of Habibi. When she becomes pregnant with the sultan’s child, Dodola begins to feel as though she has become “a container reshaped but its contents,” a statement that reflects all bodies at some time or another. She compares her frame to that of hers pre-pregnancy, saying that “—my real self [was] buried in layers of fat and aching bone. I’d once used my body to my advantage, but even then it didn’t belong to me, possessed instead by the LUSTS of men.” The panels depicting this shift show her slender body crushed by a grotesquely obese version of
herself, juxtaposed with her seductively posed frame on the other page. These panels are especially telling of our theme, demonstrating how Dodola’s body was indeed “a container reshaped by its contents,” whether that content be a fetus or a man. This touches on an important point in feminine philosophy that, more broadly, applies to both main characters in this story. Throughout history, many women’s only sense of agency has come from either motherhood or exploitive use of their own bodies to charm men, but this example shows how these agencies are not especially empowering, as they require a subversion of the female body rather than a step away from that ideology (Irigaray). Zam provides us with examples that show how men are just as firmly encased in these subversions though—Zam is only able to find his identity within sex and righteousness, depending on what urge he’s leaning into that day. This is also a common phenomenon today with many men feeling torn between social expectations to be a high-performing sex machine and to be the benevolent hero. Zam is unable to extricate lust from predatory lust, as it all seems quite animal to him.

On page 161, we see one of the many other ways that Dodola’s body is turned into language—following the rape that Zam witnesses, he runs and hides in the engine room of their ship until Dodola finds him and demands he eats. Zam vomits up the food, unable to stomach the idea of eating anything that was obtained through what he saw in the desert. This scene has contained within it a multitude of examples of physical linguistics—first; Dodola uses her body as a business tool, which is taken from her in a ploy of intimidation. Once the food has been given (a bit of extra from the rapist’s friend to make up for that little indiscretion), Dodola has become a martyred figure, literally sacrificing her body for food of which Zam must eat. Soon, Dodola’s body becomes the catalyst in Zam’s cycle of shame—despite the motherly words and actions that she aims at him, all he can see when lost in the desert is her body, shaping the landscape around him. Page 181 depicts one of the book’s essential themes: “People were crying out for water, but the sources had dried up and there wasn’t enough to share. When the world is on its last breath, however, the masses will need something to distract them from the destruction—and my body will still be a commodity. This is the world of men.” These panels depict Dodola’s body torn apart by demon hands, and a smaller panel of Zam in the bathtub, preparing to attack his erection. This reflects back on a point I mentioned earlier, about Dodola’s body being converted into a symbolic raindrop during a
drought—but instead of using her body simply to receive nourishment, she also plans to use it to help others escape their lack of such, a function long-held by stories. While stories soothe Zam, the notion of Dodola’s body as a commodity to be used tortures him, as evidenced by his self-mutilative sexual aggression.

Since Zam has been raised in relative isolation, his exposure to relationships comes purely from his experiences with Dodola, and the strangers they engage into commerce with. Since his only introduction to sex has been through accidental glances of Dodola and as witness to her rapes, Zam’s sexual identity is one clouded in shame and anxiety. Unable to separate his own healthy, natural sexual responses and urges from that of the aggressive men who force and take advantage of Dodola, Zam finds himself trapped in a body that is not his own, once again “a container reshaped by its contents.” Since for Zam his sexual urges are wrong and shameful, his body which contains them becomes a prison for him as well, just as Dodola’s does during her pregnancy. Clasped in Dodola’s maternal grasp one night after witnessing her rape, Zam dreams he is the desert rapist on top of Dodola, and wakes terrified. This clearly evidences his inability to separate sex from violence since rape is the only form of intercourse he knows anything about.\(^2\)

Throughout Habibi, ancient stories hailing from numerous traditions are used to mirror the events of the book and as a method for tracing the trails of tropes and customs into their present portrayal (Lawson). Seen in light of the contemporary culture in which he writes, Thompson is clearly critiquing, or at least depicting, the internalized beliefs and reactions to many interpersonal relationships and events.

These stories taken from traditions including but not limited to Hinduism, all three Abrahamic religions and Slavic tradition are all told in accordance with the events of Dodola and Zam’s lives, usually relating to the manner in which their bodies are being used. Stories of legendary sacrifice are a prevalent reminder of one cornerstone of the pair’s relationship—Dodola’s figurative Eucharist in allowing her body for sexual consumption in place of food; Zam’s identification with the martyr for purity and abstinence through self-mutilation, Bahuchara Mata (349, 337-340). The story of Bahuchara Mata is an especially apt reflection of Zam’s confused sexuality, and the panels depicting this provide an even stronger representation: the patron goddess of the hijra, “She was accosted in the desert by thieves. But more than her
money they wanted her body. So to protect herself from rape—she cut off her own breasts—and offered them to the thieves in exchange for her virtue. She bled to death in the desert. A martyr[,] an emblem of abstinence, impotence, and self-mutilation[].” The scene shows Habibi buried in the sand, as is customary following this castration, hallucinating that he is suckling from the nipple of the eviscerated breasts of Bahuchara Mata.13

This goddess shows us the new depth to Zam’s sexual identity as a result of his castration—his conflicting views of Dodola as his self-sacrificing benefactor and his sexual fantasy coincide in this dual representation of Zam’s desires. Since his sexual desires stemming from anatomy he does not understand entices his body to attack him with unwanted urges (much like Bahuchara Mata’s body attracts rapists), Zam offers his genitals up for the sake of purity in an effort to vindicate himself of his shameful attraction to Dodola. This scene also helps to explain the source of his guilt, a sort of Freudian anxiety about sexualizing the woman who has raised him. In a symbolic tribute to Dodola’s sacrifice of her body for his survival, Zam attempts to reconcile this debt by using his own body among the hijra as traditional entertainment and nearly sex work, and to live without sexual desire in penance for that inherent sin. In this attempt to disconnect from his corporeal self, Zam hopes to become nearer to God, but merely removes a connection to this world, in which the idea of the sacred is contained: “The world means nothing now. I need no one.” Despite this, he still feels the sexual desire when touched by a fellow, very attractive and traditionally feminine hijra.

As depicted on page 360 by a stump cut off but still spreading roots, Zam has only removed the physical manifestation of his sexual identity as far as he can recognize it, not realizing the multitude of unnamed and unconscious factors playing into his urges. Since his only acquaintance with sexuality is from his own unwanted and unexplained erections while thinking of Dodola and witnessing her rape (with the very same type of anatomy like his which responds to her), he can only associate his anatomical response with that violence—thus, the fear and shame.

Through this representation of their sexual turmoil through a traditional story demonstrating the cultural value of abstinence and martyrdom, we see how words can literally become the actions of a body through the conditioned responses depicted by them. The
repetition of these stories enforces and perpetuates their central themes and intents derived from the culture in which they were formed, influencing the shape of them in the present (Althusser). For Zam and Dodola (along with the rest of the world), their culture has inscribed on them titles for their relationship, their actions, and everything around them. They relate to one another and to their circumstances through stories, essentially attempting to name and understand a society they are largely on the outskirts of, but still influenced by. This internalized, generative naming system is not exclusive to socio-cultural shaping, but also takes form in a way that seems abstract at first, but is actually quite precise. On pages 470-475 of Habibi, we see Dodola close to death following her near-drowning in toxic water, healed by the literal consumption of a doctor’s knowledge.14 Healers in every culture and location throughout history have transcribed their knowledge of the physical world into decipherable codes that can be understood by their peers and those that come after them and used to perform physical action on living subjects. Without the names and internalized recognition of such chemical units as mass, reactivity and substance, physical science and medicine would be completely unable to organize their specific terms into comprehensible and practical use (250).

Meaning can become fluid if not rigorously tied down and separated from what it is not, which we see when Dodola uses semantics to turn water into gold (301)—depending on context, the names and meanings we use can become ambiguous (Derrida). This is another crucial aspect of interpersonal relationships that we see demonstrated by Zam and Dodola—the two do not exist in a contextual vacuum and thus change along with their circumstances. Before he can even walk, Zam is entangled in an identity crisis of names, that given to him by his biological mother and those given to him by Dodola.15 Depending on which woman he’s in the care of, his names switch meaning between the ideologically-driven Cham (an alternate spelling of the biblical Ham), Zam (from ZamZam, the well that baby Ishmael discovered) and Habibi (Arabic for “my baby”). For Dodola, Zam’s variety of names is representative of the multiple angles from which she comes to view him, first as the surrogate child through whom she can vicariously redeem her own lost childhood, and later as the protective man who cherishes her (626). As for Zam, he only knows Dodola by one name which encapsulates all of his intermingled emotions for her—his desire, protectiveness, and reverence toward her cannot be defined
within any of the social terms that they might fall into such as mother or lover, but are all present in his understanding of her name (405). 16

One of the main points of this argument is based in the crossing of boundaries, and the means by which those boundaries are established and ultimately faulty, particularly the boundary between symbolic language and physical reality (Derrida). On page 546 of Habibi, Dodola confesses while watching the palace from the safe distance of her new temporary home that “This proximity to the site of both our separation and reunion disrupted the boundaries within me.” This statement is essentially reflective of the entirety of Zam and Dodola’s relationship—their intimate proximity has created the difficulty in distinguishing what binds and what separates them, a search that leads them to drastic measures in an attempt to close any gaps. Zam admits near the end of the book in the text-only chapter “Orphan’s Prayer” that he has replaced God with Dodola, comparing his worship of her to that of a graven image. Zam’s understanding of God leads him to believe that reverence of anything other than a supreme being is just as sinful as his turning Dodola “into an object of lust,” the two issues wrapping up in one another to drive him to suicide at the sight of his impurity. Just as he has attempted to become closer to God by ridding himself of his body’s desires, he also tries to understand and become Dodola. Zam reveres her benevolence, affection and vulnerability to the point of worship, and sees countless trespasses against her divine characteristics done to Dodola by men, and begins to associate masculinity with violence. “I searched for Dodola in my own femininity. I claimed I wanted to be closer to God, but—again in my blasphemy—I meant Dodola. I cut off what made us different. I wanted both halves to meet within me.” For Zam, the separation between he and Dodola seems to be largely widened by his own perceived innate evils, and attempts to remove this with his foray into femininity.

The frayed boundaries of both motherhood and companionship complicate events for Dodola, who, like Zam, is at odds with her sexual identity. The key difference in their identity confusion is that Dodola seems much less conscious of the motivations behind her actions and adapts for survival according to the path she follows without much examination beforehand, whereas Zam is obsessed with the possible trajectory of any thought he has. Raising Zam from an early age, Dodola builds a protective bond with him not unlike that of a mother or older sibling, growing to think of him as her responsibility to care for in both
body and mind. Zam becomes the one person who does not force Dodola to submit to them and relies on her for more than her commodity value. This echoes a touted benefit of motherhood, unconditional love from a being to whom you are the center of the world, at least for a period of time. Considering the vast lack of lasting affection and respect in Dodola’s life by the time she is raising this orphan child, it is no surprise that she becomes deeply attached to her surrogate son. But the complication comes in from her corner first when her biological son Rajab is born and she feels no connection with him, and later when she enters into a sexual relationship with Zam. An important fact to remember is that Dodola is impregnated involuntarily by the sultan during her time as his favorite courtesan, and that Zam was a child she willingly saved from the same circumstances she found herself in at the slave market. For Dodola, her body has been so frequently used as a tool rather than a living entity, that the biological distinction between a child conceived in her womb and one pulled into her void barely exists.

Despite the fact that Dodola carries and gives birth to Rajab, she feels as though her true child is the one that she chose. This desire for choice forms an impassable gulf between Dodola and Rajab that is filled by Nadidah, her wet nurse. During her pregnancy and Rajab’s life, Dodola feels much closer to the lost Zam than to her own child—the mere existence of the pair’s desire to be together is a factor that unites them independently of their bodies, though in absence neither can be expressed. In the fits of feverish poisoning on pages 461-467, Dodola expresses that her “womb was unfaithful,” as she hallucinates Zam and her “swallowing mouthfuls of sewage [...] The space between us filled up with boxes and bottles and plastic bags and half-digested meals.” The panel clearly depicts the couple’s perceived distance with all of the “garbage” around them—their failures and crises that pile up within identities. The two also share the bond of having cast off their pasts and the traditions that bridled them when Dodola escaped with Zam and changed his name: “Holding that child in my arms, I blessed exclusively the moment, cursing along with the past the future when he would outgrow me (497).”

The ultimate moment of their desires and needs’ reconciliation comes at the end of the book, starting on page 632 when Dodola asks to see Zam’s scar. Dodola explains to Zam that physical penetration isn’t the only way to connect, and shows him how abandoning the carnal aspect of bodily connection can be just as fulfilling. “During sex, my
spirit always disconnected from my body. Hovering above the lamp as vapor. Over time, my sky crowded with churning, sweaty faces. When Zam anchored me, the dark clouds dissolved. I grasped hold of my vapor—and drew it back into my body.” Finally given the choice to express their emotions and needs in a linguistically impossible way, Dodola and Zam are able to connect in a way that satisfies them both.\textsuperscript{19}

By abandoning the society that had literally imprisoned them as slaves while still demanding a “civil” and appropriate relationship, the two have also left behind the linguistic constraints. As the two lay in their makeshift bed, Dodola’s thoughts narrate: “If the soul overflows, another is able to contain it.”\textsuperscript{20} This is the heart of the matter- one intangible sentiment overflowing from one person into another, sometimes successfully and sometimes not. Essentially communication through both body and language works by defining an ambiguous approximation of the overflow so we can try to contain it and understand its originating point in the other person.

The main point of this argument has been to demonstrate both the various invisible boundaries and bridges between language and the physical world as we interact with it, a physical world that includes everyone in it. Interpersonal relationships can often seem like a simple correspondence of conversation and lunch plans, but this close look at Zam and Dodola shows how extensively linguistic categorization impacts our responses and decisions regarding other people and the world around us. Just through naming the elements and making sure someone else will recognize and build on them down the line, we have entire scientific fields; reminding oppressors of the crimes of the persecuted has shaped entire populations and cultures; being given one title often closes the door on any other. Craig Thompson’s Habibi is just one example, but a powerful one, of how language and bodies are both inextricable from and reliant upon one another, but it is a powerful one.
References