Notes from the Editor

Taking over as Editor and Director of The Hilltop Review was by far one of the most challenging tasks I have experienced in my graduate career. My predecessors set the bar very high for creating a quality publication. I cannot thank my fellow graduate students enough for their patience and understanding as I transitioned into this new role.

I also would like to thank my Editorial Board members and Peer Reviewers for being available when I needed them. As students, we are pulled in many directions, much of the time.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Graduate Student Association Executive Board of 2017-2018 for their support of this journal.

It was my honor and privilege to take The Hilltop Review into its tenth volume, and I look forward to the next issue being even better than this one.

Christina G. Collins
Director & Editor
Hawthorne’s prefaces to his romances, though largely ignored as a composite body of work, contain key insights into reading his fiction. Each preface is a sort of instruction manual directed toward the reader. Though the presentation is gentle, an underlying firmness shows Hawthorne’s sincerity and decisiveness. Hawthorne’s prefaces consistently require two things of the reader: empathy and a willingness to engage in magical thinking. These qualities are directly linked to Hawthorne’s representation of the unpardonable sin as a cold lack of empathy and tendency toward disbelief. Therefore, a reader lacking empathy and an openness to magical thinking would commit a readerly version of the unpardonable sin. Hawthorne provides examples of these unpardonable readers in three of his tales: “A Christmas Banquet,” “The Devil in the Manuscript,” and “Alice Doane’s Appeal.” Though these readers’ attitudes are unpardonable, in “Alice Doane’s Appeal” Hawthorne provides the possibility of redemption.

Critics have long been fascinated by Hawthorne’s handling of the “unpardonable sin.” In regular Hawthornian fashion, the details of what this sin is are left ambiguous. Dwight points out that Hawthorne scholars tend to treat the concept of the unpardonable sin as something that originated with Hawthorne, when in fact the origination is biblical (451). The unpardonable sin is a term referring to a New Testament description of a “sin against the Holy Ghost” that cannot be forgiven on earth or in heaven (Dwight 449). With this in mind, Dwight suggests “it might well be that the unpardonable sin in Hawthorne, as in the Bible, is a transgression against the Holy Spirit” (452). McCullen further limits this definition to “presumption, despair, and impenitence” (223). Dwight’s in-depth definition of the unpardonable sin according to Hawthorne suggests:

The unpardonable sin—the self-destruction of the heart—is not an individual sin in the same sense as an ‘ordinary’ sin. The latter, regardless of how great the offence, is a specific act against God and no matter how many of these sins are committed, or how often they are repeated, they can be forgiven as specific offences if God so wills it. The unpardonable sin, as here defined, is not a specific act. It is more in the nature of a process or procedure whose end result the hardening of the heart is not achieved in any fixed length.
of time. It is the gradual transformation of good into evil absolute. (455)

We see this hardening of the heart enacted repeatedly in Hawthorne’s characters. His villains are nearly always cold, hard, and detached. Often this hardening is a process, but once accomplished it is impossible for the sinner to be repentant. Even though the eventual coldness is impermeable, Dwight suggests that on this journey into the unpardonable sin the sinner can be given the opportunity to repent and so redeem himself (455-56). This view of the unpardonable sin is more nuanced than some: the sin of coldness is unpardonable, but those who have not yet reached the final destination have the opportunity to escape.

Many other critics define the unpardonable sin based off one of Hawthorne’s entries in The American Notebooks:

The Unpardonable Sin might consist in a want of love and reverence for the Human Soul; in consequence of which, the investigator pried into its dark depths, not with a hope or purpose of making it better, but from a cold philosophical curiosity,—content that it should be wicked in whatever kind or degree, and only desiring to study it out. Would not this, in other words, be the separation of the intellect from the heart? (qtd. in McCullen 222)

McCullen, among others, makes the point that this definition is “speculative” (223). The question mark and tone imply that Hawthorne’s statement is not declarative, leaving some room for doubt. As Baym points out, Hawthorne’s notebooks were for working out story ideas primarily, not his own philosophizing (32). This awareness has made some critics wary of flatly accepting the definition of the unpardonable sin as “the separation of the intellect from the heart” (Hawthorne, Notebooks, 106). Still, a close reading of “Ethan Brand” seems to reinforce this definition, particularly the “cold philosophical curiosity” (Hawthorne, Notebooks, 106). In my reading, the unpardonable sin is a combination of coldness of heart and intellectual disbelief.

Though much of Hawthorne’s work revolves around complicated questions of sin and secrecy, “Ethan Brand” handles this concept more bluntly by suggesting an “unpardonable sin.” The story, subtitled “A Chapter From an Abortive Romance” in some ways resembles more strongly a sketch rather than one of Hawthorne’s chapters or even his tales, due to its structure and plot (Wegner 58). In the story, Ethan Brand is a lime-burner who has just returned from a quest to discover the unpardonable sin. When his old friends ask him where he has found such a sin, he places “his finger on his own heart” (Hawthorne, “Ethan Brand,” 1054). Though Ethan readily admits to having committed the unpardonable sin, he is more secretive about the specifics of the sin itself. Even in their curiosity, the townspeople shrink from him. The new lime-burner, Ethan’s successor, finds himself overwhelmed when left alone with Ethan and “must now deal, heart to heart, with a man who, on his own confession, had committed the only crime for which Heaven could afford no mercy. That crime, in its indistinct blackness, seemed to overshadow him” (Hawthorne, “Ethan Brand,” 1055). When asked what the unpardonable sin is, Ethan defines it as “the sin of an intellect that triumphed over the sense of brotherhood with man, and reverence for God, and sacrificed everything to its own mighty claims! The only sin that deserves a recompense of
immortal agony!” (Hawthorne, “Ethan Brand,” 1057). Essentially, Ethan is saying that the unpardonable sin is the result of a lack of empathy, a coldness that keeps the sinner from forming the natural God-created bond with humanity. It is also a sin that separates the sinner from spirituality, creating a distance between the sinner and God. The unpardonable sin is the absence of empathy and of faith.

Eventually more details of Ethan's specific sin emerge. A father asks Ethan for news about his daughter. It is here that the reader, though none of the characters, learns that Ethan has committed the unpardonable sin against this man's daughter. She was “the very girl whom, with such cold and remorseless purpose, Ethan Brand had made the subject of a psychological experiment, and wasted, absorbed, and perhaps annihilated her soul, in the process” (Hawthorne, “Ethan Brand,” 1060). This is Hawthorne at his most chilling. Ethan's lack of empathy has caused him to lose sight of the young girl's humanity. The specifics are unclear; the “psychological experiment” could be many things, from sexual assault to emotional abuse to a more detached manipulation. Whatever the manifestation, the consequence of Ethan's coldness is the destruction of another's soul. Ethan recalls his previous “love and sympathy for mankind” and with what “reverence he had then looked into the heart of man, viewing it as a temple originally divine” (Hawthorne, “Ethan Brand,” 1064). Throughout Ethan's search for the unpardonable sin, his heart “had withered—had contracted—had hardened—had perished! It had ceased to partake of the universal throb” (Hawthorne, “Ethan Brand,” 1064). This hardening of heart is what led him to commit the unpardonable sin against the young woman. Ethan becomes “a cold observer, looking on mankind as the subject of his experiment, and, at length, converting man and woman to be his puppets, and pulling the wires that moved them to such degrees of crime as were demanded for his study” (Hawthorne, “Ethan Brand,” 1064). By losing sight of the girl's humanity, Ethan has destroyed them both. His lack of empathy toward her is his unpardonable sin.

Tied up in the unpardonable sin's lack of empathy is also disbelief. Cold detachment leads not only to cruelty toward fellow humans, but also a withering of the mind, a desecration of wonder. The unpardonable sin is nurtured in an environment of disbelief, and a rejection of magical thinking. In addition to empathy a belief in magic and the supernatural is required. In his reaction to his puritan ancestor's truly unpardonable sins during the Salem witch trials, Hawthorne does not ask us to say “witches do not exist!” but instead assumes witches exist, while suggesting that we should perhaps not hang them. He includes witches, unquestioned, in many of his works—The Scarlet Letter, “Young Goodman Brown,” and “Feathertop,” to name a few. In many ways, Hawthorne's romances could be considered an early form of magical realism, a literary technique often assigned to Latin American literature, but in reality it is transcontinental and far reaching (Clark 76). Clark defines magical realism as fiction that “integrates elements of fantasy, or an imagined world into a life-like, or realistic text. Magical realist authors include magical occurrences in texts that essentially and primarily mirror daily existence, or present recognizable human experiences that authors identify in their writing” (76). Magical realism, then, is quite literally the merging of magic and what is real. This, I believe, is a reasonable way to approach Hawthorne's fiction. His writing often
includes fantastical details which we, and the characters, are expected to accept without question. And yet Hawthorne’s characters and situations remain consistently relevant to and reflective of real life. Hawthorne’s magic is subtle at times; in some stories it is simply a vague hint of the impossible, while in others we are blatantly commanded to accept bizarre circumstances as if they are plausible. Considering this working definition of magical realism as it applies to Hawthorne, we can see that an unspoken part of the unpardonable sin is a refusal to suspend disbelief. A cold lack of empathy serves to separate humans from each other emotionally. Empathy requires a certain amount of trust, of believing in another’s goodness and worth; it is an openness to another’s experience. In Hawthorne’s writing, a good reader empathizes with the characters in the story and with Hawthorne himself. Readers must suspend their disbelief by trusting Hawthorne as an author in order to truly comprehend and appreciate his use of magical realism. A willingness to engage in magical thinking is crucial for a Hawthorne reader. A reader who lacks these qualities of empathy and openness to magic would commit the unpardonable sin of readership. Though this may not be as serious a sin as Ethan Brand’s, Hawthorne makes it clear that it is the worst sin a person could commit as a reader. An unpardonable reader destroys the possibility of story. This identity of the unpardonable reader becomes clear when we examine Hawthorne’s prefaces as instructions for readers, and his tales for depictions of unpardonable readers.

Hawthorne’s prefaces serve as instruction manuals for the reader. At times self-deprecating, always modest, Hawthorne uses the prefaces to create a familiarity with the reader that the texts themselves may not establish on their own. At first the cause for this self-deprecating tone seems to be insecurity, not an inconceivable stance from a man who once said, “if I were to meet with such books as mine, by another writer, I don't believe I should be able to get through them” (Hawthorne qtd. in Wallace 207). This betrays a crippling self-image that followed Hawthorne throughout his career. Certainly, these prefaces allow us to creep much closer to Hawthorne’s self than we are generally permitted in his fiction, and this familiarity does reveal some self-doubt. Still, I believe another effect is at work as well. Hawthorne uses these prefaces as a kind of guidebook, instructing readers on the appropriate way to read his writing. Though some of his words appear to be flippant asides, behind this gentleness is a firm, unflinching opinion of Hawthorne’s: he is writing for the kind of reader who will approach him and his characters with empathy and willingly follow him into magical thinking.

The Preface to The Marble Faun, Hawthorne’s last romance, contains the clearest description of this ideal reader for whom he hopes. He describes himself as writing for “that one congenial friend—more comprehensive of his purposes, more appreciative of his success, more indulgent of his short-comings, and, in all respects, closer and kinder than a brother” (Hawthorne, Preface to The Marble Faun, 853). Though he admits this reader is not a distinct person with whom he has corresponded, he explains that when he writes he addresses the imaginary “Representative Essence of all delightful and desirable qualities which a Reader can possess” (Hawthorne, Preface to The Marble Faun, 853). This idea of the reader as friend is a common theme throughout the prefaces. This “Representative Essence” is an empathetic reader for the “fanciful story,” a reader who is...
willing to revel in fancy, to suspend disbelief on the path of magical thinking (Hawthorne, Preface to The Marble Faun, 854). This is the reader Hawthorne is instructing us to be.

The “Representative Essence” Hawthorne addresses may only be named as such in the Preface to The Marble Faun, but it exists in all the preceding prefaces as well. In “The Old Manse,” Hawthorne’s Preface to Mosses from an Old Manse, he also asks for a sympathetic and magically minded reader. Because the locale in this case is his house, Hawthorne treats the reader as his “guest in the old Manse, and entitled to all courtesy in the way of sight-showing” (“The Old Manse” 1125). Treating his readers as houseguests elevates them to “a circle of friends” whom he hopes will show empathy and openness to the fantastical. As Weldon points out, there is also a paternalistic quality to Hawthorne’s attitude because he “leads his readers into his work and hopes to control closely their response” (43). This enforces my belief that the preface is not as humble and unassuming as would at first appear; Hawthorne has an agenda for his ideal reader. The forthcoming story, he tells this “Representative Essence,” occurs in a sort of “fairy-land” where “there is no measurement of time” (Hawthorne, “The Old Manse,” 1148). He wants readers to enter into magical thinking, even while he takes them on a tour of his home. Hawthorne often scorns “the public” but welcomes readers who will show empathy and an appreciation for the magical fairy lands he creates (“The Old Manse” 1149). His congeniality with the reader is for a purpose: modification of the reader’s behavior into being the kind of reader he wants.

The Scarlet Letter’s Preface, “The Custom-House,” which is one of Hawthorne’s longer prefaces, he again asks for a certain type of reader. In this preface Hawthorne alludes to the “The Old Manse,” describing it as an instance where he “favored the reader—inexcusably, and for no earthly reason, that either the indulgent reader or the intrusive author could imagine—with a description of my way of life in the deep quietude of an Old Manse” (“The Custom-House” 121). With typical self-deprecating humor, Hawthorne sets the stage for yet another “autobiographical impulse” (“The Custom-House” 121). After this self-deprecation, Hawthorne again describes the ideal type of reader he is looking for. He is clear that “the author addresses, not the many who will fling aside his volume, or never take it up, but the few who will understand him, better than most of his schoolmates and lifemates” (Hawthorne, “The Custom-House,” 121). He is instructing the reader to read with empathy, even more than he expects from his closest associates. This is a high expectation for his readers. In this preface he is more explicit about what it would mean if a reader lacked these qualities, and it is here we begin to see the correlation between the unforgivable sin and Hawthorne’s instructions for readers. He says that “thoughts are frozen and utterance benumbed, unless the speaker stand in some true relation with his audience” (Hawthorne, “The Custom-House,” 121). Here we see the coldness referenced in Hawthorne’s discussions of the unpardonable sin. If readers lack empathy, they lack warmth. Cold readers shatter a story, an unpardonable offense from a reader. Hawthorne says, for his part as an author, “it may be pardonable to imagine that a friend, a kind and apprehensive, though not the closest friend, is listening to our talk; and then, a native reserve being thawed by this genial consciousness, we may prate of the circumstances that lie around us” (“The Custom-House,” 121). The empathetic reader will thaw what is frozen, warming a story and its characters. This
is the kind of reader Hawthorne requires. Hawthorne also describes himself as a “man of thought, fancy, and sensibility” (“The Custom-House,” 141). Again, he has chosen to emphasize fancy, the fantastical, alongside more conventional realism. He then tells the artificial history of how he learned of Hester Prynne’s story, describing finding her letter A, holding it against his chest, and feeling a “sensation not altogether physical, yet almost so, as of burning heat” (Hawthorne, “The Custom-House,” 146). Here, at this moment of magical thinking—can a cloth letter A truly cause such sensations?—Hawthorne addresses readers who might doubt, saying, “the reader may smile, but must not doubt my word” (“The Custom-House” 143). Though Hawthorne’s account is somewhat tongue-in-cheek, I think he means what he says. He is asking readers to suspend their disbelief, be empathetic, and engage in the story. He even presents some whimsical imaginings of the ghost of Surveyor Pue, furthering the magical atmosphere. This is how Hawthorne approaches writing; stories happen when “the Actual and the Imaginary may meet, and each imbue itself with the nature of the other” (“The Custom-House” 149). Hawthorne writes using magical thinking, and to read his work we must do likewise. He describes his time working at the Custom-House as a time where he is unable to engage in magical thinking, and therefore unable to write (Hawthorne, “The Custom-House,” 150). Here, again, refusing to engage in magical thinking destroys story, making it impossible to engage. A reader who lacks both empathy and the capacity for magical thinking is an unpardonable reader indeed. Hawthorne also reveals perhaps where he got his ideas about unpardonable readers. He assumes his puritan ancestors’ reactions to his chosen profession as a storyteller would be cold and negative. He imagines one of them saying, “[w]hat is he? . . . A writer of story-books! What kind of a business in life,—what mode of glorifying God, or being serviceable to mankind in his day and generation,—may that be? Why, the degenerate fellow might as well have been a fiddler!” (Hawthorne, “The Custom-House,” 127). Here his puritan forefathers represent his idea of the unpardonable reader: one who is cold and skeptical. These, of course, are also the ancestors whose lack of empathy led to their heavy involvement in the Salem witch trials. This, truly, was an unpardonable sin if such a thing exists. That these ancestors are also the ones who lack empathy to be good readers is surely significant.

In the Preface to The House of the Seven Gables Hawthorne directly addresses magical thinking again. It is here that he provides his famous definition of a “Romance” as opposed to a “Novel” (Hawthorne, Preface to Seven Gables, 351). Hawthorne says that if “a writer calls his work a Romance, it need hardly be observed that he wishes to claim a certain latitude, both as to its fashion and material, which he would not have felt himself entitled to assume, had he professed to be writing a Novel” (Preface to Seven Gables, 351). A Hawthornian Romance is an early form of magical realism, offering Hawthorne unlimited artistic license. In contrast, a novel “is presumed to aim at a very minute fidelity, not merely to the possible, but to the probable and ordinary course of man’s experience” (Hawthorne, Preface to Seven Gables, 351). For Hawthorne, the term “novel” means realism. No magical thinking is required. A novel, though fictional, is concerned with the truth of normal, realistic life. A romance “has fairly a right to present that truth [of the human heart] under circumstances, to a great extent, of the writer’s own choosing.
or creation” (Hawthorne, Preface to Seven Gables, 351). Magical realism offers another way of telling the truth, of showing the spirit of the truth while disregarding some of the basic facts of realism. Romances free the imagination of the author, but require more from the reader. An author, Hawthorne tells us, would “be wise, no doubt, to make a very moderate use of the privileges here stated, and, especially, to mingle the Marvellous rather as a slight, delicate, and evanescent flavor, than as any portion of the actual substance of the dish offered to the Public” (Preface to Seven Gables 351). Here, it would seem, Hawthorne is defining a subtle form of magical realism, and instructing the reader to approach this type of writing with a willingness to engage in magical thinking.

Though he has high expectations of his readers, he does not want to ask too much. It is as though he is agreeing to meet the reader halfway: if the reader will be empathetic and open to magic, he as the author will not take advantage of the freedom he has given himself. Still, ultimately, his instructions are clear. He requests that the book “be read strictly as Romance, having a great deal more to do with the clouds overhead, than with any portion of the actual soil” (Hawthorne, Preface to Seven Gables, 353). He requires a reader who is open to whimsy, a reader who will engage in magical thinking.

The Preface to The Blithedale Romance provides specific reading instructions for the truth of the story he is about to tell. Hawthorne uses the preface to clarify the fictionality of his characters and situations in the novel to avoid confusion with his actual time spent in a commune. He uses this opportunity to continue the definition of a Romance that he began in the Preface to The House of the Seven Gables. He reminds his readers that “Fiction has long been conversant, a certain conventional privilege seems to be awarded to the romancer; his work is not put exactly side by side with nature; and he is allowed a license with regard to every-day Probability, in view of the improved effects which he is bound to produce thereby” (Hawthorne, Preface to Blithedale, 633). He is invoking the magical realism definition as a guide to reading his current work. He practically scolds readers not to compare the book to real life, and to see it as magical art. Hawthorne says that a Romance has “an atmosphere of strange enchantment, beheld through which the inhabitants have a propriety of their own” (Preface to Blithedale 633). This is the sort of environment he is instructing readers to accept. He knows that readers must take this approach for his story to be effective.

One thing is clear: Hawthorne’s instructions require two things of readers: empathy and a willingness to engage in magical thinking. This is necessary for a reader to enter the magical realism of Hawthorne’s Romances, and to treat kindly the characters found within. Hawthorne also makes it clear that readers who lack empathy and willingness to suspend their disbelief are associated with a sort of unpardonable sin. The unpardonable sin of calculated coldness, a complete absence of empathy, shatters a person’s relationships, and such a reader approaches a story with coldness and disbelief. Hawthorne is clear that he does not want this to happen to his stories. Readers’ coldness and refusal to suspend their disbelief causes a story to fizzle, derailing the author’s hopes and intentions. This is the representative essence of an unpardonable reader.

Hawthorne demonstrates the unpardonable reader in some of his tales, which frequently star writers and story-tellers, and their audiences provide mixed responses. In three tales in particular, “A Christmas Banquet,”
“The Devil in the Manuscript,” and “Alice Doane’s Appeal,” Hawthorne provides examples of unpardonable readers and how they experience fiction. For the purposes of my argument I am considering those who listen to an oral tale to be “readers” in the sense that their interpretation requires the same empathy and magical thinking as one reading from a page.

“The Christmas Banquet” is a particularly interesting tale in this regard because it deals with unpardonable sins on multiple levels. In the tale Roderick reads his story to his wife, Rosina, and their friend, the sculptor. Roderick’s story is about the epitome of the unforgivable sin as Hawthorne has described it: a man named Gervayse Hastings. The readers, Rosina and the sculptor, respond in ways that show they are similar to Gervayse, and are therefore unpardonable readers.

In the tale, Gervayse Hastings is the one guest who is invited, year after year, to a Christmas dinner for “the most miserable persons that could be found” (Hawthorne, “Christmas,” 850). Though the other guests have clear sources of misery, Gervayse seems at first to have a successful life. In his own preface to his readers, Roderick describes Gervayse as a person with “a sense of cold unreality, wherewith he would go shivering through the world, longing to exchange his load of ice for any burthen of real grief that fate could fling upon a human being” (Hawthorne, “Christmas,” 849). In Roderick’s story, the first indication that something is amiss comes when a mentally disabled guest “touched the stranger’s hand, but immediately drew back his own, shaking his head and shivering” (Hawthorne, “Christmas,” 854). This coldness comes back repeatedly, as well as Gervayse’s lack of empathy. He lacks warmth, both literally and metaphorically.

Though Gervayse is outwardly successful, with a family and career, he is “a cold abstraction, wholly destitute of those rich hues of personality, that living warmth” (Hawthorne, “Christmas,” 862). He is unable to feel any sort of empathy, even at a banquet for miserable people he is unable to “catch its pervading spirit” and when the other guests share their woes, he is “mystified and bewildered” (Hawthorne, “Christmas,” 855). Even with his family, Gervayse has no empathy; his children and wife find him cold and emotionless. Perhaps the most shocking instance of Gervayse’s coldness is at one of the Christmas banquets. One of the guests dies in his chair, a gust of laughter having extinguished his diseased heart. At this horrifying sight, the other guests are naturally upset, but Gervayse feels no empathy. Instead of being startled, Gervayse is “gazing at the dead man with singular intentness” (Hawthorne, “Christmas,” 860). Another guest confronts him about how he can be so passive, but Gervayse only responds that “men pass before me like shadows on the wall—their actions, passions, feelings, are flickerings of the light—and then they vanish!” (Hawthorne, “Christmas,” 860). He feels no warmth, no connection with other people. Another person can die in front of him and he feels only cold, intellectual curiosity. He is the embodiment of the unpardonable sin; his coldness toward people makes everyone shudder.

Because of Gervayse’s inability to empathize with others, at the end of the story he has learned nothing. Even after years of attending a banquet for miserable people, Gervayse thinks his own misfortune is the worst (Hawthorne, “Christmas,” 866). He
describes his affliction as “a chillness—a want of earnestness—a feeling as if what should be my heart were a thing of vapor” (Hawthorne, “Christmas,” 866). Gervayse’s unpardonable sin may or may not be the most miserable affliction, but a crucial component of it is that he must think it the worst because he cannot empathize with any other than himself.

So goes Roderick’s story. Rosina and the sculptor’s responses, as readers, are what we are now concerned with. After the story is told, Roderick asks Rosina’s opinion. Rosina is unimpressed. “Frankly,” she tells him, “your success is by no means complete . . . It is true, I have an idea of the character you endeavor to describe; but it is rather by dint of my own thought than your expression” (Hawthorne, “Christmas,” 867). Rosina, unknowingly, is responding in just the way Gervayse Hastings would: she is unable to understand and identify with someone else. Her cold detachment as a reader prevents her from engaging in the story and even with her husband the author. As a reader, she lacks empathy both for Roderick and for the characters within. Still, she has at least the openness to magical thinking, willing to use her own imagination to try to comprehend the character of Gervayse.

The sculptor responds poorly as well. After Rosina provides her feedback, he agrees with her. He lacks the ability for magical thinking necessary to appreciate the story. He is concerned with how realistic Gervayse Hastings is as a character. Because the description of Gervayse only says what he cannot feel—empathy—the sculptor says he cannot identify with him. The sculptor quibbles that “we do meet with these moral monsters now and then—it is difficult to conceive how they came to exist here, or what there is in them capable of existence hereafter” (Hawthorne, “Christmas,” 867).

Though the sculptor does not criticize Roderick’s handling of the story, he is caught up in the literal creation of these “moral monsters,” rather than suspending his disbelief and getting into the spirit of the story. The sculptor cannot see past the real world and engage in the magical thinking required to enjoy it. Combined together, Rosina and the sculptor provide the response of an unpardonable reader who is unable to empathize with the characters and unwilling to engage in magical thinking.

In “The Christmas Banquet” we have two readers who are unpardonable due to lack of empathy and magical thinking, unable to appreciate and appropriately interpret the story. We only see these readers for two short moments, before and after Roderick’s tale, and during that brief time we see no growth. By way of contrast, we do see growth of a reader in “The Devil in the Manuscript.” Here the reader starts out unpardonable but begins to have a change of heart.

The narrator in “The Devil in the Manuscript” is visiting his friend, called Oberon, who is ranting about his collection of unpublished stories, which Oberon has begun to resent as a source of pain and humiliation. He has even begun to believe that a fiend lurks within them. The narrator has read the stories in question, and is unimpressed. When Oberon exclaims, “I have a horror of what was created in my own brain, and shudder at the manuscripts in which I have that dark idea a sort of material existence. Would they were out of my sight!” the narrator thinks “[a]nd of mine, too” (Hawthorne, “Devil,” 331). The narrator lacks empathy for the stories he has read and to some degree lacks empathy for Oberon himself. Though he has enough tact to refrain from telling Oberon what he really thinks of the manuscript, he remains quietly amused. When Oberon
announces his plan to burn his manuscript in the fireplace, the narrator does “not very strenuously oppose this determination, being privately of [his] opinion, in spite of [his] partiality for the author, that his tales would make a more brilliant appearance in the fire than anywhere else” (Hawthorne, “Devil,” 332-33). He has no sympathy with what he has read, no connection, making him an unpardonable reader.

The narrator also ignores Oberon’s repeated claim that there is a Devil in his manuscript; he is unwilling to engage in magical thinking. When Oberon asks him if he has felt the influence of the devil while reading the manuscript, the narrator denies it and makes a joke that perhaps the “spell be hid in a desire to turn novelist, after reading your delightful tales” (Hawthorne, “Devil,” 331). There is biting sarcasm in this reply, since we know the narrator does not find the tales delightful at all. He brushes off the possibility of any sort of magical influence in the stories. His inability to engage in magical thinking makes his reading of them unpardonable.

This reader, however, undergoes a slight change of heart. When Oberon is about to throw his papers into the fire, the narrator has “remembered passages of high imagination, deep pathos, original thoughts, and points of such varied excellence, that the vastness of the sacrifice struck [him] most forcibly” (Hawthorne, “Devil,” 334). Now that he feels empathy for the good in the stories, he tries to stop Oberon from burning the tales. He is unsuccessful; Oberon is determined and it is too late. Though the narrator now feels empathetic toward the tales in the fire, he still lacks magical thinking. He does not believe there truly is a fiend in the stories. As Oberon watches the tales burn, the narrator tells us Oberon “described objects he appeared to discern in the fire, fed by his own precious thoughts” (Hawthorne, “Devil,” 335). It is clear the reader is still skeptical, even snide. Still, Oberon’s enthusiasm gradually begins to influence him. As he keeps watching Oberon, he thinks “the writer's magic had incorporated . . . the aspect of varied scenery” (Hawthorne, “Devil,” 335). He is beginning to believe and see what Oberon sees in the manuscript.

When the fire is almost out, the flame suddenly blazes up the chimney and the reader realizes it has “flickered as if with laughter” (Hawthorne, “Devil,” 335). The narrator is surprised by this unforeseen occurrence. Oberon exclaims that this flame is the devil that was in the manuscript, saying, “[y]ou saw him? You must have seen him!” (Hawthorne, “Devil,” 335). The narrator does not respond. In the moment of his surprise, he seems almost ready to believe, but never fully commits. Instead, he is drawn back into practical matters. At the end of the tale, he is the one who realizes that the chimney is on fire, while Oberon stomps around the room ranting about his fire demon (Hawthorne, “Devil,” 336). Ultimately, the narrator has gained empathy but is still unable to engage in magical thinking. He remains partly an unpardonable reader.

In “Alice Doane’s Appeal,” we finally see two readers who start out unpardonable but truly change by the end. The story also has a unique form where the narrator is telling a tale to listeners but summarizes large parts of it for the reader. The narrator, a writer, is on an excursion with two female companions through a wood associated with the Salem witch trials. The ground of graves has a sort of aura about it; the narrator says that with “feminine susceptibility, my companions caught all the melancholy associations of the scene” (Hawthorne, “Alice Doane,” 206). It is a place of gloom and evil. In spite of this, the girls soon forget their
melancholia, and “Their emotions came and went with quick vicissitude, and sometimes combined to form a peculiar and delicious excitement, the mirth brightening the gloom into a sunny shower of feeling, and a rainbow in the mind” (Hawthorne, “Alice Doane,” 206). Hawthorne has established that the girls’ feelings are transitory, and it is difficult to truly affect their sympathies.

The narrator decides to read one of his manuscripts to the girls. He hesitates, suffering from “a dread of renewing [his] acquaintance with fantasies that had lost their charm” (Hawthorne, “Alice Doane,” 207-8). After seeing their insufficient empathy, he worries the girls will also lack the willingness or ability to engage in magical thinking. Still, he proceeds. His story is one of murder and jealousy and accidental incest and magic. At one point, the narrator pauses to observe his “readers,” the girls. They have been attentive, and “Their bright eyes were fixed on [him]; their lips apart” (Hawthorne, “Alice Doane,” 212). Thinking his audience is showing empathy and suspending their disbelief, the narrator plunges into the final scenes. As a last dramatic touch, the narrator tells the girls that they sit upon the grave of the evil wizard in the tale. He finally gets a reaction; “The ladies started; perhaps their cheeks might have grown pale, had not the crimson west been blushing on them” (Hawthorne, “Alice Doane,” 214). The narrator is pleased, thinking his readers have given him the response he hoped for, one of empathy and magical thinking. Still, however, the readers’ true feelings become apparent. To his chagrin, the girls “began to laugh, while the breeze took a livelier motion, as if responsive to their mirth” (Hawthorne, “Alice Doane,” 214). The girls have no empathy for the characters in the story and the horrors they have faced, and are unimpressed by the wizard’s sorcery and power. They refuse to engage in magical thinking. The girls are the definition of unpardonable readers.

The narrator describes his displeasure at their unpardonable reaction. After they begin to laugh at his tale, he says, “I kept an awful solemnity of visage, being indeed a little piqued, that a narrative which had good authority in our ancient superstitions, and would have brought even a church deacon to Gallows Hill, in old witch times, should now be considered too grotesque and extravagant, for timid maids to tremble at” (Hawthorne, “Alice Doane,” 214-15). He decides to try again, to teach them a lesson. The next story he tells is true, and he hopes this will incite a better response from his readers. This time, his story is about the Salem witch trials, linked to the ground where he and his readers sit. This time the readers are enthralled. They are willing to engage in magical thinking even more than the story requires; when Cotton Mather comes onto the scene, the girls “mistook him for the visible presence of the fiend himself” (Hawthorne, “Alice Doane,” 216). They leap from man to fiend without being asked. The narrator is pleased that his readers are engaging with magical thinking, and next reaches for their empathy. He probes his “imagination for a blacker horror, and a deeper woe, and pictured the scaffold—” (Hawthorne, “Alice Doane,” 216). Here the narrator’s appeal to his readers’ emotions is interrupted by just that: empathy. His “companions seized an arm on each side; their nerves were trembling; and sweeter victory still, I had reached the seldom trodden places of their hearts, and found the wellspring of their tears” (Hawthorne, “Alice Doane,” 216). The readers have developed the capacity for empathizing with the characters in his story. Now that they have expressed both empathy and magical thinking, the two
readers are no longer unpardonable readers. They have reformed. In fact, they share the narrator’s disappointment “that there is nothing on its barren summit . . . to assist the imagination in appealing to the heart” (Hawthorne, “Alice Doane,” 216). The two girls, once given a second chance, have now changed into the type of reader Hawthorne describes in his prefaces. They are no longer unpardonable readers. They truly are the “Representative Essence” of the kind and gentle reader Hawthorne instructs us to be.

Hawthorne’s instructions to his readers in his prefaces are firm. He expects empathy from his readers and openness to his version of magical realism. A reader must have these characteristics to fully understand and appreciate Hawthorne’s romances as he defines them. A look at his exploration of the biblical concept of the unpardonable sin, exemplified primarily in “Ethan Brand” shows that these qualities are precisely what an unpardonable sinner is lacking. Cold detachment from others and disbelief are the ultimate crime. On a much smaller scale, then, it becomes clear that a reader who does not follow Hawthorne’s instructions would be an unpardonable reader. Though perhaps not literally sinful, unpardonable readers have the unfortunate power to freeze a story and crush an author. Story cannot exist in the presence of such a reader. Hawthorne demonstrates this in his depiction of readers in his tales. Fortunately, in one tale, “Alice Doane’s Appeal,” Hawthorne offers an opportunity for redemption. Though unpardonable sinners may be beyond repentance and salvation, unpardonable readers are not. Hawthorne instructs, scolds, and offers forgiveness to those readers who ask for it. Hawthorne is the deity of his readership, saving us from ourselves.


PEOPLE YOU MAY (OR MAY NOT) KNOW: USAGE INTENSITY, STATUS MOTIVATION, AND INTIMATE SELF-DISCLOSURE AS PREDICTORS OF BRIDGING SOCIAL CAPITAL ON FACEBOOK

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Introduction

Social networking sites (SNS) such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook, allow not only for the formation and maintenance of both casual and intimate relationships, but offer individuals an unprecedented degree of control over their self-presentation as users exchange information over channels unbound by spatial and temporal restrictions. Currently, 71% of adults in the United States use SNS, a nearly sevenfold increase over the past decade (Poushter 2016). Individuals from ages 18 to 29 are the most common users, with 90% among this age group using social media (Poushter 2016). In recent years, the increasing popularity, pervasiveness, and even necessity of SNS has attracted the attention of researchers in the field of online communication who are interested in gaining insight into the potential benefits and adversities of involvement in these extensive, diverse platforms.

Facebook, currently the most popular social networking platform online, hosted an average of over 1.7 billion monthly active users as of July 2016 (Facebook Press Release 2016; Poushter 2016). Although there are countless alternatives for online social networking, users and researchers alike are drawn to Facebook (FB) by its distinct communicative features. Unlike other popular sites that restrict users to sharing limited-character posts, captioned photos, or strictly public information, FB permits users to connect in a variety of ways, from instant messaging and restricted groups, to their own public profiles and open community pages. Moreover, the site places few restrictions on the type and amount of content that can be shared (e.g. photos, videos, links to other websites, etc.). Arguably the most unique aspect of FB, however, is the ease with which users are able to browse the network and connect with others, as the site suggests ‘people you may know’ and offers a search function that locates other users by name, personal information, mutual group affiliations, and general profile content. In sum, Facebook constitutes a vast, diverse online network that permits users to selectively share self-information, maintain connections with offline acquaintances, and form relationships with other users whom they may not know personally via shared interests, common contacts, or by simply browsing the network (Attrill and Jalil 2011; Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe 2007; Maghrabi et al. 2014; Walther et al. 2008).
Social Networking Site Use and Social Capital

The large, heterogeneous networks afforded by SNS has prompted a considerable amount of research that examines the effects of involvement in these online mediums on users’ access to, and accrual of, social capital. Although the concept has come to be understood differently across the social scientific community (see for example Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992), Robert Putnam’s (1995:67) more recent conception of social capital has been popularized due to his introduction of dimensionality into the construct, which broadly refers to “the features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit.” More specifically, Putnam (2000) views social capital as a means of strengthening connections among individuals of relatively homogenous groupings and expanding connections between members of a broad range of social groups. As such, Putnam makes the distinction between two dimensions of social capital: bonding is characteristic of more homogenous social groupings and has the potential to reinforce exclusive identities and provide individuals with emotional support, social support, and feelings of trust; bridging social capital, on the other hand, is characteristic of interactions between members of diverse groupings and has the potential to broaden social identities, informational access, and worldviews (Putnam 2000:22-23). Thus, in Putnam’s terms, the concept of social capital can be used to understand how individuals’ feelings of security, as well as their access to information, emotional support, and general social support are shaped by the composition of the various networks within which they interact, and the ways in which exposure to varying degrees of homogeneity and heterogeneity influences group solidarity and intergroup involvement.

Whereas the relationship between SNS use and bonding social capital is not widely agreed upon among researchers, previous studies have often linked SNS use to increases in bridging social capital (Aubrey and Rill 2013; Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe 2011; Hofer and Aubert 2013). Given the wide-ranging, heterogeneous networks hosted by SNS, individuals are often exposed to profiles that highlight differences among users (Ellison et al. 2011; Hofer and Aubert 2013; Maghrabi et al. 2014). As Ellison et al. (2011) found in their study of FB users, initiating interaction with strangers on the site was not significantly related to increases in bridging social capital. Rather, using the site to explore others’ profiles and learn more about them (i.e. social information-seeking) was positively related to perceptions of bridging. This makes sense given other studies which have found that SNS users are more likely to directly interact with those whom they are already acquainted (Ellison et al. 2007; Walther et al. 2008).

The greater influence of publicly available information on users’ perception of bridging capital can likely be attributed to how such information is customarily assessed by users of these platforms. It has been suggested that SNS users present information about themselves selectively in order to appeal to various subsets of their online network by emphasizing certain personal characteristics via profiles and posts (Ellison, Heino and Gibbs 2006; Maghrabi et al. 2014). As Bazarova (2012) found in her study of undergraduate Facebook users, intimate information shared publicly was both considered inappropriate and misinterpreted as less intimate by its receivers, consequently rendering the
sender less attractive to their audience. Both the ability to selectively present oneself on SNS and the restrictions placed on posted information in terms of perceived appropriateness and attractiveness suggests that the publicly available information that exposes users to differences among members of the network serves a “relational maintenance” function rather than a means whereby they are able to form strong ties with others (Tong & Walther 2011). In other words, access to social capital on SNS may be founded on the presentation of more ‘superficial’ information that is motivated not only for reasons of sociability, but by a concern with status (Aubrey and Rill 2013; Maghrabi et al. 2014). Information shared in this way may neither prompt nor permit users to seek the close connections requisite of bonding capital, but likely provides the necessary exposure to diverse opinions, beliefs, and worldviews required to positively impact users’ access to bridging social capital.

While there is ample evidence in support of a link between SNS use and bridging capital, past studies commonly disagree on which elements primarily account for this association, highlighting disjointed aspects of online interaction, such as user motivation, the number of ‘friends’ one has on a social networking platform, and time spent online (Chang and Hsiao 2013; Hofer and Aubert 2013). Although research has revealed significant relationships between these variables and social capital, other important elements of online interaction that may help to reconcile often conflicting findings remain considerably understudied within the field. Self-disclosure, the sharing of self-information with a single individual or a multitude of others, is a process that occurs in all interactive online mediums. In her studies of online self-disclosure, Attrill (2012) found that users are more likely to disclose superficial self-information in both private and public contexts on SNS, and that positive attitudes toward forming relationships online are not related to increases in intimate self-disclosure (Attrill and Jalil 2011). These findings are in keeping with Tong and Walther’s (2011) contention that SNS is better suited for relational maintenance via the public sharing of mundane personal information rather than the formation of strong ties via intimate self-disclosure, and suggest that the self-expositional nature of communication on SNS involves meeting socially acceptable standards of information sharing (Bazaravo 2012). Still, the factors found to impact bridging capital via online interactions, such as concerns with self-presentation, self-disclosure, routine use, and time spent online remain sporadic within the literature and are oftentimes incompatible (Attrill and Jalil 2011; Aubrey and Rill 2013; Hofer and Aubert 2013. In an attempt to synthesize these elements of SNS use under one model and gain a better understanding of their interplay, this study will test several hypotheses involving usage intensity, status motivations, and intimate self-disclosure on public profiles as predictors of bridging social capital.

Given that 1) FB use has been found to positively predict bridging social capital (Ellison et al. 2007; Liu and Brown 2014), 2) SNS users are exposed to heterogeneity via information shared on public profiles (Ellison et al. 2011; Hofer and Aubert 2013), and 3) users may selectively disclose self-information in order to appeal to subsets of a diverse online network (Maghrabi et al. 2014), we can expect to find that:

Hypothesis 1: Usage intensity will be positively associated with bridging social
Hypothesis 2: Status motivations will be positively associated with bridging social capital.

Also, given that 1) intimate self-disclosure in public contexts on FB decreases the social attractiveness of the sender (Bazarova 2012), and 2) users are more likely to disclose superficial rather than intimate information in all contexts on SNS (Attrill and Jalil 2011), we can expect to find that:

Hypothesis 3: Self-disclosure of intimate information on public profiles will be negatively associated with bridging social capital.

Data and Methods
Participants

Data collection for this study was achieved using an online survey instrument. The questionnaire was distributed to 4,000 randomly selected undergraduate students at a large Midwestern university via the university email system. In total, 580 students completed the questionnaire, resulting in a response rate of approximately 14.5%. The considerably low response rate may be attributed to the explicit focus of the survey on Facebook use, which did not permit participants to respond according to their experiences on other forms of social media. A contingency question was included in order to determine whether respondents had used Facebook during the previous two months, with 90.9% of respondents (N=527) indicating that they had recently used the site.

Dependent Variable

Online Bridging Social Capital: For this study, bridging social capital was measured using items from the bridging subscale of Williams (2006) Internet Social Capital Scale (ISCS). The six items with the highest factor loadings from Williams (2006) confirmatory factor analysis were chosen and appropriately reworded to reflect respondents’ experiences on Facebook. Items include such statements as: “Interacting with people on Facebook makes me feel like part of a larger community,” and “Interacting with people on Facebook makes me want to try new things.” These items were assessed using a 5-point Likert-type scale of agreement ranging from 1 “Strongly Disagree” to 5 “Strongly Agree.”

A confirmatory principal components analysis was conducted on the six items in order to verify the anticipated factor structure. The indicators were found to be adequately intercorrelated (KMO=.841) with factor loadings ranging from .632 to .862. A high level of internal consistency was found (α=.876) and the items were combined into a summated scale for the measurement of bridging social capital.

Independent Variables

Usage Intensity: Facebook usage intensity was assessed using the Facebook intensity scale developed by Ellison et al. (2007). The scale includes one self-reported item that asks respondents to estimate the amount of time they spend on Facebook daily, and six attitudinal indicators including statements such as “Facebook is part of my everyday activity” and “I would be sorry if Facebook shut down.” Each of the usage intensity items were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale of agreement, ranging from 1 “Strongly Disagree” to 5 “Strongly Agree.”

In order to verify the expected factor structure, a confirmatory principal components analysis was run on the seven intensity items. A high degree of intercorrelation was found among the
variables (KMO=.827), with high factor loadings on a single component, ranging from .604 to .850. The seven items were found to have a high level of internal consistency (α=.851) and were combined into a summated scale.

Status Motivation: In order to measure status motivation, three items from Aubrey and Rill’s (2013) adapted status motivation subscale were employed. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the following statements: “I use Facebook to provide others with information about myself,” “I use Facebook as a way to impress people,” and “I use Facebook as a way to feel important.” These items were assessed using a 5-point Likert-type scale of agreement, ranging from 1 “Strongly Disagree” to 5 “Strongly Agree.”

A confirmatory principal components analysis was run and the three items were found to be adequately intercorrelated (KMO=.636), with factor loadings of .519, .805, and .820. The items were found to be internally consistent (α=.789) and were combined into a summed scale for the measurement of status motivation.

Intimate Self-Disclosure: In order to measure the extent to which users shared intimate self-information with other Facebook users via their own public profiles and/or the public profiles of others, a contingency question was developed which asked respondents to estimate how often they communicate with others online using this function. The item was assessed on a 5-point Likert-type scale of frequency, from 1 “Never” to 5 “Very Often.” Respondents who indicated that they “Never” use profiles to communicate with other users were not asked any further questions regarding their use of this function, while those who chose any other response category were asked subsequent questions regarding their behaviors, feelings and encounters within this channel of communication.

For this study, items from the adapted version of Magno’s (2009) self-disclosure scale employed by Attrill and Jalil (2011) were used to measure intimate self-disclosure via public profiles on Facebook. Sixteen items were chosen from the original 60-item scale based on the face validity of each statement and the dissimilarity of each indicator from others included in the instrument in order to minimize the likelihood of response-fatigue. The items were reworded to appropriately reflect behaviors, feelings and experiences on Facebook public profiles. The self-disclosure indicators were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale of frequency, ranging from 1 “Never” to 5 “Very Often.”

An exploratory principal components analysis was conducted on the sixteen self-disclosure items in order to identify any underlying latent constructs (see Table 1). A very high degree of intercorrelation was found among the items (KMO=.916) and the rotated component matrix identified three dimensions that met the Kaiser criterion, with ten items loading on the first component (λ=8.076), five items on the second component (λ=1.946), and two items on the third (λ=1.097). Two items were found to have low loadings on their respective components and were excluded from further analyses: “I tell people on Facebook about my problems in the forms of a joke” and “I give information about myself in casual situations on Facebook.”
### Table 1. Exploratory Principal Components Analysis of Intimate Self-Disclosure Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Component 1</th>
<th>Component 2</th>
<th>Component 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I tell people on Facebook the things I worry about the most.</td>
<td>.718*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I open up about my situation to others on Facebook when I feel troubled.</td>
<td>.760*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tell my personal insecurities to others on Facebook.</td>
<td>.806*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I talk about my love life in detail with others on Facebook.</td>
<td>.727*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I talk about the things in the past or present that I feel ashamed of with others on Facebook.</td>
<td>.727*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I talk about my family problems with other people on Facebook.</td>
<td>.812*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel the need to have somebody to talk to on Facebook when I experience failure.</td>
<td>.832*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel comfortable revealing secrets about myself to others on Facebook.</td>
<td>.825*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tell people on Facebook about my problems in the form of a joke.</td>
<td>.495</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I share my happiest moments in life with others on Facebook.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.881*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tell people on Facebook about my life goals.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.726*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tell people on Facebook the kinds of things that make me proud.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.855*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I talk about my successes in great detail with others on Facebook.</td>
<td>.417</td>
<td>.707*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I give information about myself in casual situations on Facebook.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.550</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I talk about my spiritual life to other people on Facebook.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.841*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I share my views about God with others on Facebook.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.901*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Factor analysis was conducted using Varimax rotation and all values below .40 were suppressed. The precise wording of each item on the instrument is represented. Items are ordered according to component and do not reflect the order on the instrument. Items with asterisks (*) were chosen for inclusion in summated scales based on high factor loadings.
Because the eight items with the highest loadings on the first component involved the disclosure of sensitive, adverse self-information, and given a very high level of internal consistency among the items (α=.937), the eight indicators were combined into a summed scale for the measurement of ‘negative self-disclosure’. The four items with the highest loadings on the second component involved the disclosure of favorable self-information and were also found to be internally consistent (α=.861); thus, the indicators were combined to create a summed scale for ‘positive self-disclosure’. Lastly, the two items loading on the third component involved the disclosure of religious, or spiritual self-information; these items were found to have a high level of internal consistency (α=.887) and were combined into a summed scale for ‘religious self-disclosure’.

**Results**

Ordinary least squares (OLS) regression was used to test the hypotheses following a multiple imputation of the original data. Before imputing the data, each of the bivariate relationships between the dependent and independent variables were assessed for linearity. Curve fit estimations were calculated and three significant nonlinear relationships were found between the dependent variable and negative self-disclosure, religious self-disclosure, and status motivations. Incremental F-tests revealed a significant increase in explained variance of bridging social capital between the linear (R²=.056) and logarithmic (R²=.134) models for negative self-disclosure (F=21.178(304, 1, 1), p<.001), between the linear (R²=.046) and power (R²=.072) models for religious self-disclosure (F=1.579(312, 1, 1), p=.004), and between the linear (R²=.248) and power (R²=.273) models for status motivation (F=16.404(479, 1, 1), p<.001). However, upon imputation, log transformations of the dependent and independent variables resulted in a non-normal distribution of the residuals and a condition index greater than 30, indicating severe instability among the predictors (Allison 1999). Therefore, none of the variables were logged in the final model.

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics of the original dataset and pooled statistics of the five imputations. Similar to the original data, Shapiro-Wilk tests of normality revealed significantly non-normal distributions of each of the imputed variables.² Both the dependent variable, bridging social capital (t=-.504, S.E.=.109), and the independent variable usage intensity (t=-.216, S.E.=.109) were found to have slight negative skewness. The remaining independent variables, negative self-disclosure (t=1.789, S.E.=.109), positive self-disclosure (t=.238, S.E.=.109), and religious self-disclosure (t=1.066, S.E.=.109), as well as status motivation (t=.432, S.E.=.109) were found to be positively skewed. Log transformations of the variables did not correct the non-normal distributions, and caused multicollinearity and multivariate non-normality within the model; therefore, the variables were not logged for the regression.

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¹Five datasets were imputed. A Markov Chain Monte Carlo method with 500 maximum iterations and case draws, and 300 maximum parameter draws was employed; the dependent variable, all five independent variables, and log transformations of the dependent variable, negative self-disclosure, religious self-disclosure, and status motivation were imputed. The seed was set to 666.

²All test-statistics and standard errors were averaged across the five imputations (N=506). Shapiro-Wilk tests of normality revealed p<.001 for each of the variables.
An OLS regression\(^3\) was run using the unlogged variables and collinearity diagnostics revealed no problematic\(^4\) variance inflation factors (VIFs), tolerance levels, or condition indices, indicating no extreme multicollinearity within the model. A Shapiro-Wilk test of normality was conducted on the model residuals (N=506), revealing a significantly normal distribution (t=.995, p=.082) and indicating multivariate normality within the model. In order to assess homoscedasticity, the residuals were squared and regressed on the five independent variables, resulting in an R\(^2\) value of .0144 (N=506, df=5). A White’s test revealed a significant homoscedastic condition (t=7.2864, p=.2002) and it was concluded that heteroscedasticity was not an issue in the model.

As displayed in Table 3, the OLS regression showed a significant association between the predictors and bridging social capital (F(5,506)=83.984, p<.001). An adjusted R\(^2\) value of .4508 was found, indicating that, taken together, usage intensity, status motivation, and the three types of intimate self-disclosure on public profiles (negative, positive, and religious) account for 45.08% of the variance in bridging social capital for the Facebook users included in this study.

| Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Original and Imputed Datasets |
|---------------------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
|                                | Original Dataset | Imputed Datasets (N=506) |
|                                | Mean | Min | Max | S.D | Mean | Min | Max | S.D |
| Negative Self-Disclosure       | 10.68 | 8.00 | 15.00 | 4.72 | 11.72 | 8.00 | 15.00 | 4.46 |
| Positive Self-Disclosure       | 9.94 | 4.00 | 20.00 | 4.02 | 10.31 | 4.00 | 20.00 | 3.85 |
| Religious Self-Disclosure      | 3.18 | 2.00 | 10.00 | 1.82 | 3.62 | 2.00 | 10.00 | 1.78 |
| Usage Intensity                | 20.74 | 7.00 | 34.00 | 5.36 | 20.29 | 7.00 | 34.00 | 5.74 |
| Status Motivation              | 7.19 | 3.00 | 15.00 | 2.62 | 7.05 | 3.00 | 15.00 | 2.72 |

\(^3\)The OLS regression was run on the five imputed datasets. All reported numbers reflect pooled values of the five imputations.

\(^4\)Allison (1999) suggests that VIFs of 2.50 and higher, tolerance levels of .40 and below, and condition indices greater than 30 indicate problematic multicollinearity.

The results show a significant, positive association between FB usage intensity and bridging social capital (B=.451, p<.001), lending support to H1 and indicating that, for each additional unit increase in usage intensity, a .451 unit increase in bridging social capital can be expected. In support of H2, status motivation was also found to significantly predict increased bridging social capital (B=.466, p<.001) where, for every unit increase in status motivation, a .466 increase in bridging capital can be expected. Finally, no significant associations were found between the three intimate self-disclosure variables and bridging social capital. Positive, insignificant relationships were found between both negative (β=.013, B=.015) and positive intimate self-disclosure (β=.032, B=.042), and the dependent variable. Religious self-disclosure was found to be the weakest predictor of bridging among the three intimate self-disclosure measures (β=-.012, B=-.034), albeit not significant, where a negative association between the variables lends partial support to H3 and suggests that religious self-disclosure on public profiles may lead to a slight decrease in bridging social capital.

**Discussion, Conclusion, and Directions for Future Research**

The findings of this study provide further support for a positive association between social networking site use and bridging social capital. The results reveal both Facebook usage intensity and status...
motivations as predictors of increased bridging capital, lending support to the contention that social networking sites serve a “relational maintenance” function by exposing users to a wide-range of information shared among users of a diverse online network (Bazarova 2012; Tong & Walther 2011). The positive association between status motivation and bridging capital seems to suggest that users not only perceive the information they share on FB as being viewed by a larger, heterogeneous audience beyond those with whom they are already acquainted, but that publicly shared information is in some way intended to appeal to this audience as Maghrabi et al. (2014) contend, and is likely moderated by standards of information sharing defined by communicative norms on the site (Bazarova 2012). However, aspects of the public information sharing process on Facebook and its implications for bridging social capital remain unclear.

Although a strong, negative association between the various types of intimate self-disclosure and bridging capital was not found, no significant positive association was revealed, suggesting that the public sharing of deeply personal information on FB is not a primary means whereby users connect with a range of dissimilar individuals who constitute sources of bridging social capital. Rather, the informational access and general social support made available by involvement in the diverse networks that make up SNS may be achieved through the exchange of information that Attrill and Jalil (2011) term ‘superficial’: postings of messages, pictures, videos, articles, and other forms of public self-disclosure that convey incremental, ‘on the surface’ information about the sender that does not wholly capture their attitudes, beliefs, and experiences, but instead expresses who they aspire to be, or rather, the person they wish others to perceive them as. While this study cannot speak to the sharing of ‘superficial’ information, it suggests that intimate self-disclosure is not the bridge connecting users of wide-ranging backgrounds, experiences, and worldviews across social networks such as Facebook, a finding that raises questions regarding the process of identity construction and socialization in a society that is ever-shifting from offline to online.

Although the results yield valuable insights for future studies of SNS use and provide support for previous research regarding the behaviors and motivations that contribute to the accrual of bridging social capital in online social networking, this study is not without its limitations. First, the cross-sectional design of this research precludes the inference of causality from the model. Although, intuitively, the independent variables included in this study can be accepted as antecedents of bridging capital, it is possible that bidirectional relationships exist among the variables in the model, such that increases in bridging social capital may affect the degree of intimacy in online self-disclosure, or the extent to which use becomes routine (i.e. usage intensity) by virtue of the informational and social resources individuals enjoy by using Facebook and other SNS. Future research should attempt to explore feedback between bridging capital and the independent variables included in this study through either the development of longitudinal research designs or the use of nonrecursive path analysis.

The measurements employed in this study qualify as an additional limitation. Data obtained via attitudinal measures
are often difficult to validate and, even when criterion-related methods of validation are available, the link between associated behaviors and what is measured attitudinally may be confounded by additional, unexamined internal and external factors (Oppenheim 1966). Moreover, this study did not collect data on the type of information users share on Facebook in order to convey intimate self-information (i.e. text, photos, videos, etc.), leaving questions regarding how rather than simply whether intimate self-disclosure is carried out publicly on the site. For this reason, future studies should strive to employ both behavioral measurements that allow for the assessment of criterion validity, as well as qualitative forms of data collection that permit stronger claims to construct validity, such as in-depth interviewing in conjunction with questionnaires employing open- and close-ended items.

Finally, the findings of this study should not be taken as generalizable given the community-specific nature of data collection in the current research design. Future studies of SNS use and social capital should sample from larger, more wide-ranging populations that offer higher levels of external validity but that, as in this study, also allow for probability sampling techniques via adequate sampling frames. While the undergraduate population sampled in this study closely reflects the demographic of the majority SNS user-base throughout the U.S. (Poushter 2016), data collected from populations that are representative of the general SNS user-base would undoubtedly yield more valuable insights regarding the potential benefits of involvement in these sites for users’ access to social capital.


Waves of Beauty

Taylor S. McDonald
"August 21 was one of the high points of 2017. That day, a total solar eclipse tracked over much of the continental United States. An early morning train ride brought me to Carbondale, Illinois, which happened to be the location of the eclipse’s longest duration. As totality neared, clouds obscured this amazing celestial wonder. The clouds soon parted, and I was able to get this spectacular shot."
first there was the regular track of time & energy,
then like botany class the lab opened its glass doors:
you were blinking in color through the microscope
of your stunned Monday; you were in your warm car
in the lonely parking spot you chose carefully,
just to eat in; the sky is something enthusiastic
through windshields...Maybe you’re wondering
what carried you here into this crazed radio station
called rush, or what exactly it is that lives
on the crown of your head, tingling at a thousand
frames per transmitter, the caught feeling
of keeping—the car running while sitting
(listen to her sigh), and the clink of a brass penny
against the jar making a list of what I owe to its rock,
how the face gets carved by the transformation of the arm
into a robotic force, a honeycombing of faces
to a scale led by dynamite, everyone talking
thereafter about who deserves to be added.
STYLOLITE
CATHODOLUMINESCENCE UNDER CROSS POLARIZED LIGHT

Katherine Dvorak
*Western Michigan University*

Stylolites are solution seams where the rock is literally dissolved from excess pressure. Usually uninteresting to the naked eye, geoscientists will make thin sections of these rocks and analyze them underneath the microscope. When the cathodoluminescence technique is applied to these thin sections amazing colors from different minerals become visible. This limestone fluoresces yellow colors where calcite is present. Blue is the most likely presence of some barite and little green or red specks indicate other trace minerals.
LOVING HER

I Like you... 3 words she sang out had my face smiling like a light bulb in a dark room. That was the day I could eat flower petals for breakfast tasting the beauty of her for the rest of my life. Taste her vibrance like the sun radiating through my bedroom window midday on a summer in July.

I Love you... Hung in the air my lungs never tasted, yet felt like the sweetest sensation a vibration that shook my chest in accidence to the rhythm of her every syllable. Since that day I’ve clung on to every little word her eyes speak as they dance around my features when she looks at me.

Those soft opal eyes pull me in like the tide of the ocean with no notion of all the emotions I feel when she gazes into me. Like deep sea diving she plunges into the darkest parts pulling the sun under so I can beam from the inside. Feel light. Feel warmth, her warmth verberates though my vertebrae sending shivers down my shoulders like icicles touching my taste buds. I feel my tongue squirm in excitement every time her name flows out my mouth and into this atmosphere of wonder. Where the stars couldn't get any brighter. The moon no higher than the love I feel for her.

To you this creature of features so exquisite even Mona can't help but smile. Heaven in every curve of her hips, dip in her lips, drenched with elegance more beautiful than a girl on her wedding day. More beautiful than dancing in the rain. More beautiful than anything in my wildest imagination.

To this woman whose breath blankets my fears with comfort calm. When the palms of her brush against my chest landing in the softest center I did not know I had. To this woman whose love saturates into my bones bringing alive my spirit like reviving the dead. I feel all the thoughts of her fluff up my head like cloud 9 in the daytime of when the sky is the bluest of blue.

I thank her. I thank her for taking her time to handle my rubric cube feelings that she peels out my arms like onions, layer after layer. She finds my warm place behind the cold chamber I keep it hidden behind. She makes it beat again, bleed again, in the way it leads to new beginnings and fun never endings. Laughter that fills my medicine cabinet heart because no medicine is greater than the sound of her piano tone voice I fall surrender too, like a musician oxygenating a crowded room with feelings of complete static goosebumps.

Her arms remind me of the smell of home with wood fires and hot chocolate cozy kind of nights. Safe and relaxing. She is more than enough I deserve. More than enough I reserve to my heart every day I wake.

She is what beautiful is made of.
She is what sunsets dripping on front porch steps looks like.
She is my land of wonder I could wander around all day.

Thank you, sweet love, for all the ways you help me say I like you, and all the more ways I love you.
High Aspirations

Deniz Toker
I liked you before I loved you, before I dreamed of a world where ours would merge. I couldn’t see an “us” then.

Yet here I am writing my confession, not of crime but of obsession.

Before you took my hand, I assumed alone I would stand. Maybe if you were my goal, I would once again feel whole.

I look in the mirror and no longer see, a child staring back at me.

My mind would rush to pleasing you. In my search to enter your space, I rushed out of my own place.

This is not the way it works, someone’s feelings of self-worth.

I began to fight for what I wanted to be right. But as two wrongs don’t make a right, this logic could never take flight.

In another I must not define, that which can only be mine.
PRINTED DOT QUALITY IN RESPONSE TO
DOCTOR BLADE ANGLE IN GRAVURE PRINTING

Bilge N. Altay
Western Michigan University

1. Introduction
Although printing substantially contributes people's daily life, it is maybe the most underappreciated technology. When tens of millions of copies are needed, such as magazine (i.e. National Geographic, IKEA catalog), book, newspaper, packaging (i.e. cereal boxes, M&M's candies, cosmetics), or specialty items (i.e. furniture, flooring, flexible electronics) gravure printing is the preferred production technology [1-6].
Gravure is one of the five major printing technologies and its origin goes back to early seventeenth century [7,8]. Its advantages include high print quality, high-speed production and hardwearing image cylinders which allows duplicating in millions [8]. A very critical printing machine part that is called doctor blade (Figure 1) controls the amount of ink transfer from the image cylinder onto the substrate. The blade can contact the image cylinder at varied angles; however, an improper angle may cause major problems.

Ink viscosity is another factor that can influence the ink transfer [9]. Both water and solvent based inks are commonly used in gravure printing. They require viscosity range of 10 to 30 seconds (s.) – depending on the press conditions – when measured with the Shell cup viscometer #2 [10]. Solvent based gravure inks can be highly volatile chemicals. They can evaporate into the air [11], and cause reduction in ink viscosity. Having high viscosity can lead to uneven dispersion, as well as aggregation of pigment particles that cause ink transfer problems. Therefore, the first thing to do before the printing is to adjust the ink viscosity. It is also equally important to consider the compatibility between the size of cell openings on the image cylinder and the size of pigment particle in the ink. Pigment is the component that gives ink its color and the size of it varies based on the pigment manufacturer. On the image cylinder, there are recessed cells (Figure 2) that may be same in area but different in depth or vice versa or may be both different in cell shape, area and depth [12,13]. These variations permit delivering different ink volumes on a substrate. During printing, ink fills in the cavity of these cells, then doctor blade removes the excess ink from the outside surface of image cylinder before transferring it on the substrate. A rule of thumb for a given pigment size is that the opening must be three times bigger than the pigment particle size, so the particle can easily go in and out of the cell.
A traditional way to control the amount of ink transfer to the substrate is to measure the ink density. There are handheld density measurement devices that functions based on reflecting light (45°) to the printed ink and measuring the percentage of light being reflected (0°) back to the device. This is one way to monitor ink profile over the course of printing process, but the density data is limited, since it doesn’t indicate information about color or dot attributes such as dot perimeter (P), area (A, size) and circularity (C, shape).

Collecting data from the printed ink by incorporating image analysis through a high-resolution camera would assist receiving more details about the dot attributes. In this study, the doctor blade angle was positioned at three different levels to investigate its effect on printed dot quality by correlating density and image analysis.

2. Method and Materials

A 4-color gravure web-fed printing press (Cerutti: Italy) was used to print the test form in Figure 4 on a coated paper substrate. The ink solvent base was toluene. Print color order was yellow, magenta, cyan and black (YMCB) (Figure 1). Doctor blade angle was varied at three different levels and labeled as high, normal and low. The blade pressure was set to 40 psi. Printing speed was 650 feet/min. The viscosity of the toluene based ink was measured with the Shell cup #2.

Optical density of 100% black solid patch was measured 10 times with X-rite densitometer for each doctor blade angle setting. Printed black dot attributes (area, perimeter) of the 15% tone step were quantified using high-resolution overhead camera along with Image Pro Plus image analyzing software.

The perimeter (total length of the dot boundary) and the area (the sum of areas of each pixel within the borders of the dots) can be used to calculate a circularity value [15]. Circularity is a dimensionless value and represents how a printed dot similar to a circle. It is calculated using the formula based on ISO 9276-6 in Equation 1:

\[ C = \sqrt{\frac{4.\pi.A}{P^2}} \]  \hspace{1cm} (1)

Lower circularity value indicates a less circle like shape [15, 16].
3. Results and Discussions

Previous practices in lab has proved the target viscosity values presented in Table 1 is suited for 4-color Cerutti gravure printing press. Before the printing, the values were higher than the target viscosity. To reduce the viscosity, additional toluene was added into the inks until seizing the target value.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yellow</th>
<th>Before printing</th>
<th>After the adjustment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22 s.</td>
<td>24 s.</td>
<td>22 s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magenta</td>
<td>22 s.</td>
<td>25 s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyan</td>
<td>28 s.</td>
<td>32 s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>19 s.</td>
<td>23 s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5 and Table 2 represent 10 different density measurement that were collected from the 100% black color in response to the blade angle. The high angle blade setting was exhibited slightly lower density, while the normal and low setting was averaged the same.
After the density, the printed ink analyzed with a high-resolution camera. The magnified photos are presented in Figure 6. Even though the density profile was around the same, the printed dot shapes and missing dot amount did not correspond as identical. At low blade angle, the dot formation and density looked uneven, which causing overall image to appear mottled or grainy. At high blade angle, the dot shapes appear irregular. The normal angle setting was presented more uniform dot shape. Missing dots occurred at each blade angle, but the low angle setting had the higher amount, representing the inability of ink transfer from the engraved cell to the substrate.

Table 3 shows that changing the blade angle from high to low affects the dot area and perimeter values. The sample size for the low angle is shown as 268, which is roughly three times more than the other blade angles. Since the image analysis software function based on threshold technique, the reason would be that the software detects any dark spot as a regular dot. By disregarding the low angle data, it can be stated that the normal blade angle enables better dot shape than the high blade angle. The circularity of high and normal angle is calculated as 0.83 and 1.05 respectively (Table 4), indicating normal angle dot shape is more uniform and circles.

Table 4. Circularity results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High angle</th>
<th>Normal angle</th>
<th>Low angle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roundness</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Conclusion

In this study, doctor blade angle was positioned at three different levels to investigate its effect on printed dot quality. Although the gravure printing used in the study, the theory to check dot quality through image analysis can extent to the other printing systems named flexography, offset, digital and screen printing. The results showed that only looking at density value cannot provide sufficient information about dot quality. Incorporating an advanced camera was allowed further investigation and assisted quantifying printed dot area, perimeter and circularity. The dot attributes were undesired when the doctor blade angle was above or below the normal proper positioning.


It's hard to pay attention to where you're going when you're trying not to walk into the road. Nicole texted me a party invite during class. I walked from campus because I can't see well enough to drive. Construction obstructed my normal route, so she sent different directions. I turned left when I should've gone right. I reversed and corrected my mistake.

I reach a house vaguely resembling Nicole's. Classical music lilts as I approach. Nicole is into techno.

I knock, then enter the foyer. I shiver as the door closes. Mold stings my throat. A beaded curtain covers the archway into the kitchen. I pass into warmth. The scent of meat roasting fills my lungs. Everyone resembles fogged glass. They appear to be dressed in costume. A thin gold bracelet with twelve onyx shards on a young woman's wrist catches my eye. She snaps into focus in a room of blurs and shadow. A bearded Russian man leans close, "She is lonely."

I turn to him, "Why is that?"

"Each shard represents a dead suitor." His beard is unkempt. His hands feel like cold glass. "She built a place outside of time, and was trapped inside." He recedes into the room.

On the counter, a punch bowl sits next to a stack of Styrofoam cups. A soft hand rests on my back: Nicole's? I turn, no. The woman radiates sorrow. Her white dress covers her ankles and wrists. Her hair is the black of a closed crypt. Her smile glows. Her voice is the wind through the trees of an endless forest. "Won't you ask me to dance? The musicians are playing, and we are both without dates."

I glance down, "I'm sorry. I stumbled into your party."

A door clicks; cobwebs and moss tickle my nostrils. Her smile flickers, "Won't you escort me?"

"I wasn't invited. I don't know where I am. I should call my friends," I mentally retrace my route and touch my phone. Nicole will worry if I don't arrive soon.

Her smile rekindles. "Be my guest; join me tonight." She glides close, her body warms my skin. "Stay with me." She pulls my hand, leading me around the table and between chairs. Candelabras illuminate the chambers. Each candle like a boney finger, flames hovering above the tip. Smoke threads from each, crisscrossing to form labyrinths in the air. The floorboards moan as I follow through columns of icy air. "Who are you?"

She presses her index finger to my lips, "Shh."
The quartet strikes up another song. “Dusk fades into night. We must dance before the gloom crawls through the windows.” Long passages lead into a large room. Heat radiates from a fireplace recessed into the wall. The fire leaps and whirls rhythmically to the music. A haze reflects the glow of the flames. Shadows dance without regard for the bodies that cast them. The smoke blurs the revelers. In the far corner, four specters play instruments. Between songs, one or another musician sips from a wine glass on a table next to the stage.

A slowly spinning ceiling fan puffs my hair as we start to dance. Her dress is spider’s silk. Closer, I can tell her eyes are midnight blue. Moonstone earrings float beneath her ears. A ruby pendant pools like a drop of blood at the base of her neck. Nicole’s shampoo is apple scented. My companion smells like a wilted rose. “I’d like to get some fresh air,” I try pulling away. She holds me, “We’ll have an eternity for that soon.” She guides me deeper into the haze; through a forest of white pillars. More people enter the room. But, we never collide with another couple. We dance, weaving between the columns.

I struggle to pay attention while we dance. I brush a pillar; cold pierces my arm. Nobody else seems concerned.

The Russian speaks, “One more shard for your bracelet Ariadne?” My companion missteps. Then she leads me back to the kitchen. Ignoring the Styrofoam cups, she hands me a chalice of gold liquid. We sit on folding chairs and eat at a card table in a small pantry off the kitchen.

“I worked on the Codex Justinianus.” She sips her drink. “I was surprised Tribonian asked for me. Maybe he saw my interest. Later I contributed to the Juris Civilis. I never thought I’d be so involved.” She swirled her cup, “I studied alchemy, enchanting, and magic.”

Tribonian is from Greece; he’s a history professor, I think... She must be his graduate student. “Nicole studies the Court of Justinian and the Eastern Roman Empire. Do you know her? She’s a history postdoc.” My companion stands then leaves. She returns, cup refilled. The fluid sparkles as her finger traces along the rim. She sips then passes me the glass, “One final drink.”

Later, she introduces me to the other guests. One was a physician in the court of a Chinese emperor; another was an architect for Ivan the Terrible.
Historical Perspectives of Burial

Throughout the last 200 years, there has been a significant change in American funeral practices. Pre-civil war preparation of the dead was an intimate experience performed by family members. Only the closest individuals to the deceased would participate in the “laying out” of the body, washing and dressing or wrapping with a shroud (Gonzales, 2009). It was uncommon for cosmetic work to be performed and minimal to no preservative measures were taken. The body would usually be kept in the home, under constant supervision for 1-3 days, and burial options included inhumation or entombment (Davies, 2005). Laderman (1996) states that in pre-civil war society, it was abnormal to consider other burial options than the two mentioned above, modern disposal methods would be viewed as “...impractical or inconceivable to the majority of the population. Indeed, any procedure that accelerated the destruction of the body and threatened its supposed integrity after death provoked outrage and horror...” (p.36). Attitudes regarding the preparation of the dead changed drastically when the United States faced the crisis of union succession.

During the Civil War, over 600,000 American citizens perished. The unparalleled amount of human loss experienced within such a short period changed the trajectory of burial practices within the United States (Mitford, 1998). Laderman (1996) states, “Such excess of violence and human destruction during the contest was heretofore unknown in the history of the republic, and under circumstances the symbolism constructed around the dead began to demonstrate significant changes” (p. 94). Death was pervasive on the battlefield, and many men were not given funeral rites or disposed of in an inappropriate societal context. Soldiers were partially buried in unmarked graves or combined in large pits of 30 men or more. It was reported that battles would have to move location or be temporarily halted because of the decay present in combat conditions (Laderman, 1996).

Soldiers buried in unmarked graves in unknown locations with no formal systems for identifying rank (the later developed dog tag) were unable to be located by relatives. Newspaper coverage of battlefield conditions exposed American families to the reality of decay and many began to search more intensely for family members (Davies, 2005). The desire to bring family members home for burial in northern soil increased. Field medical practitioners were consulted and practical means for transporting bodies over long distances developed. Initially,
Embalmment methods included submerging bodies in ice, preserving with whiskey or stuffing bodies with sawdust, lime, and charcoal (Laderman, 1996).

Although once perceived as a temporary measure during wartime, the practice of chemical embalming with substances such as “arsenic, zinc chloride, bichloride of mercury, salts of alumina, sugar of lead and a host of salts, alkalies and acids” became the “American” way of burial (Laderman, 1996, p. 113). The embalming of President Abraham Lincoln and funeral train extending over several states displaying the body to the American public was a defining moment in the acceptance and normalization of the practice (Mitford, 1998). It became associated with high social status, and demand for embalming increased among wealthy classes. Trickling down from affluence, it became accessible for middle class families and eventually became a federally regulated practice for all citizens. The medicalization of body preservation for the health profession was born and the role of the “undertaker” was formalized (Davies, 1996).

In addition to the process of chemical embalming, it is important to recognize the effect the Civil War had on the creation of private cemeteries and government-regulated burial grounds. The high death toll of the Civil War created industrialized burial space, including the Gettysburg National Cemetery (Davies, 2005). Concepts like the purchasing of grave plots, post mortem documentation and regulations for bodily remains within public cemeteries was developed as a result of the Civil War period. Within the scope of five years, burial rituals and methods of body disposal were dramatically altered. The historical method of natural burial with ecological and religious underpinnings was transformed into mainstream “embalming culture” (Gonzales, 2009). The practice of personally preparing a loved one for the grave, allowing for natural decomposition, transitioned into a segregated medicalized practice that introduced hazardous chemicals into the ecosystem (Spellman, 2014).

**Modern Funeral Practices**

After 1900, mortality rates dramatically fell, and death became more associated with old age. Preparation and disposal of bodies became a secularized practice run by privatized businesses (Spellman, 2014). Preparation of the dead integrated preservative and cosmetic procedures to create the “magic” of the funeral production. Morticians were careful to present the living as “sleeping” or “just like they once were” in attempt to temporarily present falsified versions of the dead for the world of the living (Gonzales, 2009). Spellman (2014) notes during this time, “Death professionals were even careful to emphasize the quasi-religious function of their specialized services, allowing friends and family the necessary time to separate themselves from the cosmetically enhanced physical remains of the departed” (p. 189).

Modern funeral practices completely remove death care from the public sector, and small mortuary businesses have become commercialized funeral companies. Many Americans are not aware of alternative burial practices devoid of mortuary intervention. Once a person dies, it is assumed a funeral director will be notified and have the body removed from the home in an organized, quick, and discrete manner (Gonzales, 2009). Davies (2005) notes that funeral directors tend to be traditional in matters of customary behavior. In times of intense bereavement,
It is much easier to follow a prescribed pattern of behavior. If a person did not have a burial plan, it may be hard for family to make alternative decisions with short notice. It is uncommon for beavered to change a funeral pattern unless they have a strong or special reason for doing so. Family members may be left with limited options in terms of pricing and funeral packages depending on geographic region and are “at the mercy” of the mortuary business (Mitford, 1998).

Families understand all burial arrangements will be coordinated as part of the ascribed professional package. This may include lead-coated steel casket inserts, adjustable innerspring mattresses, color-matched casket linings and coordination of funeral fashion (Mitford, 1996). The transition from preservation to cosmetic enhancement, Foltyn (1996) argues, is now evolving into restoration of the body presenting the dead devoid of illness, mutilation, and disfigurement. The commodification of modern funerals allows morticians to offer premium packages that can camouflage wounds, replicate lost limbs, attach severed heads, and even chemically adjust skin tone if it was affected by the dying process (Mitford, 1996). Trade language in the funeral industry has adapted to emotionally disconnect families from “death rhetoric.” Some of the terms include casket, not coffin, funeral director, not undertaker, coach, not hearse, and cremains, not ashes (Mitford, 1996). Davies (2005) argues that, over time, funeral directors reduced family ties to the body and death allowing for higher levels of acceptance in mortuary practices.

Green Death Movement

In response to mainstream death culture, some have begun to question the desirability of embalming and sustainability of disposal. What was initially conceived as a temporary measure during wartime crisis is now an established industry that represents a cultural practice of bereavement. Societal views segregating death from the public sphere and acceptance of body perseverance as a medical trade are noted as main features for normalization of body preservation (Feagan, 2007). The long-term environmental effects are immeasurable, but approximations for current resources have been formulated. Gonzales (2009) states, “It is estimated that in each year, 827,060 gallons of formaldehyde for embalming, 30 million feet of hardwood and 90,272 tons of steel for caskets, 14,000 tons of steel and 1,636,000 tons of reinforced concrete for vaults are buried in cemeteries across the United States” (p.2). Burying preserved human remains in hardwood “perma-sealed” caskets with anti-leak technology is a societal indicator of dualistic views separating flesh from earth. The failure to accept death and the necessity of products that physically inhibit the fulfillment of “ashes to ashes” are reflective of cultural norms (Gonzales, 2009).

The green death movement challenges modern funeral practices, and what Davies (2005) identifies as the “cosmetic-casket-concrete-complex.” Green or natural burial, also referred to as the green death movement, is the practice of burying the dead without any chemically preservative measures. Bodies are disposed of in biodegradable containers, or ecopods, constructed from cardboard, wood, wicker, and other natural materials (“Green Burial Council”, n.d.) Davies (2005) states current burial practices “…Seek to express preservation of the dead even though, in practice, it really leads to the inevitable corruption of the body within its casket.
rather than contact with the earth” (p.75). Conventional burial methods do not allow organic matter to return to the planet and encapsulation of the corpse in sealed containers promotes rot of the body (Gonzales, 2009). Mitford (1996) argues that the docility of American attitudes towards “conventional” burial is because they do not know what invasive procedures take place behind the “formaldehyde curtain.” During natural burials, the body is not altered or augmented in any way, however, modern forms of preparing a cadaver include incisions draining bodily fluids and replacing with cavity fluid, and in some cases, removal of organs (Mitford, 1996).

“Green” body disposal is not limited to the traditional natural burial context. Cremation is generally discussed as an alternative practice to traditional burial and is promoted as a sustainable practice, however, ecologically, the process emits harmful toxins. Although it can be considered as less environmentally damaging than the traditional burial process, it releases greenhouse gases and vaporizes embalming chemicals (Feagan, 2007). Also, the process of cremation does not allow the body to integrate back into the ecosystem, feeding biological life. Other green methods include eternal, or “memorial,” reefs that combine a loved one’s ashes with non-toxic materials to replicate and sustain deteriorating oceanic reef habitats (Gonzales, 2009). Although the environmental issue of cremation was discussed above, this method is included because of its restorative purpose as an alternative burial option. Another method of green disposal includes the process of promission. This is marketed as an alternative to cremation and is a process in which the body is frozen with liquid nitrogen until it becomes brittle. The body is shaken producing powdered “premains” (Gonzales, 2009). The process does not emit harmful toxins or have negative environmental effects, but is not yet available in the United States.

Theology of Death and New Age Spirituality

Laderman (1996) asserts the theology of death and symbolic nature of burial shifted with the invention of embalming and medicalization of the “death work.” He argues that the secularization of western society during the post-enlightenment period contributed to the cultural separation of the human body with nature. The Christian church began to lose its position within funeral proceedings as Americans became more exposed to scientific methodology and medicalized practices. The breakdown of the theological understanding of the natural world and its relation to mortality was a result of this cultural shift (Laderman, 1996). Embalming and public burial spaces, once conceived of as abnormal and sacrilegious, are now preferred by some religious populations as a preservative measure. Christian populations view the integrity and intactness of the body as ideal, because it preserves the physical human form for Christ’s return, uniting the eternal spiritual being with its corporeal shell (Davies, 2005). Today, Christian ideology is still followed in the basic constructions of gravesites with bodies facing east, towards Jerusalem, symbolically waiting for the return of Christ (Davies. 2005). Dogmatic religious aspects of afterlife judgment and resurrection conflict with the New Age’s decentralized “grab bag” spirituality. Incorporating aspects of mysticism, eastern philosophy, neo-paganism and Native American traditions with other esoteric beliefs sculpts
a variegated belief in the ambiguity of the afterlife experience for many New Agers.

Early New Age concepts include interpretive definitions of death that diverted from Christian theology. This was reflected in transcendentalism and spiritualism, describing an uncertain destiny of the soul and presenting death as a spiritual transition. Transcendentalists pronounced a holistic concept of body-earth integration of death within the “Gospel of nature” (Davies, 2005). Defining features of the New Age that contribute to the discussion of green burial's eco-spirituality include “new science,” referencing interconnection among life and ecological philosophy, addressing a total planetary state and human's responsibility within it (York, 1995). The New Age paradigm represents the shift in world view from the authority of the church and will of God to monistic spirituality and the destiny of humanity (Feagan, 2007).

Hanegraff (1998) states that our society is in planetary crises due to the Newtonian/ Cartesian paradigm that deeply influences thinking and permeates our way of life. The ecological crisis the earth is facing is based on “fundamentally flawed” presuppositions of the duality between humans and nature. Transition in the way we are thinking about humanity and the interconnectedness of life and death within a holistic framework philosophically aligns the New Age with the green burial movement. Hanegraff (1998) argues that a new perspective of an integrated ecological world view reflects the transformative humanistic restoration of the earth. The ecological framing of our identity and concern for future generations is reflective in mainstream practices of recycling, energy reduction and land conservancy (Davies, 2005). Being conscientious of waste disposal is disseminated in American culture, but we do think of sustainability within the context of our bodies. Feagan (2007) states body disposal is the ultimate ecological contribution that ensures “ecological immortality”. Natural burial ideologically embodies the concern for the destiny of the planet and its application represents an extension of the practices Americans are implementing in everyday life. The purpose of green burials is to emphasize the “intrinsic relationship between the human body and the world as a natural system within which the ongoingness of life is grounded in the successive life and death of the individual, animals, plants, indeed, of all things” (Davies, 2005, p. 87). Contributing to the mass of living organisms allows personal values to be reflected not only in lifestyle but also in “death-style” (Gonzales, 2009).

New Age beliefs emphasizing holistic views of humanity as a planetary culture incorporates not only ecological relatedness, but biological and spiritual relationships as well. Spangler (1984) advocates increased accountability for treatment of the earth based on chemists James Lovelock’s Gaia theory. The Gaian model suggests that the earth is a single, self-regulating organism without separate or detached biological systems. Lovelock (1979) proposes we “revision” our view of the planet as a complex entity of interacting systems. The New Age must view the earth as “Gaiamorphic” and transcend anthropomorphic views (Spangler, 1984). Detaching from the human-plantary binary, he suggests we no longer “act upon” the world but “with the earth”. Spangler (1984) states, “The image of Gaia restores us to being part of an Earth community, first among equals perhaps, but only because of
our potentially great ability to understand and serve the whole” (p.48).

Although some philosophers categorize paganism separately from the New Age movement, Hanegraff (1998) incorporates Neopagan beliefs into the new paradigm, as they are ideologically compatible with terminological differences. Pagan beliefs grounded in reincarnation as the “ever-turning wheel” of death view the decomposition of the body as the organic balance of planetary wellbeing (York, 1995). Starhawk (1997) presents the integration of our physical bodies within the Pagan context of karma. She asserts the consequences of the way in which we treat the earth inspires Pagans to consider the long-term view of the planet’s future. From a Pagan perspective, decomposing, or being ingested by other entities, is fundamental to the spirituality if reincarnation (York, 1995).

**Deinstitutionalized Death in Life**

From a bereavement perspective, the reintroducing of death back into the familial sphere could be societally beneficial and demystify the “funeral production” (Gonzales, 2009). Institutionalized death practices are not limited to postmodern procedures. Choices regarding quality of life and patient surroundings are other forms of a medically controlled dying process. What Davies (2005) coins as “supervised death” in a hospital environment may not reflect personal preferences of terminally ill patients. During the 1960s, the development of hospice philosophy as a holistic medical treatment for chronic illnesses began to emerge. Initially, social resistance to hospice services was rooted in the lack of understanding of non-curative philosophy. Opponents of hospice stated that services accelerated death by not implementing life-prolonging measures and promoted active euthanasia (Spellman, 2014). The negative formulation of this conviction is deeply rooted in a western medicalized society which aims to combat death. Alternatively, hospice philosophy is a personal decision only employed when the individual no longer wants life-sustaining measures and recognizes his or her own mortality. It encourages self-determination and autonomy in medical decisions (Davies, 2005). Interdisciplinary hospice practitioners address physical, psychological, and spiritual systems of the patient and do not impose values or preferences on patients and families (Spellman, 2014). Comparing burial choices with individualized hospice care represents holistic values that honor the way in which a person desires to die. Spellman (2014) explains that the goal of hospice is to return the power to the dying individual, stating, “What marketers declared as appropriate in terms of the funeral, what the medical and psychological communities define as ‘normal grief’, what culture endorsed in terms of the proper disposal of the body—all of these efforts to classify, bureaucratize and rationalize death were challenged as examples of arbitrary power in Western society” (p.194).

With medical advancements, ethical issues regarding artificial biological preservation prolonging life is frequently debated in palliative care. Davies (2005) states, “Though life support machines may perpetuate the existence of human bodies, for the great mass of people the difference between life and death is stark and obvious” (p. 61). Health care directives and “Do Not Resuscitate” (DNR) orders are used extensively within hospice services to guide patients in determining personalized medical treatments. Funeral planning
and preferences are discussed in an open manner and encourage patients to make accommodations that best fit with their “death style” (Spellman, 2014). Hospice is a therapeutic approach that does not view the dying as a “set of body parts” but as an integrated person. Hospice deviates from the institutionalized medical complex and returns a sense of agency to the individual (Davies, 2005).

The resistance and misinformation of the hospice movement as an individual or “different” practice parallels choices of alternative burial selection. After regulations allowing death in the home as a standardized palliative practice changed, attitudes regarding non-curative death shifted within the medical field (Spellman, 2014). In relation to the green burial movement, there is notable resistance of deinstitutionalized burials from death benefiting industries. Although not originally conceived to economically injure the mortuary market, it fundamentally threatens the livelihood of embalming practice. The funeral industry is a business, and selling products for the afterlife is like any other form of merchandise (Gonzales, 2009). Morticians have become responsible for many tasks as a “coordinator of services” that expands beyond the original preservative purpose. Funeral directors exploiting the vulnerability of the bereaved have been criticized for using selling strategies to tack on additional and unnecessary funeral options (Mitford, 1996). From the green burial perspective, the entire concept of mortuary practice is unnecessary, costly, and unsustainable.

Another practical implication includes not having a natural cemetery or hybrid space, allowing both embalmed and unembalmed bodies, within regional and even state-wide proximity. Another option is burying the deceased on personal land, but requires special permits for the zoning of inhumation and transportation of a dead body and is only allowed in some states (Feagan, 2007). Currently in the United States, there are 51 operating green burial cemeteries, three of which are in Michigan (“Green Burial Council”, n.d.). Other facets of the green burial industry include companies producing biodegradable grave products and “green-certified” morticians aiding families in planning natural burials. On average, the cost for green burials is significantly less than traditional burial that often amounts to thousands of dollars (Gonzales, 2009).

**Conclusion**

Participants in the green death movement include not only environmentalists, but those who are seeking to spiritually reunite their body with the earth. Although green burials represent an eco-spiritual practice, the movement is ultimately about death (Feagan, 2007). Medical discussions about death and funeral planning are increasing with the intervention of hospice social workers and medical directives available in hospitals and other social services settings. However, societally, the subject is avoided in conversation and considered taboo. Although some discuss “final arrangements” with family, an overwhelming number of patients neither have burials plans, nor have discussed preferences with loved ones (Spellman, 2014). The lack of end-of-life planning or consideration of the “ethos of disposal” ultimately represents the tendency to deny death in western society. Culturally, we are addressing “ethos of waste,” but are failing to recognize our bodies as decomposable matter.
Gonzales (2009) presents an alternative image of current burial practices stating “...Cemeteries serving as quiet beacons of eternal rest becomes one of the quasi landfills of chemically processed human remains. Being able to look at the body in this way would be difficult for some and even insulting or sacrilegious for others” (p. 44). From this perspective, the modern funeral concept is presented as unnatural, unsustainable, and slightly macabre. As adequate burial space decreases, with the acknowledgement of the need for improved land conservancy, concern for natural resources increases. We are forced, as evidenced by the green burial movement, to question the practical means in which we dispose of human remains. The movement challenges the perceived need to remove dead from the public sphere and create a private medicalized practice (Feagan, 2007). To address the growing interest in alternative funeral practices, morticians will need to change and expand services to meet the demand for human-centric approaches of death. This may include practitioners becoming green certified, developing hybrid cemeteries and adapting to different forms of disposal. Changes in federal regulations and state laws regarding disposal practices may be altered to accommodate ecological and spiritual needs of the public (Mitford, 1996). Some developments within the field include “do it yourself” death books, including Caring for Your Own Dead and New Natural Death Book, with detailed instruction and resources for green burial methods and procedures. Mitford (1996) explains the “true American tradition” is a burial practice without mortuary intervention. Breaking the trend of mechanical and impersonal journeys to the grave will depend on societal acceptance of the unenviability of death and cultural norms surrounding death work (Walter, 1993). The state of the world ultimately reflects the dominant culture. The New Age movement represents a spiritual shift in the ways we think about ourselves and the world. Conversations and consideration of our death and disposal will ultimately integrate more sustainable burial practices into our ecological conscious.
References


Some of the most iconic images of the twentieth-century’s People’s Republic of China are of propaganda posters. These artistic renderings, featuring bright colors and depictions of powerful and productive members of society, have come to represent both the strength of the People’s Republic of China and the hypocrisy and hidden corruption of the Communist Party. Designed to exemplify correct living and the hopes for the future of China under the People’s Republic, propaganda posters became the most active form of political communication in China and were engaged in by all members of society. Propaganda posters were used as a vehicle to propagate Communist thought widely within and without China and were ultimately the most effective measure to gain rural peasant support for the Communist leadership. Once the Party had gained stable control over China, propaganda posters penetrated the lives of people at every level of society. This is particularly true of the period in which Mao Zedong led the Communist Party and were essential to his role in Chinese society. The impact of Mao Zedong and his ideologies in the early years of the People’s Republic would never have come to be without the impact of Chinese propaganda posters.

**Propaganda in Prospective**

It is no exaggeration to say that the Communist Party uses propaganda in conceivably every form of media available to the Chinese public. The Communist party uses newspapers, magazines, digital news media, universities and primary education classrooms, film, and museums to dispense propaganda. These various vehicles for political ideological dissemination provide to serve two main purposes within the nation. They make for a propaganda state, where political ideology rules the majority, and thus one in which intellectuals are forced to self-censor. This reduces conflict within the state and encourages ideological purity. This purity is also enhanced by the secondary goal of propaganda in Communist China which is of proactive propaganda. Proactive propaganda provides a blueprint of behavior and thinking that the party believes should be observed and repeated by the citizen population. Propaganda itself is viewed by the Communist party without the negative associations it is commonly given in Western culture.

The Western definition for the word “propaganda” is defined as: “information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote political cause or point of view”. The term generally used within China, which was translated from the western word “propaganda” is xuānchuán. Xuānchuán (宣传) does not contain positive

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or negative connotations in Chinese culture. Instead, the word is a neutral term that is interchangeable for words like “information” or “advertisement”. The same term could be used to describe public health information pamphlets or a billboard advertising the sale of cellphones. It is for this reason that “propaganda” does not have the same cultural legacy that it is associated with in the West. Because propaganda can be associated with the neutral broad dissemination of knowledge, it could then prevail as culturally significant and a long withstanding form of political communication.

**Chinese Propaganda Afore the Chinese Communist Party**

Propaganda posters within China are often historically associated with the People’s Republic of China, but truthfully, it was used well before the Communist Party (CCP) came into a central position of power. While it could be associated with dynasties of China’s past, it was more significantly employed by the Nationalist (Kuomintang) Party, the rival of the CCP during the Chinese Civil War. During the Second Sino-Japanese War, the Nationalist Party promoted several different series of propaganda posters that presented the image of the Nationalist army standing solely opposed to the Japanese. These include posters such as “Millions of People All of One Mind Vow to Exterminate the Japanese Enemy” and “We Live to Struggle for the Nation!”, both published in 1937. Neither of these posters make any mention of the Chinese Communist Party, which the Nationalist Party had purged ten years prior during the April 12th massacre in Shanghai, despite the fact that the Chinese Communist Party had initially allied themselves with the Nationalist Party against the Japanese. Instead, the posters reflect the Chinese resistance as a Nationalist resistance. In the latter propaganda poster, “We Live to Struggle for the Nation,” the subjects of the image wave one flag only: the Nationalist flag. Eventually, pressure from Japanese forces would heavily weaken Chaing Kai-shek’s Nationalist army, leaving room for the Chinese Communist Party to expand from their rural power base in Yan’an and take central control of mainland China, forming the People’s Republic of China.

Years later, once the Nationalist government’s power base was restricted to the island of Taiwan, the People’s Republic of China employed propaganda posters to maintain the constantly revolving series of campaigns which Mao Zedong believed were essential for Communism to be successful. Mao is quoted as saying, “Wherever the Red Army goes, the masses are cold and aloof, and only after our propaganda do they slowly move into action”. Under Mao, the Communist party engaged the population through propaganda posters to promote party approved role models for society to follow, create ideological monitors among the public, and control the media and educational system so that people on all levels of society could engage with the Communist message. The CCP’s power base resided with the peasantry through class struggle and mass revolution, so propaganda posters were especially effective in inspiring the often illiterate

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rural masses.\(^9\) Propaganda posters also provided the feverish mass movement energy required for the regular rooting out of enemies among the people, which were often violent and virtually endless as Mao’s paranoia grew towards the end of his life.\(^10\) For virtually every major campaign of the Communist Party’s history there is a plethora of propaganda posters available to show how the Communist Party wanted that historical moment remembered by the Chinese population and how they wanted the citizenry to respond.

**Exaggerated History and Hopes for the Future**

The May-Fourth Movement provides an interesting example of the role of propaganda with historical memory. At the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, Japan was allowed to maintain control of Shandong, which had been previously occupied by the Germans during World War I. Chinese students immediately gathered in protest.\(^11\) Though the Communist party did not play a direct role in the May Fourth movement, the party later liked to remember the protests as the spirit of revolution that inspired the party.\(^12\) Printed in 1959, the “Develop the Revolutionary Spirit of the May Fourth Movement” poster commemorates the May Fourth’s historical position in the Communist Party’s history; the subject of


During the mid-1930s, the Communist party was forced to flee their base in the Jiangxi province, over mountains and through swampland, pursued by the Nationalist army, which would be historically remembered as the Long March. As a result, the party received a massive blow in numbers, as more than 90% of its members were lost to warfare and environmental conditions.\(^14\) Upon the Party’s reemergence as a national power in China, the Long March was crafted into an epic backstory for the Party that was highly replicated by propaganda artists. A prime example of this is a series of eight posters drawn up by Ying Yeping and Wang Huanqing in 1961 titled “An Arduous Journey”.\(^15\) These posters idealize the Long March, showing images of uniformed, clean Communist marchers proudly baring the red flag before them in each poster. The propaganda posters fail to reflect the numbers of wounded, starving, and dead that suffered through the Long March.

The Communist Party has also used propaganda posters not only to remember its history, but to promote reform ideas intended for China’s future. The Land Reform Movement of the 1950s revolved around the idea of the advancement of Chinese peasants through the dispossession of landlords and the destruction of landowning social elitism at the village level. Propaganda posters from this period, such as the “Mutual Help in Plowing has Brought
in More Food” poster and the “Agricultural Cooperativization is the Socialist Course that Makes Everybody Prosperous” poster reflects the quixotic goals of cooperativization rather than the violent struggle meetings that were performed on landlords.

Progressing onward from the village run cooperatives, the Party moved to incorporate all property and its output into a strictly state controlled collectivization society. It was organized under the Great Leap Forward campaign, headed personally by Mao Zedong. The goal of the Great Leap Forward was to outpace Russian Communist successes by seeking a rapid transformation of Chinese agrarian landscape through industrialization. As the result of often exaggerated reports and the widespread planting of crops with industrial benefits instead of sustenance crops, the Great Leap Forward was a massive failure, resulting in the Great Famine and the death of millions of Chinese citizens from starvation.

Both “The Commune is like a Gigantic Dragon” poster printed in 1959, designed to exemplify Chinese industrial output as more successful than the slow progress of the Soviet model, and “The Communes are Big” poster from May 1960, featuring a young woman proudly holding more rice, fruit, and pork than she could carry alone, failed to accurately represent the failures of the Great Leap Forward. Propaganda posters from this period continued to exemplify the hopes for the Movement in an effort to inspire the peasantry whose strength had already been sapped by two years of intense famine.

The Cultural Revolution and the Cult of Mao

The Cultural Revolution plays a unique role in the history of propaganda use by the CCP; it was during this period that Mao Zedong Thought was elevated to its grandest, larger than life, proportions. This campaign featured the goal of purifying Maoist and Communist ideology within the Party by rooting out capitalists and “old” traditions that still stood in the way of Party progress. Encouraged by Defense Minister’s Lin Biao’s promotion of the Little Red Book of Mao’s quotations, Mao’s persona had elevated to an almost cult-like status. Images of Mao, the rising sun, the Little Book of Quotations, and seas of red all came to symbolize Mao Zedong Thought, revolution, and the whole of Marxist Leninism. Propaganda posters and mass revolution had done well for the Chinese Communist Party and at its forefront, Mao Zedong.

The Chinese Communist Party used propaganda posters not only to sway favor towards the party within China, but internationally as well. Posters, printed on more durable paper designed to travel safely, printed messages in English, French, and German. Many of the exported propaganda images sought to represent China as non-threatening political ally, especially in a position to protect neighboring states from the United States’ capitalist and imperial influence. By securing international allies, Chinese propaganda posters would serve as a force

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16 Ibid., http://chineseposters.net/posters/e13-917.php.
18 Fairbank and Merle Goldman, China: A New History, 368-373.
21 Fairbank and Merle Goldman, China: A New History, 383-386.
22 Cushing and Ann Tompkins, Chinese Posters, 14.
23 Ibid., 11.
to protect blossoming Chinese economy and increase its diplomatic and political international influence. Propaganda posters also played another vital role for the Communist Party: protecting the position of a specific population group believed to be essential to the success of Communism in China.

**The Role of Women and Artists in the CCP**

At the very forefront of the Chinese Communist Party’s rise to power, women’s liberation and equality were emphasized. The New Marriage Law, making wives equal to their husbands in marriage, as well as allowing them to seek out divorce, was celebrated in propaganda posters such as the 1953 poster, “In Marriage, Keep an Eye on Your Own Interests, and Return Radiant After Registration”. Liberated, strong Communist women graced images of the Long March, as proliferators of the successful commune, as technically skilled employees of China’s industrial growth sectors, and as feminine homemakers who gave appreciation for all Mao and the Party had provided for her. The image of happy productive women playing an active role in the advancement of the Chinese cause may have been a genuine goal of Mao Zedong through Communism, but equality was never fully realized. In reality, women did often gain a position in industrial employment, but often these were lower paying positions. Whenever one of the Party’s reform movements failed, women and children were the ones to suffer the most during hard times.

The positive and negative effects of mass propaganda as a form of political communication were weighed by Chinese writers during the early twentieth century. Wang Shiwei was an enthusiastic supporter of Mao Zedong, and took to his pen during the New Culture Movement. In 1942 he printed, “Political Leaders, Artists”, in which he celebrated the position of artists as critics of society and government. He was an ardent believer that the Communist Party and the future of modern China required the work of both political leaders and artists to bring progress and balance to lead the revolution. In “Political Leaders, Artists,” Shiwei said, “in the process of transforming the social system, the soul too is transformed...The tasks of the political leader and the artist are complementary”. Mao Zedong disagreed; Mao believed that it was art’s position to serve politics, which he confirmed in a forum he gave on art and literature in Yan’an, May 1942. Mao said, “What we demand is unity of politics and art, of content and form and of revolutionary political content and the highest possible degree of perfection in artistic form”. Wang Shiwei was purged from the Communist Party that year and executed five years later. As a result of such interactions between Mao, the Party, and critics of Communist mass politics through propaganda posters, this particular vehicle of political communication has garnered both international fame and stereotype.

**Conclusion and Future Study**

From its neutral origins, xuānchuán, or Chinese propaganda, has had a unique

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**Notes:**


26 Landsberger, “In Marriage, Keep an Eye on Your Own Interests, and Return Radiant After Registration”, http://chineseposters.net/posters/e15-556.php


29 Ibid., 444.
position in the People’s Republic of China’s history. Propaganda has been used to capture the minds and hearts of the Chinese citizenry, providing snapshots into the behavior that was expected and what also must be avoided within the Party at any given time. Used in every major campaign associated with the Party, from the Long March to the Cultural Revolution, the rise and endurance of the Chinese People’s Republic owes that status to the impact of political propaganda posters. Despite this lofty position, Chinese Communist propaganda posters have always been examined under a tight lens, receiving critique from opponents of the Communist party and Mao himself. The fate of the People’s Republic of China was born and nurtured while intertwined within propaganda posters and the two remain ever linked in the frame of history.

What remains to be seen is how the Chinese Communist Party’s relationship with propaganda will continue to evolve in the 21st century. These days, many of the slogans and printed posters appear archaic and puerile; in China today individuals are more commonly in contact with glossy billboards or brand-name film advertising for the Party. Modern Chinese propaganda seems to be taking on decidedly new tilt in attitudes towards the Western world as well. “The China Dream”, proposed by President Xi Jinping when he took office in 2012, has a very American flavor that is designed to combine the Party, and the epitomes of nationalism, and connotations of sumptuousness. A new video campaign released on People’s Daily social-media accounts, which is the official representative of the Communist Party, advertises the claim to stand alongside the dreams of China’s individuals. The video advertises the Party’s support for its “ancient and youthful country,” which is “full of opportunities, along with untold challenges” with an English voiceover which is not clearly British or American. If the Party is opening up to Western ideology, it would be imperative to compare the American and Chinese Dream; the historical context of the Chinese Civil War and the Cult of Mao is crafting a Chinese Dream very different from the American Dream brought on by the California Gold Rush and other factors that drove up immigration from all parts of the world. More research could also be put into China after Mao and how attitudes towards propaganda itself have changed within the nation; propaganda is still alive and well in modern China and the Chinese Communist party has not forgotten it as the umbilical cord between the Party’s ambition and the millions of Chinese men, women, artists, illiterate rural farmers, and average citizens that it impelled to bring the Party to power.


References


