New Errands

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The American Studies Program at Penn State Harrisburg is pleased to present the latest edition of *New Errands*, an online journal that publishes exemplary American Studies work by undergraduate students.

Seeking to develop the next generation of Americanists, *New Errands'* mission is both to provide a venue for the publication of important original scholarship by emerging young scholars and to provide a teaching resource for instructors of American Studies looking for exemplary work to use in the classroom. By recognizing and publishing the exceptional work of undergraduate students, *New Errands* hopes to inspire a new generation of American Studies scholars and to provide a forum to share their work.

Having resumed publication after a hiatus related to the COVID pandemic, *New Errands* plans to publish semi-annually, after the end of each academic semester. The goal will be to collect and publish essays produced during the previous term, so that they can be made available as quickly as possible for use in the following term. We encourage both self-submission by undergraduate students and nominated submissions by teaching faculty. Articles must have an American focus and can employ a variety of disciplinary methods. Those wishing to submit articles should refer to the instructions here: https://journals.psu.edu/ne/about/submissions#authorGuidelines.

Essays can be of any length, but they must have a research focus. Any visual images should be placed at the end of the manuscript, and tags should be placed in the text to indicate the intended placement of each image. Manuscripts should confirm to the latest edition of the Chicago Manual of Style notes-bibliography guidelines.

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A Message from the Editor —

To say that the COVID pandemic disrupted life in America is an obvious understatement. Who can forget the masks, the social distancing, and the Zoom calls, not to mention the social stresses and political controversy surrounding our collective responses as we felt our way in this uncertain new world?

In putting together this issue of *New Errands*, we considered devoting it to articles focused on the pandemic and how the nation handled it, now that it is "over" and we all have some benefit of hindsight. However, we decided that American Studies scholarship has always been broad and varied, and that despite whatever crisis occupies center stage at the moment, our journal should reflect that. Interestingly, the submissions we received were characteristic of the continuing broad interest in the events, ideas, and themes that comprise American culture, literature, and history. We thought we could best honor that and also celebrate our resumption of publication by featuring not only new scholarship, but several articles selected by the editorial team from issues published in the years prior to the onset of the pandemic in 2020.

In his 2016 article, Roland Gawlitta scrutinizes the suburb's universal claim of an ideal reality connected to the American Dream. The reality is different, characterized too often and too much by conformity and social pressures, as scholars, poets, authors, and filmmakers have depicted in calling into question the middle-class landscape.

William Kowalick, in his article from 2017, explores the interaction of social ideas, design, and material culture in the creation and widespread adoption of the Streamline Moderne style. Reflecting a forward-looking, futuristic ethos and the quickening pace of life during the interwar years, the style emphasized clean, simple lines and ease of use for the everyday household objects that were becoming increasingly important to the American consumer.

Delving into the structures upon which modern fan communities stand and the products they put forth, Alana Herrnson in her 2018 article uncovers links to the women's Shakespeare clubs of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, finding that their camaraderie and the foundations of female community continued into the female fan communities of television shows like *The X-Files* and *Star Trek*.

Beyond its intrinsic delights, music can also carry ideas, and even political meanings. That was particularly true of Civil War music, as Jordan Cohn tells us in his article from our 2019 issue. Music played a large role in spreading and reinforcing a wide breadth of beliefs, making the war as much a "musical war" as a military and political conflict.

In one of the two new essays selected this year, Kyle Loucks explores the history of lobster rolls, Maine and American foodways, regional identity, and class through the lens of material culture. The cultural scripts that accompany mobile foods like sandwiches can reveal important links between people, place, and diet. Loucks finds that the mobility inherent in lobster rolls helps to present and define regional identity for a broader American audience in a way that familiarizes "difference" within the American nation.

June 24th, 2022 marked the controversial overturn of *Roe v Wade*, sparking public protests, lawsuits, street art, and graffiti. In the year following the Dobbs decision, reproductive choice messaging in the form of stickers, pasted posters, and spraypainted works appeared on billboards, street signs, and walls across the United States. Ellen Patronas analyzes these ephemeral creations of visual culture to understand how they express a need to disseminate information, register protest, and empower individuals.

Four years on, the impacts of the pandemic are still being felt; it was an inflection point whose full implications will necessarily take time to be fully revealed. However, one thing has not changed: Our country encompasses more than the latest crisis, and our concerns and challenges are many, varied, and continuing. I hope you agree with me that this issue reflects that broad range. It is what we strive for with each issue.

Table of Contents

(2016) **Rage Against the Machine in the Garden: Television, Voyeurism, and Hyperrealism in American Suburban Film**
Roland Gawlitta, University of Bath 1

(2017) **Streamline Moderne Design in Consumer Culture and Transportation Infrastructure: Design for the Twentieth Century**
William Kowalick, Temple University 38

(2018) **Women's Shakespeare Clubs: Fandom in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century America**
Alana Herrnson, Barnard College of Columbia 68

(2019) **Abraham Lincoln and the Music of the Civil War**
Jordan Cohn, Franklin and Marshall College 92

(2024) **In the Palm of Your Hand: Lobster Rolls and Contradicting Performances of Regional Identity**
Kyle Loucks, Pennsylvania State University, Harrisburg ……………………... 126

(2024) **Bans off our Bodies: Categorizing and Analyzing Reproductive Justice Street Art Across the United States (June 2022 to June 2023)**
Ellen Patronas, University of St. Thomas (St. Paul) 152

NEW ERRANDS: THE UNDERGRADUATE JOURNAL OF AMERICAN STUDIES

Rage Against the Machine in the Garden: Television, Voyeurism, and Hyperrealism in American Suburban Film

Roland Gawlitt
University of Bath

Following the Second World War, living in the suburbs has been connected to the American Dream. The suburbs appeared to be the perfect place to raise a family and enjoy the benefits of both urban and rural conveniences without the exposure to harmful influences of the city. Ebenezer Howard argues that the town and the countryside exert a magnetic pull that draws urban citizens in, eventually resulting in a balance between the two in a hybrid environment: the middle landscape, or the suburbs (166-69). Everyone strives to own a suburban home and everyone wants to fulfill their dream of a perfect life with a perfect family and perfect neighbors. However, once people have started to move, some realized that reality did not live up to the utopian expectations of the project. The magnet that has drawn them to the suburbs in the first place, began to tear them apart through conformity, social pressures, and paranoia. People started to

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scrutinize the suburb's universal claim of an ideal reality. It is no surprise that these doubts were most fervently raised by scholars, poets, authors, and movie makers who, often originating from an urban background, detested the values of the middle landscape.

In this article, I will explore the American suburban movie from the post WWII era until 9/11, which marked a turning point in the portrayal of suburban life. The purpose of my work is to analyze how screenwriters and directors grappled with the conflicting disparity of the utopian vision versus reality of the suburbs and how they produced a picture of the faulty design and constructed-ness of the middle landscape. This design not only subordinated nature, but also subverted and deconstructed human nature by the initial introduction of technology. That is, the introduction of artificial structures in a natural environment caused human nature to become artificial and mechanical itself. "*Life in a garden is relaxed, quiet, and sweet, […] but survival in a howling desert demands action, the unceasing manipulation and mastery of the forces of nature, including, of course, human nature*" (Marx 43). What techniques do filmmakers use to convey their message? What are the similarities in their perception and, moreover, what are

the differences? What solution do the artists propose to deal, cope, and overcome the ills of suburbia? Finally, why does Hollywood produce negative movies about the suburbs in the first place, considering the success of the suburban project and the film industry's main objective of making money would suggest that the ideology of the suburbs would work in tandem?

This article does not make general claims or statements. Given the large number of movies on this topic, this would not be feasible. Instead, I will provide one qualitative account on the larger trend of the suburban movie genre and how these movies are mirroring and exposing society by using them as cultural texts placed historically. The focus will be on three movies: *All That Heaven Allows* (1955), Douglas Sirk's prototype of post-WWII suburban criticism, *Blue Velvet* (1986), David Lynch's exploration of voyeurism and dirt in the final moments of the Cold War, and *The Truman Show* (1998), an existential portrayal of a man who lost grip on reality. My working angle for this critique of technology and the common denominator in the contextualization of these movies is the practice of *watching the suburbs* and the ironic doubling of perspectives and instances. It manifests in a growing TV culture, voyeurism, and the

lack of privacy, substantiating deeper implications on how societal decline, loss of community, and the loss of coping mechanisms to differentiate the real from the fake; this can be linked to scientific progress and the introduction of technology into the middle landscape. Scholars such as Robert Putnam are firmly convinced that the suburbs are responsible for the decline in social capital, and TV seems to be an additional reason for this.[1]

The Machine and the Mirror

At first sight, the negative depiction of the suburbs in movies seems counterintuitive. Over the past decades, the percentage of Americans living in the suburbs has increased from about 25% in the 1950s to more than 50% in the 1990s (Muzzio, Halper 544, 555). Hollywood – built on the virtues of profitability, sustainability, and growth – should think twice before producing films that shed a negative light on the homes of more than half of the population if they intend to make a profit. Yet the success of suburban movies suggests otherwise. The suburban project was supposed to combine the best of both city and country,

[1] See Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000, especially chapter 12, Mobility and Sprawl, and chapter 13, Technology and Mass Media for a detailed account on the decline of social capital from a sociological perspective.

enabling a timely approximation of the Jeffersonian pastoral ideal of happiness found on a “small family farm” without having to give up the perks of a steadily progressing society (554-555). Moviemakers and intellectuals believed that the opposite to be the case. Instead the suburbs combined “the worst, not the best, of city and country. Suburbia may have been conceived as a bourgeois utopia, but it was a snare and a delusion, born in greed and nurtured by materialism, that degraded all it touched” (556). Relating to some of the critiques, suburbanites were slowly beginning to question the suburb’s claim of perfection as they walked into the theaters. Unlike the ideal, the suburbs are not a safe haven from the ills of the city. Crime and poverty are just as apparent in the suburbs as in the cities. The failure to extend the “dramatiz[ation of] the human condition” (Wunsch 644) outside city limits, further contributes to the conflicted view on the supposed bourgeois utopia (656).

Concerns over the disparity between ideal and real in a technological world were not first voiced during this period of suburbanization, but rather began at the time of America’s industrialization. *The Machine in the Garden* (1964) by Leo Marx explores major works in American literature, delivering a blunt verdict of the introduction of technology into nature.

Given its intention to not only be an account on the past, but also with implications of alienation and anxiety in the post-nuclear present, I will use this book as a template to apply it to my critical argument of technology in suburban cinema (380). Nostalgia for the return to the pastoral ideal, being closer to nature, is a way to "mask the real problems of an industrial civilization" (7) and, quoting Freud, a means to attain "freedom from the grip of the external world" to "maintain the old condition of things which has been regretfully sacrificed to necessity everywhere else" (qtd. in Marx 8).

The suburbs tried to approximate the utopian ideal; but in reality they have become a middle ground where "felicities and miseries can be reconciled together" (Strachey qtd. in Marx 45). Michel Foucault calls these places that aspire to be the approximation of utopian places *heterotopias*, an important concept in our so-called "epoch of juxtaposition" (par. 1), for they "[are] in relation with all the other sites, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralize, or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect" (par. 10); they are real places not only approximating utopian places, but also exposing and de-masking the contradictions behind these real realities and ideals. For Foucault the mirror is as an

intersection between utopia and heterotopia, simultaneously sharing both characteristics (par. 12).

In my essay, I will apply this metaphor of the mirror to the Suburban film and role of the TV/movie screen. Just as the suburbs relate to the pastoral ideal and reality as a heterotopia, movies juxtapose the physical unreality of the images with the reality of the audience. The screen serves as a literal and figurative mirror to expose, reflect and compensate for the illusions of "perfectibility and progress" (Foucault par. 26; Marx 88).

Suburbia in 20th Century American Film

All That Heaven Allows and the visuality of the frame

The critique of technology was largely limited to the realm of literature. Following the boom of the Second World War, the rise of the suburbs, and especially the nationwide success of television in the 1950s, critiques began to take shape in film. One could argue that the creative minds in Hollywood were just as concerned as Putnam about the decline in community by sitting alone in front of the television. Though the more pragmatic approach would argue that a growing television culture would just undermine revenue opportunities of movie theaters (Muzzio,

Halper 559). Nonetheless, the point of replacing a social with an often solitary activity still holds to be valid and is reiterated in many motion pictures. One of these movies is *All That Heaven Allows* (1955) by director Douglas Sirk.

All That Heaven Allows revolves around Cary, a recently widowed housewife who seeks self-fulfillment in the relationship with her much younger gardener Ron. However, she feels constricted by traditional family structures and expectations from society, which is following and observing her every move. She has to face many challenges, before she can find peace in the arms of her "man in the red flannel shirt" (Biskind 323). One of the most interesting elements of Sirk's cinematography is his expressionistic use of suburban architecture. For him, architecture is not just part of the setting; it is a tool (McNiven 38-39). Sirk argues that the suburban environment which surrounds Cary and her home of Stoningham is a mere construct of artificiality that corrupts everyone that comes close to it with inauthenticity, shallowness, and superficiality; it leaves you suffocated and unable to act freely. The only way to escape this confinement is to live the pastoral ideal to the fullest and refrain from society that attempts to recreate and isolate the advantages of

the country by subordinating nature to humankind (51).

Sirk accomplished this by contrasting the artificiality of Cary's home and neighborhood with the naturalness of the rest of the environment through stylistically juxtaposing them with the architecture and different cinematic techniques.[2] Many scenes are not filmed directly, but through reflective surfaces such as mirrors, as if he wanted to ontologically separate the artificial image in the mirror from the naturalness surrounding this image, like the branch that was handed to Cary by Ron in one of the first scenes and placed next to the mirror on her make-up table. Roger McNiven explains that through the framing by window frames, mirrors, doorways, the background distinguishes itself "from the more 'real' foreground space." In the convention of 1950s movies, the framing of the background scene is supposed to represent the ideal of family harmony. Cary, on the other hand, trying to "escape into the foreground space", feels entrapped by it (40). The suburban house, symbol for financial stability and a happy life,

[2] For an exploration of an architect's perspective of how ill-design contributed to the deterioration of human nature in the suburbs, see Kunstler, James Howard The Geography of Nowhere: The Rise and Decline of America's Man-made Landscape. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993, especially chapter 13 "Better Places."

becomes a tomb for Cary, which after Egyptian custom is for "walling up the widow alive in the funeral chamber of her husband along with his other possessions" (*All That Heaven Allows*).

The solution to suburban claustrophobia and an "'other-directed' [life] in tedious conformity with suburban neighbors" (Wunsch 645) seems to be Ron's independence from society, realized with his cabin in the woods. The movie is not very subtle about which philosophical tradition Sirk is referring to. When Cary and Ron visit two of his friends, Cary finds and picks up the book Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*, reading a few passages out loud:

> *The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation. Why should we be in such desperate haste to succeed? If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured far away*. (Thoreau qtd. in *All That Heaven Allows*)

The message is simple: "To thine own self be true" (Shakespeare qtd. in *All That Heaven Allows*). Hollywood expert Peter Biskind concurs that "Thoreau is right; Cary's life is one of 'quiet desperation', and the utopian alternative represented by the people gathered around her can only be realized outside society" (328). Marx talks about the "cultural

malady" of "pointless, dull, routinized existence" (247).

> [They] *perform the daily round without joy or anger or genuine exercise of will. As if their minds were mirrors, able only to reflect the external world, they are satisfied to cope with things as they are. In Emerson's language, they live wholly on the plane of the Understanding. Rather than design houses to fulfill the purpose of their lives, they accommodate their lives to the standard design of houses*. (247).

In short, "men have become the tools of their tools' (Thoreau qtd. in Marx 247). People are trapped. They fall victim to the machines that were supposed to serve them by subjugating them into a system that serves only itself; it only nurtures a dependency on man-machine relations, i.e. consumerism, rather than social relations (Marx 248). Instead of receiving support, the all-watching eyes of her neighbors only hold contempt for her deviation from their conservative conventions, enviously pressuring her for her individuality and self-realization in this hyper efficient environment.

Cary's societal entrapment becomes final after she receives a TV set as a Christmas present, the ultimate symbol of confinement and the center of Sirk's criticism of the corrupting force of artificial structures in nature. This technological novelty, from

the start dismissed by Cary as the "last refuge for lonely women," now frames her appalled face on the screen, trapping her in the reflection (see fig. 1). "*All you have to do is turn that dial and you have all the company you want - right there on the screen*" (*All That Heaven Allows*). The TV serves as Cary's "consumer compensation in exchange for an active pursuit of her desire," enclosing her "in a haze of consumerism, impotent spectatorship, and televisual hyperreality" (Joyrich 45-46). She leaves the house immediately for the woods.

Her return to Ron, culminating in the obligatory melodramatic ending, might be seen as a happy ending for Cary and Ron; in the end, the audience realizes, however, that even Ron was not safe from the intrusion of artificiality. Ron remodeled his home to make it more appealing to Cary, eventually trying to subordinate his nature as well. This is seen in the large window framing the exterior, degrading nature as merely a picture hanging on the wall, a post card scene, or a still film frame. The *frame within a frame* is essential to understand what Sirk is trying to convey about the ill-constructed middle landscape. The love between the two, their emotions, are the only natural things left, after artificiality has pervaded everything. Sirk's scathing verdict makes it

clear that he thinks that the suburbs are a corrupting, dehumanizing influence and their claim of providing the perfect middle ground is merely an illusion constructed und perpetrated by its advertisers (55).

Blue Velvet and the pleasures of the voyeur

The 1960s through early 1980s would produce further change to the perception of suburbia, continuing and intensifying Hollywood's critique of inauthenticity and artificiality. The rise of the Beat Generation not only coincided with the emergence of protest movements, but Hollywood also restructured. 'New Hollywood' as an innovative platform for criticism was not reliant on happy endings, large budgets, or on achieving commercial success. *Bonnie & Clyde* (1967) and *Easy Rider* (1969) became movies for a whole generation revolting against the previous generations' dated ideals and world views. *The Graduate* (1967), a suburban movie that deems the superficial and artificial old guard simply 'plastics' seems to be as much in line with the argument of dehumanization as *The Stepford Wives* (1975), which takes it another step further by having the idealized housewives be actual robots, for the lone purpose of subservience (Muzzio, Halper 562).

Noticeably, the spread of horror movies did not stop at the gates of suburbia. The bipolar battle between good and evil was not only fought in Cold War proxy fronts overseas, but also in the small suburban settlements. Paranoid surveillance and the Red Scare extended their influence to the movie theaters through films which emphasized on the evils behind the façade of the supposedly peaceful neighborhood. This era spawned movies such as *Amityville Horror* (1979), *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984), and *Carrie* (1976), which have all had recent remakes. According to David Lynch, one tradition in the American gothic movies is "about things that are hidden — within a small city and within people" – exemplified by Lynch's own *Blue Velvet* (1986) (qtd. in New York Times).

Blue Velvet starts off with the familiar establishing shots of showing the idyllic peacefulness of red rose petals and white picket fences in supersaturated colors. However, when the camera takes closer look into the very ground of the suburbs, it reveals what lies behind the outside image of this perfect suburban scenery: a swarm of bugs crawling in the dirt – a recurring metaphor for the evils underneath the surface. Lynch said himself, "I discovered that if one looks a little closer at this beautiful world, there

are *always* red ants underneath…I saw life in extreme close-ups" (qtd. in Bainbridge 3). Leo Marx helps to qualify:

> *Most literary works called pastorals […] do not finally permit us to come away with anything like the simple, affirmative attitude we adopt toward pleasing rural scenery. […] [T]hese works manage to qualify, or call into question, or bring irony to bear against the illusion of peace and harmony in a green pasture. And it is this fact that will enable us, finally, to get at the difference between the complex and sentimental kinds of pastoralism*. (25).

Protagonist Jeffrey Beaumont, who found a severed ear on a walk following the introductory scene, sets himself to find the truth behind the mystery of the cut-off ear with the help of a detective's daughter Sandy. Curious about Sandy's story that a suspicious woman might be connected to the case, Jeffrey tries to gain access to her apartment disguised as a pest controller. What follows is a net of events ensnaring Jeffrey between the two worlds of superficial idealization on the outside and myths and symbols of violence on the inside, a story about "kidnapping, murder and torture, all juxtaposed against an adolescent romance" (Bainbridge 4).

Besides the theme of figuratively looking through the façade, Lynch takes on the literal act by playing with Freudian voyeurism. Already in *All That*

Heaven Allows we were able to make out this curiosity in the behavior of the disapproving townsfolk, leering at and condemning Cary's efforts to achieve self-fulfillment. It is the desire to remain in control of one's environment that is being commented on and which is further elaborated in sadomasochist power relations in Lynch's film. However, this time the audience actively participates in it, blurring the lines between subject and object with camera shots through closet door slits following Jeffrey's eyes and turning back on him, making him the observed (Bainbridge 7).

In this particular scene the camera alternates between close-up shots of Jeffrey in the closet, point-of-view shots through the closet and outside views of the closet. The audience is not only forced to participate in the sadistic act of voyeurism, but becomes victim of being watched themselves. According to Freud, the perversion of voyeurism manifests in two co-occurring features – the 'active' role of the observer and the 'passive' role of the observed (32-33). Usually, the audience of a movie theater does not face the danger of being seen by the object of their voyeurism; they remain impotent observers, since they cannot reveal themselves to the characters in the film. In the case of *Blue Velvet*, however, they not only watch Jeffrey on the screen and

Dorothy through the eyes of Jeffrey, but Jeffrey repeatedly looks *into* the camera, exposing the audience, and contributing to the suspense of the scene and the *Schaulust* of the viewer (see fig. 2).

For Freud, voyeurism remains ultimately passive, since the actual goal of acting is being delayed, suppressed, or replaced (23). The anxiety or reluctance to act is deeply rooted in the depictions of suburban culture; watching, so you do not have to do it yourself. It is easier to criticize and condemn someone for trying to realize one's full potential than taking a leap of faith and trying to accomplish something themselves. They live proxy lives, trying to maintain control over their neighbors and their own feelings. This tendency of avoiding assuming responsibility cannot only be seen in *All That Heaven Allows*; it actually traces back to the Middle Passage, and has already rooted deeply in the mind-set during the industrialization. Marx quotes D. H. Lawrence when he says that "the most idealist nations invent most machines. America simply teems with mechanical inventions, because nobody in America ever wants to do anything. They are idealists. Let a machine do the thing" (Lawrence qtd. in Marx 145).

The consequence of Jeffrey's voyeurism is the corrupting influence of Frank, who serves as evil

incarnate. Witnessing Frank engage in sadistic behavior (while yelling "Don't look at me") transforms Jeffrey throughout the movie. Once innocent, the protagonist himself transforms through interconnection between active and passive forms of perversion and gives into his urges to exercise force on others, hitting Dorothy and eventually killing Frank (60-61).

The plot concludes in an ironically melodramatic, happy ending. David Lynch would later perfect this technique in his TV drama series *Twin Peaks* (1990-1991).[3] Marx comments with the stylistic device of "ironic juxtaposition" by giving a literary example which intends to restore "the sickly sweet, credulous tone of sentimental pastoralism" in fiction upon realizing that ideal does not match reality (275, 277). As Lynch sees life in close-ups, he urges his audience to do the same with his film. Not only are they participating in his play of voyeurism and sadomasochism, but they are also encouraged to question the logic of the story and look behind the

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[3] *Twin Peaks* is a TV series about the rape and murder of a teenage girl in a small town in rural Washington. The connection between the invasion of technology into nature analogous to *The Machine in the Garden* as represented by the lumber mill cutting trees in the intro sequence, and the social corruption of the persons behind the lumber mill might be even more striking than in *Blue Velvet*.

façade. The robin on the windowsill eating the bug in the final scene is a symbol for love prevailing over evil; Jeffrey, the "bug man," fights Frank, who wears a bug-like gas mask during the closet scene. In a previous scene, Sandy recalls a dream of robins spreading love in a dark world full of evil. Jeffrey, the robin, acts out of love, eradicates the evil bug Frank. However, the dirt, the disruptive force in the suburbs remains. The lesson is it may be important to find the truth by digging through the dirt. What you find though does not lie in your control and may not be as rewarding as anticipated. "*Dirt sticks. Jeffrey is forever changed and so is our perception of the suburbs*" (Bainbridge 8).

The Truman Show and the loss of reality

As the 1980s waned, so did the Cold War with its defining East-West dialectic. It appeared that the Rambos and Rockies of the Reagan era who fought so bravely against the dangers of encroaching Communism were victorious and decided once and for all who the winner was in the ultimate battle between good and evil. However, the lack of an ideological antithesis plunged the US in an abyss of insecurity and self-doubt (Laist par. 2). What happens to bipolarity

once the enemy is overcome and gone; the enemy who helped Americans maintain their sanity, their grip of reality; the enemy who fed into their feeling of superiority and confirmed their belief of being on the right side of history? Don DeLillo put the problem famously in his novel *Underworld*:

> [We] *need the leaders of both sides to keep the cold war going. It's the one constant thing. It's honest, it's dependable. Because when the tension and rivalry come to an end, that's when your worst nightmares begin. All the power and intimidation of the state will seep out of your bloodstream. You will no longer be the main point of reference*. (qtd. in Laist par. 2)

There was no McCarthyism, no Red Scare, no communism left that could fill the void of the time between the fall of the Berlin Wall and the terror attacks of September 11. The 90s were the "modern interwar period", the "lost decade" (par. 2). This was also the time when the suburbs became the dominant form of housing in the US. Meanwhile, technological innovations, like cloning, the Internet, and computer effects challenged our thinking of what is real and what is illusory, authentic, and artificial. It became increasingly difficult to differentiate reality with its representations. The 'era' between 11/9 and 9/11 has therefore spawned a new type of suburban movies. The concept of hyperreality was not new in the 1990s

but it is in this period it regained momentum – a time that made it so simple to edit and manipulate data to forge a new reality that is realer than real, because it does not possess any actual reference to reality anymore. The representation or the simulacrum replaces reality and therefore becomes hyperreal (Baudrillard 527-528). Jean Baudrillard talks about a "copy without an original" (qtd. in Laist par. 6).

Suburbia, as focal point of artificiality, is predestined to be a center stage for movies depicting the hyperreal anxiety of not being able to distinguish authentic from artificial. *True Lies* (1994), *Pleasantville* (1998), *The Virgin Suicides* (1999), and *Donnie Darko* (2001)[4] represent the most notable movies analogous to this particular school of thought. The movie which gets closest to Baudrillard's original idea is *The Truman Show* from 1998.

Truman Burbank lives a seemingly content life in a small, quiet suburb Seahaven. He is popular, everybody likes him, and the whole world appears to revolve around him. Little does he know that it actually does. Everything and everybody he knows, his perceived reality is just a construct, from the dome

[4] *Donnie Darko*, released on October 26, 2011, technically belongs to the post 9/11 era, but it was obviously filmed and produced before the incident of the New York terrorist attacks and therefore still resembles the style of the 1990s.

arching over him like an artificial sky to his friends and family who are all paid actors. A whole life orchestrated solely for the entertainment of a world-wide audience; a life in absolute control of the producer Christof, who deliberately misleads and manipulates Truman through fake stories in the Orwellian sense, forged news reports, and TV shows to prevent him from trying to leave the confines of the studio. Truman's *life of quiet desperation* is ridden by restlessness and boredom, for he hears a *different drummer*. Despite all efforts, Truman eventually comes to realize of his existence and the 'real' reality, as he touches the inauthentic sky. With him recognizing his artificially constructed boundaries and transcending them by leaving the studio, he "*reaffirm[s] […] the truth of reality and the escapability of artificial social structures" and "the shackles of Plato's cave*" (Laist par. 10).

The critique of this movie is clear, it condemns the manipulative power of the media which is able to distort and produce reality to its liking, becoming indistinguishable from fiction. The exploitative relation between Truman, his in-film television audience, and the actual movie audience leads to Lynchian style voyeurism *ad absurdum*: Truman watches a television show, who is also being watched

by a fictitious TV audience that is again being watched by the real movie audience. In a critical scene, Truman looks at his reflection in the bathroom mirror, not knowing that the semipermeable mirror is also equipped with a camera (see fig. 3). The setup of multiple screens and mirrors is reminiscent of Jacques Lacan's discovery of the mirror stage, which describes a stage in early childhood where the child is beginning to recognize that its mirror image is a reflection of the Self (502). From Truman's naïve point of view, he finds himself in a self-aware position in a play of "jubilant activity" (502); the omniscient audience looking at the TV screen dismisses this false awareness through laughter. On a meta level, however, the scene is more about the fake TV audience and, by proxy, the real movie audience itself. If we assume that the semi-permeable surface is not only a window, but *actually* a mirror, the TV screen or movie screen becomes the other half to reflect our own image. Laughter enables the audience in the mirror stage to overcome personal deficiencies through pleasure; in essence, the look in the mirror is a critical engagement with the self (Reichert chapter 6). For Lacan, the process of identification goes through a stage where the *I* projects its own reflection onto the mirror as an "Ideal-I" before becoming aware of the

self (503). The image in the mirror, the Ideal-I, or in this case Truman, is the defining aspect to reach self-awareness and the transformation from a "specular *I*" to a "social *I*" (507). "Narcissistic scopophilia" in film is therefore the desire to find oneself in the sublime image of the other approximate it in the imaginary (Reichert chapter 7). The audience becomes aware as a result of first identifying with the other and then alienating oneself from it again through *reflection*.

Interestingly, the movie stops after Truman leaves the set. The producer in the movie explains to Truman, "There's no more truth out there than there is in the world I created for you. Same lies. Same deceits." (*Truman Show*) It is as if the film wanted to say that the outside world as well is just a construct of "more layers of domes"; 'deterrence' is the term used by Baudrillard to explain the phenomenon of the audience getting distracted by the artificiality of its reality by watching a fake world on television (Laist par. 10). Truman disappears, because he has got a grip on the meaning of his existence, a sense of self-awareness, and knowledge about the true nature of his surroundings. He is filled with both curiosity and anxiety when he exits the stage. Leo Marx relates Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story *Ethan Brand* about the protagonist's search for the "Unpardonable Sin,"

which is "the great sin of the Enlightenment – the idea of knowledge as an end in itself" (266, 273). The result is Brand's demise as he realizes that his "cold philosophical curiosity" has made him cold and mechanical inside (266- 267). He becomes insane and disappears by throwing himself into the fire. Truman Burbank, our modern-day Ethan Brand, has found the truth around him. He has left the mirror stage at the price of what Lacan calls "paranoic knowledge" (502, 505). He does not kill himself, but by leaving the set knowing, he equally withdraws both physically and mentally from our scope of perception, "where the real journey begins" (507, 509).

The audience in the Truman show, however, oblivious of its situation simply changes the channel and asks, "What else is on?" (Laist par. 10). They are stuck in the mirror stage and the real audience is to believe that they have seen through the scheme, that they overcame the mirror stage when, in fact, knowledge of our situation does not mean deliverance from it. This raises the question whether this hyperreality is really less real than reality. Christof makes a valid point about Truman's world and our society when he says, "We accept the reality of the world with which we are presented" (*Truman Show*). The two quotes from the producer of the show are

perfectly in accord with Baudrillard's concept of hyperreality, which makes this movie exemplary for this time of American uncertainty, because "the simulacrum is never that which conceals the truth – it is the truth which conceals that there is none. The simulacrum is true" (Ecclesiastes qtd. in Baudrillard 524).

Conclusion

While most suburban movies share a stock of tropes and motifs to criticize America's favorite middle landscape, through its superficiality, inauthenticity, or conformity, some do reveal a more elaborate argument of the failures of this 'imagined community.' One underlying trend in the movies discussed is the concept of truth, of exposing the social constructs behind the physical construct that is suburbia. This truth may take many forms and names such as the 'Unpardonable Sin' or 'Enlightenment', but they are all concerned with looking behind the artificial façade of the inauthentic bubble they call home. The movies discussed in this paper have dealt with the quest for the transcendentalist truth and a return to the countryside, the inconvenient truth about the nature of humanity leading to homicide, or the hyperreal truth of living in a staged reality confined in

a dome within domes. The project to create a 'perfect middle ground,' a realized pastoral ideal in 'perfectibility and progress,' a heterotopian approximation of a utopia has failed and with it all hope of salvation.

It discloses that our inherited symbols of order and beauty have been divested of meaning. It compels us to recognize that the aspirations once represented by the symbol of an ideal landscape have not, and probably cannot, be embodied in our traditional institutions. It means that an inspiriting vision of a humane community has been reduced to a token of individual survival […] *[I]n the end the American hero is either dead or totally alienated from society, alone and powerless. […] And if, at the same time, he pays a tribute to the image of a green landscape, it is likely to be ironic and bitte*r. (Marx 364)

All movies discussed in this article conclude with 'happy' endings. They seem to be happy on the outside; they try to restore the idyll at least ironically in fiction. A look behind the curtain of illusion, however, will reveal the truth. There is no "real" happy ending without the distortions of reality. There is no perfect middle landscape. Many directors attempt to trace the vices of civilized society back to their origin and find them in technological progress

itself; it is the *Machine in the Garden*, which transformed modern society to a superefficient apparatus filled with plastic consumers unable to engage in genuine human relationships. This hyper-efficiency and the urge to make everything look perfect from the outside while subjugating humanity (*Menschlichkeit*) made suburbanites keep social interactions to a minimum; they try to maintain the façade out of fear that anybody could see what lies inside them, the fear of being scrutinized for pursuing this aspect of realizing the self. If you need your grass to be cut, you are not asking your neighbor for their lawn mower, but you get one yourself. If you are depressed, you do not talk it over with a friend but seek help from a professional (Goudreau 24). Essayist Thomas Carlyle interjects on the effects of industrialization:

> *Our old modes of exertion are all discredited, and thrown aside. On every hand, the living artisan is driven from his workshop, to make room for a speedier, inanimate one. The shuttle drops from the fingers of the weaver, and falls into iron fingers that ply it faster. Men have crossed oceans by steam […]. There is no end to machinery. […] For all earthly, and for some unearthly purposes, we have machines and mechanic furtherances; for mincing our cabbages; for casting us into magnetic sleep. We remove mountains, and make seas our smooth highway; nothing can resist*

us. We war with rude Nature; and, by our resistless engines, come off always victorious, and loaded with spoils. (Carlyle qtd. in Marx 170-1).

They have in turn become "mechanical in head and heart," reducing themselves to the calculable aspects of life at the expense of the imaginative facet of the psyche (175). Movies help to readjust our perception of ourselves and surroundings; they recalibrate our reference position; they serve as Foucauldian mirrors to expose the faults of society and the self, aiming to overcome our "organic insufficiency in [our] natural reality" (Lacan 505). The nature of television makes it a perfect point to discuss and mediate the divergence of ideal reality, real reality, and fabricated representations.

Watching television and movies keeps the viewers sane; they try to overcome their state of "Hegelian 'self-estrangement,' a dichotomy of 'social' and 'natural' self" (Marx 177). They may even want to watch a reality show to get a grip of their own 'real' reality that got lost in the process of the information age. Christof from *The Truman Show* comments on this as follows:

We've become bored with watching actors give us phony emotions. We are tired of pyrotechnics and special effects. While the world he inhabits is, in some respects, counterfeit, there's nothing fake about

Truman himself. No scripts, no cue cards. It isn't always Shakespeare, but it's genuine. It's a life. (*The Truman Show*).

Perhaps it is watching these movies that enables suburbanites to *live happily ever* after in their conformity centers, even if the scopophiliac voyeur ultimately remains impotent by only suppressing and replacing the desires, instead of acting out on them. The voyeur is forced to watch without recognizing the self in the mirror. This is also part of the irony of this story. Movies which criticize suburban dwellers for resorting to professional help instead of socializing or preferring passive pleasure gained through television are a product of technological progress themselves; they are part of the machine they criticize. They have gone full circle and become a cogwheel in a self-perpetuating industry that is both problem of and solution to the decline of social capital.

Since my analyses focused on the period between the post WWII era and the end of the 90s, I did not consider movies produced after 9/11. This is due to the change in the conversation about hyperreality after the *real* event of 9/11, the conversation about hyperreality took another turn and was dismissed as trivial, while the suburban movie has been slowly disappearing from the big screen ever since. Suburbia had to clear the way for the

reemergence of the American hero. The long yearned-for bipolarity returned and with it the superhero movie, as well as the biographical blockbuster of era defining historical films focused on real heroes such as Abraham Lincoln. The increasing role of surveillance for safety at the expense of personal freedoms and privacy has contributed to the discussion about claustrophobia, paranoia, and voyeurism. Being under constant supervision is not new to suburbanites. In the past years the reach of surveillance programs has extended to camera monitoring throughout metropolitan areas and most recently to warrantless Internet and phone surveillance by the NSA. The suburbs have not completely disappeared after 9/11, but they have taken over another primary medium. They have reclaimed their target of choice to introduce to us a new breed of suburban anti-heroes on television; they are unrestrained by fear, outside pressures, or the law; they act out on their urges and fantasies without the suburban audience having to face the consequences itself. Television series like *The Sopranos, Weeds, Breaking Bad, and Mad Men* all exhibit characteristics of this new type of suburbanite. Even ‘fake’ reality shows, like *The Osbornes* or *The Real Housewives* share some of these aspects, diluting again our sense of what is real and counterfeit. From

an ideational perspective, the suburban project has failed. If we look at their presence in our minds, the suburbs are now more successful than ever. On this occasion, I would like to refer to the research studies of the Research Unit "Popular Seriality—Aesthetics and Practice” at Freie Universität, sponsored by the German Research Fund (DFG), which is currently examining the dynamics and functions of serial structures in American culture. The seriality of the suburbs in television, as well as in its literal, physical manifestation found in suburban sprawl, has shown that they remain a lasting concept in American popular culture.

Appendix

Fig. 1. Cary looking at her reflection on a television screen: a TV frame within the movie theater frame. *All That Heaven Allows*. Dir. Douglas Sirk. Universal International, 1955.

Fig. 2. Jeffrey breaks the Fourth Wall and makes the audience victim of his voyeurism by looking through the keyhole of the camera lens. *Blue Velvet.* Dir. David Lynch. De Laurentiis Entertainment Group, 1986.

Fig. 3. The semi-permeable mirror shows how the audience tries to assume the ideal image of Truman Burbank in a return to a Lacanian mirror stage. *The Truman Show*. Dir. Peter Weir. Paramount Pictures, 1998.

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Streamline Moderne Design in Consumer Culture and Transportation Infrastructure: Design for the Twentieth Century

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Situated in the time between World War I and World War II, the design community sought a new design for a new century, free of the trappings and encumbrances of the past. The impact of this new design idea would be far-reaching and serve as a remarkable milestone in the American experience, ushering in modern contemporary mass-produced consumer culture, and stylistically and philosophically the successor to contemporary design practice. The Art Deco style pioneered in the years following World War I, exhibited at the L'Exposition Internationale des Artes Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes of 1925 (translated to English as the *International Exhibition of Modern and Industrial Decorative Arts*). Art Deco, while certainly new, was not entirely free of the ornamental motifs of the past. Additionally, Art Deco prioritized the handcrafted, high-end, and exclusive,

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providing exceptional design for those who could afford it.

Streamlining was just that, stripping away the excesses of the past, of even a just few years prior. Streamline Moderne, also referred to as Art Moderne evolved from Art Deco as a more accessible style that was influenced by that present moment, the fast paced, contemporary life, taking cues from motion, speed, and transportation infrastructure—adopting an aerodynamic image. Key to Streamline Moderne over Art Deco was the widespread availability of items and products meant for everyday use by a far-reaching group of Americans. Defining elements of the Streamline Moderne style as marketed to consumers are efficiency to fit into the fast-paced lives of the users, not so different from marketing today. The clean, rounded lines exude elegant simplicity and ease of use for the modern household. For those who could afford this forward-thinking new style at the height of the Great Depression made clear that they didn't want to be stuck in the past, but adopt the radically new and different progressive design that did not recall historical periods or ornamentation for decoration, but derived inspiration inwardly from the spirit of that moment in that day.

Developed following World War I in Europe and first exhibited in Paris, Art Deco was a response to the devastation of the continent following what was described as the "Great War". Looking towards the future, designers for the upper-class created furnishings, decorative objects, and finishes in an angular yet organic style. This, however, was not entirely a departure from the past. Art Deco's organic design elements recalled the Art Nouveau style of the previous two decades, with a more modern and urban influence (Meikle 93). Seeing this as the *en vogue* style, it was quickly adopted by affluent Americans and American designers, who had little to show themselves at the 1925 exposition. The Art Nouveau style's association with the past was too great for it to be a sustainable design idea, and by Art Deco still too similar though more removed. While Streamline Moderne is successor to Art Deco, it existed in its earlier years concurrently with the latter. It is a further abstraction of that style, rounding the angular edges, making the style less harsh and more approachable, and shaped by the speed of progress.

Similar in inspiration by speed and transportation, the Italian Futurist movement, by artists such as Umberto Boccioni, which predates the Art Deco period are angular and aggressive (White

105). One heavily linked idea of Futurism that is strongly correlated with Streamline Moderne is “dynamism”. While the figures, shapes, and objects are angular, they are not static. These shapes connote motion, much like in Streamlining. However, the futurists looked to the future but with the same combative adherence to the past that weighted the Art Deco style and its predecessors despite offering a vision of what was to come, it nonetheless was also commentary on what had happened. Streamline Moderne is also influenced by and related to the Bauhaus. This German style was first cultivated and inspired much like Art Deco in the years following World War I, but more similar to the Streamlined Style that would follow. The Bauhaus promoted a universal set of design guidelines, and a commonality between all artistic practices--architecture, decorative arts, furnishings, paintings, and other trades which prioritized abstraction as a reflection of modern life (Maulsby 146). Lucy Maulsby speaks of the rise of “Mass Culture” and the relationship of modernity and how people would live in it “in a fundamentally new way of inhabiting the world” (Maulsby 147). The “freedom”, “anonymity”, and “sophistication” of the Bauhaus, like Streamline Moderne appealed to Americans (Maulsby 146).

The accessibility, and perhaps mundane nature of Streamline Moderne is what makes it interesting because the extraordinarily significant nature of what this style accomplished as far as advancing design forward, while remaining so ubiquitous and ordinary. Architecture, furniture, decorative objects, automobiles and vehicles, and household appliances and fixtures all designed in the Streamline Moderne style held a prominent place in 1930s and 1940s American households. For the first time, a larger body of the American population was exposed to and maybe able to afford "good" design that was not only aesthetically considered, but also new tools for a new century through time-saving products and transformative inventions, but also novelties of and for consumer fascination

Designers struggled to find a machine aesthetic both intellectually defensible and commercially viable. They sought a new style that would honestly express the technological modernity of American life. But that style also had to appeal to consumers. (Meikle 113)

Streamlining was presented as hopeful, a clear and proud statement about moving towards the future in the present day at that particular moment in time. Designers opted to make use of inexpensive and

readily available materials to manufacture these consumer goods. The materials included were smooth materials found both in nature and manmade "such as plastics, composite metals, and wood laminates reflected the national obsession with speed at a time when efficiency and productivity were passwords to a fast-paced future" (Kardon 28). The interest in streamline modern design pervaded every aspect of design.

It was at the World's Fairs of 1933 in Chicago, and 1939 in New York; that the promise of Streamline Moderne as a realized style was presented to a global audience. Chicago's *Century of Progress Exposition* promised a bold, bright future to exhibition-goers. Featuring the Burlington's *Zephyr* train, manufactured by the Budd Company of Philadelphia, the first streamline designed train, Buckminster Fuller's extraordinarily futuristic Dymaxion Car Number 3, and the Chrysler Airflow (Hanks and Hoy 36). Each of these items exuded early on a sense of movement and dynamism, all in their names alone. The New York World's Fair of 1939, similarly featured streamlined design in every possible application, continuing to demonstrate a model of the supposed future of the world, with the motto of "building the world of tomorrow with the tools of today", which

Hanks and Hoy describe as the “ultimate endorsement for streamlining” (Hanks and Hoy 36). This endorsement of streamlining as it was applied to so many products and ideas was executed not only in the name of progress, but progress for a cause. Streamline Moderne and the act of “streamlining” as a verb, looking beyond the very basic tenet of increasing efficiency, sought to improve the lives and experiences of users.

Drawing inspiration from the pure forms of machinery, a preoccupation with the nature of innovation was not a new concept by the 1930s. A similar predilection towards the enshrinement of the “machine” was seen as a commanding force in the years following the American Civil War, as evidenced by the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, and perhaps even earlier than that with the rise of the “Industrial Revolution”. A new modern industrial revolution was taking place that would dramatically alter the means by which Americans would purchase, look at, and interact with household objects and in the larger picture, design as a whole. What is clear is a linear timeline of industrial innovation that paved the way for modern consumerism, sustained by desire for objects to make life better and easier. It is in this realm

of the domestic sphere that allowed Streamline Moderne to take off:

As a consumer culture assumed social dominance for the first time in history, the commercial practice of design became more significant than ever. New products— automobiles, phonographs, radios, toasters, washing machines, refrigerators, vacuum cleaners—had to be given forms reflecting modernity…Consumers had to decide how much to modernize domestic surroundings. Would acquiring a modern-looking radio for the living room stimulate a desire to replace traditional furniture with something more up-to-date? Or would it serve as a token of modernity among the comforts of a traditional interior? Or would timid consumers avoid modern styles and instead select a radio disguised in eighteenth century trappings? Manufacturers and designers had to determine what consumers wanted and then provide it—but with subtle innovations to keep them slightly off balance, disposed towards novelty and further consumption. While nineteenth century pattern designers and decorative artists had supplied furnishings that supported traditional domesticity, industrial designers of the early twentieth century sought to give coherent shape to mass-produced artefacts in an era self-consciously referred to as the machine age. (Meikle 90).

This assertion by Meikle makes clear the motives and function of the Streamline Moderne style. Beyond serving as simply a jumping off point to reject historical precedents and move forward, Streamline

Moderne was a proving ground to test the functionality and aesthetic of every and any item imaginable. It also provided a medium for connecting Americans with products and services. Taking a page from the successes of the Sears, Roebuck and Company catalog which in the Gilded Age made products of every type and purpose available to almost everyone, designers, businesses, and corporations. Magazines such as *House and Garden* featured large enticing colored advertisements marketing these products as thrilling. The March 1936 issue features an advertisement for the Kelvinator DeLuxe Refrigerator showing two men wearing tuxedos and a woman in a gown demonstrating a large new refrigerator. Above this illustration is the text: “Once again...there’s a thrill in the kitchen!” (Kelvinator DeLuxe 5). Perhaps a surprising way to describe a refrigerator, this mode of advertising was more appropriately used for automobile sales, it demonstrates that these products could all be marketed the same way utilizing the same appeal.

In *Art and the Machine; An Account of Industrial Design in 20th-century America*, a book written concurrently with the rise of Streamlining, the authors’ words express the excitement that streamlining offered not only to the consumer but in

the greater context of the power and potential of design to serve as a representative mode of change:

> *We are thrilled to be eyewitnesses to a battle for supremacy between two types of common carriers, as one epoch of railroad domination ends and another begins to be established, seeing historic significance in the struggle: a struggle which is intensified in its dramatic aspects because high power is no more powerful a weapon than its expressive form, because efficiency will be no more a determining factor than appearance—which results from industrial design…The streamline as a scientific fact is embodied in the airplane. As an aesthetic style mark, and symbol of twentieth century machine-age speed, precision, and efficiency…* (Cheney and Cheney 97)

In the groundbreaking 1934 exhibition, *Machine Art*, at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, later distinguished architect, Philip Johnson curated an exhibition unlike any other. For this was not a traditional display of traditional art objects. Like the 1876 *Centennial Exposition* in Philadelphia, this exhibit celebrated the machine and the practice of industry. The *Machine Art* exhibition served a very familiar function in revering and presenting the industrial as art, to find beauty in the simplicity and functionality of a particular item, without an unproductive veneer. Differing from the earlier 1876 exhibition, over fifty years prior, which had massive

machinery, engines, and inventions, *Machine Art* displayed more everyday objects, many which visitors likely used or saw in their own homes that morning. Considering the formal design and functional use of these ordinary objects, which included dishes, tea kettles, car pistons, flatware, and ashtrays (Marshall 2-3). Similar to 1876, the intention of these exhibits was to present and display these objects, whether industrial or domestic, to convey the simplistic and pure beauty in the object itself and not from outside or artificial ornamentation. Objects for household use and objects for use on an airplane, or in a laboratory, or factory are beautiful because of the functionality of that object and the expression of that functionality in its design as solely that. According to Jennifer Marshall, these objects presented the objects in the exhibition: "activated by the functionality and use of the object as a representation of that functionality and efficiency" (Marshall 4).

The year prior, the museum had exhibited a show by Johnson, *Objects: 1900 and Today*, comparing the evolution of the decorative arts over the span of thirty years to include examples of ornate and organic Art Nouveau pieces up to sleek, streamlined functionality of Bauhaus. This show demonstrated the simplification and evolution of similar forms

(Marshall 25-26). What *Machine Art* was able to accomplish is the acceptance of these abstracted, often industrial, or domestic objects to be considered beautiful (Marshall 27). “There’s no denying it: Machine Art was a show for shoppers” (Marshall 109). The show was successful in putting modernity and the machine on the minds of Americans. Philip Johnson, however, was against the notion of streamlining, for the same that its principles were being overused and inauthentic in their application, particularly taking aim against the designs of Raymond Loewy. Marshall cites the example of a pencil sharpener:

> *That pencil sharpener might’ve looked smoothly aerodynamic, but when was the last time a pencil sharpener had to glide quickly through space? In fact, totally contrary, pencil sharpeners function most efficiently when they are solidly mounted to the desk. Here the streamlined shape was a metal casing put over an old-fashioned machine, not only obscuring the turning, spiraled blades of its working interior, but pretending to a ‘look’ of functionalism at cross purposes with a function!* (Marshall 122)

However, in disagreement to this point, the use of the streamlined design allowed for that object to take on a contemporary identity, allowing it to evolve, even if the use of a new design was not needed. By transgressing the design of ordinary objects to take on

a more artfully and carefully considered form it asserted a clear adherence to the principles of modernism, which in its rejection of the past was also a radical transformation of what it meant to be designed. While machinery and technology heavily inform the Streamline Moderne style, it is also hypocritical in that it does present the idea of modernity, but the item that is produced is still but a decorative covering of the internal components, however minimalist, streamlined, aerodynamic, and futuristic they may appear to be. In a book review, for Donald Bush's work, *The Streamlined Decade*, Robert Craig sums up Bush's understanding of Streamline Moderne through the use of the teardrop form as:

> *...the essence of streamlining the 'teardrop' employed by Norman Bel Geddes and others as the ideal form and indeed the symbol of progress resulting from the application of technology and art to the design process*. (Craig 779)

Besides the transportation infrastructure designed in an aerodynamic manner, the vast majority of streamlined objects did not have to be. Despite the positivity and general enthusiasm for streamlining on the part of the public and the consumer market, streamlining did come at a cost to the traditional nature of craft, even how craft had been practiced just several years prior with the acceptance of the handmade in Art

Deco. Streamline Moderne rejected the handmade, in favor of the machine made for the sake of efficiency and uniformity, in this mindset, necessities for a society pushing forward. The "handmade" in the context of the Art Deco movement refers to the role of individual craftspeople who designed and made expensive limited production items with valuable and precious materials. Where Art Deco was accessible to only the wealthy, Streamline Moderne was if not *actually* accessible, was at least marketed towards a wider array of Americans, and was produced on a massive scale with man-made and economical materials:

> *The ever-reaching threat of industry and the machine-made and the separation of the designer from the maker, impinged on the purity of the handmade object. At the same time, the contribution of industry to the period was a critical one. Industry's mandate was to modernize products and their means of manufacture. Streamlining swept through the design universe, rounding corners, smoothing surfaces, attenuating forms, proselytizing speed. Modernism was like a cult, practiced with fervor and compliance to the doctrine. Everything in American life was affected; craft would be irrevocably altered* (Kardon 30).

As previously stated, the emphasis on speed, motion, and transportation are beyond critical for the

emergence and adaptation of Streamline Moderne in the home. The design of automobiles and trains in this streamlined style would serve as the inspiration for household appliances, objects, and furnishings seeking to capture that same spirit. In his 1932 book *Horizons*, Norman Bel Geddes said "To-day, speed is the cry of our era, and greater speed one of the goals of to-morrow" (Meikle 116). A number of years before, the automobile began to influence and dominate the American way of life. The introduction of Ford's "Model T," first put into production in 1908 provided a reliable means of transportation, and a sense of independence for Americans. For $500, a family could own a car. The "Model T", accessible and affordable enough for the now growing American middle class got America hooked on the idea of speed. Like Art Deco design, the automobile, initially essentially a novelty plaything for the wealthy, began to be seen as viable means of transportation for the American public, should it be made affordable and accessible—that same shift was seen with Streamline Moderne, which evolved from Art Deco and marketed for a wider audience of consumers, at a lower price point (Meikle 102). The earliest cars, like the "Model T," were angular, boxy and utilitarian. However, the same interest in aerodynamics results in dramatic

design changes, and would influence automobile design for around twenty years.

Streamlining pervaded not only automobile manufacture and design, but every mode of transportation of the time: trains, buses, and airplanes included. In the design of trains, Raymond Loewy was responsible for the design of the Broadway Limited for the Pennsylvania Railroad, while Henry Dreyfuss was responsible for the New York Central Railroad's Twentieth Century Limited, in 1937 and 1938, respectively demonstrate the need to outdo one's competition, particularly in the fast-paced urban environment. The designs of these trains bear a resemblance to contemporary bullet trains—the intention remains the same, speed. These competing designs each provided comfort and luxury in travel for the passengers on board, a departure from older trains (Hanks and Hoy 29). Additionally, providing structural and mechanical improvements, a smoother ride, increased speed, while increasing safety, reduction of wind resistance (the purest justification for streamlining) and fuel efficiency (Cheney and Cheney 133). The trains represented a romanticism and interest in the nature of travel, a dramatization. (Cheney and Cheney 130). Lucille Guild's notable design for "Vacuum Cleaner: Number 30" for

Electrolux, bears a compelling resemblance with Loewy's design for the Broadway Limited Train, featuring a similar bullet shaped design, and horizontal striping, along with a rail or track-like sled at the bottom. Hanks and Hoy also describe the vacuum as "emphasizing a train-like form" which it would appear, even upright vacuums also did (Hanks and Hoy 89).

Related to the association of Streamline Moderne to transportation, the adoption of this style was by transportation companies themselves a marketing opportunity to convey the ambitions, reliability, and service of the business. That is precisely what Greyhound did, in the systematic design of buses and stations for a uniform and confident design. Greyhound commissioned architect W.S. Arrasmith to make this vision a reality (Sargent 445). Quite apt for a business whose identity and branding even today is associated with speed, Streamline Moderne proved an appropriate and consummate application of an artistic form which praises the same reliance and endorsement of speed and velocity as not something to simply be admired, and not a way of life, but *the* way of life in the modern, urban, twentieth century.

The prevalent qualities of Streamlining extended to the far reaches of everything that was or could be designed, used, or experienced. The argument made is the expression of these attributes in both consumer products, household appliances and furnishings, and well as how the same style was manifested in transportation design as the ultimate statement of adherence to the principles of Streamlining which in itself seeks to be informed by movement and speed--a key reason for the adoption and association with transportation. Coinciding with this was an allure for items with no relationship or association with movement, transit, or speed to suddenly reflect these ideas. Much of the focus of Streamline Moderne design in the design, marketing, and sale of consumer products was in the kitchen, where for centuries, housewives toiled, initially over an open hearth, then moving to more rudimentary stoves. With the advent of electricity, the modern housewife, maybe even the working wife would not have to struggle to keep up a proper home. New ingenious appliances mechanized tiresome work, previously done by hand, while also saving precious time. This ease of use alleviated this strain on the modern woman, making life easier. Therefore, it was fitting to incorporate those same design elements that

exuded the idea of speed and innovation in products that aimed to accomplish or promote the same. “The perfect design for any object could be derived from the ‘function which the object is adapted to perform, the materials out of which it is made, and the methods by which it is made’” (Meikle 114).

At the same time, while streamlining offered a new freedom for women and was emblematic of the changing role of women, it continued affirmation by society, which deemed that women belonged in the home. However, with the ability to vote with the 1920 passage of the nineteenth amendment, and the specific marketing of streamlined products towards women making purchasing decisions for the home--it made clear that women practiced some agency, and having time and energy saving products would make life as a housewife better and easier, it remained however still a part of the hegemony of a patriarchal society. Although the futuristic and progressive designs may have been symbolic of an attempt or hope to break with this tradition as a part of Streamlining’s larger goal of breaking with the past.

This is not the only evolution and attempt at change in response to Streamlining. Thinking about this evolution of these appliances themselves, which we now consider nothing less than a definite necessity,

many of these products were new and novel inventions at the time. From the beginning of the twentieth century, and three decades in, we see the modern American home develop, all within the context of Streamline Moderne. Looking at a timeline, we see these significant appliances and products enter the market earlier, and are then further developed and perfected by Industrial Designers in the 1930s, and going forward. 1903: "Lightweight electric iron", 1905: "Electric filaments improved", 1907: "first practical domestic vacuum cleaner, 1909: "first commercially successful electric toaster", 1913: "first refrigerator for home use", "first electric dishwasher on the market", 1919: "first automatic pop-up toaster", 1927: "First iron with an adjustable temperature control", Mid-1930s: "Washing machine to wash, rinse, and extract water from clothes", 1935: "First clothes dryer", and 1947: "First top-loading automatic washer" ("Household Appliances Timeline"). Mail order businesses, like Sears and Montgomery Ward were early adopters of Streamline Moderne to stand out amongst the brick-and-mortar competition as consumer's dollars became scarce during this, the height of the Great Depression (Meikle 108).

In 1931, Montgomery Ward established a "Bureau of Design" headed by Swedish designer

Anne Swainson. It is clear that Montgomery Ward began to take the design and marketing of their products seriously. Sears, Roebuck took a different approach, focusing on the design of key products, hiring Industrial Designer, Henry Dreyfuss to design a washing machine, which was introduced in 1933 as a "designer appliance" (Meikle 108-109). The result was a clean and shiny appliance that would certainly make life easier. In 1935, Sears introduced the Raymond Loewy designed "Coldspot" Refrigerator. This appliance, which prioritized a simple elegant design that highlights its ease-of-use "… *in the door release, a long vertical bar that someone with both hands full could operate with the nudge of an elbow*" (Meikle 110).

In the consideration of the role that the refrigerator played in streamlined design, and how it was marketed to consumers, historian Shelley Nickles delves deep into this analysis. Again, the need, or perhaps desire for streamlined appliances comes from the approach that an object designed to look efficient will be efficient. Nickles describes the ideal consumer for a time, money, and energy saving appliance for the home: "a homemaker in a depression economy, without servants or helpers, who found herself opening the refrigerator door with both hands full. She

valued thrift, efficiency, convenience, and modern food preservation methods for her family" (Nickles 694). Nickles argues that this example was needed to shift the refrigerator from a luxury item to everyday household object, not a status symbol, but a necessary tool for any modern household. The icebox simply would not do any longer as the twentieth century progressed (Nickles 696).

By the mid-1930s, the design of refrigerators and other household equipment would be transformed by the new modernist 'streamline' aesthetic. Historians have tended to emphasize the dramatic quality of this change, as did industrial designers themselves. Therefore, consumers' rapid acceptance of streamline modernism has seemed remarkable. But as the foregoing discussion illustrates, household economists and other reformers already succeeded in simplifying refrigerator design by calling on values such as hygiene and efficiency. What designers contributed was a new aesthetic vocabulary and rationale…Designers found a visual vocabulary that expressed modernity but, just as significantly, was restrained within the boundaries of household values as they were being defined through the role of the servantless housewife. (Nickles 708).

In order to accomplish this, the refrigerator had to be redesigned to fit this new market—overseen by Industrial designers, making clear that was a carefully orchestrated craft meant to express this message. Frigidaire, in their model to attract more customers, sought to do so by radically reconsidering the American consumer landscape. In this, they drew their consumer base from every class and position in society (Nickles 698). The research conducted demonstrated that there was a growing need to reach consumers at the lower end of the spectrum who at that point were the ones making refrigerator purchases (Nickles 698). As an attempt to attract potential customers, many companies gave away sets of serving pieces—like plates, jugs, and pitchers. These items, known as "Refrigeratorware" were meant to incentivize the purchase of a new refrigerator. Appropriately, these pieces were also designed with streamlining in mind (Stewart).

For those Americans who in the midst of the Great Depression were unable to afford these same conveniences, Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal came to the aid, with the Electric Home and Farm Authority (EFHA), a New Deal program that has seemingly been underrepresented in analysis of New Deal programs. The EHFA worked to provide families

in need, particularly in the rural South, with appliances at low prices and competitive payment plans, allowing up to five years to finish paying. "The electrified, modern American kitchen took shape within a government-managed economic, social, and technological infrastructure" (Mock). The EHFA pushed for "Model T Appliances"— "appliances for the masses", just as the automobile had done nearly thirty years prior. "*By 1935, Electrical World confirmed that 'the appeal of modern electrical appliances has become so strong and public interest has been so increased as a result of the wide publicity that has grown out of President Roosevelt's enthusiasm for the social benefits that come from electricity in the home*'" (Mock)

It is important to note that Streamline Moderne design extended its reach into every possible type of item. "*Nothing is too small or too obscure to be redesigned and made expressive of the new ideal of form*" (Cheney and Cheney 217). David Hanks's and Anne Hoy's work *American Streamline Design*, captures and documents the carefully rendered designs of numerous objects, everything from architecture to, staplers and tape dispensers, vacuums to toasters, hair dryers to power tools, and everything in between. The nature and scope of Streamline Moderne design is so

extensive that a complete analysis cannot be undertaken in a work this short, however, the context given of particular interest in the role of kitchen appliances designed in the Streamline Moderne style as marketed to consumers as necessary items for a modern-day lifestyle, inspired by the need for speed, motion and movement of that day, is represented first by the physical motion of transportation.

This definitively specific style speaks to a difficult time in American and world history, following the aftermath of World War I and a devastating flu epidemic. At that particular moment, the United States was in the middle of the Great Depression, when the outlook on American society seemed hopeless. Industrial designers and corporations established a new stylistic vocabulary. This vocabulary, a style that would become to be implemented widely in every marketable designed object would draw on the successes of the Art Deco movement, but would be a new style that did not recall tradition, whose only inspiration was looking forward and moving into the future. The harsh and sharp edges of the Art Deco style would be rounded and smoothed--gliding through space; familiar forms from nature and classical antiquity would be rejected. While it can be said that the entire language of design has always been

a dynamic discipline and that every change is a turning point in its own right, this particular departure from tradition was especially groundbreaking for setting the course for future changes to come--and with those changes, continued progress took place. These changes did not take place in a vacuum but in the context of the twentieth century, where conflict, violence, revolution, civil rights, and so much more clashed and played out not just on a national, but a global stage. Streamline Moderne itself continued to evolve and ultimately resulted in the adaptation of new styles which emulated American society's sentiments on modernity in the acceptance of the International Style and then Midcentury Modern and Brutalism. It is not a surprise that American society ascribed to lofty ambitions for the future, depicting an ideal world going forward through the 1930s, and again in the 1960s at the height of threat of nuclear war, just as the United States looked towards space. The *Jetsons* in particular depicts a futuristic, space-age society that in an animated universe exists as Streamline Moderne in its most idealized and widely embraced form. Streamline Moderne was a reflection of modernity and the ambitions of a nation moving forward in the progressing twentieth century, which would come to be regarded as "the American century". It was in the

era of Streamlining that ushered in the age of contemporary American consumer culture and the proliferation of goods and services never before seen. The radical and rounded design vocabulary instituted in the twenties, thirties, and forties set forth a transformational change in the way design is thought about an incorporated into everyday life for Americans.

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NEW ERRANDS: THE UNDERGRADUATE JOURNAL OF AMERICAN STUDIES

Women's Shakespeare Clubs: Fandom in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century America

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In 1929, as recorded and distributed in the *Shakespeare Association Bulletin*, a member of the Hathaway Shakespeare Club of Philadelphia explained that what drew her and her fellow club members together to discuss and analyze the works of the Bard each week was "the strong bond of fellowship due to our common literary interest and singleness of purpose" (4.4:119). Meanwhile, in her 2000 book, *Enterprising Women: Television Fandom and the Creation of Popular Myth*, Camille Bacon-Smith detailed the purpose of 'fandom' communities, stating "the clubs in fandom are run by the fans, for the love of the source products— the books, comics, television and movie series around which fans rally—and for the community" (8). These two women are connected by more than just their "common literary interest" and their "love of the source products." The structures upon which modern fan communities stand

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and the products they put forth are also found in the women's Shakespeare clubs of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and, vice versa, the comradery of spirit and foundations of female community that women found in Shakespeare clubs continued into the female fan communities of television shows like *The X-Files* and *Star Trek*.

In this essay, I will explore the correlations between these two groups of women, using case studies pulled from newsletters such as the *Shakespeare Association Bulletin* and *Shakespeariana,* as well as internet fan sites and blogs. In doing so, I hope to show how women have and continue to utilize specific touchstones in popular culture as a means of forming community, especially in areas where they have been intellectually barred. Noting the importance of fandom as an intellectual and communal outlet for women today, it is clear that Shakespeare was as personal a source text for American women as any fandom source text is in the modern era of popular culture.

Due to the constraints of this essay in terms of length, I will begin by establishing a series of necessary definitions in order to develop a working knowledge of fandom studies. It is also worth noting that Katherine Scheil, the primary expert on Women's

Shakespeare Clubs, published a book on the topic, *She Hath Been Reading.* Scheil views these clubs through the lens of a larger movement of women's reading clubs. However, I intend to view the subject through the lens of fan studies, in which Shakespeare is not just the reason for women gathering, but rather the fundamental basis upon which these women's relationships to themselves, each other, and the greater world developed.

Henry Jenkins, a leading expert in the field of fan studies, loosely defines fandom as "the social structures and cultural practices created by the most passionately engaged consumers of mass media properties" ("Fandom, Participatory Culture, and Web 2.0"). He further narrows his definition to that of participatory culture, a subset of fandom in which the members actively respond to and interact with their source text, developing a community with "relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one's creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices... one in which members believe their contributions matter, and feel some degree of social connection with one another" (*Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture*

7). Fans employ the use of textual poaching, "appropriating media texts and rereading them in a fashion that turn them to their own individual, contingent, or contextual advantage," in order to "individualise mass culture by interpreting texts beyond the dominant meaning which has been decided by the elite (academics, teachers, authors etc.) who monopolise the readings" ("Star Trek Rerun, Reread, Rewritten" 85; Levine). Common forms of textual poaching found in fandom include fanzines (amateur magazines created and distributed by fans which connects a fan community spread out across large distances), meta/head canon (online or printed theories that fans post analyzing aspects of their chosen media, occasionally creating their own individualized canon concepts through transformative works such as fanfiction and fanart), cosplay (the practice of dressing up as, performing, and embodying a character from a source text) and activism ("fan-driven efforts to address civic or political issues through engagement with and strategic deployment of popular culture content") (Brough and Shresthova).

Keeping these parameters in mind, we can ft the primary creative, cultural, and communal products of women's Shakespeare clubs into these same categories. Fandoms remain an influential and

important aspect of modern American society, serving as micro-communities that allow their members to express their identities, connect with others, and participate in larger conversations on social justice through identification, communication, performance, and advocacy. How do women's Shakespeare clubs of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries fulfill the academic parameters of a fan community? What connections can we find between these clubs and the women's fandoms of the late twentieth century? In answering these questions, we can understand the emotional and intellectual motivations that drew these women to Shakespeare, and to each other, week after week to meet on front porches, in parlors, and in library halls to partake in "a common feeling of wholesome hero-worship" for the immortal Bard (Scheil 15).

In the late nineteenth century, the women's club movement began gaining steam, particularly as an intellectual outlet for middle class women who were denied the opportunity to express themselves in the presence of their husbands. By the turn of the twentieth century, an estimated two million American women were members of women's clubs and organizations. Similar to church groups or philanthropy clubs, reading clubs were intended both

for intellectual discussion and socialization with the other members. Kate Flint argues that "what distinguishes the reading group from . . . other sites of shared discussion is the fact that its members continually, at some level, return to a text and to their encounter with it, both as individuals and as members of a community" (517). During this same period, over five hundred women's clubs formed, all with a single purpose in mind: to passionately study and discuss the works of William Shakespeare.

There are numerous records of such foundings in local bulletins, national Shakespeare journals, and club minutes, in which the members set forth the reasoning behind the founding of clubs with such a specific mission. The 1896 edition of the Michigan State Library Bulletin extolled the virtues of clubs that focused on a single subject, rather than the more common, and more generic, reading clubs of the era: "The provision of continued study on one subject prevents the waste of thought and energy common in clubs which take up a topic one week only to drive out of mind the next by one totally different" (1: 1-2). In 1892, Kate Tupper Galpin began her women's Shakespeare club in Los Angeles as "an unfailing remedy for breaking the crust of the mind in rust, and releasing latent powers of which the possessor had

never dreamed" (Lyons and Wilson 158). In an 1896 edition of her newspaper column, *Women's Kingdom*, Laura Eaton, a member of the Osage, Iowa Shakespearean Women's Club, spoke specifically to the communal nature of such a club which uses Shakespeare not just to enlighten a single women, but to bring empowerment to all women who partake in the study together. She wrote, "we all feel that instead of walking alone, that we had all the time been walking by our sisters. I know for the first time the true mission of the Shakespearean Club. Not wholly self-culture, but it is to enter into, brighten and beautify the lives of all women in this city, who have few pleasures and fewer opportunities" ("Mitchell County Press").

The 'pleasures' and 'opportunities' that Shakespeare clubs provided women were possible because, as Lawrence Levine explains in his discussion on Shakespeare in *High Brow, Low Brow*, many nineteenth-century Americans viewed literature as part of the popular culture rather than as a purely elitist activity. Due to the social accessibility to the material that stemmed from this outlook, women had the freedom to interact with the text as they wished, forming emotional connections with the material itself, as well as with the community that formed

around the material. It also created a more permeable membrane for entry that developed into the "relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement" that Jenkins put forth in his definition of fandom. However, as Mark Dufett explains in *Understanding Fandom*, a fan is not simply someone who has committed to exploring and understanding a particular set of works. In order to enter a fandom, one must continually return to the source media, committing to "regular, emotionally involved consumption of a given narrative or text," or, in other words, organize weekly meetings to contemplate the meanings of King Lear and Hamlet (Sandvoss 8). As fans begin to build up their emotional connection to a source text, they tend to move toward and create structured communities, in person, online, or by mail, through which they can share their opinions, acquire more knowledge, and create new material. However, as these organizations form, organization-specific vernacular, rules, and hierarchies form with them. We can see examples of this phenomenon in the form a pseudo-spiritual structure, both in an *X-Files* mailing list which called itself the OBSSE (Order of the Blessed St. Scully the Enigmatic), as well as in the Marion Shakespeare Club of Marion, Iowa. The OBSSE structured itself according to the hierarchy of

the Catholic church in order to emulate the religion of their "blessed one," X-Files character Dana Scully. The members refer to each other as 'sisters' and the site moderator as the 'abbess.' The Marion Shakespeareans referred to their club meeting place, both literally and figuratively, as the "sanctuary." Women who joined the "charmed circle" of the Shakespeare club, as Shakespearean K.D. Brenneman recounted in her article commemorating the club's first homecoming, were referred to as "One of us," the capitalization evoking a reverential theme evident in much of the club's traditions, as with the OBSSE. The OBSSE site included a "frequently asked questions" page in which all OBSSE jargon is listed in detail, including various names for the community's patron saint, such as "she whose eyebrows are like the vaults of Heaven" and "she whose blazers we are unfit to button" (Wakefeld 133). The Marion Shakespeareans also viewed the object of their obsession as a spiritual entity. When a new member joined the club, Brenneman said that the "charm of the magician, Shakespeare, fell upon here and will always remain" ("Archived Materials").

In addition to complicated and deeply set subcultural community structures and vocabulary, fans are distinguished from other cultural consumers

by "their off-by-heart knowledge of their text and their expertise both about it and any associated material" (Dufett 19). Many Shakespeare clubs used knowledge of their source texts as both an intellectual and a social commodity, with women recorded as having quoted lines of Shakespeare to each other to prove their points. Some clubs instituted a hierarchical fan-superfan dichotomy, similar to those Bart Beaty wrote about in his exploration of Hollywood franchise fandoms, stating that "the insider/outsider relationship is formed around the ability to recognize obscure and often trivial relationships, many of which may never be developed in a meaningful way" (322). While casual members may not be aware of their outsider status, members who have invested heavily in the fandom are hyper-aware of their insider status, maintaining it as the ultimate reward, one that is frequently referenced and used as leverage when fans may choose to enter the fan community. This relationship was particularly emphasized in the Kate Tupper Galpin Shakespeare Club of Los Angeles where members received "certificates" when they had completed study of twenty plays, a physical representation of knowledge dominance (Lyons and Wilson 158). However, the certificate program also fulfills the qualification set out by Jenkins of "some

type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices." The experienced members of the clubs would work with new members to pass along their knowledge and help the achieve the goal of 'super-fandom.' The Marion Shakespeareans also participated in competitive displays of knowledge. Instead of saying "present" during meeting attendance, members would perform a chosen line from a Shakespearean text, only being marked as present if they quote the line correctly. Additionally, members would receive 'points' in a credit system for particularly compelling analyses and displays of knowledge, quantifying their knowledge for means of competition. In doing so, the greater 'hive-mind' of fandom knowledge grew and the level of discourse in the club increased dramatically, contributing to the shared knowledge space that Pierre Lévy referred to as the 'cosmopedia,' which makes available to the collective intellect all knowledge gathered by the group, accessible through the individual members personal knowledge base (214).

According to Jenkins and in conjunction with fandom's need to provide "strong support for creating and sharing one's creations," members of fan communities thrive from epistemophilia, not simply

pleasure in knowing but a pleasure in exchanging knowledge. The Marion Shakespeareans, for example, engaged in correspondence with wide networks of other Shakespeare clubs, sharing in new ideas and information, as well as providing thoughts of their own. In addition, they, like many other clubs across the country, paid dues to be members of the state and national federations of Shakespeare clubs. While records show that the Marion Shakespeareans were at first hesitant to join the larger network of clubs for fear of loss of autonomy as an organization, the group later determined the power of the national connections forming in the federations were of greater importance to the growth of their chapter.

Part of the way members of Shakespeare clubs fulfilled their epistemophilia was through their own methods of textual poaching. These methods served to elevate the deification of Shakespeare that also emerged around this period. As any interaction with a source text that involves textual poaching inevitably leads to a challenge to the author's authority, the women engaging in conversations with the text were simultaneously acting reverentially toward "William Shakespeare, poet by the grace of God" and "evok[ing] the scorn of the class" when elements of the work did not ft with a club's desired interpretation

(Long 45). In order to discuss and opine on the implications of new forms of Shakespeare interactions, clubs networked through a variety of journals, including the *American Shakespeare Magazine*, *Shakespeariana,* the *Shakespeare Association Bulletin*, and its later incarnation, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, which all printed news of Shakespeare clubs, shared members' personal essays, and encouraged clubs to continue sharing details of their chapters' endeavors in studying Shakespeare. One could see similarly titled publications in the Star Trek fanzine boom of the late 1960s. Women published fanzines under the names *Star Trek Lives!, Spockanalia*, and *The Enterprise Papers* for the purpose of using Star Trek to forge intellectual and emotional connections with other women and to share in their creative output. The far reaching national Shakespeare publications held similar goals, the editor of one such journal included a supplication at the end of one issue, writing "we are separated geographically by immense distances and only in exceptional instances can we meet face to face, but this is the place where we can talk to each other... Here Shakespeare will introduce us, each to all" (Scheil 17).

As with Star Trek's fanzines, the Shakespeare publications started out as entirely non-fiction

information dispensers, providing details on what clubs had formed when and what activities they had recently planned. As members grew more comfortable with the format of the journals, they began using them as more than just mode of communication, but rather as modes of expression and creation. They first tried their hands at producing analyses, or what we would refer to today as meta or head canons, including such topics as 'Is Hamlet Insane?' 'Shakespeare's Use of Eleven' 'Was Oberon a Meddler?' 'Shakespeare's Manifestation of Abnormal Characters', 'Shakespeare's Historical Plays', 'Elemental Beings as Agents of Enchantment', and 'The History of Rome as it pertains to Coriolanus' (Croly). However, as with the Star Trek Zine-makers, Shakespeareans sought to engage more personally in the works that they had dedicated so much of their time to, with one woman, Miss L.B. Easton of the San Francisco Shakespeare Class, noting in an issue of *Shakespeariana* that "married ladies have so many claims upon their time, material, domestic, and social, that one has to handle them very gingerly, in order to obtain any results whatsoever" (3). Thus, in order for these women to get the most out of their fan community, they had to develop their own personal engagement with the text, which they could later share with the rest of their

group as a form of short and long distance socializing. These personal engagements developed in the form of transformative works such as fanfiction, including parodies, spin-offs, and inspirations. For example, "The Seven Ages of Woman: Shakespeare Up to Date," a companion piece to the original speech in *As You Like It*, dealt with the issues of misogyny and women's stereotyping through the use of parody (Fortnightly Shakespeare 1:2). Paula Smith, a Star Trek fan in the 1970's employed the same coping mechanism to deal with misogynistic writing on *Star Trek: The Original Series*. She published a fanfiction called "A Trekkie's Tale" in the second issue of the fanzine *Menagerie*, which parodied (and named) the 'Mary Sue' trope, by exaggerating its transgressive features. Another form of transformative work that there is record of Shakespeareans creating is the crossover AU fanfiction, in which characters from more than one work interact with each other in a story in an alternative universe to that from which the characters originally derive. The president of the Fortnightly Shakespeare Club, Anna Randall Diehl, who encouraged her members to partake in the fanfiction phenomenon, created her own Shakespearean comedy, called "The Marriage of Falstaff." The story is "set in 'Castle Montague' in

Hoboken, New Jersey, Falstaff 'becomes a happy Benedict,' accompanied by fellow characters Romeo, 'the gracious host of Castle Montague,' a tamed Petruchio and a Kate who did not go to the 'taming school,' and a Juliet who 'entertains Will Shakespeare's friends' and 'flirts without a balcony'" (Fortnightly Shakespeare 1:4). In addition to using revisionist writings as a creative outlet, women used them to address complex social issues by creating dialogue with the author. Randall Diehl, for example, recognizes the hints of strength that Shakespeare gives his female characters, and uses those hints to create a narrative of female empowerment, in which Petruchio is tamed and Kate is free and in which Juliet is no longer doomed to die for love. In these works, the writers are employing the standards of wish fulfillment used in Jenkins' textual poaching to respond and relate to Shakespeare on a personal level. In writing transformative works, they facilitated their own empowerment, and in sharing them, they facilitated the empowerment of their communities.

In addition to fans empowering their own communities, a common theme found across fandom is 'fan activism,' in which fans, inspired by their source material, attempt to incite some form of social change. The motivation for such activism often

includes identification with a character, theme, or experience within a work, mapping the fictional content onto real world concerns. Fan groups characterize their activist goals as a "mission" that they must complete, either in deference to source of their identification or to the creator of the work. The women of The Shakespeare Club in Concord, for example, claimed that they had "met to perfection the requirements laid down by Portia': . . . for in companions/ That do converse and waste the time together,/ Whose souls do bear an equal yoke of love,/ There must be needs a like proportion/ Of lineaments, of manners, and of spirit" (Leahy and Whetstone 9). Our friends at the OBSSE, as mentioned above, also attempted to model their behavior after their character role model, with one such "sister in St. Scully" establishing the Scully-like attributes that members should strive to hold themselves to, writing "Scully is my Saint, I shall not prance/ She maketh me search for irrefutable/ She leadeth me to a logical explanation/ She restoreth my faith/ She leadeth me in the path of science for truth's sake. . . ." (Wakefeld 132). Fans then take this identification and apply it to issues that the community as a whole is passionate about.

The Marion Shakespeareans engaged directly with their texts in order to guide their social activism.

Following the passage of the nineteenth amendment, the Marion women returned to Shakespeare to contemplate the topic, "Has woman's power been greatest when yielded through men?" ("Archived Materials"). Other club women found earlier inspirations for their own suffragist opinions, with the members of the Peoria, Illinois, Women's Club (who performed Shakespeare annually) supporting suffrage as early as 1907. The Woodland, California Shakespeare Club read plays and also "wished to work actively for women's suffrage, for the improvement of the lot of women and children, for town beautification, and for many other civic matters" (Scheil 10). The Pasadena, California Shakespeare Club "became a forum and launching-point for numerous "progressive" ideas of the new century, including public kindergarten, public restrooms, Juvenile Court and the Pasadena Humane Society... initiated by Shakespeare Club volunteers" (Scheil 10). Many such women studied the texts to find examples of strong female characters who displayed agency that could be paralleled with the fight for the vote. Favorites cited by the Marion Shakespeareans included Juliet, Ophelia, Imogen, Portia, Helena, and Lady Macbeth. Club members treated characters "as if they were real

personages whose virtues were to be emulated, or their weaknesses decried" (Scheil 52).

While these characters span a broad spectrum in terms of strength and agency, the ladies of the club read deeply into each one, finding textual evidence that provided personal empowerment for the women who identified with them. Similarly, modern fan-run activist organizations, such as the Harry Potter Alliance or Firefly fans' 'Can't Stop the Signal', mobilize civic participation by relating social movements to the experiences of the source text, using iconic imagery and thematic relevance to galvanize the base. Another form of civic engagement between the two groups is charity performance. The Fortnightly Shakespeare Club, for example, participated in a charity performance of The Taming of the Shrew "for the benefit of the Home for Blind Women" on Long Island (1:5). In a similar act of performance charity, cosplayers who dress up as fictional characters at the base of their fandoms often raise money, awareness, or, in many cases, smiles, by donning the persona and performing as their characters.

Considering all that these women have done in Shakespeare's name, all of the time, energy, and passion that they poured into an intense immersion of

their souls in his works, how can we understand Shakespeare's role in the larger conversation of fandom in America? Scholar Mark Duffett describes fandom's contributions as "the ways it can heighten our sense of excitement, prompt our self-reflexivity, encourage us to discuss shared values and ethics, and supply us with a significant source of meaning that extends into our daily lives" (18). As the object of fandom, Shakespeare seeped into his fans' minds, empowering the community in their understanding of his works, and becoming the whetstone upon which their ideas and ideals were sharpened. Fandom empowers women specifically through the deeply set sense of ownership that comes hand in hand with engaging in conversations with the text. At a point in history when American women's value was being challenged, the fact that Shakespeare provided women with sources of inspiration and a sense of belonging speaks to Shakespeare's legacy as a cultural touchstone which rooted itself throughout American history. By viewing Shakespeare through the lens of fandom, we can see how he and his works have permeated the American psyche. One quick search of Tumblr will show countless ways fandoms have supported its members and called for change in their names. One quick search of *Archive Of Our Own* will

reveal countless fanfiction, metas, and head canons through which members of a fan community interact with and respond to their source texts. Searches across the thousands of Shakespeare club archives spread across this country in attics, basements, and libraries will garner similar results. There is strength and power in loving something, and greater strength and greater power in coming together to create that love. Through Shakespeare, American women found community and voice, and through American women, Shakespeare retained a cultural relevance within America, not as an object of sophistication, or even an object of entertainment, but as an object of internal identification and community engagement.

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NEW ERRANDS: THE UNDERGRADUATE JOURNAL OF AMERICAN STUDIES

Abraham Lincoln and the Music of the Civil War

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Music pervades civilization in almost every institution and serves as a provider of important ideas. Today, music carries heavy political meanings, as artists frequently opt to explicitly voice their opinions and express their emotions through song and dance. The 19th century was no different. An especially turbulent period in American history, the years of Lincoln's presidency were marked by a staggering amount of political unrest. In this tumultuous time, music played a large role in spreading and reinforcing a wide breadth of beliefs. Acclaimed Lincoln and music historian Kenneth A. Bernard calls the Civil War a "musical war." His claim is further supported by the fact that more music was produced and performed over the four-year period of the American Civil War than during every other war combined.[1]

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1 Kenneth A. Bernard and Frank and Virginia Williams *Collection of Lincolniana* (Mississippi State University Libraries), *Lincoln and the Music of the Civil War* (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, 1966), xviii.

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This paper will look at primary sources of music from the Civil War era that are still available to us for research. Thanks to Louis A. Warren, the director of the Lincoln National Life Foundation, there is an index of every piece of sheet music written about Lincoln at the start of his presidency, all throughout the Civil War, and after his death.[2] The index was released in 1940, and by using the pieces of sheet music provided, with the years of publication and the composers/artists listed in the index, a deep dive into the world of Civil War era music is possible. The Library of Congress holds digital copies of these pieces of music, sortable into different categories, and this online collection of sheet music provided easy access to these authentic primary sources.

Exploring the lyrics of these songs will reflect something that Lincoln cared very much about: public opinion of his office and administration. By researching and analyzing lyrics, it can be seen how the public interpreted Lincoln's policies and administrative goals. Lyrics can also demonstrate the support and opposition he received from followers and adversaries and display their reactions through

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[2] Louis Austin Warren and Lincoln National Life Foundation, *Lincoln Sheet Music: Check List* (Fort Wayne, Ind: Lincolniana, 1940), accessed Dec. 11, 2018.

popular music. By looking at a range of music over time, from the songs of Lincoln's electoral campaign in 1860 all the way to music commemorating his death, it will become clear how his image changed. Even pieces of sheet music that are instrumentals contain important information. What they lack in lyrics can be made up for in the style of song, the cover art and its depiction of Lincoln, and other annotations on the piece. The lyricists of the songs will also be a key factor in determining the utility of sheet music in uncovering themes of the Civil War. Although the ethnicities and backgrounds of the composers may not be information that is readily available, using the last names of the composers and the areas of publication and distribution as indicators can also shine a light on why certain music appeared, what audience it was meant for, and who was actually receiving it.

Each part of the paper investigates different parts of Lincoln's policy, including the preservation of the Union, the military strategy and spirit of war, and emancipation. Within each section, relevant sheet music will be utilized to highlight different aspects of Lincoln's presidency. Specific lyrical excerpts will show the messages that the music conveyed. Then, secondary sources will reinforce the primary evidence. Additionally, a secondary goal of this paper is to

advocate for the use of sheet music as a viable source of studying history.[3]

Lincoln and Music

Abraham Lincoln, the most influential figure of the Civil War era, was not immune to music's influence. His love of all kinds of music has been well-documented by a number of historians, and the frequency with which he encountered music during his presidency helped to establish the political, cultural, and social implications that music could carry in the United States. From the very start of his political career, music had a large presence in his life. He enjoyed music during his entire campaign for the presidency as well as during his years as a lawyer during which he traveled up and down the country on the Eighth Judicial Circuit and crossed paths with itinerant musicians.[4] After Lincoln was elected, music continued to have a steady presence in his life. His inauguration ball was a lively and rather splashy event, with a typical Marine band playing patriotic tunes in addition to a full-scale opera performance, which

[3] See Historiography section.
[4] Bernard, xvii.

historian Douglas Jimerson says was the first opera to have performed at a presidential inauguration.[5]

Henry Clay Whitney, an attorney and friend of Lincoln, spoke to Lincoln's love of music in contrast to his understanding of it. He mentioned that Lincoln claimed that music had no utility other than the ability to please the listener and that "he fancied that the creator… made music as a simple, unalloyed pleasure."[6] This quote slightly contradicts other reports of Lincoln's reception of music. With his re-election in doubt in 1864, Lincoln was reported to have been "deeply affected", his face "wet with tears," after hearing "Lead, Kindly Light." This religious hymn pleaded for God to lead the narrator, and the narrator would show undying loyalty and trust in return for guidance. Lincoln, who at this time used religion as a source of solace, appreciated the song in the context of the uncertain situation he was facing.[7] Regardless of his emotional response, it is likely that

[5] Douglas Jimerson, "Music Played a Notable Part in Lincoln's Life," *The Washington Times* (Washington, D.C.), Mar. 22, 1997, accessed Dec. 10, 2018, https://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-56847999.html

[6] "Abraham Lincoln and Music," The Lehrman Institute Presents: Abraham Lincoln's Classroom, accessed on Dec. 10, 2018, http://www.abrahamlincolnsclassroom.org/abraham-lincoln-in-depth/abraham-lincoln-and-music/

[7] Bernard, 147.

Lincoln himself did not realize the practical importance of music.

The news of the attack on Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, brought out a strong effusion of emotions in the nation's capital. People feared war while concurrently experiencing a newfound sense of excitement and spirit to jump into battle.[8] As a result of this unrest, a wave of relief flooded over the citizens of Washington as the New York Seventh regiment appeared in the city as the first wave of defense shortly after the event, on April 25. Along with defense, the regiment brought music, and it was the first military band to perform a concert at the White House for Lincoln. Sensibly enough, patriotic standards such as "Hail, Columbia" rang loudly through the streets as the Union military asserted itself as a proud defensive presence in Washington.[9]

Lincoln frequently heard "Hail, Columbia" in the early parts of the war, as the song represented the values of the Union and had done so since the days of George Washington. It discusses the value of staying "firm" and "united," and makes a specific reference to

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[8] Ronald C. White, Jr., *A. Lincoln* (New York, NY: Random House, 2009), 407.
[9] Bernard, 19.

a "band of brothers" in the oft-repeated chorus.[10] The song was very non-specific to the era, and yet was especially relevant as a period of disunion was about to completely dismantle the country over the coming months. Another patriotic standard, "Hail to the Chief!" was played with high frequency throughout the entirety of Lincoln's political career, often as an instrumental and with especially prominent stretches of popularity during election season. Again, this song was a traditional one, honoring presidents since the early 19th century. It was finally played at an inauguration ceremony for the first time in 1837 for Martin Van Buren.[11] In 1864, it is no wonder then that both Lincoln and McClellan welcomed the song as a part of their respective campaigns, while lyrics may have been slightly altered to denote who exactly was being hailed as "the chief."[12] Traditional songs, however important in continuing political customs and American rituals, were used predominantly for show and for entertainment. They did nothing to differentiate themselves for the specific era of the 1860's in the United States, and did not influence or

[10] S. T. Gordon, "Hail Columbia," New York: S. T. Gordon, 1862, loc.gov.
[11] "Hail to the Chief," Library of Congress (Washington, D.C.), 2002, accessed Dec. 10, 2018, https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.200000009/
[12] Bernard, 243.

encourage the spread of ideas and opinions specific to the war years throughout the audiences in front of which they were performed. These audiences could be quite large. For example, over 30,000 people gathered for a concert in Washington after the news of Gettysburg and Vicksburg reached the capital, and some individual songs sold over 100,000 copies in print by war's end.[13] Music had a potential to circulate throughout the entire public.

Thus, music during Lincoln's time was important in many ways for the lawyer and politician and for all of the citizens, whether they were viewed as loyal unionists or as Confederate rebels. Music was a reflection of the hearts and souls of many American citizens during a time when popular opinion was especially important to the receptive commander-in-chief. Many of the songs were written with direct references to the president, and additionally would reference members of his cabinet, members of the Confederate government, and draw explicitly upon the issues of the time to communicate ideas throughout the struggling nation.

[13] Bernard, 141-143.

Historiography

Although Kenneth Bernard's *Lincoln and the Music of the Civil War* extensively researches the president's relationship to music of the time, his work focuses on music that was popularly performed for or heard by the president. His detailed explanations of the president's emotional responses to certain songs and his accounts of performances help readers to develop a more complete view of the president as a person. Supplementing Bernard's historiographic approach on the music that Lincoln would have heard with the songs that most directly referred to the public opinion of Lincoln and the war provides an abundant source of information on the Union and the popular masses in the Civil War era.

A more general account of music of the Civil War, Sanjek's *American Popular Music and Its Business*, discusses some of the most important publishers, writers, and performers of music. Sanjek breaks down the prominent music publishers of the time, including Oliver Ditson, who oversaw a whole network of music publishers throughout the North and is a renowned publisher of the sheet music featured in this paper. Sanjek also details which songs were popular at certain times, which implies how the song

may have had an effect on the nation during the Civil War.

What this work will do differently is look at the lyrics of songs regardless of whether Lincoln would have heard them, and take their popularity into account separately from the political, religious, or social connotations of each song. The usefulness of Bernard's and Sanjek's works here is that they shine light on the relative popularity of each song, but regardless of these facts, the songs' meanings have never before been explored to this extent. There is one instance in Ronald White's biography on Lincoln where he discusses the importance of "We Are Coming, Father Abraham," and looks into the lyrical implications.[14] However, lyrics do not receive serious treatment in his biography or in any others that look into Lincoln and the Civil War. My research complements Lincoln biographers as well, in that the analysis of lyrics helps to provide context of the time period in which the songs were released and inform readers about the motivations and opinions of the people living under Lincoln. Sheet music provides a rich source and method of researching popular history, and additional research into the composers themselves, the frequent locations of performance,

[14] White, 491

and the relative popularity of certain songs could inform historians even more on life during the Civil War.

The 1860 Campaign and Lincoln's Platform

The 1860 election was tightly contested from the very beginning for the Republican Party. Not until the third day of the Republican Convention did Lincoln take the lead over one of his fellow candidates, William H. Seward, whom he was trailing by three votes. One of the states in which Seward was leading going into that third day was Massachusetts, but by the end of the day, four votes had transferred over to Lincoln.[15] Several important pieces of music from the 1860 election supporting Lincoln were written and published in the capital of this crucial state.

An instrumental entitled "The Railsplitter's Polka" was written in Boston during the campaign. Written by A. Neuman and published by the aforementioned major printer Oliver Ditson, the cover page of this piece dedicates the song "To The Republican Presidential Candidate Hon. A. Lincoln" at the top of the page. Further down, the "R" that

[15] White, 328.

begins the title is made up of robust rail lines and wood.[16] This reputation followed Lincoln throughout his 1860 campaign whether or not it was his intention. Richard J. Oglesby, chairman of the convention, had brought in two rails and a banner that denoted Lincoln as the "Rail Candidate" which symbolized a movement away from slave labor and one towards free labor.[17] The railroad also represented Lincoln's work ethic and desire to spread west. As this piece of music was disseminated, the first thing that recipients would read was this title and the front page dedication to the favored candidate.

Once Lincoln had been established as the Republican candidate, a divided Democratic platform stood in the way as the final opponent in becoming president. Lincoln believed that although the South threatened secession, talk of this sort was "mostly bluster" and that other focal points were more important.[18] Instead, Lincoln advocated for the promise of "justice and fairness to all."[19] As his

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[16] A. Neuman, "The Railsplitter's Polka," Boston: Oliver Ditson & co., 1860, Library of Congress website. Unless otherwise stated, all pieces of sheet music were researched through the Library of Congress website which will be denoted in footnotes as loc.gov.
[17] White, 320-321
[18] White, 345.
[19] White, 332.

railsplitter reputation signified, he was totally against the extension of slavery, so as to promote free labor. The songs of his campaign accurately reflect these ideas.

Karl Cora wrote two pieces of music in support of Lincoln's campaign which were published in Boston by Russell and Tolman. Although both were distributed in the same packet of sheet music, the two feature drastically different aspects of Lincoln's platform. "The Campaign" is displayed across the top of the cover page, followed up by Karl Cora's byline. Interestingly, the byline expresses that the words were "written expressly for the times," as if to indicate that the lyrics may not have a perpetual significance. Karl and Cora are names that are very often German in origin, and so Cora's allegiance to Lincoln, demonstrated in his campaign music, is appropriate based on the German opinion of the time. The Germans' "commitment to free soil," and thus opposition to slave labor, rang true in Cora's writing.[20]

The first of Cora's contributions, "We see the break of day," focuses almost exclusively on the slavery aspect of the Republican party platform. Cora writes from the perspective of an enslaved African

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[20] Louise L. Stevenson, *Lincoln in the Atlantic World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015) ,115 and 120.

American, deploying profound lyrics such as the following:

The hands that hold the Sword and Purse
Ere long shall lose their prey:
And they who blindly wrought the curse,
The curse shall sweep away.[21]

This verse seems to say that the owners of these slaves will lose their slaves without anything to gain from the loss.[22] Cora also writes about the maintenance of the "virgin beauty of the West" and encourages the prevention of anything that would stain it. The song ends on a triumphant note, claiming that the African Americans refuse to be slaves now or ever, and that the world shall soon find out that they are free.[23] Although Lincoln does not discuss emancipation this early into his political career, the Republican party's supporters include abolitionists and free African Americans, and Cora connects with those audiences by speaking to the hope of freedom.

The second piece from Cora in this dual campaign set was "Freedom's Call." Instead of appealing to the more radical sector of Lincoln's

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[21] Karl Cora, "We see the break of day," Boston: Russell and Tolman, 1860, loc.gov.
[22] Lincoln hadn't introduced his idea of compensated emancipation until July of 1862.
[23] Cora, "We see the break of day," loc.gov.

supporters, this song serves a broader audience by discussing themes of perpetual union and strong leadership. Cora emphasizes Lincoln's belief in the founding fathers' intentions with lines implying that Lincoln "makes certain the way" left behind by "the shades of the fathers for freedom who died." Cora builds upon this patriotic and nostalgic sentiment and ends with "not for North or for South, but the best good of all, We follow Lincoln and his wild bugle call!"[24] As Ronald White mentioned, Lincoln did not like to focus on the growing threat of secession, and actually neglected the growing reality of its possible occurrence, and so these lyrics reflect that the president's avoidance of the topic of secession rubbed off on popular music supporting his campaign.[25]

Music continued to reinforce the concept of unity after the election, with songs like "Viva l'America." Written by H. Millard in 1861 and published in New York, the lyrics denounced the traitor and attempted to establish a strong sense of nationalism. The chorus of "united we stand, divided we fall! Union forever, freedom to all!" served as a direct counterpoint to the verse, which threatened the

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[24] Karl Cora, "Freedom's Call," Boston: Russell and Tolman, 1860, loc.gov.
[25] White, 345.

traitor and proclaimed "curs'd be his homestead… shame be his mem'ry…. Exile his heritage, his name, a blot!"[26] The song, "written to instill a new spirit of nationalism," became massively popular as the decade began.[27]

Live performances of music during and immediately after Lincoln's 1860 campaign featured popular songs that embodied the same themes of union and nationalism. *Hutchinson's Republican Songsters, For 1860* was a compilation of music of this sort performed by the widely popular Hutchinson Family, known for their abolitionist themes and overall strong support of republicanism. One of the most popular musical groups of the time, the Hutchinson Family was hired by Lincoln to perform in the Red Room of the White House for private parties, and so their music appealed not only to the wider audiences that would hear their music at celebrations and receptions, but also for private guests of the president.[28] The Rhode Islanders' band, composed of troops, celebrated Lincoln's election with performances of pieces like

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[26] H. Millard, "Viva l'America," New York: Firth, Pond & Co., New York, 1861.
[27] Russell Sanjek, *American Popular Music and Its Business, Volume II: The First Four Hundred Years Volume II: From 1790 to 1909* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 240.
[28] Bernard, 56-57.

"The Flag of Our Union," which stresses the preservation of all aspects of our nation, including the lakes, the lands, and the hearts and hands of citizens under the flag.[29]

Military Strategy and Emancipation: 1862-1864

Unfortunately for Lincoln and the rest of the United States, the idea of perpetual unity was almost immediately destroyed when the Confederates attacked Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861. Military consequences had now emerged out of the political tactic of secession, and Lincoln's role as commander-in-chief came into the public eye. Inadvertently, the Confederate attack stirred up the North to rally around a common cause and strengthened its unification.[30] As secession pulled more and more states out of the union, faithful Americans "dedicated to preserving the Union turned to patriotic music."[31] Seven months after the attack, the North's patriotic sentiment was to be reflected in what Kenneth Bernard calls "the greatest

[29] Bernard, 26; Wm. B. Bradbury, "The Flag of our Union," New York: Firth, Pond & Co., 1861, loc.gov.
[30] Michael P. Johnson, *Abraham Lincoln, Slavery, and the Civil War* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2011), 70-71.
[31] Sanjek, 234.

song of the war."[32] Julia Ward Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic," still a recognizable tune today, had a major impact on the war spirit of the Union. It utilized the melody of "John Brown's Body," a popular Union song about the abolitionist from Harper's Ferry.[33] Howe's song "stir[red] the conscience of the whole North" and pinned religious undertones to the whole cause of the war.[34] By deploying lyrics like "As He [Christ][35] died to make men holy, Let us die to make men free," the war effort was elevated to one that put the morality of citizens at stake unless they fervently supported the war effort.[36]

On July 1, 1862, Lincoln made a bold move as commander-in-chief. A wave of "great Northern discouragement," no doubt a response to a long series of Union losses under General George McClellan in his Peninsula Campaign, led to Lincoln's call for 300,000 volunteers.[37] Soon after, James Sloan

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[32] Bernard, 50.
[33] Bernard, 50.
[34] Bernard, 51.
[35] My addition.
[36] Julia Ward Howe, "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," Boston: Oliver Ditson & Co., 1862, loc.gov. The LoC website says the piece was received by the LoC in 1890, and so can't put a date on the actual age of the sheet music. However, the song itself was first published in 1862.
[37] White, 490.

Gibbons, a quaker abolitionist and economist by trade, wrote a poem titled "We Are Coming, Father Abraham."[38] The words of the poem were set to music at least seven times by different artists, including the hugely popular Stephen Foster. The song, written in the plural first person, unites all listeners together in a zealous attempt to invigorate the North. Different versions of the song, depending on the composer, contain subtitles with different numbers of volunteers. A version released in Philadelphia, for instance, is subtitled "600,000 more," while a version published in Boston only subtitles the piece "300,000 more."[39]

The differing numbers of volunteers aside, the song officially frames Lincoln as more than just a president and commander in the public eye. Lincoln had now attained a patriarchal presence. The lyrics of this song recognized many of the emotions that Unionists were experiencing: the volunteers were sad to leave their homes, but their "hearts [were] too full of utterance" even as "a farewell group stands

[38] Bernard, 76.

[39] White, on page 490, claims that Lincoln issued a call for 300,000 volunteers in July, 1862, whereas Johnson, on page 109, writes that Lincoln called for 600,000 volunteers in July and August 1862. Different versions reflect both of these claims.

weeping at every cottage door."[40] Expressing the cognitive dissonance that the volunteer must have felt made the song more personal and thus more salient. Lincoln himself commented that the song "contained an excellent sentiment and was sung in a manner worthy of the sentiment."[41] Father Abraham's recognition of the song helped bolster the song's success as shown by the two million copies of the song that were distributed before Gibbons's death in 1892.[42] George F. Root's "Yes, We'll Rally 'Round the Flag, Boys (The Battle Cry of Freedom)," a similar theme song of the Northern war effort, was printed 500-700 thousand times.[43] The sheer quantity of pieces published demonstrate the immense success that these songs had.

Wartime songs did not always carry positive and enthusiastic messages. A parody of Gibbons's famous tune reflected a drastic change in Northern attitudes as the war dragged on. The first federal conscription bill passed in March 1863 sparked a series of protests. One part of the law that enraged

[40] James S. Gibbons, "We are Coming, Father Abraham," multiple versions, loc.gov.
[41] Bernard, 82.
[42] Bernard, 75.
[43] Bernard, 75.

poorer Northern citizens was the clause that accepted a "$300 commutation fee" in order to exempt someone from the mandatory draft.[44] Anti-draft rioters paraded through the streets of New York and sang the "Song of the Conscripts," which contained the following verse:

We are coming, Father Abraham, three hundred thousand more.

We leave our homes and firesides with bleeding hearts and sore,

Since poverty has been our crime, we bow to the decree;

We are the poor who have no wealth to purchase liberty.[45]

The biting sarcasm apparent in these words show a complete contrast, albeit from a single group, to the jubilant expression of respect for Lincoln displayed less than a year earlier. It wasn't the only time the song had been made into a parody. In 1864, the meaning of the song changed to advocate the Democrat party candidate, George McClellan. "We are coming Father Abraham" was proclaimed not in a

[44] Adrian Cook, *The Armies of the Streets: The New York City Draft Riots of 1863* (Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2015), 51.

[45] Cook, 52. Actual source of song could not be found, but is cited in multiple different articles.

supportive tone, but in a threatening tone, and was followed up by "two millions strong I'm sure, to drive you from the white house; Abe your acts we can't endure." The acts are then specifically listed and mention his suppression of *habeas corpus* among other alleged violations.[46]

Some songs, rather than resorting to anger, tugged at the heartstrings of listeners to protest the war and sympathize with those who had to deal with the domestic effects of the enduring conflict. Charles Carroll Sawyer's "Weeping, sad and lonely (When this cruel war is over)" was among the most popular songs at anti-administration protests in New York.[47] The war is called "cruel" and is written from the perspective of a family member awaiting his/her beloved soldier to come back home. A particularly powerful line suggests the harsh reality made possible by the war, as the narrator solemnly says,

> *Oft in dreams I see thee lying*
> *On the battle plain,*
> *Lonely, wounded, even dying,*
> *Calling, but in vain*.[48]

While the lyrics do not directly refer to Lincoln, his unwavering stance that war must go on stood in contrast to the longing desires represented in

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[46] Bernard, 245.
[47] Bernard, 137.
[48] Charles C. Sawyer, "Weeping, sad and lonely (When this cruel war is over)," Brooklyn: Sawyer & Thompson, 1863, loc.gov.

this popular song. Sawyer's moving piece sold over one million copies and was the most popular song of the entire Civil War era due to its message "which so strongly appealed to two great armies and to an entire people."[49]

The positive spirit of war intertwined with the longing for emancipation and the amalgamation of the two aspects of the war manifested itself in the lyrics of songs sung at contraband camps. Lincoln himself would hear some of these songs in his visits to the camps, and would even join in the singing.[50] The songs often suggested religious worship as a crucial part of emancipation. Before the proclamation was officially announced in September of 1862, Lincoln had generally acceded to the North's contraband policy through which fugitive slaves could work for the Union army.[51] At a contraband camp in Washington, D.C., the fugitive slaves sang songs that blessed Abraham Lincoln in anticipation of their hopeful freedom.[52] Although Lincoln's policies do not

[49] Sanjek, 245-246. Sanjek also notes that "criticism is baffled in an attempt to discover a reason for its popularity," on the same pages.
[50] Bernard, 92.
[51] Johnson, 115. However, Lincoln insisted that the slaves be returned if their master was a "loyal" one, but Johnson argues that this distinction was never made clear.
[52] Bernard, 93.

exactly reflect that of a great religious emancipator, a role that many of the songs bestowed upon him, it is probable that songs allowed these ideas to be disseminated and further entrench Lincoln into this position.

One title, the appropriately named "Song of the Contrabands," was full of references to Moses and Pharaoh, and the popular biblical motif of "Let my people go!" rang true throughout the lyrics and acted as the subtitle of the song. Arranged by Thomas Baker, the song was said to originate "among the 'Contrabands' and was first heard sung by them on their arrival at Fortress Monroe."[53] In all eleven verses, there is no mention of any current political figure or issue, but the intentions are completely clear. Perhaps to give the song legitimate political meanings, Baker created a parody of the song, changing the lyrics to represent the modern times and published it alongside the original sheet music of the "Song of the Contrabands."

Baker's parody, titled "The Lord doth now to this nation speak," continues the refrain of "Let my people go!" from the original, but replaces biblical

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[53] Thomas Baker, "The Song of the Contrabands," New York: Horace Waters, 1861, loc.gov.

characters with current figures and themes. Verse seven pleads:

> *Save freemen, save our land from stain,*
> *O let my people go!*
> *Go say to Congress yet again,*
> *O let my people go!*

Verse nine features Simon Cameron, William H. Seward, and Salmon P. Chase in the lyrics, and is followed up two verses later by more members of Lincoln's cabinet.

> *Go say to Smith, Welles, Blair, and Bates,*
> *If you let my people go;*
> *Peace shall return to the Rebel States,*
> *Then let my people go!*[54]

The two songs had the same melodies and choruses, but the utility of each served the appropriate audience differently. Fugitive slaves and still-unfree slaves sang the song as a call for hope and for emotional unity among each and every one of them. Baker's agenda was to get the song into the public and rally support for Lincoln's eventual proposal of emancipation.

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[54] Thomas Baker, "The Lord doth now to this nation speak," New York: Horace Walters, 1861, loc.gov.

When emancipation finally occurred, popular music discussed it frequently. A piece released in Boston in 1863, "We'll fight for Uncle Abe," continued the themes of patriarchy and military spirit. Even as the proclamation freed them, the sentiment still favored going into battle both to support Lincoln and to fight back against the side that caused decades of oppression. The cover of the sheet music denotes it as a "plantation song" and states that it is sung "with great success" by the Buckley Serenaders.[55] This group, one of the most popular blackface groups at minstrel shows in the United States in the 1850's and 1860's, would have been heard often.[56] The song supports General Grant, General McClellan, and mentions the great presidential power and leadership possessed by Lincoln. It even brings international politics into play, claiming that "Johnny Bull and Mister France are 'fraid of Uncle Abe."[57] Here, Great Britain and France are seen as scared to interfere with the war due to Lincoln's executive proclamation. The Emancipation Proclamation, as demonstrated through popular music, further elevated the stature of the Rail

[55] James Buckley, "We'll fight for Uncle Abe," Boston: Oliver Ditson & Co., 1863, loc.gov.
[56] Vera Brodsky Lawrence and George Templeton Strong, *Repercussions, 1857-1862*, Strong on Music, V. 3., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 95-96.
[57] Buckley, "We'll fight for Uncle Abe."

Candidate into a powerful, patriarchal, and practically religious figure. “Kingdom Coming (Year of Jubilo),” written by abolitionist Henry Clay Work, had existed before emancipation but took on a new meaning when Lincoln’s proclamation reached the public. It was by far the most popular “freedom song” sung by both whites and blacks in the North, and sold over 3,000 copies a month.[58] The themes of religion that began in contraband camps had now resonated with the greater public, as Lincoln appeared to be “coming with his chariot” to free all of the slaves.[59]

It is worth noting that not all emancipation songs carried a completely positive sentiment with them. For some Northern songs, the support of Lincoln combined with innate racism to create music that had ambiguous intentions. “Abraham my Abraham,” released in 1863, sets the tone with just the title. The writer, listed as Wm. K. O’Donoughue, clearly possesses an Irish surname, and this helps us to understand why the lyrics may reflect multiple different opinions in regard to Lincoln’s policies. The Irish, strong in their anti-nativist sentiment, supported the North in order to preserve the Union in fear that

[58] Bernard, 99; Sanjek 236.
[59] Henry Clay Work, “Kingdom Coming,” Chicago: Root & Cady, 1862, civilwarfolkmusic.com

otherwise immigration would be not as accessible. The Irish stood out among other nations in their disproportionately large number of immigrants.[60] However, the Irish did not support the Republican Party's platform of abolition and anti-slavery. Emancipation could interfere with the Irish's ability to hold down jobs for cheap labor in the North as well as take up spots in the military.[61]

"Abraham my Abraham" portrays the Irish opposition to Lincoln's presidency. Freed blacks are referred to as "darkies," and Lincoln's proclamation is viewed as a "fatal word."[62] Whether the word "fatal" refers to the Confederates' hopes of surviving the war, or the status of the North after emancipation introduces freed blacks into everyday life, is up to the interpretation of the listener. Regardless, the constant refrain of "Abraham my Abraham" transforms from an endearing remark in the beginning of the song to an almost shameful and reprimanding remark at the end.

End of War and Death/Remembrance: 1864-1865

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[60] Kevin Kenny, "Abraham Lincoln and the American Irish," *American Journal of Irish Studies* 10 (2013): 41.
61 Kenny, 49-51.
62 Wm. K. O'Donoughue, "Abraham my Abraham," Buffalo: Sheppard & Cottier, 1863, loc.gov.

Like many other pieces of art have shown, Lincoln's post-war depiction is almost always heroic. His reelection in 1864 coincided with key military victories to affirm his status as an idol throughout the North, and popular music reflected his heroism. "Abraham the Great and General Grant his Mate," written as a campaign song in 1864, concluded prematurely that Grant would run alongside Lincoln in the election. The usage of "Uncle Abe" continues throughout the lyrics, as Lincoln's familial presence had now nearly been set in stone. Grant, a military hero for recent victories and the eventual force that warranted Robert E. Lee's surrender, would soon rise to celebrity status in the North. This song very well may have contributed to Grant's thrust into the national spotlight.

There was still some unrest as the war came to an end about the status of African Americans once the war was ever. This crucial component of reconstruction was a cause of fear in many Unionists who were not strong proponents of complete emancipation, and popular music picked up on this anxiety, as well. "That's what the niggers then will do," published in 1865, claims to have been sung with immense success on its title page, which may mean that it resonated with a lot of listeners. Sung from the

point of view of a free African American, the narrator asks "but now our work is almost done, then what are we poor niggers guan to do!"[63] While this line may have sparked worry in white listeners who were not ready for the introduction of free African Americans into their community, subsequent verses work to show that African Americans can work to become proper citizens. The lyrics ask to "let us learn to read and write," advocate for their ability to "be faithful and true," and provide evidence that "we have proved that we can fight" and that all they ask for is to be men like everyone else.[64]

Wartime enemies were portrayed in popular music as well. An instrumental titled "Jeff's Double Quick" was an upbeat title, and even without lyrics, the release of the song in sheet music spread a political message. Published for the Western Sanitary Fairs of 1865, the cover art shows Jefferson Davis in a woman's dress, disguised so that he could steal food from more deserving people at the fair.[65] The absence of masculinity present in this image of Confederate cowardice not only lifted Northern pride, but

[63] Tom Russell, "That's what the niggers then will do," Boston: Oliver Ditson & Co., 1865, loc.gov.
[64] Russell, "That's what the niggers then will do."
[65] E., M., "Jeff's double quick," Philadelphia: Lee & Walker, 1865, loc.gov. The only composer cited is listed as M. E.

demoralized the South for following such an incompetent leader. Perhaps such an image could additionally transform former Confederate loyalists into Northern supporters due to their embarrassment.

After Lincoln's untimely death, an outpouring of popular music hit on the mournful feeling that had swept the North. Of these songs, "Farewell Father, Friend and Guardian" became the best known of Lincoln's funeral pieces, and the title shows how his image had transformed from a humble and honest worker into a familial icon.[66] "Rest, Noble Chieftain," "Let the President sleep," and "Lincoln's Requiem" are all other songs that achieved popularity in mourning of the assassinated president. Instead of dwelling on the assassination, but still in a very solemn mood, the lyrics of these songs acknowledge that Lincoln left the earth once he knew he had fulfilled all of his responsibilities and freed the nation from the massive burden of slavery. "Uncle Abe" had only accepted death once he had succeeded in his monumental goals, and everyone in the North could agree that his passing was a tragedy worthy of memorializing.

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[66] Bernard, 309.

Further Research

The works explored throughout this paper only serve as a small representative sample size of the numerous pieces of music from the Civil War era. There are many avenues of research that music opens up. For one, the sheet music itself could be the focus, and discovering the commercial success of each song's sheet music could lead to understanding which opinions and ideas the public had seen most frequently. Breaking down music by the ethnicity and background of the lyricists and composers could reinforce and enhance our understanding on certain groups' opinions of the Lincoln and the Republican party. In addition, music released before and after the war most likely would continue to develop the patterns of popular opinion that this paper has just begun to uncover. Regardless of the focal point of the research, looking at music and lyrics is a fantastic supplemental source of historical information when accompanied by the facts of the times.

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NEW ERRANDS: THE UNDERGRADUATE JOURNAL OF AMERICAN STUDIES

In the Palm of Your Hand: Lobster Rolls and Contradicting Performances of Regional Identity

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The rocky coast of Maine, guarded by lighthouses immemorial and braved by rugged fishermen in weathered boats, must present to the nation the most picturesque image of America's Northeastern Seaboard. Maine's landscape draws upwards of sixteen million visitors annually,[1] all pursuing "The Way Life Should Be." There may be many opinions concerning the allure of Maine, but as the state's material culture may suggest, "The way life should be" necessarily requires lobster. There is no shortage of brightly colored, cartoonish lobster memorabilia in the overflowing souvenir shops that plague Maine's coast. Almost always bright red, a color that lobsters only turn when cooked, the souvenirs sold to tourists mirror the freshly steamed bodies of lobsters served at shacks to visitors and Mainers alike. The lobster's status as an icon is unmistakable. What is more apparent is this dialogue

[1] Mary Douglas, "Deciphering a Meal," Daedalus 101, no. 1 (1972): 66.

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between iconography and commodity. In Maine, depictions of lobsters are plentiful, depictions as food are king.

The abundance of lobster-related material culture in the regions surrounding the Gulf of Maine demonstrates the American Lobster's economic, cultural, and culinary importance. Lobster boats, traps, shacks, souvenirs, and specialized utensils are highly visible. Despite its breadth of cultural influence, the American lobster's primary importance is of course its culinary use. Rather than focusing on the lobster shears, crackers, and picks that often aid in the consumption of American lobster or related industrial materials like traps and boats, this essay will discuss the materiality of a ubiquitous item of New England fare, the Maine lobster roll. Like other expressions of Maine's material culture, exploring the histories and meanings embedded in the state's food will serve as a valuable dive into the intricacies and contradictions of regional culture. As a material object, the Maine lobster roll is composed of ingredients layered with regional histories while exhibiting formal qualities appealing to American culture more broadly.

The discipline of material culture is often concerned with enduring materials, objects that may be passed down through generations and stand as lasting representations of their given culture. In many cases these objects may even survive to be encountered after the culture has dwindled. Cuisines and the "edible objects" that compose them, however,

are inherently ephemeral in comparison to more durable or stationary crafts. These types of artifacts are known as "embodied material culture. [a] special kind of material culture… created specifically for immediate destruction, but destruction through the transformative process of ingestion into the human body."[2] As destruction is a required component of any food item's cultural script, to study edible objects as material we must study codified, composed items or meals, of which the lobster roll is one, and individual ingredients which are only as accessible as they are repeated in soil and flesh.

A culture's cuisine is emblematic of who a group is and who they are not, and as foodways are among the most conservative and persistent aspects of culture, they endure metaphysical shifts of identity and difference.[3] Codified food items survive as living historical records, being continually layered with modern histories. However, individual edible materials or objects do not alone represent the varied identities and histories of a culture but stand as

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[2] Douglas, 66.

[3] "These Are America's Best Lobster Rolls," *Food & Wine*, accessed June 28, 2023, https://www.foodandwine.com/travel/americas-best-lobster-rolls. While it is true that the more recognizable composition of a lobster roll always includes a toasted New England split-top hot dog roll, a hamburger style bun does seem to serve as a culturally acceptable variation. This is evident by the fact that The Clam Shack, a Kennebunkport institution and valued lobster roll vendor, serves their rolls on locally made hamburger buns.

markers within patterns of "meal formats." "Meal formats," as they are described by Dietler and Mary Douglas, are characteristically synonymous with "cuisine." That is, the patterns of eating behaviors and repetition of form.[4] The dishes that compose a cuisine, codified and repeatable compositions of food items, are referred to in this essay as "edible objects." These objects stand as artifacts and markers of the lived experiences within a given culture as well as the culture's history, geography and regional identity.

It is important to note that the codification of edible objects does not only require a recognizable assortment of ingredients, but also proper composition. The composition and preparation of ingredients into recognizable and codified forms hinges on proper technique. Not unlike carpentry, culinary technique (knife skills, the size and shape of cuts, different applications of heat and general attention to the treatment of ingredients) is what properly constructs edible objects and the traditions that shape cuisine more broadly.

A Handheld Archive

Human interactions with and alterations of the landscape have been described by Henry Glassie as "a

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4 Aaron Bobrow-Strain, White Bread: A Social History of the Store-Bought Loaf (Boston: Beacon Press, 2012). Bobrow-Strain synthesizes the social histories that led to the adoption of industrial white bread in their book. Their work would serve as a useful point of reference for any interested researcher.

palimpsest, the people's own manuscript, their handmade history book."[5] Material culture should generally be approached in this manner, with the assumption that objects hold within them archives of human history. While the landscape endures time much better than meat, grains, or produce, as products of the landscape it would follow that they may carry related history. Glassie claims that, while the landscape is an archive of sorts, it has "no pat answers". Instead, he suggests that the landscape sits patiently awaiting analysis, and that "We cannot understand... unless we know the language."[6] While the language of cuisine has been discussed by scholars like Mary Douglas whose work will be discussed later on, the matter requires further attention because unlike the landscape, food does not sit patiently. Food is preferably made and ingested multiple times a day, literally and figuratively feeding culture. Ingredients, meals, and cuisine provide a pattern for our days, weeks, and yearly celebrations and remain in constant dialogue with traditional and adaptive elements of human culture.

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[5] Tom Groening, "Another Good Year for Maine Tourism - Island Institute," accessed April 18, 2023, https://www.islandinstitute.org/working-waterfront/another-good-year-for-maine-tourism/.

6 M. Dietler, "Culinary Encounters: Food, Identity, and Colonialism,"2006, https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Culinary-Encounters-%3A-Food-%2C-Identity-%2C-and-Dietler/e01eea0facbc26d1647b5c7e588611df6bc256f2.

Cuisine should be read as a historical text just as closely as the landscape because it is an intimate marker of specific cultural groups in practice and inclusive of humanity in concept. Glassie's assertion that, "Few people write. Everyone makes things" can and should be applied to the study of food.[7] Everyone is either a cook or is closely acquainted with someone who is. Everyone eats. What people eat specifically is emblematic of restrictions of place, class, gender, and embedded understandings of cultural norms. The patterns of human experience are what birth cuisine. To paraphrase Maine food historian Sandy Oliver, foods are not invented but rather descended from people and their histories.[8] The intimate relationship between food and people is what makes edible objects such valuable archives.

As an artifact of New England culture, the lobster roll's archival memory begins the moment English colonists in the region encountered an American lobster. The American lobster's physical similarities with its European counterpart meant that it would have been recognized as a food source.[9] However, initial economic struggle coupled with the abundance of American lobster meant that it was

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[7] Dietler, "Culinary Encounters," 223.
[8] Dietler, "Culinary Encounters," 224.
[9] Sandy Oliver, "What You Hear about Lobsters, and What's True - Island Institute," accessed 2023, https://www.islandinstitute.org/working-waterfront/what-you-hear-about-lobsters-and-whats-true-2/.

devalued as poverty food early on. Folktales concerning the status of lobster often conflate the gnarled crustaceans with literal trash, claiming that the animals were reserved for pig feed or fertilizer.[10] Being fed lobster frequently enough in the early colonies was said to be so inhumane that it could push people to riot. A commonly retold folktale concerning a Massachusetts Bay Colony prison depicts just that scenario. After being fed lobster continually the prisoners supposedly rioted until the colony was forced to place a limit on the frequency with which lobster could be humanely served to prisoners.[11] The extent to which lobster was labeled a low-stock commodity continues to be debated. Sandy Oliver, a food historian from Maine who has written much about her state's relationship with lobster, claims that while lobster was considered an economic meal and could be the source of embarrassment for impoverished families, it was certainly not the inspiration for riots as myth suggests.[12]

The archival memory of lobster is also fraught with contradiction, telling a story of competing

[10] George H. Lewis, "The Maine Lobster as Regional Icon: Competing Images over Time and Social Class," *Food and Foodways* 3, no. 4 (December 1, 1989): 304, https://doi.org/10.1080/07409710.1989.9961958.
[11] Marina Santos, "Lobster Lore," MIT Sea Grant (blog), accessed May 11, 2023, https://seagrant.mit.edu/lobster-lore/.
[12] Oliver, "What You Hear About Lobsters."

identities, both lived and imposed.[13] While folktales discredit lobster as a legitimate food source for early colonists, historians tell us that lobster was sought after by English settlers as early as 1605. The Archangel, captained by George Weymouth, recorded having caught "about thirty very good and great lobsters" upon arriving in the Gulf of Maine.[14] Wealthy urban families outside of Maine also developed a notable taste for lobster by the early 1700s. Being caught in the Long Island Sound, lobsters were shipped to New York City and Boston, where they were sold live or boiled, respectively. These wealthy families, who would become "summer people," frequently visiting Maine to escape the city, are the same people Oliver claims would have assumed lobsters were used as fertilizer after encountering canning refuse in fields. Around the same time, lobster boats from Boston began traveling north after the lobster stocks of Southern New England were overfished. As a result of apparent economic opportunity, the Maine lobstering industry began its crucial development.[15]

Analyzing foodways and learning to speak the language of food can unveil valuable social histories.

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[13] Lewis, "The Maine Lobster as regional icon."
[14] Cathy Billings, "The First Recorded Lobster Catch," in *The Maine Lobster Industry: A History of Culture, Conservation & Commerce* (Charleston: The History Press, 2014): 9.
[15] Oliver, "*What You Hear About Lobsters.*"

Mary Douglas states that the meanings of foodways lie in the "patterns of social relations" that they represent.[16] Interestingly, as wealthy visitors, colloquially referred to as rusticators, developed a taste for the poverty food many Mainers reluctantly subsisted on, the animal became a symbol of the state and its people. Especially after the Civil War, lobster was in high demand and Maine was regularly visited by wealthy out of staters who seemed to associate rugged coastal Mainers with the American lobster. [17]

The relationship between rusticators and coastal Mainers, which is geographic, identificatory, and classist, proposed a cultural conflation between the American lobster, Maine, and its people. The canning industry, which began its initial success in the Northeast in the early to mid-19th century, was dominated by lobster in Maine. A survey of the state's fishing industry written in 1898, which marks the near end of Maine's lobster canneries, claims that until that point, "Maine [was] the only State in the Union in which lobsters [had] been canned".[18] This means that West Coast Americans and inlanders would have likely only encountered lobster labeled as being packaged in Maine. Despite the abundance of lobsters in the gulf of Maine, encountering lobster as a Maine

[16] Mary Douglas, "Deciphering a Meal," *Daedalus* 101, no. 1 (1972): 61.
[17] Lewis, 304.
[18] John N. Cobb, "The Lobster Fishery of Maine," Bulletin of the United States Fish Commission 19 (1899): 241–65.

specific commodity may have been more meaningful for Americans. First-hand experience with Maine lobster would have helped it become symbolic of an archetypical Northeastern coastline pictured on the can.

Along the Maine coast, people continued to grapple with lobster as a representative food into the twentieth century.[19] Maine's hesitancy to accept its association with its own poverty foods is evident in that the earliest documented recipe for lobster salad comes from "The American Frugal Housewife." Written by Lydia Maria Child, the cookbook was published in 1832 and "dedicated to Those Who Are Not Ashamed of Economy".[20] Although the dressing for Child's lobster salad takes the form of a vinaigrette and not mayonnaise,[21] this is the earliest written documentation of what would become the filling for the Maine lobster roll. Child's inclusion of lobster salad in this cookbook clearly illustrates how hesitant Mainers were to consciously accept these kinds of foods into their cuisine.

Educated coastal Mainers began accepting the lobster as a representative food around the turn of the century and had such romantic views of the lobster by the mid-1900's that it assumed the role of statesman.

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[19] Lewis, 305

[20] Lydia Maria Child, *The American Frugal Housewife*, 2004, https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/13493.

[21] Child, 120.

A notable poet and Mainer, Robert P. T. Coffin, wrote in the 1940s that,

> *...this thorny Yankee of the crab family goes away from you and other danger tail-end-first. . . As my best New England uncles used to do, he protects his brain by advancing with his rear into the unknown. He gazes still on tradition and authority, and goes forward backward, as best Yankees do. . . He is the archest of arch-conservatives, the Republican of the deep. He is a Yankee, all right.*[22]

This relationship between Mainers, their exports, and non-Mainers seems to represent the pattern by which American Lobster became "Maine Lobster" and an icon representing the people along the coast.

The issue of class is one of the most pertinent aspects of historical memory that is expressed by the Maine lobster roll. Lower classes, drawn to lobsters as a form of subsistence, consequently assumed an imposed conflation with the animal as wealthy classes developed a taste for it. However, those same Mainers have a long history of incorporating lobster into cookery and indeed, sandwiches. There are documented cases of school children being embarrassed of their lobster salad sandwiches and attempting to trade them for a more typical baloney sandwich. Repurposing leftover lobster salad as a

[22] Lewis, 305.

sandwich filling was common among poor families and working fishermen.[23] The practice was convenient, stretched already strained resources, and accommodated movement and labor. According to historian Sandy Oliver, the first proto lobster rolls were most likely sold to tourists by lobstermen between the 1890s and 1910 in order to use up stock that was on the verge of spoiling. The first tourists to eat one of these lobster rolls would have most likely been a wealthy rusticator who would have associated the crustacean with luxury. Again, social interactions between classes are where the lobster roll is derived.

Formal Analysis

Currently, there are two modes of lobster rolls in New England, each with its own codification. These modes both define the boundaries of New England and divide it. Although both variations are present throughout the region, their spheres of influence roughly follow the divide between Southern and Northern New England. The North being loyal to mayonnaise and the South to butter. Although the lobster salad sandwich has been around since the 19th

[23] Brian Kevin, "The Definitive Oral History of the Lobster Roll," *Down East Magazine* (blog), August 7, 2018, https://downeast.com/food-drink/maine-lobster-roll/.

century,[24] what has now been codified as the Maine lobster roll includes commercial white bread inspired by a standard hot dog roll. The American hot dog bun descended from German-American cuisine in the late 19th century and was only popularized around the 1910s.[25] It was somewhere after the turn of the century and most likely in the 1940s when the first standard, recognizable expression of a lobster roll was sold.[26]

The Maine style is composed of cold lobster salad, just thick enough to hold its shape after being spooned into a roll. The salad features picked chunks of meat and bits of celery, as well as mayonnaise which could potentially speak to French influence from the north, as some of the only immigration Maine experienced during the 19th century was from French Canada.[27] The salad itself holds together a set combination of ingredients in the creation of a new, composed object. The addition of mayonnaise and celery, as well as the salad's temperature marks this as an object of economic frugality. Lobster lends itself to being pre-cooked as it spoils quickly and the use of chilled meat and the incorporation of a filler like mayonnaise is a recognizable attempt to stretch the

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[24] Holly Jennings, "New England-Style Bun, from HoJo's to Homemade - *The Boston Globe*," BostonGlobe.com, accessed April 12, 2024, https://www.bostonglobe.com/lifestyle/food-dining/2013/07/02/top-loading-buns-typical-new-england-for-lobster-and-clams/QiEC0fUGxJl2MwNizjYxdL/story.html.

[25] Lewis, 304.

[26] Dietler, 225.

[27] Lewis, 307.

lobster's yield. As a category, economic meals also signify a new whole as they hold sparse resources together in order to create an alterable object falsely representative of abundance. Regardless of the erroneous presentation of Maine lobster rolls overflowing with luxury seafood, the fillers that mark this dish as an economic one have come to define its composition.

The rolls, characteristically soft and golden, are baked in a specialty pan that ensures they rise and bake together. The result is that when pulled apart, individual rolls are left with pale edges, exposing the bread's crumb. As a result, New England style rolls are uniquely suited to be toasted in butter. These rolls are a regional culinary expression that borrows from broader American meat formats.[28] The characteristically fluffy, enriched white bread that has become a staple of general American culture and is featured in both styles of hotdog rolls, was popularized during World War II as a result of health scares. Anxiety over proper nutrition and emerging industrial progress made the promotion of this type of bread a natural cultural progression. The incorporation of typically American white bread into the lobster roll's agreed upon composition, especially with a slight variation meant to better accommodate local foodways, places this regional artifact in dialogue with

[28] Henry Petroski, "Form Follows Failure," in *The Evolution of Useful Things* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992): 22-33.

edible objects representative of the nation more broadly. Further research concerning the meanings and histories embedded in Industrial American bread should be pursued in an attempt to contextualize the nation's sandwich culture and better interpret Its foodways.[29]

New England style rolls are always opened from the top in an attempt to keep the salad contained and not retreating from the roll onto a plate. The roll makes this a physically mobile meal, inviting the consumer to walk with it along Maine's picturesque coast. Henry Petroski claims in his essay, "Form follows Failure," that, "we may find food indispensable, but it is not necessary to eat it with a fork. Luxury, rather than necessity, is the mother of invention."[30] While it has been stated that food is descended from culture rather than invented by it, Petroski's argument does aid in analyzing the form of the lobster roll. Dropping the fork, as well as the multitude of tools necessary to crack and cut away the shell, serves several purposes which will be explored in the next section of this essay.

The Importance of a Mobile Form

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[29] Robin Bernstein, "Dances with Things: Material Culture and the Performance of Race," *Social Text* 27, no. 4 (101) (December 1, 2009): 67–70, https://doi.org/10.1215/01642472-2009-055.

[30] Henry Glassie, "Meaningful Things and Appropriate Myths: The Artifact's Place in American Studies," *Prospects* 3 (October 1978): 1–49, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0361233300002544.

Lobster rolls, and sandwiches more generally, exhibit mobility in at least three ways. The first is, of course, physical mobility. The lobster roll, like other sandwiches, scripts the user to employ the roll as a kind of edible container or utensil which allows the consumer to carry and eat their food as they complete other tasks. Robin Bernstein describes the objects that surround us as "script[ing] meaningful bodily movements."[31] The movements scripted by food include eating, movements aiding the act of eating (sometimes specific to a particular category of food), and digestion. Sandwiches, as handheld foods that very commonly do not require utensils, invite us to move with them as the movements involved in their consumption are not anchored by cutlery or flatware.

The second way in which Maine lobster rolls exhibit mobility is economically. From analyzing the archival history of this edible object, it has been deduced that its contents represent a cuisine of frugality. The repurposing of lobster salad into sandwiches represents the beginning stages of codifying modern lobster rolls, but also the movement of materials across forms. In this way, the lobster roll is historically mobile in an economic sense, making use of leftover materials in a way that shifts funds, language, and materials. When repurposing an object, especially as a component of a greater whole, resources are stretched, and form is altered in a way

[31] Oliver, "What You Hear About Lobsters."

that potentially requires new labels, language or cultural scripts. An in-depth study of Maine's economic history in relation to lobstering and the sale of lobster rolls lies outside the scope of this essay. However, the way that lobster rolls help to ration or extend the use of a valuable resource remains a notable aspect of the object's form and history.

The third, and arguably the most culturally pressing manner in which lobster rolls exhibit mobility is socially. Food generally exhibits social mobility as ingredients and cooking methods are moved and adapted across neighboring or otherwise related cultures. Marshall Sahlins has noted what anthropologists have known for some time now, "cultures are generally foreign in origin and local in pattern."[32] The lobster roll is a sound example of this as it is composed of a regional ingredient that has been adopted as an icon of regional culture, enveloped and delivered to the consumer in an encompassing container representative of an umbrella culture. The ubiquitous status of sandwiches across the United States makes them representative of dominant American culture while serving as familiar packages for presenting "difference." In an American context, sandwiches serve as a vehicle of culinary identity, a way to tell other Americans who you are through food.

For the American public at large, sandwiches are familiar, scripted objects that are appealing to and

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[32] Bernstein, 67-70.

prevalent in popular culture. Sandwiches across the country are associated with and representative of ethnic, economic, and cultural identities of cities, states and regions. They present identities that are distinct in their Americanness but assimilated. The lobster roll is no exception, utilizing regional ingredients and regionally specific techniques that are layered with the history of Mainers. Eating a lobster "in the rough" (from the shell) may now be familiar to some wealthy or middle-class Americans outside of New England but it is ultimately a part of the New England cultural repertoire. The lobster roll's form, like other sandwiches, serves as a conduit through which regionally specific artifacts may be enjoyed and understood without the burden of required cultural knowledge. The Maine lobster roll, more so than any other edible object composed primarily of lobster, introduces the American public to the culture of Mainers. Familiar behaviors of engagement make for an approachable, enriching, and mobile presentation of a regional and state identity capable of spreading archetypical understandings of regional culture without much friction.

Deciphering the American Table

In Mary Douglas' 1972 essay, "Deciphering a Meal" the greatly respected British Anthropologist states that, "Meals require a table, a seating order, restriction on movement and on alternative

occupation".[33] Throughout her essay, which is highly recommended to any aspiring food studies scholar, there is a thorough attempt to decipher what defines a meal. However, Douglas does not attempt to define the setting of the meal, which she claims is required for any gathering worthy of the description. I would like to propose that the table Douglas describes in this essay is a metaphysical one, dependent on a culture's meal formats and culinary scripts. Any setting that binds one to a gathering of social patterning and hierarchy, physically or otherwise, should constitute a "table." As Douglas says, "The meal puts its frame on the gathering."[34]

Douglas draws from readings of traditional domestic meals following a typically British format. It's clear from her work that she would not consider a lobster roll a meal for several reasons, but as fully revisiting her formulas to better fit an American context lies outside of the aims of this essay, the issue will not be pressed. Instead, only Douglas' insistence that meals must restrict movement will be addressed, with the presumption that a lobster roll is in fact a mobile meal or at least a course that invites you to move with it.

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[33] Kevin Slane, "New England Lobster Rolls and Philadelphia Cheesesteaks: A History of Two Regional Icons," *Boston.Com*, January 30, 2018.
[34] Douglas, 61.

As handheld meals script physical mobility, the landscape necessarily becomes a setting for culturally imbued bodily movements. The scripts of mobile things also suggest varying performances, as they are naturally and necessarily acted out in differing settings. As mobile things invite us to interact with our environment, I would like to propose that there are ideal environments to perform the scripted behaviors suggested by them. There is a hierarchy of setting embedded in mobile things within which we are invited to perform their script most ideally. While interacting with mobile foods individually, one is not as directly bound by the same "patterns of social relationships"[35] that may be present at the table that Douglas discusses, even if those social hierarchies are present, as I suspect. However, one is more directly bound by archetypical understandings of place and cultural script, a gathering of ideas rather than of people.

To return to the Maine lobster roll, it must be said that the Maine coast is the ideal setting within which the sandwich invites you to dance.[36] To walk the streets of Chicago with the sandwich would place the object's script in a contextually confused and consequently meaningless setting. Mobile foods, especially ones that stand as icons of archetypal state identities, must be eaten in context to be fully

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[35] Glassie, Henry, 1-49.
[36] Glassie, 1-49.

understood. They offer more answers while being walked along their streets, their paths, and their coasts. The lobster roll serves several purposes. However, its social mobility is of the utmost importance in the pursuit of deciphering the American table. The assimilation of many identities under an umbrella culture suggests movement itself, which is mirrored in the nation's embodied material culture. As American identities are often in flux and continually encountering outside forces through immigration, mobile foods present "foreign" Americans and their states as they are to the general public, inviting the consumer to become acquainted. Like the Lobster roll's script, this invitation is not only symbolic but physical, calling you to the idyllic Maine coastline where the language of this particular food item will be best interpreted and deeply understood.

The Ambiguity of regional identity and importance of continuing discussions of food

I have been very careful throughout this essay to reference coastal Maine as often as possible. This is because regional identities do not neatly follow state borders and while all who live in Maine's territory are Mainers, not all Mainers see the lobster as a representative icon or attainable food source.[37] Here we encounter the ambiguity of regional identity. The foods we eat represent who we are and tell us who we

[37] Oliver, "What You Hear About Lobsters."

are not. They stand as archival, edible objects through which we can study social histories and cultural developments through time, so they must be contextualized. Properly interpreting the language of food is not only dependent on the interpreter and their willingness to act out cultural scripts but also on setting. This is a truth that both benefits the culture from which the object is derived as well as outside cultures that could be wrongly accused of having a convergent relationship. It is important to engage with archetypal understandings of place, yes, but when done properly there will be some level of exclusion. It is imperative that in experiencing and analyzing culture we do not continue to impose identity.

Studying food and learning its language is a pursuit that has proven to be fruitful. In the case of the Maine lobster roll, its archival memory outlines a history of class relations and industry. The sandwich's form suggests at least three modes of mobility inherent in its material form. Those being, physical, economic, and social. The social mobility of the lobster roll and sandwiches more generally, is the quality that is most meaningful to American culture. The intersection of place and regional identity is inherent in regional culinary expressions and a complete survey of American foodways will not be complete without addressing this fact. The ways in which various regional differences are presented in material culture through familiar forms are emblematic of America's diversity under an encompassing nationality and this

truth is ultimately the loudest aspect of the Maine lobster roll's speech and script.

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NEW ERRANDS: THE UNDERGRADUATE JOURNAL OF AMERICAN STUDIES

Bans off our Bodies: Categorizing and Analyzing Reproductive Justice Street Art Across the United States (June 2022 to June 2023)

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June 24, 2022, marked the official overturn of the constitutional right to abortion in the decision of Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization. In doing so, the Supreme Court cases of Roe v. Wade and Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey, which had formerly upheld that pregnancy termination was a personal choice and that states should not enact laws that present an undue burden to abortion-seeking gestating persons, became immaterial. Although a Supreme Court draft opinion had been leaked the month prior to the Dobbs decision, people throughout the country remained in disbelief that a once privately made decision now fell into the hands of legislative bodies who could now dictate individual states' abortion laws.[1]

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1 NPR Staff. (2023, June 23). New abortion laws changed their lives. 8 very personal stories. NPR. https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2023/06/23/1183878942/abortion-bans-personal-stories-

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Just two days after the decision was announced, I was in the car heading west into Minneapolis, Minnesota on I-94 when graffiti reading "Abort the Court" caught my eye on the side of the interstate. This graffiti piece or "burner," a term used by graffiti writers to describe a work so bright, large, and vivid that it "burns" off the wall, included bold white lettering and a red splotchy backsplash. What stood out to me when I spotted this was not only the rapid creation of this highly visible piece, fully rendered just two days after the Supreme Court's decision, but also its ability to respond quickly, publicly, and militantly to the Supreme Court following the reversal of Roe v. Wade. In the days that followed, I noticed colleagues and peers share their own pictures of the same piece on social media to voice their support for reproductive rights and denounce this decision against bodily autonomy. Intrigued by the way that this graffiti piece was shared and created, I began to consider what other forms of street art would accompany this post-Roe movement. Furthermore, I became determined to categorize these acts of protest as a testament to their significance and as a documentation effort to protect these ephemeral works.

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In the year following the Dobbs decision, reproductive choice messaging in the form of sanctioned and unsanctioned street art has appeared across the United States. In addition to street arts annotations on the physical landscape of the United States, a year later, abortion is completely banned in thirteen states (Baden & Driver, 2023). A variety of other gestational limits, attacks on medication abortion, and subsequent restrictions on gender-affirming care have followed. Unfortunately, the struggle for equitable abortion access is nothing new, as financial and legal obstacles have been present for decades: disproportionately impacting BIPOC and low- income families. This struggle is illustrated by a series of public protests, lawsuits, and militant street art and graffiti messages.[2] In this paper, I refer to the political movement that advocates for bodily autonomy as the Reproductive Justice movement. Reproductive Justice is an intentionally chosen framework, as opposed to "pro-choice" or "reproductive rights," to encapsulate a more intersectional type of feminism and way of thinking about bodily autonomy. The term, coined in 1994 by the Collective SisterSong, was derived in part as a response to a women's rights movement that

[2] McCammon, J. (2023, April 3). Judges' dueling decisions put access to a key abortion drug in jeopardy nationwide. NPR. https://www.npr.org/2023/04/07/1159220452/abortion-pill-drug-mifepristone- judge-texas-amarillo and Honderich, H. (2022, July 9). Roe V Wade: Thousands march to White House for abortion rights. BBC.https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-62109971

predominately catered to middle- and upper-class white women (Reproductive Justice). Reproductive Justice hinges on the pillars that childbearing bodies have the right not to have a child, the right to have a child, and the right to parent children in a safe and healthy environment (Ross & Solinger, 2017). As consistent with Reproductive Justice authors Loretta Ross and Rickie Solinger, I also recognize the ways in which inclusive language is necessary when discussing pregnancy and childbearing. Not all people who can become pregnant and have children identify as women, and some women are unable to or do not get pregnant and give birth. I use "women" and other language such as "pregnant people" interchangeably, except when discussing past legislation that has specifically targeted women-identifying persons. In doing so, I do not intend to erase or mitigate the lived experiences of womanhood, nor the ways in which the female body has been oppressed and brutalized historically.

Contemporary scholarship recognizes the importance of a society's visual culture as it relates to social movements. Graffiti and street art play a crucial role in empowering a collective, which is often made up of marginalized or excluded identities. It also serves as a catalyst to release imagination, highlight struggle, and display narratives (Avramidis & Tsilimpounidi, 2017; Zaimakis et al., 2021; Lennon, 2022). In situations where individuals feel the need to

express themselves, blank walls exist as canvases for political critiques, statements, and images.

Inspired by how street art appeared quickly and powerfully across the United States in response to the overturn of Roe v. Wade, my research aims to categorize and analyze graffiti and street art pertaining to the Reproductive Justice movement from the time of Roe v. Wade's reversal, June of 2022, until June of 2023. In this paper, I argue that Reproductive Justice street art falls into four main categories: didactic abortion resources stickers, Crisis Pregnancy Center tags, billboards of exchange, and "abort" messages. Through documentation and analysis, my research works to preserve the voices and visual art of this movement and is increasingly relevant to the study of street art as protest.

Methods

My research methodology brings together both qualitative and quantitative modes of analysis. In conducting a qualitative analysis of street art categorization, my research methodology develops from the scholarship of Dr. Ann Marie Graf in her dissertation, Facets of Graffiti Art and Street Art Documentation Online: A Domain and Content Analysis. In her dissertation, Graf argues that the documentation of street art and its online dissemination requires several forms of knowledge organization, or KO (Graf, 2018). Knowledge Organization as a concept is commonly applied in a

Library and Information Science context of bibliographic systems and information classification. As a discipline, KO is about the semantic relations between ideas and how they can be classified in a way that allows for effective retrieval (Graf, 2018). It goes beyond the heuristics, or mental shortcuts, for ordering knowledge and encompasses interdisciplinary comprehension of knowledge at the meta level (Hjørland, 2002). To identify the scope of a KO analysis, a domain is used to set limitations and define data and a community of data users (Graf, 2018). The raw knowledge, or the compiled images of street art in my research, once identified, described, categorized, and communicated, provides knowledge about the foundations of the domain, and assists in its future evaluations. The process of naming a category of images can make online retrieval of these images easier. For example, a simple search for "Reproductive Justice street art" yields only a few relevant Google results. My hope is that my research will preserve the ways in which street art appeared in conjunction with this movement for a lack of organized online documentation and retrieval.

The domain of my research surrounds a gathered and crowd-sourced image gallery of over 100 reproductive justice-themed works produced between June 2022 and June 2023. The criteria for collecting the images in my domain were that 1) the images must be dated between June 2022 and June 2023, 2) they must have some sort of messaging that is consistent

with the pillars of the Reproductive Justice framework, 3) they must be located within the United States, and 4) they must be on a surface that is in public and/or traditionally associated with street art and graffiti. I gathered the bulk of the images from the well-known Instagram and Tumblr account Radical Graffiti, @radicalgraffiti. The Instagram account itself has posted over 13,500 images in its lifespan and has over 222,000 followers, making the account one of the most popular places to find political graffiti on the internet. However, due to the account's "radical" nature, there is some selection bias involved that most likely led me to view more militant and combative examples of street art. The remainder of the images were either taken by myself or sent to me directly from friends and colleagues.

Examples of graffiti that are not included in my gallery but are included in categorization and content analysis include stickers from well-known Reproductive Justice advocacy groups, a sanctioned Reproductive Justice billboard project, and graffiti that appeared on Crisis Pregnancy Centers in association with the pro-choice group, Jane's Revenge. My reasoning for this is that these three groups represent outliers, compared to the gallery that I have grouped, which can be easily categorized together. There are also factors such as organizational affiliations and monetary restrictions that prevent the public from participating in these categories. Qualitative research has taken shape in the

form of ethnography and content analysis. Ethnography, or in this case, the use of interviews, seeks to engage others with my research while gathering insight into ideas or topics that extend beyond visual analysis or materials such as books and journal articles. Ethnographic research in the realm of street art and graffiti is recognized as one of the key tools to improve research in this area to situate the context of urban art in a space (Ross, 2016). In conducting interviews, I selected individuals who were either abortion rights activists/providers and/or artists who have done Reproductive Justice street art since the Dobbs decision. Choosing a wide variety of interviewees allowed me to become acquainted with the context of a post-Roe v. Wade artistic scene, the concept of street art as protest, and the challenges of restricted abortion access. To supplement my research, I also have studied narratives including podcast episodes, documentaries, and poetry. Engaging with materials such as these have allowed for fulfillment of missing accounts such as abortion patients, doctors, and additional BIPOC and Queer voices.[3]

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3 Podcast episodes include “Abolition is Gender Equity with Charlene Carruthers” from abolition is for everybody, “The Womb” from Truth be Told with Tonya Mosely, An “Exciting Time for Abortion Law!” from Unladylike. Documentaries include The Abortion Divide (Frontline), Reversing Roe (Netflix), and The Janes (HBO). Narratives include: The Essential June Jordan and Bodies on the Line by Lauren Rankin.

Finally, I used content analysis as a method of research. As a tool, content analysis is used to determine the presence of certain words, themes, or concepts. This can be used to quantify and analyze the determined presence, meanings, and relationships between visual images (Content Analysis, 2023). While content analysis can be used either as a qualitative or quantitative form of research, I have used it in a quantitative way. Through quantifying factors like surfaces street art appears on, styles, symbols, and what states street art is located in, I have been able to draw meaningful conclusions and categorizations.

Results

Didactic Abortion Resource Stickers

Didactic resources to promote abortion access have been around for decades and have been used by advocacy groups including the Chicago-based group, The Jane Collective. The Jane Collective, which was most active from 1969 to 1973, provided abortion care to pregnant persons via an underground network. Besides word of mouth, one effective measure of advertising their services came from placing ads in local papers and bulletins. The discrete ads included messages such as “Pregnant? Need Help? Call Jane” and “Pregnant? Don’t Want to Be? Call Jane” (Lessin & Pildes, 2022). The same sort of messaging appears in public spaces today, with the most popular medium being stickers. Stickers are used by some of the most

popular abortion resource groups including Plan C, INeedAnA, and NARAL Pro-Choice America. These stickers are characterized by their straightforward and mundane appearances that usually includes a few colors, a QR code that links to a pro-choice organization's website, a question, and sometimes an organizational logo, as seen in Figure 1. These simple, yet powerful stickers cater to activist groups, including college students, as a creative and efficient way to disseminate abortion resources (Fichten, 2022). Didactic resource stickers can be seen in a variety of places, such as on the backs of street signs, in restrooms, and anywhere else that can serve as a facet for publicly seen messages. Stickers are quick and inexpensive to produce and distribute, making them the most popular form of Reproductive Justice street art (Awcock, 2021).

Figure 1

Left: INeedAnA.Com, Need an Abortion? (2022) retrieved: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Tzg9dbgtV1JuSowyBnuBl-OPAV97ginv. Right: Plan C, Need to be un-pregnant? (n.d.) retrieved from: https://www.plancpills.org/stickers

Plan C, a public health campaign that shares information and access to the abortion pills mifepristone and misoprostol, is credited for the creation of QR code stickers that provide abortion access resources. Since the launch of Plan C's stickers in 2021 to August 2022, the organization states that over half a million QR code stickers have been distributed by the organization (Fichten, 2022). Plan C will ship stickers to anyone using a "pay what you can" model. Besides ordering stickers online through the organization, Plan C also makes its stickers available for free download for individuals to print their own stickers at home, making the number of stickers greater than those who order or receive them through the organization.

INeedAnA.com, a platform that provides personalized resources for abortion seekers in the US, has a similar free download option for their stickers. In August of 2022, it was estimated that they had distributed over 2,000 packets containing about 24 QR code stickers per pack, excluding those that were downloaded and printed directly from their website (Fichten, 2022). Other organizations, like NARAL Pro-Choice America, also use QR stickers to advertise their services. However, payment is necessary when ordering them online, potentially limiting the number of them that appear in public spaces.[4]

[4] According to the NARAL Pro-Choice America's website, it costs $12 for one of their sticker packs. The pack includes two QR code stickers. The rest have logos and quotes.

Crisis Pregnancy Center Tags

On May 8, 2022, six days after the Dobbs decision was leaked, the autonomously organized self-defense network Jane's Revenge created its first blog post. The group's first post, or "First Communiqué," reads as a manifesto and demands the closing of anti-choice establishments and fake clinics within the next thirty days. On May 30, 2022, Jane's Revenge put out a much more militant post than the first with a request to carry anger into the world and express it physically. The post is signed, "To those who work to oppress us: If abortion isn't safe, you aren't either. We are everywhere" (NIGHT OF RAGE 2022). Since this post, the group has been linked to over 24 instances of tags on anti-abortion women's health facilities or Crisis Pregnancy Centers.

In the world of street art, "tagging" is usually what first comes to mind when graffiti is mentioned. Graffiti tagging, or a "tag," is the term used by those familiar with the graffiti subculture to describe a name, symbol, or word that is painted, sprayed, or written in a repetitive manner on property not belonging to the individual that paints it (Lewis, 2023). Tagging can often appear illegible or messy, and because much of it is done illegally, it is usually considered vandalism (Austin, 2010). There have also been incidents of arson. However, these incidents appear to have taken place at night when staff members were not there, a tendency of anarchist groups that prioritize attacks on private property rather

than people (Sherman, 2022). While Jane's Revenge has been credited for events happening all over the country, there is one thing that ties them all together: tagging on the walls.

Tagging appears on the destinations of attack, which most frequently happens to be on Crisis Pregnancy Centers. Crisis Pregnancy Centers (CPCs) are notorious for representing themselves as reproductive health care clinics when they frequently spread medical disinformation and misrepresent abortion care. There are over 4,000 of these centers in the United States, and according to data from The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, "71% of CPCs use deceptive means. By using deception, delay tactics, and disinformation, CPC staff undermine the tenets of informed consent and patient autonomy and impede access to comprehensive ethical care" (The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, 2022; Crisis Pregnancy Centers). According to my interview with the Executive Director of a clinic that provides sexual, reproductive, and abortion services, these CPCs present a large concern, especially the one located right by their office:

[CPCs] are an anti-abortion religious organization. You know, there are tons of CPCs, they outnumber abortion clinics in [the state they work in] like 11 to one or something like that. They use all the same tactics that CPCs use to mislead people and misconstrue their services. They don't tell patients that they're calling the wrong place, or that they arrived at

the wrong place. They don't tell patients that they don't provide abortions. They provide medical misinformation about abortion and the risks of abortion and shame people about their consideration of having an abortion...So that's what tactics they use.

Their name used to be really similar to ours. We used to be called Women's Health Center, and they're Women's Care Center. They're kitty-corner from us. They very intentionally did that. We had already been here for over 20 or 30 years by the time that they were built.[5]

It is evident that tagging is an essential tactic that allows Jane's Revenge to accomplish its agenda. With many rogue efforts by their organization, the one thing that makes their work traceable is their repetitive use of slogans. They most frequently read, "If abortions aren't safe, then you aren't either," "Jane was here," and "Jane's Revenge." While there is no direct call for the use of tagging, the group refers to it in one of their posts writing: "Everyone with the urge to paint, to burn, to cut, to jam: now is the time. Go forth and manifest the things you wish to see. Stay safe, and practice your cursive" (NIGHT OF RAGE 2022). As seen in Figures 2 and 3, most of their messaging is in cursive.

[5] This interview was conducted via Zoom on July 13th, 2023. To respect the privacy of the individual, I have decided not to include their name as abortion providers have historically been targeted in acts of violence.

Figures 2 & 3

Left: Messaging on CPC, Longmont, Co, 2022, Photo Source: https://janesrevenge.noblogs.org/2022/06/ **Right:** Messaging on CPC, Asheville, NC, 2022, Photo Source: https://janesrevenge.noblogs.org/2022/06/

Billboards of Exchange

Besides being a way for brands to gain exposure or an efficient way to draw travelers to new tourist destinations, billboards are used to raise awareness for political campaigns, spread information, and highlight social issues, including abortion. A pro-life group, ProLife Across AMERICA, launched its first billboard campaign in 1990 and has since referred to themselves as "The Billboard People." In 2022 alone, they placed 12,000 billboards in 46 states (*Our Mission*). Every billboard includes the organization's 1-800 hotline number meant to direct callers to a nearby Crisis Pregnancy Center, a pro-life message, and a photo of a baby. With tens of thousands of billboards created by this

organization alone, there is no intent to slow production in the future.

Pro-choice billboards in response to these well-established pro-life billboards are nothing new.[6] However, the *Vote for Abortion Rights* billboard exhibition in the fall of 2022 was created during a critical time. As part of the overturn of Roe v. Wade, individual states were given control over abortion access legislation. The 2022 midterm elections provided an opportunity for voters to select representatives for many key offices nationwide who would then be able to champion pro-choice abortion legislation. As such, this project was meant to encourage voters to have reproductive rights issues in mind while voting. This specific billboard project was created by the Brooklyn, NY non-profit organization, SaveArtSpace which is dedicated to creating an urban gallery experience addressing intersectional themes and fostering a progressive message of social change (*Transforming Advertisements into Public Art for Local Communities*!). According to their website (https://www.saveartspace.org/home), they have installed the artworks of 550+ artists in over 1,000 advertising spaces. *Vote for Abortion Rights* was done in collaboration with artist and Reproductive Justice

[6] Other examples include https://nextcity.org/urbanist-news/grassroots-campaign-reproductive-rights-takes-aim-at-anti-choice-billboards and https://rewirenewsgroup.com/2018/09/24/we-want-to-flip-the-narrative-religious-groups-bring-pro-choice-billboards-to-oklahoma/

advocate Michele Pred and was on display in 14 cities across 12 states nationwide starting October 17, 2022. The gallery featured works of artists Bud Snow, Holly Ballard Martz, Laney Baby, Lena Wolff & Hope Meng, Michele Pred, Shireen Liane, Viva Ruiz, Wildcat Ebony Brown, and Yvette Molina. In my research, I had the opportunity to speak with five of these artists directly about what role they see street art playing in the Reproductive Justice movement and learn a bit more about their involvement in this project.[7]

Michele Pred, the curator of this billboard project and a conceptual artist, uses art to address themes such as the economic and political struggle for women's rights and the politics of post-9/11 security. According to Pred, using billboards was an intentional choice for the SaveArtSpace: Vote for Abortion Rights exhibition, as it is both an accessible medium and can address a large audience. As such, making the commitment to put Reproductive Justice ideas and messaging in states where people didn't necessarily agree was crucial.

Besides location, imagery was an important factor for this project. Pred stated:

[Something] that's essential for me, and just in the abortion movement in general, is that there's no sort of

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[7] Special thanks to interviewees Holly Ballard Martz, Lena Wolff, Hope Meng, Michele Pred, and Yvette Molina for their wisdom, time, and contributions to the Reproductive Justice movement.

> *negative messaging. There are no bloody coat hangers. You know, no references to back-alley abortions. The key is just having more of a positive [message]. Especially in those areas where people probably are anti [abortion]. So, for them to hopefully look at these, think differently, enjoy the art, and kind of flip the script— Wildcat Ebony Brown, you know, Abortion is Life (Figure 4). It's such a different approach, and I just loved it. It's very organic and floral. It's just completely shifting the messaging to stop people in their tracks... I've never curated a billboard exhibition before. I've done my own billboards and been on other projects. But, like I said, having other voices and other visions were really essential to me.* (Michele Pred, personal communication, August 9, 2023).

Figure 4

Wildcat Ebony Brown, Abortion is Life, 2022, Photo Source: https://www.saveartspace.org/abortionrights

Other artworks in the billboard exhibition include *Bans Off Our Bodies*, *Thank God for Abortion*, and *Abortion is Health Care*. In choosing positive messaging, this exhibition was able to engage with those who do not see eye-to-eye about reproductive

health issues. For example, a pro-life website published an article titled, "New Billboards Claim Killing Babies in Abortions is Health Care." While the title of the article is partisan on abortion, what is surprising about the article is how the author engages with the billboard project. In the article, the author vividly describes the signs, includes photos, credits all the artists that were involved, and even has a quote from Pred's interview with the news source, The Guardian. The author then acknowledges how important the upcoming midterms are for the dictation of abortion laws. In this way, Pred was correct about how positive messaging can lead to more positive interactions from those on the other side of the aisle. However, not all pro-choice messaging on billboards is as positive when it comes to graffiti tags on pro-life billboards.

Tagging on billboards is nothing new. In the graffiti subculture, one is praised more highly for tagging a harder-to-reach spot, or a more visible spot (Bloch, 2019). Usually, a billboard is both, making them easy enough targets for graffiti. As an act of protest, pro-life billboards have been vandalized all over the country. The original billboards are most commonly the work of ProLife Across AMERICA. These graffiti responses include militant and powerful messages as well as iconography. For example, in the image on the left (Figure 5), all ProLife Across AMERICA's information has been painted over and instead reads, "I could get an abortion," along with

"Keep it legal," "Keep it Safe," and "My Body My Choice." The graffiti also includes coat hangers that are crossed out, a reference to mitigating back-alley abortions.

The billboard on the right (Figure 6) is quite plain compared to the image on the left, but the message "We will not be silenced. Protect Womens Rights" is still very powerful. I call this category Billboards of Exchange due to the responsive nature of sanctioned pro-choice billboards and unsanctioned graffiti to pro-life billboards.

Figures 5 & 6

Left: Tagged Billboard, Barkhamstead, CT, 2023. Photo Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/CpDWiRCSQWZ/ Right: Tagged Billboard, Syracuse, NY 2022. Photo Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/ChN5N4kvvQB/

"Abort" Messages

As previously mentioned, the first instance of Reproductive Justice street art that I had seen after the overturn of Roe v. Wade was an "Abort the Court" burner on the side of the interstate (Figure 7). Interestingly, this was not an isolated incident. The

same words were sprayed on the side of interstates in Maine, Kentucky, and Wisconsin. They are similar in appearance with bold lettering and a splotchy blood-appearing backsplash.

Figure 7

It is not clear who first coined the term "Abort the Court," however, it was one of the first Reproductive Justice messages to be disseminated by street art after the overturn of *Roe v. Wade*. "Abort" messaging is not exclusive to interstates. They appear on surfaces such as electrical boxes, street posts, stickers, and unsanctioned walls as well. While "Abort the Court" is a play on words as "abort" rhymes with "court," and the Supreme Court overturned the right to abortion, there are many other instances of "abort" messaging in Reproductive Justice street art. Alternative wording includes "Abort the State," "Abort Politicians," and "Abort your Senator."

Discussion

Through the intertwining of quantitative and qualitative analysis, the categories of didactic abortion resource stickers, Crisis Pregnancy Center tags, billboards of exchange, and "abort" messages were extrapolated. These categories, reflective of a need to disseminate information, protest, and empower individuals post-Roe, are significant as their recognition and documentation will help to preserve these ephemeral creations and their contribution to the Reproductive Justice movement. Furthermore, this research provides crucial knowledge about the foundations of this domain and assists in its future evaluations, as it is the first scholarly paper written on this topic.

Besides determining these four categories, I was also able to make some assumptions on the correlation between the number of Reproductive Justice street art messages, and the restriction level of abortion laws in each state. Based on my gathered and crowd-sourced image gallery, there was a significant positive relationship between states with the most protected abortion laws and the number of Reproductive Justice street art works.[8] One reason for this may be that the states themselves simply have

[8] Using regression analysis, I was presented with the formula $r(23)= 0.416$ $p<.05$. As previously mentioned, although my gallery of gathered and crowd sourced images had about 90 images total, I removed the images I had found on Instagram pages other than Radical Graffiti so as not to skew my analysis.

more political street art, another is that street artists in these states feel more inclined to advocate for the continued protection of abortion rights.

However, I must acknowledge that as a limitation of my research, I did not have the time nor resources available to adequately photograph, document, and collect all instances of Reproductive Justice street art across the United States. Further research is required to draw more definitive conclusions.

Ethnography was also a method of data collection in which I was able to situate Reproductive Justice street art in context through interviews with artists who are creating this art. Through thoughtfully conducted interviews, I was able to identify three major themes to respond to the question of "Why street art?" Identifying the themes of street art as a rapid response, confrontational in nature, and the dual role street artists play as activists, can be used not only when examining Reproductive Justice street art, but street art as a whole.

Street art is a highly effective way to quickly respond to a societal crisis. Instead of taking time to attempt to have it displayed in a gallery or museum, or even having it be promoted on social media, one can simply use a can of spray paint, stickers, or another street art medium to take their message to the streets to have it shown to anyone that passes by. This sentiment was shared by Bay-area projection artist, Alan Marling who described their contribution to the

street art of the Reproductive Justice by way of projection.[9] They state:

> *What happened was that there'd be an issue which was urgent, something very pressing that day, and I would look online often following hashtags and see what images I felt spoke to that moment and presented themselves well to projection. [With] projection, you want an image to be very recognizable and readable in about a second, because when people glance up and see an image [and] they don't get it, they'll probably keep walking. Or, if there's some context missing, it won't work. So, it needs to be very legible, which is why sometimes just simple words are very effective. So, for instance ... Jessica Sabogal's projection is, "If Abortion Isn't Safe, and Neither Are You" (see Figure 8) ... I just said [to Jessica], "I'll be projecting your image tonight at 7 PM."...Usually, the strength of projection is speaking to the moment, and that's often projecting something which has been drawn by an artist that week or that month and then immediately projecting it.* (Alan Marling, personal communication, July 20, 2023).

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[9] Regarding the legality of projection art, Alan Marling states: "Projection activism is a beautiful form of activism that allows the creation of art that speaks the moment. Sometimes the very hour. I would often load images in response to the news of the day, and then shine it on walls, creating a near instant mural of light. Now it is a lawful form of street art. I am drawing with photons which are fundamentally impermanent. They are also unregulated except insofar as they qualify as a nuisance, which projection activism would never do."

Figure 8

Art by Jessica Sabogal & Projected by Alan Marling, If Abortion Ain't Safe Then Neither Are You, 2022, Photo Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/CffwzaKLyOh/

In these ways, Alan has made it clear that street art is a highly effective way to spread messages. They also mention how readability is an important trait in their projections. With many walking or driving by quickly, there needs to be something that can grab passerby's attention. In this respect artist Holly Ballard Martz, part of the *Vote for Abortion Rights* exhibit, agreed stating:

The work that I do that I consider more fine art that's in galleries or has been shown in museums, although I do incorporate some text in it, tends to be a little bit more nuanced because you can spend time with it, right? But, if it's out in the world, you want people to get it. Especially a billboard. If you're driving past really fast, it has got to be really graphic

and simple. You need to get that message across to people quickly. One of my installations that has been shown multiple times in a few different museums and other places is called Dangers of Nostalgia in Wallpaper Form. That is something that you need to spend time with, because when you first walk up to it, people think, "Oh, it's just this beautiful pattern. Oh, what a really pretty wallpaper!" Right? And then it reveals itself where either they see the reproductive system first, or they see it's a coat hanger first. There's an evolution of recognition of what is right. It takes time to understand what this piece is. You don't have that time when you're out in the public sphere. (Holly Ballard Martz, personal communication, July 14, 2023).

When it comes to who can put political messages on the streets, it appears that artists may be our best bet as opposed to corporations or political leaders. It was quite common for interviewees to be practicing artists who worked mainly in mediums other than street art, but who felt so inspired by their connections to Reproductive Justice issues that they felt called to put their messages out to the public. The more I conversed with these artists, the more I realized that most of them felt their goal as an artist and an activist were intrinsically connected. Washington, D.C. based artist, Trap Bob spoke with me about her experience creating free downloadable images on reproductive health topics. She said:

I think art is the best way to communicate and to reach people. I truly believe that it will save the

world. My work is activism, not by choice, but because I speak through my work...It was a great opportunity to relieve myself of the kind of stress I was feeling from, you know, women's rights being threatened, and so many things happening in that moment, and also being able to again communicate a really important message in a way that is simple and you know, digestible for people...I really love that they (the organization Amplifier) was providing free artwork to people that they could print out. So, that way my art could support movements in places that I couldn't be... [People would use them] as phone wallpapers and had their own posters that they were giving out at the marches, and it was so cool to see my work in all these different cities...Art doesn't tell people what to do, it inspires [them]. It creates hope in people. Specifically, for me when I'm creating art for advocacy, or for any type of large-scale communication like that, I don't want to ever create a reminder of our problems. I always want to create hope and inspire, because I think the only way for us to deal with it and to end injustice is to move forward and to have hope for a better future...being a woman, being a Black woman...it doesn't become a choice. It's like, if I don't speak then who will? (Trap Bob, personal communication, August 2, 2023).

Michele Pred shared further sentiments about being called as an artist to activism, saying, “making political artwork is what I've been doing my whole career. It's in my blood. It's in my DNA to do the work. It's really important for me. It's what I feel like is my job here on the planet.” (Michele Pred, personal communication, August 9, 2023).

In all, coupled with the goals of activism and confrontation Reproductive Justice street art contributes to the movement in four main categories of didactic abortion resources stickers, crisis pregnancy center tags, billboards of exchange, “abort” messages, and empowering calls to action to respond quickly to crisis. Reproductive Justice street art is also most likely to appear in states that most heavily protect abortion rights.

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