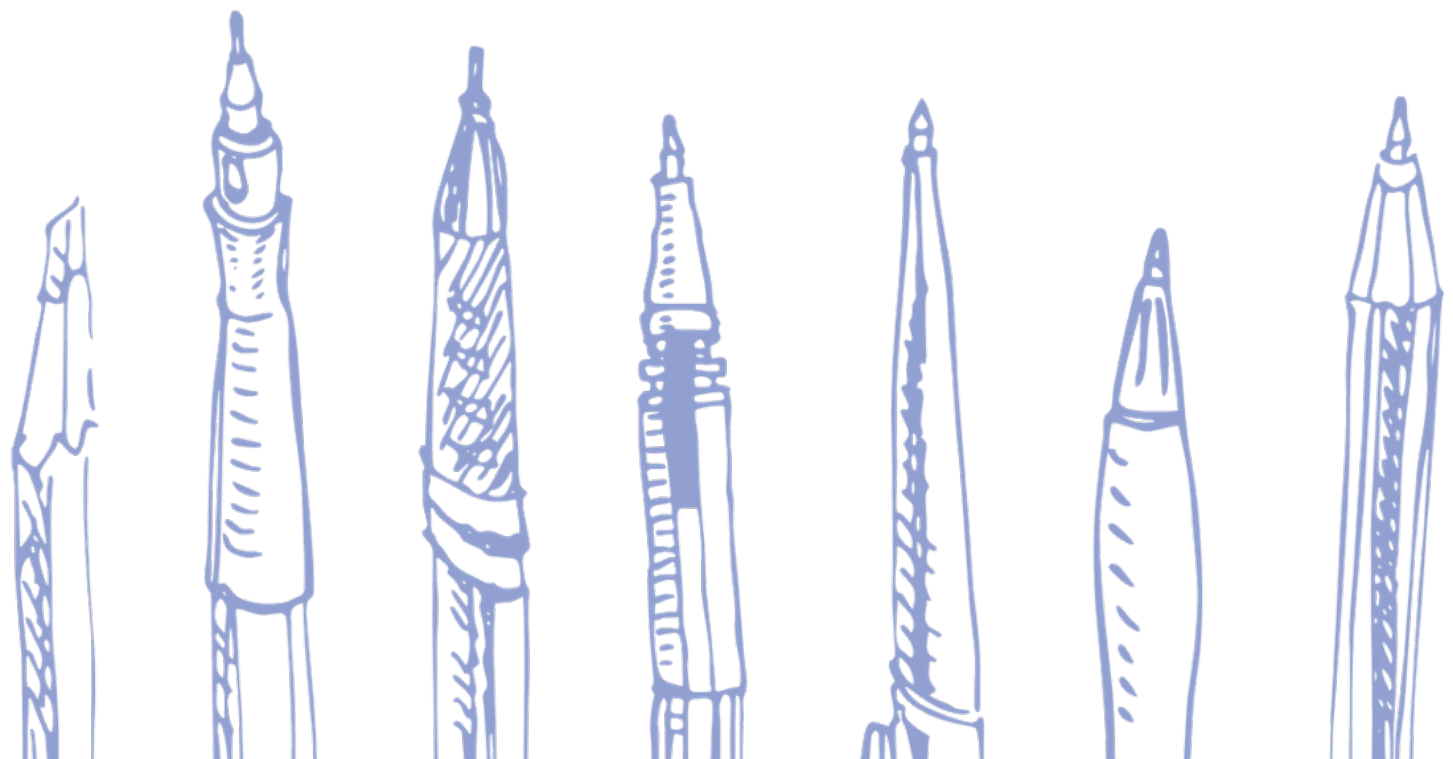




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2020-2021



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Editor's Note

And here we are—beginning another school year amid the pandemic. Because of the unusual situation in which our world has found itself, we are regularly reminded to practice self-care. Although the days of baking sourdough and toilet paper shortages seem like ancient history, there is one hobby to which I will always turn—reading.

Reading provides us the chance to learn new ideas, travel when we are restricted, gain empathy, and to refresh. The ongoing pandemic has forced us to rethink so much. The loss of life because of COVID-19 is horrific. Essential workers have experienced exhaustion many of us cannot fathom. Working from home has somehow made transformed into living at work. But for me, and I'm certain I am not alone, reading remains a great pleasure.

Even when our entertainment is beginning to acknowledge the pandemic, reading can help us take a breath. Television shows like *Superstore* closed their series by grappling with the difficulties of working safely amongst COVID protocols. In response to most everything being canceled last year, British artist David Hockney attempted to bring a small bit of joy last year by proclaiming “spring cannot be cancelled,” reminding us that there is hope in changing seasons.

But books and other writing have been a reprieve—we can choose to live in the written word far away from the realities of our daily lives. Earlier this year, I attended one of the virtual Voices in the Valley events, which included two poets, Kathryn Smith and Adam Clay, who are featured in this issue. There was something so beautiful about that gathering—all of us taking a small break to listen to someone share a few poems. Once each participant had finished, host Dr. Arra Ross asked everyone to unmute and share some noise of appreciation. Those small gestures—unmuting and clapping—was something so small and yet it brought me so much solace. It reminded me that reading and writing are always worthy of celebration.

Whatever your coping mechanism, I do hope you find something to read in these pages to lift your spirits, even for a moment.

Kim Lacey
Editor, *Writing@SVSU*

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Spotlight on...

The University Writing Awards

The Ruth and Ted Braun Awards are presented in the categories of General Education, Graduate Programs, and in each of the five colleges to promote excellent writing across the curriculum. This year two prizes were available in the College of Health and Human Services: one for students in Health Sciences, Kinesiology, or Occupational Therapy courses, and one for students in Nursing or Social Work courses. Two prizes were similarly available in the College of Arts and Behavioral Sciences: one for students in Art, History, Modern Foreign Languages, Music, Philosophy, Rhetoric and Professional Writing, or Theatre courses, and one for students in Communication, Criminal Justice, Geography, Political Science, Psychology, or Sociology classes. Members of the 2020-2021 University Writing Committee judged this year's entries. The committee was chaired by Scott Kowalewski, associate professor of Rhetoric & Professional Writing.

The Braun Awards were established by Ruth and Ted Braun. Longtime supporters of SVSU, they created these awards with the belief that no student can be successful in his or her academic career without writing competence and that no SVSU graduate should enter the workplace without such proficiency.

The Brauns' support of SVSU extends far beyond these writing awards. Both have served on the SVSU Board of Control and the SVSU Foundation Board of Directors. The Board of Control's chairperson from 1995–1997, Ruth Braun has been active in community service: she has served on the State Board of Education and the Saginaw School District Board of Education, as the president of the Junior League of Saginaw, and as the chairperson of the Board of Trustees of Saginaw General Hospital. Hugo ("Ted") Braun was a partner in the Saginaw law firm Braun Kendrick Finkbeiner PLC. A recipient of an honorary Doctor of Laws from SVSU, he was a longtime supporter of the school; among his other volunteer work for the university, he served on the Foundation Board's Finance & Investment Committee. Like his wife, he was much involved in other community organizations; he was president of the Harvey Randall Wickes Foundation, and United Way of Saginaw County honored him with its Outstanding Volunteer Award.

The writings of past Braun Award winners are available online at www.svsu.edu/writingprogram/writingawards/braunawards/

The Diane Boehm Writing Awards for e-Portfolios were first awarded in 2015. Established by Diane Boehm, founder and former director of the SVSU Writing Center and the SVSU University Writing Program, the awards recognize the creative and effective integration of writing and multimedia by SVSU students via the medium of e-Portfolios. Entries are judged according to a portfolio's ability to do the following: present a student's capabilities in an engaging, professional, and comprehensive manner; include artifacts and documents that demonstrate deep learning appropriate to the student's class or chosen major; include perceptive self-reflection; demonstrate creative use of multimedia; and be easy to navigate and aesthetically effective based on the capabilities of the software or program. Coordinated by the University Writing Committee, the Boehm Awards are given for portfolios made for the classroom or for a workplace application.

The Tyner Prizes are awarded to students in English courses to recognize writers of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. The Tyner Prizes are named after Raymond Tyner, a former member of the English Department. Professor Tyner came to SVSU in 1968 and was long affiliated with *The Green River Review*. Faculty in the English Department nominate student work for these prizes. Tamara Migan, lecturer of English, chaired the selection committee in 2021, and prizes were awarded in the categories of poetry, fiction, and nonfiction

and are included in this issue. Jordan Williamson won for his poetry collection, *Sad Dracula: A Handful of Poems*. Todd James Graham won for fiction for his paper called "Straight to My Core," and Gabrielle Krieger won for her nonfiction piece "Disability."

The Seitz Creative Writing Scholarship was created by Jim and Melissa Seitz to acknowledge excellence in the writing of poetry and/or fiction. The scholarship, worth \$1,000, is awarded annually. A graduate of SVSU, Melissa Seitz is a retired member of the English Department much respected by her students and colleagues. During her time at SVSU, Melissa served as both student editor and faculty advisor of *Cardinal Sins*. The 2020-2021 Seitz Scholarship was coordinated by Tim Kenyon, a lecturer in the English Department. This year, Gabby Bourgeois won for their essay, "Taking the Plunge," which is included in this issue.

The First-Year Writing Awards recognize outstanding writing in the beginning composition courses taught at SVSU. The First-Year Writing Program at SVSU strives to ensure incoming freshmen have a solid introduction to writing at a collegiate level. This program includes two comprehensive writing courses: Writing Skills (English 080) and Composition I (English 111). The First-Year Writing Committee was chaired in 2020-2021 by Sherrin Frances, associate professor of English.

- First place: Xander Barrat, "Beneath the Ink: An Analysis of Comic Strips."
- Second place: Madelyn Harris, "Rhetorical Reading Analysis on the Teachings of the English Language in America."
- Third place: Ledonna Husband, "Haiku is Unique Poetry."
- Fourth place: Brendan Horning, "That's Bananas."
- Fifth place: Maxwell Kershen, "Should Writers Use They Own English: A Rhetorical Analysis."
- Honorable mentions: Laney Fulk, Caleb Powers, Megan Randall, Emily Sawatzki, Erin Segerstrom, and Rachel Veihl.

The Ming Chuan Multilingual Writing Awards were awarded for the first time in 2018 and were established by Dr. Robert S. P. Yien. A longtime supporter of SVSU, Dr. Yien joined SVSU in 1970 and was a recipient of the Franc A. Landee Teaching Excellence Award, he served as the vice president for Academic Affairs, and he has been instrumental in the success of Ming Chuan University at SVSU. These awards recognize writing excellence by international students at SVSU. One award is for students in the English Language Program; the other award is for students who have moved into courses that are required as part of their degree. These awards are coordinated by the University Writing Committee.

How Community and Occupation Correlate, Correspond, and Create

Spencer Morris

Braun Award for Excellence in Writing in the Graduate Program

Nominated by Donald Earley, Professor of Occupational Therapy



Spencer Morris, of Flushing, Michigan, is enrolled in Saginaw Valley State University's Master of Science in Occupational Therapy program with an anticipated graduation date of December 2022. He received his Bachelor of Science in Rehabilitation Medicine in May 2021 through Saginaw Valley State University.

This piece was written for the occupational therapy Community Integration (OT 610) course. The basis of this course is founded on the intertwined nature of community and occupation with focus on utilizing the relationship between the two for improved health and well-being.

Community and occupation. At surface level, these are two terms that do not have an apparent bond or connection. Digging into some of their shared nature, these terms appear to be connected only by the idea that they are often misinterpreted depending upon their messenger. To the general public, occupation is one's job or place of employment. In the field of occupational therapy, occupation holds a much deeper connotation. The same is true for the word community. To the general public, community is simply one's physical location and most often pertains to one's neighborhood. In the field of occupational therapy, the term community has far reaching implications with an assortment of definitions depending upon the individual. When looking at how two simple terms can take on incredibly different interpretations, it begs the question whether each term is truly understood or whether it is necessary to understand each term. Perhaps with this introduction the reader may be left wondering why and if there is a need to associate these terms in the first place.

Community and occupation are correlated in ideology. This is evident in the incredibly complex nature of these two terms. To connect the terms in a roundabout way, community and occupation are different beasts of the same nature. The power of community and occupation is not in their definition, but in the ability to recognize, utilize, and participate in the two. Looking at how the field of occupational therapy interprets each term is where one will see how that power is obtained by the individual. That is the importance of this essay. Each term is connected through the benefits that arise in their recognition, utilization, and participation. The positive power of each will facilitate meaningful growth in an individual. An increased understanding of each will lead to the ability to recognize, utilize, and participate in each.

When these abilities are accomplished then one will find the beneficial nature of community and occupation. To increase understanding, this paper will seek to define community and occupation as separate entities. Next, there will be a recognition of the interwoven nature of community and occupation. Finally, this paper will expand upon the idea that knowledge of community is purposeful in expanding the power of occupational therapy.

Defining Community and Occupation

Occupation

The attempt and purpose of defining community and occupation is important because this is the foundation for recognizing each term. In short, one's occupations are the activities participated in that occupy one's time. These activities can be physical or mental. These activities can be assigned or accomplished

voluntarily. From the field of occupational science, an occupation is recognized as “chunks of activities that are culturally and personally meaningful” (Clark et al., 1991; Yerxa et al., 1989; & Zemke & Clark, 1996, as cited in Jackson et al., 1998, p. 327). It is important to note that even occupations that are obligatory can be meaningful. There are two different categories of obligatory meaningful occupations: occupations that are meaningful to function within a routine and occupations that are meaningful because of the roles they assign. Referring to the former, an example of an obligatory meaningful occupation related to routine would be the ability to dress oneself. At surface level, this occupation may not be meaningful because it does not seem to directly contribute joy to an individual’s life. The occupation of dressing within a morning routine becomes significant, and therefore meaningful, when you recognize it as a necessity. Necessity is most often understood once the occupation is lost or impaired. Returning to the prior level of function after a loss or impairment becomes a goal due to that occupation’s necessity. Goals are set because someone hopes to accomplish something meaningful. This is where obligatory occupations coincide with meaningful occupations. The phrase “meaningful occupations” is often written and emphasized within the practice of occupational therapy (American Occupational Therapy Association, 2014). There is an incredibly oxymoronic nature to this phrase. This is so because occupations are meaningful. Jackson et al. (1998) spoke directly to this idea by the recognition that themes of meaning are embedded within occupations as these themes “guide the manner in which occupations are chosen and performed” (p. 328). The question then shifts from whether occupations are meaningful activities to where the interpretation of meaningful comes from. The meaning assigned to an activity is influenced by an individual’s beliefs, identities, experiences, and life story (Jackson et al., 1998). Each of these components is highly individualized. Therefore, a “meaningful occupation” is defined differently by each person. Referring back to themes of meaning, these personally ascribed themes are what “help people organize their overall everyday pattern of occupations or may provide a framework for interpreting certain occupations as particularly salient or satisfying within the broad context of their lives” (Clark, 1993; Gallimore, Weisner, Kaufman, & Berheimer, 1993; Jackson, 1996; & Kaufman, 1986, as cited in Jackson et al., 1998, p. 328). To continue to construct the idea of occupations as meaningful engagements, Jackson et al. (1998) wrote “personalized experiences of meaning are intricately connected to engagement in occupations” (p. 330). To understand occupations is to recognize that occupations are meaningful activities participated in that guide one’s daily life.

Community

A surface level definition of community is describing community as the context where someone exists. Yet, this simplification does an incredible amount of injustice to its importance and does not go far enough in teaching the ability to recognize a community. In an attempt at specificity, a community has been defined as “a context in which people define their lives” (Doll, 2010, p. 2). This idea draws closer to what a true community is because it helps to define its importance and value. To expand that definition, Doll (2010) wrote communities are “individuals tied together by occupational engagement and a collective sense of meaning.” (p. 2). A collective sense of meaning is not produced by individuals who simply occupy the same vicinity. An area must have certain elements to make it a community. These elements are: locus, sharing, joint action, social ties, and diversity (MacQueen et al., 2001). When these elements are present, individuals find their collective sense of meaning, and therefore find their community. There are many hidden components within these elements. First and foremost, each element, and social ties specifically, incorporates some concept of face-to-face interaction (MacQueen et al., 2001). Locus does not simply describe the specific physical location, but truly refers to a sense of place (MacQueen et al., 2001). The idea of locus as a sense incorporates an individualized nature to community, as that sense may or may not exist from person to person. Sharing and joint action iterate the idea of commonality, vulnerability, and identity. The commonality found in a community is profound because it is not at surface level. This serves to be true as diversity is a criterion for community.

Are Community and Occupation Correlated?

The ability to recognize occupation as a meaningful engagement in an activity that shapes life's meaning is important. So, too, is the ability to recognize community as a specific context that surrounds an individual's engagement in meaningful activities. Occupation and community are defined by an individual's experience and perception. This idea is profound because it is dual sided. An individual's perceived ability to participate in occupations is influenced by their context, or community. An individual's experience(s) of meaningful occupation is influenced by their context. One's perception of context is influenced by their ability to participate in meaningful engagement, aka occupation. One's experience in a specific context is influenced by their ability to participate in meaningful engagement. Occupation cannot exist without influence from community. Community cannot exist without influence from occupation.

Interwoven Nature of Community and Occupation

Similarity

It is necessary to note the underlying premise that community and occupation are not separate entities but two concepts of an interwoven nature. This idea is supported by two different points. First, occupation and community are similar in nature. Second, occupation and community influence each other through dependence upon one another. Referring to the similar nature of occupation and community, each has a separate meaning based on the individual. In addition, both communities and occupations serve as a symbol. This is so because the community an individual identifies with and the occupations an individual participates in are the manifestations of their internal self. Within that, both function as the representation of the individual's moral, social, and physical attributes, as well as, who they are and what they hope to become (Doll, 2010). It is understood that occupations are the foundation of occupational therapy. The human beings they seek to serve are individuals who thrive off participation in meaningful activities. The stated idea of a community does not deviate from that sentiment. In fact, it has been noted that "community is congruent with the philosophical views of occupational therapy in relation to meaning, purpose and the occupational nature of man" (Earley, 2020). With the established idea that community and occupation operate in a similar nature within the field of occupational therapy, investigating their relation to one another is a worthy exploration.

Relation

Furthermore, neither occupations nor communities exist in a vacuum. There is an incredible sense of connectivity when noting that occupations occur within a community, occupations and community are an interdependent relationship, and communities are founded on relationships that occur within them. Jackson et al. (1998) wrote "occupations occur within specific socioculturally defined settings" (p. 328). In addition, individuals come to those settings "to reciprocally interact, thus generating occupations" (Jackson et al., 1998, p. 328). These statements iterate the connectivity by showing the occurrence of occupations within a well-defined setting that allows for reciprocal interaction. These interactions are the relationships found in a community. With a community offering such interactions, occupations are made, highlighting their interdependent relationship.

The generation of occupations through interact recognizes the idea that communities can be occupations. This leads to the question as to whether occupations can build community. The answer is undoubtedly yes. In Gorman et al., he suggested "Some strategies utilized to build social support typically occur as a byproduct of other activities" (Gorman et al., 2018, paras. 5). What can be gathered from this? Participation in activities, what has been defined as occupations, led to social support. Social support is a key community component and is what was previously described as "social ties." Wilcock (2006) echoed this same sentiment by writing "occupation provides a mechanism for social interaction and societal development and growth, forming the foundation of community" (as cited in Doll, 2010, p. 6).

To further divulge the community-occupation relationship, it is understood "person" is an occupational being and therefore possesses an occupational nature (Wilcock, 1999). The concept of

occupational self-analysis is defined as an individual acting upon visions of themselves as an occupational being (Jackson et al., 1998). Within that process, there is a requirement of self-perception and actions within the environment (Jackson et al., 1998). Here is where one can begin to see the collision of occupation and community. Actions can be equated to occupations and the environment is represented as community. Will these actions stand alone without influence from the environment? The answer is likely no.

Influence

It is inappropriate to acknowledge that occupations occur within a community, occupations build a community, and communities build occupations, without acknowledging how each may influence the other. Personal growth occurs as the result of an individual acting upon visions of self. This growth is “facilitated by opportunities to embrace self-chosen risks in occupation” (Jackson et al., 1998, p. 333). Understanding that occupations do not occur in a vacuum, “therapists encouraged experiences that involved risk-taking by the participants within safe, optimal environments.” (Jackson et al., 1998, p. 333). How may that environment influence participation? First, “creating meaningful lives entailed saturating one’s present occupations with personally relevant themes of meaning that had developed within one’s past or present experiences, as well as apprehending the significance of those occupations in one’s own and others’ lives.” (Jackson et al., 1998, p. 329). To translate, meaning influences occupational participation and experiences, along with beliefs and identities, influence meaning. Experiences, beliefs, and identities are all influenced by community. In short, community effects one’s experiences, experiences effect personal meaning, and meaning influences occupation. Through this sequence, community effects occupation.

It is more difficult to find writing that does not connect occupation to community than writing that does make the connection. Jackson et al. (1998), wrote on the specific dependency between occupation and community by stating “healthy social relationships enable occupations to happen and that, conversely, occupations can mediate the acquisition and maintenance of relationships” (p. 331). The relationship between occupation and community is deeply rooted. Occupations are influenced by physical, social, or financial changes (Jackson et al., 1998). All of which are community components. A negative influence can lead to a reduction to societal contributions and an impediment to personal growth (Jackson et al., 1998). This is a profound phenomenon. In this scenario, community has influenced occupation to the point that occupation is influencing community. These physical, social, and financial factors can be a catalyst to occupational participation or a limitation. To illustrate a limitation, an individual within a community may not have appropriate access to sidewalks (Doll, 2010). As a limitation, inaccessible sidewalks may not allow for community engagement or occupational participation. This scenario “demonstrates a simple barrier to health and well-being in a community setting” (Doll, 2010, p. 4). That is why noting specific influences is not enough for the practice of occupational therapy. Extensive time has been spent on recognizing how an occupational therapist can utilize the relationship between occupation and community.

How Community and Occupation Factor into Occupational Therapy

Community and occupation are health determinants. That idea is abundantly clear as “health is viewed as the ability to engage in occupation” (Baum & Law, 1998; Wilcock, 2006, as cited in Doll, 2010, p. 3). Common literature supports that sentiment time and time again. Law, LeClair, & Steinwender (1998) & Wilcock et al. (1998) wrote “efforts aimed at maintaining or increasing opportunities to participate in meaningful social and community activities may have the effect of improving individuals’ quality of life through improved self-perceived health and well-being.” (as cited in Matuska et al., 2003, p. 221). These community activities, what is known as occupations, help define, establish, and improve one’s own concept of health. Quality of life improvements are not the lone outcome of community and occupational participation.

Well-being, whether it be physical or psychological, has been shown to be positively influenced by participation in meaningful activities (Doll, 2010; Jackson et al., 1998). Improving quality of life and well-being are targeted outcomes of occupational therapy’s therapeutic process (AOTA, 2014). As such, the

field has worked to recognize community and occupation. In addition, the field serves to benefit from an increased knowledge of both occupation and community.

The relationship between community and occupation in the field of occupational therapy is not a newfound idea. In 2001, Scaffa spoke on the community occupation relationship through the statement

In occupational therapy, an essential conception of community is one that considers groups of people engaged in a collective occupation. In other words, just as individuals have unique occupations, so do communities. The basis of a community is relationships, and communities of people come together “to do something that cannot be easily done in isolation.” (as cited in Doll, 2010, p. 2)

This literature does not stand alone in addressing the relationship. The *Occupational Therapy Practice Framework* (2008) states that “occupational therapy practitioners must consider clients not only as individuals but also as both organizations and populations within a community” (AOTA, as cited in Doll, 2010, p. 6). While community in this context may refer to an individual’s surroundings and not community as a meaningful context that facilitates occupational participation, it is important because it continues to highlight the idea that occupations do not occur in a vacuum. As such, the field has begun to develop “the community-built practice model” (Doll, 2010, p. 13). Defined as “a strength-based approach and ‘ends when the client-defined community has effectively built the capacity for empowerment’”, this model provides the appropriate definition of community as it recognizes a community as “client-defined” (Wittman & Velde, 2001, as cited in Doll, 2010, p. 13). What does the field seek to gain from community-built practice? Community-built practice allows the profession to grow and apply occupations in their natural setting (Doll, 2010). How does the field of occupational therapy grow from community-built programs? By accomplishing goals of the practice. This has been accomplished as “community programs have demonstrated an impact not only on physical well-being but the whole person, which is the ultimate goal of authentic occupational therapy.” (Doll, 2010, p. 17). Doll and the community-built practice model have served to recognize and build knowledge on the occupation community relationship. While the literature is limited, the knowledge gained has benefitted occupational therapy as it has helped the field grow by accomplishing targeted goals. If the field hopes for continued growth, there is a need to increase the knowledge about how occupations unfold within the community context. Fortunately, to the benefit of occupational therapy, literature exist that increases the knowledge base.

Literature Beneficial to Occupational Therapy

There is an understanding that increasing the knowledge related to occupations within a community is beneficial because it allows for the improvement of a client’s well-being and quality of life. The essence of a community can be captured without defining it by the specific term. Social capital is referred to as “networks of relationships and resources within a social structure that can be engaged toward purposeful action” (Lin et al., as cited in Gorman et al., 2018, paras. 3). In relation to this definition, community is one’s network of relationships within a social construct and occupation is one’s purposeful action. Understanding social capital is beneficial because it serves to increase the understanding of community. The benefit to this understanding? An increase to social capital has been correlated to better health and life satisfaction – a positive outcome for both the individual and society (Gorman et al., 2018). Positive outcomes for both lead to growth for the field of occupational therapy. *Veteran Coffee Socials* by Gorman et al. (2018), also shows the value of broadening the knowledge of occupations within community. These coffee socials were described as peer support groups for veterans that attempted to offer social support (Gorman et al., 2018). In this attempt, the “Veteran Coffee Socials” incorporated several of the aforementioned elements for building a community. These socials “established a forum to share perspectives and engage in joint action in a common location” (Gorman et al., 2018, paras. 24). First, locus, or a sense of place, was established through the common location. Joint action, a community element, is specifically mentioned and engaged upon. Finally, the social offered a forum to share perspectives. Sharing is an additional community characteristic. Occupations are meaningful because they assign roles. Joint action and sharing, along with the community context itself, helps to influence identity. Thus, the coffee

socials further built a community of occupational engagement by creating “an opportunity for Jared to reach out to local veterans, reclaim his veteran identity, and successfully transition into retirement with purposeful and meaningful activity” (Gorman et al., 2018, paras. 20). To unpack this statement, reaching out was an occupation for Jared because it had personally assigned meaning. This occupation reestablished his identity and that reestablishment was facilitated through the context of his community. This statement is incredibly powerful because his occupation and community allowed him to transition into retirement with purposeful and meaningful activity. Occupation, or purposeful and meaningful activity, leads to quality-of-life improvements, a therapeutic goal. Additionally, through quality-of-life improvements occupational therapy was supporting a transition in life stages, which is an emphasis within the practice (AOTA, n.d.). This should be the take home point for the occupational therapy practice. If a therapist can create a community that allows for occupations to unfold within them, such as the “Veteran Coffee Socials,” occupational therapy will grow as a field.

Conclusion

Occupation and community are different, yet they influence and depend upon each other. The question that remains is where does the field transition with the existent knowledge on community and occupation? The answer is purposeful intervention. One example of purposeful intervention is an advisory board. An advisory board “can effectively represent community perspectives regarding health priorities” (Macqueen et al., 2001, p. 1936). With knowledge of what is important to a community, a therapist can help that community. In addition, with knowledge on what a community is, a community can be more easily built. Community development is a purposeful intervention. With this, “interventions targeting community development are described as having the potential for broad positive social impacts and may facilitate access to needed care” (Gorman et al., 2018, paras. 3). The knowledge of what a community is, through recognition of the core elements, will further “help us understand how to build and support “good” communities that enhance the health of their members” (Macqueen et al., 2001, p. 1937). This statement encompasses the idea of this writing. In viewing health as the ability to engage in occupation, their relationship is obvious. In the ideal, helping a community is helping an individual participate in occupations. Helping an individual participate in occupations is helping a community. In the worst, a community that is limiting will restrict occupations. Restricted occupations limit the ability for a community to exist. The fieldwork of occupational therapy has the power to determine which direction community and occupations will follow. They are separate entities but treating one without the other is negligent. Through knowledge and literature, occupational therapy has the capability to treat both in a mutually beneficial relationship. The therapist must aid both the patient and the community and in return the patient and community will allow the field of occupational therapy to grow.

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Utopia or Dystopia: A Comparison of Plato's Ideal State and Lois Lowry's Community

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Braun Award for Excellence in Writing
in the College of Arts and Behavioral Sciences, Category 1
Nominated by Beth Jorgensen, Associate Professor of Rhetoric and Professional Writing



Eliza Kriz is a senior majoring in Professional and Technical Writing from Ludington, Michigan. She has been involved in the Association of Professional and Technical Writers (a student club at SVSU) since she came to SVSU in Fall 2019. Before coming to SVSU, she studied at West Shore Community College and worked at the writing center there. She thanks Jodi Radloff, the director of the WSCC writing center, for introducing her to technical writing.

"Utopia or Dystopia" was written for Rhetorical Theory (RPW 265) taught by Dr. Beth Jorgensen in Fall 2020. Throughout the course, the class studied several Greek philosophers and their contributions to the study of rhetoric. She enjoyed comparing the writings of Plato, an ancient classical philosopher, with that of Lois Lowry, a contemporary author writing for young adults.

Abstract

This paper explores the idea of utopia through a comparison of Plato's *Republic* and Lois Lowry's *The Giver* and a discussion of how utopia is applicable to life today. First, the societal structures in Plato's and Lowry's utopias are compared and secondly the virtues that are considered essential in each society. This comparison is followed by reflection and analysis about how utopian ideas are imagined and the different perspectives that each individual brings to a community. Finally, the paper ends with a discussion on diversity and its challenges to Plato's Ideal State and Lowry's Community as well as its potential for prompting progress.

Keywords: *Republic*, *The Giver*, utopia

The idea of utopia, a perfect world or society, has been explored in numerous ways from ancient history to the present day. Plato discusses his Ideal State in the *Republic*, a society which he believed was ordered to create happiness and justice for all (Rosen, 2005; Crossman, 1963; Moldovan, 2012). Lois Lowry (1993) in her science fiction dystopian novel, *The Giver*, provides a more recent description of a society intended to purge evil and promote "sameness" and efficiency in the Community. Although written in vastly different historical times for different audiences in distinct contexts, the *Republic* and *The Giver* share similarities in societal structure and virtues in their imagined utopias, or as it may be, dystopias. They both raise questions about what is required for a perfect society and what we may lose in trying to create one. I plan to demonstrate that although the societal structures in Plato's Ideal State and Lowry's Community create ordered and efficient societies, they limit individual expression, creativity, and choice, ultimately quashing the diversity of ideas and backgrounds that lead to progress and development in a society. First, I will discuss the structure of each city or community and then I will compare the values that are promoted and enforced in each.

Literature Review

Due to the study and reverence given to Plato and the *Republic*'s antiquity and status as a classic, an abundance of books, essays, and articles are devoted to his conception of the Ideal. Many philosophers and theorists have debated and discussed facets of Plato's work, and although these scholars differ on many points, there is a consensus on the overall hierarchical structure of Plato's Ideal State and Plato's focus on philosopher-kings rather than a democracy (Dobra, 2009; Moldovan, 2012; Topaloğlu, 2014). Plato's cardinal virtues are also agreed upon in scholarly circles. Unlike Plato's works, *The Giver* lacks widespread study and attention among theorists, but there have been several articles with a focus on Lowry's fictional Community connected with the idea of utopia and dystopia (Hanson, 2009; Toma, 2017). As a result of the lack of scholarly work comparing Plato's Ideal State from the *Republic* with Lowry's Community in *The Giver*, the analysis between these utopias is my own contribution to academia.

Methodology

My starting point for comparison is Plato's *Republic* and scholarship discussing Plato's Ideal State. With this framework in place, I then compare the Community in Lois Lowry's *The Giver*. My first analysis is of societal structure, a clear component of each community. Secondly, I compare virtues, a more abstract, but certainly no less important, foundational aspect of these imagined societies. Finally, I continue to discuss the ways that utopia is relevant today.

Societal Structure

In the Republic

Plato's society in his Ideal State is highly stratified. He divides his society into three broad classes: the governors, rulers, or guardians; the soldiers; and the craftsmen, laborers, and producers (Dobra, 2009). These categories are not chosen arbitrarily. Rather, Plato structures his societal classes upon his belief of a tripartite soul with each of the three components (reason, courage, and desire) corresponding with a class: reason with the governors, courage with the soldiers, and desire with the craftsmen.

Plato spends the greatest amount of time describing the guardian class whose principal function is to watch over the order of the city and provide ideal governance. Plato believes that a special skill for wisdom and governance is needed for the philosopher-kings (Crossman, 1963). The education of the guardians is critical because of their elevated position, so Plato describes this in great detail. This ruling class is segregated early on from the producing class and given a highly censored and controlled state-administered education. Beginning in youth, the personal interests of these individuals are suppressed. They do not have the right to acquire property or own wealth because of the potential for corruption (Moldovan, 2012). The guardians live communally with others of their class, completely separated from the laborers and craftsmen. Plato maintains that the ruling class must share accommodation, food, and even women and children to further guard against the corruption connected with ownership (Dobra, 2009). In addition to material goods, the guardians don't have the capacity to pursue opportunities for personal growth leading to self-realization and fulfillment. Another key component of their education is physical training and mental discipline (Crossman, 1963). At the end of this rigorous education, those who pass the examination become the next philosopher-kings and the others become the administrators, the military class that carries out the guardians' orders with unswerving single-mindedness.

The military class exists for armed protection and enforcing the guardians' authority (Moldovan, 2012). Along with the guardians, they forgo wealth and family but are invested in their role as the military might of the philosophers' intellect (Crossman, 1963). Although they receive a state-administered education alongside the guardians, their primary role is significantly different. As with the guardians, the soldiers live segregated from the producing class.

The producing class provides the economic function for the city, and Plato is less descriptive about this class. Although the civilians are allowed the function of economic transactions and ownership, they have no political, cultural, or educational rights, thus are excluded from having a voice in how the society is managed. However, in losing these rights, Plato insists that they are the beneficiaries of a stable government, justice, and defense (Crossman, 1963). The civilians have no need for civil liberties in this just social order.

In The Giver

The Community in *The Giver* is also strictly regimented, but in a way that is less immediately evident. There are a handful of select authority figures, called “The Committee of Elders” (Lowry, 1993, p. 15). Although there are other committees in the community tasked with researching and proposing changes, the Committee of Elders is given the responsibility of approving or denying any proposals. The most important Elder is the position called “The Receiver of Memories.” This individual is responsible for holding the collective memories of the Community and offering advice when necessary. Because of the importance of the role, The Receiver isn’t bothered with inconsequential decisions, but only those of the utmost importance.

In contrast to Plato, Lowry offers significant detail and description about the everyday lives of the citizens in the Community. Upon reaching the age of twelve, each child is given his or her “assignment,” or adult occupation, based upon careful observation by the Committee that has been taking place from childhood (Lowry, 1993). These assignments are designed to fit the skills and interests of the individual. There is an assignment to meet every need in the community: birthmother, nurturer, caretaker of the Old, positions in the Department of Justice, pilot, instructor, and the list goes on. As in Plato’s Ideal State, these assignments are not chosen. Individuals don’t protest their place in society or ask for a different role - the Committee’s decision is final. Although the hierarchy present among the members of the Community is not glaringly obvious, it is still present. Certain assignments and positions are viewed with more respect than others. For example, a position in the Department of Justice is highly esteemed because of the intelligence and intense study that the position requires. On the other hand, there is very little honor in the role as a birthmother, as necessary as the position is. After a birthmother’s three “productions,” or births, she is reassigned to a position as a laborer at some location in the community for the rest of her working days. Until they are relocated to the House of the Old, people work in their designated positions, performing the functions that they were chosen for. Individuals are not considered to have inherent worth. Rather, citizens are valued for what they provide to the Community.

Virtues

In the Republic

Plato describes four cardinal virtues that are essential to his Ideal State: wisdom, courage, sophrosyne, and justice. Wisdom is applying reason to all situations and is especially important for the ruling class. Courage is represented in the military class and is described as the will to do what must be done. Courageous soldiers follow their orders with supreme loyalty to the rulers (Rosen, 2005). Sophrosyne, a Greek word often translated as temperance or discipline, is self-knowledge combined with self-restraint, knowing one’s place and staying in it (Jorgensen, 2020). The temperate city is specialized, and the citizens complete their own specific task and that task alone (Rosen, 2005). Justice is the state of things when all the other virtues are present and is thus difficult to define. Plato believed that a city with wise leaders, courageous soldiers, and citizens who stayed in their place would, as a matter of course, be just as well. Justice is the natural result when the other virtues are practiced by the society. Returning to the idea of the tripartite soul as a model for the state, Plato reasons that when each social class is following its designated role, the soul will be complete, balanced, and just. He maintains that justice in the state corresponds to justice in the soul. In this way, harmony is achieved by seeking the happiness of the state as opposed to happiness of the individual (Dobra, 2009).

In The Giver

The primary virtue in Lowry's Community is the concept of "sameness." Individuals are trained and molded from childhood to fit in, to conform to the community, and to downplay any existing differences. All "dwellings" where family units live are built and furnished identically. Colors and the variety they add to life have been removed from existence. Strong emotions across the spectrum, including love, pain, loss, and joy, are nonexistent and have lost their meaning in society. Lowry demonstrates what the loss of these emotions could look like through thought-provoking interactions. One day, Jonas, the protagonist, returns to his dwelling and asks his parents a question after the evening meal. "Do you love me?" he asks (Lowry, 1993, p. 126).

There was an awkward silence for a moment. Then Father gave a little chuckle. "*Jonas*. You, of all people. Precision of language, *please!*"

"What do you mean?" Jonas asked. Amusement was not at all what he had anticipated.

"Your father means that you used a very generalized word, so meaningless that it's become almost obsolete," his mother explained carefully. (Lowry, 1993, p. 127)

Emotions have been simplified to the level that the word "love" is meaningless. In the Community, only enjoyment and mild affection remain, emphasizing uniformity even in the realm of feelings. Children in the same age categories dress the same, only allowing differences between males and females. Citizens have no idea of the concept of history, and thus cannot understand changes that happened in the past. When Jonas is assigned his adult occupation, he is given the unique role of "Receiver of Memories." When Jonas first reports for his training as the new Receiver, the previous Receiver (whom Jonas now calls The Giver) explains that he will transmit memories of the past to Jonas. Jonas is confused. He replies, "I'm sorry, sir. I don't understand exactly. Maybe I'm not smart enough. I don't know what you mean when you say 'the whole world' or 'generations before him.' I thought there was only us. I thought there was only now" (Lowry, 1993, p. 78). The present is the only reality and any significant change over time is practically nonexistent in the memory of the Community. Individuals who fail to conform are first reprimanded and rebuked. If the trend continues, the offender is "released to Elsewhere," a euphemism for euthanasia.

Another virtue in the Community is efficiency. Weather has been done away with in favor of climate control. Even family life is strictly regimented for efficiency. Instead of spouses choosing each other and having a family together, spouses are assigned, children are genetically engineered and then produced by birthmothers, and the Elders carefully select "newchildren" for placement in a family unit. Once children have received their assignments and moved out of the dwelling, the two spouses are separated and moved to the Home for Childless Adults where they will live the rest of their working days.

Although I used different terms, "sameness" and efficiency, in describing the virtues of Lowry's community, they have strong parallels to Plato's cardinal virtues, especially *sophrosyne* and justice. Individuals who follow the rules and complete their assigned tasks, an excellent example of *sophrosyne* at work, are commended and their behavior encouraged. As in Plato's Ideal State, the good of the Community is placed before the good of the individual, a clear illustration of Platonic justice. When all members of the society are fulfilling their roles while practicing uniformity and productivity, Plato's definition of justice is achieved, and everyone is assumed to be happy.

Reflection

When I first started reading *The Giver*, I was impressed by the Community Lois Lowry described. The structure of the Community seemed to provide stability and harmony for its citizens because everyone had a place and a purpose. However, as I continued to read, my initial impressions began to fade as the sterile emptiness of the society surfaced. Family, passionate emotions of all kinds, individual choice and drive, and the diversity that comes with differences were absent, driven out by the push for uniformity and efficiency above all else.

Similarly, I found myself frustrated as I discovered the requirements for Plato's Ideal State. How could the designated guardians govern wisely without interaction with the craftsmen who made up the vast

majority of the city's members? I agree with Plato that corruption often accompanies power and wealth, but would communal living and segregation from the rest of society cure that ill? How can justice be reached in a society that clearly and unapologetically values certain groups over others? As in *The Giver*, individuals are encouraged to fit in and stay in their place. How then, can a society make progress, create, and develop if unique ideas and individuals are routinely quashed? What motivation would there be for pursuing personal development?

Analysis

Upon reflection, I began to consider the motivation for creating a utopian plan. Lowry's *The Giver* is ultimately written as a dystopian/science fiction novel rather than to explain her sincere belief of an ideal society. On the other hand, Plato's *Republic* was firmly based upon Plato's worldview on what it means to be human, the best construction of government, and how virtues are defined. In the United States during the 21st century, it can be easy to reject Plato's idea of an Ideal State and dismiss his other writings, too. One might say, "How could an individual who believed that the guardians should communally share wives and children have anything meaningful to say relevant to life now?" However, upon learning more about Plato, his views become much more understandable, though perhaps not worth imitating in this case. Plato was born shortly after the start of the Peloponnesian War and this conflict continued into his early adult years (Topaloglu, 2014). This war, along with the experience of seeing Socrates sentenced to death and the political and social strife at the time, left Plato disillusioned with democracy and the current political state. Plato's strict hierarchy and classes as well as the importance of each individual fulfilling his or her role make more sense when laid upon the context of current events during Plato's life.

Numerous authors, individuals, and groups have experimented with different definitions of utopia. What Plato imagined and Lowry's Community seem more like dystopias to me, partly due to my time and place in history and the individual freedoms to which I am accustomed in the United States. Each person's definition of utopia is deeply personal and formed by the childhood, events, experiences, and beliefs of the individual. A person's experiences of living through a war or suffering under a corrupt government will certainly color his or her perspective of a perfect world, as it did with Plato. The degree to which people have knowledge of the past or experience with different cultures will also impact how they see the world and whether they see it as generally good or corrupt. In Lowry's Community, the majority of the citizens were content with their lives. However, they had no concept of history and no experience with other communities that lived differently, on top of the fact that they were deprived of strong emotions.

Conclusion

In a world of individuals with diverse backgrounds, experiences, perspectives, and worldviews, a utopia that all can agree on is unlikely in our future. However, this is not the tragedy that it might seem. The same differences in opinion and background that make it impossible to develop one acceptable utopia also create diversity. Although diversity is often spoken of in regard to race, the broader reach of diversity that encompasses the differences in ideas, thought, methods, and processes is what drives innovation and creativity in all areas of life: education, business, technology, and beyond.

Diversity can be frustrating. Quite often it is the enemy of *sophrosyne* and sameness. Therefore, differences and people who don't fit in the societal boxes imposed on them are seen in Plato's Ideal State and Lowry's Community as the adversary, the villain who must be vanquished. However, diversity, creativity, and human ingenuity are actually our most valuable resources for progress and development. So, while a society of like-minded individuals who fill clearly defined roles may seem worth pursuing, focusing on the unique strengths that each person brings and embracing our diversity as a group may, in reality, be our best plan for harmony.

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Actors and Actants in and in Front of the Screen: Mass Media as an Emotional Management Actant in the Era of Covid-19

Holly Houck

Braun Award for Excellence in Writing in the Arts and Behavioral Sciences, Category 2

Nominated by Warren Fincher, Associate Professor of Sociology



Saginaw native Holly Houck is a fourth-year Honors Student at SVSU, majoring in theatre and international studies while pursuing a minor in French. A spirited member of the SVSU Theatre Department, a site leader for the student organization Alternative Breaks, and a Health Simulation Actor for the Nursing Department, Holly finds joy in storytelling and serving her community. Joining the Peace Corps is in Holly's plans following graduation.

“Actors and Actants in and in Front of the Screen: Mass Media as an Emotional Management Actant in the Era of COVID-19” is the culminating survey report of a semester-long project for Dr. Warren Fincher’s Fall 2020 sociology course, SOC 326: Research Methods. Investigating the significance of streaming platforms and its social role in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic presented a unique opportunity to conduct relevant research within the larger body of sociological findings. Resources provided by Dr. Fincher and SVSU—including access to SPSS Statistics, official human subjects research training, and a national survey conducted by Survey Monkey—bolstered Holly in creating the invaluable experience of legitimate quantitative research. Venturing into the realm of SPSS statistics for the first time, Holly was encouraged by her fellow classmates and Dr. Fincher’s patient guidance as she navigated the computer program.

In the six months since finishing her survey report, Holly has lived in Lyon, France studying French at the Université Catholique de Lyon. Living through the pandemic in another country, and drawing comparisons to the American experience, she continues to take interest in the ways media is employed to fulfill the social voids created by the COVID-19 health crisis.

Introduction

In the past two decades, the breadth of media available at our fingertips has increased exponentially. Launches of Facebook, Netflix, Hulu, YouTube, Tik Tok, and Disney+ are just a few of the many ways people can engage with mass media instead of, or in addition to, cable television. As the means of mass media have evolved, so, too, have the ways that people engage with media. Millennials and Gen-Z are familiar with the social phenomena, “Netflix and Chill”: a euphemism for sexual activity under the pretense of watching Netflix, and what it means to “binge-watch” shows on a variety of platforms. Mass media consumption has experienced many changes over the past twenty years, but the most drastic changes may have occurred in just the past year as COVID-19 emerged and changed nearly every aspect of people’s lives. Events had to move online, theatre performances occurred over Zoom, and many people filled the

extra hours by utilizing a plethora of streaming services. In March 2020, most of the United States entered varying degrees of “lockdown” to reduce the spread of COVID-19. As a result of isolation and quarantine protocols, many social gatherings were cancelled or modified to be virtual. Among the physical health risks of COVID-19, the collective mental health, in terms of loneliness especially, of the United States has been impacted. In a preliminary study, Health Affairs reported in June 2020 that in the first months that COVID-19 was known to be in the United States, loneliness increased between twenty and thirty percent (Holt-Lunstad). These staggering numbers suggest, at the very least, that how people perceive their feelings of loneliness have changed since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Considering the impacts of loneliness and mass media’s presence in today’s society, I found myself curious as to how mass media is used to manage people’s feelings when they cannot be physically close to others. These thoughts culminated in the following research question: to what extent have mass media platforms served as emotional management actants since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic? The term “emotional management actants” here refers to mass media’s role as a social actant in the framework of Bruno Latour’s Actor Network Theory, explained further in the literature review. Learning what changes in loneliness are experienced as a result of COVID-19 and how they affect people’s consumption of mass media could increase our understanding of the ever-evolving role that mass media plays in people’s lives. I pose two related questions: How are people affected by their consumption of mass media? What drove people to consume more or less media during the pandemic? Understanding how people are turning to mass media in times when social interactions are limited to virtual settings could help organizations and companies facilitate virtual social interactions that people are missing. Findings could also support the survival of the arts amid a pandemic by gaining an understanding of what mass media platforms people are turning to during periods of isolation and for what reasons. Based on preliminary findings that loneliness increased due to the pandemic and the growing relevance and accessibility of mass media, I hypothesized that mass media platforms’ role as an emotional management actant increased in tandem with an increase in loneliness resulting from the coronavirus pandemic. Before conducting a quantitative survey study to test my hypothesis, my methods and sociological framework were informed by existing sociological literature.

Literature Review

The research question, “to what extent have mass media platforms served as emotional management actants since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic?”, is set within the context of the sociological framework known as Actor Network Theory. To familiarize myself with this framework, I worked from French sociologist Bruno Latour’s article “On actor-network theory: A few clarifications,” published in 1996. At the core of Actor Network Theory, developed by Latour over the course of the 1980s and ’90s, is that non-human actors, or actants (as I will also refer to them), are an integrated part of the human social experience. Not only are non-human actors important, but they can “act” on people in similar ways to humans act on them. The term “network” can be misleading based on its English connotation, which implies direct transportation without interference or transformation. Latour based the name for Actor Network Theory on the French “réseau,” which conversely suggests fibrous connectivity and the interwoven quality of the network’s elements (Latour, 1996, p. 369). A distinction Latour makes in this article is that “ANT is not about *traced* networks, but about a *network-tracing* activity;” the question I posed for this research lends itself well to this idea as I intended to consider the movement of people’s emotional management and the role in which media plays as an actant within that network (Latour, 1996, p. 378). Latour contends that these networks are not human-centered; this may be where my research strays from Latour’s meaning of Actor Network Theory. My research question is dependent on the human experience of mass media and their self-reported loneliness. Although Actor Network Theory is interested in the productions of meaning in a network, it does so in a more descriptive route than explanatory, and it prioritizes the reflexivity of actors and actants (Latour, 1996, p. 377). A final element of Actor Network Theory important to this research is the existence of “quasi-objects” in a network. Latour describes quasi-objects as moving actants “that [transform] those who do the moving because they transform the moving object” (Latour, 1996, p. 379). It is reasonable to expect that this study will identify a quasi-object in the

network of mass media communication and the COVID-19 pandemic. Most sociological approaches to Actor Network Theory, prior to this research, are concerned with urban planning, geographical elements, and urban-rural relations. Though Actor Network Theory has been applied to science and technology studies, its place in the realm of mass media has yet to be explored. The period of isolation necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic is a perspective that is unique but revealing to this work. In addition to consideration of Actor Network Theory, this research has a place among sociological studies of loneliness, isolation, the internet, and media.

An assertive piece of literature on loneliness and its relationship to technology is Sherry Turkle's 2011 book, *Alone together: Why we expect more from technology and less from each other*. From Chigusa Kita's (2012) review of the book, I learned that her work is similar to mine because it concerns human solitude in a similar era of social media and mass media's accessibility online (p. 960). The focus of Turkle's work is on the increasing prevalence of technology and how it limits people's interactions with others (Kita, 2012, p. 960). This study will offer an interesting comparison, as the onset of the pandemic necessitated people to communicate online, and technology was used as a tool to stay close to others while staying apart. America has, in a way, experienced the pandemic alone together. Turkle is interested in how people want to interact with technology, in addition to the effect that technology has on the individual. An alluring theory Turkle draws is that technology's rise is transforming people into social cyborgs. As we carry the internet with us everywhere now, it is a part of our self and sociability. Turkle also asserts that the expanse of social connections at people's fingertips have increased their fears about loneliness and/or separation (Kita, 2012, p. 961). Interestingly, Turkle is not the only one to adopt fictional elements to represent technology's effect on society's individuals. In Mark Deuze's (2014) article, "Living as a zombie in media is the only way to survive," he explains that people's decrease in awareness of their surroundings while connected to media is a process of society's "zombie-fication" (p. 278). Although the zombie-fication entails people becoming "lifeless automatons," the flipside of Deuze's theory is the blurred lines between virtual and real experiences imply there are more opportunities for people to connect with one another and in new ways; there are even instances in which boundaries to communication are broken through because of the online platform (Deuze, 2014, p. 278). In his work, Deuze builds off of anthropologist Kevin Hart's perception of media as a three part revolution: mechanically, socially, and existentially; which is "transforming what it means to be human and how each of us relates to the rest of humanity" (Deuze, 2014, p. 279). Considering this perspective, I ask whether it is possible that the transformation of media to emotional actants is a part of the revolution Deuze and Hart describe. A second influencer in Deuze's zombie theory is Gary Wolf, who in an edition of *Wired* magazine said, "when a medium is coincident with life, the last refuge for humanism is gone;" Deuze's stance is that the medium is a kind of outsourcing of the human psyche (as cited in Deuze, 2014, p. 283). Similarly, I'm inferring that people experienced a kind of outsourcing to mass media to fill an emotional and social void created by loneliness and isolation related to the pandemic. Whereas Turkle's cyborg theory depicts a grim reality of people being alone together, Deuze takes a positive outlook on technology's capacity to enable people to be "together alone" (Deuze, 2014, p. 284). Of the two outlooks, Deuze's aligns more closely to the goals of this research project; many people have found hope and joy in technology since the onset of the pandemic, but it has also drained people's batteries, so to speak, being bound to technology.

The existing literature on subjects of loneliness and isolation are vast, but Schroeder's (2018) "The internet in everyday life I: Sociability" and Parigi and Henson's (2014) "Social isolation in America" provided beneficial frames of reference for this study. Parigi and Henson (2014) consider two definitions of isolation: either a lack of meaningful relationships or a lack of social connection (p. 162). Since this study is considering isolation in terms of limitations to in-person social interactions, enforced by the pandemic, the latter definition is my focus. For decades prior to the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, sociologists have been questioning if Americans are becoming increasingly isolated. The question of increased isolation posed by Parigi and Henson (2014) focuses on technology and new social media, and opposing views as to their role in creating distance between people or adapting the ways in which people interact (p. 154). A popular debate among the literature on loneliness is whether the internet and social media's growing prevalence in American society is associated with the increasing "fragmentation of

society” or the development of new avenues (via the internet) for people to discover social groups to which they can belong (Parigi and Henson, 2014, p. 160). In reference to this debate, Schroeder (2018) cites Fischer’s findings that there has not been an increase in social isolation due to social media since it involves social interaction, albeit online, whereas books and television are examples of asocial media (p. 93). Although my study does not address media in the medium of books, I aim to consider television and its role as a vehicle for social interaction. Doing so, this study may challenge Schroeder’s (2018) assertion that in “solitary or one-way engagement with mass media, there can be no sociability” (p. 94). This study questions if the extenuating circumstances of isolation, posed by the pandemic, could change mass media’s role in sociability, or if it is used as a substitute for emotional engagement that would usually take place in social contexts. Parigi and Henson, and Schroeder share an idea about differing roles of mass media and social media. Parigi and Henson (2014) found that use of mass media is an individual experience; it is personally motivated and its use yields personal effects (p. 161). Comparatively, social media is driven by a desire to connect with others; in Schroeder’s (2018) words, “social media always involve interaction and social selves, never one-way communication” (p. 84).

Both Turkle’s cyborg theory and Deuze’s zombie theory are based on qualitative research and a review of existing literature. In fact, of literature included in this report, the only quantitative report is Parigi and Henson’s. As Kita (2012) suggests in her review of *Alone together*, the field may be ready for another quantitative approach (p. 961). The benefit of conducting one is measuring the changes experienced among a broad population in a period unlike any other: the COVID-19 pandemic.

Context

COVID-19 is significant to this study in two ways. First, the COVID-19 pandemic is central to the research question: to what extent have mass media platforms served as emotional management actants since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic? Second, as detailed in the Data and Methods section, data was collected in November 2020 while the pandemic continued in the U.S. and around the world. COVID-19 is the commonly known abbreviation assigned by the World Health Organization (WHO) for its longer name, Coronavirus Disease 2019. The shortened “coronavirus” is also widely used by the public. COVID-19 was first found in December 2019 in Wuhan, China. The virus quickly travelled to the rest of the world, and by March 2020 the WHO declared that COVID-19 is a global pandemic. COVID-19 is particularly frightening, and confounding to some, because of its range of effects on people. Though most people only experience mild symptoms when they contract the virus, others face serious medical complications or even death. Because COVID-19 is a new virus, researchers are learning more every day. There is consensus, however, that limiting the sizes of gatherings, wearing masks in public, and maintaining six feet of distance between yourself and people with whom you do not reside are effective at mitigating the spread of COVID-19 (The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020). For this reason, most of the United States entered a variation of quarantine lockdown in March. The isolation that state-mandated and personal efforts created are key to the inquiry of mass media’s role as an emotional management actant. Due to the recency of the coronavirus pandemic, the Actor Network Theory has yet to be applied to a relationship between inanimate social participants (like mass media) and a national population that is relatively isolated, or quarantined.

Data and Methods

To test my hypothesis that mass media platforms’ role as an emotional management actant increased alongside loneliness resulting from the coronavirus pandemic, I conducted a quantitative survey study. Based on my original path diagram, pictured in Figure 1, I operationalized the five original variables as survey questions using a variety of Likert scale, fill-in-the blank, and multiple-choice questions. For the variable, “number of housemates,” I was interested in how many adult, children, and pets lived with the respondent. “Stay-at-Home Policy” refers to the respondent’s experience of limitations to in-person interactions imposed by government or personal responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. After creating the survey questions that correspond to this study, I collaborated with a group of five other sociology students

to compose one large survey that would gather data for our six respective projects. Working in this fashion expedited the data collection process and kept this study within its budget; it also proved to be beneficial for this research because questions created for other students' projects ended up being informative for this one.

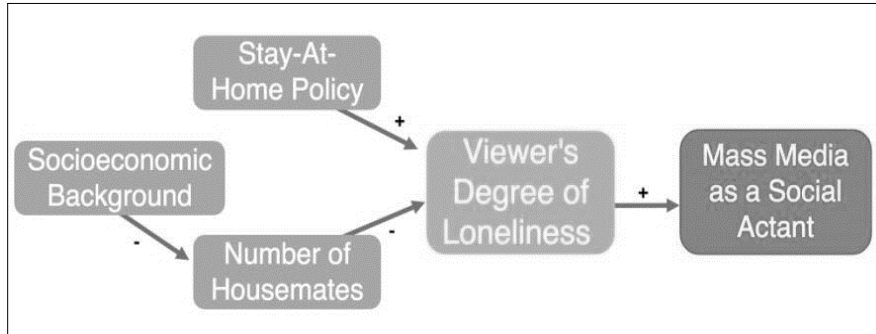


Figure 1: Initial Path Diagram

The projects for which my peers were collecting data ranged in subject from depression, to social media, “fake news” culture, and mass media. The final product for our collective survey included 37 questions (with Likert scale sections counted as one question) and was titled “Media and Mental Health Survey.” To collect the data, our questions were uploaded to the online site, Survey Monkey. The survey launched on Survey Monkey’s website platform the week of November 2, 2020. This was the week of the American 2020 election, which had the potential to influence the respondents at the time they took the survey. In the end, we collected data from 150 participants. All the participants willingly took the survey and remained anonymous to our team. To keep the data uniform, any participants that left questions unanswered and/or completed the survey in too little time for their answers to be accurate were removed from the data set, leaving 144 respondents whose data was used. On average, respondents took eleven minutes to complete the survey. Regardless of whether participants were included in the data set for analysis, they were compensated with a small stipend through Survey Monkey, paid for by the Saginaw Valley State University Sociology Department.

Once the data was collected from Survey Monkey, it was organized in an Excel spreadsheet and then input to SPSS Statistics. Respondents from the national survey ranged in age from 18 to 72-years-old, were mostly white, and most identified as either cisgender male or cisgender female. In SPSS, I created dummy variables for race, gender, sexuality, highest level of education, having (a) pet(s), mental diagnoses, and physical diagnoses. Data from the Likert scale questions were analyzed by running factor analyses on all the related responses. If the analysis reported a $KMO \geq 0.6$ and Bartlett Significance ≤ 0.05 , then the next steps were taken. Each variable was looked at for its communality extraction to be > 0.4 . If there was more than one component, the variables were split between the two depending on the value of its communality extraction. Then, for each component (if there was more than one) an index was created for the variable it represented. Before being used in the analysis, the index was checked for a skewness between $-1 < x < 1$ and its kurtosis between $-3 < x < 3$. No variable was used in more than one index. Following these standards, ten indices (see Table 1) were created to analyze relationships with dependent, independent, and intervening variables.

Table 1

Index Descriptions

Index	Description
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FEEL_INDEX	The “Feel Index” is composed of six parent variables related to the effect of the coronavirus on the respondents’ state of mind. All of the variables are “negative” impacts on state of mind on a 5-step scale of frequency of experience from never to almost constantly. A higher value indicates higher frequencies of feelings of loneliness.
PAND_INDEX	The “Pandemic Index” measures how respondents were limited from in-person social interactions with groups of people or at certain locations because of the COVID-19 pandemic. A higher value indicates more restrictions to in-person interactions.
WATCHFEEL_INDEX	The “Watching Feelings Index” evaluates to what extent people engaged in mass media for emotional and/or social connections. Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with phrases such as “I watch media with friends and family using extensions like Netflix Party.”
LIVEPRE_INDEX	The “Live and Pre-Recorded TV Index” is a measurement of the frequency the respondent watches live and pre-recorded TV since the onset of the pandemic.
WATCHTYPE_INDEX	The “Watch Type Index” measures the change in frequency that the respondent watches movies, episodic shows, YouTube channels, comedies, and dramas since the pandemic. It is measured using a five step Likert scale ranging from “a lot less often” to “a lot more often.”
STRSschjob_INDEX	The “Stress: School and Work Index” examines how much work and school related stress the respondent feels.
SM_INTERACT	The “Social Media Interactions Index” measures the frequency in which the respondent interacts with their parents, siblings, friends, acquaintances, and coworkers on social media platforms.

The WATCHFEEL_INDEX above is the variable that corresponds to “Mass Media as a Social Actant” in the initial path diagram. All the variables relevant to this study were run through linear regressions to test for increases in whether they had a direct, indirect, or no relationship to the dependent variable. Once these variables were identified, the variables went through a series of nested regressions to decipher which variables interacted with one another and in which direction the influence occurred. Based on the adjusted r-squared values and levels of significance, four direct variables were identified, and six indirect variables. These are visible in the Revised Path Diagram (see Figure 2 in “Discussion and Findings”).

In addressing the research question within the framework of Actor Network Theory, this study’s methods for data collection and analysis are limited. The linear and nested regressions run through SPSS indicates the direction that independent and intervening variables influenced the dependent variable, but it does not measure how the dependent variable responds. Understanding the network and the transference of meaning in multiple directions is one element of Actor Network Theory; this study does, however, illustrate several of the channels of an isolation and media network on which future studies could elaborate.

Discussion of Findings

Statistical Findings

Based on the data collected and analyzed, there is limited truth to the hypothesis statement that mass media's role as an emotional management actant increases as people's loneliness related to the pandemic increases. Feelings of loneliness are in fact related to the use of mass media as an emotional management actant, but the relationship is not linear as the original hypothesis implies. Additionally, feelings of loneliness is not the only independent variable that has a direct relationship with mass media as an emotional actant. In addition to feelings of loneliness, the variety of mass media consumed, being straight, and social media interactions have a direct relationship to mass media as a social actant. Table 2 demonstrates the independent variables which have direct relationships to the dependent variable and their respective levels of significance and beta coefficients.

Table 2

Variable Relationships

Direct Relationships	Significance	Beta Coefficient	Total Effect
SM_INTERACT***	0.000	0.294	0.2999
WATCHTYPE_INDEX***	0.000	0.365	0.806
FEEL_INDEX**	0.002	0.226	0.455
SX_STR8**	0.005	0.204	0.204
Indirect Relationships			
RAC_BL		0.2999	
LIVEPRE_INDEX		0.512	
INCOME		—0.229	
KIDS		0.335	
PAND_INDEX		0.201	
STRSschjob_INDEX		0.293	

Perhaps surprisingly, the index that measures feelings of loneliness, FEEL_INDEX, is not the leading variable influencing mass media's role as an emotional management actant. Rather, the indices that measure social media interactions (SM_INTERACT) and the variety of mass media consumed—including movies, episodic TV shows, YouTube channels, comedic shows, and dramatic shows— (WATCHTYPE_INDEX) yield a greater influence on the dependent variable. Also shown in Table 1 are the six variables that have an indirect relationship to mass media's role as an emotional management actant. In the model, race only played one significant role: being Black yielded an increase in social media interactions (beta: 0.2999) between parents, siblings, friends, acquaintances, and coworkers. Compared to the original path diagram, which hypothesized socioeconomic background would have a relationship with feelings of loneliness, the path diagram below, Figure 2, illustrates the socioeconomic elements of income and race playing different roles in the statistical model. Instead of socioeconomic background, income (beta: -0.229) impacted feelings of loneliness and race impacted social media interactions. Also influencing the index of frequency of social media interactions are the number of kids (beta: 0.335) living with the respondent, stress related to school and work (beta: 0.293), and the degree of isolation imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic (beta: 0.201) Of these, the number of kids living with the respondent yields the greatest influence on the frequency of social media interactions. Note that there is a negative relationship between these two variables which

aligns with my original hypothesis and path diagram. I hypothesized that the more housemates a respondent has, the more often the respondent will experience feelings of loneliness.

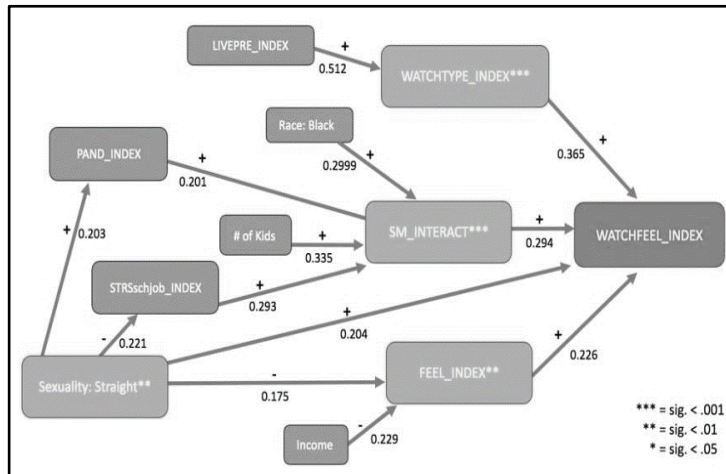


Figure 2. Revised Path Diagram

Revised Path Diagram

Pictured above is the Revised Path Diagram to illustrate this study's findings. In the rectangle on the far right is the dependent variable, which is the measurement of mass media as an emotional management, or social actant. The four rectangles represent the study's four variables with direct relationships to the WATCHFEEL_INDEX; the number of asterisks communicates its level of significance (see bottom right of figure for key). The rectangles correspond to variables that have an indirect relationship to the dependent variable. Notated on each arrow is the beta coefficient for the relationship and an indication whether it is positive or negative. Considering the Actor Network Theory this study is framed in, the path diagram is one lens through which to visualize the network of technology, isolation, and COVID-19 that the research conveys. There are three main avenues of influence that affect the inanimate social actant, WATCHFEEL_INDEX, that pass through three of the direct relationship variables: WATCHTYPE_INDEX, SM_INTERACT, and FEEL_INDEX.

Avenue 1: WATCHTYPE_INDEX

The first avenue to consider is how the types of mass media consumed affect people's emotional engagement with those media. Of the three avenues, this one is the most straightforward with few intervening variables. The only variable that had a significant relationship to the WATCHTYPE_INDEX is LIVEPRE_INDEX. Both indices came from the same Likert scale set. LIVEPRE_INDEX is composed of watching live TV and watching pre-recorded TV. WATCHTYPE_INDEX includes watching movies, episodic TV shows, YouTube channels, comedic shows, and dramatic shows. Although watching the news was also a variable in this Likert scale set, it did not align with either index. Since all the components of the WATCHTYPE_INDEX could be fictional or entertainment-based media, it is not surprising that respondents were not considering watching the news in the same way. Since both of the indices in this avenue of influence are based on the increase in frequency in consumption, it is reasonable to consider that when people increased their consumption of TV, and variety of media, their use of mass media for emotional management and social connections increased. Not present in this network are the specific platforms of mass media such as Netflix, Hulu, Disney+, and Amazon Prime. Although the survey collected this data, the use of specific platforms did not prove relevant to mass media's role as an emotional management actant. From this, I infer that the platform is less relevant than the content of the media on that

platform (i.e. the specific shows or movies watched). What this avenue does not explain is whether increased consumption of media is caused by one of the two definitions of isolation: lack of meaningful relationships or lack of social connections (Parigi and Henson, 2014, p. 162). Since the relationships between variables are all directed towards the WATCHFEEL_INDEX, it is also unknown how mass media's role as an emotional management actant affects people's consumption of media. For example, does increased use of mass media train people to turn to media for emotional and/or social connections? Is this trend consequential or a learned behavior? Another piece of information that could be helpful in making this distinction is a ratio level of measurement of the increase in time per day spent on mass media during the height of the pandemic. For people who had high experiences of isolation due to government "Stay-at-Home" orders or personal precautions, their free time to spend on media may have increased. This avenue is one of two that has the greatest significance related to the dependent variable; the other is through SM_INTERACT.

Avenue 2: SM_INTERACT

This avenue has many intervening variables, so though it is less streamlined than the first avenue, it is more interesting too! Although social media interactions did not have a place in the original path diagram, the logic that people who are more isolated will engage in mass media emotionally more also applies to this avenue. The PAND_INDEX in the revised path diagram illustrates this point: the more isolated someone is from in-person interactions, the more frequent their social media interactions are. Interestingly, the number of kids people have living with them is also related to their engagement on social media, and its relationship has the highest beta coefficient: 0.335. Although there is no statistical relationship between the number of kids living at home and isolation caused by the pandemic, it is possible that parents have relied on social media more to connect with friends and family to protect their children from exposure to COVID-19. Another possibility is that parents are on social media more to connect with other parents and to find resources to support their kids' online or hybrid education, as necessitated by the pandemic. A third variable affecting the frequency of social media interactions is school and work-related stress. Similar to how the pandemic-imposed isolation increases the frequency of social media interactions, it is logical that the more stress people feel related to school and work, the more they would connect with people on social media. Every state, and even individual counties, responds to the COVID-19 pandemic differently, but many people have needed to work from home or attend classes online when the virus' prevalence in an area is high. In these instances, stress could increase at the same time people's interactions online with coworkers increase. As mentioned in "Statistical Findings," the race demographic also has a relationship to SM_INTERACT. Compared to people identifying as other races, the Black population is more likely to have frequent interactions on social media platforms. Based on the available data, explanations for this trend are merely conjecture. One hypothesis is that urban areas tend to have higher Black populations and tend to have stricter "Stay-at-Home" orders, increasing the prevalence for online communication. The statistical model from this study, however, does not prove any relationship between the Black population and the PAND_INDEX.

Avenue 3: FEEL_INDEX

The relationship between feelings of loneliness and mass media as an emotional management actant has a significance of 0.002 and two influencing variables. The first of these is the ratio level measurement of income, a negative relationship. It would be crude to say outright that people with higher levels of income experience feelings of loneliness less, as I predict there are intervening variables at play this network does not address. Among these could be access to supportive networks, ability to communicate online, and effects of the political climate. Sexuality is the second variable with which FEEL_INDEX has a relationship. This statistical model suggests that the straight population experiences feelings of loneliness less than lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, pansexual, and aromantic populations. There are no explanatory variables for this relationship in the model, but it is logical to consider the social stigma of being part of the

LGBTQ+ community in the United States, especially during the election season when people's sexuality is negatively targeted more than usual. Also related to social stigma is possible limitations experienced by the LGBTQ+ population to supportive networks and spaces during the pandemic, which would increase feelings of loneliness.

Sexuality's Multiple Avenues

The fourth direct relationship is between the WATCHFEEL_INDEX and the straight population. Sexuality plays four roles in the network. The first is its direct, positive relationship to the dependent variable, second and third are its negative relationships to FEEL_INDEX, and last is its positive relationship to PAND_INDEX. Considering the relationship between sexuality and school and work-related stress, it is not surprising that the straight population experiences less stress than the LGBTQ+ population. The straight population is the majority and "assumed" sexuality in the United States; people in the LGBTQ+ population are more likely to face harassment and discrimination in professional and educational settings. Perhaps the least apparent relationship is between sexuality and limitations to in-person interactions caused by the pandemic. The relationship begs the question, why did LGBTQ+ populations experience less limitations than the straight population? One possibility is that the LGBTQ+ population had more virtual social interactions prior to the pandemic, in which case "Stay-at-Home" orders would diminish the effect of limiting in-person interactions. Of all the variables in this network, sexuality is the most "fibrous," the preferred quality of networks in Latour's Actor Network Theory (1996, p. 369).

Non-Existent Avenues

There are three variables that did not interact in or establish avenues in this network: gender, average hours worked per week, and age. During the data analysis, gender appeared to be a productive avenue. In linear regressions, the trans women experience had a direct relationship to the WATCHFEEL_INDEX. Upon closer inspection, only five of the 144 respondents identified as trans women—too small of a sample to be significant in this study. Differences between cis men and cis women (the vast majority of respondents) did not have relationships to any of the variables in the network. While conducting the study, I predicted that the fewer hours people worked a week, the more media they would consume; however, there was no relationship between hours worked and media consumed. Due to this study's focus on new social media technologies and mass media platforms, I also expected there to be differences in people's experience with media as an emotional management actant based on their age. Although the set of data collected in this study did not reveal this relationship, a future study with a higher percentage of Gen-Z respondents may provide clearer insight.

Social Actants

Based on these statistical findings, there are three discernable social actants in the network. These are 1) the use of mass media platforms, 2) social media interactions, and 3) social isolation caused by the pandemic. The first two actants identified have significant direct relationships to the dependent variable, as their beta coefficients are 0.365 and 0.294 respectively. The third social actant is isolation related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although this variable does not have a direct relationship to mass media's role as emotional management, it does influence the feelings of loneliness, which in turn is directly related to the dependent variable. Furthermore, feelings of loneliness classify less as a social actant since they are inherently individual. The isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, however, is felt by communities and not just an individual, thus making it a better candidate for the discussion of social actants in the context of Actor Network Theory. Although the data does not prove my original hypothesis, it creates an interesting and useful picture of the relationships between social actants and individual experiences, namely, the variety of mass media consumed, social media, and isolation imposed by COVID-19.

Conclusion

Connections to Existing Literature

In the scope of a single quantitative survey, this study does not discern as many avenues of connectivity that should be analyzed through the lens of Actor Network Theory. Instead, the three main avenues, and the fibrous quality of sexuality, in this study are a foundation of a network that can be explored in further research. Mass media may be considered a “quasi-object” as defined by Latour because of its potential to be influenced by viewers, and also its ability to influence viewers. Since this study did not investigate people’s feelings or reactions towards mass media as an emotional management actant, it would be beneficial to conduct a qualitative interview study on the roles of specific media platforms, such as Netflix, to corroborate this theory. Existing literature on media technologies and isolation is marked by a central debate as to whether technology is forcing people to be “alone together”— as Turkle suggests, or “together alone” as suggested by Deuze. The SM_INTERACT’s place in this study offers a contrasting picture to Turkle’s theory that people’s fears of loneliness and separation have increased from their incessant connection to the internet; under the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, people’s social media interactions proved vital to remaining sociable while distant, and encouraged emotional connections to mass media (Kita, 2011, p. 961). In the framework of Actor-Network Theory, this insinuates that how people use mass or social media can change how that actant responds to the human component in the network. Overall, this study’s focus on the increased role of mass media as a social actant aligns itself with the more hopeful outlook that media technologies can help people be “together alone.”

Further Research

Just as scientists are continuing to learn about COVID-19 from a medical perspective, the roles of media and isolation abound in directions of future research. Since the data collected on isolation is related to people’s limitations to in-person interactions, it would be interesting to analyze isolation’s role more closely to the definition of lacking meaningful relationships. At the time this study was conducted, it may have been too early to understand the complexities of tools such as Netflix Watch Party and Group Watch for Amazon Prime and Disney+; future research could further explore these vehicles for social interaction within media. Additionally, a study considering a wider breadth of media could be fruitful. Not included in this study are video games, podcasts, music, or platforms such as Zoom and Discord, which have all shared a spotlight during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lasting Thoughts

Though this study is not complete in fleshing out the network of isolation and media in the era of COVID-19, a quantitative application of Actor Network Theory on the subject justifies future qualitative studies to investigate how people remain social when their safety requires them to stay socially distant.

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The Use of Hormone Treatment in Gender Reassignment

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Braun Award for Excellence in Writing
in the College of Health and Human Services, Category 1
Nominated by Roslyn McQueen, Adjunct Faculty in Biology



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While widespread media coverage of gender dysphoria and transgender individuals has only recently grown popular—approximately 1.4 million adults in the United States identify as transgender—the condition has been around for years. (The Williams Institute, 2020). Gender dysphoria is the feeling of discomfort or distress among people who identify as a gender that does not equate to their sex assigned at birth (Mayo Clinic, 2019). However, not all transgender or gender non-conforming individuals experience gender dysphoria. Gender dysphoria can begin during childhood, but one can also not feel the need to transition until adulthood. Those diagnosed with gender dysphoria can experience a strong desire to be treated as the opposite gender, significant distress, a strong desire for opposite sex characteristics, and a strong desire to remove sex characteristics of the sex assigned at birth (Mayo Clinic, 2019). While not all individuals experiencing gender dysphoria or discomfort may choose to partake in gender reassignment surgery, a percentage of individuals choose to partake in the procedure.

Gender reassignment surgery, or gender affirmation surgery, can be performed in a variety of ways. Surgical methods enable individuals to go from male-to-female, as well as female-to-male, and both top and bottom procedures for the surgery exist. The top procedure is a mastectomy, in which patients can remove their breasts or can undergo surgery to get breast implants. Some examples of bottom surgery include a hysterectomy, or removal of the uterus; a vaginectomy, or removal of the vagina; or even metoidioplasty or phalloplasty, which is the construction of a penis (Medical News Today, 2018). For a patient to undergo gender reassignment surgery, he or she must complete hormone treatment first to help ease the transition. The majority of patients choose not to undergo the surgical procedures, whether it is for financial reasons or personal choice. Instead, hormone treatment is the most popular transition for gender reassignment among patients.

Just like the reassignment surgery, hormone treatment works from male-to-female and female-to-male. When individuals decide to go through hormone treatment, they will be given a team with mental health professionals, prescribers for the hormones, and sometimes even a surgeon. Transgender men who undergo hormone treatment hope to gain secondary sex characteristics of males and remove secondary sex characteristics of females. The reverse goes for transgender women: they hope to gain secondary sex characteristics of females and remove secondary sex characteristics of males. Transgender men will go through injections of testosterone, and transgender women will receive injections of estrogen (Moravek, 2018). Patients must monitor testosterone and estrogen levels to guarantee that they are maintained in the

appropriate range, and multiple ways exist for the patient to administer the dose: intramuscular injection, subcutaneous injection, gels, or patches (Moravek, 2018). The gel and patches are made readily available for patients who cannot or choose not to administer the injections to themselves. Transgender women who hope to preserve erectile function can be given spironolactone (Deutsch, Bhakri, & Kubicek, 2015).

Whether the patient is a transgender woman or man, the patient must monitor the effects of hormone treatment. Many side effects and risks to hormone therapy are possible, which is why it is important for patients to work with a team of medical providers. With testosterone therapy, patients should watch out for erythrocytosis, an increase of red blood cells with increase in hematocrit because of the effect that testosterone has on the formation of erythrocytes (Moravek, 2018). Hormone therapy can also lead to liver problems or increased problems with mental health disorders. Testosterone treatment can, for example, cause an increase in liver enzymes, but there is no need to worry about hepatotoxicity. Usually, those who undergo hormone therapy can see an increase in mental health function due to comfort in one's body, but these individuals should be aware that testosterone therapy can risk destabilization of severe psychiatric disorders (Moravek, 2018). Less concerning side effects from hormone therapy consist of mild or severe = acne, balding, and clitoral pain.

In addition to side effects and risks, hormone therapy also has effects on physical health. A study by Deutsch, Bhakri, and Kubicek (2015) was conducted to determine the effects of hormone treatment on weight, body mass index (BMI), blood pressure, lipids, and hormone levels of adults. The researchers had both male and female transgender participants, and they measured median blood pressures and lipid values at both baseline and after six months. The results showed that estrogen therapy is associated with a decrease in blood pressure and testosterone is associated with an increase in BMI. With the blood pressure, the median value dropped roughly 10 mmHg over a span of six months. BMI in the transgender males increased by roughly 0.9 kg/m² over six months. Overall, the study showed normal range blood pressures and BMIs, despite showing significant variations within the normal range. The research did not find any other changes to be significant enough to associate with hormone therapy. Gender dysphoria can also lead to difficulty in adolescent development. Kaltiala, Heino, Työläjärvä, and Suomalainen (2019) wrote about a review that "suggested that adolescent gender dysphoria is associated with both negative and positive features in parent and peer relationships." As such, adolescents with gender dysphoria should be monitored for proper societal functioning. Adolescents commonly struggle personally while growing up, and gender dysphoria makes development more difficult. However, due to increasing availability of cross-sex hormone treatment, development becomes easier and enables these individuals to feel comfortable. (Studies have been completed to show how hormone treatment is not limited to adults.)

Kaltiala et al. (2019) also conducted a study to assess how cross-sex hormones affect adolescent development. The researchers specifically assessed psychosocial functioning, as well as the need for psychiatric treatment. Participants were adolescents who wanted to undergo gender reassignment. They were all diagnosed as being transsexual, and they all underwent hormone treatment to become more comfortable in their bodies. As a means of monitoring the adolescents' development, the researchers focused on living arrangements, peer relationships, school and work participation, romantic relationships, the participants' management of everyday matters, and the need for psychiatric treatment. The results showed that the participants who did well with psychiatric needs and overall functioning prior to the hormone treatment continued to function well. At the end of the study, a majority of the participants had moved out to live independently, rather than with parents or guardians. The researchers found that while hormone treatment may assist with depression and anxiety, it is not guaranteed to have a positive impact on psychiatric needs. Instead, adolescents should continue to seek psychiatric help whether undergoing hormone therapy or not.

In addition to the study by Kaltiala et al., another study was conducted to see the effect of hormone treatment on cognitive function in young adults. (It is important to see the effects on cognitive function, as it is important for young adults to develop properly.) If hormone treatment has an effect on the growth and development the researchers posited, then young adults should wait until they are done developing before they begin hormone treatment. The researchers examined a total of ten studies to determine the effects of hormone treatment. The studies represented over 300 young adults and provided a basis for cognitive

function. By analyzing the previously conducted studies, the researchers were able to determine a potential positive effect that hormone treatment has on cognitive function. While the researchers found an effect, there is no significant impact that hormone treatment has on cognitive development in young adults (Karalexi et al., 2020). If younger adults are transgender and want to undergo hormone treatment, these studies have proven that it is safe for them to go through with the process. They just need to be aware of all of the precautions that need to be taken, as well as the need for a team of medical providers.

Despite all of the studies being conducted for the side effects, researchers need to continue to test the overall safety and efficacy of hormone treatment. Meyer et al. (2020) conducted a study to do just that for individuals diagnosed with gender dysphoria by measuring liver levels and blood lipids. To test the efficacy, the researchers measured testosterone and estradiol levels. They found that the biggest side effect from the treatment was acne, which is an effect that is very simple to take care of and clear up. By completing this study and monitoring the participants during their treatment, the researchers were able to determine that “gender-affirming hormone therapy in accordance with current clinical practice guidelines is efficient and safe” (Meyer et al., 2020). This study provides future patients and clinicians with information that they can trust regarding safety and efficacy, especially with the growing popularity of hormone treatment and gender reassignment.

Hormone treatment is a critical part of gender reassignment, despite its costly challenges and time commitment. Due to its growing popularity, many researchers have conducted studies to ensure the safety and efficacy, as well as any and all possible side effects. They have proved that hormone treatment is a safe process for patients to go through. For individuals to go through the gender reassignment process, they should be treated with hormones before completing the surgical change. This treatment enables patients to have an ease of mind and a feeling of comfortability in their own body.

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Undergraduate Workplace Portfolio

Elizabeth Kennedy

Diane Boehm e-Portfolio Award

Elizabeth Kennedy is a graduating senior from Maybee, MI who received her BA in Professional & Technical Writing with a double minor in English and Sociology. During her time at SVSU, Elizabeth worked as a peer tutor in the SVSU Writing Center for three years and served as the Coordinator for the SVSU Community Writing Center. In addition, Elizabeth was part of the 22nd class of Robert's Fellows, worked as a technical writer for Cardinal Solutions on campus, and served on executive boards for both the Honors Program and the Association of Professional and Technical Writers.

As an aspiring grant writer in the non-profit sector, Elizabeth created this e-portfolio to showcase her academic achievements and professional writing experiences to prospective employers. Elizabeth specifically highlighted her community involvements as a way to express her passion for using writing as a means of social advocacy, and balanced personal narrative with sample documents she created.

Her portfolio can be accessed at <https://elizabethrkennedy.weebly.com>

Undergraduate Classroom Portfolio

Emily Schuette

Diane Boehm e-Portfolio Award



Emily Schuette comes from Linwood, Michigan with a major in graphic design and a minor in marketing. She always believed those two areas of study always went well together as she explains, “An artist needs to be able to sell their creative works just as much as they need to be able to create the piece itself.” Emily was a Senior upon submitting her e-portfolio but is now one of the Winter 2021 graduates.

The purpose of this portfolio is to showcase Emily’s projects and graphical talents to potential employers, as it was the main goal of her Art 450 Portfolio class. She explains that her biggest challenge with this piece, given its size, was that she needed to take out some decorative graphics and paragraphs in order to allow some white space to show. In that sense, her actual designs would be showcased with less clutter. She further explains that deciding to take out any embellishments and extra wording was a difficult choice, but ultimately improved the overall design in this case. In terms of the writing itself, she wanted her statements to be bold; something a viewer would be interested in reading as opposed to simple descriptions of her projects. By adding personal opinions and general suggestions for success, Emily made this portfolio stand out against many others in the same setting.

One project in this portfolio stood out in particular, as it lasted an entire term and was then brought up to SVSU’s Office of Student Life. This project, found in the beginning of the portfolio, is called WeServe – an interactive volunteer app specifically for SVSU students and local nonprofits. Within this app, students would have ease of access when it comes to finding local volunteer opportunities, be it for credits or simply for the goodwill of the community. In this class, Emily’s app design stood out in terms of its searchability function and color usage. After multiple usability research sessions, the final app design was created as an online mockup.

In the near future, Emily would like to work as an in-house graphic designer as part of the marketing team of a local company. She has been involved in multiple nonprofit organizations’ campaigns as part of her previous summer internships, and so she would like to continue that kind of in-house work if possible.

Her portfolio can be accessed at: <https://emilyschuettegraphics.weebly.com/>

An Excerpt from *Sad Dracula: A Handful of Poems*

Jordan Williamson

Winner of the Tyner Award for Poetry
Nominated by Arra Ross, Professor of English



Originally from Toledo, Ohio, Jordan Williamson is a creative writing major and professional and technical writing minor who likes to write short fiction and poetry that uses absurd humor, surreal imagery, and raw emotion. He started at Saginaw Valley State University in 2016 and has spent his time here studying literature and writing, growing fond of the flash fiction genre. Jordan graduated in May 2021 and has plans to get a master of fine arts in Creative Writing.

Sad Dracula: A Handful of Poems was originally created in Advanced Poetry Techniques (ENGL 490), where students had to create a chapbook based on poems written in that class.

Sad Dracula

Sometimes I feel the tips of my teeth
prick the surface of my
swollen tongue.

Cocooned in bed sheets,
I grind my teeth
to my tv screen brain.

It replays old episodes
of fast-food meals
and one-syllable conversations.

The laugh track reverberates
into the black of my ceiling,
lifting.

I taste the blood of my tongue
and the show is cancelled
again, and again.

Complex

Apartments in the city are
more romantic
than castles in the forest,
towers upon mountains,

caves under earth.

Cells within the brain of
a city: multiplying.
Encounters of the flesh,
sculptures of the universe,
microscopic utopias.

The halls simmer with the
dullness of a wet sun
that reveals each crease and crow
in each beautiful drawn smile.

On the other side of the deadbolt,
are there any sunsets or singing birds
or dogs howling at yellow moons?
Do the windows even open?

Tell Time

I wish time was tangible
so I could capture it in a jar,
seal the lid tightly,
and bury it.

I would lay on the biggest blanket,
soak in its softness,
and spend a year watching the
heavens.

The clouds could take shape
of two horses, not racing,
but sauntering
in perfect pace.

Then the stars dilate,
amongst blacks and blues.
I'll lose my mind in a good way
and the celestial swirls will close my eyes.

I should watch the sun rise
and bask in its wisdom.
So when time unburies itself,
I might keep up.

Glad Dracula

Maybe fangs are just an avenue
for tearing through nonsense:
thick, viscous nothings

I cough up when deep anxiety
presses against my neck.

Maybe blood is just the life force
that drives me to love and to live
and to nosedive into pearly lakes at the
feet of mountains

Maybe flowing capes with high collars
are an invitation for the loves
of our lives to catch up
and tug at our impatience,
our inability to see past peripherals.

Maybe the holding of each other
in our arms is an eternal signal:
a buoy bobbing in unravelling space
in which the gatekeepers of time smile and nod.

Maybe this madness is a Cthulhu migraine
created by prism sugar and
endless self-deprecating poetry sung by
Shakespearian chorus imps.

Maybe I should open a window,
consider the sun cracking in two,
its yolk dripping into the ocean.

A Love Poem

(For those happy, sad, sexy, lonely, funny, human)

I wish you looked at me
the way my dog looks out the window
of a moving car like
how can this universe exist
outside of my understanding
it doesn't matter

I love it anyway
but

I get it life is a burlap sack of cogs
and they don't just start turning
together willy nilly
you gotta fit them into place
and once the mechanism spins
energy can be created
and we all know energy is the source of action
and that is what progresses humanity beyond
what simply is existence for we thrive on community and companionship
and denial and fear
oh the everlasting war between happiness desire
and the excruciating reality

that loneliness is a possible outcome of our human identity
and sadness is most of the time a real bummer
 but
luckily my dog is looking out of the car window
contemplating
 the enormity of our love

Are Dolphins God?

Roads are built by us,
to guide us to made-up places
in leather-bound tomes or splintered hammers.

(built by leather-bound men and splintered grandmas)

Roads are destroyed by us.
My friction erases the places I've been
I can't go back, I can't remember.

(Aged brains, slowly melting with the ice-cream Sphinx)

Roads are safe enough,
but to veer between pines and follow the
Michigan rivers:

(wet roads, where frogs direct traffic and mushrooms drink)

We threw our hammers
into the great splish, the turquoise beyond.
Lungs, grant me a blowhole.

(strap me to a turtle and watch me swish)

This road is good enough.
 I'll travel
 till I find another hammer.
 I take turns,
 I run lights,

And I'll find another hammer
that writes prose and verse on turtle shells,
 on leathery men,
 on grandmas' bosom,
 on pine trees,
 on brain folds,
 on froggy tongue,
 in the hymnal of Dolphin.

Straight to My Core

Todd James Graham

Tyner Award for Fiction

Nominated by C. Vincent Samarco, Professor of English



Todd James Graham is a non-traditional student, who has returned to college after taking a few decades off. He is a double major in psychology and creative writing, who transferred to Saginaw Valley State University in 2020 after graduating from Alpena Community College with associate degrees in liberal arts and applied science. An activist and member of the LGBTQIA+ community, he enjoys writing queer fiction, science fiction, fantasy, children's literature, and poetry. His educational and career goals include working with abused children and the LGBTQIA+ community as a licensed sexual therapist while also pursuing publication. He hopes to increase resources for the LGBTQIA+ community in rural areas by working in the Alpena, Michigan, area, where he resides with his fiancé, Steven.

The following story was written for Creative Writing Fiction (ENGL 306) in Winter 2021.

He walked into the cold, drab-gray jail cell wearing the standard issue bright orange jumpsuit, signifying a county inmate. Dozens of others in the cell were dressed accordingly, yet his jumpsuit hung differently. The outline of a bulldog in human form, that animal species that screams, "Don't get too close, I bite!," was visible underneath. The fluorescent lights bounced off his scalp on each side of his Mohawk. The atmosphere changed when he entered the 64-bunk cell carrying his clear plastic tote of personal belongings, a county-issued shower towel, and a blue bed mat. The bell ring created when he slammed these items on top of one of the metal picnic-style tables that littered the cell announced his arrival.

The drum of voices went quiet, allowing the echo of the television to fill the air. He scrutinized the room looking for an open bunk. The bunks were double-stacked and placed in rows along the cell walls with two additional rows down the center. Steel frames once white but now tan from age and neglect. Those of us who already had a bunkie were breathing silent sighs of relief, knowing this new addition to our community wouldn't be bedding above or below us. Those who didn't have a bunkie expressed looks of concern, caution, and fear. Everyone's head followed his hulking footsteps as he carried his things over to an unoccupied bunk and settled in. Slowly the voices returned to a level that again drowned out the television.

The next day a small group of acquaintances and I were playing a friendly game of Uno at one of the metal picnic tables. Each table had six attached steel seats. There were five of us playing. Suddenly, the entire table shook as if a fault-line under it had given way.

"I'm Josh Mutha Fuckin' Freese, man. Can I play?"

"Hi Josh, I'm Troy," I forced myself to say as I extended my hand. The speed at which Josh responded with a fist bump barely gave me enough time to alter my offering to match his. Everyone else at the table sat as still and silent as stonegrave markers.

As I dealt the cards, I engaged Josh in idle conversation. How old are you? Are you a local? Is this your first time in jail? Those types of questions. It was considered rude to ask another what they were in for, though everyone found out in time. Josh openly shared, and I responded in kind to his similar questions. There was something unique staring at me from behind those large, chocolate-colored eyes of his. I've always been pretty good at reading people, and this read was an unusual mix of longing and regret blended with hope and energy. The more we shared at the Uno table, the less Josh and I interacted with the others seated there. Though he was several decades younger, Josh's soul projected old scars.

As the months passed, Josh and I continued the friendship that began that night at the Uno table. I admired his tight, muscular physique—especially his massive forearms. Some in the cell made comments his arms looked like Popeye's. Others teased that they grew so large due to his jacking off. Josh worked on an oil rig and explained that his forearms received the most attention when changing pipe lengths. He missed being physically active, and I wanted to spend some of my stay improving myself physically, so we invented ways to exercise. We would work out together using make-shift weights created out of sheets tied and filled with various old paperback books. We collected empty shampoo bottles, filled them with water, and placed them inside totes. Tying our county-issued laundry bags around the tote gave us a handle to create an awkward but effective dumbbell. Josh always encouraged me to push myself and keep up with his pace. I would remind him I'm more than twice his age, to which he would respond, "I'll always have your back, man!" He would take his bright orange jumpsuit and lower the top half, tying it around his waist. On his chest was a tattoo of a heart. Not your typical outline in the shape of a heart we all see on St. Valentine's Day, but a colored picture of an actual human heart frozen in ice. Josh shared that it represents the many times his heart had been wounded throughout his 23 years, making it feel as though it no longer wanted to beat.

I was able to get a position as a trustee. I was allowed out of the cell for a few hours each day to scrub floors in the halls, laundry room, and kitchen. The pay was a twenty-dollar phone card each week. I didn't have anyone to call, so I would trade the card to other inmates who received outside support to purchase snacks and other jail store supplies. I traded for paper, pencils, a plastic bowl and spork, and Ramen noodles. I'd never eaten Ramen before my arrest and found them sickening; however, they were the least expensive supplemental food item. Many prisoners would have large cook-ups each evening using store supplies to create a menu of inmate specialties; Ramen casserole, Honeybun cakes, and Pop-Tart sandwiches were always popular. In the process, they would dirty several plastic bowls. I encouraged Josh to ask around and see if he could do dishes and receive payment in the form of food. Now he had a job too.

Each day after lunch had been served and the empty trays were taken out of the cell, an officer would enter and do a mail call. Standing at a podium located in one corner of the cell that was constructed of the same material as the picnic tables, the officer would slowly call out the names of inmates who had mail. Most cell members would rush to gather in front of the podium to listen for their name. Josh was always part of the gathering; though he never returned with an envelope, he remained optimistic that someday his name would be announced. I would agree with him, not wanting to see his hope dwindle as mine had months earlier.

I've always been an early riser. In here, I enjoyed the silence while the rest slept. Josh's bunk was at the end of one of the center rows. I would sit at the table nearest his bunk and work on journaling, writing poetry, and drafting ideas for a series of children's books. Doing this was more of an exercise in the occupation of time than a hope of anything growing to publication after my release. Josh stirred, and I looked his way, meeting him eye to eye. Like a dog whose owner has returned home, he sprang out of his bunk and took the seat across from me.

"Whatcha doin'?"

"I'm writing a poem."

"I write poems, too! Can I have some paper?!"

Josh would slide over his work for review and take mine even when incomplete. Quiet smiles filled the moments as we read what each other had penned. The two of us sitting silently across from one another was my favorite part of each day.

We shared deeply. Daily, we walked seemingly endless laps around the cell and shared our most severe wounds. We learned there was much common ground in our past: abuse and neglect in childhood, rebellion and angst in adolescence, and disappointment and heartache in adulthood. Josh, being his bold outspoken self, asked why I was there. I froze. My feet didn't want to continue along the imaginary path we were following around the cell. I no longer saw Josh standing with me. I saw my daughter standing in the back of the courtroom as I was escorted to the holding area through the door next to the judge's bench. Her face damp with smudged makeup and swollen red to match her shoulder-length hair.

“It’s okay, Troy. I’m still cool wit you if you don’t wanna share. When you’re ready, I’m here, and we can both share.”

Josh regretted not having graduated high school. I began to tutor him using materials provided by the GED program offered through the jail system. In the beginning, Josh would become easily frustrated and wanted to give up.

After a few days of tutoring, he exclaimed, “I’m a dumb mutha fucka. Been told so all my life. This proves it!”

Josh most certainly was not dumb. With tears forming in my eyes to match the tears present in his, I explained he was uneducated, not dumb. Working together, we could change this.

With those vast, chocolate eyes piercing me, he said, “Thanks, Dad.”

Dad. The word bounced through my brain like a headache without a point of origin. It had been so long since hearing that word. Through my actions, I lost a daughter. Because of those same actions, I gained a son. I needed to share my story with my son. I told Josh I needed to speak with him privately when more of our cellmates were awake, so the hum of their voices would help cover our conversation. Blinking away tears and using my orange jumpsuit’s sleeve to dry the table, I went back to the GED study guide.

We began our evening as all others by walking laps around the cell. Josh made an off-the-wall wisecrack about never knowing how many miles he puts on his feet each night.

“You can figure it out if you want,” I said.

“How?!”

“Well, each tile on the floor is one-foot square, and there are 5,280 feet in a mile. So, on this next lap, count how many squares we walk over.”

Laser-focused on his task, he quickened pace. Josh counted 228 tiles on our path. We stopped at my bunk and took a seat to show Josh how to figure the math. Having another inmate sit on your bunk was not a common practice, but Josh was welcome in my home. Together, we calculated taking 23 laps equaled a mile.

Privacy is a luxury not found in jail. Even the showers are communal. After the calculation, we huddled close, sitting on the floor in a back corner of the cell below the security camera so the guards couldn’t see. Josh fumbled his fingers through his hair, playing with the longer mane down the center, a remnant from his Mohawk. I felt my words stumble over my tongue.

After what seemed like hours of attempting to utter the words to gain enough strength and courage, Josh said them for me: “I know you’re gay. And it doesn’t matter to me, Dad.”

The release of tears cleansed all the fear and doubt, anger and despair, regret and sorrow. For the first time in my life, I felt free. Through heavy breaths, I shared I was arrested for embezzlement. I’d stolen funds from my employer to cover my tracks and live a double life. The extra money allowed me to pay for hotel rooms and male prostitutes while keeping being gay a secret from my family. The family I no longer have.

Josh slid along the wall until his shoulder was touching mine. His voice was deep-throated and raspy.

“Dad, I hurt him. I hurt him real bad. He went to the hospital, and I still don’t know if he’s okay.”

I placed my arm around his neck as his body melted into mine. After a long day on the oil rig, Josh had been drinking, celebrating St. Patrick’s Day with co-workers, when his father stopped by unannounced. An argument ensued, over what Josh could not recall, but it led to his father taking a swing at him.

“When he hit me, all I could see was the times he hurt me when I was small, and I just started swinging back.”

I assured Josh his father was okay, knowing that if not, Josh would have had to return to court as his charges would have been upgraded. I may have been physically holding Josh, but it was my heart that was held that night.

One day, while I was out of the cell working, an inmate read my journal. In jail, there are two things despised: child molesters and homosexuals. Josh immediately went on the defensive on my behalf, ready to take on anyone who may want to cause me harm. If you get into a fight in jail, there is no innocent party. Both are guilty in the eyes of the regulations, and both pay the price. Josh was not only risking himself

physically but risking his opportunity for freedom. His time was almost served. An altercation would undoubtedly change his release date. "I'm not showering with a faggot!" and "I bet that sissy was checking me out at the urinal!" echoed throughout the cell. Josh took the steel stool and then the tabletop in two manly strides.

Pounding his right foot on the table to silence the crowd, Josh announced, "From now on, I am Troy's designated shower buddy, and if any of you mutha fuckas have a problem with that, come and try to take my ass!"

Fortunately, diplomacy defused the situation as I agreed to avoid being near certain individuals. As he had promised, Josh had my back.

Holidays are the most challenging times on the inside. Especially Christmas. As the usually joyous day neared, the mood of the cell shifted. The crowd gathering daily for mail call became somber. The hum of voices in the evenings grew dim. More cellmates joined the imaginary walking path instead of sitting at tables playing cards and board games. Many of them on a solo trek, head down, arms crossed as if hugging themselves.

"Everyone seems so gloomy, man."

Even Josh's energy was less exuberant. It was his first time being isolated during the Christmas season.

"After missing four Christmases, I guess I've become numb to what's outside these walls."

"But Dad, I don't want to become numb."

"And you shouldn't. Your release date is just around the corner."

When December 25th arrived, I surprised Josh by sharing a cake with him. I received a couple of chocolate frosted Honeybuns, two strawberry Pop-tarts, and a sleeve of Oreo cookies with my last phone card trade. I gently merged the Honeybuns side by side in a bowl, crumbled up the Pop-tarts, sprinkled them on top, and then lined the cookies around the edge.

"Dad! No way! You could have got a lot of paper and shit to write with for what this cost ya."

The ensuing bro hug was more "thank you" than I'd anticipated.

Time moved much slower after Josh's release. During mail call each day, I joined my cellmates in the huddle near the podium. I longed for news that Josh was doing okay. Did the oilrig take him back? Did he find a supportive AA group, as the court had ordered? Life gets in the way outside prison walls. I'm sure he's busy rebuilding what was lost. Inside a cold, drab-gray jail cell, the love of a young man with a frozen-heart tattoo thawed my heart. His acceptance of me as I am and refusal to pass judgment upon me set me free. Josh Freese saw straight to the core of me and showed me it is good. I didn't need a letter to remind me of this. Every day I experience something that brings his face to the forefront of my thoughts. I see his eyes, seated below his dominant forehead topped with a Mohawk as if he were the chief of a tribe, reminding me he loves me. The real me. The true me.

"Troy." I vaguely heard the call while seated at the table where Josh and I used to write together.

"Troy." The name echoing inside me was unrecognized.

"Troy!" One of my Uno buddies passing by jolted me from the writing project before me. "The CO's been calling your name, dude. You've got mail, man!"

"It's probably just some more court paperwork," I told myself to keep from running to the podium like a track star.

Opening the letter, the first thing I noticed was it had been addressed to "Grandpa." Josh was going to be a dad. I was going to be a grandfather.

The first time I heard my grandson call me grandpa, my past was cleansed, completing the metamorphosis Josh helped begin.

Sylvia Plath's "Thalidomide" and Twentieth-Century Attitudes towards Disability

Gabrielle Krieger

Winner of the Tyner Award for Nonfiction
Nominated by Dr. Daniel Cook, Professor of English



Gabrielle Krieger is in the third year of her double major in literature and sociology. Unsurprisingly, much of Krieger's work pertaining to literature, when appropriate, also employs sociological themes and knowledge, as can be seen in the following analysis of Sylvia Plath's "Thalidomide," which was written in Fall 2020 for Writing Interpretive Papers (ENGL 301).

While not working on her degrees, Krieger enjoys the conversations and coffee that her part-time job at Live Oak Coffeehouse provides her. As a Bay City, Michigan, resident, she enjoys the roller-skating, yoga, and vegetarian food that the city has to offer and spends the rest of her free time at home with her partner and two cats. After she graduates, Krieger hopes to use one or both of her degrees to help others and, potentially, to earn a master's degree in a field that speaks to her.

"Thalidomide" (1962) by Sylvia Plath is one of her more brutal works, and not just in the sense that some of her other confessional poems are, which are often described as shocking, extra-personal, grotesque, and obscene. Although this poem is also these things, it is foremost a cruelly honest reflection of the cultural attitudes towards disabled people in the mid-twentieth century. Rhonda Neuhaus, Cindy Smith, and Molly Burgdorf report that the cultural attitudes towards disabled people in this time period were a combination of "magic, religion, medicine, and science," the latter three of which were in dire need of a more humanistic approach to disability (46).

Thalidomide—the inspiration of this poem—is a medication that was given to pregnant women to prevent morning sickness in the 1950s, but because of a lack of foresight by both the American and European pharmaceutical industries, this medication also caused severe physical and developmental birth defects. "Thalidomide" is the tale of a pregnant woman who is struggling to find love for her "Thalidomide baby," as these children were often labelled, and who is disheartened by her baby's condition, for she, like many women, always imagined a readily loveable, perfect baby. The speaker's fear and disgust are a result of the incredibly ableist medical and political discourses leading up to the 1950s and 1960s, which inevitably influenced the accepted cultural attitude that dehumanized people with disabilities. In this essay, I will be exploring these discourses in relation to the specific language the speaker uses to describe her soon-to-be child.

First though, I would like to give some context to this poem, as there is quite a long history that contributed to the general beliefs about disabled people during this time period. Historically, the earliest approach to disability that is relevant to revisit is the concept of eugenics, which was a popular political ideal during much of the early twentieth century. Eugenics, as described here, was supported by policy and medical advice, and defined

mental and physical impairments as the reasons for social problems such as poverty and crime. The remedy to these social problems, therefore, lay in such public policies as compulsory sterilization, restricted immigration, restricted marriage, and institutionalization, with the goal of keeping the less-desirable genes from being passed onto the next generation. (Neuhaus, Smith, and Burgdorf 47–48)

Although as a political ideal it lost steam in the early 1920s, and certainly after the Holocaust, eugenics as a cultural influence easily survived throughout Plath's lifetime considering the limited understanding of disabled persons. A significant contribution to this misunderstanding is the complete lack of ethnographic research done among disabled persons between the 1930s and 1960s, which obviously, and severely, impeded the recognition of disabled persons as autonomous individuals deserving of respect (Mehrotra 1). Furthermore, despite "a rising interest in social inequalities in the 1950s with reference to race, caste and the women's question, disability remained invisible in mainstream discussions" (2). The absence of informed research as well as the absence of advocacy for disabled persons within the civil rights movement could account for Plath's utterly cruel depiction of disabled children in "Thalidomide," even though recurring feminist themes are seen in her other works like "Lady Lazarus" (1962)¹ and "The Applicant" (1962)², which were written in the same year as "Thalidomide." Even with progressive attitudes gaining popularity in this decade, discriminatory attitudes generally persist past the height of their currency, and with Plath growing up in the 1940s and 1950s, her viewpoint is regrettably understandable.

One abstract interpretation of "Thalidomide" that can also be extended to much of Plath's other work, and even much of confessional poetry, is Robin Peel's. Peel draws similarities between this poem and a World War II collage that Plath created on her wall, as both are "concerned less with narrative than with exposition" (84). He says that her collage's "composition parallels her poetry-making in this one respect: the final effect is the result of carefully arranged images [... assembled] and [shaped] to construct her own photographic essay" (84). This point of view is veritably reflected in "Thalidomide" as its violent language practically assaults the reader with images of "dark / Amputations" (Plath 5), "Faces that / Shove into being" (13–14), a "lopped / Blood-caul" (16), and "two wet eyes" (20), while the only discernible narrative is the presence of the speaker as a pregnant woman anticipating the birth of her child. Even this is ambiguous though, for the lack of narrative leaves room for the speaker to also be a woman simply imagining the emotional difficulties that bearing a child with these birth defects would bring her.

One of these difficulties is the fact that because of their status, disabled people were often seen as inferior to the able-bodied majority. Considering the controversial nature of this poem in and of itself, it comes as no surprise that it begins with a rather inhumane comparison between the speaker's baby and a "Negro, masked like a white" (Plath 3). This problematic comparison, accentuated by language like "half moon" (1) and "Half-brain, luminosity" (2), implies that disabled persons (as compared to able-bodied people), like African Americans (as compared to White people), are not fully developed, intelligent beings. "Half moon" (1) also draws on allusions to the moon being symbolic of fertility—and here the "moon" is only "half" full, further emphasizing "that the embryo that is developing in the mother's womb is 'incomplete' not only in the sense that it has not reached its fully formed state, but that its embodiment cannot meet the criteria of normative corporeality even after birth" (Kiss 19). This normative superiority of able-bodied people is a basis for much of the stigma and negative stereotypes surrounding disabled persons.

The theme of incompleteness, as coined by Kiss, is also an important facet to the cultural attitudes of the 1950s and 1960s, and contributed to the belief that, because of their incompleteness, people with physical or developmental disabilities were seen as not fully human and not welcomed into society. One law in Chicago that was not repealed until 1974 denied any person who was "diseased, maimed, mutilated, or in any way deformed" the right to "expose himself to public view" (Neuhaus, Smith, and Burgdorf 46). The speaker of "Thalidomide" echoes this prejudice by solely describing her baby by its physical attributes, emphasizing its "spidery" and "unsafe" nature, showing her disgust without shame (Plath 6). An example of this dehumanization surfaces in these lines:

The indelible buds,

¹ Reflected by Plath's renowned lines "I eat men like air" (84).

² Alternatively, feminist ideals here are represented through language that satirizes marriage between man and woman, and refers to the woman as an "it" (13) and described as a "poultice" (37) among other things.

Knuckles at the shoulder-blades, the
Faces that
shove into being. (11–14)

These lines (particularly “Knuckles at the shoulder-blades”) emphasize the common deformation caused by Thalidomide births that entails the absence of arms, leaving the hands emerging from the shoulders. Additionally, “the indelible buds” indicate underdevelopment by comparing arms to “buds” instead of fully formed branches (11). Physical deformities especially seemed to induce repulsion from onlookers, who, during this time period, had seen disabled persons “on display for others to look at with fascination and ridicule” oftentimes in “freak shows” throughout the mid-twentieth century (Neuhaus, Smith, and Burgdorf 46).

One way that mid-century Americans approached their disgust was through the mass institutionalization of disabled persons. These asylums, although many were erected by Christian organizations with good intentions, often harbored subhuman living conditions that were not focused on remission or treatment, but on detainment from the public and media (de Zaldo 5). I assert that the lack of disabled persons within the normative experience of society is the “glove” that “Has protected / [her] from that shadow,” with the shadow being the reality of having a disabled child (Plath 7–10). Using institutionalization to effectively banish disabled persons from the public view, de Zaldo says, is an infringement of disabled person’s human rights (5). Until the emergence of these “Thalidomide births,” the lack of visibility of disabled persons in society, schools, and media during this time period allows our speaker the disbelief that she may someday mother a disabled child.

This leads us to the reality that the speaker will indeed give birth to a disabled child, and at this point in the poem, she blatantly states that this child will be hard to love by nature because of its physical and developmental disabilities. It could also be argued that by this point, the speaker has already given birth; “the / Faces that // Shove into being” (Plath 12–14) imitate the baby entering the world, as it “[drags] / The lopped // Blood-caul” (14–16) with it. The caul birth mentioned here occurs when a baby is born with the amniotic sac still intact, and the speaker chooses to describe her child not as such, but as a “Blood-caul of absences” (16), directly echoing the theme of incompleteness mentioned earlier. After this birth scene (or imagined birth scene), she confesses,

All night I carpenter

A space for the thing I am given,
A love

of two wet eyes and a screech. (17–20)

The speaker indicates that she must build a space for this baby in her heart, and work to love it, for this is not what she always imagined for herself or her child. This evident sadness does not shift the language of the rest of the poem though; in fact, it becomes even more negative and demeaning, as she continues to describe her child only by physical attributes (“two wet eyes” [20] and “White spit / Of indifference” [21–22]). This dehumanization is further expressed in the following stanzas through her apparent disappointment.

As we near the end of the poem, the notion that becomes clear is that the birth of a disabled child is a mistake and a waste of a woman’s fertility. This disappointment is exemplified in the phrase “The dark fruits revolve and fall” (Plath 23), alluding to the analogy of a child being the “fruit” of a woman’s labor. The fact that the fruits “fall” symbolizes the failure of the pregnancy or birth to produce what she believes to be a complete child (23). The speaker feels that her duty as a woman has not been fulfilled because she has not produced a valuable, able-bodied child that will lead a normal life.

Additionally, her disappointment regarding any previous expectations she had in terms of motherhood is shown through the following lines: “The glass cracks across, / the image // Flees and aborts

like dropped mercury” (Plath 24–26). These lines are tricky in the sense that if they are read without the recognition of the comma after “across,” it reads like the glass over a picture has broken. In my interpretation however, the “glass” is actually a mirror (which was often referred to as a looking-glass in the past), and it shatters when the speaker’s reflection, which now includes her disabled child, does not reflect what she wants to see (24). This is when “the image” of herself “flees and aborts like dropped mercury” (25–26), yet another indicator that the glass is a mirror, as until about the mid-1800s, the reflective material behind the glass was a mixture of tin and mercury (Hadsund 12), the latter material being known to scatter when uncontained. These allusions to fertility and motherhood reflect the attitudes of the time period accurately because Plath grew up misunderstanding disabled persons as “a group of people to be pitied, ridiculed, rejected, and feared, or as objects of fascination ... or as needing to be subjected to medical treatment or cure,” like many other Americans (Neuhaus, Smith, and Burgdorf 46).

As a historical account of the attitudes of this time period regarding disability, this poem is successful, but it does little for Plath’s reputation as a progressive writer. Although her writing is truthful, and sometimes hurtfully so, this work exploits the degree to which her feminism, and much of the feminism of this time period, is limited to White, able-bodied women. This exclusion can be exemplified wholly in Plath’s opening metaphor that manages both racism and ableism. The speaker takes us through her thought process, employing symbols and metaphors that veil the subject matter of this poem upon first read. When revealed, her all-consuming feelings of despair and disappointment exemplify just how limited the twentieth-century understanding of disabled people was. However, the sources that many looked to for guidance and information regarding disability—like medicine, the government, and even religion—were just as inherently biased in upholding White, able-bodied supremacy.

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Taking the Plunge

Gabby Bourgeois

Winner, Seitz Scholarship for Creative Writing
Winner, Theodore Roethke Student Writing Award



Gabby Bourgeois is a resident of Alpena, Michigan, and dreams of becoming a full-time writer and editor. After graduating high school in 2019 and completing an associate of arts degree at Alpena Community College in 2020, they began studying at Saginaw Valley State University to pursue bachelor's degrees in both creative writing and professional and technical writing. They are looking for publications that will accept their work.

The surface of the lake was a shifting mess of push and pull pierced by a single blinding beam of light. Ollie wiped at the sweat forming on her forehead and glared at the waves, trying not to shiver as a stiff breeze blew past her. She squirmed in place, trying vainly to spare her bare feet from the splintering wooden dock. She stood on her toes and tried to catch a glimpse of the modest forest located somewhere past the endless, blinding, crushing expanse of water in front of her, but of course there was nothing. From here, it was always nothing. She compared the churning of the water to the churning in her stomach.

"It's almost 7:00," Jess announced. Ollie startled and looked at the ground to her right. Jess stared at her from under her large sunhat, her phone in her hand and her arms wrapped around her drawn-up knees. The dark circles under her brown eyes were hidden behind sunglasses. Her mouth was set in an unmistakable grimace.

"... And?"

"And we've been here since 6:00."

"Oh. I guess we have."

"Oh, I know we have."

The corners of Jess' mouth twitched upwards into an easy smile. Her arms fell to her sides and her long legs unfurled like a butterfly emerging from a chrysalis. She submerged her feet in the lake and hummed idly, impervious to the wind and the sun and the fear of what might be lurking under those waves. Ollie resumed her solemn vigil over the cloudless sky and the harsh white sunlight glinting off the boundless dark water, her chest aching with love and envy and a looming sense of dread.

"Water's just starting to warm up. Wish I'd thought to bring my swimsuit, too." Jess picked at her denim shorts with disdain.

Ollie felt the wood scorch her soles and her sweat mix with her waterproof sunscreen. She wiped at the resulting substance with her palm. The sun shone apathetically, and the open mouth of the lake yawned widely.

"You okay?"

"No."

"You wanna go sit in the car for a while?"

Ollie glanced behind her, surveying the tall wispy strands of grass that grew to spite the sandy shoreline, the parched strip of soil that separated the sliver of beach from the woodchips and mulch marking the edge of the local playground, and the dusty red Chevy Malibu standing proudly in the Dairy Queen parking lot across the street. She thought about air conditioning and her hair whipping wildly around her head in a vortex as she drove with all the windows down. She thought about driving away from the beach until she ran out of gas and hitchhiking with strangers until she was as far away from the body of water as she could possibly be. She thought about the long talks she had with her therapist and the way her breath would hitch whenever she heard splashing or saw a flash of fluorescent pink.

“No,” Ollie grunted as she turned back to the watery gaping maw.

Ollie picked at the thick straps of her swimsuit and grazed her hands along its seams, feeling each spot where the silkiness of cheap black water-resistant fabric made to look enticing in stagnant two-dimensional space bunched and contorted over the dynamic curves and angles of her body in ways that she could only imagine were unflattering. Jess nudged her leg.

“Baby, you don’t have to do this—”

“Yes, I do.” Ollie winced. Her words came out harsh, and Jess did not deserve harsh. “Yes. I do.”

“I’m just saying so you don’t forget—and I think you forget this a lot, Ollie—that this isn’t a race. There’s nobody here that you have to beat. You already took a really big step today just by coming here, and I think you’re being real mean to yourself when you focus just on how far you have to go and forget how far you’ve already come.”

Ollie swallowed the bitter lump in her throat and felt her blood chill against the scorching heat on her face and the stark white sun and the too large, too violent lake under that too wide, too blue sky.

She remembered being five and waking up in the middle of the night screaming and crying to her parents about dreams of being sucked under the lake at the edge of town and lost forever. She remembered how her mother’s gentle cooing was eventually replaced with a furrowed brow and a stern command to go sleep in her own bed. She remembered the year’s worth of nights spent staring at the spindly shadows on her bedroom ceiling, mind rushing to supply her with new and terrible theories about what might be living under that dark open water.

She remembered being ten and having to wear a garish pink swimsuit covered in stiff ruffles and leopard print to a family gathering and sobbing because she hated being so close to the lake. She remembered her father, tired from arguing and red from drinking, dragging her down the dock by the arm and her mother screaming at him to stop as her cousins and aunts and uncles looked on in shock. She remembered calloused hands gripping her by her halter top and shoving her forward, and the loud splash her body made as it connected with the surface of the lake, and the way she flailed and screamed as water stung her eyes and filled her ears and poured into her open mouth. She remembered much softer hands pulling her from her murky grave and coughing between heaving sobs as her mother cooed, brow furrowed and eyes wet, while her father wrung his hands, silent and ashamed.

She remembered being eighteen and moving from the eastern edge of Michigan to the center. She remembered when her parents’ faces did not light up with pride or credulity when she explained that it was for college.

She was twenty-two and she still had nightmares about sinking to the bottom of the lake.

Ollie felt hot tears spill down her face and wished, not for the first time, that she could feel all of her fear in one acute and painful burst rather than the sporadic and volatile cloud of terror that tunneled her vision and constricted her lungs and strangled her heart every time a thoughtless friend or unwitting roommate mentioned spring breaks in South Padre, or semesters abroad in Venice, or destination weddings to the Caribbean. She sat down on the dock next to Jess and drew her knees up to her chest.

“I’m sorry,” she mumbled.

“Don’t be.”

“I’m being stupid.”

“I promise you you’re not being stupid.”

“I feel like a failure.”

“I promise you you’re not that, either.”

“I know I’m not that either, but that doesn’t mean I don’t feel like one.”

Jess pulled her legs out of the water and shifted to face her partner, gathering Ollie’s long curly hair and tying it back with one of the elastic bands that lived on her wrist. She wrapped her arms around the other woman and kissed her salty shoulder.

Ollie sighed at the relief of cool fingertips and fresh air on her hot neck. She peered down at the murk. She felt her stomach lurch and the heat return to her neck. The wooden deck gently scraped the backs of Ollie’s calves as she cautiously drew her feet closer to the water.

“Whatever you need, I’ll be here for you.”

Ollie scanned the sky for the point beyond the water. She searched for the spindly trees that marked an end to the unending. Nothing. Her legs hovered above the lake until they trembled. She felt Jess' arms fall from her shoulders as she crawled away from the edge of the dock. She tucked her legs against her stomach and hugged herself as she swallowed another bitter lump. The soles of her feet remained scorched and dry.

"Can we go back to the hotel? I'm not ready yet." Ollie's voice was thick with mucus and loathing.

"Sure."

Ollie looked past the reflection of her own face in Jess' glasses and saw eyes that held neither pity nor malice. Her head felt lighter. Jess kissed her cheek, then her temple, and then slowly stood and offered her hand. Ollie took it and pulled herself up, wobbling slightly. Arm in arm, the two women traced their way back up the dock and ran through hot sand and hotter asphalt to their old Malibu, cursing and giggling at their lack of foresight and appropriate footwear. Ollie looked back at the crooked tooth of a dock jutting from the shore, and its single set of wet footprints, and did not feel regret.

As they pulled out of the empty Dairy Queen parking lot and made their way up the gently sloping hill leading into town, Ollie glanced out of the passenger-side window. On a distant shore, evergreens and maples jutted proudly into the sky like dozens of gloved hands reaching up to pull the sun off its axis. The car climbed higher, and the verdant hands began to close in on the water. By the time their Malibu had reached the hill's peak, the lake had become a skipping stone resting in a child's open palm. Ollie felt the tension she had been carrying in her shoulders melt away as she traced the now broken horizon.

"Darling? I'm proud of you," Jess said. She reached past the console and squeezed her girlfriend's knee.

Ollie rested her hand on top of Jess' and squeezed back. "Me too," she sighed.



Spotlight on... Students

No matter in which college they find themselves, SVSU students write regularly in their courses. As members of a university that, per its mission statement, “creates opportunities for individuals to achieve intellectual and personal development,” SVSU students write in different genres, learn different documentation styles, and find themselves weighing the various options they carry in their rhetorical toolkits. No matter their major, they must consider issues of medium, message, and audience.

Because their majors do vary, students find different venues in and avenues through which to grow as writers. No publication can capture all their stories. In the following pages however, you’ll find stories about three students, representing three of SVSU’s five colleges, who have found success in their studies through writing.

In this section, you’ll also find profiles of the editors of SVSU’s two student-run publications, *Cardinal Sins* and *The Valley Vanguard*. *Cardinals Sins* is SVSU’s fine arts and literary magazine. Produced by the school’s faculty, staff, and students, *Cardinal Sins* has been honored by the American Scholastic Press Association; it features work by members of the SVSU campus and by artists from around the nation. More information about *Cardinal Sins*, including back issues and submission deadlines, can be found at www.cardinalsinsjournal.com. Founded in 1967, *The Vanguard* is SVSU’s official student-run news source and has been the recipient of numerous awards. Its online presence can be found at www.valleyvanguardonline.com.

Spotlight on...

The College of Health and Human Services

Lauren Huebner
Rehabilitation Medicine Major



As a student, athlete, and writing tutor, Lauren Huebner is accustomed to pushing herself to achieve her goals. A Saginaw, Michigan, native, she started at SVSU in Fall 2016, received her bachelor's degree in rehabilitation medicine in May 2020, and will receive her master's degree in occupational therapy (OT) in December 2021. Throughout her time at SVSU, writing and sports have been constants.

Since seventh grade, Huebner has had a passion for running, and she has been lucky enough to spend five years on SVSU's track and field team. Huebner trains in the heptathlon, an event comprised of seven components including various jumps, throws, and sprints. "It's a little bit of everything—all the worst stuff," Huebner says with a smile. Despite the obvious challenges, Huebner has found great success in the event. She is a four-time All-American, with a national championship title in the women's heptathlon; she has also been named an Academic All-American multiple times, proving that she is not only a stellar athlete, but she simultaneously maintains excellent grades.

Her reputation as a strong student led to another extra-curricular. In Winter 2021, she was chosen to work as a tutor at the Diane Boehm Writing Center. Just as the heptathlon involves a little bit of everything, so too her work at the Center. Part of her time involves working with OT students who are newer to the program, an initiative created by the Writing Center's director, Helen Raica-Klotz, and OT faculty Ellen Herlache-Pretzer and Stacey Webster. The rest of her time involves working with the larger student body, with students from all disciplines and at all stages of the writing process to help them develop and improve their own writing.

Huebner finds similarities between her Writing Center work and the OT program: "In all of our OT classes, we say that we're not trying to fix the person; we're trying to help them help themselves. That's exactly what we do in the Writing Center. We're not writing papers for students, but helping them figure out how they want to write their papers." Collaboration and individual growth are also seen in her work on and off the field. As Huebner asserts, "At practice, I'm trying to get better, but I'm also trying to make the person next to me better. In competition, you are competing by yourself, but it's a team atmosphere."

That desire to grow is just as applicable to her work in the classroom, and Huebner's own professional growth can, in part, be attributed to the writing she has done in the OT program. Although she wasn't a fan at first, she claims that the structured formal writing used in the field is the type she now enjoys most. She also cites the importance of one of the most common assignments in the program—a literature review—to support evidence-based practice. Part of an occupational therapist's code of ethics, Huebner stresses, is to stay up-to-date on best practices in the field, so learning how to seek out that information is a vital skill.

Huebner's writing experiences, however, haven't been limited to reviewing others' theories and findings. As part of the capstone course, the OT program requires students to conduct their own research and compose a manuscript for submission to a journal. Huebner and her groupmates, Aaron Wilkins, Megan White, and Hunter Irish, have been working on their manuscript since the winter of 2020. They planned to conduct a study that tested the effectiveness of different "dosages" of short message service (SMS) text messages as an exercise-reminder system for OT clients. Unfortunately, they were unable to find enough participants; the manuscript then became a protocol about the benefit of using text messages in OT offices, and Huebner and her coauthors submitted this work to *OT Practice*. She notes this project was a learning experience for another reason: due to the pandemic, all collaboration for this project occurred online. Huebner and her groupmates flourished in the team writing atmosphere and took advantage of the virtual

setting. Like all good OT practitioners and writers, they found a method that worked for them and yielded good results.

Huebner has one more fieldwork opportunity lined up before she completes the OT program in December 2021, and as always, she is excited for the chance to learn. She completed her Level 1 fieldwork at a respite care facility for adults with developmental disabilities, and her first Level 2 fieldwork experience was done during the summer of 2021, working in an outpatient rehabilitation center with pediatric and neuro populations. Huebner's second Level 2 fieldwork will be completed in the fall of 2021 in Rochester, Michigan, where she will work in inpatient rehabilitation. Where she ultimately ends up is still be determined, but she is open to relocation as long as the move challenges her and lets her help others. Wherever she ends up, she knows she will be honing her writing skills and using what she has learned from writing to inform her practice.

Spotlight on...

The Scott L. Carmona College of Business and Management

Kelly Pabst

Professional Accounting Major



Like many students not majoring in English, Kelly Pabst did not think writing would be an integral part of her major in professional accounting and minor in actuary science. The upcoming December 2021 graduate has since learned however that it's not just a bunch of numbers and Excel sheets in accounting—there are plenty of words involved too. To emphasize this point, Pabst identifies parallels between her chosen field and her own writing process. “I love the analytical part of accounting and putting the numbers together like pieces of a puzzle.” She explains that writing can be an overwhelming process, especially for longer essays and projects. To cope, she plans before she writes, mapping out her ideas in ways that are very similar to how she works with numbers, putting sentences and paragraphs together like pieces of a jigsaw to create that larger work. With this mindset, she has come to realize writing is a necessity for her career.

This Corunna, Michigan, native, however, has not always enjoyed writing. In her younger years, writing was often a chore requiring her to respond to books she found tedious and research that was uninteresting to her. It wasn't until later in her schooling did she realize writing wasn't as bad as it once seemed. “In college, it's not just ‘oh write about this book you read,’ but it's about ideas you learn in class and implementing them into things like bank reports. It's on topics that I enjoy now.”

Although she may not have always enjoyed writing, she did have an appreciation for it as a form of storytelling. She maintains that storytelling opened up doors to other people's perspectives and experiences: “If I pick up a book, it's most likely going to be an autobiography. You're always learning from other people and writing is just another way to do that.” Still, Pabst is not ignorant to the pains of writing and the writing process. For peers in her field who don't enjoy writing, Pabst offers this advice: “Find a way to enjoy it. Even if it's something as small as being able to format the paper at the end or counting down the pages you have left until you reach the minimum. Give yourself something to look forward to.” She says this recognizing that writing will likely be in everyone's future in some capacity.

Pabst's time at SVUS hasn't been just about writing. She helped introduced laser tag to campus and cites finding her close-knit group of friends as a highlight of her time on campus. She has also been a member of the Residence Housing Association (RHA) and the National Residence Hall Honorary program (NRHH), and as with writing, these programs have offered their own set of challenges—and rewards. She has served as president of RHA and, most recently, as the group's treasurer. Her most notable project with them was her involvement in Kids & Sibs in February 2021. Pabst explains that the group had been expecting 300 registrants at most due to the pandemic and were shocked when the number tripled to 950. Being able to adapt and overcome such a drastic difference and still have it turn out well was extremely rewarding to Pabst, showcasing her strong communication skills and flexibility as a leader. Pabst has also been responsible for writing “Of the Month's” for NRHH, in which the group honors various program members, earning them the potential to receive national level recognition. Other notable writing projects from the NRHH include writing to deployed soldiers, which gave her and other NRHH members great satisfaction.

Pabst has come a long way from her childhood dream of being a professional baker, as she is now on her way to Plante Moran, a firm in Flint, Michigan, where she will be a certified public accountant. There, Pabst maintains, writing will continue to follow her: “whether it's writing emails to clients, making up audit reports, doing tax research—writing will always be a constant throughout my career.”

Spotlight on...

College of Science, Engineering & Technology

Carly Sawatzki

Electrical and Computer Engineering Major



During her time here at SVSU, Carly Sawatzki, a native of Saginaw, Michigan, has found great value in having a wide range of college experiences. “I take classes and learn what I want about my major,” she says, “but the things that build who I am as a person are the experiences I have had outside of it.” Thus, while her peers were co-opting and interning at Dow, Nexteer, and Consumers, Sawatzki was a part of SVSU’s marching band, moot court team, and Roberts Fellowship Program. For Sawatzki, it’s empowering to say that “I am an engineer, but I am also a student of Japanese; I am an engineer, but I am also a sax player.” These diverse experiences make her who she is—as do her experiences with

writing.

According to Sawatzki, she was always a writer, but not always a scientist. Sawatzki knows, however, being an effective and clear communicator is crucial to the Science, Engineering, and Technology (SET) field. She realizes that for engineers “so much of our work depends on our ability to communicate what we are doing in a way that is specific and easy to understand.”

Perhaps that relationship between science and communication explains why her experiences as a writing tutor at Diane Boehm Writing Center have been enormously influential. Peers in SET departments reach out to her for not just help in engineering, but also for help in writing, expressing their desire for someone who understands them on a technical level and can then help them translate that technical knowledge into writing. Her tutoring also resulted in her working on a Center for Academic Innovation-supported project led by Dr. Peggy Jones, assistant professor of mechanical engineering; for this project, Sawatzki was tasked with creating various print and audiovisual materials to help other engineering students hone their skills as writers.

In fact, Sawatzki states that her tutoring has impacted nearly everything she has done at SVSU, such as becoming a Roberts Fellow and working with international students. Sawatzki’s time as a tutor, for example, presented the opportunity to travel to Japan and tutor at Shikoku University. There, she learned how to work with non-native English speakers and became much closer to international students. She notes she “gained this knowledge of how to help international students with grammar structures and critically examine the way that English is structured, which doesn’t always make sense.” Because of this experience, she also adopted a Japanese minor and became more invested in meeting and supporting international students here on campus. As she explains, there is a “humility you get from that human experience where you don’t both speak the same language, but you are constructing meaning together.”

This May 2021 graduate would not have experienced all that she has if she hadn’t stepped out of her comfort zone and done the unexpected. And that will most likely continue when she leaves SVSU. Currently, Sawatzki is considering going into intellectual property law or pursuing a biomedical degree after graduation. Whatever she does, Sawatzki claims that writing will always follow her in some capacity: “Whether it’s just writing memos to coworkers or writing full-on research reports or scientific articles, writing will always be a part of my life in some way.”

Spotlight on...

Cardinal Sins

Madeline Bruessow and Matthew Blum
Co-Editors



Given their shared duties as editors of *Cardinal Sins*, it should come as no surprise that Madeline Bruessow and Matthew Blum have much in common.

With English literature as her major and professional and technical writing as her minor, Bruessow (who is from Bay City, Michigan) makes a good teammate to Blum (a Fowlerville, Michigan, native), who conversely is majoring in professional and technical writing and minoring in creative writing. And the similarities don't stop there.



Both assumed their editorial duties in August 2020, both enjoy engaging in creative writing on their own time, and both admit that their talents and interests largely resided in the realm of poetry before working for *Sins*. Their work with the journal, however, has given both the opportunity to expand their horizons. "One of my favorite things about being co-editor-in-chief of *Cardinal Sins*," Bruessow states, "is being able to acquire viewpoints from different cultures and perspectives. *Cardinal Sins* accepts submissions from around the world, so I often get the opportunity to read poetry, fiction, and nonfiction that provide unique aspects on life." Blum echoes this focus on personal growth by claiming that, although he often seeks his own inspiration from non-written

sources, his work as co-editor-in-chief has pushed him out of his comfort zone, which has been inspiring in its own way.

Both, too, point to other lessons they've learned while working on *Sins*. Blum states, "The way that I write might be different from someone else's style of writing, but that doesn't make either style bad. That's something I had to keep telling myself as I worked." In addition to learning about the world through writing, Bruessow is excited to have been able to learn about career choices: "Working for *Cardinal Sins* has given me a glimpse into the world of editing that I don't think I would have seen otherwise, along with insight into whether I want to pursue editing and publishing as a future career."

Their college courses have also aided the two with their editing processes. Bruessow points out that both her creative writing and technical skills have come into play for her as an editor; creative writing helped her find the meaning and significance of each piece, and technical writing helped her visualize the works on the page. Similarly, Blum says that his creative writing and cultural rhetoric classes have made him realize the importance of finding the authenticity and personality in each poem or story.

Blum and Bruessow also readily acknowledge the support they have found on campus in their editorial roles. Bruessow expresses that their faculty advisor, Dr. Kimberly Lacey, has been "the kindest advisor I could have asked for," stating that the associate professor of English has always been there to answer questions and offer assistance when Bruessow felt overwhelmed or confused. Blum has gained much guidance from another professor of English, Dr. Arra Ross: "Without her, I never would have even applied for this position. She is one of my biggest influences and inspirations when it comes to writing and understanding other people's writing."

Differences naturally exist between the two editors. Blum explains, "Maddy and I have very different views that somehow line up together, but those differences are incredibly helpful; they balance everything out." Additionally, Blum wishes to become an advocate for social change, particularly in the realm of sports, which contrasts to Bruessow's interest in a publishing career. Their shared position at *Sins*, however, enables them to strive toward the same goals for the journal—to publish quality work from around the world—and find joy in the work of putting the award-winning magazine together.

And that joy, they remind us, can be found even in times of pandemic. Because of COVID-19, Blum and Bruessow chose to merge the fall and winter issues of the magazine, but they still remain excited

about the pieces they published. One such poem is “Chronoscope 221: The sky is,” by John Walser, which Bruessow describes as “a multitude of emotions, all packed within 31 lines.” She explains that Walser “captures the essence of sublimity one experiences when emerging from a long winter.” Unsurprisingly, Blum concurs, praising the piece’s memorable imagery and message of hopefulness: “Walser is able to take a snapshot of the nature around them and separate each factor, such as the birds, treetops, flowers, and the sky itself, into images more vibrant than they appear naturally. This piece made me hopeful for 2021, as we began spring and began protecting ourselves against COVID-19.”

“Chronoscope 221: The sky is”

by John Walser

So many of the tulips
planted for May
for beyond
already head nipped
the petals like metal
the petals like melted plastic
flattening against
the driveway
the sidewalk.

The sky’s talkative
this afternoon:
not rumble: not thrash:
just the constant jabber
of something praying
under its breath
or acknowledging
angers or joys
or promises that
only it can see
right now:

although I can guess
it has something to do
with rain that feels
like swelling, birds
that cannot be seen
in tree tops,
angles that cause
shadows to shorten
and shorten
as days draw out
more blare, more glare.

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Spotlight on...

The Valley Vanguard

Hannah Beach
Editor-in-Chief



In her role as editor-in-chief for *The Valley Vanguard*, Hannah Beach has found writing to be a venue for personal growth and confidence.

Beach hails from the village of Almont, Michigan. Liking the feel of a small town and close-knit community, Beach felt SVSU was the perfect fit for her. She started at SVSU in Fall 2017 on a medical and science path, but she realized her love for writing in her sophomore year when she started reporting for the *Vanguard*. As a result of this extracurricular experience, she switched her major to professional and technical writing (PTW), a move that provided experience with *InDesign*, *Dreamweaver*, *Illustrator*, video and audio editing, website coding, and document design.

Her work at the *Vanguard* has obviously also given her many skills in regard to editing; however, SVSU's small class sizes, she feels, really make her stand out among editors at other schools. She says here she has received detailed feedback on her assignments, which helped her move up from reporter to editor-in-chief. That feedback often came from Justin Engel, the manager for Alumni Communications and a former editor of the *Vanguard* himself. Outside of the *Vanguard* offices, she is thankful for feedback from her PTW professors, particularly Dr. Beth Jorgenson, and her philosophy professor Dr. Robert Koch.

Writing has proved to be a catalyst for growth in other ways. She notes a memorable experience when she wrote an opinion piece in the *Vanguard* regarding her high school football team and biased journalism. The article, "Sports Journalism Shows Hometown Bias," which appeared December 2, 2019, blew up online and received attention in her county paper as well as some of the larger state papers. Beach describes this as a difficult time for her as she received negative feedback and had to learn to be strong in her opinions and beliefs. She learned a lot about journalistic integrity and the importance of holding her head high, even when receiving reader backlash.

Another writing experience that has bolstered Beach's confidence was a study abroad trip she took to Greece between her sophomore and junior year of college. Although it was exciting to be on the other side of the world by herself, it was also a stressful time, but writing continued to be a source of strength. She had the good fortune to take a writing class, where she worked with established author George Crane and other students interested in writing, and soon she found herself creating dark short stories on the beautiful beaches of Greece.

Upon her anticipated graduation in December 2021, Beach would like to travel more, especially to Europe and Southeast Asia. Eventually, she would like to end up as a production editor or assistant production editor in New York City at Penguin House or another major publishing company. Although the future remains uncertain, Beach's experiences at SVSU have given her something that is certain: the confidence and strength to stand behind her writing.

The following article, which appeared in *The Valley Vanguard* this year, focuses on another author who is well aware of the power of writing: the activist and scholar Angela Davis.

Angela Davis speaks about Black history month by Madeline Bruessow

SVSU hosted Angela Davis as a speaker for Black History Month, per students' requests.

The series was arranged by the Organization of Black Unity, Diversity Programs, the Office of Multicultural Services and Student Affairs.

Davis, a political activist, presented to the SVSU community on Feb. 18. “My advice, if I ever have advice to offer, is that you never set out to do what you want to do alone,” Davis said. “The struggle is much larger than any of us can imagine it to be.”

Mamie Thorns, the special assistant to SVSU President Don Bachand and one of the event’s organizers, explained the importance of sharing Black history.

“Black history is American history, and a lot of times it is hidden, or only certain sections are shared,” Thorns said. “(This month) is also an opportunity to understand Black histories, going beyond stories of racism and slavery to spotlight the amazing achievement by Black Americans.”

Davis focused on the struggle against systemic racism. She suggested that white people need to be more than just allies against racism.

“I think allyship is important ... because it allows white people to recognize the important role that they have to play in these struggles against systemic racism,” she said. “The reason I’m a little critical is because it somehow assumes that the real work is being done by the people of color and that white people have a marginal role to play. I want us to develop the kinds of arguments that can persuade White people that it is as much in their interest to bring down structural racism as it is in (the interest of people of color).”

Davis said the power white people have puts them in a position to stand against racism.

“White people have the kind of legacy that can either be a productive legacy or a destructive legacy,” she said. “I think it’s important for White people to choose the legacies [of those] who have been involved in the struggle against racism. The struggle against white supremacy is one that (white people) have to take on as productive in their own futures as well.”

Davis said she takes issue with terms such as “diversity.”

“The whole notion of diversity is problematic,” she said. “Not that we don’t want diverse institutions, not that we don’t want diversity in our classrooms. But diversity has become a type of watchword for those who are trying to find quick solutions to a problem that’s really complicated.”

She explained that the movement toward “diversity” is not enough to fix the root problem.

“One of the reasons why I think deeply about the meaning of that term is because it can infer that you simply want to bring more diverse faculty, more diverse students, more diverse staff into an institution that remains exactly the same as when it excluded people,” she said. “If that’s the case, you are asking people to participate in a culture that continues to be oppressive at its core.”

Although the struggle against systemic racism is far from over, Davis stressed the importance of acknowledging the progress that has been made.

“Even if systemic racism remains a major issue for us, we have to be able to provide the evidence that engaging in struggle can bring about change,” Davis said. “That all the people who marched, or were killed by the Ku Klux Klan, or did voter registration, that their work did not go in vain. If we could accomplish this, then we ought to be able to accomplish a great deal more.”

SVSU has further events planned for Black History Month, including Black @ SVSU and the Hip Hop Icons exhibit at the Marshall M. Fredericks Museum.

“Celebrating Black History Month should not end in February,” Thorns said. “Learning about Black history should be a continual effort. Thank you to our amazing students and sponsors for making this event come to life.”

Reprinted by permission of *The Valley Vanguard*. “Angela Davis speaks about Black history month” first in the February 28, 2021, issue of *The Valley Vanguard*.

The background of the page features a light gray illustration of several writing instruments, including pens and pencils, arranged vertically. The instruments are drawn in a sketchy, artistic style with varying line weights and shading. They are positioned around the central text, with some appearing more prominently than others.

Spotlight on... Faculty

In the following pages, we profile the work of SVSU faculty members known for their work inside and outside the classroom. Innovative teachers and scholars, they are also successful writers who strive to help their students find their own success as writers.

Critical Thinking, Community, and Writing

Elizabeth Rich

Professor of English

Winner of the 2021 Franc A. Landee Award for Excellence in Teaching



Elizabeth Rich began teaching in the Department of English at SVSU in 2000 after one year in a postdoctoral program in writing at Grand Valley State University. She received her M.A. in 1994 and Ph.D. in 1999, both from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA. She has published articles and delivered conference papers on such writers as Penelope Lively, Elizabeth Bishop, Gertrude Stein, Mohsin Hamid, Naveed Noori, and Louise Erdrich. Her forthcoming book from Lexington Books is entitled *Authority and the Historical Document in Late Twentieth-Century Literature* (2021).

Having served the Department of English for four years as Assistant Chair and for two years as Chair, Rich currently serves as Chair of the Honors Program. In addition, over the years, she has been the faculty adviser for the following student groups: Honor Corps, Sexuality and Gender Spectrum Alliance, Cardinal Readers, Concerned Christian Students, and the English Club.

“I am not solitary while I read and write, though nobody is with me.”

--from Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature* (1836)

Our popular imagination painfully visualizes the “act” of writing. Hollywood represents it with montages of characters sitting alone in agony in front of a computer screen or typewriter. These writers on screen crumple sheets of paper. They rub their eyes. They sigh. We recognize the scene in the crying-to-writing montage in *Something's Gotta Give* or in the writer's-block-montages in *Wonder Boys* or *The Shining*. In these scenes, isolation produces a moment of such extreme alienation that the writing subject can be split in two, as in *Adaptation*, where Nicholas Cage's character Charlie Kaufman poses against his twin brother, acting as his doppelgänger, living a life that the writer, unmoved from his place at the typewriter, cannot. In so many ways, we learn that to write is not to live and that to write is to be in pain or is dangerous.

The core demand of the montage form is that selected images must show two things in tension with each other so that a feeling and visual representation become conceptualized as one. The writer-at-work montage serves the larger narrative, such as the sacrifice that writers make, the success that the painful process of writing produces, or the tragedy that results from succumbing to enduring time alone. Whatever aesthetic these images serve, the cultural imagination fixes “writing” in a field of “thinking” that often leads it to appear a solitary act and can define it in terms that ignore the deeply connected role that writing plays in communication, a term whose roots stretch from late Middle English (*communicate*) to further removed classical Latin (*commūnicātus*). The Latin root “com,” meaning “with” and “together,” as in “community,” sets the constellation of acts where writing is situated among speaking, listening, and reading. Often done alone, writing as a form of communication is always informed by others and done for others.

To insert a plural set of interpretive practices between cultural perceptions that students hold as they enter the classroom and the work that they need to do in learning their subjects, I emphasize the communicative and shared aspect of writing over discrete tasks that students do on their own. Beginning with the most tedious and seemingly arbitrary aspects of academic writing, teaching the rules of formatting and technical aspects of representing research is challenging. Students benefit from knowing that they are not citing sources in specific ways because of abstract rules but to help someone interested in their topic to follow their research and find more about their topic. They are not performing research for me but preparing to understand how research works so that everyone can put themselves on a path to share ideas, experiences,

interpretations, and analyses. For instance, to indicate the character Ulysses without italics or quotes is to invoke not *Ulysses* (James Joyce's novel) or "Ulysses" (Alfred Tennyson's poem), but the character in any number of texts. We cover the disciplinary differences in marking in-text citations with dates (as in APA style) or with names and page numbers (as in MLA style) to see essential matters in different majors' lines of inquiry. Privileging dates means that the field wants to locate an idea in a teleological development, while privileging names emphasizes different viewpoints.

In more substantive ways, students benefit from moving beyond overly simplistic notions about writing by critically thinking about their own subjectivity, a concept that my classes spend considerable time developing. Subjectivity is not the isolated individual or a group identity but a unique and singular interplay of oneself in various social structures of power. Being critically aware in the context of studying literature means seeing oneself and the writers whose texts we analyze as being connected in fraught, complex, and sometimes sympathetic ways. We are connected to the writers we read and to those who read our interpretations. Both those who inform us and whom we inform sit in a balance with us when we write.

Even the most seemingly isolated writers, like Emily Dickinson, have rich experiences with the words of others. As Dickinson's speaker muses on solitude in the poem below, it becomes clear that being physically alone can be expressed only in socially defined terms and that "A soul admitted to itself" exists as a paradox insofar as in language, "that polar privacy" only exists "to itself"; that is, it is inaccessible:

There is a solitude of space
A solitude of sea
A solitude of death, but these
Society shall be
Compared with that profounder site
That polar privacy
A soul admitted to itself—
Finite infinity.

The poem may be composed by a writer alone in a room, but the state of being truly alone is beyond words as the "soul" reveals itself only to itself. Reading these lines, we have no access to the speaker's "soul" but only how "Society" defines solitude. What does the soul "admit" "to itself"? It is a paradox in the irreconcilable opposites, "Finite infinity," that language cannot access.

Language is a common place. When one is reading, one is listening (to others). When one is writing, one is speaking (to others). In "A Litany for Survival," Audre Lorde says,

when we are silent
we are still afraid

So it is better to speak
remembering
we were never meant to survive.

Silence is to be alone. In my classes, we read the perspectives of writers who are accepted and who had to be recovered to ask hard questions about ourselves. Being "critical" is not to criticize the text but to be critical of ourselves as we learn to open ourselves to the voices of others. So long as students read and write, they work in relationship to others in a social framework in which they can be active and thriving agents.

An Excerpt from “Corona Wind Induced in a Square Channel by a Two Stage Corona Wind Generator”

A K M Monayem H. Mazumder

Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering

Grace S. Trombley and Brendon G. Cousino

Undergraduate Research Assistants



Dr. Monayem H. Mazumder received his Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Oklahoma in 2012. He has been a postdoctoral fellow and worked as assistant professor before joining Saginaw Valley State University. He joined in the department of Mechanical Engineering at SVSU in Fall 2018. He specializes in electrohydrodynamic (EHD) technique, Finite Element Analysis (FEA), Computational Fluid Dynamics (CFD) etc. He has received three faculty research grants and three faculty-led undergraduate research grants from SVSU to make further contributions to his EHD technique. He was recently awarded the Dow Professor award from the Center for Academic Innovation at SVSU. He also received a fund from Michigan Space Grant Consortium (MSGC) as P.I.

Abstract – In this study, corona wind induced by a two stage electrohydrodynamic (EHD) gas pump in a square channel has been evaluated. A two-stage pump with three emitting electrode configurations: 8, 24, and 56 respectively is implemented. It is evaluated for a wide range of operating voltages starting from 20 kV up to 28 kV for further improvement. To achieve the maximum enhancement, the emitting electrodes of the pump are flush mounted on the channel walls so that the corona wind produced directly disturbs the boundary layer thickness and improves the heat transfer. This is leading to a higher velocity near the channel walls and resulting in an inverted parabolic velocity profile at the center of the channel, which is opposite to the fully developed velocity profile of a forced flow. Velocities are measured at three cross-sections along the tube length and then integrated to obtain the volume flow rate.

Index terms – Corona discharge; corona wind; charge density; gas pump; electrostatics; electrohydrodynamic; emitting electrodes; electric field; electric potential; induced flow.

I. NOMENCLATURE

A	surface area of the grounded electrode, [m ²]
b	ion mobility, [m ² /V·s]
D	hydraulic diameter, [m]
I_{cal}	numerically calculated corona current, [A]
I_{exp}	experimentally calculated corona current, [A]
p	pressure, [Pa]
p_{atm}	atmospheric pressure, [Pa]
u	x-component of velocity, [m/s]
v	y-component of velocity, [m/s]
V	electric potential, [V]
V_0	electric potential at the wire, [V]
w	z-component of velocity, [m/s]

W	width of grounded electrode, [m]
x, y, z	Cartesian coordinates, [m]
ε	electric permittivity of air, [F/m]
ν	kinematic viscosity, [m ² /s]
ρ	density of air, [kg/m ³]
ρ_c	space charge density, [C/m ³]
ρ_{c0}	space charge density at the wire tip [C/m ³]

II. INTRODUCTION

Rapid technology advancement towards microelectronic components requires high utilization of the corona wind produced by electrohydrodynamic (EHD) gas pumps for efficient cooling solutions. Producing such corona wind involves two asymmetric electrodes: a highly curved (such as needle or small diameter wire) and a small curvature (such as plate or ground). The gas molecules are ionized by this high electrical field and, controlled by Coulomb force, these ions migrate to the grounded electrode. The ions transfer their momentum to neutral molecules via collision during the migration which creates a bulk flow called corona wind [1]. Therefore, corona wind is created by an electrode charged with a direct current (either positive or negative) at a sufficiently high voltage (generally in the kilovolt (kV) range). Although the applied voltage is high, the current involved is usually very small (in the microampere (μ A) to milliampere (mA) range) making the required power insignificant which is one of the most attractive features for EHD technique.

EHD techniques have been applied in many engineering fields. The following are a few examples: Corona wind has become a novel method to enhance the drying process in the food industry [2]. In the electronic systems thermal management, corona wind can produce a substantial increase in the heat transfer coefficient [3]. In the aerospace industry, EHD actuators are used to reduce the drag force of an aircraft or to stabilize the air flow [4]. In addition, electrostatic precipitators have been used in manufacturing and power industries to control particle emission and increase the efficiency of particle collection [5]. Mazumder and Lai [6]-[10] investigated the flow field inside a square channel with a two-stage EHD gas pump by experimental measurement and numerical simulation. In their study, they added the first stage of the pump to initiate the flow and the second stage to boost the flow.

Although EHD techniques is promising, some challenging questions need to address. One of the challenges is related to the effective EHD gas pump design configuration. The objective of the present study is to investigate the effect of two important design parameters on the EHD gas pump performance: the number of emitting electrodes or pins in each stage and number of stages. As one can expect, using a two-stage EHD gas pump may help in extending the range of their applications. In this configuration, the first stage will start the flow and second stage will increase the flow. Furthermore, it has been also speculated that the number of emitting electrodes in each stage will not only affect the distribution of electric field but also complicate the interaction between corona jets issued from two neighboring electrodes. Therefore, the relation between the number of electrodes and pump performance becomes critical in the design of an optimal EHD gas pump.

III. EXPERIMENTAL SETUP

The experimental setup used in this study includes a two-stage EHD gas pump, data acquisition system, high voltage power supply and air velocity transducer. The dimensions of proposed configuration (left) and the actual wire-electrode configuration (right) are shown in Fig. 1. The EHD gas pump is constructed from Plexiglas with 0.00635 m (0.25 inch) thickness. The pump is 0.4064-m-long with cross section inner dimensions of 0.1016 m by 0.1016 m (4 by 4 by 16 cubic inches). A copper wire of 0.000812 m diameter (20 GA) is first bent and welded to form the electrode loop and subsequently flush mounted on the inner wall of the channel. To serve as emitting electrodes, the additional 0.0254-m-long (1-inch-long)

copper wires of the same diameter are welded to the base loop. Three different number of emitting electrodes configurations are considered in this study: 8, 24, and 56 emitting electrodes or pins in two stages. The space between two neighboring electrodes in 8, 24 and 56 emitting electrodes configuration are 0.0508 m (2 inch), 0.0254 m (1 inch) and 0.0127 m (0.5 inch), respectively. A 0.0127-m wide (0.5-inch wide) and 0.000635 m (0.025 inch) thick copper strip is also flush mounted on all four sides of the inner wall of both stages and served as the grounded electrode. For each stage, the space between the tips of the emitting electrodes and the grounded electrode is maintained at 0.0381 m (1.5 inch). The spacing between the electrode wire loops of the two stages is maintained at 0.1524 m (6 inch). It should be noted that to maximize the pumping effect, the emitting electrodes are intended to align with the direction of primary flow.

A high voltage power supply (Bertan Associates, Series 205B-30R) is connected to the wire electrode assembly. This power supply has a maximum capacity of 30 kV and can be charged with a direct current (DC) of either positive or negative polarity. The National Instruments data acquisition system is used, and the data sampling/collection is assisted by the LabView program. The velocity transducer (Omega FMA 902-I) can accurately measure air velocity from 0 to 500 ft/min (2.54 m/s) with an accuracy of 2.7% of full scale at room temperature. The velocity probe extended horizontally from the channel wall allowing measurements in three levels: 0.0254, 0.0635, and 0.1016 m (1, 2.5 and 4 inch) down-stream of the grounded electrode of bottom stage. A total of twenty-one sampling points is evenly distributed on each level.

In this study, experiments are conducted with only positive corona discharge. It is important to know the onset voltage and sparkover voltage for EHD gas pumps before starting the experiment. Operating at or beyond the sparkover voltage should be avoided because it may damage the power supply or the data acquisition system. The applied voltage is gradually increased until a flow of air is detected by the velocity transducer for starting the experiment. Corona wind was too weak to be detected for the present setup until the applied voltage was increased to 20 kV (the onset voltage). The applied voltage was then incrementally increased by 2 kV until sparkover occurred, which can be easily detectable through a visible bright light and cracking sound. When sparkover occurred (around 30 kV), electric field fluctuates violently and became unstable and, as a result, it was avoided. Shown in Fig. 2 are the typical V-I curves for the present experimental setup of three configurations (8, 24, and 56 emitting electrodes). One can observe that after the onset of corona, the current produced by corona discharges increases with the applied voltage. It is interesting to note that, a two-stage EHD pump with more emitting electrodes draws a higher current at a given applied voltage.

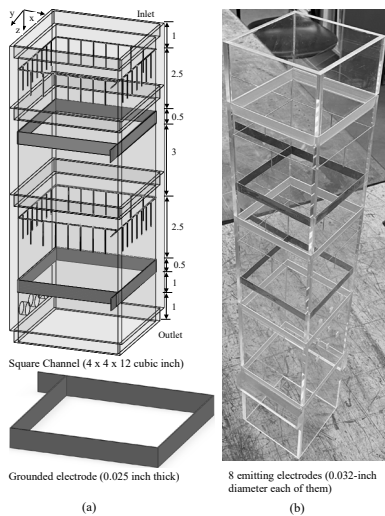


Fig. 1. A two-stage EHD gas pump configuration: (a) the proposed domain and (b) the actual domain (design and assembly); all dimensions are in inch (1 inch = 0.0254 m).

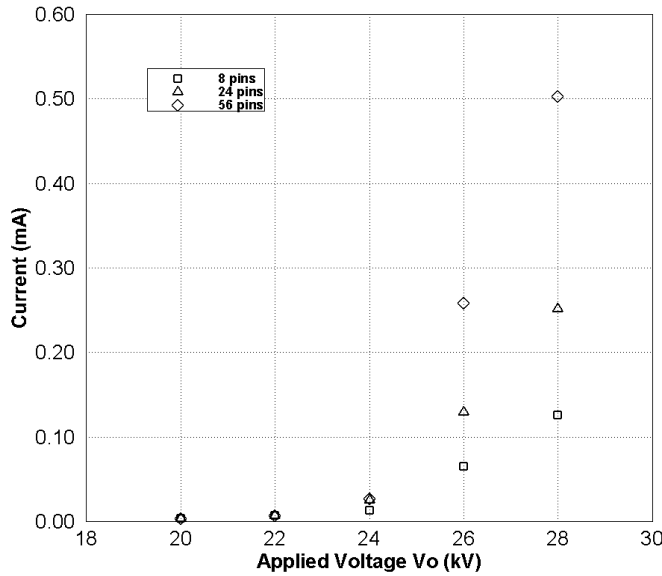


Fig. 2. V-I curves for a two-stage EHD gas pump.

VI. CONCLUSION

Experimental and numerical studies are performed for a two-stage EHD gas pump with three different number of emitting electrodes or pins (8, 24, and 56 emitting electrodes) operated by positive corona discharge. The numerical results of electric potential and charge density distributions are visually examined for the same emitting electrode configurations at various applied voltages. It is shown that the induced air velocity increases with an increase in the applied voltage. From the V-I characteristic curves for the present setup, it is observed that an EHD gas pump with 56 emitting electrodes draws more current than the other two configurations. It is concluded that corona wind issued from the emitting electrodes behaves like a set of wall jets. As a result, an inverted parabolic velocity profile is observed at the center of the channel with the maximum velocity close to the channel wall, which is opposite to the fully developed velocity profile of a forced flow.

The maximum volume flow rate observed in this study is 14 L/s produced by the configuration with 8 emitting electrodes at an applied voltage of 28 kV. As far as the performance is concerned, it is shown that the proposed EHD gas pump is more effective than most conventional fans. As a result, an appropriate configuration of emitting electrodes, addition of multistage electrodes as well as applied voltage can be adapted depending on each individual application to reach the highest efficiency.

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An Excerpt from “The Digital Transformation Happened Overnight in K-12: Implications for Teacher Education”

Anne Tapp

Professor of Teacher Education

With Cathie Norris (University of North Texas) and Elliot Soloway (University of Michigan)



Dr. Anne Tapp is a professor in the College of Education. She teaches in both the graduate and undergraduate programs within the College of Education. Dr. Tapp has a variety of research interests including the integration of technology, STEM, and reflective practice. She is a frequent presenter at international and national conferences and has published numerous journal articles, book chapters, and books. Dr. Tapp was recently elected as chair of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) Advisory Council of State Representatives (ACSR) Executive Committee and is a member of the AACTE Board of Directors. She previously served as the Midwest Region Representative and is past president of the Michigan Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (MACTE). She serves as a director for the University of Michigan Center for Digital Curricula as well as a board member for several organizations and frequent volunteer within educational communities.

Abstract: K-12 has undergone a digital transformation in response to the demands of teaching and learning in the COVID-19 era. The question explored in this chapter is whether teacher education will need to undergo a comparable transformation in order to prepare K-12 teachers to effectively teach in a digitally transformed school. In our exploration, we describe how our Center for Digital Curricula at the University of Michigan has supported, since September 2020, about 180 Michigan, K-5 teachers by providing them with deeply-digital, standards-aligned curricula for their classrooms and with professional learning opportunities on how to use those resources in their classrooms. Based on those experiences, we pose questions about what potential changes K-12 teacher education may need to undergo in the next few years. Such an exploration is urgent since more and more schools are going beyond using digitized curricula – paper-and-pencil curricula put onto a computer – and adopting deeply-digital curricula to more effectively address digital-savvy students now populating K-12 classrooms (i.e., the Alpha Generation). Those questions are also extremely important since teacher educators are the future leaders of public-school classrooms across the country.

Lesson Learned: Teacher educators should have learned that deeply-digital, OER curricula is a tested way to teach teachers how to reach the deeply-digital generation of children – whether at their school desks or at their kitchen tables.

Lessons Learned for Research

These are early days in the creation and deployment of deeply-digital curricula in K-12. As such, it would be pre-sumptuous to identify specific research activities that need to be explored. Rather, in this section we pose a range of questions that need to be openly discussed in the community. The outcome of those conversations can define a research agenda for the new teacher education, the education that addresses the teacher issues surrounding the creation and deployment of deeply-digital curricula.

As Reich (2018) argues, computing technology has not been entirely successful in disrupting PreK-12 education; nor would we argue it has disrupted teacher education. Computing technology has been used primarily to supplement existing modes of instruction. Thus, we are only in the beginning phases of truly understanding how to create and employ deeply-digital curricula in the K-12 classroom. That is, we are just beginning to understand how to take advantage of the affordances of internet-connected computing infrastructure. While these are still early days for deeply-digital curricula, the lessons learned already make it clear that such curricula can provide learners with truly new opportunities for learning. This is particularly true when compared with the opportunities afforded by pencil-and-paper technology. Based on those new opportunities, a set of questions follow:

- How do teachers take advantage of deeply-digital curricula?
- What is the role of teacher education in helping K-12 teachers learn to be effective in deploying deeply-digital curricula in their classrooms?

First, it is our opinion that it is not too early to ask about changes needed in teacher education. We base that claim on seeing how fast the digital transformation has occurred in other areas of human endeavor (Norris & Soloway, 2018). For example, the music industry has gone through multiple transformations in the last 10 years. Records and CDs gave way to buying digital music on iTunes to listening to music that is streamed by companies such as Spotify.

We also need to ask how profound those changes might be to teacher education. Does teacher education transition to dealing with digitized curricula or does teacher education undergo a larger (and hoped for) transformation to engaging with deeply-digital curricula? In her classic book entitled *In the Age of the Smart Machine*, Harvard School of Business Professor Shoshana Zuboff (1988) distinguished between automating and informing. Automating is putting a pencil-and-paper process onto a computer. Gains in productivity might accompany this transition, but the real benefits of technology come with there is informing – when new processes, not before possible, are employed. While there are a range of ways to create deeply-digital curricula, the intent is for such curricula to be on the informing side of Zuboff's distinction.

We conclude this section as we started: asking questions. So, if deeply-digital curricula can be transformative, not just providing a transition to something a bit better, what must happen to teacher education? Must teacher education be transformed? Are schools of education ready for informing their teacher education courses in order to prepare teachers to use curricula that is also informing in the classroom?

Lessons Learned for Practice

At the outset of this chapter, we asked: does teacher education need to undergo a digital transformation that is comparable to the digital transformation that curricula and the K-12 classroom is undergoing? Towards answering that question, then, in this section, we abstract lessons for the practice of teacher education from three experiences. First, Tapp, Hansen and Kumar (2006) studied preservice teacher educators within science methods courses to learn about their class-room technology use. Second, we discuss what can be learned from our (AT) experience in restructuring our teacher education course at Saginaw Valley State University to explore the transformative potential of deeply-digital curricula with respect to educational practice. Finally, we discuss the lessons learned from the professional development created by the Center for Digital Curricula for in-service teachers to enable them to use the Center's deeply-digital curricula effectively.

We must ensure all preservice educators complete teacher preparation programs with a solid foundation of effective digital teaching and learning principles as well as a comfort level to teach with technology

Within undergraduate and graduate teacher education courses, it is essential for pre- and in-service teachers to learn about technology standards and the incorporation of meaningful technology into curricula

within the context of their courses. Tapp, Hansen and Kumar (2006) studied preservice teacher educators within science methods courses to learn about their classroom technology use. Students were required to incorporate technology within their lesson plans. Groups of students from various universities were given field experience opportunities to teach their lessons in classrooms, and others were not. Those who taught their lesson plans increased their comfort level with technology and likelihood of use. Those who did not, had a lower comfort level with technology and likelihood of use. Later, a random sample of these students were rated by their school administrators, and the in-service teachers who had rated themselves as having a higher comfort level and likelihood of use were rated higher on the scale of technology knowledge, comfort with technology, and likelihood of use. “It was recommended that preservice teachers have additional opportunities to practice these skills within all methods courses including reading, social studies, and math to further strengthen their level of comfort and likelihood of use within these curricular areas” (p. 179).

Teacher education programs should require preservice teachers to design meaningful, standards-based lessons that incorporate technology within all content areas. Further, preservice teachers need opportunities to teach these lessons during their field and student teaching experiences and receive clinical supervisor and cooperating teacher feedback, support, and opportunities to improve. Following our last year, digital technology should be a requirement as well as the lessons learned from K-12.

Teacher educators should work towards digital transformation of their teacher education courses

Teacher educators should explore questions about the potential transformative nature of deeply-digital curricula in their teacher education courses. We attempted this in our own teacher education course, TE 587, Technology in Elementary Schools, in Spring 2019 and Spring 2020.

First, we integrated discussion and hands-on experience with deeply-digital curricula. A key in the conversations was using the following criteria (see WestEd, 2008) to analyze the Center’s deeply-digital curricula and the Collabrify Road-map Platform:

- *Collaboration* – What is the level of student/student, student/curriculum, student/teacher collaboration?
- *Engagement* – To what degree are students engaged? What student and parent data supports this?
- *Support Critical Thinking* – What impact does the program have on learner process skills such as critical and higher-order thinking?
- *Student Achievement* – What impact does the P-12 program have on student achievement?
- *Learner Outcomes* – Is the curriculum standards-based? How are learner satisfaction and motivation related to the outcomes?

Second, drawing on a social constructivist model of learning (Palincsar, 1998), the students in the class used the materials explored in TE 587 in their own classrooms and then reported their experiences back for discussion. TE 587, in effect, modeled what the teachers needed to do in their classrooms when using deeply-digital curricula. And based on interactions with the students in TE 587, we feel that this transformed version of TE 587 was an effective strategy. In other words, students in TE 587 uniformly reported positive experiences in their classrooms.

Teacher educators must work towards the digital transformation of professional development for in-service teachers

Typical professional development in K-12 involves a trainer coming into a school and talking at teachers for 1 day or 2 days (Davis, 2017). However, just as we adopted social constructivist learning in the K-12 classroom and in TE 587, we felt that our PD to prepare in-service teachers to use Roadmaps and Collabrify needed to reflect that pedagogical philosophy. In what follows, then, we describe how we conducted PD for teachers who were going to be using Roadmaps and Collabrify. After that description, we step back and draw lessons for teacher educators from that experience.

In late summer 2020, after school administrators had decided to adopt the Center's deeply-digital curricula and the Collablify Roadmap Platform. However, we were challenged to consider how to bring teachers who were accustomed to traditional uses of computers in the classroom up to speed quickly in using the Center's deeply-digital curricula in their classrooms. We quickly created a program of professional learning that was comprised of various learning activities. Our core pedagogical philosophy for the PD was this: the PD experience should model how the teachers would use the Roadmaps in their classroom. For example:

The K-5 teachers who had created the Center's curricula led a 90-minute, face-to-face webinar with a school's teachers. Driving the progress of the webinar was a Roadmap, thus using the deeply digital curricula the teachers would eventually be using. The school's teachers and the webinar leaders were all collaborators on the Roadmap.

- After the synchronous PD session, the teachers were provided with a sequence of four Roadmaps that teachers would work through on their own time.
- During the time the teachers were working on their PD Roadmaps, we held many open Q&A sessions. Teachers could drop into a zoom session and talk with the Center's teachers. The Q&A sessions were well attended and quite lively.
- We did not want the teachers to think that Roadmaps were to be used for asynchronous learning. That is, we did not want the teachers to think that all they needed to do was distribute Roadmaps to their students, and then the students would complete the Roadmaps by themselves. This was the opposite of what we intended. Deeply digital curricula were meant to be used for synchronous learning, whether the children were in-class or at home at their kitchen tables; in both instances, a teacher would be working with them.
- After the teachers had worked through the PD Roadmaps, we held a Show & Tell Session where the teachers showed each other the Roadmaps that they had modified and/or created.
- Teachers could ask questions via email. As several Center members monitored that email, teachers often would get answers in 10 minutes or less. Phone numbers were even exchanged as occasional one-to-one conversations were needed.

Not everything went well; creating PD for digitally transformed curricula was challenging. Here we point out two fundamental mistakes we made in the PD program. We identify them here in the hope that others can learn from our mistakes.

- **Focus primarily on *using the provided curricular materials*:** While our PD program showed teachers how they might change the deeply-digital curricula, we neglected to focus on simply using the curricula as is, without change. Given how different these digitally transformed curricula are from traditional paper-and-pencil curricula, changing those materials without first using them runs the risk of creating a "lethal mutation," in the classic words of Brown and Campione (1996, p. 291), and losing the coherence that was built-into the provided lessons.
- **Show teachers *how to use the provided curricula materials*:** Teachers need to see how other teachers are using the deeply-digital curricula. While the Center has video of teachers using the deeply-digital curricula in the classroom, we neglected to heed the wisdom of teacher educators who advocate for the use of just such video in teacher education programs (e.g., Marsh & Mitchell, 2014).

Survey data revealed that the participating teachers rated the PD relevant, high quality and effective in design and progression. Further, teachers stated they acquired the intended knowledge and skills of the PD to a high degree, and they felt that the deeply digital curricula would be very useful to their students. While teacher comments were incredibly positive, this example is provided to continue to push teacher educators to reconsider traditional professional development. We need to continue to teach teachers using tools we want them to use with students.

What You Should Read

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Spotlight on...

The Center for Community Writing

Established in 2018, the Center for Community Writing works to promote writing throughout the Great Lakes Bay Region. Coordinated by Helen Raica-Klotz and Christopher Giroux, the Center serves as an umbrella organization for various other initiatives, including the Saginaw Community Writing Center (SCWC), the Bay Community Writing Center (BCWC), and the Saginaw Bay Writing Project (SBWP).

The Center for Community Writing continued to operate its community writing centers in 2020–2021. Housed in Saginaw’s Butman-Fish Library and established in October 2015, the SCWC is the first community writing center of its kind in the state of Michigan and is funded by the Saginaw Community Foundation. The BCWC opened its doors at the Wirt Public Library in Bay City in September 2017; it is funded by the Bay Community Foundation. Both centers have offered specialized workshops on given topics (like résumés, cover letters, or short fiction) as well as individual consultations on any piece of writing a community member chooses. Because of the pandemic, these offerings occurred online in 2020–2021.

Under their auspices, and through funding provided by community member Dr. Debasish Mridha, the community writing centers published another issue of *Still Life* in 2021. The only community arts journal sponsored by a university in the state of Michigan, *Still Life* offers creative writing opportunities for writers of all ages. In 2020, *Still Life* was once again honored with a first-place award from the American Scholastic Press Association.

The SBWP is the local chapter of the National Writing Project (NWP). Based on the “teachers teaching teachers” model, this grant-funded initiative enables area teachers to come together and discuss literacy issues related to best practices in the classroom. Through year-round programming that includes workshops, graduate courses, summer institutes, and guest lectures, the SBWP creates opportunities for teachers’ personal development and information that they can pass on to their colleagues and students. The SBWP was led in 2020–2021 by SVSU’s Writing Center director, Helen Raica-Klotz, and by Merrill High School teacher Allison Jordan.

On the following pages, we share some of the writing generated by the Center for Community Writing through its contests, workshops, and various community initiatives.

Light in the Dark

Kaili Goodrich

Still Life Author



Kaili Goodrich is a ten-year-old fourth grader at North Elementary in Birch Run, Michigan. She lives with her mom, dad, and four purry fuzzballs. When she's not reading, Kaili loves writing and building worlds and using her imagination. She is new to the art of poetry and is enjoying it.

I see a truck on fire;
I see a car on fire.

What can I do?

Our world is falling to ruins
right in front of me and you.
Our world falls down, but we climb up;
the old dog dies but life brings a pup.

So don't get lost in our world's ruins,
our world's dark ruins,
our world's lonely ruins.

Grief is important—
grief is a part,
a part of who I am.

I look back and see
happy memories.
I look forward and see
a future for me.

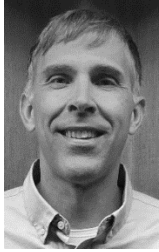
I won't get lost tonight.

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Goodnight Moon

Mark Brenner

Still Life Author



A resident of Saginaw, Michigan, Mark Brenner graduated from SVSU with a M.A.T. in Reading in 2012. Mark teaches 6th–8th grade ELA at Saginaw’s Holy Cross Lutheran School. He is also a board member of the Saginaw Bay Writing Project and regularly participates in the poets’ group at the SVSU Community Writing Center. He is happy to be published in *Writing@SVSU*, so people can learn about a cherished time that he shared with his boys, whom he loves with all his heart.

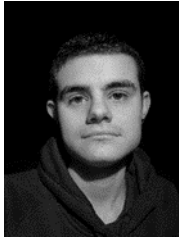
That’s us reading *Goodnight Moon*.
Those are your yellow SpongeBob pajamas,
and that’s your little brother’s stinky blue blanky.
There we are saying goodnight to the moon again. Three of us.
Outside—cold and dark.
Stay here, boys.
That’s you laughing at the cow jumping over the moon.
Those are your last sips of water.
There you two visit the bathroom again, scampering down the hallway.
That’s your little brother climbing over you, back into your car bed.
There you are pointing at the two little kittens.
That’s us whispering “hush.”
There you are, tugging your ear and closing your eyes.
There we are hugging goodnight.
Goodnight dirty socks and underwear.
Goodnight doggie and kitty and mommy.
Goodnight Legos and Lincoln Logs.
Goodnight Buzz and Woody.
There I am, looking in your old bedroom, looking out at the moon alone,
Grey, rocky, and dark, waxing crescent—
Goodnight my boys.

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Matthew Sauer

Community Writing Center Participant



Matthew Sauer is an 18-year-old poet born and raised in Saginaw, Michigan. He first developed a love for writing in high school through the English concentration program at Saginaw Arts and Sciences Academy. Thanks to the mentorship of teachers Jared Morningstar and Karen Horwath, Matt has won multiple writing awards and worked with local groups such as the River Junction Poets, Michigan State University's Center for Poetry, and Alien Buddha Press, and he has been featured in SVSU's *Still Life* publication. Currently, he is a student at Delta College with plans to complete an English degree at a four-year university. While unsure of where he'll end up in the long run, Matt knows he wants anything he does to give back to the Tri-Cities that shaped him.

The following poem was one of the winners of a writing contest sponsored by the SVU Center for Community Writing and Marshall Fredericks Sculpture Museum. Participants were asked to write a poem inspired by one of the pieces in the 2020 exhibit of work by Michigan artist Mark Beltchenko. Matthew took his inspiration from Beltchenko's sculpture *Good Ole Number 45*, which was part of a series called *Not My President*.

for the record, we wanted a good ole 45,
that classic American sound,
antique values, scratched and splintered
but the warped distortion of tin-can speakers stays enough to satisfy the deafened believers listening to
the same looped segment
of America's empty sentiments.



Spotlight on... Visiting Writers

As part of its mission to enhance the life of the community in which it resides, SVSU is committed to bringing guest speakers to campus. Sponsored by individual departments and colleges, Student Life, the President's Office, student organizations and student support services, among other campus groups, these visitors create a richer learning environment at SVSU and speak to a host of interests and issues we face locally and globally.

Some of our visiting writers come as part of Voices in the Valley, a longstanding tradition at SVSU that profiles the work of creative writers. Dr. Arra Ross of the English Department currently directs the program and works to bring established and emerging voices to campus. Past guests of Voices in the Valley include poets Jamaal May, Tracy K. Smith, and Carolyn Forché; short story writer and novelist Peter Ho Davies; and memoirist Anne-Marie Oomen.

Each year a writer also visits SVSU in connection with the Stuart D. and Vernice M. Gross Award for Literature. The Gross Award carries a prize of \$1,000 and honors publications, whether historical writing, fiction, or drama, linked to Michigan or the larger region. Mr. Gross was a published author, a historian who focused on the Saginaw area, and a reporter for *The Saginaw News*, as well as a former employee of SVSU.

Two of our visiting authors from the 2020–2021 school year have been gracious enough to let us reprint some of their work in *Writing@SVSU* on the following pages.

Spell to Turn the World Around

Kathryn Smith



Kathryn Smith is the author of the poetry collections *Self-Portrait with Cephalopod* (Milkweed Editions, 2021), winner of the 2019 Jake Adam York Prize, and *Book of Exodus* (Scablands Books, 2017), as well as the chapbook *Chosen Companions of the Goblin*, winner of the 2018 Open Country Press Chapbook Contest. Her poems have appeared in *Gettysburg Review*, *Fugue*, *Poetry Northwest*, *The Journal*, *Mid-American Review*, and elsewhere, and she has received an Allied Arts Foundation award, a Spokane Arts Grant Award, and a Pushcart Special Mention. She lives in Spokane, where she also makes collage and mixed media art.

Begin each day collecting birds battered
in the night by creatures bent on malice.
Give thanks for dew and viscera's bright litter,
leaves brought down by drought and feathers damp

with blood. When you say you love fall, be sure
you know it's death's season. Take shallow
breaths, reminding you of summer's smoke,
a wildfire bruise that locked us all inside.

Cling to warm October afternoons
as vow to live a waterless winter.
Drive cross-state to the firefighter's grave
and read the poem he memorized at 17,

three years before flames overtook the vehicle
he rode in, trying to reach disaster.

Calm Morning

Adam Clay



Adam Clay is the author of *To Make Room for the Sea* (Milkweed Editions, 2020), *Stranger* (Milkweed Editions, 2016), *A Hotel Lobby at the Edge of the World* (Milkweed Editions, 2012), and *The Wash* (Parlor Press, 2006). He is editor-in-chief of *Mississippi Review*, a co-editor of *Typo Magazine*, and a Book Review Editor for *Kenyon Review*. He directs the Center for Writers at the University of Southern Mississippi.

The road turned
to river yesterday
for a while
and the pond
in the backyard
will subside today
to mud and silt.
In the middle
of a storm it's odd,
but I feel maybe
more human
than ever, the way
the wind can
carry, the way
the meteorologist
repeats himself
endlessly for lack
of words, and I
suppose we're
living in a hymn
constructed for
this view of morning
out the window
at the sky past
the kitchen sink,
another day
my feelings and feet
to carry me wondering
what color the sky
will be tonight and if
I'll even remember this
moment right now a
few hours from where
I'm sitting, the smoke
of thought always
gone too soon.



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