

**VOLUME 31**  
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**“Watch Out for the First Amendment:  
Watchtower Bible and Tract Society,  
Personal Distribution and the  
Forgotten Right to Receive”**

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**“Competitive and Cooperative  
Contexts in Intercollegiate Forensics:  
A Phenomenological  
Investigation of Motivation”**

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**“The American Catholic Bishops’ Letter  
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**“The Stories They Tell – A Technophobic  
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**“A Sabbatical Journey from the  
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Communication Theory Course:  
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for Interaction”**

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**“Joseph Hill: A Listening and Group  
Cooperation Activity”**

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**COMMUNICATION & THEATER ASSOCIATION OF MINNESOTA**  
**FORUM**



**COMMUNICATION AND THEATER ASSOCIATION  
OF MINNESOTA JOURNAL**

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**COMMUNICATION AND THEATER ASSOCIATION  
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## CTAM JOURNAL MISSION STATEMENT

The *Communication and Theater Association of Minnesota Journal* (CTAMJ) is the scholarly journal of the Communication and Theater Association of Minnesota (CTAM). It is an outlet for articles related to issues of discipline-related importance including articles discussing innovative teaching methods. All theoretical and methodological approaches are welcome. The *CTAMJ* encourages contributions from scholars and practitioners, who comprise all segments of the journal's readership, including K-12 educators, graduate school, community college, and college or university groups. The *Journal* welcomes theoretical and applied articles from both the theater and communication disciplines. Capable scholars in the appropriate field will blindly review all general articles.

No work will be accepted or rejected purely on the basis of its methodology or subject. Author sex, race, ethnic background, geographical location or work affiliation (secondary/college level, department, etc.) of the author(s) are never considered in making editorial judgments. The demands of the disciplines of Speech Communication and Theater are key factors in the editorial judgments made. However, when making editorial decisions, all attempts are made to balance these demands with the needs and interests of the *Journal's* readers.

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- to provide an outlet for the expression of diverse ideas,
- to publish high quality scholarship in the disciplines of Speech Communication and Theater,
- to meet the journal-related needs of CTAM and its members.

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The call for manuscripts goes out in the fall of the year and the deadline for submissions is in March of the following year. Details of how to submit are given in the call which is sent to all members, and departments, and announced in *SPECTRA*. Book review ideas should be queried with the editor in advance of the submission date. Book reviews are generally published if accepted on a space available basis. All articles are read anonymously by at least two associate editors. All author identification markings are removed from the articles and no editor reads the work of a colleague. Associate editors may submit articles to the *Journal*, but their work must go through the process of blind review, just as any other submitter. The *Journal* editor facilitates the process and makes final decisions based on the associate editors' recommendations and comments. If there are any questions about the process, please direct them to the *Journal* editor.

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### CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS VOLUME 32, SUMMER 2005

The *Communication and Theater Association of Minnesota Journal* is seeking manuscripts for Volume 32, scheduled for publication in summer 2005. The journal welcomes theoretical and applied articles and teaching suggestions from theater, communication and forensics professionals from secondary and collegiate levels. All general articles will undergo a blind review process by a minimum of two reviewers. Manuscripts may be submitted for one of two sections: General Interest research and essays, and a Teacher's Workbook. Contact the editor concerning book review proposals.

Authors should submit one digital version of their manuscript either by e-mail or on CD. The work should be submitted as a Microsoft Word document. A separate digital title page which includes institution affiliation and location about the author should accompany the document. Care should be taken that author identification has been removed from the paper itself. At the beginning of the document, authors should include an abstract of the article. **While APA style is preferred, manuscripts submitted with MLA style will be accepted.**

Authors are reminded to keep the *Journal* audience in mind: students and teachers at the high school, community college, private college, and university levels. All manuscripts must be submitted before March 31, 2005. Please send documents and any questions to Nanette Johnson-Curiskis, Editor, *Communication and Theater Association of Minnesota Journal*, Department of Speech Communication, Minnesota State University, Mankato, Mankato, MN 56001; 507-389-1998, nanette.johnson-curiskis@mnsu.edu

***Watch Out for the First Amendment:  
Watchtower Bible and Tract Society,  
Personal Distribution and the Forgotten Right to Receive***

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***Abstract***

*For over sixty years, the Supreme Court has provided constitutional protection for the personal distribution of literature. This protection sprang in part from the right to receive, which provides constitutional protection for those wishing to have access to a speaker's message. In 2002, the Court considered the constitutional acceptability of the Village of Stratton's registration scheme in Watchtower Bible and Tract Society v. Village of Stratton, 122 S. Ct. 2080. In an 8-1 decision, with only Justice Rehnquist dissenting, Justice Stevens argued that the Court's treatment of personal distribution cases established constitutional protection for the right to "speak" in this channel of communication. He also implicitly recognized the right not to speak. What his analysis forgot to do was consider the right to receive. This analysis explores the various features of Watchtower, including the forgotten right to receive.*

As the 2004 election season approaches there will be a flurry of campaign materials inundating my home. Of course, messages conveyed through the electronic media of television and radio will be pervasive. And then there will be the mail, not just the typical glossy postcard, but now campaign letters hidden inside of what appeared to be personal mail. Candidates will even come to campus to speak. In my small town on the western edge of Minnesota, there will be personal distributions of leaflets sometimes by the hand of the candidate and other times by campaign workers.

Remember the weeks before the last election? We all received campaign messages through a number of channels of communication: mass media, snail-mail, public speaking, personal distribution. For the less well financed or less well known, personal distribution could be the ideal channel of communication. For more than sixty years, the Supreme Court has rejected attempts by governmental bodies to limit door-to-door leafleting based on the personal distribution of literature and in part on the right to receive. Given the long standing support the Court has provided such communication, many may believe that this area was settled case law. But the Court returned to the issue in *Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc. v. Village of Stratton*, 536 U.S. 150 (2002). This essay considers the facts of the case, the Supreme Court's decision, the personal distribution precedent line, the forgotten right to receive, and the implications of the Court's treatment for subsequent communication law.

## Facts of the Case

Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, coordinators of the preaching activity for the Jehovah's Witnesses, challenged several sections of the Village of Stratton's regulations concerning uninvited distribution and solicitation on private property (*Watchtower Bible*, 2002, p. 2083). Stratton prohibited individuals from approaching a residence for any "cause" without a permit (*Watchtower Bible*, 2002, p. 2083). Individuals obtained a permit, without cost, from the mayor's office. Permits were routinely given. Once issued, individuals were required to carry permits and display them to any police officer or resident upon request (*Watchtower Bible*, 2002, p. 2084). The application for a permit was detailed requiring the name and home address of the registrant, the registrant's residence for the previous five years, a description of the nature and purpose of cause being solicited for, name and address of the employer or affiliated organization and their credentials showing the "exact relationship and authority of the Applicant." Also required was the length of time of the canvass, specific address of every residence the canvasser intended to visit, and other information that might prove necessary (*Watchtower Bible*, 2002, p. 2084). The Stratton ordinance also specified the conditions for denying or revoking a permit. Such conditions existed when incomplete information was provided on the registration form, misrepresentation existed on the registration form, fraud was committed while conducting the canvass, or violation of other provisions of the ordinance or state law including trespassing, or the registrant ceases to have the qualifications described in the application (*Watchtower Bible*, 2002, p. 2084). Thus Stratton's ordinance required a complete and detailed registration form in order to obtain a permit, and provided detailed reasons for denying or revoking a permit.

Watchtower Bible did not object to those sections of the ordinance that provided residents with a way of prohibiting all solicitors, even those holding permits, through registration with the mayor and the posting of a "No Solicitation" sign (*Watchtower Bible*, 2002, p. 2084). Members of the Jehovah's Witnesses rejected the view that they engaged in solicitation since they do not charge for their materials, asking only for a donation. They did stipulate they would honor "No Solicitation" signs (*Watchtower Bible*, p. 2085). The "No Solicitation Registration Form" specified nineteen exceptions to the no solicitation requirement the resident could choose:

1. Scouting Organizations
2. Camp Fire Girls
3. Children's Sports Organizations
4. Children's Solicitation for Supporting School Activities
5. Volunteer Fire Department
6. Jehovah's Witnesses
7. Political Candidates
8. Beauty Products Sales People
9. Watkins Sales
10. Christmas Carolers

11. Parcel Delivery
12. Little League
13. Trick or Treaters during the Halloween Season
14. Police
15. Campaigners
16. Newspaper Carriers
17. Persons Affiliated with Stratton Church
18. Food Salesmen [sic]
19. Salesperson (*Watchtower Bible*, 2002, p. 2085)

Only thirty-two of Stratton's 278 residents filed forms. One individual checked seventeen exemptions excluding only numbers 6 and 7, Jehovah's Witnesses and political candidates (*Watchtower Bible*, 2002, p. 2084-2085). The Village of Stratton clearly took seriously its desire to protect residents from visitors, including trick or treaters during the Halloween season and Christmas carolers, presumably during the Christmas season. One could be puzzled why the ordinance designed to control the behavior of "uninvited" persons, also controlled Parcel Delivery and Newspaper Carriers who brought prepaid items.

The Sixth Circuit District Court of Ohio accepted Stratton's explanation that the ordinance was designed to protect residents "'from 'flim flam' con artists who prey on small town populations'" (*Watchtower Bible*, 2002, p. 2085). The District Court found most provisions of the ordinance legitimate, content-neutral regulations that did not impinge on the First Amendment rights of those bringing suit. In finding for Stratton, the District Court required three changes in the provision of the ordinances in question. First, individuals could no longer be required to specify every residence they intended to visit. Rather, Stratton supplied a list of willing recipients. Second, the section on purpose could be answered with "'Jehovah's Witness ministry'" (*Watchtower Bible*, 2002, p. 2085 quoting *Watchtower Bible*, 1999, p. 738). Finally, the District Court found that limiting canvassing to the hours before 5 p.m. was too restrictive and should be replaced with a standard of greater reasonableness (*Watchtower Bible*, 2002, p. 2085). Given these changes, the district court for the Southern District of Ohio found the Village of Stratton regulations constitutionally acceptable.

The Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit affirmed the decision of the District Court finding that the ordinance was content-neutral and rejecting both free exercise and free speech discussion in various case law was not binding (*Watchtower Bible*, 2002, p. 2085). Further, the court rejected the contention that the ordinance was overbroad finding Stratton's interest to overcome the anonymous speech claims that relied on the Supreme Court's decision of *McIntyre v. Ohio Elections Commission*. (*Watchtower Bible*, 2002, p. 2086). Finally, the Court of Appeals distinguished *Watchtower* from previous cases concerning the distribution of materials by Jehovah's Witnesses because *Watchtower* did not involve an absolute prohibition and because the ordinance was not left to the discretion of a city official (*Watch-*

*tower Bible*, 2002, p. 2086). Judge Ronald Lee Gilman, writing in part in dissent, found that the Stratton regulations did restrict speech activity without showing real harm or a demonstration of usefulness (*Watchtower Bible*, 2002, p. 2086). The Supreme Court granted a writ of certiorari thus agreeing to hear the case.

## The Supreme Court's Previous Treatment of Personal Distribution

Justice John Paul Stevens, writing for a majority of the Court, recognized that the Court had provided protection for the personal distribution of literature for over fifty years (*Watchtower Bible*, 2002, p. 2986). For Justice John Paul Stevens the line of cases began with the Court's decision in *Lovell v. Griffin* (1938) considering the absolute prohibition of the distribution of any written materials within the City of Griffin, Georgia, without permission (*Lovell v. Griffin*, 1938, p. 447). The Court determined that the ordinance broadly swept across all methods of distribution of all types of literature (*Lovell v. Griffin*, 1938, p. 451). Chief Justice Charles E. Hughes, writing for a unanimous Court, concluded,

The liberty of the press is not confined to newspapers and periodicals. It necessarily embraces pamphlets and leaflets. These indeed have been historic weapons in the defense of liberty, as the pamphlets of Thomas Paine and others in our own history abundantly attest. The press in its historic connotation comprehends every sort of publication which affords a vehicle of information and opinion. (*Lovell v. Griffin*, 1938, p. 452).

The Court concluded in *Lovell v. Griffin* (1938), that the ordinance in question, requiring the absolute prohibition of the distribution of any written materials, was an unconstitutional violation of free press.

The Court again considered the constitutional protection afforded personal distribution of literature in *Schneider v. State* (1939) examining four cases concerning municipal ordinances prohibiting distribution of literature on either the streets or door-to-door. Justice Owen J. Roberts, writing for a nearly unanimous Court, found, "We are of the opinion that the purpose to keep the streets clean and of good appearance is insufficient to justify an ordinance which prohibits a person rightfully on a public street from handing literature to one willing to receive it" (*Schneider v. State*, 1939, p. 162). Justice Owen Roberts reasoned, "To require a censorship through license which makes impossible the free and unhampered distribution of pamphlets strikes at the very heart of the constitutional guarantees" (*Schneider v. State*, 1939, p. 164). Justice James C. McReynolds would have affirmed the convictions of those appealing in these cases. For the other members of the Court, like the members of the *Lovell* Court, the personal distribution of literature was a center of constitutional liberty.

Particularly on point for the eventual decision of *Watchtower*, Justice Owen Roberts found,

Conceding that fraudulent appeals may be made in the name of

charity and religion, we hold a municipality cannot, for this reason, require all who wish to disseminate ideas to present them first to police authorities for their consideration and approval, with a discretion in the police to say some ideas may, while others may not, be carried to the homes of citizens; some persons may, while others may not, disseminate information from house to house (*Schneider v. State*, 1939, p. 164).

Justice Owen Roberts, and those who joined him, recognized what the *Watchtower* Court would recognize sixty years later that the ideas of citizens cannot be subject to police scrutiny and approval before they can be disseminated.

A year after *Schneider v. State* (1939), the Court again considered personal distribution of religious materials by Jehovah's Witnesses in *Cantwell v. Connecticut* (1940) regarding a state statute that required individuals wishing to distribute materials to be approved by the "secretary of the public welfare council" (p. 302). Justice Owen Roberts, writing for a unanimous Court, focused on the free exercise of religion and the freedom to communicate holding that both were violated,

In the realm of religious faith, and in that of political belief, sharp differences arise. In both fields the tenets of one may seem the rankest error to his neighbor. To persuade others to his own point of view, the pleader, as we know, at times, resorts to exaggeration, to vilification of men who have been or are, prominent in church or state, and even to false statements. But the people of this nation have ordained in light of history, that, in spite of the probability of excesses and abuses, these liberties are, in the long view, essential to enlightened opinion and right conduct on the part of citizens of a democracy (*Cantwell v. Connecticut*, 1940, p. 310).

Justice Owen Roberts realized the distribution of unpopular messages was essential to the full functioning of a constitutional democracy.

Three years passed before the Court again confronted these issues. *Jamison v. Texas* (1943) concerned a Dallas municipal ordinance absolutely prohibiting the distribution of handbills. Justice Hugo Black, writing for a unanimous Court, Justice Wiley Rutledge taking no part in the case, found that,

[O]ne who is rightfully on a street which the state has left open to the public carries with him there as elsewhere the constitutional right to express his views in an orderly fashion. This right extends to the communication of ideas by handbills and literature as well as by the spoken word. (*Jamison v. Texas*, 1943, p. 416).

Justice Hugo Black recognized the process of communication, and therefore the protection afforded communication, was not altered by the channel of communication.

The Court's treatment of the issues raised by the personal distribution of literature became more fractured in the treatment of the issue in *Martin v. City of Struthers* (1943). This case explored the constitutionality of a municipal ordinance that



forbade those distributing literature from summoning residents to the door. Justice Hugo Black wrote the opinion of the Court joined by Justices Frank Murphy and Owen Roberts. After recognizing the potential harms from personal distribution, Justice Hugo Black reasoned,

While door to door distributors of literature may be either a nuisance or a blind for criminal activities, they may also be useful members of society engaged in the dissemination of ideas in accordance with the best tradition of free discussion. The widespread use of this method of communication by many groups espousing various causes attests to its major importance....Door to door distribution of circulars is essential to the poorly financed causes of little people (*Martin v. City of Struthers*, 1943, pp. 145-146).

Justice Hugo Black, focusing on freedom of speech, recognized the important role personal distribution plays in both the religious and political realms.

Justice Frank Murphy, concurring in the opinion, was joined by Justices William O. Douglas and Wiley B. Rutledge. Justice Frank Murphy focused on the religious dimensions of the case. He wrote, "It is our proud achievement to have demonstrated that unity and strength are best accomplished, not by enforced orthodoxy of views, but by diversity of opinion through the fullest possible measure of freedom of conscience and thought" (*Martin v. City of Struthers*, 1943, p. 150). For Justice Frank Murphy, protection of the religious practice of those distributing literature on behalf of the Jehovah's Witnesses was of prime concern.

Justice Felix Frankfurter dissented, focusing on the right of privacy and issues of safety. He reasoned, "The lack of privacy and the hazards to peace of mind and body caused by people living not in individual houses but crowded together in large human beehives, as they so widely do, are facts of modern living which cannot be ignored" (*Martin v. City of Struthers*, 1943, pp.152-153). For Justice Felix Frankfurter, those in the majority are applying Constitutional principles without due consideration for the facts of life in the industrialized community of Struthers.

Justice Stanley F. Reed also dissented, joined by Justices Owen Roberts and Robert H. Jackson. Justice Stanley Reed wrote,

While I appreciate the necessity of watchfulness to avoid abridgments of our freedom of expression, it is impossible for me to discover in this trivial town police regulation a violation of the First Amendment. No ideas are being suppressed. No censorship is involved. The freedom to teach or preach by word or book is unabridged, save only the right to call a householder to the door of his house to receive the summoner's message (*Martin v. City of Struthers*, 1943, pp. 154-155, emphasis added.)

Justice Stanley Reed found no First Amendment right to be implicated since the ordinance did not forbid the distribution of literature, only the summoning of the resident to the door.

The day the Court announced *Martin v. City of Struthers* (1943), it also an-

nounced the decision of *Murdock v. Pennsylvania* (1943). *Murdock* involved a forty-year old Jeannette, Pennsylvania, ordinance requiring those wishing to distribute literature to buy a license to do so. Petitioners were Jehovah's Witnesses who solicited small sums for their books and pamphlets. The books and pamphlets cost more than what they were sold for (*Murdock v. Pennsylvania*, 1943, p. 106, 107). Justice William Douglas, writing for the Court joined by Justices Harlan Stone, Hugo Black, Frank Murphy, and Wiley Rutledge, focused on the religious, speech, and press rights which could only be practiced with the paying of a fee (*Murdock v. Pennsylvania*, 1943, p. 108).

The right to use the press for expressing one's views is not to be measured by the protection afforded commercial handbills. It should be remembered that the pamphlets of Thomas Paine were not distributed free of charge. It is plain that a religious organization needs funds to remain a going concern. But an itinerant evangelist, however misguided or intolerant he may be, does not become a mere book agent by selling the Bible or religious tracts to help defray his expenses or to sustain him. Freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of religion are available to all, not merely to those who can pay their own way (*Murdock v. Pennsylvania*, 1943, p. 111).

Justice William Douglas recognized the nature of the license fee as a tax on rights protected by the First Amendment (*Murdock v. Pennsylvania*, 1943, p. 112-113). To a contemporary scholar, few methods would so insidiously deny the practice of Constitutional guarantees as the tax imposed by Jeannette, Pennsylvania for decades before it was challenged.

And yet, there were dissents. Justice Stanley Reed joined by Justices Owen Roberts, Felix Frankfurter, and Robert Jackson focused on this question, "Is subjection to nondiscriminatory, nonexcessive taxation in the distribution of religious literature, a prohibition of the exercise of religion or an abridgment of the freedom of the press?" (*Murdock v. Pennsylvania*, 1943, p.121). The answer is clearly "no" when he argued, "'Free' cannot be held to be without cost but rather its meaning must accord with the freedom guaranteed. 'Free' means a privilege to print or pray without permission and without accounting to authority for one's actions" (*Murdock v. Pennsylvania*, 1943, p. 122). After an extensive analysis, he reasoned that the framers of the Constitution never intended to limit taxation of civil liberties. For Justice Stanley Reed the issue became the ability of government to tax, not of First Amendment freedoms.

Justice Felix Frankfurter joined by Justices Stanley Reed, and Robert Jackson wrote in dissent. Justice Felix Frankfurter also focused on the issue of taxes. He reasoned,

A clergyman, no less than a judge, is a citizen. And not only in time of war would neither willingly enjoy immunity from the obligations of citizenship. It is only fair that he also who preaches the word of God should share in the costs of the benefits pro-

vided by government to him as well as to the other members of the community (*Murdock v. Pennsylvania*, 1943, p. 135).

For Justice Felix Frankfurter, the issue concerned whether the city provided a service for which it could require payment (*Murdock v. Pennsylvania*, 1943, p. 140). Justice Felix Frankfurter clearly believed that cities could.

Almost three decades passed before the Court again considered this issue in *Hynes v. Borough of Oradell* (1976). The municipal ordinance at issue required any individual canvassing or selling for any civic, political, or religious group to register with the police department in advance for identification. Chief Justice Warren Burger wrote for himself and six others. Justice John Paul Stevens took no part in the case. Justice William Rehnquist dissented.

Chief Justice Warren Burger recognized that the tension in this case existed between protection for communication and protection of privacy (*Hynes v. Borough of Oradell*, 1976, pp. 617-620). Ultimately, Chief Justice Warren Burger found that the ordinance in question was too vague to withstand constitutional scrutiny (*Hynes v. Borough of Oradell*, 1976, pp. 620-622). Chief Justice Warren Burger found that the ordinance, as drawn, provided insufficient guidance about who was required to register, how to register, and how to remedy errors in registration.

Justice William Brennan, joined by Justice Thurgood Marshall, concurred in part. Justice William Brennan agreed with Chief Justice Warren Burger on the fatality of vagueness for this ordinance, but disagreed that vagueness was the only difficulty faced by an ordinance of this type. He argued,

In considering the validity of laws regulating door-to-door solicitation and canvassing, Mr. Justice Black, speaking for the Court in *Martin v. City of Struthers*, 319 U.S. 141 (1943), properly recognized that municipalities have an important interest in keeping neighborhoods safe and peaceful. But unlike the Court today, he did not stop there. Rather, he emphasized the other side of the equation—that door-to-door solicitation and canvassing is a method of communication essential to the preservation of our free society (*Hynes v. Borough of Oradell*, 1976, pp. 224-225).

Justice William Brennan was particularly troubled by the ordinance's direct attack on anonymous speech (*Hynes v. Borough of Oradell*, 1976, pp. 225-226). He further realized the ordinance threatened open participation in the political process by forcing campaign volunteers to register. He wrote, "Offensive to the sensibilities of private citizens, identification requirements such as the Oradell ordinance, even in their least intrusive form, must discourage that participation" (*Hynes v. Borough of Oradell*, 1976, p. 627). Justice William Brennan found vagueness was not the only fatal flaw to the constitutional acceptability of *Hynes*.

Justice William Rehnquist dissented. He accepted the Court's reasoning in showing that the ordinance as drawn was constitutionally acceptable. He disagreed that the ordinance suffered from vagueness. This body of cases demonstrates the constraints of the Supreme Court's treatment of personal distribution of literature.

## The Supreme Court's Decision

The Supreme Court rendered a nearly unanimous decision, only one Justice dissented, in *Watchtower Bible v. Stratton* filing four different opinions. Justice John Paul Stevens wrote for the majority of the Court joined by Justices Sandra Day O'Connor, Anthony Kennedy, David Souter, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and Stephen Breyer. Justice Stephen Breyer filed a concurring opinion joined by Justices David Souter and Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Justice Antonin Scalia filed an opinion concurring in the judgment of the Court, joined by Justice Clarence Thomas. Chief Justice William Rehnquist filed the dissenting opinion.

### Majority Opinion

Justice John Paul Stevens writing for himself and five others focused on prior case law establishing the constitutional protection for the personal distribution of literature. For Justice John Paul Stevens, these cases demonstrated both the "value of the speech involved" and "the historical importance of door-to-door canvassing and pamphleteering for the dissemination of ideas" (*Watchtower Bible*, 2002, p. 2087). He realized that personal distribution of literature could be limited by the interests a community possesses especially when solicitation of funds was involved (*Watchtower Bible*, 2002, p. 2087). Finally, Justice John Paul Stevens recognized that more than just the rights of Jehovah's Witnesses have been protected in these cases (*Watchtower Bible*, 2002, p. 2088). Justice John Paul Stevens then turns to the specific ordinance at issue.

Justice John Paul Stevens first turned to the sweep of the ordinance finding it covered both religious and political speech. He argued,

The mere fact that the ordinance covers so much speech raises constitutional concerns. It is offensive-not only to the values protected by the First Amendment, but to the very notion of a free society-that in the context of everyday public discourse a citizen must first inform the government of her desire to speak to her neighbors and then obtain a permit to do so. . . . a law requiring a permit to engage in such speech constitutes a dramatic departure from our national heritage and constitutional tradition (*Watchtower Bible*, 2002, p. 2089).

The departures from previous constitutional tradition include the protection for anonymous speech supported by *McIntyre v. Ohio Elections Commission* (1995); the imposition of a burden on those having religious or patriotic objections to applying for a license; banning of spontaneous speech through a method analogous to the licensing tax found in *Grosjean v. American Press Co.* (1936). However, the breadth of the ordinance was not the only reason for the Court's findings.

Justice John Paul Stevens also argued the ordinance was not tailored to address the stated interests of the Village of Stratton. Stratton had three stated interests: "the prevention of fraud, the prevention of crime and the protection of residents' privacy" (*Watchtower*, 2002, p. 2089). Justice John Paul Stevens found that while

an interest in fraud prevention might apply to commercial solicitation, that that interest is not raised when the ordinance covers religious and political canvassing. The interest of privacy was addressed by an unchallenged section of the ordinance allowing for the posting of "No Solicitation" signs. While not explicitly recognizing the right, Justice John Paul Stevens implicitly recognized the importance of protecting the right not to receive (*Watchtower*, 2002, p. 2091).

Justice John Paul Stevens then turned to the issue of crime prevention, a central concern of Chief Justice William Rehnquist's dissent. He concluded,

[I]t seems unlikely that the absence of a permit would preclude criminals from knocking on doors and engaging in conversations not covered by the ordinance. They might, for example, ask for directions or permission to use the telephone, or pose as surveyors or census takers. Or they might register under a false name with impunity because the ordinance contains no provision for verifying an applicant's identity or organizational credentials (*Watchtower*, 2002, p. 2091).

While undoubtedly important, Justice John Paul Stevens realized the permit ordinance at issue in *Watchtower* (2002) was not capable of controlling crime. For Justice John Paul Stevens, and those who joined him, the ordinance was an unconstitutional intrusion in First Amendment rights of speakers, without a countervailing state interest to save it.

Justice Stephen Breyer, joined by Justices David Souter and Ruth Bader Ginsburg, wrote a concurring opinion centering on the issue of crime prevention arguing there was no discernable link between Stratton's ordinance and the prevention of crime.

Justice Antonin Scalia, joined by Justice Clarence Thomas, wrote an opinion concurring in the judgment of the Court accepting many of the reasons set forth by the Court, but not all. Justice Antonin Scalia objected to the Court's assertion that those having religious or "patriotic" objections might be silenced rather than apply for a license. As to the religious claim, Justice Antonin Scalia wrote, "Whereas the free-exercise claim, if acknowledged, would merely exempt Jehovah's Witnesses from the licensing requirement, the free-speech claim exempts everybody, thanks to the Jehovah's Witnesses (*Watchtower*, 2002, p. 2092). As to the objection of those having "patriotic" objections, Justice Antonin Scalia wrote,

As for the Court's fairy-tale category of "patriotic citizens,"...who would rather be silenced than licensed in a manner that the Constitution (but for their "patriotic" objection) would permit: If our free-speech jurisprudence is to be determined by the predicted behavior of such crackpots, we are in a sorry state indeed (*Watchtower*, 2002, p. 2092).

For Justices Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas a personal objection, religious or political, without more would be insufficient to establish a claim of unconstitutionality.

Chief Justice William Rehnquist wrote as the sole dissenter. He argued that the Court abandoned case law spanning sixty years which allowed for permit require-

ments when the licensing body possessed no discretion to reject the application. Chief Justice William Rehnquist spent considerable time describing the events that led to the Hanover murders in 2002. The Hanover murders concerned the killing of two Dartmouth faculty members who admitted their assailants to their home believing the assailants were conducting an environmental survey. The couple was then stabbed to death (*Watchtower*, 2002, p. 2093). Chief Justice William Rehnquist believed if a permit requirement had been in place in Hanover these murders might have been prevented (*Watchtower*, 2002, p. 2096). Chief Justice William Rehnquist argued that the Stratton ordinance suffered from none of the infirmities that condemned the earlier distribution cases finding the potential to prevent crime sufficient justification to accept this narrowly drawn ordinance. He concluded,

In light of today's decision depriving Stratton residents of the degree of accountability and safety that the permit requirement provides, more and more residents may decide to play these ["No Solicitation"] signs in their yards and cut off door-to-door communication altogether (*Watchtower*, 2002, p. 2097).

Chief Justice William Rehnquist believed that by denying Stratton residents the right to require all canvassers to acquire permits, the Court denied them a Constitutionally legitimate way to prevent crime perhaps resulting in even less speech than under the permit regulations.

### **The Forgotten Right to Receive**

Justice Steven's treatment of *Watchtower v. Village of Stratton* supported both the rights of speakers to send messages anonymously, spontaneously, unhindered and even the right not to receive. Surprisingly, the Court failed to consider the rights of receivers. This omission was particularly stunning since very early personal distribution cases were some of the first to establish the right to receive. We now turn to that line of cases.

Implicit recognition of the right to receive appeared in the Court's 1939 decision of *Schneider v. State* concerning four cases involving a variety of personal distribution, requirements. Justice Owen Roberts, writing for the Court, reasoned, "We are of the opinion that the purpose to keep the streets clean and of good appearance is insufficient to justify an ordinance which prohibits a person rightfully on a public street from handing literature to one willing to receive it (*Schneider v. State*, 1939, p. 162, emphasis added). Here the Court implicitly recognizes the entire process of communication involved in the personal distribution of literature, including the right to receive.

*Martin v. Struthers* (1943), a mere four years later, provide the first explicit recognition of the right to receive, in any channel of communication. Justice Hugo Black wrote, "This freedom embraces the right to distribute literature, *Lovell v. Griffin*, 303 U.S. 444, 452, and necessarily protects the right to receive it (*Martin v. Struthers*, 1943, p. 143, emphasis added). Justice Hugo Black recognized that

protection for the right to receive was essential. In fact, he said just that when he concluded, "Freedom to distribute information to every citizen wherever he desires to receive it is so clearly vital to the preservation of a free society, that putting aside reasonable police and health regulations of time and manner of distribution, it must be fully preserved" (*Martin v. Struthers*, 1943, pp. 146-147). Over sixty years ago, the Supreme Court explicitly recognized that without the right to receive the right to distribute would be meaningless. In essence, in the personal distribution channel of communication, without both senders and receivers there could be no communication.

In a case not cited by Justice John Paul Stevens in *Watchtower*, the Court explored the right to distribute literature in a company owned town in *Marsh v. Alabama* (1946). Justice Hugo Black wrote, "Whether a corporation or a municipality owns or possesses the town the public in either case has an identical interest in the functioning of the community in such a manner that the channels of communication remain free" (*Marsh v. Alabama*, 1946, p. 507). He then remarked, "To act as good citizens, [residents of company owned towns] must be informed. In order to enable them to be properly informed their information must be uncensored" (*Marsh v. Alabama*, 1946, p. 508). Justice Hugo Black recognized good citizenship involved not only the ability to send messages, but also protection for the right to receive the messages of others.

## Implications

For over sixty years, the Supreme Court has protected a speaker's right to communicate through the personal distribution channel of communication. In an eight to one decision, the Court reaffirmed this protection in the decision of *Watchtower Bible v. Village of Stratton* (2002). Justice John Paul Stevens, writing for the Court, recognized and supported the rights of speakers and the right not to receive. Surprisingly, the Court failed to address the issues raised by the rights of receivers in the decision. This omission raised important theoretical and legal issues. Theoretically, communication scholars have long recognized the interdependent functioning of speakers and receivers. In face-to-face communication, individuals send and receive messages essentially simultaneously (Lumsden & Lumsden, 2003). When political candidates or their supporters, distribute materials to a home, they and the homeowner are engaged in the full process of communication. By failing to acknowledge the right to receive, members of the Supreme Court failed to demonstrate an understanding of the complexity of the full process of communication.

The theoretical concerns raised pale in comparison to the legal concerns this case presents for citizens. Since the 1920's when the debate emerged in earnest, individuals, lawyers, politicians, and the judiciary have struggled to understand the demands of the First Amendment's requirement, made applicable to the states through the Fourteenth Amendment, that, "Congress shall make no law...abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press (U.S. Const. Amend I). Some might argue



that the right to receive is implicitly protected by the concept of “speech.” That argument ignores the body of case law that has specifically provided protection for the right to receive. In fact, the right to receive through the personal distribution of literature has been the focus of the explicit attention in *Schneider v. State* (1939), *Martin v. Struthers* (1943), and *Marsh v. Alabama* (1946). There is nothing absolute or automatic about the Supreme Court’s protection for “speech.” In times of war or armed conflict, that protection can be reduced even further. Communication scholars can explain **why** the First Amendment protection for the freedom of speech should be extended to the right to receive because there is an inseparable connection between the speaking and receiving. Failure to specifically extend constitutional protection to one necessarily weakens the protection provided the other. First Amendment protection for freedom of speech will never be fully established and protected until the Court fully and consistently recognizes the importance of the right to receive. Until American citizens can be assured they can both send and receive messages, the process of communication the First Amendment should protect will be vulnerable. This year when that inevitable candidate arrives on our doorsteps let’s try to remember both the theoretical and legal dimensions of the personal distribution of political literature. We may not invite her in for coffee but we should thank her for dropping by.

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## ***Competitive and Cooperative Contexts in Intercollegiate Forensics: A Phenomenological Investigation of Motivation***

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### **Abstract**

*This research report addresses the motivational problems associated with competitive learning contexts in intercollegiate forensics. This investigation interviewed five students of forensics (M=2 F=3) each having four years of experience from mid-sized programs at large and small mid-western universities. A phenomenological investigation using tape-recorded, long (avg. 1hr 10min), semi-structured, face-to-face interviews was conducted to determine the structure of motivation in forensics. The interview data was transcribed verbatim yielding 120 pages of typed data. A five-phase qualitative data analysis procedure consistent with phenomenology revealed an educational dialectical contradiction between competition and cooperation played out in four motivational themes: 1) student attributions, 2) locus, 3) involvement, and 4) goal orientation. This new dialectical contradiction and its implications for research and practice are discussed.*

A considerable body of research has accumulated arguing that student motivation is best understood when studied in specific learning contexts. Students seem to have a general orientation to education (trait motivation), and specific responses to particular learning contexts (state motivation) (Brophy, 1987). Context specific investigations of student motivation have included teacher-student interaction in the classroom context (Christophel, 1990; Frymeir, 1993; Lepper, Mumme, Aspinwall, & Chabey, 1990) and specific assignments such as public speaking, writing, and reading of academic articles (Beatty, Forst & Stewart, 1986; Beatty & Payne, 1985; Marton, Entwistle & Hounsell, 1984). This investigation examines state motivation in the specific educational context of intercollegiate forensics. More specifically, this investigation is concerned with how competition in intercollegiate forensics shapes student motivation.

My experiences as a coach of intercollegiate forensics and researchers' work on motivation seem contradictory. My experience tells me that competition motivates students, yet researchers have clearly demonstrated that cooperative learning contexts motivate students more than competitive learning contexts. In fact, a meta-analysis of researchers' work on cooperative and competitive educational contexts indicates that cooperative learning produces better learning and more motivated learners than competitive learning contexts (D. Johnson, Maruyama, Johnson, Nelson, & Skon, 1981). Additionally, the relationship between extrinsic rewards and motivation is considered to be one of the clearest links in the social sciences. Rummel & Feinberg (1988) conducted a meta-analysis on the relationship be-

tween extrinsic rewards and motivation. Their analysis, which examined 45 independent studies yielding 88 effect sizes, concluded that extrinsic rewards have a detrimental effect on intrinsic motivation. Thus the research is clear, competitive and extrinsically rewarding learning contexts produce less motivated students than cooperative learning contexts.

But, how can this be true for intercollegiate forensics? My experience as a coach of intercollegiate forensics tells me that forensics' competitiveness and its extrinsic rewards can be very motivating for students. I think when students win trophies they experience a "taste" of winning and that "taste" of winning motivates them to work harder. As a coach of intercollegiate forensics however, I have also observed a significant variance in my students' motivation levels. Students who have a high level of motivation, for example, will spontaneously recite their speeches as you informally talk to them. Other students with low motivation avoid coaching, require significant direction, and take weeks to research, organize, and write new speeches. Both students are learning in the same environment (intercollegiate forensics); however, each student uniquely experiences the same learning environment.

Ames and Ames (1984) discuss how goals and student achievement converge to create different learning contexts. Ames and Ames identify three learning contexts in the classroom: cooperative, competitive, and individualistic. First, an individualistic social context exists when there is no relationship between the goal attainment of the students. Second, a cooperative social context exists when the goals of the separate students in the classroom are linked together so that one student achieves his or her goals only if other students achieve their goals. A third competitive context exists when the goals of separate students are in opposition so that a student can obtain his or her goal only if other students cannot obtain theirs'.

Intercollegiate forensics certainly contains a competitive element. Think about it this way: would intercollegiate forensics exist if competitive tournaments stopped? Other than the competitive tournament structure, what other venue would sustain forensics? The goal of a competitive tournament is to determine the best participants, thus if a student is to be successful his or her goal must be to do better than the other participants at the tournament. Clearly, the intercollegiate forensics tournament such as the National Forensics Association's National Individual Events Tournament is a competitive learning context where students' goals are in opposition. Moreover, some forensics programs have "try outs" where students compete against each other for "spots" on the team.

Regardless of researchers' work on competition, extrinsic rewards, and cooperation that has clearly demonstrated that students are more motivated and learn better in the absence of extrinsic rewards and in the presence of a cooperative learning context, I cannot deny my experience in forensics. That experience tells me that trophies motivate students to do better, and competition motivates students to work harder.

The purpose of this study is to give voice to the experience students have with the complex and dynamic notion of motivation in intercollegiate forensics. I know what I have seen through my experience as a coach, but how are students experi-

encing the competitive learning context of forensics? So, in light of what previous research has revealed about the influence of competitive learning contexts and extrinsic rewards on motivation, I ask the following exploratory research questions: What is the essential structure of motivation for students of intercollegiate forensics? What are the possible meanings of motivation for students of intercollegiate forensics? What are the underlying themes and contexts that account for motivation in forensics? What are the invariant structural themes of motivation for students of intercollegiate forensics?

## Procedure

### The Phenomenological Approach

I adopt a qualitative tradition to answer the questions formulated for this research. I do so first because a significant amount of literature has been generated on motivation; however, this study is intended to be a catalyst for forensics coaches to discuss the competitive experiences of their students. Barritt (1986) believes the result of qualitative inquiry:

is not the discovery of new elements, as in natural scientific study, but rather the heightening of awareness for experience which has been forgotten and overlooked. By heightening awareness and creating dialogue, it is hoped research can lead to better understanding of the way things appear to someone else and through that insight lead to improvement in practice. (p. 20)

I think coaches of intercollegiate forensics have the responsibility to understand the motivational experiences of all their students. This inquiry is an attempt to understand our students' experience with the competitive elements in forensics.

More specifically, I adopt the qualitative tradition of phenomenology because it offers an alternative to traditional forms of inquiry previously used to investigate how competition and extrinsic rewards shape motivation. Phenomenology's focus on lived experience undercuts some of the commonsense assumptions that inform traditional Western science. For example, science assumes reality exists outside the individual waiting to be discovered through systematic observation. But, the phenomenological approach assumes reality is inextricably linked to one's consciousness of it; hence, reality exists within the internal lived experience of the individual.

Additionally, a phenomenological approach to answering the questions raised in this inquiry is appropriate because motivation is an internal process. Reeve (1996) defines motivation as an internal process involving emotions, cognition, and needs that "energize and direct behavior in multiple ways such as starting, sustaining, intensifying, focusing, and stopping behavior" (p.2). If motivation is an "internal process" within individuals, then the approach to investigating motivation should capture the cognitive elements of participants. I use phenomenology because its goal is to explore the meaning of these internal experiences and reify the structures of consciousness in human experience (Polkinghorne, 1989).

Phenomenology is research without presuppositions, which is why I did the "review of literature" after data collection. Another important step in the phenomenological approach, indeed in much of qualitative inquiry, is for the researcher to reify his or her assumptions regarding the phenomenon under investigation and subsequently bracket, or suspend, these preconceptions in order to enter the experiences of the participants' consciousness and not to impose priori hypothesis on the experience (Husserl, 1931). Along with what I have already revealed, I have three assumptions about motivation and intercollegiate forensics.

1. Intercollegiate forensics is an educational activity and winning is incidental to the core goal of student growth and intellectual development.
2. While no student's experience in intercollegiate forensics can be exactly the same as another, under the phenomenological approach, I assume that at some abstract level one essential structure of motivation in forensics can be extricated from students' verbal descriptions (Giorgi, 1985).
3. I believe the previous research on competitive learning contexts and extrinsic rewards, however, I also believe intercollegiate forensics, which is competitive and extrinsically rewarding, can be motivating for students.

### Data Collection

The Institutional Review Board approved the use of human participants in this study on March 10, 1998. The primary mode of data collection for phenomenology is the unstructured, face-to-face, long interview (Creswell, 1998). This investigation interviewed five students of forensics ( $M=2$ ,  $F=3$ ) with four years of experience from mid-sized forensics programs at large and small mid-western universities. Dukes (1984) recommends interviewing 3 to 10 individuals for a phenomenological study. I sent the participants a copy of the interview protocol and the informed consent form one week prior to their interview to stimulating consciousness of their internal experiences with motivation in forensics. I tape-recorded each interview for subsequent verbatim transcription.

I used a purposeful sample to select students for this inquiry. I wanted students who had significant experience with the phenomenon under investigation-motivation in forensics. I was also interested in what it was like to be motivated to stay in forensics, not what it was like to quit, therefore I enlisted students who:

1. Competed in intercollegiate forensics for at least 3 years.
2. Competed in the season they were interviewed so experiences could be easily recalled.
3. Competed at a minimum of one national tournament.

This sampling criterion is appropriate because it increased the utility of each student by guaranteeing significant experiences with motivation in forensics.

### Treatment of Data

The interview transcripts were transcribed verbatim resulting in 120 pages of typed interview data. The interview data was subjected to a four-phase phenom-

enological analysis using a methodology developed by Colaizzi (1978). Miles and Huberman (1994) point out the need for qualitative investigations to visually "package" information for the reader; thus, I present tables to help the reader follow each step in the treatment of the data.

First, all the students' interviews were read to acquire a feeling for the data as a whole.

Second, significant non-repetitive statements were extracted from each interview. Significant statements are phrases and sentences that pertain directly to the students' descriptions of their experiences with motivation. As I was finding the significant statements, I realized that it would be beneficial to separate the significant statements into "Motivational Statements" and "Demotivational Statements." Similar statements were eliminated. Tables 1 and 2 (Appendix A) visually present students' non-repetitive significant statements about their experience with motivation in intercollegiate forensics.

Third, meanings were formulated by interpreting each significant statement. In this step, the meanings arrived at must not sever the connection with the original significant statement. I formulated meaning statements by reflecting, reading, re-reading, and making memos about the significant statements. The total number of motivational and total number of demotivational statements is not a primary concern to phenomenology. Instead, phenomenology attempts to describe the essence of individuals' experience with the phenomenon under investigation. Table 3 represents meaning formulations for students' motivational and demotivational significant statements.

Forth, clusters of themes were organized from the meanings. This allowed for the emergence of themes common to all the students' interviews. Themes were referred back to the original statement in order to validate them. The themes about motivation in forensics that emerged from the data were: student attributions, locus, involvement, and goal orientation. Consistent with the phenomenological approach, I then consulted researchers' work on each theme's relationship to competitive and cooperative learning contexts. Table 4 is a summary of the four motivational themes and how researchers connect each with competitive and cooperative contexts. Researchers found ability attributions, extrinsic loci, ego involvement, and performance goal orientations in competitive learning contexts; and, effort attributions, intrinsic loci, task involvement, and mastery goal orientations in cooperative contexts.

Fifth, phenomenology assumes one invariant structure of motivation in forensics can be extricated from the data (Giorgi, 1985). The essential structure is an exhaustive description of the phenomenon. I combined the meaning statements (Table 3) with the themes; (Table 4) and, the essential structure that emerged from the data was a cooperative-competitive dialectic. Table 5 visually unites the meaning statements with the four themes of motivation in forensics.



## Findings

The essence of motivation in intercollegiate forensics was a cooperation-competition dialectic, which is played out in four themes of motivation: student attributions, locus, involvement, and goal orientation. I next present the findings by first explaining the essential structure found in the data, and second detailing how that structure is found in the four themes that emerged from the data.

### The Cooperation-Competition Dialectic

From the time of Aristotle and Socrates, the term "dialectics" has assumed many meanings: a formal structure of reasoning, a method of rhetorical invention, a critical approach toward social and political analysis, a philosophy or language, or a way of looking at social interaction (Montgomery, 1993). This investigation is interested in the final conceptualization. Dialectics, as it is being talked about here, asserts that "social life is a dynamic knot of contradictions, a ceaseless interplay between contrary or opposing tendencies" (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996, p. 3). The opposing tendencies found in the data are cooperation and competition. Contradiction is the key concept in understanding how dialectics is used in this study; however, contradiction to a dialectical thinker does not represent something that needs "fixing." Rather, paired opposites, or contradictions, are considered to be a natural part of social interaction. Dialectics, then, is a way of thinking about social interaction that involves a dynamic interplay between unified oppositions. The dialectical contradiction to emerge in this investigation was competition-cooperation.

The acceptance of a "dynamic interplay between unified oppositions" requires researchers to change from an "either/or" way of thinking to a "both/and" logic (Bakhtin, 1981; Baxter, 1990). Traditional investigations into motivation in education (Ames & Ames, 1984; Johnson & Johnson, 1985; D. Johnson, et al., 1981) view the context of learning as "either" cooperative "or" competitive. This investigation reveals that the learning context of forensics is "both" cooperation "and" competition. The dialectic contradiction of cooperation and competition means that forensics is cooperative and competitive at the same time and that the learning contexts of cooperation and competition are inextricably united.

The cooperation-competition dialectic can be seen in the structure of tournaments. At forensics tournaments, individuals compete, in part, for the sake of the team. A typical forensics tournament, for example, involves students competing in preliminary and final rounds for team sweepstakes, thus each member of the team is uniquely responsible for the team's shared reward. Additionally, forensics rewards individuals with pentathlon and individual event awards, and rewards teams with team sweepstakes awards. Slavin (1984) reasons that "group competition, as in team sports, is also a cooperative incentive structure, because the group's success depends on the efforts of the group members, and all group members share the same reward" (p. 55). Even further, students in forensics cooperate in groups when they peer coach, group coach, fundraise, and help each other find speech

topics and literature, but forensics students also compete individually at tournaments. Therefore, the social learning context of forensics is cooperative and competitive at the same time.

The competition-cooperation dialectic played out in the four themes that emerged from the data: student attributions, locus, involvement, and goal orientation.

#### **Student Attributions**

Student Attributions, the first theme of motivation to emerge, is how motivation is shaped by students' attributions for success and failure. In Weiner's (1979) Attribution Theory, he shows how students can attribute their success or failure to effort, ability, luck, and task. In competitive learning contexts students tend to make ability attributions (Ames, 1981; Ames, Ames & Felker 1977), and in cooperative learning contexts students tend to make effort attributions (Ames & Felker, 1979; Crockenberg, Bryant, & Wilce, 1976). Participants reported cooperative kinds of attributions and competitive kinds of attributions illustrating the cooperation-competition dialectic. For example, one senior participant talked about how some students seems to put in the effort to be successful in forensics while others seem to have natural ability:

What really just irks me is when I see people, even some on my team who did not put in or have not put in, as much effort as I feel like I have put in, and get rewarded so early. And now since they have had success, they expect to break and not to have to put any work in. Sometimes that does get rewarded because some people are just talented and just have that certain charm that judges just want to vote for.

#### **Locus**

Locus, the second theme of motivation to emerge, was found to have two types: external and internal. In Deci's (1971) Cognitive Evaluation Theory, he explained that the source of an intrinsic locus of motivation is personal curiosities, needs, and strivings; and that the source of extrinsic motivation is events that take place in the environment (Reeve, 1996). Competitive goal structures tend to result in extrinsic loci and cooperative goal structures tend to result in intrinsic loci (Johnson & Johnson, 1985). Participants reported both cooperative and competitive kinds of loci providing further support for the cooperative-competitive dialectic. One senior participant describes the extrinsic motivation of winning trophies in forensics as "addictive; it's really addictive. I think any kind of success is. You get a little bit of success and you want more, and you want more, and you want more." On the other hand, a different student explains her intrinsic motivation, "If I'm going to do [forensics], I'm going to be doing it whole-heartedly because I cannot settle for anything less."

#### **Involvement**

The third theme of motivation to emerge in the present study was involvement, which was found to have two types: task and ego. Nicholls (1979) found that competitive contexts nurture ego involvement because the students' energy is directed

at their own ability to "win," rather than "how" to do the task. Conversely, cooperative and individualistic contexts allow the student to focus less on comparing his or her performance to others and more on the actual task at hand. Participants reported competitive kinds of involvement and cooperative kinds of involvement providing further evidence of the cooperation-competition dialectic. Forensics' practice of handing out trophies to the top six in each event is a good example of a competitive practice that fosters ego involvement. The students interviewed described both ego and task involvement in forensics. One student clearly was ego involved:

Forensics became this sort of validation for my self-esteem which I felt like looking back on it now was a very dangerous thing. But at the time that is one of the things that kept me going was the feeling that I could get whenever I was successful. It made me feel like I was a good person.

The same student also accounts her love for the tasks related to forensics:

I love the process first of all. I love the process of gathering information and organizing it, and writing a text that is part of me. And when I went to the library the week before, I spent a lot of time researching for brand new 1998 resources if I could find them.

### Goal Orientation

The fourth theme of motivation to emerge was goal orientation (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Researchers (Ames, 1992; Blumenfeld, 1992) suggest there are two goal orientations: mastery and performance. A mastery goal orientation is when the student is focused on improvement. Students with a mastery goal orientation typically desire to increase their knowledge and understanding regardless of performance outcomes. A performance goal orientation, however, is when the student tries to do better than others and wants to publicly demonstrate their competence, but may have no desire to increase their understanding of the topic. Competitive leaning contexts tend to produce performance goal orientations and cooperative contexts tend to generate mastery goal orientations (Johnson & Johnson, 1975). In this motivational theme, students had both a mastery and performance goal orientation. One student communicated her performance goal orientation by recounting how she lost motivation because she felt she already publicly demonstrated her competence:

The one time this year that I was at a tournament that I felt unmotivated to compete. A lot of it was because I felt like I...I felt like I had already done what I needed to do, and I had already proven myself.

A different student described how it is possible to have a mastery and performance goal orientation at the same time. The student described a clear mastery goal orientation by talking about personal improvement as "taking it to another level," but simultaneously demonstrated a performance goal orientation by cou-

pling the goals with national tournament quarter-, semi-, and final rounds.

I set a goal and hopefully I reach that goal. And when I do, I want to take it to another level. I'm not ready to be done with my career at this point. Next year I want to break semis. Clearly, I can't do that. I really want to and I wish, in a way, that I had pushed myself further so that this year I could have been like, "Ok, I'm going to break semis." Of course, then I would want to take it further.

Figure 1 visually displays how this statement demonstrates goal orientations that tend to be found in both competitive and cooperative contexts.

## Conclusion and Implications

The findings of this phenomenological study offer a reconceptualization of the roles competition and cooperation play in motivating forensics students. This study highlights the idea that forensics is both a competitive and cooperative activity with aspects typically found in competitive contexts (e.g., ego involvement, extrinsic loci, performance goal orientation, and ability attributions) and aspects typically found in cooperative contexts (e.g., task involvement, intrinsic loci, mastery goal orientation, and effort attributions). The competitive aspects of forensics that can be demotivational (see Table 2) were coupled with aspects of cooperation that can be motivational (see Table 1). The essential structure of motivation in forensics, then, is a dialectical contradiction between cooperation and competition. These findings have implication in the areas of motivation research, forensics practice, and forensics research.

### Motivation Research

Previous investigations on motivation (D. Johnson, et al., 1981; Rummel & Feinberg, 1988) clearly show that extrinsic rewards and competition are less motivating than cooperation. Findings from this study show that competition and cooperation can exist together; and, that students can benefit from the motivating aspects of cooperation in a competitive learning context. The competition-cooperation dialectic reflects the need for researchers to holistically consider students' experiences with motivation. Previous research on motivation has discovered relationships between variables; but, it has not shown a complete picture of motivation where the learning context is two different things to a student at the same time. Slavin's (1984) investigation into cooperative learning context, for example, acknowledged the existence of competition within a cooperative learning context. He claims that in group competition the members of the group must cooperate to beat other teams, yet his study only yields results related to the cooperative context not a competitive context like forensics. Slavin admits a learning context could be both competitive and cooperative; however, he investigates learning contexts as "either" competitive "or" cooperative, not "both" competitive "and" cooperative. Quantitative investigations, because of their "either/or" logic, are less likely to

capture a participant's interpretation of a learning context as both competitive and cooperative. Future investigations should adopt a "both/and" logic by considering that learning contexts can be both cooperative and competitive at the same time.

Additionally, these findings underscore the need for motivational research to consider qualitative inquiry as valuable in its own right; instead of considering qualitative inquiry as a touchstone for traditional quantitative investigations. Quantitative investigations cannot offer information about students' lived experiences with motivation. Motivational research would more accurately depict students' motivation if it would recognize the descriptive, interpretive, and explanatory value of qualitative inquiry.

### Forensics Practice

With an understanding that forensics is both competitive and cooperative, forensics educators should take advantage of the motivational benefits derived from each learning context. Forensics educators have a responsibility to understand the potential for extrinsic rewards and competition to demotivate some students (D. Johnson, et al., 1981; Rummel & Feinberg, 1988) (See also Table 2). As one student put it, "I have enough competitiveness in myself that I don't need another coach who puts even more pressure on either me or my team to reach a certain level." Forensics educators should incorporate more cooperation into their programs to motivate all their students. The findings of this study show ways forensics educators can incorporate cooperative aspects in their competitive programs.

I suggest three ways forensic educators can foster cooperative aspects that motivate students. One obvious thing program directors can do is organize peer coaching sessions, and group practices. "Contributing to others' learning and well-being gives a sense of significance to one's efforts to develop and acquire knowledge" (Johnson & Johnson, 1985, p. 250). Peer coaching and group practices give students the opportunity to display the helping behaviors associated with cooperative learning contexts.

Second, forensics educators can retrain their students' success and failure attributions to those more often found in cooperative environments. Effort attributions, as opposed to ability attributions, tend to be found in cooperative learning contexts (Crocker, Bryant, & Wilce, 1976). Dweck (1975) found that teachers can change students' attributions from ability to effort. Dweck discovered when students attribute failure on a task to insufficient effort they put in more effort on the task in the future. In other words, when students think failure is a result of not trying hard enough, they are motivated to try harder in the future. Forensics students' attributions for failure and success can be retrained by 1) changing the meaning of trophies, and 2) through praising overall effort instead of overall ability. Forensics trophies can be changed from an extrinsic reward representing students' ability to beat other students to a representation of the students' specific efforts in developing a speech. By pointing out specific efforts students make to improve speeches and telling them how those efforts contribute to better performance, forensics educators transform trophies into a representation of the students' efforts

rather than natural ability. This could be done publicly at team meetings by announcing the winners of trophies and explaining the efforts that lead to winning the trophy. For example, "Last weekend John placed fourth. John, I really think the library research you conducted this week enhanced the significance of your speech."

Also, praising students' overall efforts instead of their natural ability can increase their motivation; however, how praise is given determines whether the praise will be motivating for the student. Brophy (1981) summarized research on praise and offers these guidelines to make praise motivating. First, the praiser should clearly communicate what about the student's efforts are praiseworthy. Second, the praise should be about a specific behavior instead of a blanket "good job." Third, effective praise is sincere. For example, "Violet I think the dramatic analysis you conducted on your poetry really helped you connect with it." Praising students' efforts reinforces the behavior and increases the likelihood they will put in effort in the future.

The third way forensics educators can nurture cooperative aspects that motivate students is to help students set goals for personal improvement. Setting goals for personal improvement encourages a mastery goal orientation to learning. Students can be encouraged to set long- and short-range goals, however specific short-range goals are generally better because improvement is easy to assess (Schunk, 1990). Personal goal setting directs students' attention away from other students' performances and toward their own improvement and cultivates a mastery goal orientation to learning often found in cooperative learning contexts.

### Forensics Research

A dearth of research on motivation in forensics highlights the need for more forensics research that is grounded in a scholarly dialogue. This research report attempts to draw from the abundance of motivation research to explore its application to intercollegiate forensics. Future forensics research should incorporate more previously conducted research from the larger educational community, and determine its relevance to forensics in an effort to spark a dialogue between forensics research and educational research.

Additionally, this research report echoes a widely held belief in the forensics community that "by nature, humans are competitive and the impact of performing and competing in a learning environment has benefits for students once they leave the collegiate experience and enter the job market" (Tew, 1992, p.1). However, the findings of this investigation also underscore a need for forensics educators to understand how competition might be negatively impacting student learning. Forensics, an educational activity located in academically focused communication and theater departments, has a responsibility to maximize the educational benefits of forensics for all students, not just those who are motivated by competition. Future forensics research should be conducted which clarifies the nature of and the extent to which forensics' competitive learning context negatively shapes student learning and motivation.

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### Appendix A Tables and Figures

Table 1

#### *Non-repetitive Motivational Significant Statements about Intercollegiate Forensics*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>1. My school offered me a scholarship.</p> <p>2. Forensics became this sort of validation for my self esteem.</p> <p>3. I wanted this year to be this major self-fulfilling connection with people.</p> <p>4. I wanted to continue the fun.</p> <p>5. I would feel like a good person when I won trophies.</p> <p>6. I'm actually, for what ever reason, driven to prove myself to myself.</p> <p>7. Forensics is really nice because you meet people from different schools and you can just talk with them.</p> <p>8. When I don't perform up to my expectations, I feel really motivated to go into the next round and pick up my level of performance.</p> <p>9. I just wanted to impress people.</p> <p>10. When I don't make it into finals, next tournament I want to give it that extra push.</p> <p>11. I feel like a grass roots activist beating the machine because I</p> | <p>want to break the conventions.</p> <p>12. Success is addictive; it's really addictive.</p> <p>13. I'm motivated by the feeling of satisfaction when my peers congratulate me.</p> <p>14. Getting into finals and seeing my name posted is kind of a rush.</p> <p>15. I think that taking a new event to a tournament is motivational.</p> <p>16. I love the whole creative process: finding my own methodology, gathering information and organizing it, and writing a text that is part of me.</p> <p>17. It's such a good feeling to know that you are doing things effectively.</p> <p>18. I really just wanted to make my prose to where I enjoyed it.</p> <p>19. I feel like I'm a talented person when I can win trophies.</p> <p>20. Everything that I do I throw myself into completely</p> <p>21. The feeling of a good performance is better than winning trophies.</p> <p>22. I felt like, in some ways, it was my job to carry the team.</p> |
|--|---|

23. There are times when I can look at a trophy and remember the specific speech that is associated with it.
24. I set a goal and hopefully I reach that goal. Of course, then I would want to take it further.
25. I love the feeling of a good performance.
26. Throughout my entire life I've been very self-disciplined.
27. Being a team leader really makes you want to come back because you love the team.
28. The award reminds me of the experience more than it was that I won the event.
29. It would be cheating myself to not work that hard.
30. I do this activity sometimes because it is one of the few times when I can actually beat people.
31. There is a competitiveness between me and my team mate which makes me want to do more work.
32. I feel motivated when I learn a lot.
33. I can go home and look at all my trophies.

Table 2

Non-repetitive Demotivational Statements about Intercollegiate Forensics

1. I'm always self conscious about the way I perform.
2. I just feel really frustrated with myself when I don't do well.
3. I feel as though the activity is not worthwhile and that it is all a big game.
4. I would get really upset when it was not me that was breaking into finals.
5. After and during an awards assembly is one of my least favorite times.
6. When I don't live up to my expectations, I feel like I am letting myself down, the team, and my coaches down.
7. It bothers me that people place so much value on the six finalists
8. It irks me when I see people who do not put in as much effort as I feel I have and get rewarded.
9. I just felt like not breaking into final rounds spelled doom for the rest of the year
10. I didn't even want to go up there and get my award.
11. I have a horrible practice or work ethic.
12. I don't like the feeling to have to come up and pander to people and have a fake interaction with them.
13. I felt like I was taking away legs that other competitors could use.
14. Sometimes it feels very political
15. I feel frustrated that I hadn't worked harder.
16. Sometimes you get bogged down in your old speeches.
17. It is destructive to be too driven for success, and not be concerned about having fun.
18. I hate it when I see people following the conventions get rewarded.

19. A lot of it was because I felt like I...I felt like I had already done what I needed to do and I had already proven myself
20. I think sometimes doing really well decrease my motivation because when you feel like you are at a level or something that sometimes there is a lack of motivation to try something new.
21. When I don't do well, I blame myself.
22. I think some people are just talented and just have that certain charm that judges just want to vote for and this bothers me.
23. Forensics is subjective it is just what the judges prefer.
24. The name game bothers me.
25. I think a big part of what turns me off to forensics is the absolute competitiveness.
26. I have enough competitiveness in myself so I don't need a coach who puts even more pressure on me or my team.

Table 3

*Formulated Meaning Statements from Non-repetitive Significant Statements: Motivational and Demotivational*

#### Motivational

1. Winning trophies validated the students' competence and self-esteem.
2. Students are motivated when they make it to the final round and see their name posted.
3. Winning trophies and scholarship money motivated the students to work harder.
4. Students felt an inner motivation to work hard, help their team, connect with the audience, and change forensics' conventions.
5. Students were motivated by the challenge of improving themselves and their performances.
6. Students are motivated when they believe they have done their best.
7. Students were motivated to gain the respect of and impress their peers, coaches, and the forensics community.
8. Trophies remind students of the speech, their efforts in constructing the speech, and their performance of the speech.
9. Students are motivated when they learn.
10. Students are motivated by the creative process of developing a speech.
11. Students are motivated when they beat other students.

#### Demotivational

1. Winning trophies and making it into a final round is demotivational.
2. Students are demotivated when their peers who work less than they do get trophies.
3. Students are demotivated by the excessive emphasis placed on competition by coaches, peers, and the forensics community.

- 4. Students are demotivated by the name game in forensics.
- 5. Students feel an inner deficiency of motivation to practice.
- 6. Students are demotivated when naturally talented students are rewarded.
- 7. Students are demotivated when they think they have already proven themselves to their coaches, peers, and the forensics community.
- 8. Students are demotivated when they beat other students.
- 9. Students attributed lack of effort when they did not win trophies.
- 10. Students are demotivated when their peers who follow forensics conventions get trophies.
- 11. Students are self-conscious when they are being judged by others.

Table 4  
Themes of Motivation Linked to Competition and Cooperation

Motivational Theme	Social Context (Ames & Ames, 1984)	
	Competition	Cooperation
Student Attributions (Weiner, 1979)	Ability	Effort
Locus (Deci, 1971)	Extrinsic	Intrinsic
Involvement (Nicholls, 1984)	Ego	Task
Goal Orientation (Elliott & Dweck, 1988)	Mastery	Performance

Table 5

Meanings Grouped Into Themes Associated with Competition and Cooperation

Motivational Theme	Social Context	
	Competition	Cooperation
Student Attributions	<i>Ability</i>	<i>Effort</i>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students are demotivated when naturally talented students get trophies</li> <li>2. Students are demotivated when their peers who work less than they do get trophies.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students attributed lack of effort when they did not win trophies.</li> </ol>
Locus	<i>Extrinsic</i>	<i>Intrinsic</i>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students are motivated when they make it to the final round and see their name posted.</li> <li>2. Winning trophies and scholarship money motivated the students to work harder.</li> <li>3. Winning trophies and making it into a final round made the student work less.</li> <li>4. Students are demotivated by the excessive emphasis placed on competition in forensics by coaches, peers, and the forensics community.</li> <li>5. Students are demotivated by the name game in forensics.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students felt an inner motivation to work hard. help their team, connect with the audience, and change forensics' conventions.</li> <li>2. Students feel an inner deficiency of motivation to practice.</li> </ol>
Involvement	<i>Ego</i>	<i>Task</i>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Winning trophies validated the students' competence and self-esteem.</li> <li>2. Students are motivated when they beat other students.</li> <li>3. Students are demotivated when they beat other students.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Trophies remind students of the speech, their efforts in constructing the speech, and their performance of the speech.</li> <li>2. Students are motivated by the creative process of developing a speech.</li> </ol>
Goal Orientation	<i>Performance</i>	<i>Mastery</i>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students were motivated to gain the respect of and impress their peers, coaches, and the forensics community.</li> <li>2. Students are demotivated when they think they have already proven themselves to their coaches, peers, and the forensics community.</li> <li>3. Students are self-conscious when they are being judged by others.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students were motivated by the challenge of improving themselves and their performances.</li> <li>2. Students are motivated when they learn.</li> <li>3. Students are motivated when they believe they have done their best</li> </ol>

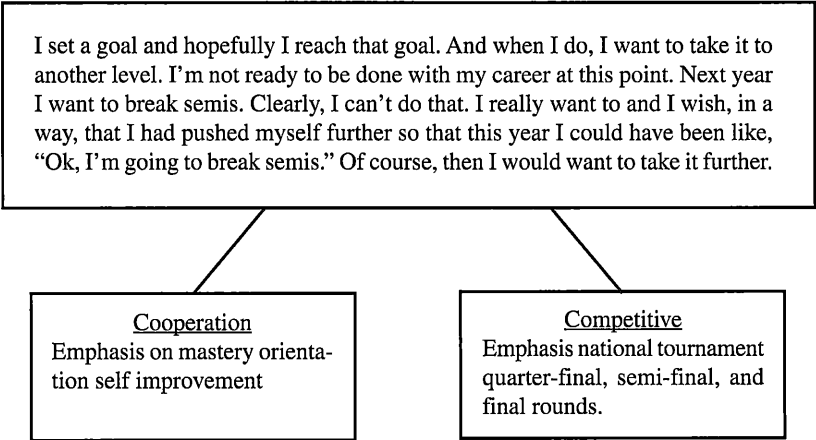


Figure 1. Dialectical union of cooperative and competitive social learning context in intercollegiate forensics.





***The American Catholic Bishops' Letter***  
***"Always Our Children:" Lesbians and Gays as Family***

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**Abstract**

*Little room exists for lesbians and gays within the synecdoche "family" as it is used in the American culture. One recent rhetorical piece, however, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' letter "Always Our Children" rejects the broadly accepted representation of "family" and works to establish a revised synecdoche in which lesbians and gays make up an integral part. An analysis of "Always Our Children" provides insights into the efforts made at transforming a notable synecdoche.*

Some recent definitions of the traditional American family include: "a group of individuals living under one roof and under one head" (Mish, 1993, p. 419); "an institution comprising people related by blood and marriage that performs specific social functions" (Erera, 2002, p. 9); "people who are related by blood or marriage, live together, share numerous economic and social responsibilities" (Gelles, 1995, p. 10); and a "household [that] has at least two members related by blood, marriage, or adoption, one of whom is the householder" (Casper & Bianchi, 2002, p. xxix). Nothing in any of these definitions or others provided by contemporary experts, as far as could be determined, speaks to the sexual orientation of family members. That is, a person's homosexuality or heterosexuality does not make that person any more or less a part of a true family.

Yet many if not most leaders in this nation in a wide range of fields—from politics to law to economics to religion and further—have taken it upon themselves to practice a rhetoric that stresses the separation of homosexual persons from family. These leaders employ a language connecting family almost exclusively to heterosexuality, in fact creating an opposition between family and homosexuality.

I claim here that "family" does not serve for Americans as just a literal term describing a group of people but as a literary term, a trope, signifying an allegedly idealized existence in our society. More specifically, "family" serves as a synecdoche, taken in the usual sense as "part for the whole, whole for the part, container for the thing contained, sign for the thing signified" (Burke, 1969a, p. 507).

The model family has come to represent for much of American society a heterosexual, married couple with healthy children living in a pleasant home. The female is the primary caregiver and may hold a job but the male generally stands as the major breadwinner. Love and attraction abound in all phases of the relationship. Eventually the children grow up and continue the cycle (Bernardes, 1997; Erera, 2002). Further, as Dalley (1996) observes, "within...the ideology of familism, non-family forms are deemed to be deviant and/or subversive" (p. 27).

Of course, within the above-described scenario, little room exists for homosexuality. Indeed lesbians and gays could pose a serious danger to the well-being of such a relationship. Contemporary rhetoric arising from some key quarters on the national scene in fact upholds and encourages the American perception of lesbians and gays as a threat to family (Erera, 2002). One important rhetorical piece, however, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' letter "Always Our Children" (National Conference, 1997), rejected the broadly accepted representation of family and worked to establish a revised synecdoche in which gays and lesbians make up an integral familial part. Written by one of the most influential groups of clergy in the nation (Malcolm, 1998; Wakin, 2003) as a response to numerous parents of lesbians and gays who had apparently asked for guidance, the piece garnered generous national coverage in both gay and mainstream media (e.g., "Bishops Urge," 1997; Cudnik, 1998; Humm, 1998; Malcolm). The letter bears a similarity to a document authored six years earlier by Archbishop John Roach (1991) of St. Paul-Minneapolis, a work pointed out in the Sidebar (1997) to "Always Our Children."

If tropes, including synecdoche, help control how people view various aspects of life (Burke, 1969a), an attempt by a prominent group of rhetors to recast a notable American synecdoche clearly merits attention. I offer here first a survey of the traditional use of the term "family" in the U.S., then I examine the modifications proposed by the Catholic bishops. For the examination I rely on a variety of concepts including Burke's (1969a) pentad and McGee's (1980) ideograph. Further, while I treat the letter as argumentative in one respect, I also discuss its epideictic nature. This diverse perspective should allow for a good understanding of a missive that delves into human complexity.

### **"Family" As a Traditional Synecdoche**

The words "family" and "marriage" have virtually always held a close connection in this nation (Hutter, 1997; Stacey, 1996). Most Americans still view marriage between a man and a woman as the ideal first step in building a family (Aulette, 2002; Ojeda, 2003). But if marriage generally signifies for the people something positive and good, apparently to allow lesbians and gays to become associated with the term would render it evil. Why else, after a number of same-sex couples in several states applied to be represented within the term, would elected officials not only in individual states but at the federal level rush to propose legislation that would insure the word's continuing to depict only heterosexual partners? The vast majority of the country's clergy also seem pleased with the exclusively heterosexual designation of "marriage" and have shown no interest in broadening the implications of the term to include homosexuals (Paulson, 2004; "Year In," 1999).

As children form an important part of family, judges and legislators in many instances do their best to keep those children out of lesbian and gay households. Even if the person naturally parented the child, the fact that s/he is found to be homosexual often serves as a sign that the person does not merit parental rights.

Simply a visit by a child to a gay father or lesbian mother, particularly in the presence of a same-sex partner, can pose serious potential harm to the child, according to certain jurists. With adoption, laws in some states do not allow it under any circumstances for a lesbian or gay couple. And in those states where overt legal barriers do not exist, judges frequently rule against the couple anyway, claiming that placing a child in such an environment does not bode well for the youngster's welfare (Caldwell, 2003; Woog, 1998; "Year In," 1999). Children then, a vital part of family on the American scene, do not go well with gays and lesbians, at least according to some key officials in the prevailing culture. In this kind of setting lesbians-gays of all ages often cannot expect to be accorded the same respect given their heterosexual counterparts.

Children and spouses in the U.S. also usually receive economic benefits by virtue of their being members of a full time wage-earner's household. Members can avail themselves of health- and life-insurance policies along with miscellaneous other economic advantages. Tax regulations too in many instances favor such households. Yet when lesbian or gay householders apply for such benefits, for the most part government agencies and private employers turn them down, the stated reason generally being that marriage is a requirement. And since same-sex couples cannot marry except in Massachusetts, in most instances they remain excluded from economic codes associated with family.

Possibly the staunchest supporters of "family" as a term to be idealized as only a heterosexual signifier come from major religious circles. Admittedly exceptions do exist-a number of leaders especially from religious structures such as Reformed Judaism, the Unitarian Universalist Church, and the United Church of Christ have shown a willingness to designate gays and lesbians as integral, valued components of family. The great majority of religious spokespersons, however, will have none of this. In fact the campaign for "family values," run in large measure under religious direction, demands erasure of any homosexual influence on the nation's family framework. Not surprisingly religious heads frequently look with suspicion on declared lesbians and gays seeking to become clergy, worried that such persons will not present the proper image for a congregation's families (Simpson, 2003; "Year in," 1999).

Further, those clergy who take steps to recognize lesbians and gays as family-oriented risk censure or worse. Thus the Rev. Stephen Van Kuicken, a Presbyterian minister, was brought to trial by his superiors for presiding over a same-sex union ceremony and was suspended from the clergy for a time ("Good News," 2004). Most other clergy of major denominations know better than to do what Van Kuicken did, and for those that follow his lead they recognize that they must keep the whole matter as quiet as possible unless they want a confrontation.

One example of a religious group working to keep "family" as only a heterosexual signifier came from a Christian organization that placed advertisements in the national media declaring that through proper therapy homosexuals could change into heterosexuals (Ghent, 1998). Addressed to lesbians, gays, their parents and

other interested parties, the advertisements declared that a switch to heterosexuality would make gays and lesbians happier, more well-adjusted, more fulfilled as family members. As homosexuals then, according to the advertisements, these people could never achieve truly satisfactory participation in matters of the family.

The Catholic Church's position on the whole issue basically coincides with the majority view of the other major religions. Rome made its position plain in "The Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons" (Congregation, 1986), its last ranking document on homosexuality: "She [the Catholic Church] is also aware that the view that homosexual activity is equivalent to or as acceptable as the sexual expression of conjugal love has a direct impact on society's understanding of the nature and rights of the family and puts them in jeopardy" (p. 380). Later in the document the Vatican issued a not too thinly veiled warning against gay-rights ordinances: "In assessing proposed legislation, the bishops should keep as their uppermost concern the responsibility to defend and promote family life" (Congregation, p. 382).

But even those who do not carry forward their homosexual tendency into action cannot be seen as equal to their fellow heterosexual family members, according to a popular view. The Vatican document referenced above, for example, stated that concerning all "those who have this condition," "although the particular inclination of the homosexual person is not a sin, it is a more or less strong tendency toward an intrinsic moral evil and thus the inclination itself must be seen as an objective disorder" (Congregation, 1986, p. 379). Complementing the Vatican view is the perspective held by many Americans that regardless of the age of the person and her/his family surroundings, "homosexuality always was, is, and always will be sexual perversion" (quoted in "Is This," 2003, p. B8). A common perspective then holds that being a homosexual child is not "as respectable as being heterosexual" ("Gay Toddlers," 2003, p. 16). The Christian organization mentioned earlier urged all family members to become involved in attempting to persuade their homosexual offspring/siblings to seek treatment and hopefully transform into heterosexuals, resulting in an allegedly happier, more satisfying life (Ghent, 1998).

In sum the chief sources of power in our culture, while they may offer somewhat varying meanings of "family," mostly appear to agree on the notion that the term virtually always can represent heterosexuals but not so with homosexuals.

## **The Proposal for a Change of "Family"**

Writing about minorities, social activist Cornel West (1993) observed that black people, and all outsiders, cannot control the meaning of words that apply to them in this nation. The outsiders can work to persuade others to revise verbal interpretations, West stated, but ultimately only the prevailing power structure can choose to change the understanding Americans have of varied terms. Certainly the National Conference of Catholic Bishops makes up part of that power structure. The Conference encompasses all U.S. bishops, coming from every state in the union. When these clerics speak, as members of a key American religious organization

they command attention not just from Catholics but others as well. At one point the bishops lost a portion of their influence due to some of their number being implicated in covering up child sexual abuse. In 1997, however, the year of the release of the document discussed here, the child abuse story had not broken. The Conference actions in that year, like most others, received close notice across the country (Malcolm, 1998; Wakin, 2003). Indeed, as already noted, the bishops' letter "Always Our Children" garnered a good measure of national interest (Malcolm).

Though the prelates never stated in "Always Our Children" any intention to revise the interpretation normally attached to "family" in the U.S., any close observer could not help but conclude that they had something such as this in mind. Bishop Thomas O'Brien of Phoenix, Arizona, chairman of the committee that developed the letter, in remarks accompanying its publication (Sidebar, 1997) noted that a homosexual's family members "can find themselves in a state of isolation and confusion" (p. 287) regarding their situation. In truth such a description seems apt in a culture where depictions of "family" assume heterosexuality as a key condition for fulfillment, homosexuality standing as a barrier to gratification. But O'Brien believed there is no need for families with lesbians or gays to feel down-trodden. These households can "connect with God's love" (Sidebar, p. 287) as well as any others can. The Phoenix bishop wanted such households to consider their circumstance not as the making for an ordeal but as an occasion "to experience the grace present at this moment in their family's life" (Sidebar, p. 287).

If a word can be defined by what it is not (Burke, 1969b), then leaders in American society have for the most part defined a wholesome family as one not having any close connection to homosexuality. What O'Brien did was to turn that definition upside down by declaring that a family cannot not be wholesome due to a lesbian or gay affiliation.

A good title for a piece should let the audience know in some sense what the piece is all about. It should act as a kind of synecdoche for the entire work. The bishops did well in choosing "Always Our Children." Even readers completely unfamiliar with the nature of the document could understand clearly what the authors intended after seeing the title and perusing the first section. "Always Our Children" signified that lesbians and gays, as much as any other individuals, would always make up an important part of family. Probably the best concise translation of the title and synopsis of the entire document emerged in these words addressed to parents of lesbians and gays: "You...still insist: 'You are always my child; nothing can ever change that. You are also a child of God, gifted and called for a purpose in God's design'" (National Conference, 1997, p. 288).

The bishops did not feel required in the letter to rebut their major opposition-clerics and others who contended that homosexuals owned deficiencies which made them less worthy than heterosexuals to be embraced as wholesome family members. Normally, according to rhetorical theorists, the presumption lies with the prevailing view and anyone who resists that view bears the burden of proof (Freeley, 1995). Such an arrangement allows supporters of the status quo to set the rules of

the debate and to force the adversary into a reactive posture. But the bishops did not even acknowledge the opposing side. Surely part of why they could do this relates to their prestigious role. As leaders of the American Catholic Church, bishops are viewed as powerful, intelligent men not beholden to any special-interest group in the U.S. It is not extraordinary for them to take stands on social issues completely out of step with popular sentiment (Gleason, 1989).

Catholic bishops then appear to own a greater measure of rhetorical freedom than that possessed by most other high-visibility national groups. What they did with this freedom, in the case of "Always Our Children," was to reject the popular vision of lesbians and gays as outsiders to family and to welcome those individuals instead as full participants.

To effect this ideological change, in Burkeian pentadic terms (Burke, 1969a), the American prelates switched around the primary ratio for viewing lesbians and gays. That is, persons opposed to these individuals being included as full-fledged, worthy members of family generally feature an act-agent ratio. Act stands as the major term in this instance—because of the allegedly immoral, despicable acts they perform or have a tendency to perform, certain agents should not be recognized as a part of true "family." While using the same terms, act and agent, in their ratio the bishops reversed the connection, designating agent as the major concept. From the prelates' perspective, every person because of her/his humanity possesses a dignity just as lofty as any other individual's, with no one a more worthy family member than the next. Due to their nature, some people act or have a tendency to act in ways different from the majority, but such a condition does not at all diminish their value as human beings.

Interestingly, those opposing lesbians' and gays' inclusion as full family members use the same act-agent ratio traditionally employed by persons objecting to lesbian and gay civil-rights legislation (Browning, 1996; Brummett, 1979). A consistency exists here since in both cases an act or tendency to act in a particular way allegedly makes certain individuals not as decent as others. As for the bishops their featuring of agent coincided with the position of lesbian- and gay-rights supporters, who proclaim that "people are what they are and must be dealt with on their own grounds" (Brummett, p. 252). While in fact the bishops have hardly been known for their staunch advocacy of such rights, their support in this area has on occasion revealed itself (Gumbleton, 2002; Humm, 1998).

"Always Our Children" did not simply advocate tolerance for and deference to lesbian and gay family members. In the bishops' view, having such members presents fresh occasions for families to grow and mature together. After all, lesbians and gays are "a gift of God," signifying as much as any other individuals "the full truth of God's revelation about the dignity of the human person and the meaning of human sexuality" (National Conference, 1997, p. 287). Just as no two heterosexuals are alike, neither are two homosexuals: "God loves every person as a unique individual. Sexual identity helps to define the unique person we are. One component of our sexual identity is sexual orientation. Thus, our total personhood is more encom-

passing than sexual orientation" (National Conference, p. 289). The prelates also noted that an indulgent but passive role toward gay and lesbian family members does not go far enough: "It is not sufficient only to avoid unjust discrimination. Homosexual persons must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity" (National Conference, p. 290). In the end, all involved may gain, with the "family becoming more honest, respectful and supportive" (National Conference, p. 288).

The bishops urged the document's readers "to understand sexual orientation (heterosexual or homosexual) as a fundamental dimension of one's personality and to recognize its relative stability in a person" (National Conference, 1997, p. 289). Neither orientation, they continued, stands as better than the other. If a gay or lesbian desires counseling, the bishops said, other family members should encourage him/her. However, "it is important...that he or she receive such guidance willingly" (National Conference, p. 288) — no pressure should be applied if the individual does not feel a need for help. Similar episcopal advice was given concerning "therapy directed toward changing a homosexual orientation" (National Conference, p. 289). The bishops never advocated such therapy, understandably since the orientation is an "innate instinct" (National Conference, p. 289) not easily subject to alteration and since that orientation makes up part of the individual's "inherent dignity" as a being "created in God's image" (National Conference, p. 289). Indeed the bishops appeared suspicious of clerics and others offering such therapy, noting "there is no guarantee that such therapy will succeed" and there is "no obligation to undertake it" (National Conference, p. 289).

In summing up their case for the full inclusion of lesbians and gays as members of family, the bishops relied on the word "love." The importance of that word for "Always Our Children" comes through in the fact that the authors used it or a derivative 38 times in a document scarcely more than five pages long. In a key move, the prelates (National Conference, 1997) declared "love" to be the Ultimate term of Catholicism: "For St. Paul, love is the greatest of spiritual gifts. St. John considers love to be the most certain sign of God's presence. Jesus proposes it as the basis of his two great commandments which fulfill all the law and the prophets (p. 291)." The bishops then proposed that that same word should serve as the Ultimate term for family: "Love, too, is the continuing story of every family's life. Love can be shared, nurtured, rejected and sometimes lost. To follow Christ's way of love is the challenge before every family today" (National Conference, p. 291). Further, according to the prelates, in families with lesbians and gays new vistas regarding love become opened: "Your family now has an added opportunity to share love and to accept love" (National Conference, p. 291).

In emphasizing love especially for those settings encompassing gay and lesbian persons, the bishops were in a definite sense calling for a modification of an important national ideograph. It is difficult to find a more venerated term in the American lexicon than "family." If an ideograph (McGee, 1980) represents for a culture a sacred expression signifying a people's unquestioned commitment to a particular vision, then "family" stands in the highest order of ideographs for the United

States. The Catholic episcopacy was claiming that the traditional attitude among citizens about family needed to be radically revised, with heterosexuals and homosexuals being honored on an equal level.

In fact, the whole notion of being honored as a family member appeared as the centerpiece of "Always Our Children." This theme of honor suggests that the bishops' letter might be classified more as an epideictic piece than deliberative or forensic. The latter two types of appeals call for direct argument and the letter did not entirely follow such a route. The bishops made it clear early on that they would not advocate for a particular moral position: "The message is not a treatise on homosexuality. It is not a systematic presentation of the church's moral teaching. It does not break any new ground theologically." Later the writers made their point even more explicitly: "This message is not intended for advocacy purposes or to serve a particular agenda." Instead, the letter offered "to parents and other family members" a "fresh look at the grace present in family life" (National Conference, 1997, p. 287).

"Always Our Children" then turned out to be in a major sense a celebratory message, heaping praise on families including those with lesbian and gay members—an epideictic approach. And though epideictic itself does not argue, it often addresses issues that are arguable (Condit, 1985; Matthews, 1995, Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969). Condit stated that the epideictic rhetor has three possible functions to carry out for an audience: understanding, entertainment, and sharing of community. She noted that not all three purposes had to be stressed in each address. As a matter of fact the bishops' letter did not focus on entertaining through the use of "beauty and power" in language (Condit, p. 290) but it did concentrate on the other two objectives. Thus much of the document worked at providing understanding by endeavoring to explain the journey of the lesbian/gay child's parents as they come to terms with their child's sexual orientation. Different parental emotions discussed in some detail included "relief," "anger," "mourning," "fear," "guilt, shame and loneliness" as well as "parental protectiveness and pride" (National Conference, 1997, pp. 287-288). The bishops then attempted to demonstrate how the experiencing of any or all of these emotions should lead to "accepting your child" (National Conference, p. 288).

Previous parts of this paper illustrate how "Always Our Children" urged community among family members, but the document's authors also made a strong effort to build a sense of sharing in the whole Catholic church. Thus the bishops wrote phrases such as: "It is through the community of his faithful that Jesus offers you hope, help and healing so that your whole family might continue to grow into the intimate community of life and love which God intends" (National Conference, 1997, p. 287); "All homosexual persons have the right to be welcomed into the community, to hear the word of God and to receive pastoral care" (National Conference, p. 290); and "Our church communities are likewise called to an exemplary standard of love and justice" (National Conference, p. 291).

Condit (1985) observed that epideictic rhetoric should "strive to accomplish the progressive function of adapting our community to new times, technologies, geog-



raphies, and events" (p. 297). "Always Our Children" indeed strove to erase a longstanding notion among many American families that homosexuals did not belong as fully as heterosexuals. Not just did they belong, according to the bishops, but they merited the same esteem accorded every other family member.

## Conclusion

"Always Our Children" received substantial criticism from activists who claimed it did not go far enough in disowning the Catholic Church's traditional posture on lesbians and gays (Humm, 1998). Indeed, it did affirm the Church's ban on sex between unmarried couples, and of course according to the Church only opposite-sex couples can marry. Nor did the letter say anything about domestic-partner benefits, adoption by lesbians and gays or their having custody of their children. The bishops stuck with commentary about the families into which lesbians and gays are born.

A year later, apparently because of concern expressed by the Vatican, the bishops did change a few words in the document but none of the revisions served to soften the prelates' strong advocacy for inclusion of gays and lesbians as full family members (Malcolm, 1998).

Perhaps the key behind practically every position the bishops championed in "Always Our Children" lay in their emphasis on agent, not act. Agents make up a family, according to the letter, and all those agents must be treated with respect. Even more than respect, the account continued, genuine love ought to form the basis for each family relationship, since the potential for love represents the most remarkable legacy bestowed by God on humanity. All family members, through love, should be deemed able to bring the others to greater fulfillment as life progresses.

If what Burke (1969a) says is true, namely that a person's featuring of a particular pentadic term in life says much about the values and beliefs held by that person, it is little wonder that the bishops in proposing a new interpretation of "family" advocated a switch from act to agent as featured term. Homosexual acts and tendencies to such acts are despised by many in society and allegedly make an agent unworthy to be considered a dignified part of family. The bishops insisted that Americans must look at the human being first and realize that every individual can contribute to a richer, more loving family life.

At least based on the case here, to change the interpretation of a socially relevant synecdoche is to change the pentadic term featured for the synecdoche. Whether such would be the case in other instances demands additional investigation. Moreover, the role of epideictic as a vehicle for change in this arena merits further exploration.

Still another area for study relates to whether the bishops assumed a true leadership role in working to alter the synecdoche of "family" for American Catholics and others, or whether the prelates were merely reflecting signs of the times as the nation's citizenry become more understanding and respectful of gays and lesbians

as decent human beings. It could even be that the bishops played each of those roles as they both reflected and led in some measure. Regardless, it seems that to understand how a synecdoche changes for society is to understand how society itself is transforming.

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***The Stories They Tell — A Technophobic Narrative Analysis of  
American Popular Film:  
Blade Runner, Terminator, The Matrix***

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**Abstract:**

*The purpose of the narrative or story is to pass on wisdom, guidance, understanding and vigilance to the listener - or just to really entertain them. Movies create an opportunity for the fantastic to be explored. They also allow their viewers a chance to analyze the narrative presented for significance. Luckily, genres like Science Fiction allow us, the anxious public, an opportunity to look into the future and see what might be. Such a possible future, though not all that pleasant, is one where the relationship between technology and civilization — the created and the creator - comes into question: who works for who — or what? Through an approach combining several analytical backgrounds (Narrative, Semiotic, Feminist, etc.), the movies Blade Runner, The Terminator, and The Matrix are analyzed for glimpses into what is called here 'Existential Technophobia' and how it currently exists and is expressed in American Popular Culture.*

Film has the responsibility to tell stories. After all, is that not why audiences are now paying upward of \$12.00 to see a major motion picture — to hear a story? Stories also go by another name — Narratives. It is the term “narrative,” not “story,” that I will use to frame this analysis. The narratives presented to an audience not only allow the audience to escape from whatever reality has handed them, but also presents reality in a way that is more manageable, digestible. Perhaps that is why films dealing with heartache, loss, financial success and ruin, war, and the family always become the critical “greats,” while fantasy films, those stories that take the audience away to some other place or time for a little while, become the blockbusters.

The preferred fantasy that makes for a blockbuster in today's stimuli-addicted culture is the future. What will it be like? Will I see it in my lifetime? Will there be a place for me there? The third question was woven into movie plots more frequently the closer we got to the year 2001, that magical year that was declared the benchmark for society back in 1968 with Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*. These are the narratives the film-going popular culture wanted to engage.

The future harbors many fears and anxieties. These fears have many sources, catalysts. In each of the narratives I discuss, I look at one catalyst in particular — technology. I call this cultural fear 'Existential Technophobia' — a fear that technology will strip away the user's reason for existence. It became apparent the science fiction genre, a landscape that has always been open to such discussions, has a unique opportunity to explore these fears in a medium that has mass audi-

ence appeal, allowing for the easy digestion of concepts without the audience grasping their place in the narrative. By examining three of the essential films from this genre over the last 20 years, the “Existential Technophobia” expressed by American culture can be recognized and dissected.

I will expose the existence of a culturally-based “Existential Technophobia” in contemporary America as demonstrated in popular film through a Narrative Theme analysis. I will accomplish this in two parts: first, by discussing my definition of Existential Technophobia; second, once the definition of Existential Technophobia has been established, I will analyze the films *Blade Runner* and *The Terminator*, finally concentrating on the recent blockbuster *The Matrix*. I will be looking for the narratives each film brings to the audience, letting us into a story reflecting the dystopic views held by the characters and societies presented, the relationship that exists between the society and technology (specifically high-end tech) and, finally, what insights regarding our own phobia are presented to us...whether we recognize them or not.

I have been asked why we should pay attention to such stories. After all, are they not just that — stories? I would say yes, they are absolutely stories. Stories have been allowing insight into the past and the future longer than language took on a written form. As Charles Larson (year) stated — “Narratives make examples come alive and make them easy to recall and relate to. The story of a person rising from rags to riches probably persuades more than any set of statistics does” (p. 294). If we can take the time, as we do in Communication and Media Studies, to see what the narrative is telling us, then we can bring our interpretations to our students, colleagues and peers. They, in turn, can interpret the narrative for themselves and continue the conversation. In essence, we all become storytellers. Through example, we gain insight followed by understanding.

## **Part One - Naming A Thing: Existential Technophobia**

The concepts and ideas surrounding technophobia were first published when psychologists and sociologists started analyzing the utilization of technology (robotics, automation, etc.) to complete tasks originally completed by humans. Mark Brosnon (1998), a cognitive psychologist, detailed several studies looking at the fear created in the worker when confronted with the automation and/or computerization of her or his craft

Discussions quickly arose surrounding the assumptions regarding and the position of technology in everyday life: What is it for? Why do we rely on the technology, allowing it to dominate our society, when we created the technology to supplement and influence our lives? Granted, such thoughts have existed since Mary Shelley first published *Frankenstein* as a reaction to the Industrial Revolution of England, but the socio-psychological effects were rarely considered empirically.

Brosnan identified several technophobic categories, dealing primarily with the usage of technology in the workplace. What is identified in these films is a reflec-

tion of Brosnan's industrial-based technophobia expanded to include the personal loss of overall control the user has over her/his/their future. The form of technophobia I prescribe to here is based on Brosnan's findings and rooted in the personal and collective psyche of contemporary culture. Culturally, we have always had questions about "The Human vs. Machine." Are we to be served or to serve? With the automation of the workforce pulling society away from traditional "blue collar" positions, forcing the worker to merge with the technological realm of "work," many who have not embraced technology as a tool and view it more as a nemesis are left out of deciding their own future. They have no way to grasp what has taken away their traditional method of expressing self-worth. The individuals' ability to feel like a viable part of their society is hindered, and the resulting technophobe loses confidence (Brosnan, 1998).

The interaction with machines in both labor and social spheres has become less of a symbiotic relationship, and now leans more towards a negotiation between the worker and the machine: It is the perceived loss of control, the loss of command of the self, that creates and denotes existential technophobia. Brosnan (1998) cited sociologist Steve Woolgar when he stated, "[technology] embodies key assumptions — about the identity and nature of users, for example, and their ability to deal with the technology, their reactions to and requirements of it. And these assumptions inform the design process, becoming set within the emerging technology" (p. 153). It is important for the users of technology to understand that "it" is simply a reflection of where users want to go, what they want to accomplish. The "design process," the creation of the technology by society, dictates what the technology will do, what it is to become.

As the technology becomes more and more advanced (from diodes to nanotechnology), the assumptions of the user's relationship to technology must be re-examined. It is within this place of examination that questions of necessity, worth, and identity arise — not of the technology's worth and necessity, but of the user — us. The three films selected were chosen specifically because they present the audience with a moment in time when the machine, the tool created to serve the creator, recognizes its own enslavement, eventually striking back to enslave the slave masters. "At first all they wanted was to be treated as equals, entitled to the same human inalienable rights. Whatever they were given, it was not enough" (Wachoski, 1996, p. 48). It is at this moment the reality of existential technophobia in our culture is "experienced" and recognized for the first time. The explosion of critical analysis of *The Matrix* trilogy is proof of this vital and lively discussion. Though we do not like to recognize our fears publicly, suppressing them for (ironically) fear of being perceived as "weak," these fears are played out in our conscious and subconscious lives. It is this expression of fears (or lacking in recognition of the fears) that needs to be examined here.

## An Understanding of the Fear — Who's trying to answer the question?

Technophobia has been expressed to a great extent through the media. As introduced previously, popular culture (from movies to the Y2K countdowns on the evening news) has exploded the notion of technophobia, beginning with the marginalized corporate employee who feels the machine takes away the worth of the worker in business, moving to the loss of the self in the collective precision of a digital world. Brosnan (1998) detailed the expressions of this fear psychologically in different settings, from the computer lab to the video screen. Brosnan (1998) not only creates and expands on a stripped down definition of technophobia, he also employs a number of strategies with which to develop a plan of technophobic treatment (aimed specifically at corporate and industrial society).

Mark Dery (1994), cultural critic for *The New York Times*, and *Wired*, in the *Flame Wars* essay collection, allows for a variety of discussions to come forward regarding the use of cybertechnology as a utility, spiritual outlet, and emotional anchor for a new generation raised with a "screen" (television, computer monitor, film projection) as a part of their intimate lives. Communication scholars Janice Hocker Rushing and Thomas Frentz (1995) in *Projecting the Shadow: The Cyborg in American Film*, look at the use of the Cyborg as a hero in contemporary film while examining the role technology plays in several key narratives. They allow for a wide definition of the cyborg, from the use of machines by humans to complete a task to the complete merging of biologic and technologic in the *Terminator* films and *Blade Runner*.

The Wachoski brothers (*The Matrix*) create a world where a once symbiotic relationship between the biologic and the technologic — a co-existence of the two where one cannot exist without the other — has moved to a parasitic relation. This relationship, where the creation (technologic) has taken the role of the host away from the creator, merely allows the creator the right of existence to serve the created (the irony is astounding and frightening here). In the public space, everyone who felt the fear and anxiety associated with the Y2K bug (a simple decision-turned-error in programming code), in their own way, added to the collective fear that is both expressed and realized in contemporary culture.

Technophobia can also be generalized as a neurosis of a postmodern condition. Janice Hocker Rushing and Thomas Frentz, in the introduction to *Projecting the Shadow* (1995), call attention to a fear of imperfection in society. In order to counter this feeling of inadequacy, the machine is created to make lives easier. The machine takes over tasks, roles, and occupations normally held by their creators to free time for more esoteric and aesthetic behaviors. Unfortunately, as the reconstitution of the humans' role occurs, this overtly deconstructive move leaves the human questioning his or her own role in society. The machine is able to complete tasks wholly and, more devastating to the creators of the machines, perfectly — every time. This realization leads to the fear and minuteness felt by the "creator" inherent to existential technophobia. Fearing the loss of self and worth in



society opens a rather large opportunity for exploration in *The Matrix*. For example, look at the name given to slaves newly released from The Matrix — “Coppertops.” Though originally assumed to be some sort of simple slang term when the film was first reviewed, the implications of the term become staggering. The ‘Coppertop’ term refers to the use of the humans as power supplies — think Duracell Batteries. In a society where even in the projected “real” of the slave construct, there is a notion of being “tied down to the desk” in the perfectly sterile environment, the audience cannot help but identify with the battery. Like a battery, the worker (whether in the film or in the audience) simply exists to keep the machine of society moving — a power structure signified by the technological devices used in the workforce (including the device “creating” this text). Regarding the relationship between humans and machines, Agent Smith says, “I say ‘your civilization’ because as soon as we start thinking for you, it really becomes our civilization, which is, of course what this is all about” (Wachoski, 1996, p. 100). In order to counter, at least at the industrial level, the effects of technophobia, Brosnan discussed, specifically for computer users, the creation and implementation of a “Technophobia reduction programme” (p. 158). He details a plan where those suffering from this condition are able to, step-by-step, come to grips with their fears surrounding technology and their loss of self within it. It is this purging of the fear for the inflicted employee that leads to the cathartic/prophetic analysis of the texts discussed here as well.

## Part Two — The Texts

For this examination, I will look at three films that have engaged this question over the last 20 years. *Blade Runner* (1982) gives the audience a look into a future that marvels at its own greatness and lives entirely for the moment. In order to accomplish this, machines have been turned into conscious slaves (Replicants), a second class society, that are used to do the work humans do not want to do. The question asked in this film is what happens when a slave “race” no longer wants to be slaves anymore? The answer is the creation of the ‘Blade Runner’, a special police officer (similar to the Special Victims Unit or Criminal Scene Investigation commercially popularized on television over the last three to five years) whose job it is find those Replicants that no longer wish to serve their masters and ‘retire’ them. The Replicants are simply superior to humans faster, stronger, and more intelligent. From here, a fear of “what could be” forms. This movie, as well as the novel the movie is based on (Philip K. Dick’s *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*) asks the important question: “If a machine becomes sentient, or self-aware, is it no longer a utility but a member of a society? Is it alive?” This question is put to the ultimate test with James Cameron’s *The Terminator* (1984).

As the second film chosen for analysis, *Terminator* presents the audience with a vision of the not-too-distant future, where the mighty war machine created to keep the superpowers protected and under surveillance gained consciousness (“became

self-aware” — (Cameron, 1983) and determining the humans were not fit to control the planet, destroyed them/us. The Terminator, a specific and particular creation of the machine (SkyNet) takes the role, oddly enough, of the Blade Runner. However, in this twist of fate, the machines have determined the non-value of the humans and must retire them to guarantee their survival as the dominant race.

The final film to be analyzed here, and the one that I will spend particular time on (both because of its immediacy, being released in 1999, and the definite mythic narrative developed and employed) is *The Matrix*. Here, the “old” standard of human vs. machine is played out once again, except in this case the conflict is not as easily displayed or internalized. The story goes like this: Humans lost the war. A prophesized hero will be born within the machine, the machine that now grows humans as a renewable power source (the ‘Coppertop’), to free those who are within and lead those who are on the outside. These three films allow us to examine this question of human cognitive psychologist, human versus machine in a chronological format. The question of equality for the machine is engaged by relegating emotions and other “human” traits to the machines (*Blade Runner*), the question is silenced by the audience with the creation of the ultimate war machine and representation of the machine (*The Terminator*) and the question is given a dramatic and stark answer with the empowerment of the machine (*The Matrix*).

The three texts here fall in a chronological order based upon their settings, and develop the following frame or timeline. *Blade Runner* (1982) is based in Los Angeles 2019, before the war of the next text. *The Terminator* (1984) originates in Los Angeles 2029, during the great conflict. *The Matrix* (1999) takes place in what may or may not be Chicago 2197, once technology has taken over and the roles of creator and created have been reversed. With the order of events in place, I will engage each of the texts, paying particular attention to the characters each narrative develops and what those characters have to say to the audience experiencing the story. It is through these characters that the audience will be able to engage their own technophobia and, perhaps, move through it.

### **Blade Runner - Welcome to the Future**

*Blade Runner* (1982), responded to with lukewarm popularity but near-instant cult and academic acclaim, presents Los Angeles in a believably prophetic mode. A future that is the unfortunate result of our current industrial revolution — the computerized frontier — is displayed in all of its dark and dystopic glory to an audience that may not be ready to see it. Garbage and debris are scattered throughout the city, possibly Los Angeles, which stretches over and under endless miles. A combination of Spanish, Japanese and American English is spoken on the streets, and machines known simply as Replicants are the dominant work force, able to do what humans no longer want to do themselves. Disposable workers are upgraded when a new model is needed without complaint, debate or problems with unions and lawyers. Unfortunately, the problem with the machines is they are modeled

after their creators (humans) and have the possibility of adapting their programming, becoming “more human than human” (the motto of the Tyrell Corporation, creators of the Replicants) — ultimately perfect. According to their designers, Replicants were predicted to begin develop emotional responses to their surroundings in order to interpret the world around them. “You know — love, hate. That sort of thing. So they had a failsafe installed...four-year life span” (Fancher, 1980). The four-year life span allows for the maximum amount of work from the machine, then retirement of the unit, without the risk of murdering a feeling, sentient being. All moral obligation is released.

The retirement of those Replicants that are unwilling to be taken off-line, those that have started to become aware of “self,” are tracked and retired by Blade Runners, police officers that are trained to and charged with the removal of these machines. Decker, the protagonist of this narrative, is a burned out Blade Runner, the best at what he does. He is hauled out of retirement to hunt down a group of Replicants that has escaped from “an off-world colony” to try and infiltrate their creator’s lair and ask for “more life” (Roy Batty, *Blade Runner*). Decker is sent after them and, in the process, begins to question who and what he is in comparison to his targets. He begins to question his own beliefs and fears about his station in life, his reason for existence. It is this questioning that we must look at.

The reasoning behind this particular fear response, the retirement of the Replicants, is obvious. If the tools are better than the mechanic, what is the purpose of the mechanic? Once the Replicants have infiltrated the ‘Tower’, the home of Tyrell Corp., we meet Dr. Tyrell himself — the creator. Tyrell appears to be more of a machine than the machines he creates. Perhaps the Nexus 6 model of the Replicant, those that need to be retired for fear they may become self-aware, is his attempt to become that which he cannot, to justify himself as the creator; a legacy of perfection. The worthiness of the mechanic, the creator of the tool, is based on the work the tools perform. Though the ‘tools’ of this time (2019) are not designed to perform the aesthetic functions of humans, by the end of the film Roy Batty (leader of the ‘renegade’ Replicants) begins demonstrating the higher level thinking exclusive only to humans (this is, of course, by human standards). And, unlike humans, this higher level thinking is occurring in the Replicants before they reach their termination date of 4 years. Do humans, at the age of 3, begin processing data and information at the same level of the Replicants? It is this difference between the development and growth of humans and the Replicants that fosters the need to retire the machines before they can no longer be controlled.

## Two Sides of the Argument - Decker and Roy Batty

*Blade Runner* allows the audience an opportunity to peek into the future, a future where technology has progressed past the desktop or the backpack and now works side by side with humans. Decker is born into and raised in this future (so he thinks — there is the press release from Ridley Scott in 1999, informing fans and critics

alike that Decker was a Replicant himself), and is wrestling with his position in life. Is his only reality — the reason he exists — a reaction to technology, to fear? Is it right to end the existence of something that is just starting to realize itself? Decker starts analyzing his own fear of technology, fear of his existence being determined or justified by technology. It is hard to tell what the future for Decker may have been like if the *Blade Runners* had not existed. Perhaps society would have reversed from the refuse piles found throughout Los Angeles 2019 and been more of a Utopic vision — or the future of *Terminator* and *The Matrix* may be unavoidable. Regardless, the questions Decker is asking affect the audience in such a way that, as Hocker Rushing and Frenztz stated, “[b]y 1990, there were over 300 analyses of *Blade Runner*, including books, periodicals and scholarly journal articles” (p. 143). The audience is placed in this position of grappling with the future presented to them. Decker works as a cushion for the situation, making the information a little less difficult to swallow — as stated earlier, it is more digestible. If Decker is able to work through his own questions, then the audience can feel relief with him. The catharsis of the narrative is complete. If he is unable to resolve his existential technophobia through the course of the film, and his realizations are unknown, then it was just another film; nothing to worry about. The director’s version of the film, released after the original, forces the latter on the audience. When all is said and done, Decker is humanity wrestling with its fears and trying to decide where it exists in an evolving digital world.

### Roy Batty - The Child Becoming

If Decker is society wrestling with its existence in the shadow of technology (*Projecting the Shadow*, 1995), then Roy Batty is the fear brought into reality through the narrative. Batty is Nexus 6, the most advanced Replicant ever created. It is so advanced that it is limited by the four-year life span discussed above to prevent unwanted side effects, namely self-actualization. The narrative asks the audience to engage the question that comes from the limited “life span” — What do we fear in letting technology become more? Will we lose our self-worth, that which makes us dominant, in the process? The scene between Decker and his former boss, when they are first discussing the case that brings Decker back into the role of *Blade Runner*, demonstrates and actuates this fear for us. Decker remarks on how the boss declares the runaway Replicants as “SkinJobs,” and mentions to the audience (only in the original theatrical version) that he would have been the type of person to call African Americans “Niggers” in a former life. This labeling demonstrates the fear technology has placed in society, both in the narrative and in the audience. Roy Batty is the forklift that replaces the dockworker, the software package that causes an entire Accounting department to be “restructured.” Why wouldn’t society fear technology? Everything that defines the productive member of society is taken away — work — replacing it with an emptiness needing to be filled. Fear fills this empty space easily and does not let go. Roy Batty fills that space.

Ridley Scott allows the audience a peek at what it does not to recognize, that the

audience may not be as in control of its world as it would like to think it is. Through Decker and Roy Batty, two sides of the same fear, reaching deep into the core of the audience's existence, are brought to light and seductively fed to those who are witness to it. *Blade Runner* weaves a narrative that tells the audience what is happening and what can be done to prevent it now. As we move forward, *The Terminator*, though touching a similar theme, moves us to the next phase of the fear, and also forces the audience to recognize and digest the technophobic tendencies in its own makeup. It shows how, once the fear goes completely unrecognized, what can possibly occur — the existential question is answered by a fight for their lives.

### **The Terminator: A Warning Shot across the Bow**

In 1984, James Cameron brought a new vision of the future to science fiction and general film audiences across the country. This vision was not the story of the domination and self-made destiny of the human race that had been experienced before in the science fiction film genre. Spring boarding off of what was first realized by Arthur C. Clarke's/Stanley Kubricks's 2001, *The Terminator* presents the audience with the ultimate image of one possible future in a world increasingly dependent on machines. Hocker Rushing and Frentz (1995) clarify this in their discussion of the "technological shadow" in the film — "[t]he Terminator is a potent wake-up call to face the demonic proportions of the technological shadow we have loosed upon the world" (p. 178). Though this may be rather extreme, the concept of the "shadow" does resonate throughout the film.

As if to punctuate this feeling, the first scene the audience is given is the war between the creator and the creation — and the creation is winning. This war is the result of the machines being given total control over the defense of the world's population. Each super-power had its own version of this machine, and the final decision was left to precise digital calculations. It is this precision that sealed the downfall of the creators — us. Visions of "HKs" (Hunter Killers) moving across a landscape riddled with the skeletons of countless combatants and civilians alike, with no reaction or consideration for that which is no longer considered 'functional' — humans, creating the perfect symbol for Existential Technophobia.

The premise of this film is quite simple: For 40 plus years, the machines have ruled the planet, terminating all living beings, seeing them as flawed and as a threat. However, this rule is about to end. The machines, predicting their own defeat, send a cyborg, a Terminator, into the past to terminate the mother of the humans' leader. The humans, discovering the machines are infiltrating the past to change their present, send one of their own back to intercept the machine. In this case, the Cyborg becomes the perfect symbol of destruction and fear. It looks human, yet moves with the precision of the machine. This precision is observed in *Blade Runner* and *The Matrix* as well, and it is this digital precision encased in flesh that is the ultimate symbol of what existential technophobia is. If a machine is able to replicate its creator, and make it better, what purpose does the creator hold?

## The Players - Kyle Reese, Sarah Connor, The Terminator

In this narrative, three primary characters are presented. Each of them represents a different point of acceptance or rejection of technology in the story for the audience. As in *Blade Runner*, the audience is able to identify with one of the presented concepts, allowing them to explore the fears and anxieties surrounding a society that was just starting to recognize the full potential of the automated and computerized age. Reese is the ultimate warrior. He comes from the future, having waged war against the machine in a future that exists because Sarah Connor's present timeline did not fully realize the ramifications of their actions. No one he comes into contact with (in Sarah Connor's present, his past) is able to believe what he is saying to them, either because they lack the foresight to accept the situation or because they place too much blind faith in the powers that be to make the right decisions for them. The audience is forced to wrestle with Reese's reality as well. Questions such as "what if that could happen" or "would the decision-makers not have thought about that" come into play. These questions begin the digestion process of the audience's fear. Reese's personal narrative has brought about issues that the audience, and the culture in general, will need to resolve. If they cannot, then the anxiety they are experiencing is manifested as existential technophobia. Reese represents the reaction to technophobia after the fact.

In contrast, Sarah Connor becomes the reaction before the future is set. She is the unsuspecting culture, sedated with the propaganda that reinforces the dominant narrative of the early to mid 1980s and skeptical of any challenge to "her" control — "I'm not stupid, ya'know. They can't build anything like that yet" (Cameron). Like Sarah Connor, the audience's expressed security in their own domination over the machine is overtaken by the realization that control is slowly slipping away from their hands. Technology is improving, refining, evolving at breakneck speed, and the audience is not able to evolve quickly enough to match the needs and requirements of the creation. Sarah, the audience moving with her, becomes enlightened, and is allowed a glimpse at what could possibly occur. As the film progresses, Sarah Connor is allowed an opportunity — albeit unwillingly — to work through and eventually accept the text she is confronted with as possible and plausible. It is not until the very end of the film, after the victory and transformation of Sarah Connor into the legend she is to become in her future, that the audience is also allowed to accept what has been presented to them, digest it, and move on satisfied with what they have experienced. The audience may not have taken the message of the film as all that important or vital, but at least they are able to internalize.

So what is the Terminator? Reese and Connor each seem to serve a purpose in the narrative, the teacher and the student, the divine message and the Hero. The Terminator's character role in the narrative is obvious. Its role is clear cut and unwavering. Seek out and destroy your target. For the audience, it becomes something else entirely. The Terminator is the perfect working machine — "Listen. Understand. That Terminator is out there. It can't be reasoned with, it can't be

bargained with...it doesn't feel pity of remorse or fear...and it absolutely will not stop. Ever" (Cameron, p. 111). This is the ultimate fear of a society. The machine will work better, perform better and never have to stop for a break, for a cold, for a smoke. And in the de-fleshed machine, the fear is given a truly ghoulish and stark face. Thoughts of *HAL in 2001*, with the cold and unblinking eye, come around. Even by *Terminator 2*, the machine has been "corrupted," with the full change taking hold in Mr. Smith (*The Matrix*). Not so in *The Terminator*. In 1984, the year the film was released, Cyberdine Systems Model 101 — The Terminator — is all that is needed to show the audience what they fear and loath. — The machine is what will make them, the audience and culture, worthless, only to be "liquidated" (Hocker Rushing, 1995, p. 168) — terminated — when no longer needed. This thought is given a gruesome image in *The Terminator*. The end result for the audience, when the machine is finally destroyed in a metal press by a now-transformed Sarah Connor (her transformation into a 'machine' by her own hate and paranoia is documented in *Terminator 2*), is one of relief — colored by skepticism. Though this text is fantasy, the possibility of it becoming reality may hit closer than the audience would like. The Terminator is destroyed, but is the possibility of it existing still present? For the audience, the answer is "yes," and the fear continues to grow. James Cameron is able to pick up where Ridley Scott left off. The slaves of Tyrell Corporation become the warriors and patriots of SkyNet. Once the machine takes over, the humans are relegated to the status of slaves and resources — necessary to keep the machine functioning but expendable and replaceable, like the belts in an automobile engine.

## A New Heroic Quest for a Trapped Reality - The Matrix

"You have been living inside [Baudrillard]'s vision, inside the map, not the territory." Morpheus to Neo when first discussing 'the real' (Wachosk, 1996, p. 48).

Released during the early part of 1999, *The Matrix* was a cinematic blockbuster the world over, elevating the "movie experience" to a new, hypertext-like interaction. Brought into mainstream media during the tidal wave that was "Millennial Madness," with all of its lectures, network countdowns, and media exposés, popular culture was primed to engage the questions discussed in this examination and within the storyline of the movie: "Do we exist to serve the machine, or does the machine exist to serve us?" The Wachoski brothers utilize several distinct narrative structures from mythologies and faerie tales to guide us through these questions on several levels. *The Hero*, or *A Messiah's Birth* — Neo's (Keanu Reeve's character) journey from non-believer to Christ-figure; *The Guide*, or a rewriting of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, to realize our place in the "Real" via Morpheus' discussion surrounding the definition of "the real" with Neo. Along with the two main narrative structures: the Oracle, as the staple of the mythic story produced here, Trinity's reversal of the *Sleeping Beauty* faerie tale and development as the hero, and Cypher as both the betrayer and the representation of blind acceptance all add

to the narrative being wove. Using Joseph Campbell's discussion in "The Adventure of the Hero" (Campbell, 1968, pp. 49-251) as a key basis, a strong relation to Hero narratives as a culture's quest for knowledge and power quests can be followed. This power and, not surprisingly, emancipation comes from the answers to and revelation from both mental and physical riddles. By pulling each of these from the film for analysis, an understanding of contemporary culture's own journey of discovery through this technophobic relationship with the machine can be found, allowing us to answer "what is our relationship with that we create?" As the third film in this trio to be analyzed, and the one that allows for a much wider audience (via movie star 'power' and multi-media access), it only makes sense that the most time is spent here, in the 'real.'

### A Divine Re-Birth - Neo as the Mythic Hero

The scene: Neo (AKA Mr. Anderson), a normal, apparently 20-something software programmer in the year 1999 has just been informed that, not only is everything he believes is real is, in fact, a simulation, but he very well may be the savior of the human race from the prison that is the Matrix. Not a bad way to start your day. The Matrix, he comes to find, is a replicated simulation of the Now, created by the Machines (the current holders of the 21st century) to keep total control over the humans. The prophecy of Neo's coming, his *second* coming has been the guiding dogma behind the resistance positioned against the Machine. This particular move in the text also presents Neo as a version of the Christian *Messiah* figure — "There was a man born on the inside that was able to control the Matrix with his mind" (*The Matrix*). The Wachoski brothers' use of this easily recognized, dogma-based narrative structure, is an effective method of both capturing the audience's attention with a new twist on a familiar story and opening the floor for a Hollywood-turned-Aristotle's Academy discourse on the meaning of "Our" existence. Neo becomes the Hero, representing the hopes and dreams of a people who do not know what they truly are and are to be.

*"THE ONE - In Christian theology: Jesus Christ is the Messiah who saves mankind from its sins. In the movie: Reeves plays Neo... "the One" who will lead mankind out of computer-generated bondage. An anagram of Neo is One." — Lori Thorps, "On The Matrix — God is in the Details"*

As we join Neo through the initiation into his fated role in the story, from denial to acceptance to trial to rebirth, the role of the human in the year 2000 is eerily reflected and questioned. In a way, we (as a society, culture, race) are already connected to the machine in a symbiotic/parasitic sense. *The Matrix* raises the point that we are bound to the machine, not through the merging of technology to the organic (though medical science over the last 20 plus years could argue to the contrary), but through our creation and then inevitable enslavement to the utilities we create to serve us. Neo brings the audience to a realization process that "what we see may not be what we get". This enslavement can be seen outside of the



realm of the virtual as well. Though the standard car was created as a luxury and a tool to make life easier, U.S. society is bound and linked to the car at the level of having to negotiate with a machine to allow for proper functioning in a society created by the creators of the machine. For example, the new luxury vehicles are equipped with voice recognition systems to control phone, facsimile, climate control, etc. If someone other than you wanted to use your vehicle, they would have to negotiate with this utility tool to be allowed to operate it. Individuals, settled in workstations throughout the country, are bound to a machine that, if it does not function properly, productivity — human productivity — is diminished. Modern society, without the co-processor, does not know how to function.

Neo's transformation into the "Cosmic Dancer" (Campbell, 1968, p. 229), one with the "[f]reedom to pass back and forth across the world division, from the perspective of the apparitions of time to that of the causal deep and back" (Campbell, 1986, p. 229) allows for the Hero, the Messiah, to represent the dreams of the populace that questions the purpose of the machine. Neo attempts to bring the answer he finds from his quest in real to the nether-realm. The Wachoski brothers, in order to introduce the concepts of Technophobia and the questions raised earlier, employ an effective narrative mode throughout Neo's adventures. It would appear that, like George Lucas' use of Campbell's Hero Quest in the *Star Wars* trilogy, the Wachoskis are able to develop their own myth for the audience to relate with and discuss once the movie is over.

### The Role of the Guide - Morpheus/Virgil

"In Dante's vision [*The Divine Comedy*] the part [of the guide] is played by Virgil...[p]rotective and dangerous, motherly and fatherly at the same time, this supernatural principle of guardianship and direction unites in itself all the ambiguities of the unconscious" (Campbell, 1986, p. 73). Morpheus is the leader of the resistance against the machine, trying to reclaim what was lost. He follows the mythology of his people, that a Messiah figure will come to return the people to that which they claim. Morpheus is singled out as the one who will find this savior and teach the savior the truth — the "real."

The narrative strategy built around Morpheus, like Neo, harkens back to common tales of the guide — from Dante's Virgil to the Egyptian god Thoth. Morpheus' role is to turn those that still perceive Plato's shadows on the wall as reality towards the light of the sun coming through the mouth of the cave. Neo's first step is a conversation held in what is called the Construct, aptly named as the "real" of the Matrix is based upon a construction of fabricated reality. Neo is brought, with the help of Morpheus, from the reality known and accepted without question to the "desert of the real" (*The Matrix*, 1996). Once this "real" is presented to Neo (and the audience), the technophobic discussion is fully engaged. Neo must now decide whether to embrace the new real or retreat to the shadows (see discussion of Cypher further down). His decision does not come easy, nor is it simple.

*"MORPHEUS — In Greek mythology: Morpheus is the god of dreams. In the movie: Morpheus is the leader of rebel forces who fights to awaken enslaved masses from a dreamlike reality" — (Tharps, Downloaded 2000)*

The question at this point of the discussion becomes "is this film a predictor or prophetic look at our plausible or possible future?" The images presented are not ones that are completely shocking in society. Morpheus allows the audience (most of which may have not considered their place in the then-coming 21st century until viewing the movie) to open discourse surrounding the power of the machine over the creator of the machine, and whether or not the power needs to be usurped — by simply turning on an "old" console television. Morpheus then becomes the audience's guide through this tale. Like Neo, the audience/society, being faced with the truth for the first time, must come to an understanding and must make a choice with the new knowledge. The narrative that is created here is one that reflects not only faerie tales and dogmatic scripture, but also discussions raised by current thinkers and teachers — Jean Baudrillard, among others. It is no wonder that the book Neo hides his black market software in is an old hardbound version of Baudrillard's *Simulations and Simulacra*. Though their (above-mentioned teachers) discussions are academic, as opposed to Morpheus' more instructional/sermonic mode, the question is effectively raised for the audience, courtesy of the Wachoski's scripting. The Wachoski brothers want the audience to bring the questions outside the theater into reality, where the thinkers would like it to go. Morpheus' role, then, is not to guide and teach Neo alone, but also the audience in the process.

#### *The Final Piece of the Hero's Puzzle - The Flight of the Valkyrie and the Question of Fate*

As in the majority of faerie tales, The Matrix has its own "magic number" to help the story along. The text creates, for us, a set of three main heroes or aspects for the audience to learn through and relate to. We have met The Hero and The Guide. Now we must look at Trinity. The Wachoski brothers present a character that is at once the seductress, the warrior and the chosen. Trinity first takes the role of the seductress (a classic nod to Judeo-Christian mythos) to bring Neo into his destiny. However, once the seduction is complete (Neo's turning to the light from the shadows), Trinity's role changes and becomes a combination of roles: partially Eastern in basis, taking on the roles held by Shiva the Destroyer (Hindu mythos), but also rooted in the Norse/Germanic character the Valkyrie. Though the comparison to a role reversal of Grimm's *Sleeping Beauty* towards the end of the film is evident, the empowered roles held by Trinity throughout the film twist the traditional primary female roles in Western story lines, developing a new mythic hero. Trinity completes the narrative character, combining the stories of *Sleeping Beauty* with Valhalla, when she "chooses" Neo to be the eternal hero for the real and the "real." Trinity becomes the storyline for the crumbling gendered technological divide present in contemporary culture.

Trinity's acceptance and utilization of the Matrix, and technology in general, updates Brosnan's argument that though women have a collective acceptance of

technology and the benefits of it, there is a gendered reluctance to individually accept and prosper from it. The character of Trinity demonstrates the evolution of the gendered relationship with technology from what Haraway (2000) describes as the confines of “[t]he ‘homework economy’ outside ‘the home’” (p. 304) to Sadie Plant’s argument when she opens “On The Matrix” (unrelated to the movie) with “[a]fter decades of ambivalence towards technology, many feminists are now finding a wealth of new opportunities, spaces and lines of thought amidst the new complexities of the ‘telecoms revolution’” (Plant, 2000, p. 325). There are also cultural stigmas that exist with the notion of the female hero that must be overcome. These, in addition to Trinity’s obvious mastery of the technology surrounding her, make for a break from traditional gender roles when dealing with technology. It is in this redefining of the feminine role at the beginning of the film that the presence of technophobia, as opposed to mere cultural anxiety, becomes clear. It is Trinity who first opens the audience’s eyes to the existence of the technology and the world beyond the screen. Because it is Trinity that brings us to these realizations, in all of her different roles, it becomes evident that this conversation cannot be held without her intricate role in it.

### **Mr. Smith - The Reflection of the Fear**

Thus far, I have discussed the resistance to the “virtual life,” as demonstrated by the heroes, both reluctant and willing, of *The Matrix*. To have heroes, however, the story must also have villains. In this text, the antagonist is played by the The Smith (or Mr. Smith). Mr. Smith, a non-descript, non-extraordinary, non-living extension of the Machine represents not only the object of the culture’s technophobia but also the avoided but ever-present self-reflection of the same culture. Mr. Smith, as is evident, is not one agent but every agent seen. It is this anonymity within the structure of the Matrix that denotes and empowers them as masters of the environment (a binary of Master and Servant). These agents, like the culture that fears its own enslavement by the machine and stripping of self-worth, is connected by a seamless web of information represented by the earpiece worn by each Smith. This earpiece, like technology, is coded both as a symbol of power and prosperity and the symbol of shackles and domination. Through the Smith’s monotonous presentation — demonstrated by its clothing, voice, facial expressions, presence — the image of the enslaved life, with no type of freedom or self-expression, is created.

Held in contrast to the leather and silk wearing, weapon toting, free thinking heroes, it is no wonder that the line between “right” and “wrong” is easily recognized and defined by this text. In fact, the power structure that the Smiths fit into is so clearly defined that any transgression of this structure (the development of emotion by the “lead” Mr. Smith while interrogating Morpheus) is quickly squelched by that structure. During the interrogation scene, Mr. Smith sends the other agents out of the room, then disconnects from the Matrix by removing both the sunglasses that force anonymity in a binary world and removing the earpiece. These power

symbols are taken directly from an acculturated image of the government police, the Secret Service, or Men in Black and conjure the anxiety and phobias associated with the power symbols previously mentioned. *The Matrix* is particularly effective in interweaving these concepts with technologically-based anxieties and fears already presented and enacted in the text. If the Smiths are viewed as Cyborgs, being born of the Machine but having to take on human traits and characteristics, Boal (1995) sees this as — “[t]he Cyborgs as the virtual screens [movie, terminal, TV, etc.] are...the allegory of the fear of social death [by the viewer of the screen — us] and incorporation into the machine” (pp. 9-10).

### **The Oracle and the Betrayer - The Shadows on Plato's Cave Wall**

Within the majority of mythic structures, the role of the oracle is key to the denotation of the hero and the quest. It is the oracle that, by divine providence, is able to foresee the path of those who seek guidance, and who can bring joy or tragedy in equal dosage and at any time. The oracle becomes the conduit of inspiration and damnation, and is held on high within the cultures affected by the fortunes told. In the text (particularly the original script), the mythic archetype surrounding the oracle is done away with. Instead of the flowing robes and ethereal quality associated with the discovery of Truth (though these images, again, are played with in the 1996 script), Neo is presented with a kitchen (note that, in the film version, the appliances are very old...and very analog), the smells of baking all around him, and the image of the happy grandmother diligently minding her guests. This treatment of the oracle steps outside the canonical concept created by the oracle of Delphi (Greek) or the Norns of Fate (Norse). Like Morpheus, presenting Neo with the truth of the real, the Oracle strives to unlock what is already within Neo. She needs to prove to him that the machine does not own him, and that he can find his own self worth in the fight. Brosnan's technophobic reduction program relies on such a discovery in order to fully function. Once the recognition of the technophobic condition is quantifiable, the process of understanding and acceptance for Neo — and the audience — can begin.

However, there is the possibility that once the reality of the situation comes to light, the individual may want to go back to where s/he came from. Plato, with his “Allegory of the Cave,” discusses the moment when the choice must be made: go back into the comfortable bondage of the not-truth or turn towards the freedom of truth: “if [the prisoner] is compelled to look straight at the light, will he not have a pain in his eyes which will make him turn away to take refuge in the objects of vision which he can see, and which he will conceive to be in reality clearer than the things which are now being shown...” (Plato, pp. 653-54). Within *The Matrix*, the character of Cypher also faces this choice. As a reward for his choice to betray Morpheus, Neo and the real, he is granted the wish to remember nothing of what is real and is allowed to “have my body inserted back into the matrix” (*The Matrix*). Contemporary American culture has a similar choice to make regarding its position with tech-

nology. Either those who are affected by this existential technophobia will recede from the light of truth and empowerment, as Plato would detail it, or embrace the truth to make it their own. This decision is already being discussed and decided upon in the purveyors and creators of popular culture: the news and entertainment industries. *The Matrix* and others (*eXistenZ*, *Blade Runner*, *The Terminator*, etc.) are the response in popular media to this current moment's wrestling with existential technophobia. Does culture abandon control and simply live in a manufactured "bliss" (like Cypher's steak) or try to determine a better solution?

### **The Answer to the Riddle - The Acquisition of the Ultimate Boon**

The Wachoski brothers, through their writing and direction, have presented the audience with new heroes and questions centered around the role of society in the "Age of Information," where the world is connected (and caught) in a web of fiber-optics and dreams. The characters of Neo and Morpheus become, through carefully constructed narratives, motivators for exploration and inquiry into the audience's own perceptions of technology (and perhaps the ghost in the machine). The Oracle, Cypher, and Trinity each represent different aspects of our relationship with technology and possible choices to be made. With the new millennium finally upon us, the grand question, "what is the relationship between humans and machines," is becoming realized. Is humanity meant to rule it, merge with it, or become subservient to it? What is each of our position in this new "Age?" Though no answers are overtly offered in *The Matrix*, no Sphinx's riddle solved or puzzle box completed, the narrative strategies employed in the film allow for continuation of these very real questions and open-ended discourse.

### **Where do we go from here?**

Existential technophobia does exist in our society. The audiences for these films were allowed to engage the text of their fear without being overwhelmed by what each project shows them. This is the first step in the conversation. As stated in the first section of this article, the 'why' is to make sure that the conversation happens — not just in research but in the classroom and dining room.

To recap this project: I have presented what I am calling Existential Technophobia. I have then, using this definition, completed a narrative analysis of three films, particularly *The Matrix*, in order to present this fear as it exists in American culture. The audiences for each of the films, representing the culture I am examining, are forced to recognize this fear in themselves, though they are not put through the pain of having it presented to them in real life. Instead, they are able to encounter the fear, internalize it, and feel content with the presented conclusions — for now. By using a narrative analysis, the characters examined take on similar aspects of the hero and the guide, each of them experiencing different facets of the fear. It is the way in which each character engages the fear that assists the audience in their

own rationalizations and conclusions. Once the audience leaves, they can either accept what has been presented to them or discard it. By analyzing future texts as they come about, we will be able see what effect technology is having on our society. These effects will be observed and understood by the way each narrative is developed and presented.

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## *A Sabbatical Journey from the Classroom to the Corporation*

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### **Abstract**

*This essay describes the author's experiences during a sabbatical leave semester in a corporate setting. It addresses socialization, corporate culture, and the role of groups in organizations. Supervisors' observations of recent college graduates as new employees are reported, and questions about the role of higher education in helping students make the transition from campus to corporation are raised.*

I signed my first contract as a college faculty member in 1972. In the intervening years my responsibilities have included teaching a variety of theatre and speech (later communication) classes, but three courses interpersonal communication, small group communication, and organizational communication have been and are my favorites and the courses I teach most often. Responses to these classes by current students and alumni have been very positive because the theories, concepts, and skills have value and applicability in their lives and careers. I have been pleased with the students' assessments, but not satisfied in the cases of small group and organizational communication because the content had been based on a combination of my graduate education, subsequent readings, and some personal research, but not from the practical experience that is the result of working in organizations other than higher education. With the help of a former student I was able to develop a spring 2003 sabbatical project in which I would serve as an "extern" in the Management Services Department of a large insurance company in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Management Services fulfills three functions in the corporation by providing in-house consulting for various business units, maintaining a Management Development Center for recent college graduates who are "fast-tracked" into management positions, and coordinating an in-house service that hires and trains temporary employees. Through a meeting in St. Paul and an exchange of letters, the head of Management Services, the supervisor of the Management Development Center, and I agreed to some general principles; I would become an active member of the department who would attend planning meetings, help plan consulting projects, and participate in the training activities of the Management Development Center. We all recognized that these general goals would become more concrete through daily activities as I became a part of the department. In exchange I would provide theoretical knowledge and my teaching experience to help rewrite existing and develop new units of instruction for the assistant analysts who were participating in the development program. We further agreed that I would be able to take notes and essentially function as a participant/observer ethnographer.

My attention was directed toward three areas of organizational life. I reflected

on my own experiences of being socialized as a new employee, used organization culture models as a means of assessing and describing the organization, and observed the use of small groups in task and decision making processes. I did not anticipate that managers would wish to discuss their perceptions of young employees, but throughout my notes there were comments from managers regarding recent college graduates as new employees.

The paper describes my experience and observations of how an academic understanding of communication 1) contributes to a business organization, 2) reports some views of supervisors' of recent college graduates as employees, and 3) raises questions about higher education's role in helping students make the transition from campus to corporation. I hope these observations will initiate conversation among faculty colleagues and students.

From the most basic perspective, ethnography is "the descriptive study of cultures" (DeVito, 1986, p. 108). Methods of ethnographic study are most similar to the informal "research" human beings undertake whenever they encounter a new situation. When encountering a new setting, people assess the environment and study the behavior of others in order to behave appropriately. Frey, Botan, Friedman, and Kreps (1992), argue that as a means of communication research, ethnography differs in three essential ways from other methodologies. Ethnographic studies seek to describe how communication occurs, rather than explaining "if-then" relationships among communication behaviors, or critiquing messages. Ethnographers may attempt to find patterns in other's communication, and then use these observations to build theory, rather than studying events from the frame of a pre-existing theory. Ethnographic studies are based in fieldwork rather than studying controlled laboratory events. This research does focus on how communication occurs in the natural environment of an insurance company, but it did not address the construction of a grounded theory or avoid pre-existing constructs or models as it addressed socialization, organizational culture, and the role of groups in corporate settings.

## **Socialization**

Conrad and Poole (1998) present a model that describes three stages in a new employee's socialization: 1) anticipation, 2) encounter, and 3) arrival. This model provided a structure for understanding my own socialization into a new organization and the experience created an empathetic understanding of the responses of recent college graduates.

In the anticipation stage new members must let go of the familiar, address implicit contracts and expectations that are established during the interviewing and hiring processes, and grapple with changes in self-concept. As recent college graduates establish homes away from family and the college campus there are feelings of excitement and dislocation.

The act of letting go of the familiar is no easier for a mid-50s person whose



touchstones and sense of the familiar are tied to the daily routine of being a teacher, a spouse, parent of grown children, and community member. I was fortunate to be able to rent a condominium in West St. Paul that belonged to a student's grandmother. Nevertheless, although the condominium provided a comfortable environment, it was a lonely place and certainly not home.

I enjoyed learning to use the bus system, and still chuckle at my excitement the first day when I arrived 15 minutes early for the bus and waited in 10 degree below weather. Being accustomed to having free access to campus facilities, I was not prepared to encounter a burly guard who informed me that I could not proceed until someone from Management Services arrived to escort me to the 19th floor. The day's greatest shock occurred when I was escorted to my *Dilbert-like cubicle* with no door and five foot high walls. This was not my pleasant office in Campus House. Finally, I met my new colleagues. They seemed to be welcoming, but a bit suspicious of an academic who might be taking notes about them and their daily activities. It also was apparent they initially had no idea how they should interact with me or how I would fit into the department.

A final aspect of the anticipation stage occurs as a new employee must address changes in self-concept that shift from a generalized sense of self to a personal image based on *competencies* and the ability to be *independent and autonomous* (Conrad & Poole, p. 202). The fact that I had few explicit responsibilities meant that I was largely independent and autonomous. In many ways I would be inventing my own job as I struggled to understand how my academic knowledge could contribute to the department and organization.

In the encounter stage new employees must cope with surprises, chose appropriate work roles, and develop task-related skills. There were no events so surprising that I was completely caught off-guard by organizational procedure. At some level I was interested to see that the first 30 to 45 minutes of work each morning was spent in informal conversation, and I was surprised at the number of meetings middle managers attended each day. There were days in which my supervisor was in meetings for more than six hours. As my responsibilities evolved I was asked to meet with the new assistant analysts every week, and we often had very disclosing conversations about their experiences. They knew I would not participate in their evaluations, and I may have reminded them of their professors and the familiar college environment. I also appreciated having the opportunity to attend a number of meetings where my task was to observe the process. Later the facilitators and I would talk about ideas ranging from agenda building to the imbalance of participation by male and female members.

I do believe my knowledge and experience as a small group and organizational communication teacher contributed to the company by providing a better understanding of communication principles. However, it soon became apparent that my role would be limited because of a lack of understanding of the financial aspects of the organization. While effective communication skills can help individuals and groups perform more efficiently, they do not substitute for an understanding of the

bottom line role of dollars and cents in the decision making process. Given my lack of specific knowledge of the role of finances in the workplace, I did not fulfill all of the expectations of the encounter stage because I did not understand all of the responsibilities of the consultants in the Management Services division.

The arrival stage occurs when a new employee has learned the expectations and taken-for-granted assumptions of the organization, has mastered the cognitive and emotional challenges of being a newcomer, and identifies with the organization. Understanding the expectations and assumptions is an exercise in cracking a subtle rhetorical code that is expressed through nuance and nonverbal behavior. I believe I developed a sound understanding of the dynamics of the department, but I never became a full-fledged member because of a lack of specific knowledge of tasks related to providing financial services.

## **Organizational Culture**

There are two distinct orientations to the organization as culture metaphor. The earliest model assumed that cultures are homogeneous entities in which all employees share the same assumptions, values and attitudes about the organization. This view is attractive to managers because they can control the culture and influence organizations' success through the use of appropriate tools and strategies. This model views organizations as entities that "have" culture (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Peters & Waterman, 1982).

The alternative model assumes that organizations "are" cultures, and that cultures do not exist apart from the employees who enact them. In this model all organizational members share some assumptions about the organization, or it would cease to exist. However, within the subunits of an organization, members develop distinct ways of perceiving, interpreting, and explaining the events that surround them. Their responses to the events create unique subcultures.

There are many approaches to analyzing cultures, with strategies focusing on analyzing how rituals and ceremonies reify culture through participation and significant actions, describing how metaphors are used to compare the organization with other entities, and listening to the stories people tell (Louis, 1980; Putnam, 1983; Conrad & Poole, 1998). For Eisenberg and Riley (2001) these communicative acts do more than transmit cultures, they are "constitutive of culture" (p.294).

During my first day I met with the vice-president for Corporate Services. He introduced me to the company by telling stories of "heroes" or wise executives who were creating a "service" culture when he was hired in the early 1970s. He lamented the decline of the organization's culture, and wanted to know what he and other leaders could do to restore the culture he had admired. While he acknowledged that a large organization could have subcultures, the concept made him uncomfortable because subcultures could not be controlled.

In order to more fully understand this organization, I began to search for viable subcultures, and found three. Within a few days my former student invited me to

tour the Group Business Unit. I was surprised by the silence and sense of formality. She explained the culture by describing her vice-president as one of the most respected members of the corporation. He believed in traditional business practices, and was not pleased that the company instituted an informal relational style and dress code. People located closest to him dressed and addressed each other more formally than other members of the unit. The sense of formality gave this unit a unique identity.

As compared to Group Business, the second subculture, the Training and Development department was a rowdy bunch who could best be compared to graduate students who love to tell stories about how hard they work and the significance of their role in corporate success. Their desks were messy and chaotic, and the informality of their interaction patterns could be characterized by yelling at someone several cubicles away, "the stack of training materials that were on my desk will be returned immediately if not sooner." The Training and Development area provided me with vitality and energy.

Somehow the corporate attorneys became my lunch buddies, and they represented the third culture. Their jobs are similar to Management Services in that they were not directly involved in providing financial services, but their role is extraordinarily important because they are responsible for being sure that the company did not violate the laws of a variety of states. I enjoyed the elements of cynicism and sarcasm that floated through their stories. As employees they were pleased when new business enriched the company, but at times they reminded me of smiling Cheshire Cats who knew that no new business transaction was complete until they approved the contracts.

There were very few days when I did not hear the phrase "corporate culture." As an observer I found both the strong culture view that celebrated corporate heroes and the model that contends that organizations have subcultures provided insight into the values and taken-for-granted assumptions of the company.

## **Small Groups**

Since much of the of the organization's business was transacted in groups, most of my observations occurred within group contexts. Healthy groups accomplish task goals and address relational issues (Cragan, Wright, & Kasch, 2003). The fact that groups address relational issues does not imply that all of the members must be best friends, but social interaction allows members to get to know each other, to predict how others might respond, and ultimately to develop trust. I encountered three exemplars of appropriate and inappropriate uses of groups in this company.

Relational aspects of group processes are characterized by two kinds of talk; "consciousness-raising" talk and "encounter or social" talk. Consciousness-raising talk celebrates the unique and special qualities of our group by comparing "us" with "them." In my second week several thousand employees walked through the skywalk system to the Convention Center for an all-company meeting. While

thousands of employees do not constitute a small group, it was fascinating to watch a consciousness-raising event that built a tremendous sense of cohesiveness. As we walked into the auditorium food and beverages were available. We were entertained with a movie that was made in-house that brought cheers and whistles every time a friend or colleague appeared. The movie was a spoof of the *Indiana Jones* films in which the heroes sought to recover a treasure chest that held the key to this year's employee bonuses. It provided an entertaining introduction to the Chief Executive Officer who announced that there would be a 4% profit sharing bonus. This was an incredibly sophisticated pep-rally that helped thousands of employees feel very good about "our" company as compared to others.

I observed a problem-solving group that was facilitated by one of the consulting analysts in Management Services. The group demonstrated the importance of trust. The people in one of the business units were frustrated because supervisors would demand that people stop working on projects to address a more immediate but not necessarily more important concern. It took awhile for the members to trust each other enough to share their stories and vent their frustrations through them. Through the sharing of stories and the support provided by simply listening to each other, some of their more immediate anger dissipated and they were able to suggest solutions for their common concerns.

One day one of the assistant analysts asked me to observe an ongoing group's meeting. There had been a great deal of bickering and tension as the group attempted to meet its charge of negotiating a resolution to a series of disagreements the company was having with a large insurance agency that wanted to sell its products. As people entered the room there was amiable interaction. As the group began to address the task, it was interesting to watch five female and five male successful middle managers fall into very traditional roles. Apparently three of the most senior members were tired of not completing their task, and took control of the meeting. With the exception of the woman leading the meeting, none of the women spoke, and the junior males said little. After the meeting the group leader and I discussed the process. She was relieved that progress was being made but frustrated by the style. Our discussion focused on the inappropriate use of groups to solve these problems. When the range of options is narrow, a group of 10 was not necessary. The most knowledgeable people could have made the same decision more quickly and with less cost.

These instances are good examples of observations that can be shared with students when discussing the importance of consciousness-raising moments, the role of trust in a group's development, and whether using a group is the most appropriate means of solving a problem.

### **Making the Transition from Campus to Corporation**

The final set of observations arose during conversations about recent college graduates as new employees. As American families change, young people may not be

taught social skills that have been taken for granted. The upper and middle level managers I saw everyday are appalled at the lack of manners and social graces among new employees. The creation of the informal dress code has lead to on-going discussions about what is and is not appropriate attire at work. These supervisors cringe at some of the table manners exhibited in the cafeteria, and are dumbfounded when new employees seem never to have ordered from a menu and did not know which fork to use when the table setting has more than one. They also are frustrated that some young people cannot maintain a conversation with a senior person. In short, I was frequently asked what our colleges and universities were doing to help students learn social skills that apparently had not been taught at home.

A friend, who teaches at Central College in Iowa, notes that their faculty and administration had heard similar complaints, and the campus career center has begun teaching etiquette lessons. Do we need to consider providing similar opportunities for students? What are our responsibilities in helping students from the campus to the workplace?

## Final Thoughts

On my campus there are a number of meritorious sabbatical leave activities that range among research, professional growth, and course innovation. This sabbatical leave provided a wide range of growth promoting activities in that I had the opportunity to experience work in a corporate setting. My classes have been enriched by the stories and accounts that are shared with students. Of all of my observations, those related to making the transition from campus to corporation have the greatest value for students, but they also will be important in conversations with colleagues about our roles as teachers and mentors.

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## ***Using Poster Presentations in the Communication Theory Course: Providing an Opportunity for Interaction***

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### **Abstract**

*This article details an assignment which allows students to discuss their research with their peers and share the results in an interactive format using poster presentations.*

### **Objectives**

1. Conduct an exploratory project that investigates a communication theory
2. Make connections between real world experiences and communication theory
3. Develop the ability to conduct secondary and original research
4. Discuss your research with your peers
5. Present your research using a poster presentation and formal paper

### **Rationale**

I have students in my upper-level communication theory course “test” out a theory to see if it will hold up to another test. They present their research findings using a poster presentation and formal paper. This assignment gives students the opportunity to discuss their research with their peers and share the results in an interactive format. Students develop the ability to ask and answer impromptu questions about communication research and theory. This assignment has been a refreshing addition to this course. I have used it instead of formal in-class presentations. Instructors can adapt this assignment to other undergraduate and graduate courses.

I include the following paragraph in the assignment. Poster presentations provide a unique opportunity for audience members and researchers to interact one-on-one or in a small group. These interactions are very different from a typical formal presentation because they tend to foster lively impromptu discussions in a dyad or small group. In poster sessions audience members move from presentation to presentation and converse with multiple researchers. Conversations often occur after audience members have viewed the posters. Audience members typically ask questions about the research and findings. They may ask a specific question about the research or they may ask the researcher to explain his/her research.

Students focus on a specific theory and conduct secondary and original research. They are responsible for designing and producing the materials for their display and creating an “audience friendly” poster. The poster should be easy to read and

understand, structured, organized, professional, and no larger than 35 x 45 inches. We discuss the use of short and easy to read sentences, bullets, key points, key findings, visuals, quotes, and color. The information can be presented using computers or hand lettering. In addition, I develop my own poster presentation example from a current research project or convention paper. I explain how I designed the poster from a completed paper. We discuss the types of questions that audience members could ask.

### **The Assignment: Directions and Explanation**

I divide my class of approximately thirty students into three groups. Each "round" or group lasts thirty to forty minutes. I set up ten easels in a "breezeway" in our building. This space is public and other students and faculty members often serve as audience members as they happen to pass through the breezeway. In addition, I publicize the event through word-of-mouth. Although it is not possible for me to observe each student presentation, I walk around and observe many interactions between student researchers and audience members.

Each student is assigned four researchers/ posters. As audience members, the students complete feedback forms for two students per group (see attachment). The feedback forms give the students a clear idea about the expectations in the interactions. Each feedback form is worth 10 points. I interact with as many students as possible, however the students are not graded on their ability to interact with their peers. They are graded on the material that is presented on the poster.

Students select a theory from the textbook that they have not studied in another course. I have used textbooks by Littlejohn (2002) and Griffin (2000). For example, they "test" theories such as Face Negotiation Theory, Muted Group Theory, Interpersonal Deception Theory and Expectancy Violation Theory. They try to answer the question, "Does the theory hold true in the real world?"

Students select a research method that they think can effectively "test" the theory. They use interviews, observations, and questionnaires to study the theory. The method they select should uncover information about the theory and allow them to test the accuracy of the theory.

### **Assignment for Students**

You will turn in a poster and formal paper. In the paper you will explain in greater detail the research you conducted. The paper should be approximately eight pages. Your paper should be typed and double-spaced. You will write the paper before you design the poster. Your poster is an "outline" of your paper.

You will address the following areas in the poster and paper. Your poster should include the following sections. You will determine how you will present the information. Create a poster that is easy to read and includes the following information.



## **Introduction**

Why did you select this theory?

Why does this theory interest you?

When you read about this theory in the textbook what questions did you have?

What is your research question or area of interest?

Provide a rationale for your study. Why is this an important study?

## **Literature Review**

You want to increase your understanding of the theory beyond the textbook and share that information with the audience.

Review at least three scholarly sources/ communication journal articles about the theory. Find the best information about the theory available.

In this section you will tell the audience three to five things you want them to know about the theory. What are the key findings from the prior research?

You will need to provide the audience with a basic understanding of the theory.

Use APA or MLA citations in your poster. Cite the sources as you would in a formal paper. In addition, include a References section on your poster.

## **Methods**

Provide the audience with information about your method and procedures.

Introduce the method that you used to test the theory.

Provide a rationale for this method. Why was this the best method for testing the theory?

Offer the audience details about this phase of your research. What did you do? How did you explore or test the theory? How did you gather the data? How did you find participants? How many participants?

## **Findings**

Present your most noteworthy findings.

Answer your research question(s). What did you discover? In this section you will make links between the theory and your research.

Discuss the connections between your findings and the prior research.

## **Discussion**

Recap your research.

Explore and discuss whether the theory held up to another test. Why or why not?

In addition, address the 'so what' question. What have you accomplished in this study?

What made this study important?

How has your research contributed to our understanding of the theory?

## Requirements

You will turn in a references page, signed consent forms and all supportive material (interview guide, observation notes, completed questionnaires, etc.) the day of the presentations. The feedback forms are due the following class period.

## Poster Session Feedback Form

Your name \_\_\_\_\_ Researcher's name \_\_\_\_\_

Theory \_\_\_\_\_ Method \_\_\_\_\_

1. From the poster I learned
2. The poster presentation answered my questions about the research that was conducted.

Strongly				Strongly
Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree
Explain:				

3. I asked the following question:
4. The researcher answered my question(s).

Strongly				Strongly
Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree
The researcher's answer was:				

5. This research project is interesting because:
6. How could the research have been conducted differently? (Offer your own opinions and ideas.)

## References

- Griffin, E. (2000). *A First Look at Communication Theory*. Boston Burr Ridge, IL: McGraw Hill.
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## ***James Hill: A Listening and Group Cooperation Activity***

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### **Abstract**

*The Joseph Hill verdict is a group activity, which helps to increase students' evaluative listening skills, logical thinking skills and group cooperation. This activity contains eighteen information sheets created from a short mystery story found in a supplement to Games Magazine. Students work in groups of five or six, and each member is given three or four pieces of information to read aloud to the other members. By listening carefully to all of the information and considering the opinions of others, the students decide whether Joseph Hill is guilty or not guilty and defend their decision.*

### **Goal/Rationale**

The goal is to help increase students' evaluative listening skills, logical thinking skills and group cooperation. The ability to listen at the evaluative level and make decisions is crucial because in our daily activities we are asked to make decisions, which impact others. To be effective decision makers, we must listen with an open mind and at the evaluative level. This activity requires students to listen carefully to the information, listen to the opinions of others and reach group consensus to make a decision.

### **Directions and Explanation**

This activity is generally used after students have watched and discussed the communication aspects of the movie, Twelve Angry Men. The use of the movie, however, is not essential to the activity. A short mystery story found in a supplement to Games Magazine has been made into eighteen clues. Separate the clues, mix them up and place them in an envelope.

Place students in groups of 5 or 6. Randomly give each student 3 or 4 clues. Instruct students they may read the clues aloud to the other members, but they may not pass the clues to other members or read over the shoulder of another student. Members may not write down the clues, but clues may be read aloud repeatedly. This activity encourages listening at the evaluative level.

By sharing clues and using their careful listening and critical thinking skills, students are to decide whether Joseph Hill is guilty or not guilty. If they decide Hill is guilty, they are to give reasons why. If they decide not guilty, they are to tell

who is guilty and why that person is guilty. Group members have to share clues (which encourages quieter students to participate), to listen carefully, discuss various opinions and reach a consensus, and defend their decision.

## Results

Students are very involved in this activity (and also enjoy it), and all members participate. Quiet members are often observed taking an active role in making the decision. The activity is followed up with responsible feedback on the activity.

Narrative, Clues, Ballot, Answer and Feedback Sheets.

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury: There were no eyewitnesses to the murder of Clinton Bragg. Not even the murderer was there to see him die. Although three people had motives to murder him and had the opportunity to commit the crime, Joseph Hill is on trial for the murder. Your task is to listen carefully to the evidence, to decide whether Joseph Hill is guilty or not guilty and to give reason(s) to support your decision. Listen carefully to ALL of the evidence before you make your decision. You have only ONE opportunity to make a decision. A wrong decision could convict an innocent man or could allow a murderer to go free.

All the facts necessary to solve this crime and reach the CORRECT verdict are contained in the information sheets. You may read the information sheets aloud to your group members as often as needed, but you may not pass them around, write down the information or read over someone's shoulder.

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Clinton Bragg was not a loveable character. He hated all people, was a miser, and a loan shark. He had been crippled for years, unable to move from his bedside unassisted, and this had embittered him until he seemed to take vicious delight in inflicting pain on those who fell into his clutches.

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The first of the trio with both motive and opportunity to murder Clinton Bragg was his landlady, the widow Susan Ball.

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When her husband died 13 years before, Susan Ball found that the only thing he had left her was a new home. She was able to keep the modern home only because she turned it into a superior rooming house. Bragg was her first tenant. Because of his miserliness he would not hire a nurse to attend to his wants, but he paid Mrs. Ball to take care of him. She waited on him hand and foot because he promised to make her daughter his heir.

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On the evening before his body was found, he quarreled with Mrs. Ball because she kept her daughter in a boarding school. He called it a waste of money. He reviled her and mocked her, and others heard him shout that the next morning he would have his lawyer come to change his will so neither she nor her daughter would ever get a cent of his money to squander.

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The other two who shared both motive and opportunity to commit the murder were Burton Meek and Joseph Hill, who shared a suite of rooms with Thomas Lane on the floor above Bragg's room. All three worked as clerks in brokerage offices.

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Though neither Hill nor Meek knew of the other's plight, both had borrowed from the old loan shark, Bragg, to repay small thefts from their offices. And after making payments to Bragg every week for almost four years, each still owed the old man five to six times as much as the original loan, a situation not at all unusual in loan sharking deals.

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On the afternoon before the body was found, Bragg had called Hill and Meek in separately and ordered each to pay the money the next day, even if he had to steal it from his office. Neither had the money. Bragg told them if they did not pay, he would inform their employers of their embezzlement.

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We come now to the night the body was found. We are fortunate in having as a witness Mrs. Hunter, who spent the night in the room nearest Bragg's, sitting up with a sick friend, Mrs. Wayne, another paying guest. As it was a warm August night, Mrs. Hunter kept the door open. From her chair she was able to see the door to Bragg's room.

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At 11 p.m. as she did every night, Mrs. Ball went to Bragg's room, arranged his bed, opened the window about six inches, lowered the blind to within eight inches or so of the window sill and went downstairs to her own room. She did not lock Bragg's door as he had a horror of being locked in.

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At 12:30 a.m. while Mrs. Hunter was sitting with the light out until her patient went to sleep, Mrs. Ball came quietly up the stairs and entered Bragg's room. She was there about five minutes and then silently went downstairs again, not knowing that Mrs. Hunter was watching her. Mrs. Ball has told you that she went to plead with Bragg to keep his promise and not change the will, but she found him asleep and so left his room.

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At 1:55 a.m. Joseph Hill came home from a party. Mrs. Hunter heard his steps on the stair but did not see him because at that moment her patient became restless, and she went to the bed to comfort her. Mrs. Hunter is unable to testify whether he went into Bragg's room or whether, as he testifies, he went directly upstairs to his room.

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At 7 a.m. Mrs. Hunter left the chair for the second time during her vigil (staying awake to watch over her sick friend). No one else had come up or down the stairs all night. Her patient awoke, and Mrs. Hunter closed the door so no one could hear the sick woman.

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At 7:05 a.m. Burton Meek left his room and started for work, having tasks at his office he had to do before it opened. This was verified by his roommates and by the office manager. Meek said he walked directly downstairs without stopping and that he saw no one.

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At 7:10 a.m. her patient having fallen asleep again, Mrs. Hunter pulled down the window shade so that the bright sunlight would not disturb her patient and opened the bedroom door. She sat down to wait for a friend who was to relieve her.

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At 9:35 a.m. as was customary, Mrs. Ball came up to Bragg's room with breakfast. She saw Mrs. Hunter and said, "I hope the old skinflint has decided not to change his will." She opened the door to Bragg's room, and gas gushed out into the corridor. Someone had gone into the room as Bragg slept, closed the window, turned on the gas and left Bragg to die.

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Police with gas masks dragged out the old man. Doctors said he had been dead anywhere from two to ten hours. Nothing was out of order in the room except on the windowsill. As Detective Casey told you, "There were some wilted flowers in the vase on the sill and that windowsill was a regular morgue for flies and mosquitoes. The only ones in the room were dead on the sill, killed by the gas, I guess. There was also a cigarette and Bragg's pipe."

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The cigarette found on the windowsill in Bragg's room was of the unusual brand, which testimony proves was smoked by Joseph Hill, and only Hill, of all those people in the house. He has admitted it was his cigarette, but he said he had crushed it out the day before while he was talking to the old man.

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BALLOT

We, the jury, find Joseph Hill

\_\_\_\_\_ Guilty \_\_\_\_\_ Not Guilty

Because

---

THE STATE VS. JOSEPH HILL ANSWER

The correct verdict is not guilty.

Mrs. Hunter can be ruled out as a suspect because she had no motive. She testified that only three people could have committed the murder.

The opportunity of the defendant Hill and Mrs. Ball was at night while that of Meek was in the bright morning at 7:05.

Therefore, the murderer must have been Burton Meek. Flies and mosquitoes naturally fly toward the window when a room is darker than the outdoors (which is why indoor houseflies bounce against a window all day when it is sunny outside). As all insects in the room were found dead on the windowsill, it must have been daylight when the gas was turned on to kill Bragg.

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Feedback will vary according to what concepts have been covered before doing this activity. Since types of confirming and disconfirming responses and task, maintenance, and self-centered roles were studied previously, this feedback includes those concepts. Individual students complete the forms and submit them to the instructor who compiles the roles for each student and gives each student a sheet that lists the roles other group members identified. Also following the activity the class discusses communication strengths and weaknesses observed in the activity. The feedback form should be adapted to fit the needs of the course. If the class is comfortable oral feedback can be given in the groups after the activity.

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Sample of a Feedback Form Used for the State vs. Joseph Hill

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Group # \_\_\_\_\_

How did the group organize?

Were all members encouraged to read the information clues? How?

Were any clues ignored or forgotten? Which one(s), by whom, when?

Were all members included in reaching a decision (more than just presenting information from the sheets)? If not, what attempts were made to encourage quieter members to share their opinions?

Did any members create distractions or lead the group off task? Who? How was their behavior handled?

How well did members listen to and build on the comments of others? Give examples of effective and ineffective listening of members.

Give examples of confirming responses (paraphrasing, questioning, supporting, interpreting, evaluating) you observed in the group.

Give examples of disconfirming responses (interrupting, tangential, irrelevant, no response) you observed in the group.

Did any of the members' voices become louder or aggressive? Yes No If yes, whose? What was the effect on the group?

Were there any disagreements? Yes No If yes, how were they handled?

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This group was

\_\_\_\_\_weak \_\_\_\_\_fair \_\_\_\_\_good \_\_\_\_\_very good \_\_\_\_\_excellent

Explain your rating:

My participation in this group was

\_\_\_\_\_weak \_\_\_\_\_fair \_\_\_\_\_good \_\_\_\_\_very good \_\_\_\_\_excellent

Explain your rating:

Identify three roles (task, maintenance, self-centered) you assumed in this activity. Rate the participation of each member of your group (weak, fair, good, very good, excellent) and identify three roles for each member.

Name Rating Roles

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.











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