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Letter from the Editor

The other night I watched a documentary entitled, *Tell Me Who I Am*, a powerful story about a young man who after an accident, has no memory of his life. The only memory he holds is that of his twin brother, who helps him regain a sense of his previous life through photographs and stories (though, without giving much away, the life story is not true to the lived experience). What struck me most about the film was that it made me realize memories are what help us navigate the world, our compass in a sea of new and old encounters. At one point in the film a character explains that memories are really what make us who we are, that give us a sense of identity. The pieces published in this volume have been formed by the experiences and memories of their originators, which have deeply shaped their approaches to the subject matter. The stories told are a part of their life histories and an important type of knowledge.

We received many more pieces than we could publish; the ones represented in the volume relate the rich identities that have been impacted by multiple issues in our contemporary world: intersections of art and revolution, gender and parity, the limits of hate speech and transsexuality, substance abuse, bodies and physiques, immigration and opportunity, immigration and ICE raids. The authors and artists expose some of the challenges that come with how identities are influenced and shaped by experi-

ence, expectations, and the idea of conformity or fitting in, belonging, and demonstrate the accompanying affect through their use of a panoply of media: articles, essays, poems, and a comic.

Through the sharing of stories, we come to have a better understanding of lives lived within our own experiences and of those lived outside of them, increasing our knowledge of ourselves, as well as those with whom we potentially interact daily. Impressive pieces.

Maureen Mathison

The Illusion of Empowerment:
How Modern China Disguises Feminist Issues

Ywen Lau / **Stanford University**

From a distance, it looked like a doll's accessory. The wonder of its intricately embroidered silken birds and leaves made it a talisman to Imperial Chinese women, representative of class, reputation, and a sensual, goddess-like beauty. Shaped like a strange animal and less than two inches long, it seemed purely ornamental and without practical purpose, a novelty meant for display in a museum or sideshow.

When my mother saw the single lotus shoe on display in an old, antique shop in Singapore's Chinatown, she was tempted to make the purchase. She told me it was exquisite, a landmark of China's rich cultural heritage, and an extremely rare piece, perfect for her collection of historical mementoes.

And yet, it made her feel immeasurably sad.

Fig 1. Northampton Museum and Art Gallery, A Chinese Bound Foot Shoe. MyLearning.

Fig 2. Library of Congress, X-ray of bound feet, China.

Beneath the woven silk of this lotus shoe hid centuries of blood, pus and broken bone. Foot binding, a phenomenon that was perpetrated for an entire millennium on generations of Chinese women by a patriarchal society, required young girls to arch their feet so that the toes met the heels, crushing the toes into a perfectly manufactured point.

This act may have been deemed symbolic of eroticism and awe, but to scholars of the 21st century, foot binding represents the Confucian patriarchal gender values of Imperial China, the implementation of which was a strategic way for the male community—consciously or unconsciously—to reinforce gender domination, establishing the ideal woman as a frail and useless ornament. For a millennium, women endured the physical and psychological strain of the practice and conformed to societal pressures, allowing this custom to be integrated into the community's values.

My mother, a Chinese woman, could not bring herself to buy the shoe. She left the store empty-handed and with a heart that grieved for her ancestors. Our ancestors' legacy lives on, not only in those lotus shoes, but also in her and the millions of Chinese women with natural feet, free of the shackles of bandages

and abuse, and respected as useful members of society. Since the demise of Imperial China, the nation has undergone numerous governmental changes, making China's identity—and thus the female identity *in* China—subject to conflicting social and cultural pressures, where values continued to fluctuate through decades of political turmoil.

Gradually, with its burgeoning economic power, China has become an insurmountable force for shaping societal and cultural values for its 1.4 billion people, as well as influencing countries throughout Asia and beyond. With the power of technology and globalisation that connect China and its Western counterparts, values and ideals are becoming commodities that are shared across the North Pacific Ocean. However, one area in which China holds a unique stance is in the role of women. They may no longer need to bind their feet to earn a man's favour, but the extent to which Chinese women have truly achieved equality and empowerment is uncertain.

Indeed, the Communist Revolution of 1949 suddenly transformed women from worthless members of society to citizens of (legally) equal worth as men, a change unequalled by any event in world history (Hall 177). However, scholars argue that modern Chinese society's practices do not completely align with this official position. Christine Hall, an author who lived in China and interviewed over a hundred Chinese women, comments that "most Chinese consider women to be worth 'almost' as much as a man" (178). According to her interviewees, women cannot bear the weight of financially supporting a family and the Chinese economy. Mao once said that "women hold up half the sky", but women holding up "almost" *half of the sky* would surely cause its collapse (Goodreads).

Through an exploration of marriage and beauty in modern China, I intend to investigate feminism and the empowerment of women in modern Chinese society. I argue that the Chinese government and society have attempted to create an illusion of empowerment and equality, but patriarchal and misogynistic ideals rooted in Confucian values have continued to commodify and objectify women.

Male Gaze: Today's Foot Binding

Women are often defined by their beauty, and therefore the relationship between beautification and feminism is extremely tense. In his psychoanalytical investigation of foot binding and masochism, Andrew Ng explains that the Imperial Chinese society had a "highly patriarchal and masculine-dominant nature" (665). With this power, men could define female beauty standards and reinforce foot binding. In this particular cultural period, "bound feet [served] as the symbol of eroticism, the object of desire" and "nothing perhaps [was] as widespread and consuming as sexual extravagance" (Wang 57, 58). The concept of the "male gaze," coined by film critic and feminist theorist Laura Mulvey, is a modern-day rendition of foot binding's eroticism, where men and their gaze "[project] its phantasy on to the female figure which is styled accordingly" (62). Especially in patriarchal societies of male physical, financial and sexual dominance, the "pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female" (Mulvey 62).

With a culture of foot binding and a strong belief in the elusive powers of foot binding to attract men, one could question if this damaging procedure was a choice of the female community, or a burden pushed upon them by the male gaze. This mindset that foot binding, or any other beautification procedure, is a personal decision and therefore should be deemed empowering is the paragon of liberal feminism, or put more colloquially, choice feminism. Its ideology encourages "women to embrace the opportunities they have in life and to see the

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choices they make as justified and always politically acceptable" (Thwaites 55). As long as it is a decision made by a woman, to an extent, her act of making the choice is empowering and feminist; therefore, any woman's decision to beautify herself to meet prescribed standards of beauty could be deemed feminist.

However, the root of choice feminism does not comply with this positive mindset. To John Stuart Mill, the creator of liberal feminism, "what women by nature cannot do, it is quite superfluous to forbid them from doing. What they can do, but not so well as men who are their competitors, competition suffices to exclude from them" (Graham 156-7). His rationale for giving women "choices" is rooted in the thinking that their opportunities are narrowed by their physical, emotional and mental capabilities — a mindset far from empowering.

In China, many famous social philosophers had similar views on women that continue to embody themselves in modern Chinese culture. Confucius's social ideology was dominant throughout Imperial China (200BCE to 1911), and it shaped strong, misogynistic views that dictated familial relations. Ban Zhao (45-116CE), a famous Confucianist philosopher of the Western Han Dynasty, articulates the role of women in her text *Lessons for Women*. In it, she comments: "A man though born like a wolf may, it is feared, become a weak monstrosity; a woman though born like a mouse may, it is feared, become a tiger" (Halsall, 1999).

It is evident that Ban Zhao had subconscious stereotypes about the different genders: men were ideally brave and strong, while women were ideally meek and fragile. Her comment builds upon a subconscious assumption that women are weaker than men, and it would therefore be unattractive for any female to be strong and powerful. In Confucian China, women had a prescribed role in society; Ban Zhao, being female, is a representative, not only of

masculine ideals, but also of the cultural values which formed the foundation of Imperial China. Because she is herself a woman and is perpetrating these patriarchal ideals, it would seem that even educated women of her time were not aware of their oppression and subjection, but instead supported these ideals with their own conformity. In Imperial China, women lacked a voice - it was even undesirable to speak - and therefore their appearance and actions spoke of their eligibility and thus their value.

Although women have the "choice" to beautify themselves, Mill's ideological perspective on choice feminism and Confucian patriarchal values of gender equality symbolise sexism and a misogynistic mindset which has had a hand in shaping, not only modern beauty ideals in China, but also the beauty practices that allow for women to conform to that beauty standard. However, in modern day China, do women have the freedom to *not* conform to their new, modernised aesthetic ideals?

MeiTu: The Virtual Plastic Surgeon

Worldwide, women often attempt to appeal to the "male gaze" through a variety of beautification practices. The legacy of the women who bound their feet, however, lives on in companies like MeiTu (美图), the nation's largest player in the market of digital beauty enhancement, with 520 billion users and a rich portfolio of software and hardware products. Although alterations to one's body and face may come much more easily than did binding feet, the emotional repercussions are similarly daunting – yet far more elusive.

YQ, a native of Jiangsu (江苏) province, age 34, has been using MeiTu since its inception in 2008. She showed me the "Moments" page of her WeChat - a Chinese equivalent of Facebook - and it was plastered with a myriad of selfies, all taken using the MeiTu application; some photos had playful filters such as bunny ears while others were only beautified images of herself. "I

use MeiTu to make myself more appealing when posting selfies," she told me. "Being beautiful online gives me confidence and boosts my self-esteem, and by removing my wrinkles and lightening my skin, I look more beautiful." She says her use of MeiTu is a personal choice, and the beautified image gives her confidence to post online and put herself into the public arena. "It feels quite empowering to have control over how I look and how I am portrayed online."

Mulvey's idea of the "male gaze" and the male ideal materialised in the form of a gentle woman, the image that many Chinese

Fig 3. Xi Ping Tang, Beautiful Ladies. Ink Dance Chinese Paintings.
Fig 4. Xuan Zheng. Mandy. Flickr

women, including YQ, strive for: lucent irises, a slender body and a willow waist (liǔ yāo, 柳腰) (Cho 15). Women had little freedom in shaping their gender's beauty ideals. This ideal woman appears in modern society as the final destination of beautification practices, as these feminising procedures help enhance female features that make them seem gentler and frailer, allowing them to be "beautiful on account of [their] gentleness," as Ban Zhao predicted (Halsall, 1999). On the MeiPai application—a platform where individuals can post photoshopped images of themselves—there are startling similarities between Chinese women today and their traditional counterparts (see fig 3 and 4). They are both pale, slender, thin-faced, long haired; it seems that nothing has changed. Companies like MeiTu impose a beauty standard

on every girl who opens its application, telling them that this virtual version of *you* is more beautiful than the natural. The application's developers hope to create products that satisfy consumer vanity, and therefore result in greater sales and profits. As a result, their advertising, software and hardware products are all tailored to the most favourable beauty standard, which would attract the greatest number of Chinese women.

By simply pressing the "beautify" icon, the application automatically changes the user's face: your nose narrows, your eyes enlarge, your chin sharpens, and your complexion whitens. Decision making within the application contribute to an illusion of choice. Some could argue that the ability to determine how one is presented is very empowering to the woman, as if she were the artist of her own aesthetic presentation.

However, this overloaded association between "beauty" and these particular features throughout the application and in Chinese media, not only exemplify China's beauty standards, but also contribute to cultivating a new standard of beauty that girls feel inclined to appreciate and accept. Despite the satisfaction of feeling "beautiful," most girls cannot plausibly achieve that beauty standard in real life. Therefore, it can result in psychological or physical damage as they attempt to change their body. Women are being given no true freedom to appreciate their bodies, but instead are being subconsciously taught beauty standards to which they are constantly being compared.

Unrealistic beauty standards continue to define female self-worth, and women have no choice but to beautify themselves as this aesthetic self-worth translates into other parts of their lives. One key female role in society never wavers: to get married. A common Chinese idiom: xiān rù wéi zhǔ (先入为主) states that the first impression is always the strongest.

Especially for women, who are more heavily subjected to the sexual "male gaze," making an impressive first physical impression is invaluable. In a *New Yorker* article, Li Bin, a Chinese plastic surgeon, stated that "in today's competitive world, your appearance is an asset that you want to maximize." Beautification procedures (virtual or not), are needed to achieve professional benefits as a head-shot is often featured on a résumé, "the procedures are viewed as a simple investment that will yield material dividends" (Fan).

As a result, many women are subject to normative influences: "a reason for conformity based on people's desire to be liked" (Gleitman et.al. 521). When young Chinese girls see attractive stars like Fan Bingbing (范冰冰), they feel an immense pressure to be similarly beautiful. In an advertisement for L'Oreal Paris shampoo (see fig 5), Fan is presented with large eyes, a sharp nose, slender face and pale skin: the ideal beauty standard of Chinese women. In this image, she also exudes elegance and confidence. By looking directly at the camera, she connects to consumers; she looks amiable and kind. These personality traits – confidence, elegance, amiability and kindness – are all associated with Fan's beautifully symmetrical features. Due to the psychological phenomenon of the "halo effect" where there is an assumption that "people who have one good trait have other good traits," women would see a correlation between Fan's perceived personality and beauty, and be

Fig 5. L'Oreal Paris. Image of Fan Bingbing. MLM. Altfel.

inclined to attempt to replicate her appearance (Gleitman et.al. 535).

As a result, they may attempt to achieve her standard of beauty, as they may fear missing out on all the opportunities and benefits associated with satisfying the "male gaze." However, by conforming, they immediately disadvantage themselves in the ongoing power struggle between men and women in society.

Therefore, this decision to enhance one's facial features may be less of a choice than it may at first appear. Choice feminism may seem empowering, but the crux of its issues is that it lacks "true" choice. The patriarchal society that encourages a need for beautification and inspires a desire to satisfy men begins to deny women freedom of expression. A radical feminist, who measures the equality of a society by its underlying values as opposed to individual actions, would argue against MeiTu; instead of empowering, it snatches away the individuality of a woman's beauty and coerces women to conform to beauty standards in order to achieve material ends. Men, who do not undergo this same pressure to be "beautiful," are more privileged in this regard, and therefore, despite an illusion of empowerment and equality that MeiTu and other companies present, women continue to be subjected to patriarchal standards and forced to conform to beauty standards that appeal to the "male gaze."

The Communist Revolution: China's Confused Female Identity

Many Chinese women transform their features – virtually or physically – and attempt to appeal to the "male gaze" in order to fulfil the social role of finding a good, Chinese husband. By imposing the role of "wife" on an individual, society defines women by their ability to attract men and procreate, and thus places value on their sexual appeal and physical features, as opposed to their intelligence, strength or determination; a woman's beauty is closely tied to

her marriageability, and thus her worth to the community.

Like beauty standards, the female role in society is also dictated by Confucian values. In the ideal Confucian family, a Chinese woman had three roles: "the sexual object and possession of the man, the child-bearing tool to carry on her husband's name, and the servant to the whole family" (Gao 118). A common adage, nán zhǔ wài, nü zhǔ nèi (男主外，女主内), refers to the man's place being outside and the woman's being inside (Lake 35). The female domain is solely domestic.

In what was one of the largest political transformations in history, the Communist Revolution of 1949 metamorphosed the female identity in China, creating a generation of women who were educated, labouring, and liberated. This is reflected in the propaganda of the time (fig 6). As opposed to the demure, frail and slender wife of Imperial China, the poster's focus is an "iron woman" who is healthy and robust. The image of the ideal woman morphed into a happy, productive individual that is not at all sexualised.

The quote along the bottom of the poster reads: "Communism is infinitely good, women are fully liberated," taking pride in their progress, and depicting the farm worker with the support of several other females who are also prepared to work. Along the back, the buildings read "daycare," "kindergarten," "retirement home" and "cafeteria" respectively, representing the places in which Chinese women worked; no longer did women only occupy the domestic domain, but they could now spread their wings to support the community in a multitude of different ways. The Communist Party made use of women as an untapped labour force to build China's industry and economic power, and the female role in Chinese society transformed into a useful part of the workforce.

From a legal standpoint, the Communists took

Fig 6. MontyHudson. People's Commune is great as the women are liberated thoroughly (China, 1960). Reddit

decisive action to advocate female equality in marriages, namely, the New Marriage Law of 1950 (新婚姻法, xīn hūn yīn fǎin) which was set up as a civil registry for legal marriages; protections were put in place to prevent underage marriages, and it preached that marriage had to be mutually consensual (Kelly). Ever since the enactment of the New Marriage Law, women have been legally protected in marriage and there has been success in achieving gender equality in marriage. In the eyes of the law, women have become more than just male property.

Despite the marriage laws of the 1950s, traditional values continue to influence the mindsets of many men and women across the country. Modern China is struggling to balance the two ideologies: the Confucian image of a dainty and fragile woman, and the Communist image of a robust working woman. China still has strong ties to its traditional roots; therefore, having women who work more and marry later intro-

duces an entirely new issue: *Leftover Women*.

Leftover Women: Until Death Do They Part

Leftover women, or shèng nü (剩女), refer to women in their late twenties who are not yet married, and have therefore begun to lose their "value" as they are not sufficiently fulfilling their social role as "wife". Their potential to make a social, economic or intellectual impact is undervalued.

This struggle is powerfully articulated in an SKII campaign video entitled *Marriage Market Takeover* under the *#changedestiny* campaign. The campaign, launched in 2015, was a global mission to empower women to shape their own destinies, investigating narratives in which women overcame challenges to achieve their dreams, and hoped to inspire women to fight on in their personal battles (SKII). A narrative of particular interest focuses on the lives of left-over women in China who, despite facing parental pressure to get married, determinedly remain single and confident as free, working women. Similar to Confucian China, modern Chinese women have a filial obligation to get married. In the SKII campaign video, one girl comments "…in Chinese culture, respecting your parents is the most important quality. And not getting married is like the biggest sign of disrespect" (1:23-1:29). It is the older genera-tions (who are closer to the traditional, Confu-cian heritage) who are responsible for rein-forcing the female traditional responsibility to get married.

Fig 7. SKII. *SKII: Marriage Market Takeover,* 3:07.

SKII's campaign pushes against societal pressures by setting up images in the middle of a marriage market where parents match-make on behalf of their children. "As opposed to the term 'leftover woman,' I have a great career and there is another term called "power woman,"' says a daughter in the video (3:07). This is paired with her image displayed in the marriage market. The plainness of the image's background emphasises the woman as opposed to the demure image of a frail, foot-bound wife, or the Communist image of a working woman. She is refusing to change her appearance to conform to any standard of beauty, implying that women should not need to conform to any gender role and are beautiful regardless of the "ideal" beauty standard.

There appears to be a generational disparity in the understanding of the female place in society: younger women are inspired by the Communist ideals of the working "iron woman" and therefore are keen to be productive and financially independent, whilst the older gener-ation is comfortable with its traditional Confu-cian ideals and see a young woman's role in society as a wife and not an employee; there seems to be a duality in the Chinese attitude towards women (Attané 5). To older genera-tions, the true female value lies in aesthetic or domestic fields, such as a woman's beauty or her ability to do household chores. Resultantly, Confucian undertones continue to obfuscate feminist ideology, pulling back any movements towards true female empowerment.

Another reason older women are considered "leftover" is because of the beauty standards associated with aging. The Women's Federa-tion, founded by the Communist Party in 1949, aimed to support female liberation and devel-opment in China (WomenofChina). However, on their website, after International Women's Day in March 2011, it was stated , "…the tragedy is, they don't realise that as women age, they

are worth less and less, so by the time they get their MA or PhD, they are already old, like yellowed pearls" (Steinfeld 17). As the jewels deteriorate from their pristine condition, so do women, displaying imperfections and remnants of a glorious past, and representing an object left unwanted. This stigma against aging is so deeply ingrained in Chinese culture that even a large, established federation- such as the Women's Federation -supports it, thus taking female beauty and placing it above a women's productive and emotional capabilities.

KSL, 30, a Singaporean (part of the Chinese diaspora), has been exposed to the idea of leftover women all of her life. The fact that she was a successful corporate lawyer did not amount to "success" in the eyes of her traditional family who are originally from Southern China. Her parents made it abundantly clear that the most important achievement would be to marry well to a financially stable and educated man.

In my personal interview with her, KSL laughed as she explained that at every celebration, her family and friends would make jokes about unmarried women being like "Christmas cake - nobody wants them after the 25th." When she was 27, her mother sat her down and told her to "settle down, you aren't getting any younger." She was engaged to be married a month later.

"I wanted to please my parents. My mother's comment actually changed my mindset. I needed to get married soon. She told me that women get uglier as they age, and that makes it hard to compete with younger girls who are fresher and have more time to focus on make-up and fashion. Men get better with age, women get worse." She seemed to have reached the conclusion that her mother was right.

This feeling of being "left on the shelf" as women begin to age contributes to another increasingly popular beauty trend in China: the use of anti-wrinkle creams, which aims to reduce signs of aging. Women as young as their twenties are beginning to invest heavily into anti-aging products, even more than their mature counterparts (Zheng). To Beijing HR manager Fan Fan, "...the earlier you start taking care of your skin, the less worried you will be when you grow old," she said. "I'm in this for the long haul" (Zheng).

The negative stigma surrounding aging in women has become an integral aspect of the beautification culture and has resulted in psychological stress for many women as they age. Susan Quiliam, an adult behaviour psychologist, describes this trauma as "midlife mirror angst syndrome," where women become less confident in how they look as they age (FabAfterFifty). Advertisements for anti-aging creams prey on this insecurity, persuading individuals to purchase products by appealing to the pain of losing one's youthful beauty. In this advertisement of an anti-aging product, the older woman's face is being zipped or ripped apart by the features of a younger woman, demonstrating -dislike for the aged, natural features,

Fig 8. Gag Daily, 抗衰老

and by suggesting that youth is found within, all audiences have the potential to rediscover that beauty (fig 8).

The effects that biologically occur with aging (such as the darkening of skin tones, wrinkles and loose skin), are not reflective of the traditional Chinese standards of beauty, which aim to be pale, slender and with clear skin. In the advertisement, the young woman's face is much paler, brighter, clearer and has a luminous presentation. Though this appeals to many audiences and persuades them to purchase the product, it is unhealthy as it demonizes the natural process of aging to perpetrate a particular beauty standard. For men, aging represents maturity, but in women, it is largely feared. Men increase in value as they become more educated and financially stable, but women become increasingly worthless past 25 years of age. According to Quiliam, "We live in an age where female beauty is defined as young – a definition that has become an obsession in society, and particularly in the media" (FabAfterFifty). This thinking devalues women to the level of products, and women in China who are "leftover" are objectified, treated as faulty purchases that need to be returned.

Fig. 12. Womandmore. Asian Style Wedding Dresses.

Females in the Workforce: Iron Women

There are overt feminist issues in Chinese beauty and marriage culture as a result of traditional Confucian values: obsessive beautification practices, the suffering of leftover women, and a confusing female identity It is important to acknowledge that the Maoist ideals of the Communist Movement have been successful in supporting the female role in the workplace. The change in gender roles from Imperial China to modern day is no illusion. Women are becoming quite prevalent in the workplace which sometimes supersedes marriage as their life goal.

According to data from the World Bank, more than 60% of Chinese women were employed in 2016 (Lin). China had the highest female labour-force participation rate in 2010 which is higher than both the United States and Great Britain (see fig 9). Though China is still a developing country, it has an impressive number of productive, working women (The World Bank).

In an interview with CGTN America, Chinese journalist Rachel Zheng notes that this change is a result of China's newfound interest in
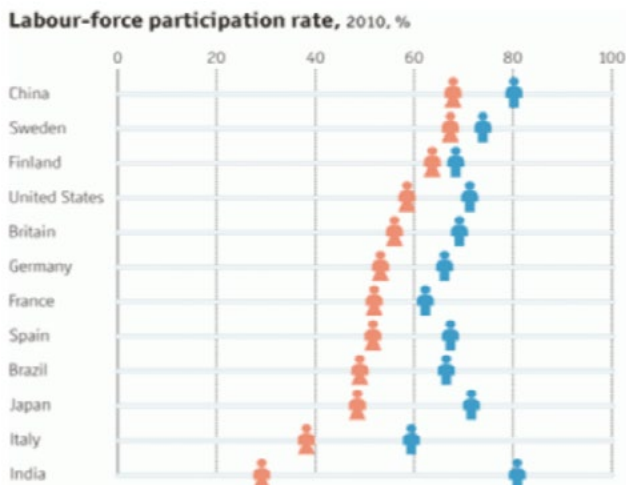

Fig. 9. Yang, Vivian. *Five ways China's women are closing the gender gap*

Fig. 9. Yang, Vivian. *Five ways China's women are closing the gender gap*

innovation, which to her, involves the breaking of traditional roots, whether they be gender roots or corporate roots, and this includes revolutionizing the gender ratios in the workplace (CGTN).

This begs the question: Because women have finally arrived the workplace, will their stay be fruitful? In modern China, Mao's notion of "Iron Women" who were productive and part of the labour force have been replaced by "Manly Women" (女汉子, nǚ hàn zi). This term has allowed many women to empower themselves as independent and mentally and physically strong individuals (NewsChina). In this Chinese artist's cartoon representation, these "manly" women seem to lack the femininity of the Chinese beauty ideal (see fig 10). The girl, though wearing a demure expression, has bulging muscles, a tattoo and hairy legs - all features traditionally deemed masculine and unfit for women. In the image, she tries to make a heart sign with her fingers and show affection but fails to do so attractively; this artist is mocking these "manly" women and instead of representing them as powerful leaders in the workplace, demonstrates their failure to achieve their role of sexualized object and wife. Values and traditions play a huge role in our lives that we often fail to recognize. There are many explicit or implicit stereotypes - such as the "feminine" woman - that are passed down to us through generations (NewsChina).

Women are working in China, but there is stigma that continues to surround them. Not only may they be deemed "Leftover Women," but there is a fear that women may lose their femininity and become unattractive and unwanted by men. The changes that Zhang addressed may diminish traditional practices in the work place but they have done little to change the stigma surrounding women who are not feminine and do not take on domestic roles.

Chinese women in the workplace are more

Fig. 10. 好词句. 女汉子励志名言大全

prevalent than the majority of other countries, and the Maoist regime inspired female empowerment and productivity successfully. Since the 1950s, Chinese women have "…gained economic independence and are to a greater extent mistresses of their own personal and professional choices" (Attané 8). However, having more women in the workplace does not mean that they have won the battle. With perpetrated patriarchal stereotypes of the beautiful, feminine woman and the underlying presumption that women are less capable than men, women have not truly achieved equality in the workplace.

Feminism Movements: Leaving Misogyny at the Altar

The topic of feminism in China is complicated. Chinese women seem to have superficially achieved equality with the large female representation in China's workplace; however, as presented earlier, underlying values of the

Fig. 11. Media Monitor for Women Network, Leta Hong Fincher. Li Maizi (left) takes part in a 2012 protest against domestic violence in Beijing. Photo courtesy of Media Monitor for Women Network.

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population regarding beauty, marriage and the female capacity to work, imply that the statistics of female in the workplace may be an illusion of empowerment.

Women have felt the empowerment of Communist China with the New Marriage Law and propaganda for Iron Women but there are still startling gender issues in China that attract feminist movements. One of the most iconic is that of the Feminist Five. The Feminist Five consists of five women who were peacefully handing out stickers to raise awareness of sexual harassment in Beijing on International Women's Day but were arrested by the Chinese government (Fincher). This resulted in a global outcry with the hashtag #FreeTheFive, and the women were released after more than a month (The Guardian). Their message was to celebrate the single, queer and childless women who defy traditional Chinese stereotypes, and to protect women from sexual harassment and violence. Female sexual rights are closely tied to ideals of beauty, as women are easily objectified and tend to dress and present themselves in ways to appeal to the "male gaze," which may--from a male perspective--be a provocative invitation for sexual aggression. The Five dressed as bloody brides in an attempt to stand up to traditional expectations of marriage imposed by the government. Their dresses were unappealing with messy veils and the girls were stained with fake blood and bruises, a direct contrast to the classic image of a blushing bride with perfect make-up, expensive dress and refined, submissive demeanour (see fig 12). The Feminist Five evoked the sympathy of the community, which was shocked by the juxtaposition between the idealized bride and the bloody brides thereby exposing the underlying horrors that exist beneath China's marriage culture.The protests of the Feminist Five could be classified as third wave feminism which advocates for social equality between genders. What makes this wave of feminism harder to understand

than others is that it is not protesting against "unjust laws or sexist institutions," but is instead objecting to "people's unconscious biases as well as centuries-worth of cultural norms and heritage that disadvantage women" (Manson). It is not as tangible a change as removing a law or allowing girls to join classes at school; it questions the underlying ideals that shape our values and therefore is not quantifiable, making it much harder for the government to resolve.

As a result, it is unsurprising that the government did not tolerate these protests. It seems that modern China has been using legalities and Communist Chinese ideology to create an illusion of equality, but women have not achieved true social equality. Once women begin to actively preach for their own rights, their voices are silenced quickly. Without freedom of speech, women are not empowered, nor are they given the opportunity to actively shape their futures.

Looking Forward: Regaining Hold of the Sky

As Tian Wei of CCTV News stated, "Any society that fails to harness the energy and creativity of its women is at a huge disadvantage in the modern world" (Soffel). China needs to quickly capitalise on the female capacity to create a stronger, healthier and more modern society, and the implementation of several social and political changes would allow China to move towards true gender equality.

The first area of focus should be feminist education of women. One Chinese feminist stated that "Most girls in China don't really know what feminism is, but they feel discrimination every day" (FeminismInChina). This lack of education results in women willingly conforming to traditional gender roles as housewives, and prevents them from understanding the patriarchal implications in participating in activities such as MeiTu and anti-aging products. If ideas of gender equality and an understanding of women's capacities were a part of educational

syllabuses, women could act as if their roles as working women in society were the norm and not an anomaly.

The second area that deserves focus is educating men about the negative effects of the patriarchal society in which they live. From the "male gaze" to their value of women to the workplace, men have a role in shaping the obligations of women. In China--the voices of men are more likely to be heard than those of women. Therefore, if the male mindset was changed and they began to speak out and defend women in protests, their voices would bear more fruit than those of the Feminist Five and other women.

The third focus is to raise awareness of these Chinese issues internationally. It was a global audience that advocated for #FreeTheFive, which eventually was the key that unlocked their jail cells. The American #MeToo movement of 2006 aims to help survivors of sexual violence find pathways to healing, works to find solutions to interrupt sexual violence, and has benefited communities from Sweden to Indonesia (MeToo-Movement, rt, Yuniar). As individuals of a wider, global community who have the blessing of an education which establishes gender equality and endless opportunities for female roles in society, it is our responsibility to continue to spread these ideals to people worldwide.

China's views on beauty, marriage and employment are what define the nation. The elegant intertwining of militaristic views and traditional ideals form a fascinatingly complex cultural ideology. Women in China have immense potential to create unique change in China and beyond. All we need to do is to free women from their verbal and visual confines; they are not "pale," "skinny," "domestic" or "sexy." They are "powerful," "innovative" and have limitless potential. They may have an illusion of empowerment now, but an invisible hand continues to pull them back. But I pray, for my millions of Chinese sisters, that with education, global support and a clear mission for a feminist country, even China, a nation still bound tightly by Confucius' grip, will feel him relax his fingers.

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A Familiar Taste of Nothing

Lizzy Santana / **Southwestern College**

When I was a child, I imagined my teen years would be like the movie: long nights with friends talking about our crushes, kissing attractive people, skipping class to go on road trips, enjoying the typical things that teenagers are supposed to enjoy. I wish I could say it was like that; I even wish I could say that my teen years were boring.

At fifteen my brain turned against me. I hated math, yet my entire life became based around numbers: nutrition facts, ounces, cups, teaspoons, tablespoons, bites, chews, swallows, pounds.

I dreaded birthday parties and holidays because I knew there would be food that I would be unable to resist. I often pretended to be sick to get out of these events. I wasted all my time lying in bed, reading a book to take my mind off of my growling stomach, watching videos and seeing pictures of my friends having a good time without me. Thinking that the people I cared about most were perfectly fine without my presence gave me the idea that I was replaceable.

As a sophomore, I almost fainted in the school hallway. I called my mom to come get me, telling her I was ill. She knew why. She forced me eat something as soon as we got home, and I did. I regretted it later, and cried the rest of the night. I really was sick, and I think that's the first time I actually realized that maybe, just maybe, I wasn't okay.

Anorexia has one of the highest mortality and suicide rates out of any other psychiatric disorder. The risk of death is three times higher than depression, schizophrenia, and alcoholism. Despite being one of the deadliest mental illnesses, eating disorders do not get as much government funding as other diseases. Why do you think that is?

When I asked my mom why I was so unhappy, she said it's genetic. Drowning in sadness and having an unhealthy relationship with food is just as much a part of me as having blue eyes and brown hair. She said it was just the way things turn out for us. I didn't like that answer.

What I have found, that a lot a lot of people don't realize, is that there's more to a restrictive eating disorder than just avoiding food. You find stupid little ways to burn calories. You make your cuticles bleed, because losing blood means losing calories. You hear from someone that ten minutes of shivering is equivalent to a mile of running, so you sleep with little clothing and no blanket with the fan turned on even in the bitterness of winter. You read somewhere that green apples burn fat, so you gorge yourself on apple after apple when you slip up and eat something fattening. Eating a bunch of Activia triggers bowel movements, so you eat four of them just to clean yourself out. Black coffee for breakfast, Diet Coke and mint gum is lunch, and that crushing feeling of never feeling pretty enough in your own skin is your dinner.

I'm eighteen now. I'm not better. I'm not as bad as I used to be, but there are days I wish I was. I sometimes wish I had the self-control I used to, but if I did, I wonder where would I be? Would I be in a hospital? Would I have even made it to college?

Would I be dead?

I had my teen years stripped from me because of

a mental illness. Anorexia is a disease that makes me gag at the sight of a doughnut, makes my eyes fixate on the number of calories, makes me feel guilt. But I am happier. Most days are filled with laughter, love, and seeing the good. I wear brighter colors, I talk more, I express myself through my crafts with confidence and conviction.

In times of great turmoil, it's important for me to remember that there are people surrounding me who love me. You are surrounded by people who love you. Even on the days where it seems like the odds are not in my favor, I try to recognize the importance of the day. It's really, really hard sometimes but I can do it, and so can you.

At eighteen I realize that eating is not supposed to be a math problem, it's just supposed to be eating.

I am more than that number on the scale.

———————————————

LIZZY SANTANA is a freshman at Southwestern College in Winfield, KS majoring in theatre performance. She wanted nothing more than to be a writer when she was little, but discovered her niche was acting when she was in high school. Even though her primary love is theatre, she still enjoys writing and likes to bring the two passions together by developing plays. Even though Lizzy's family was surprised (and probably a little disappointed) that she chose to do theatre over writing, she still has gotten unconditional love and support from them and she thanks them for encouraging her wild dreams.

SEEKING "GAY"

a comic by Shirley Cai

Author and graphic illustrtor, **SHIRLEY CAI** is a third year student at Stanford University.

DON'T GET ME WRONG. I DON'T DISLIKE THIS BECAUSE IT'S GAY.

WHY?

THAT WOULD BE HYPOCRITICAL BECAUSE

I'M GAY.

bookstore

あはは…

BOY'S LOVE FANS
FUJOSHI
"ROTTEN GIRLS"

↓

omg, gay?

EH...

BOY'S ♡ LOVE

IS THAT SUPPOSED TO BE ME?

BIG!! MEN'S LOVE MAN!

AND THIS IS MY TYPE AND ALL, BUT...

I'M KIND OF A 19 YEAR OLD GAY TWINK.
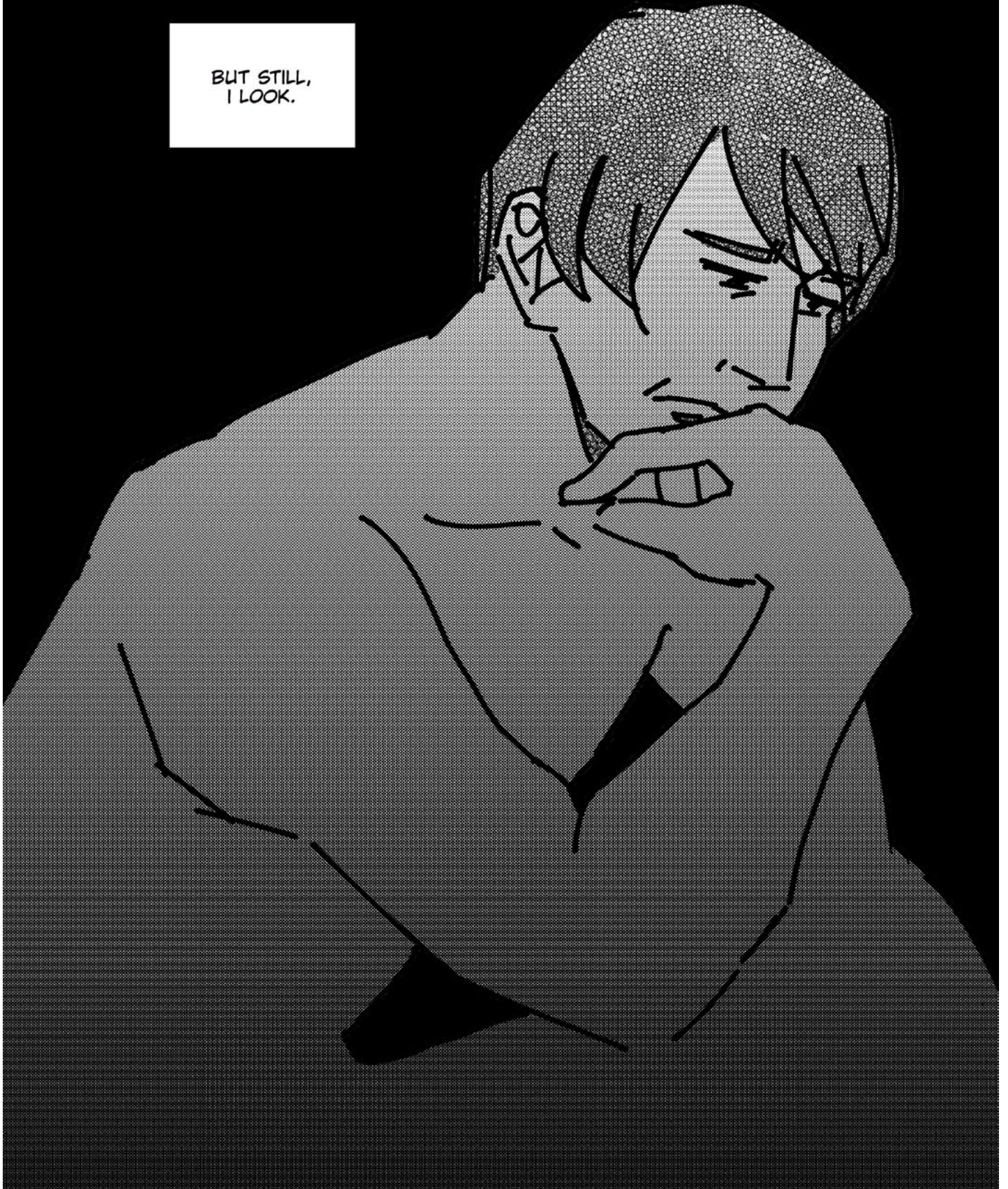
SKINNY

NO MUSCLE

BUT
WHY
THIS?

WHY
THAT?

UJCIM
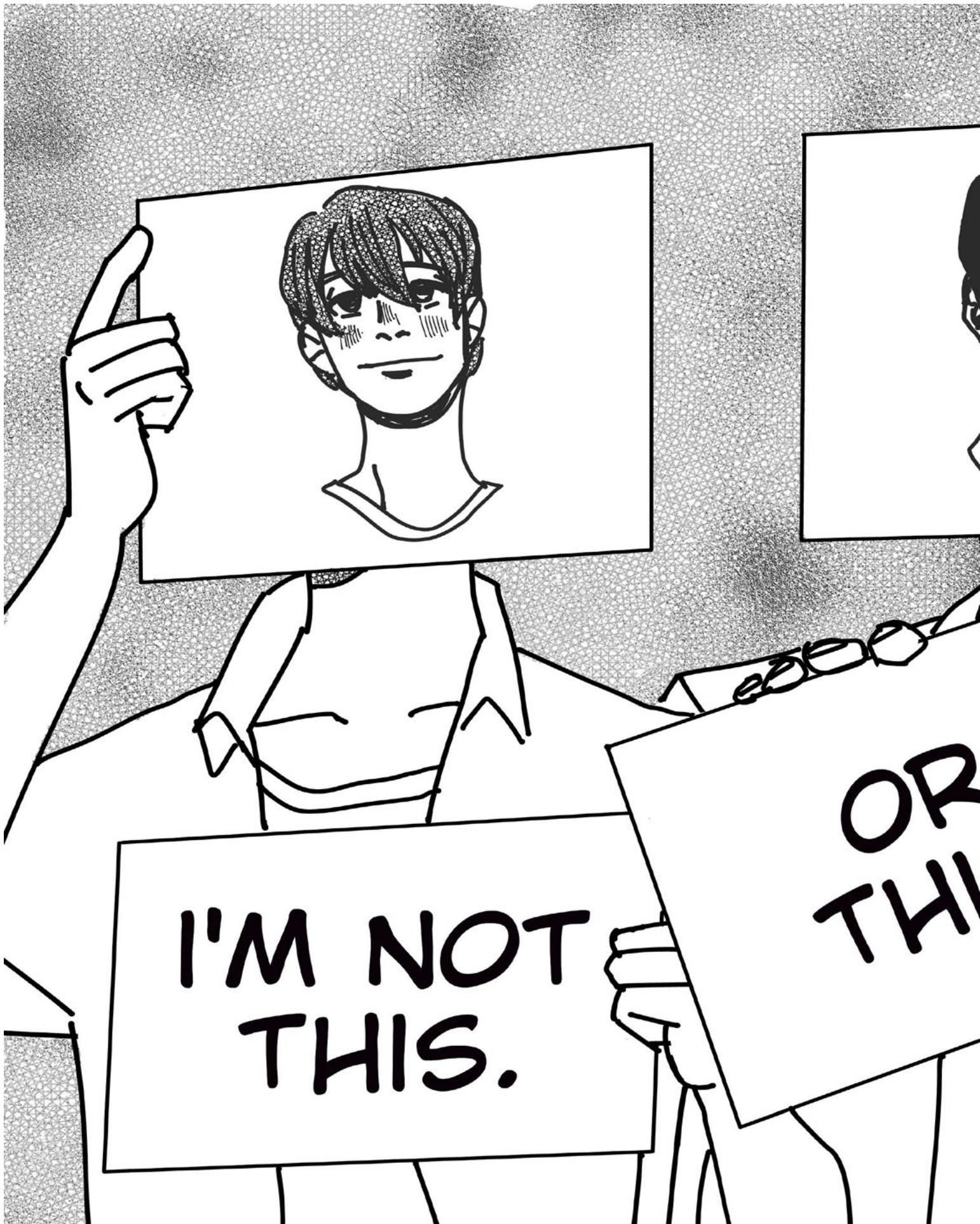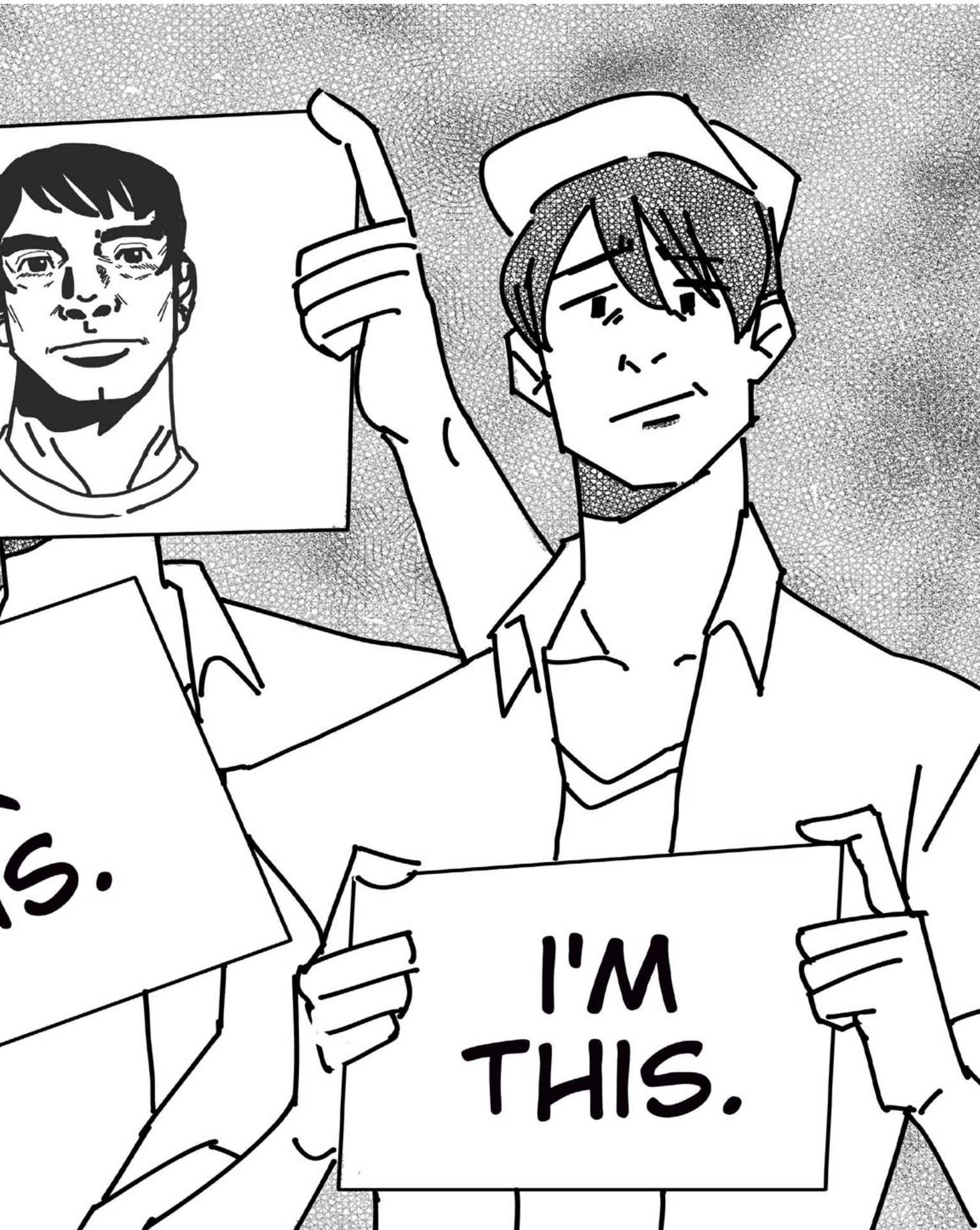
BUT STILL,
I LOOK.

Performing Democracy: Art as a Tool for Sociopolitical Change in the Arab Spring

Ankush Swarnakar / **Stanford University**

One Small Step for [A Burning] Man

17 December 2010. Sidi Bouzid, Tunisia. Splintering carts of produce hobble over the cracked pavement. Street vendors yell slogans and discounts in Arabic, trying to be heard over chatty passersby. 26-year-old Mohamed Bouazizi is one of these vendors. He's sold produce in the farmers' market for the past 7 years—an unglamorous job, but one that makes him financially stable. Bouazizi sets up his stall by a popular café. As he lays out his produce a policewoman stops him. His street-vending business is unlicensed, and therefore illegal. He pulls out a day's earnings to cover the government fine. Still, the policewoman is unsatisfied. She slaps Bouazizi across the face and spits insults at him and his family. Infuriated, Bouazizi storms to the city government's headquarters where officials refuse to entertain his complaints.

Roughly an hour later, Bouazizi returns to the government headquarters. At approximately 11:30 a.m. Bouazizi douses himself with fuel and sets himself alight. The street's steady conversation shatters as passersby scream in shock, pain, anguish (Abouzeid, 2011). Bouazizi is extinguished and taken to a nearby hospital, but the flames are

Famous cartoonist Carlos Latuff captured Bouazizi's contribution to the Arab revolutions. This image was circulated through social media and has been used in several news publications (Latuff, 2011).

still alive—flames of anger at a corrupt regime, dissatisfaction with economic policies, and disillusionment with the long-standing way of life. These flames would spread virally throughout the Middle East, irreversibly changing the Arab World over the next two years (NPR, 2011). On January 4, 2011, Bouazizi died in the ICU at Ben Arous Burn and Trauma Center. He is survived by online photos, posters, cartoons, and tweets that went viral during subsequent protests and revolutions.

The Arab Spring: A Brief History

The Arab Spring was a series of revolutions that took place throughout 2011 in the Middle East North Africa (MENA) region, especially in the countries of Tunisia, Morocco, Syria, Libya, Egypt, and Bahrain. The Spring began with the self-immolation of Bouazizi. Bouazizi's sacrifice became legend when news of his heroic act circulated through social media and news outlets. He inspired thousands across Tunisia to rise up against President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, who ruled the

TIME Magazine's Person of the Year in 2011 was "The Protester," largely inspired by the events of the Arab Spring. The issue's cover story contains a direct nod to Bouazizi's self-immolation (TIME, 2011).

country for 20 years. The spirit of revolution went viral throughout MENA as tweets, photos, Facebook posts, wall graffiti, and cartoons captured the urgency for the democratization of the countries of the MENA.

The Arab Spring concluded with mixed outcomes. Syria descended into a civil war against President Bashar Al-Assad, which still rages on today. In Libya, dictator Muammar Gaddafi was overthrown and publicly executed. In Egypt and Tunisia, Presidents Hosni Mubarak and Ben Ali stepped down and fled their countries (History.com). Citizens of all Muslim countries emerged from Arab Spring with a new sense of identity. They took a massive risk towards universal democracy, attempting to reclaim the society, culture, and economy that corrupt dictatorships were pulling out from under them.

Much of what made the Arab Spring unique was the use of art as an effective vehicle to voice dissatisfaction with governments. People from across the Arab world expressed their woes and frustration with song, dance, Twitter memes, graffiti in Tahrir Square, Instagram political posters, and more. These works became larger than the artists and activists who created them, and their art magnified political expression throughout the Middle East and immortalized activists' message. What made art such an effective vehicle for change in the Arab Spring?

Graffiti in Tahrir Square in Cairo, Egypt parodying then-president Hosni Mubarak. The artist remains anonymous, but the message is posted in a public, heavy-traffic part of the city (Times of Israel, 2012).

Performative Democracy: Art as a Framework for Politics

Elizbieta Matynia defines "performative democracy" as the use of artistic media to reflect citizens' stances on various cultural, political, and economic issues. Examples of performative democracy include political posters, graffiti, rally songs, spoken-word poetry, and more. Though there are many ways to exercise democracy, Matynia argues that artistic expression uniquely creates "little pockets of public space for free and meaningful expression … [that are] augmented by uncensored underground publishing" (Matynia, 2009). Mark LeVine corroborates, writing that art "creates spaces for subcultures to become countercultures—how groups of (usually) marginalized young people, drawn together by common cultural tastes (in music, modes of dress, styles of speech, etc.) and performances, gradually articulate a powerful oppositional political vision that challenges authoritarian state power" (LeVine, 2015). In highly regulated structures, similar to those in pre-2011 MENA, art fosters communities where political dissenters can discourse and ultimately spread their message through subverted means, like circulating political cartoons on an anonymous Twitter account or spraying protest graffiti on a public building.

Emotional Effectiveness

Art also offers the unique quality of emotional effectiveness, which is often absent from other forms of democratic expression, like voting, canvassing, and more. David Freedberg posits that a viewer's emotional response to art derives from a "radical disjunction between the reality of the art object and reality itself" (Freedberg, 1989). Art has the capacity to express the possibility of a brighter, more utopic reality that is radically different from the present state—this disconnect between the ideal and current reality creates a powerful emotional impact on the viewer. This emotional affect is particularly important, as LeVine argues that "political action [is] inherently

symbolic and performative," since political expression packages the feelings of change into a medium that can be articulated and spread. The inherent symbolism and performative nature of political expression makes art a necessary ele-

Libyan citizens march with a parodied poster of then-leader Muammar Gaddafi, recolored in classic blue-red democratic hues to oppose the dictatorship and rebranded with a slogan of "HOPELESS." (Nazaritze)

ment, because it is "emotionally affective," and thus, "the most effective" way to convey the desire for change (LeVine, 2015).

Re-appropriation of Space

Art also plays a powerful symbolic role in restoring agency to individuals. The MENA region, especially before the revolutions of Arab Spring, was characterized by extremely authoritarian governments with rigid restrictions on what individual citizens could and could not do. Such restrictions permeated every aspect of civilian life and limited citizens' freedom of religion, speech, and assembly. All public space and actions reinforced the power and control of current regimes, who then implemented more restrictions and laws, perpetuating existing power structures and preventing any movement towards democracy (LeVine, 2015).

Charles Tripp argues that this historical context is partly what has made art such an effective vehicle for revolution. Art has always been critical to the politics of the MENA. The region's regimes used art to impose their authority over citizens and create a public sense of progress, nationalism, and growth. Governments capitalized on art's non-secular qualities to conflate their identity with the greater spiritual good, establishing dictators' divine-right and superiority to citizens. Prior to 2011, the streets of the region were populated with posters of dictators and governmental slogans to maintain complete political and cultural control over citizens (Tripp, 2013). There was little to no space for citizens to voice concerns and frustration with current regimes.

Tripp's discussion of this limited expressive space in pre-2011 MENA ties directly into LeVine's theory of art as powerful and necessary political expression. Through the revolutions, art created expressive space where such a space did not previously exist. Protest art generated a citizen-driven subculture that denied the power of the state-mandated artificial culture and replaced it with democracy, the right to expression, and hope. In Syria, protestors composed the song "Yalla, irhal ya Bashar" ("Come on Bashar, leave") and the ballad became anthem of the protests and subsequent civil war. Cultural dances were redesigned to convey oppression and disillusionment and were performed at protests instead of governmental ceremonies. Tripp writes:

Graffiti on walls near Tahrir Square, Cairo displaying a government tank pointing at a defenseless fruit vendor on a bicycle (Matador Network).

"In each country, performances of this kind enhanced the experiences of the protest, entertaining but also mobilizing people in all their variety and defiance of the established order. By coming together in defiance of the authorities and holding their ground in public spaces, the citizens of these countries asserted their citizenship and ownership of their own land in the most public manner possible. The slogans, chants, songs, and banners were an integral part of these performances…" (Tripp, 2013).

These artistic protests with posters, dances, songs, and more flooded the streets of Ben Arous, Cairo, Sana'a, Tripoli, and other MENA capitals. By creating these protests, citizens reclaimed their expressive space, creating a performative democracy to communicate their attitudes toward contemporary politics. After the 2011 revolutions, art, as a concept, was a tool for democracy used by the people, not to oppress the people.

Citizens also recaptured art previously used by governments to impose dominance and frequently parodied and defaced these works in support of the rebellion. Tripp continues, "one of the first acts of the protestors was to attack the faces of those who had dominated them for so long… in order to deliberately transmit a message that would contradict the original intention" (Tripp, 2013). One such act was to take campaign posters that supported oppressive dictators and rebrand them with democratic themes and critical slogans. The emotional effectiveness of such art was particularly powerful. Protest artists could change national attitudes towards authoritarian leaders by re-appropriating government propaganda with aesthetic manipulation, which disassembled years of desensitization to oppression.

MENA's activists not only used art to reclaim expressive space, but also public, physical space. University of South Florida Professor John Lennon analyzes the specific case of graffiti and public

vandalism by saying, "graffiti is a disembodied act that secretly forces itself onto city life: the unauthorized words on the walls accuse while the accusers are tactically nowhere to be seen" (Lennon, 2014). This was important for the pre-Spring MENA region, where the crime of dissent resulted in cruel and unusual punishment, including death by public humiliation, flogging, and stoning; graffiti allowed dissenters to voice their cause without repercussion.

Lennon references the research of criminologists Mark Halsey and Ben Perderick, who found that graffiti "disturbs, deterritorializes, and therefore rejuvenates a city," which creates "a new relationship with the city" for the viewer (Lennon, 2014). Lennon contextualizes this with the case study of Tahrir Square in Cairo, famously known for its graffiti during the Arab Spring. One viral image portrayed a government tank with its turret pointed at a fruit vendor on a bicycle—a nod to Bouazizi—which is a larger symbolic representation of the citizens of Egypt. The location of the graffiti on the walls of Tahrir Square threatened the power structures that guided the MENA region for so long. By recapturing art through means like graffiti, poster defacing, and rebranding of cultural performances, citizens grappled power away from the current government and redistributed it among a community of artists and activists, vitalizing the forces of performative democracy critical to the revolutions.

Social Media: The New Wave of Artistic Expression

This redefinition of art's purpose in MENA society can largely be attributed to the growth and use of social media across the region during the Arab Spring. Social media critically helped share and disseminate art across the region during the revolutions. Lennon relates this to graffiti and its impact, writing that "images of conflict graffiti are transported at the speed of a Twitter post and can easily be seen by clicking on Al Jazeera or Flicker [sic]" (Lennon, 2014). Heather Brown, research

A screen-capture of the "We are all Khaled Said" Facebook page, displaying an image of 28-year-old Khaled Said, who was arrested without warrant and tortured by police (Daily Northwestern, 2015).

fellow at the Pew Research Center, notes the multitude of ways in which "digital media has been used by Arabs to exercise freedom, of speech and as a space for civic engagement," (Brown, 2012). It allows citizens in Tunisia to experience graffiti in Tahrir Square, Cairo or news outlets in the United States to witness public demonstrations in Sana'a through a Facebook video; it extended the Arab World's performative democracy to all who had access to a computer and the Internet. Social media powered individual artistic expression, ultimately reshaping art's role as a tool of political change in the Arab Spring.

Boris Grays argues that social media constitutes a valid artistic medium because it retains the aesthetic and ephemeral qualities of traditional art forms while virtualizing them in an online experience (Grays, 2015). Tangible examples of Grays' claims are prevalent across social media today. Social media posts are simply electronic forms of prose and poetry. Critics often attack such media for its overt simplicity and curtness; for instance, Twitter mandates a 140-character limit on all shared content, which critics argue limits artistic expression and invalidates a tweet's literary qualities (Saccardo, 2015). This fundamental linkage between the ethos of social media and art re-

quires any discussion of art's efficacy as a political tool to include the effects of social media.

Restoring Aura with Technology

By restoring artistic agency to individuals, social media revitalized the aura of art in the Middle East. Aura is loosely defined as the cultural, emotional, and ephemeral qualities of art that cannot be mechanically reproduced (Tate). Globally, the aura of art has diminished as artistic production and has become increasingly industrialized, commodified, and commercialized. German philosopher and critic Theodor Adorno theorized that such commodification created an "aura of style," that aligned with corporate, government, and hegemonic values. This commodified "aura of style" destroyed individual aura and created an arbitrary gold standard of art that limited artistic expression and appreciation and reinforced existing power structures (Matteucci, 2016). Particularly in the MENA, the weaponization of art by autocratic regimes for propaganda and total control stifled individual artistic expression, creating an "aura of style" that glorifies dictators and governments without acknowledging the citizens.

LeVine argues that recently, aura has returned to art because of "the rise of new digital technologies [that] have profoundly reshaped the production, dissemination and consumption of art"—including affordable cameras, computers, art media, and more. These technologies have reinstated agency in individual artists who don't serve the agendas of large institutions, but rather use art to voice their own opinions and beliefs.

It suddenly became possible for the average citizen to produce powerful, aesthetic art, share their works with an audience of millions, and engage with a performative democracy. Citizens photographed protests, sprayed graffiti on walls, started Facebook pages, retweeted viral messages, created posters on Instagram, etc. Art was no longer just a tool for the already powerful; the public reclaimed art as a vehicle for their own

voice, deconstructing the "aura of style" that subsisted on art power structures. Originality and individuality returned to art, and so did genuine, authentic style (LeVine, 2015).

Virality and the Common Sense of Identity

Social media's capability to reproduce art played an important role in inspiring the spirit of revolution in the 2011 Arab World. Sean Aday asserted, "using these technologies, people interested in democracy could build extensive networks, create social capital, and organize political action with a speed and on a scale never seen before. Digital media became the tool that allowed social movements to reach once-unachievable goals." Thanks to these technologies, virtual networks materialized in the streets.

Before the advent of social and digital media, protest art was limited in its audience. A political poster contains a powerful message, but it is only appreciated by the few in attendance at a protest or march. Additionally, non-artists were given the ability to participate by commenting on, liking, and sharing pieces that resonate with their beliefs. Social media constructed an ecosystem optimized for creating and responding to art in a performative democracy that extended far beyond the confines of any single demonstration or march. For context, in 2011, #Egypt was the most tweeted hashtag on Twitter (Aday, 2012).

Social media and the pure virality of art in different apps also powered common identity in other intangible ways. In 2011, the friends and family of Khaled Said, an Egyptian man who was tortured to death by police without warrant, created a Facebook page called "We Are All Khaled Said." The page acquired hundreds of thousands of followers who identified with the anger towards police brutality and unwarranted governmental control (*New York Times*, 2011). The page serves as a model for how social media creates a common identity in protests; when individuals are emotionally affected by artwork found online,

they like or share the piece, publicly identifying and aligning with the views expressed in the art (Alaimo, 2016).

Following the Arab Spring, democracy may not have caught on across all of the MENA, but a paradigm shift was undeniably observed throughout the region. The only way to cultivate such a large-scale change in mindset is to construct a common identity focused on fostering democracy. Social media powered this capability through the viral spread of tweets across the MENA and also public identification with views expressed through art.

Performing Democracy

The Arab Spring began with rage. Rage in a 26-year-old fruit vendor who faced government abuse so much that he burned himself to death publicly to make a point. Rage amongst the family members of tortured and murdered Khaled Said who knew the government was failing them well before police smashed in Said's skull without warrant. Rage amongst the millions of people across the MENA who rose up against their governments, sacrificed themselves and their families, and publicly opposed long-standing leaders in a political system where dissent is punishable by torture or death. Such rage is hard to capture through conventional democratic means. There was little cultural or political precedence for voting, canvassing, or grassroots organizations in the Middle East.

The advent of social media and digital technologies that put more power into the hands of citizens, protesters and activists found a vehicle for change in art. The people improvised songs and national dances, graffitied public buildings, defaced nationalist posters, shared prose and poetry on Twitter, spread videos of demonstrations, and created an incredible amount of artistic work in quality and quantity. With art, the MENA unified under the central goal of making sure their rage was heard, felt, and responded to.

The Arab Spring ended in late 2011, but its effect on the Arab World is permanent and the rage that drove it is still felt today. Governments crafted an "aura of style" through art-based propaganda and heavy restrictions on what creators could and could not express in their works; the repression observed in general society extended to the artistic sphere, and art was primarily used as a nationalist tool for governments to condition citizens into supporting a repressive regime. MENA's citizens are constantly *performing* democracy by producing and consuming art as a means for political expression. The immutable impact that art and social media have had on politics in the Middle East remains the dominant form of political expression. Year after year, more individuals are emboldened to perform democracy in their pursuit of change.

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The Fight Over Transphobia Within the Greater Transgender Identity

Cara Pickford / **University of Utah**

In the queer and transgender communities there is heated debate about what qualifies as transphobia. Transphobia is defined as an emotional fear or disgust toward individuals who do not conform to society's gender expectations. Transphobia has to do with a perceived notion of what a normative male or female is and expressing direct or indirect discontent with anyone who chooses to go against the binary standard. The transgender community consists of transsexuals, crossdressers, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming individuals.

A controversial topic among the transgender community centers around what is deemed acceptable interpersonal treatment (Baker, 2014). The trans community often faces varying amounts of social rejection. (Arguably, the act of coming out of the closet and facing social rejection is a rite of passage.) Focusing on different positions of trans women and how they interpret free speech will define and present the discourse taking place within the transgender community about transphobia and hate speech.

Constituting Transphobia

The juncture of where transphobia begins and ends is blurry; however, having awareness of the parameters within this issue can be a starting point. Does mandating free speech and the right to hold a different opinion exceed the First Amendment? Should transphobic people be allowed to personally maintain their beliefs through vitriolic speech just like a heteronormative person would? In order to address the arguments of free speech, the different sides must be established,

defined, and placed in context with the trans movement as a whole.

Transphobia begins to be disputed within the community when people attempt to determine what actions are grounds for transphobic discrimination. The Bill of Rights and the Constitution are open to interpretation from readers and activists. A paradox of opinion happens when different, and sometimes opposing views, are formed while still having the same framework of ideals. All transgender activists consider physical assault to be transphobia; however, other issues like free speech are not as clear cut.

Contemporary Positions of Free Speech

Within the greater transgender community, activists are using various social media platforms whose rhetorics, due to contemporary political polarization, can be generalized between right-wing, moderate, and left-wing views. Trans activism through social media provides a medium through which debate takes place and shows the distinctive stances of trans women.

Conservative transgender women are a minority within a minority and are at the crux of this issue. The contemporary conservative movement struggles to reconcile the relatively new idea of a modern transgender person with societal traditionalism. This is because "[r]ight-wing ideologies offer well-structured and ordered views about society by resisting changes to social-cultural traditions and supporting clear hierarchical structures between social groups" (Altemeyer, 1998). A conservative trans person challenges sociocultural tradition by undermining this structure. This

unique subcategory of conservativism represents something seemingly radical and new. In general, a principle of the conservative trans woman is to accept someone else holding different beliefs—even within their own community—and respect the personal right to hold different opinions. This can be observed by the fact that some transgender women are avowed members of the conservative movement which advocates to limit the rights of trans people.

Transgender conservatives, while supporting the trans community, also support a person's right to verbalize their beliefs. Among conservative trans women, Blaire White's view is not uncommon.

Misgendering is culturally violent and discriminatory, and it is fundamentally transphobic to misgender trans people.

White, a self-described transgender conservative political YouTuber and activist, is an advocate for free speech. It is clear that White believes hate speech is neither violent nor transphobic when she states, "You don't support free speech if you want to deny it for certain groups. You don't support free speech if you think it should have limitations. You don't support free speech if you do not defend your enemy's right to use it" (White, 2018). White has deleted several tweets on hate speech due to backlash from the trans community. Video titles on her YouTube channel reinforce her stance by including known slurs, i.e.-Sensitive Tranny Thinks Words are Violent (White, 2017). White argues that transgender people are no different than others, so they do not deserve to be treated better or worse under the law. Further, victims of hate speech should be less sensitive and those who would spew hate speech should think before they speak. White advocates that free speech should have no limitations, and the law should neither mandate acceptance or censor someone's opinions.

Heather Dunn is another conservative transgender activist. She is a member of the College Republicans at a prominent midwestern university and avowed evangelical Christian. Dunn's stance on free speech aligns with White by agreeing that the First Amendment should include views of all groups. However, Dunn's rhetoric diverges from White's on the topic of hate speech when she maintains, "You are free to lovingly and respectfully disagree. As a First Amendment fundamentalist, I will die for your right to do so… the line is crossed when you get nasty, mean and hateful" (Connor and Blobaum, 2017). Dunn advocates that free speech is specifically the right to voice

an opinion, but at the same time, does not encompass hate speech which serves to incite discontent, alienation, and violence.

Caitlyn Jenner is a well-known transgender woman in the media spotlight due to her previous Olympic fame and ties to the Kardashian family. Jenner has ambivalent feelings about hate speech and as a result, takes a moderate approach. When asked about her stance on hate speech she says, "If you want to call me names, make jokes and doubt my intentions, go ahead because the reality is, I can take it. But for thousands of kids out there coming to terms with the reality of who they are, they shouldn't have to take it" (Lutz, 2015). Following this line of logic, children should not be exposed to hate speech. Ultimately, Jenner does not support absolute free speech, but advocates for civil discourse.

On the other side of the political spectrum is Laverne Cox, a transgender actress and activist, who is well known for her role in the series *Orange is the New Black*. Cox is recognized inside and outside the LGBT community as a leader of the transgender movement (Steinmetz, 2014). Cox's rhetoric establishes a clear link between transphobia and hate speech by making it a matter of life and death. Cox has posted, "I have been saying for years that misgendering a trans person is an act of violence. When I say that I am referring to cultural and structural violence" (Amatulli, 2018). Misgendering is the act of derogatory comments towards a person's chosen gender, i.e. the expression *really a man disguised as a woman* effectively accuses a trans person of pretense by deeming them within one of the binary categories and is considered misgendering (Bettcher, 2014).

In 2017, in response to jokes made by comedian Lil Duval regarding transgender murder, Cox tweeted:

> After taking several deep breaths I just got teary thinking about all my sisters experienc-

ing violence, beaten, raped, murdered and some folks think it's ok to joke about wanting to kill us. We have free speech, but that speech has consequences and trans folks are experiencing the negative consequences with our lives. It hurts my spirit 'cause this isn't funny. Our lives matter. Trans murder isn't a joke. (Boucher, 2017)

Misgendering is culturally violent and discriminatory, and it is fundamentally transphobic to misgender trans people. Further, it is not appropriate to make light of violence against the trans community. To Laverne Cox, and the majority of the transgender community, hate speech is exempted from free speech on the basis of the harm it does.

While transgender people have always existed, the transgender rights movement and the modern transgender community in today's world originated at the Stonewall Inn on June 28th, 1969 in New York City. Gay and transsexual patrons reacted violently to a long-standing pattern of targeted harassment from law enforcement. The riots diffused on June 03, 1969 (U.S. National Park Service). Transphobia is easily identified in violent situations like what happened in the Stonewall riots, but free speech is still a contested concept among the trans community.

The transgender activists spotlighted in this essay are not a proportional sampling of the political climate, but they do represent the multiple positions of the argument. The vast majority of the greater transgender communities are and can be expected to maintain their collective political consciousness (Proctor, 2016) though they are likely to lean left, and therefore more likely to be in favor of seeing hate speech as transphobic.

The community has gained a seat at the American political table by creating a discourse within American liberalism (Matte, 2014) and there is

no evidence to suggest this trend will stop in the near future. If anything, the internet will connect more transgender people and give them access to new intra-community information, experience, and dialogue (Erlick, 2018), which may further strengthen the political base of the community. As long as there are liberals and conservatives, and discourse to be had, the vertex of equal treatment for transgender people and freedom of thought, expression, and speech will be held sacred and continue to debated.

CARA PICKFORD is a transgender woman originally from the Chicago area who came to the University of Utah to study rhetoric and Japanese. She is a proud plant mom who loves to read all things history and politics in her free time and goes on the occasional hike when the weather's right. She plans to become a high school teacher in Japan for the next couple of years before ultimately returning and going to law to school.

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Cabinet of Curiosities

Lars Petersen / **University of Utah**

Contained here is

a large plate of glass that stalks the foyer

and springs up and strikes a sparrow dead

in the house where you grow up.

You bury her in the wild-thing graveyard

near the line of mailboxes down by the road.

She lies in state, encapsulated within a sarcophagus

made of a toilet-paper tube with taped ends.

The trowel digs a hole for her

next to the mouse the cat caught last week.

Look there and see how

your mother's father died of pancreatic cancer

twelve-thousand miles away.

You sit on top of your school's jungle-gym

as it mocks you with its cool irony.

You do not cry, but think

of how his emaciated eighty pounds are

shrunk down to fit into an urn that

they bury beneath a tree

in an unmarked grave.

Within this nook is a slice

of May, when the sun shines brightly outside,

and you see a creature turn to you

and gnash its crystalline teeth.

Scared, you run to sit with your mother.

The thing that lives, but cannot live, on

the other side of your living-room, confuses you.

You grow into a fear with age

as you sit in your mother's lap, but tell her nothing,

as all you crave is silence.

This shelf contains a stoppered bottle

full of the calm turquoise waters of the Caribbean.

Where you spear a fish, which is quickly taken

by a roaming shark, which circles back

fifteen minutes later, and sucks

your hand off the grip, bites down.

On the deck, medical supplies stem

the bleeding, as your fellow tourists take

selfies with your bandaged hand

to post on spotty Wi-Fi back at the resort.

Here is a mirror, set prominently at

the end of the room. See how

your reflection enlarges as you

approach, how it moves from side-to-side

like a caged carnivore.

This polished contortion of glass is precious

not because it's ancient, but

because it lives in the now.

Yes, it may somehow seem ethereal,

but this mirror, it's indestructible.

Although a geology major and anthropology minor, **LARS PETERSEN** has a deep, abiding passion for writing and photography. His love for writing began in the fourth-grade when he was chosen to read one of his poems on a local radio station. The poem was a lament for the declining whale populations in the world's oceans, written after the form of "The Raven" by Edgar Allen Poe. After graduating this summer from the University of Utah with degrees in Anthropology and Geoscience, he hopes to work as a micro-paleobiologist, while continuing his writing. When not studying, reading, writing, or developing photos he enjoy SCUBA diving.

The Role of Women in Deradicalization Efforts

Hannah Bergstrom / University of Utah

The presence of violent extremist groups has become an increasingly pressing issue around the globe. Although there is a growing number of women involved in these groups, there is a severe lack of research and resources dedicated to women in deradicalization efforts to counter violent extremism, known as CVE. To date, programs to rehabilitate participants in violent extremist groups and preemptive efforts to thwart involvement are designed by men, for men. As women are joining radical groups at an unprecedented rate, and even returning to these groups after rehabilitation, this calls for a thoughtful and gender-inclusive approach to creating rehabilitation programs specific to women based on issues particular to their circumstances.

THE PROCESS OF DERADICALIZATION

Weinburg and Eubank (2011) have identified four waves of extremism: 1) Revolutionary Anarchism; 2) National Independence; 3) Revolutions; and 4) Religious and Nationalism. Each wave is associated with a particular historical moment. They claim that the first terrorist organization was the "People's Will," which was established at the end of the 19th century in Russia (p. 23). Even then, women were active participants in extremism. For example, Vera Figner was on the executive committee of the group, which was responsible for the assassination of Czar Alexander in 1881. Other more recent groups where women have been participants in extremism include Israel's "Irgun" in the 1940s and Germany's "Baader-Meinhoff Gang" in the 1970s (which was run by women). Until recently, however, little effort has been put toward deradicalization.

Today, in the fourth wave of extremism, more effort is being made to deradicalize women. Deradicalization refers to the process of reversing the effects of radicalization, which is the rhetoric, ideas, and circumstances that cause a person to adopt extreme political, religious, or social ideologies.

Typically, deradicalization comes in the form of rehabilitation programs. Some aim to rehabilitate while some aim to prevent. For example, the Mohammed bin Nayef Center for Counseling and Advice is a rehabilitation program in Saudi Arabia that aims to help extremists integrate back into society. According to the Council on Foreign Relations — a think tank in the United States dedicated to foreign policy — the program includes "... classes and counseling on sharia law, psychology, vocational training, sociology, history, Islamic culture, art therapy, and athletics." The program also aims to tackle the source of certain radicalized ideology through updated and accurate history classes (Porges, 2010). CVE, on the other hand, aims to thwart violence or extremist ideology before it happens by using proactive and preventative measures. The United States Department of Homeland Security's CVE Task Force employs youth and educational programs, public partnerships and more to counter extremism around the world.

WOMEN AND TERRORISM

Both deradicalization and CVE are critical in preventing violence and terrorism, but women are often overlooked in these efforts, though they represent an increasing number of extremists. In

2018, Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security published a policy brief that outlines findings about women in deradicalization and rehabilitation (Christien and Turkington, 2018). The brief strikingly reported that as of 2018, 20% of Western recruits to the Islamic State (IS) are women, and that female suicide bombers for Boko Haram — a jihadist terrorist group based in Nigeria — has substantially increased (Christien and Turkington, p. 1). Further, the EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report found that the number of women arrested for violent extremist participation rose to 25% in 2016, a 7% increase from the prior year (Nielsen, 2017). Women's involvement in terrorism is not a new development as mentioned above, although in the last decade it has evolved. In the article "Death Becomes Her: The Changing Nature of Women's Role in Terror" (2010), author Mia Mellisa Bloom states:

20%
of Western recruits to the Islamic State are women.

> *In some cases, women constituted as much as one-third of the [extremist] organization, as was the case in Germany's Red Army Faction and Second of June Movement, and women compromised virtually all of Germany's Red Zora movement. With these exceptions aside, women have largely played peripheral roles in terrorist violence, such as providing secondary support to male fighters. However, recent developments reveal a disturbing trend. Women have started to transition from supportive roles to more active operational roles (p. 91).*

Bloom goes on to explain that between 1985 and 2008, female suicide bombers represented about a quarter of the attacks committed worldwide. And furthermore, "Since 2002 women have represented over 50 percent of successful suicide terror operatives in the conflicts in Sri Lanka, Turkey, and Chechnya" (p. 91-92). These numbers continue to rise, and yet there is a major discrepancy between programs to rehabilitate women compared to their male counterparts.

WOMEN'S MOTIVATION FOR JOINING RADICAL GROUPS

One of the reasons why deradicalization efforts for women are so disproportionate is due to the misconception about why women join terrorist groups. The stories of girls and women being kidnapped and forced into extremist groups, or women being coerced by husbands to join are very real, and should not be downplayed. However, there are many women who join extremist groups by choice, and not by coercion. These women join radical groups for a variety of complex reasons such as family or cultural ties, economic or social opportunity, or religious ideology, amongst other reasons. Despite research to support this, the narrative that women in terrorist groups are there solely as the victims of coercion persists. "While men's agency is assumed," according to Georgetown Policy Brief authors Christien and Turkington, "women are infantilized or sexualized." Consequently, "This can lead to more lenient sentencing, inadequate rehabilitation programming, and perhaps even let dangerous actors slip through the cracks" (Christien and Turkington, p. 3). In other words, if we assume that all

women are forced into participating in terrorism, the women that choose to join such groups are not adequately disciplined for their crimes, and they are not properly rehabilitated through job training, education opportunities, counseling, and more. Without disciplining, rehabilitation, or deradicalization, some women return to participating in violent extremism.

GENDERED CHALLENGES DURING REHABILITION

In a 2018 study, author Amy-Jane Gielen sought to answer how exit programmes could be effective for women who participate in violent extremism. In this substantive study, Gielen focused particularly on exit programmes in the Netherlands where the highest population of female jihadists in Europe resides. According to Gielen, exit programmes are those that attempt to deradicalize, rehabilitate, or reintegrate people who participate in terrorist activities. The first step in creating effective exit programmes is understanding the motivation of female jihadists. Gielen expresses this when she says, "This discourse in which women are viewed as victims has hindered effective policy against female violent extremism. Many European member states initially did not prosecute females returning from ISIS nor did they offer 'exit programmes' aimed at deradicalization, disengagement or reintegration" (p. 454-455). Gielen also points out the disturbing truth of women involved in groups such as ISIS, where women play an active role in grooming other women to join, receive sniper training, carry dangerous weapons, and are involved in suicide bombing.

Through her study of exit programmes in the Netherlands, Gielen ultimately concludes that a successful rehabilitation program for radicalized women would include "mentoring, practical support, family support, physical and psycholog-

ical assessment and counselling, and theological and ideological guidance" (p. 468). Essentially, we must have a clear understanding of the motivations for women to participate in violent extremism, as well as a comprehensive picture of the role women in these groups play in order to create rehabilitation programs that are effective. Although not addressing the issue of female jihadists specifically, author Asla Jarwaid echoes the need for a more inclusive and holistic approach to rehabilitation programs (2017). According to Jarwaid, "Providing an inclusive environment that does not ostracise but rather engages returnees and encourages their involvement in daily life is perhaps the single, greatest success factor" (p. 105). This is especially true for women returning from violent extremist groups, as they face unique and often urgent challenges during the deradicalization process. Two issues of concern are lack of employment and having children.

As Gielen suggests, education is a critical component of rehabilitation, but job training is an equally important factor if women are to be successfully rehabilitated. In their policy brief, Christien and Turkington reported that employment opportunities for women after serving prison sentences are three times worse than for their male counterparts. This is primarily because job training programs are inadequate, ineffective, or even nonexistent for women. Because some women join extremist groups due to lack of economic opportunity or access to social services, if they are not given better opportunities after incarceration or rehabilitation, they are more likely to return to their radical groups.

Since many rehabilitation programs are created for men, they also do not take into consideration the complex issues that women face when they have children, and therefore do not adequately help rehabilitate women. The authors draw on

information from female gang members in the United States to make comparisons with other radical groups women join around the world to emphasize the impact of having children and returning to violence or radicalism. Gang members, for example, have reported not accessing social services because they are afraid of their children being apprehended. Similarly, many women from Boko Haram return to their communities pregnant, and community members are wary of accepting these children because they "are seen as tainted by terrorist blood" (p. 4)

According to Christien and Turkington, "After their participation in extremist groups, these women return to societies where poverty and social marginalization remain unchanged, and some have even returned to Boko Haram after completing deradicalization programs" (p. 4). This points to the urgent need to create deradicalization programs specifically for women.

WOMEN-CENTERED SOLUTIONS

A powerful and critical approach to deradicalization includes local women in rehabilitation and educational programs. In 2017, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Nigeria and the Center for Democracy and Development brought together women in Maiduguri, Nigeria to share ideas about countering radical ideology in their community. In an area where Boko Haram has terrorized civilians for the last decade, this workshop aimed to empower women to create lasting solutions. One of the participants of the workshop, Mariam Ngileruma, expressed the importance of education. "What if the women were educated, and then allowed to educate their own children?" Ngileruma asked. "Socialization starts at home and when you educate women, you educate the whole." Ngileruma also explains that "The government can have every plan available, but if they don't include women, they can never

achieve peace." Other women in the program agreed that effective resolutions, when it comes to violent extremism and conflict, must include those that are hit the hardest, that is, those who are left to pick up the broken pieces of the community to which violence has been done.

Above all, bringing women to the forefront of deradicalization efforts will be the most effective solution to counteracting female involvement in violent extremism and ensuring proper rehabilitation. According to Christien and Turkington, "Identifying, empowering, and consulting credible women leaders is a crucial part of creating sustainable deradicalization and rehabilitation programs that address individual and community needs" (p. 6). This approach to deradicalization involves the cooperation of a variety of actors and sectors—from academia, government and non-governmental organizations, and at the local/community level. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways: through empowering mothers to educate their children, supporting women in religious and political positions, and encouraging women to engage in a dialogue with their community. The voluntary participation of women in violent extremism is not something that we can let slip through the cracks. Once we understand that not all women are coerced to join terrorist groups, that many of these women choose to be in extremist groups for complex reasons, then we can create comprehensive programs to educate, rehabilitate and reintegrate them. Women face unique challenges in the process of deradicalization and rehabilitation, and we must support and encourage solutions made by women, for women.

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Immigration

Karolina Ptzasek / **University of Illinois, Chicago Circle**

There are 3.2 million undocumented children and young adults under the age of 24 in the United States (Immigration Policy Institute 1). This demographic of undocumented children can be thought of as a unique opportunity for the United States because it is an untapped resource of economic success and innovation potential for

> *In 2001, a family of seven—Marie, her husband, and their five children—made their long journey from the Mexican border to Washington's verdant Yakima Valley by driving through Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada and Oregon. The journey was supposed to take five days as they planned to drive it to Washington. They soon ran out of money and instead had to stop in different places to earn money by working on farm fields. Struggle after struggle, they finally arrived at the destination where they had hoped to get since the beginning of their trip. Their children still recall how every night the family would go to sleep in their silver minivan calling it their "five-star hotel" (Mendez 1).*
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> —An excerpt from the article "Life as an Illegal Immigrant in America," illustrating a story that is echoed throughout the stories of undocumented immigrants seeking residency in the United States. The author portrays the struggles of an immigrant family that makes sacrifices, so that their children will have the opportunities of a good education and a better life as American citizens.

the United States. People immigrate to the United States for a better life. As parents, the men and women that come to the United States do so with the hope of a better life for their children. There are many opportunities for success that the young generation of immigrants can foster; however, unjust political movements and laws disable those chances. Families seek to achieve a better life than they would usually have in their native country. Although some claim the rights of undocumented immigrants are not important, the rights of children—legal or illegal—should be prioritized.

The Land of Opportunity

Throughout history immigrants have enriched and strengthened the "American Dream." Immigrant families come to the United States in hopes to find a better future and to have an easier life than the one they faced and struggled with in their native country. Poor economic activity, lack of job opportunities, refuge from political injustice, drug cartels and crime, sex trafficking, violence, and more are all driving factors of uprooting lives and coming to the United States.

Immigration has played an important role throughout American history and has been a focal point in the United States due to social, economic, and political reasons. A primary concern of immigrant families are opportunities for their children. Just like any child, the future depends on what a young generation will be able to give to the world when they grow up. Unfortunately, the rights of immigrant youth are not given much importance and are often times ignored.

Policy changes and reforms such as border wall construction, refugee resettlement funding cuts, family separation, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) reform are controversial subjects. These issues will simply not just

disappear if programs are cut. The people who immigrate remain in the void of social status and obscurity at times. These people are being separate from their families, detained, and children are being lost in the undertow of it all. It is the job of the United States government to step up and create policies that are humane. There is room for everyone.

Education and Drawbacks

Undocumented children have educational rights in grades K-12. The National PTA's *Position Statement––Rights and Services for Undocumented Children* states, "The Supreme Court of the United States concluded in *Plyler v. Doe (1982)* that undocumented school-aged children are entitled to have access to a high quality and free public K-12 education" (PTA 2). This law is effective for all public schools, as they are open to all undocumented children.

The DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) Act helps undocumented individuals that came the United States as children from being deported. The act plays a central role in allowing undocumented children to go through elementary school and pursue higher learning after high school. DACA was created by the Obama administration to protect undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States as youth from deportation and give work permits for immigrant youth/children who came to the United States before their sixteenth birthday and before June of 2007 (By East Bay Community Law Center 2). According to Sanam Malik, "Studies have shown that people who receive temporary work permits end up with 8.5 percent higher wages, on average; this translates into more money to support both family members and education" (Malik 2). This means that undocumented immigrants are able to continue their education because they will be able to pay for college and they do not have to worry about being detained and deported. The Trump administration has moved to end DACA. As

of June 2019, individuals with DACA or those who have had DACA in the past can continue to renew their benefits on a two-year basis. However, first-time applications are no longer being accepted (USCIS).

The DREAM (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors) Act is defined as, "A bill in Congress that would have granted legal status

to certain undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States as children and went to school here" (ADL 1). To qualify for the DREAM Act, young undocumented immigrants would have had to complete either two years of higher education or military service and would have lived in the United States for five years. The nation's ideals of opportunity are shown through this act of helping young undocumented immigrants that can promote living a better life.

Undocumented immigrants can be hesitant to send their children to school due to their citizenship status. Parents do not know that ICE is not allowed to detain or deport children when they are in preschools, primary schools, secondary schools, colleges and universities, and other institutions of learning, such as vocational and trade schools (PTA 2). However, given the current political climate and detainment of immigrants, there are grassroots groups and non-profit organizations that are creating simple tips for immigrants to help know their rights. Figure 1 shows an example of suggestions for a person who might be stopped by law enforcement.

Although children in K-12 have some protections, laws for higher education have been cut. The Trump administration cut policies that helped undocumented children to continue their higher education. In his article, "Current Policies Regarding Illegal Immigrant Children Are Inadequate," Roberto G. Gonzales states, "...without a means

> " When I first arrived in the United States in the mid-1980s, I knew the road to achieve my full potential would be a difficult one. While others doubted me, I knew that through hard work and determination, I would make something of myself. Less than 30 years later, I often think while walking the hallways of Johns Hopkins Hospital after performing a 12-hour life-saving neurosurgery, what if I had stopped believing in myself? While I think of what other paths my life could have taken, I think mostly of the lives of the thousands of patients I have operated on, the surgeries I performed that other surgeons refused to, and the families of the loved ones I played a role in treating.
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> —Excerpt from the article, "Alfredo Quinones-Hinojosa: From illegal immigrant to Johns Hopkins neurosurgeon." Quinones-Hinojosa came to the United States as an undocumented immigrant youth who would have been considered poor and uneducated in the eyes of the law. "

to legalize their status, these children are seldom able to go on to college, cannot work legally in this country, and cannot put their educations and abilities to the best possible use" (Gonzales 1). DACA and the DREAM Act are two fundamental polices in having immigrant children continue education and contribute to society.

Increase in Economic Success due to Education

Marshall Fitz, scholar and advocate of immigration reform, believes that lawmakers should continue endeavors on the DREAM Act. Helping immigrant youth would open doors to being more successful in the workforce or education endeavors. Fitz argues, "Passing the act would also reduce the taxpayers' burden of providing more social services to these potential wage earners, and it would create more taxpayers to help cut the nation's deficit. Congress needs to face this issue and finally pass the DREAM Act" (Fitz 1). According to Fitz, the belief that immigrants are a burden on the US economy is inaccurate. Statistics show that immigrants make up a significant percentage of the workforce and Fitz argues, "Despite reports to the contrary, immigrants are a net positive for the economy and pay more into the system than they take out" (Fitz 1). When undocumented children graduate from college, they will be able to get jobs with higher salaries. This will lead to an increase in the GDP (Gross Domestic Product), thus benefiting the United States economy as a whole.

Call to Action

In *Immigrant's and America's Future*, Hilda Solis states, "...through 2050, immigrants and their children will account for 60 percent of U.S. population growth, and nearly all of the new additions under the age of 65 will be immigrants" (Solis 5). If individuals coming from different countries will make up more than half of the United States population by 2050, it is evident reform for im-

migration is needed and education for immigrant youth is a priority.

As the number of children coming to the United States continues to increase the rights of immigrant children need to be securely in place. The poor and uneducated demographic of immigrants that come the United States may not know how to protect themselves through the immigration process. Schools, places of employment, and organizations can help navigate situations with detainment, but can only do so much. Law makers on both party lines need to step up and find solutions to reform immigration.

In his article "It Is Unfair to Deny Innocent Immigrant Children Legal Status," Republican Congressman, Cory Gardner states, "new legislation is needed to fix the nation's broken immigration system". Gardner emphasizes that children are caught in this impossible, unfair system and says that a reform has to happen. Gardner goes on to say, "an important part of reform is to grant legal status to children brought illegally to the United States" (Gardner 1). Recognizing that immigrant children's rights are in jeopardy is the first step to immigration reform.

The ideals of freedom in the United States root life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness to all who work for it. Every person in this country, whether they are an immigrant or not, deserves a chance at that dream. In times of times of adversity and injustice, we must not forget that undocumented people's rights are human rights.

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All for You

Millennia Morales / SUNY at Buffalo State College

"Carro!" Alan and Joan instinctively shout as headlights peer around the corner of our one-way street. The screams of my neighbors overpower the blasting music coming from the balconies as the car slowly approaches, knowing that this road was full of kids at play. The aroma of sizzling carnitas travels through the summer air, nagging my nostrils for attention. My stomach rumbles, but I do not know if I want to run around or enjoy the homemade meal. As I stop to think, the bass of Banda tunes pound inside my chest. Lost in my childish dilemmas, the words, "Tag! You're it!" flood my ears, forcing me to snap back to face the cracked, paved road. I run down the trail faster, chasing the neighborhood kids. On summer nights, the adults got together, while their children roamed the hidden street. Fathers and uncles sipped on Coronas, and mothers stood close to the road, gossiping and glancing at their kids every now and then. Being part of an enormous extended family in my neighborhood, my parents always instructed me to call our neighbors "Tio" and "Tia," simply because they shared similar struggles and came from the same place—Mexico.

I knew who resided in every single house of my close-knit community. For instance, Juanita and Esteban, who were my sister's godparents, lived on the first floor, Rufina and Marcos on the third, and my family on the second.

On May 9, 2011, the dynamic of my close knit community changed. Around 5 a.m. I remember the sun that morning as it began to light up my neighborhood. Banging on my front door awakened me growing in volume as it was left unanswered. I crawled out of bed and shuffled out of my bedroom and into the living room.

"Vete a dormir!" my father ordered me, while he hid behind the bookshelf next to our front door.

How could I go back to bed when someone was pounding on my door? My parents' faces wrinkled with angst.

"This is the police! You have to open up!" My father, ignoring the claims, rushed into his bedroom when his phone began to ring.

In the next room, my father received a call from Esteban. Trying to listen through the walls, I tiptoed on our wooden floor so whoever the strangers were outside my door, would not hear me. When my father joined us once more in the living room, his crooked smile disappeared.

"Mey, se llevaron a Juanita," he reported to my mother, shaking his head, knowing that this was a time of need for Juanita's husband—Esteban. I heard them from the top of my bunk bed, which I was instructed not to leave.

"¿Quien?" my mother asked, with fear in her voice.

"La Migra," my father responded regretfully. "He said they're trying to raid the whole building. Knock on every door, see if they get lucky."

"La Migra" had come to my door that morning, but who were they?

La Migra is what we called the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The next day, silence followed my every move in the small hallway leading to my living room.

"Mom, I'm home," I whispered, extending my arm to touch hers. She looked up—eyes blanker than all my classwork from that day. "Where's Juanita?"

"Food is almost ready," she said, twisting more blanket onto herself. "Where's Juanita?" my voice trembled yet demanded an answer. With pain in her eyes, she sat me down beside her.

During her mesmerizing story, hours slipped away, yet it never seemed to end. My mother's story started ten years back. She crossed the desert for days, with no water available; she described the journey she shared with Juanita and many others to this country. However, these stories varied in time, but the journey was equally a struggle.

My mother explained how Juanita's entire life became undone; her whole family in the United States, her husband, job, friends—the list never ceased. Juanita was taken back to Mexico because her presence in this country is a crime in the eyes of the law.

My eyes widened as this new knowledge was fed to me. Silence followed. I had an urge to break it by asking, "Why did you come here?" My curious question stuck in my throat, making it ache.

"We came in search of a better tomorrow, an opportunity to a luxurious life. You were not born, or even fathomed to be, but we came for you. For you to have a good life, and a promising future. For you to be whatever you wanted to be, the unimaginable, for us."

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