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Commercial Gentrification in Times Square Forgotten and Redefined
Christian Esquivel

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The Garden City Movement: Why Howard's Urban Planning Fails Today
Princess Sarah Gracia

Yellow Woman
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Commercial Gentrification in Times Square Forgotten and Redefined

BY CHRISTIAN ESQUIVEL

Abstract

Have you ever wondered how a space like Times Square was created? This New York City neighborhood would be almost unrecognizable to us if we travelled back in time a few decades. In this paper, I will discuss the issue of commercial gentrification, an unforgiving phenomenon that can irreversibly change the identity of a community. I will explore the controversial role of state and municipal government in these processes, as well as their abuse of power and inappropriate relationships with big business. This begs the question: Who is government really for? Increased awareness on this issue can better equip you to consider the ethical and economic questions raised by one of New York City's most pressing topics.

Introduction

Cities are constantly being shaped by complex economic and political forces. The powerful effects often lead to the irreversible shift of character of entire neighborhoods. The manifestation of the relentless pursuit of profit by large private firms can be observed in the process of commercial gentrification. Times Square, a New York City gem largely disregarded prior to its "rediscovery" during the 1980's corporate boom, has been a grand stage for battles between small business entrepreneurs and large scale developers. It serves as a model to study on the strength of corporate power in a political decision-making process heavily influenced by capital. Profit potential is the real driving force behind most neighborhood "revitalization" project decisions, and financial gain is enjoyed amongst a few elite players.

Furthermore, the physical transformation of public spaces inevitably translates to social transformation. Once utilized by an ethnically-diverse community for spontaneous interaction and exchange of ideas, Times Square has become a monopolized space for tourist entertainment. The manipulation of political policies by big business in the creation of this space raises questions about the role of government. The residential and small-business displacement that took place in the Times Square neighborhood offers a troubling response.

It is astonishing, upon closer analysis, the pretenses on which these projects are based, the ironies, and contradictions that are evident during the life of these processes. Through the coercion of government authority reserved for the benefit of the city's inhabitants, such as eminent domain, and the speculative pursuit of profit by large private firms, Times Square has become a misrepresentation of New York City and a representation of corporate privilege.

History

Even the naming of this neighborhood illustrates the moves powerful players and decision-makers take for the purpose of capital gain. In his book, *Ghosts of 42nd Street: A History of America's Most Infamous Block*, Anthony Bianco tells of a time when this now famous neighborhood was irrelevant to the city's elites under its former name, Longacre Square. There was there a sheer ugliness and detestable smell brought about by the horse and carriage trading in the area that had stalled the development of Broadway above 42nd Street. It also had an ominous reputation as "Thieves Lair," known to be a sketchy and undesirable place to be after dark. However, theater entrepreneurs were fleeing north to escape the high rents of the well-established theater district around 14th Street at Union Square. The combination of theater construction and the city's decision to locate a subway station at 42nd Street and Seventh Avenue attracted new development to the area. When Adolph Ochs, owner of the New York Times, bought the little trapezoid of property between 42nd and 43rd Streets to build New York's second-tallest skyscraper for his newspaper's headquarters, it was not his idea to rename the square. "The proposal was formally presented to the municipal government by August Belmont, a prominent Wall Street investor who ran the company that was building the subway for the city. Belmont was also a shareholder in the New York Times..." (Bianco 25). Removing the negative connotations of the former name

and associating the square and newly built subway station with the conspicuous position held by one of the leading New York journals was a clever way to generate business interest and new development in the area.

During the 1910s, Times Square thrived as a theater district and entertainment hub for the city's elites, but its heyday as the Great White Way was short-lived. A series of events contributed to the metamorphosis that took place in the following decades. As stated by Senelick, "the rapid sleazification of Times Square was due not to a moral breakdown, but to a most moral experiment: the passage of the Volstead Act in 1919" (332). Prohibition had lasting consequences on the social and economic dynamics of the area. It represented a moral attack on urban culture and an effort to impose traditional values on urban immigrant populations. It led to the rise of speakeasies, an underground nightlife culture, and "the decline of legitimate theater which contributed to the emergence of other forms of entertainment, including movies and burlesque" (Reichl 53).

The devastating effects of the Great Depression and the rise of Hollywood shifted the character of Times Square from posh entertainment to cheap thrills. Suburbanization after World War II resulted in the replacing of middle-class whites with a large population of blacks migrating up from the South, leading to the economic disinvestment in cities by the public and private sector. The continuous decrease of this neighborhood's value to the city continued throughout the 1960s and 1970s, perhaps one of the most controversial periods in its history. The notorious reputation Times Square had during this time frame as the "Dirty Deuce" was not coincidental. Bianco claims that "the growth of the adult entertainment business in America is often explained as the inevitable result of high court decisions that progressively narrowed the legal grounds for obscenity prosecution" (157). The rapid adoption of the profitable porn industry in Times Square provided the ammunition that would be used against it with a generalized reputation of a neighborhood of social decay that abominated personal values. This would be the selling point of private interests in the 1980's in trying to redefine the neighborhood.

Commercial Gentrification

Commercial gentrification occurs when affluent businesses scout a neighborhood with economic potential. They increase the

value of property by creating high demand, redesigning the built environment, and dictating its uses. Once big business takes interest in a neighborhood, the long-time, locally-owned businesses are progressively squeezed out. Small businesses do not stand a chance in competing with these big players, who enjoy an abundance of economic resources and political influence. By the 1980s, the postindustrial era in NYC was in full effect and the office real estate boom on the east side of Manhattan's Midtown made Times Square an irresistible stretch of land for developers. "Because of its strategic location at the nexus of the city's transportation network and major industries...it was ideally situated to draw on the synergy of the symbolic economy – consisting of the theater district to the north and the garment and fashion district to the south" (Reich 78). The election of pro-business mayor Ed Koch in 1977 was a contributing factor in the future development that was to come.

The primary player in the revived efforts to redevelop Times Square was the 42nd Street Local Development Corporation (LDC). Operating as a private, nonprofit corporation, this organization was a representation of the blurred line between public and private urban development. "It was established primarily with grants from the Ford Foundation, and the bulk of its funding...[came] from private sector corporations and foundations." (Reichl 79). In addition, it enjoyed tax-exempt status and financial support from the city and state. The original development plan was an ambitious and paradoxical projection of Times Square as a futuristic theme park named Cityscape, themed around New York City's cultural life. One of the key aspects of this plan was that "Cityscape was not a preservation project: its premise was that 42nd Street needed to be projected forward rather than backward" (Traub 135). This became a centerpiece of opposition by many of the city's residents.

When Cityscape was formally rejected by Koch and development rights were awarded to George Klein, controller of Park Tower Realty, the new developer's vision of Times Square as a center for towering office real estate could not exist without the demolition of several historical theaters, as well as the iconic Times Tower. He believed that in order to rebuild Times Square, they had to start from scratch. The extremity of his approach explicitly expressed his limited perception of the area, claiming that "You cannot build these buildings one at a time because you cannot displace the garbage that way...We're giving Times Square an identity it doesn't have now" (Reichl 257). Coincidentally, Klein received the rights to develop the area the same year he wrote a big

check for Koch in his race for governor against Mario Cuomo in 1982.

The effort to preserve the historical value of Times Square united community members. According to Traub, “the destruction of the theaters and the decision to approve the George Klein plan had mobilized community, civic, and theater groups as they had not been mobilized before” (157). This forced the New York planning Commission to reopen the design guidelines. However, after a few months of renegotiations, only slight modifications were made. The green light given to the project by the city outraged residents and resulted in forty-seven lawsuits for the 42nd Street Development Project. “The surfeit of suits brought against the 42nd Street project went beyond the usual environmental impact challenges to allege abridgement of First Amendment rights, equal protection rights under the Fourteenth Amendment, violation of antitrust prohibitions, and so on” (Bianco 258). Although the lawsuits had no real hope of winning, they successfully dragged the project through the courts for several years, hindering its chances of survival.

The city attempted to offset the negative effects of the new construction by establishing zoning amendments in 1987. These included height and setback requirements for street walls, mandated lively ground floor use on the street with full visibility, and required electric signage on the buildings’ setbacks and facades. Ada Huxtable highlights the futility of this action, stating that, “the zoning defines the characteristics of the area brilliantly and supplies the criteria meant to protect and preserve those characteristics; but because they are being destroyed by the new construction, and because the new construction is also destroying the place that supplied the characteristics, recreating them is an exercise in artifice and futility” (366). Essentially, the preservation of the character of Times Square was a fallacy, since the space being built was designed to attract a new type of resident and consumer.

The city’s abuse of eminent domain is a clear example of corporate privilege stemming from private-public relationships. The 42nd Development Project was declared “in the best interest of the city in that it will remove blight and physical, economic and social decay and economic expansion, cultural and entertainment rejuvenation and improved public services and utilities” (Reichl 98). In other words, the individuals that have the power to exercise this authority can get away with making beneficial moves for private interests by vaguely

defining and misrepresenting who the benefit is for. "In New York State, eminent domain can be used to remove areas of blight...Historically, the courts and lawmakers have used the term blight rather liberally" (Berkey-Gerard 59). Although the use of eminent domain was justified as being used to remove pornography from Times Square, two-thirds of the businesses facing eviction had no involvement in the porn trade!

Ironically, by 1990 when the state of New York finally took title to the land and started to evict tenants, the office real estate boom had come to a halt. By the time city officials and developers owned up to the reality of the situation, "state officials had condemned thirty-four buildings and evicted 236 of the 267 tenants" (Bianco 272). Governor Mario Cuomo announced in 1992 that the project would be put on indefinite hold, acknowledging the impossibility of filling the new office towers that were to be built. Evictees had no legal recourse against the government, and the result was a ghost block in the heart of Manhattan.

Disneyfication of Times Square

This extraordinary set of circumstances secured an upper-hand for Disney when they took interest in redeveloping the New Amsterdam Theater for their live shows based on hit movies. This brand extension for Disney came at an enormous discount as they took advantage of the city's state of panic to attract development to Times Square. Disney is credited with the reconstruction of the New Amsterdam Theater and the Cinderella-like "revitalization" of Times Square. The negotiations that took place over the course of two years behind closed doors painted a different picture. "Not only did project officials foot the bill of \$250,000 for acquiring the site, they also agreed to subsidize the restoration of the theater with city financed low-interest loans that covered about 75% of the estimated cost" (Reich 158). Not only that, Disney set strict contingencies, such as demanding that two other entertainment companies be committed to the street before 1995, otherwise they would walk away from the project. Disney was also set up to receive received hundreds of millions of dollars in tax abatements over the course of several years. When the deal was signed in 1995, Times Square was fated to undergo a process that would permanently alter it into something unrecognizable to the city's residents. The term that encapsulates the events that followed is: "Disneyfication: the process by which historical places are transformed into trivial entertainment for tourists" (Bianco 278). This crucial point in Times Square's history paved

the way for the various stages of unprecedented commercial gentrification that would come to fruition in the decades to come.

Analysis

There are a couple key observations we can extract the process of commercial gentrification. First, if government aids big business rather than imposing regulations, competition is basically non-existent. American values promote a meritocracy that prizes individuals who seek entrepreneurial methods to succeed, while addressing the needs of their communities. We are sold the idea that going into business is a lucrative venture for anyone with a dream and a go-getter attitude to enjoy equal opportunity. Economics teaches us that in a free-market society, consumer is king. Financial survival is supposed to depend on creating more-affordable and higher-quality products or services. The stark reality is that it's becoming increasingly difficult for long-time, hard-working entrepreneurs to compete against the powerhouses bolstered by the purchased political influence accessible exclusively to big business.

Second, we can observe that urban development has repeatedly taken place, not for the benefit of established residents, but at the expense of them. Benjamin Chesluck adds that, "the Times Square redevelopment represented a new way of making urban spaces. But beyond this, the redevelopers also worked to reshape what it means to have 'the right to the city'- the ability to inhabit and participate in, the urban social world" (15). The social elite ultimately dictate the design and uses of public spaces, bulldozing over the opposition of the majority.

Although the creation of Times Square could be considered a corporate success, Adam Sternberg from New York magazine claims that, "the Faustian bargain, of course, has always seemed to be: Yes, you can save the center of your city from civic ruin with an infusion of bright lights and corporate money, but in return, you have to cede that space to people who don't actually live here." As a result, the whole dynamic of the relationships among the city's residents is altered, best summarized by novelist and New York native Samuel Delaney: "casual contact is being replaced by 'networking'- people with similar interests meeting intentionally to further those interests, which tend to be professional and motive driven...cutting us off from the broader and more democratic aspects of urban living. At worst, it limits us as citizens" (Bronski 68).

Conclusion

My research leads me to believe that Times Square will continue to serve as a model to be observed on the reverberating effects of commercial gentrification, a process where corporate takeover redesigns city spaces to satisfy self-serving private interests at the expense of public benefit. In theory, the role of government is to prioritize public investment and the preservation of neighborhoods, rather than leaving such a critical role to private firms and developers. However, the transformation of this iconic neighborhood elucidates the controversial use of government policies, highlighting the importance of people coming together to take a stand to protect their communities. Residents can play an active role in the efforts to preserve neighborhoods by challenging unfair government decisions and supporting community organizations that empower them to create a united front against the threats of big business.



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Sanctuary Cities, An Ethical Argument

BY ROBERT CLEARY

The question of whether it is appropriate for U.S. cities to adopt local policies offering legal sanctuary to immigrants targeted by federal authorities has received renewed attention since the election of Donald Trump as president. Acknowledging that the utility and legality of such policies continue to be debated, I will attempt to situate the question conceptually and historically for the purpose of offering an ethical analysis. To begin with, it must be observed that any discussion of the idea of sanctuary cities first of all presupposes the idea of “illegal immigration” and thence of unauthorized, “illegal,” immigrants. Although the expression “illegal” when applied to an individual is objectionable, the severity of the word may also serve to acknowledge aspects of the lived reality of those so defined. In conducting an ethical inquiry into the question of sanctuary cities, this paper will address the nature of the relationship between the United States and its population of unauthorized immigrants, including its relations with their countries of origin, consider social and political narratives within the U.S. concerning these relations, and explore the implications of two ethical systems relevant to the issue. It will be argued that the enactment of sanctuary city policies must be considered an ethical imperative under the second of these systems.

CONTEXT and MEANING

To understand why some people in the U.S. may require sanctuary from the federal government it is necessary that we comprehend who those people are and what their relationship to the United States is. In 2014, the most recent year for which data is available, immigrants constituted 13.6% of the overall U.S. population.

Of these approximately one quarter were undocumented, meaning that illegal immigrants to the United States constitute 3.5% of the total U.S. population. Just over fifty percent of illegal immigrants in the United States are of Mexican origin while the next most prevalent populations are those from Central America, who constitute 15%; and Asia, 13%. People from Europe and Canada combined comprise just over 5% of illegal immigrants in the United States, around the same figure as those from South America; people originating in the Caribbean nations accounted for just under 4% of the total; those from Africa, around 2.5%; and from the Middle East, just over 1% (Pew). Approximately 70% of all unauthorized immigration to the United States originates in either Mexico or Central America, and these are also the only two regions whose percentage share of unauthorized immigration to the U.S. exceeds their percentage share of authorized immigration (Rosenblum 4).

All this is simply meant to accurately locate the conversation over the question of sanctuary cities: when discussing sanctuary cities we are discussing illegal immigration and when we discuss illegal immigration in the United States we are, largely, having a conversation about people from Mexico and Central America. This is important because there are observable causal relationships between U.S. policies and the phenomenon of “illegal” immigration.

In 1965 major legislation was passed in the United States amending the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, and this legislation, while it rescinded elements of race based quota systems, “was also the first measure to set a limit on migration from this hemisphere,” with the effect that, “[t]he hundreds of thousands of temporary workers who for years had, like their parents, entered the United States for seasonal jobs suddenly became ‘illegal’” (Wilson 58). In addition to the precipitous criminalization of a population of people who had through their labour supported the economic growth of the United States, an increasingly strict enforcement of the border, especially since the 1980s, “deterred some people from trying to enter, but by making the trip more expensive and more dangerous, it also encouraged seasonal workers to settle down here with their families instead of returning home each year” (59). The effect of U.S. policy since 1965 has been essentially to create illegal immigration, *ex nihilo*, by criminalizing seasonal workers required by the U.S. economy, and by increasingly forcing these folks to permanently relocate, “illegally,”

to the United States.

U.S. policy also served to foster illegal immigration in another way; even as it restricted immigration from the Americas, there began an increase in that immigration, largely “as a result of U.S. policies, including support for vicious dictatorships in many countries, the funding of civil wars in Central America, and the promotion of neoliberal economic programs throughout the region” (Wilson 58). The difference between migrants traveling seasonally for work and those being driven from their homes by violence is surely a relevant one though, as Walter LaFeber demonstrates in *Inevitable Revolutions*, the battles for control and dominance within Central American nations were so driven by both private U.S. economic interest and U.S. government policies as to make the drawing of such distinctions difficult. The fact that, “[a]s the principal supplier of military aid to Central America, the United States was also reluctant to admit that its policies caused displacement and generated refugees ... [and] categorized this migration as economically driven” (Garcia 33), may serve to indicate this difficulty. In either event, traditional forms of economic migration, now criminalized, and new patterns of migration, caused by regional conflicts fueled by U.S. policy, were largely conflated in the American imagination and, “by the 1970s the media had already begun running scare stories about the ‘silent invasion’ of ‘illegal aliens’” (Wilson 58). The creation of “illegal” immigration had the effect of substituting new generations of immigrants, largely from the Americas, for those immigrants, whether Irish, German, Southern and Eastern European, Chinese or Jewish, who had been vilified and othered in earlier generations.

Though this history is quite evident and well-documented, an appreciation of it has not penetrated most mainstream discussions of the issue. Somewhat better understood than the historic development of illegal immigration perhaps is the relationship between undocumented workers in the United States and the U.S. economy, though here too the narrative is often distorted with many Americans decrying supposed deleterious effects of inexpensive immigrant labor on U.S. labor, while neglecting to acknowledge the degree to which the economy of the United States is dependent upon such labor. Anti-immigrant attitudes, frequently shielded behind the rhetoric of illegality, are often held in conjunction with expectations of cheap labor and even cheaper commodities. Aviva Chomsky neatly summarizes the contradictions:

[American] citizens often complain that Mexican immigrants are harmful to the U.S. economy, that we can't maintain our standard of living if we open our borders, and that we can't be expected to share our wealth or support impoverished people outside our country. ... [Consider] the extent to which the U.S. economy, and the U.S. standard of living, exist only because of cheap Mexican labor ... Food is available and cheap; schools, hospitals, streets, and homes are clean; clothes, cars, pharmaceuticals, and electronics are manufactured and easily accessible to U.S. citizens, because of low-paid Mexican workers in the United States and in Mexico ... Those who argue that 'we can't support all of them' need to recognize the extent to which 'they,' in fact support all of 'us.' But ... 'they' can only remain a source of low-paid labor if anti-immigrant sentiment and policies continue to justify their mistreatment and exploitation. (208)

Chomsky's insights help us to reformulate our understanding of a central issue involved in the question of sanctuary cities, namely, that there are significant numbers of people in the United States who need protection from the government. Recognizing that this is the case because the government has made their very existence illegal so as to allow for their continued exploitation within the U.S. economy must inform any consideration of the issue. Immigration is such a contested territory and so subject to ideological propaganda that most American citizens are poorly positioned or equipped to consider the question from any other than a radically, and, one might argue, deliberately, mis-informed perspective. I have for that reason found it necessary here to contextualize, and so attempt to redefine, the meaning of illegal immigration because the circumstances in which the concept has arisen and operates must have a bearing on an ethical consideration of the practice of offering sanctuary to such immigrants.

A QUESTION OF ETHICS

It has been demonstrated that the idea of illegal immigration, and hence of illegal immigrants as a category of person, is based on a deeply problematic historical construction. It must now be asked whether attempts by cities such as New York to provide sanctuary to unauthorized immigrants are ethically appropriate. When approaching the issue of local sanctuary policies from an ethical perspective, we must consider not only the historical construction of illegal immigration as outlined above, but also the chauvinism that

supports the structurally exploitative relationship thus created, and the social and political dissensions engendered. The social, political, and economic forces in American society which are invested in the dynamics of exploitation, represented and given state-legitimacy by the federal government in its enforcement mechanisms targeting “illegal” persons, would find resistance to their hegemony much more manageable were it not for “elitist traitors” within the U.S. establishment who question its greatest excesses and most glaring inconsistencies. Ian Buruma, in his essay “Exit Wounds” published in the New York Times in December 2016, outlines some rhetorical elements of this narrative:

“But from whom or what does Trump want to take his country back? ... Trump deliberately tapped into the same animus against citizens who are not ‘real people.’ He made offensive remarks about Muslims, immigrants, refugees and Mexicans. But the deepest hostility was directed against those elitist traitors within America who supposedly coddle minorities and despise the ‘real people.’”

The internal social and political fracturing within the United States suggested here can only further heighten the ethical significance of the question as to the position of immigrants in that society. Ethical consideration of the sanctuary concept in relation both to illegal immigration as an historical construction, a function of external policies and relationships, and to the internal social and political divisions within the U.S., for which the conversation on immigration is often a stand-in, a signifier or semiotic and rhetorical proxy.

One of the most influential political and social philosophies of the modern era has been the moral philosophy of utilitarianism, the essence of which has been summarized as: “that action is best, which procures the greatest happiness for the greatest number; and that, worst, which, in like manner, occasions misery” (Rawls 22). The ethics of utilitarian thought have been an undergirding of liberal democratic political and social development equaled only by the ideology of the free-market. The tension between utilitarian conceptions of public interest and the “political economy of Adam Smith” has been central to the history not only of the United States but of all the Western democracies (Fawcett 67), with a second and related tension being that between the individual and society, between, “the progress of society as a whole and civic respect for people one by one” (342). Both the ideology of utilitarianism and that of the free-market have

proposed solutions to this second tension, with the free-market's "economic individualism" promoting "free markets and private property," and the liberal ideal of "political individualism" sprung from the utilitarian creed, imposing "on government the task of serving individuals' aims and purposes" (131). Problems with the philosophy of the free-market, of "economic individualism," are, in the twenty-first century, well-understood, if deeply disputed. The problems of liberal democracy, of "political individualism," are perhaps harder to chart. To begin with, utilitarianism is fully able to accept the misery of a minority, an oppressed class, if such can be understood as serving the greater good of society (Losurdo 73-4, 182-83). John Rawls, in *A Theory of Justice*, says of utilitarian social theory that by its logic, "there is no reason in principle why the greater gains of some should not compensate for the lesser losses of others; or more importantly, why the violation of the liberty of a few might not be made right by the greater good shared by many" (26). Nor is such an outcome disallowed even by offering the correlative utilitarian position that the creation of individual happiness is the best mechanism by which to serve such a greater good. The problem lies in the ethical bias which is implicitly attached to a comprehension of individual interest in terms of the principle of utility, and occurs irrespective of whether one foregrounds the happiness of the individual or the society in one's approach. It is a flaw which may help to explain why the doctrine of economic individualism, despite its inherent attachment to inequality, has so often been able to justify itself as serving the greater interests of fairness.

While utilitarianism held great sway during the nineteenth and much of the twentieth century, it is no longer the animating spirit of political philosophy. H.L.A. Hart wrote in 1979 that, "Whereas not so long ago great energy and much ingenuity of many philosophers were devoted to making some form of utilitarianism work, latterly such energies and ingenuity have been devoted to the articulation of theories of basic rights" (828). The most influential of these theories is that developed by Rawls. While utilitarianism "holds that there is one kind of good or value toward which all rational, reasonable, or moral actions are directed ... Rawls rejects this approach entirely [assuming] that there is a diverse plurality of conceptions of the good that are sincerely and reasonably held by different individuals" (Mandle 39). Rawls's epistemological foundation, or "original position," is a different one than that suggested by utilitarianism. In positing that individuals in a society may have different interests, the central question

regarding the application of justice becomes, “how to arrange the basic institutions of society in a way that treats these individuals fairly in light of these persistent disagreements” (ibid). Rawls replaces the principle of utility with the principle of fairness. Rather than holding that “that action is best, which procures the greatest happiness for the greatest numbers” (Rawls 22), Rawls offers that, “no one should be advantaged or disadvantaged by natural fortune or social circumstances in the choice of principles” (18). Though Rawls establishes his theory upon a conception of society rooted in the idea of the social contract, variations of which were elaborated by Locke, Rousseau, and Kant (11), he conceptualizes and utilizes the social contract idea differently than these: proposing that the principles of justice would be those that “free and rational persons concerned to further their own interests would accept in an initial position of equality” (ibid), and giving his conception the name of justice as fairness.

Rawls uses his critique of utilitarianism as a beginning point for defining his own theory, and the understanding he presents is useful both for comprehending Rawls's theory and the implicit unfairness of political and social structures built upon a utilitarian foundation:

“Implicit in the contrasts between classical utilitarianism and justice as fairness is a difference in the underlying conceptions of society. In the one we think of a well-ordered society as a scheme of cooperation for reciprocal advantage regulated by principles which persons would choose in an initial situation that is fair, in the other as the efficient administration of social resources to maximize the satisfaction of the system of desire constructed by the impartial spectator from the many individual systems of desire accepted as given” (Rawls 33).

Although utilitarianism is based in the concept of individual happiness, it is a social theory, and a theory of moral justice, in that it extends that conception outward – the good of society is identified with the good, or happiness, of the individual, and, the good, or happiness, or society, is understood in conceptual terms comparable to the theory's understanding of the good, or happiness, of the individual. Thus, the definition of who exactly constitutes “the individual” becomes critical. There are two aspects to this question that bear upon the relationship of the United States to those whom it considers to be illegal due to their presence within the borders of the U.S., and thus to the question of the ethical position of sanctuary cities. First of all, it is undeniable that in the United States the individual has historically been constituted as being white and male and either property-owning or employed. It may be observed that

as the socially agreed upon constitution of the individual has been, is slowly and painfully, expanded, there has been an increasing reliance on the constructing of more explicit boundaries around citizenship which serve to continue to reinforce aspects of the traditional conception of the individual. Secondly, it must be observed that Rawls works out his argument in the context of a society that is “a more or less self-sufficient association of persons who in their relations to one another recognize certain rules of conduct as binding” (4). Even given that “societies are of course seldom well-ordered in this sense [and that] what is just and unjust is usually in dispute” (5), these are nevertheless the parameters within which Rawls operates. Both utilitarian theory and Rawls's theory of justice as fairness contain as an operative parameter the idea of a particular society, or a collection of individuals which is not universal. A central problem in applying either theory would be to determine the particular boundaries of which individuals actually constitute the community or society. This particular problem is one which clearly is not limited to the application of modern social, political, or ethical theories, rather being one which may be seen as constitutive of all social organizations.

CONCLUSIONS

The pivot upon which the question of sanctuary cities must turn is revealed to be the definition of the community or society. Even if we were to agree the best principles upon which to structure our community or society, a far from likely occurrence, we may disagree about the boundaries within which such an agreement should operate. Although such definitions often seem incredibly obvious to many, they are equally obviously contested. There are, for example, clearly two different conceptions of the community operating in the United States today. On the one hand there is that conception which includes immigrants within the community and, on the other, there is that conception which does not. In first formulating a formal utilitarian ethical theory Jeremy Bentham asked, “what is the ‘community’ other than the sum total of the members that comprise it?” (Chaffee 510). The application of either a utilitarian or a Rawlsian approach to the question of sanctuary cities therefore requires the solution of the problem as to “what is the ‘community,’” and such a solution must depend upon the definition of the roles played in the U.S. by immigrants and the role of the U.S. in the dynamics of immigration. Even so, there are significant differences in approaching the question from the one theory as opposed to the other. It has been shown that the application of utilitarian ethics to this question may find that the greatest happiness of the community, even if defined inclusively, would allow for the disenfranchisement of the eleven million people living in the United

States classified as being illegal. Rawls's principle of justice does not allow for the loss of freedom of some on the grounds of a greater good shared by others (3-4). From the Rawlsian position, it is clearly not enough to suggest that limiting the freedom of immigrants in the United States would effect an improvement in the circumstances of some group in the U.S. Rawls does qualify his position, saying that "an injustice is tolerable only when it is necessary to avoid an even greater injustice" (4). If we accept that the granting of rights to immigrants is harmful to the economic interests of white working class people born in the United States, for example, it may provide an ethically convincing argument against the granting of such rights to immigrants. As was demonstrated above however, the policy of not granting rights to immigrants is enacted, not to protect native born citizens of the United States, but rather in order to further the exploitation of immigrants, for the benefit of others.

In conclusion, it seems that determining the most ethical approach to the question of immigration and whether or not this approach would allow or even require the implementation of a sanctuary policy on the part of New York City and other U.S. municipalities depends upon the definitions we employ based upon the information we possess. The conventional wisdom seems to assume the reasonableness of the distinction drawn between legal and illegal inhabitants of the United States. Even many of those who argue for the rights of illegal immigrants often argue from a position which assumes that the definition of illegal persons is a valid one, seeking not so much to change the definition as to alter the status of some of those whom the definition defines. This is an expression of an existential tension in all societies, the question of what and who constitutes the community, society, or nation. Though it may seem obvious that those who are not citizens cannot be considered to constitute the community of a nation, we have seen the extent to which the construction of citizenship has been used to control some populations of people in the interests of others. Rawls' theory of justice suggests that robbing the freedom of some in order to benefit others is both unjust and unethical. Whenever the national government seeks to manipulate or disenfranchise elements of its own population, as well as of other nations, in the service of the political and economic interests of particular categories and classes then it is incumbent upon any who are in a position to do so to resist this expression of ethically illegitimate power.



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Assessment of Levels of Mercury, Lead and Cadmium in Salmon

BY SIMRAN KAUR, HENRY VARGAS, AHMED ELSAYEGH

Abstract

Rapid industrialization, abuse of natural resources, and irresponsible disposal of toxic waste over the past several decades has dramatically increased heavy metal concentrations in earth's rivers, lakes, and oceans. All organisms and plants, including fish and humans, are adversely affected by toxic levels of heavy metals in the environment. Fish being a major food source for humans and higher predators, we wished to find and compare Lead (Pb), mercury (Hg), and cadmium (Cd) concentrations in wild caught Atlantic salmon and farm raised, top fed salmon from Norway. The samples obtained from a local food store were analyzed using Osumex Kits. We found wild caught salmon contained 0.0045µg of Hg and 0.1 µg of Pb per 100g sample while the farm raised salmon was found to contain 0.0016 µg of Hg and 0.02 µg of Pb per 100g sample. No Cd was detected in either variety. Farm raised salmon was shown to have considerably lower heavy metal concentration than the wild caught counterpart.

Introduction

Since the industrial revolution, all forms of pollution, air, water, and soil have risen exponentially. The tremendous use and abuse of oil, coal and natural gas, while revolutionizing industry and driving human advancement has also caused pollution of our delicate biosphere. Fossil fuels are used for energy in every industry. Petroleum and petroleum byproducts are used in several industries such as leather, medicine, and plastics. Access to an abundant source of energy and means to use it on a large scale via machinery

have led to increased mining activities across the globe. Mining for metals and materials such as iron, zinc, gold, copper, diamonds, coal and many more rose and so did the toxic waste from the ores. With no proper guidelines of how to dispose of this toxic waste and very little fundamental knowledge of the ill effects of this waste on human and animal life and environment, it was dumped in rivers and oceans or casually left standing. One such example is reflected in a study that was conducted from 1998-2000 in the Old Lead Belt of Missouri. This study analyzed levels of lead (Pb), zinc (Zn), copper (Cu) and cadmium (Cd) in the fish samples along several spots on the river bodies in the area. Mined for Galena from mid 1700s until 1972, after which the mining operations were ceased, improperly discarded scrap rock and rock powder has dramatically increased heavy metal pollution in the area.¹ Erosion and runoff have extensively raised heavy metal pollution in this area, and the effects of which still have not been reversed.

Extensive research has linked illegal mining, oil spills, use of agriculture fertilizers and pesticides, and toxic waste disposal into the waterways directly to the unhealthy levels of the heavy metals in many of the earth's waterbodies. Chemical runoff, wash off from farms using pesticides and insecticides and from mining sites, groundwater contamination, and acid rain are all ways that heavy metals enter our biosphere and waterways.² The EPA's website attributes erosion of natural deposits, discharge from refineries and factories, runoff from landfills and croplands, corrosion of household plumbing systems and runoff from waste batteries and paints to heavy metal exposure.³ Mercury (Hg), Lead (Pb), and Cadmium (Cd) have contaminated oceans and rivers, and affected our marine environment and life. Once Hg settles into river beds and ocean floors, it is then turned into methyl mercury (MeHg), the most toxic form of Hg, by sulfate producing bacteria. This MeHg enters the food chain and is accumulated in bigger fish like salmon. "Bioavailability refers to the availability of a metal to enter and affect a biological system. The most bioavailable and therefore most toxic form of cadmium is the divalent ion (Cd^{+2}). Exposure to this form induces the synthesis of a low molecular weight protein called metallothionein, which can then bind with cadmium and decrease its toxicity. This normally takes place in the liver of fish and humans. But if the cadmium concentration is high, the metallothionein detoxification system can become overwhelmed and the excess cadmium will be available to produce toxic effects". Lead dissolves in water as lead carbonate (PbCO_3 or $\text{Pb}(\text{CO}_3)_2^{2-}$), lead acetate, lead oxide, lead nitrate, and lead carbonate. Lead inhibits chlorophyll synthesis and other enzymes needed for photosynthesis in plants and algae, thus reducing the respiration rates of aquatic (and land) plants and algae. This leads to lower food and oxygen production and has

consequences for the entire biome. Unlike mercury, lead does not accumulate in fish muscle, it is concentrated in bone, liver, kidneys and skin.⁴

According to the United States Food and Drug Administration (USDA), the safe limit of Hg, Pb, and Cd for human consumption per day is 0.5 microgram of Hg and Pb, and 4.1 microgram of Cd⁵. The FDA Total Diet Study indicated a range of concentrations of Cd in meat, fish and poultry¹ from trace amounts up to 0.014 $\mu\text{g g}^{-1}$, with an average of 0.0057 $\mu\text{g g}^{-1}$. Typical Concentrations of lead in meat, fish, and poultry reported by the EPA (1986) range from 0.002–0.159 $\mu\text{g g}^{-1}$.⁶ EPA guidelines for Cd, Pb and Hg in drinking water are 0.005 MCLG1 (mg/L), zero, and 0.002 MCLG1 (mg/L) respectively.³ Heavy metal pollution leads to various harmful effects in all organisms. In fish, studies have shown decreased fertility and gamete quality, reduced neurological responses including but not limited to olfactory interference and ability to orient itself by the fish, gill malformations, and liver abnormalities.⁶ Fish⁷ liver abnormalities linked to heavy metal exposure include, but are not limited to, fatty liver and sinusoid dilation with blood congestion of the liver hepatocytes. Absent under normal conditions, mucus cells are found in respiratory epithelium including gills. This is a defense mechanism of fish to protect lamellar surfaces against toxins and particles in suspension.⁸ Furthermore, MeHg has been known to disrupt redox homeostasis⁹ and energy generating metabolic pathways in fish liver.

In humans, prenatal exposure¹⁰ to mercury can result in multiple neurodevelopmental effects including deficits in memory, language, attention, and fine motor skills. Current evidence suggests that adult exposure to MeHg may also have subtle effects on the nervous, immune and cardiovascular systems.¹¹ According to the CDC,¹² no safe serum levels of lead have been determined. Lead poisoning in children causes damage to the brain and nervous system, slowed growth and development, learning and behavior problems (e.g., reduced IQ, ADHD, juvenile delinquency, and criminal behavior), and hearing and speech problems. Lead exposure during pregnancy can lead to miscarriage, physical developmental abnormalities in fetus's heart, brain, kidneys and nervous system and small birth weight. Cadmium (Cd) is a toxic metal associated with impaired kidney function and hypertension. Cadmium has no known useful biological functions in humans and builds up in body over time. It competes with zinc for binding sites and can therefore interfere with some of zinc's essential functions. In this way, it may inhibit enzyme reactions and utilization of nutrients. Cadmium has also been known to cause bone and joint aches and pains. A syndrome itai-itai ("ouch-ouch")¹³ disease, first described in Japan where it was termed, was caused by cadmium pollution and included symptoms like weak bones that

led to deformities, especially of the spine, and increased risk of bone fracture. “World Health Organization (WHO) set a UCd level of 5.24 µg/g creatinine as a threshold, while the threshold set by European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) is 1 µg/g creatinine¹. An average of UCd in the US population is 0.18 µg/g creatinine (95th percentile: 1.03 µg/g creatinine).”¹⁴

Scientists predict future rise in the levels of these metals in other marine animals, which causes high concerns as a large percentage of human population depends on fish and fish industry for survival. In light of this information, we tested salmon obtained from two different sources: wild caught from the Atlantic and farm raised and top fed in Norway. The samples were obtained from a local food chain. Osumex Kits, known to be a suitable qualitative detector, were used to detect the levels of mercury, lead, and cadmium in the samples obtained. The heavy metal concentrations are predicted to be higher in the wild caught sample than in the farm raised one. Metal concentrations in the farm raised sample are expected to fall within the established guidelines.

Experimental Materials and Methods

Two pounds of each fish to be analyzed was obtained from a local supplier. The sample obtained were fillets without skin. The samples were soaked in water overnight and stored in the refrigerator. The next day, the water was discarded and the fish samples were divided into three hundred gram portions. Each portion was put in a beaker and the beaker was appropriately marked so not to mix the samples. The samples were cooked in the microwave for three minutes. The beakers were then removed from the microwave and left to cool so that they could be handled safely. Once cooled, the liquid given off by the fish in each beaker was transferred into an individual graduated cylinder and the measurement was recorded. This was done for a total of 6 times. Using the liquid obtained, the tests for Pb, Cd, and Hg were performed for the two varieties of fish. The instructions included with the Osumex Kits for individual tests were followed. The color of the test tube solution was compared with the key provided in the kit. Results were recorded.

Data and calculations

Same method was followed to calculate values for all the samples tested. See table 1 below.

Sample calculation:

$$1 \text{ parts per million (ppm)} = 1 \text{ milligram (mg) / Liter (L)}$$

Wild caught Atlantic salmon tested for Hg

Result from Osumex kit test: 0.05ppm or 0.05mg/L Hg

Amount of fluid collected from cooking

$100\text{ g sample} = 9\text{ml} \times \frac{(1\text{ L})}{1000\text{mL}} = 0.009\text{ L}$

Daily allowance:

$(0.05\text{mg/L Hg} \times 0.009\text{ L}) / (100\text{ g (amount of fish tested)}) = 0.0000045\text{ mg}$
=> $0.0000045\text{ mg} \times \frac{(1\text{ g})}{(1000\text{ mg})} \times \frac{(1000000\text{ micrograms})}{1\text{g}}$
=> $0.0045\text{ micrograms per day}$

		ppm	Daily intake (µ/day)
Wild caught	Hg	0.05	0.0045
	Pb	1.00	0.1
	Cd	0	0
Farm raised	Hg	0.2	0.0016
	Pb	0.2	0.02
	Cd	0	0

Table 1. Concentration of heavy metal in samples tested and intake of the heavy metal consumed with 100 g of the fish.

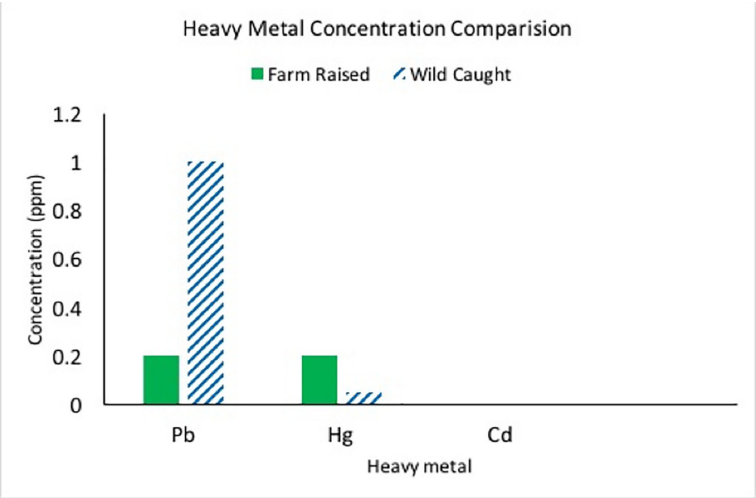


Figure 1. Concentration of heavy metals ppm in salmon samples tested.

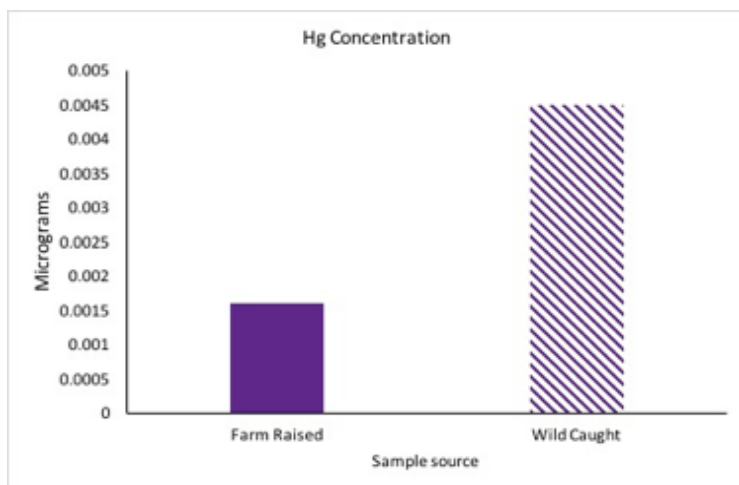


Figure 2. Intake of Hg for every 100 grams of fish tested if consumed.

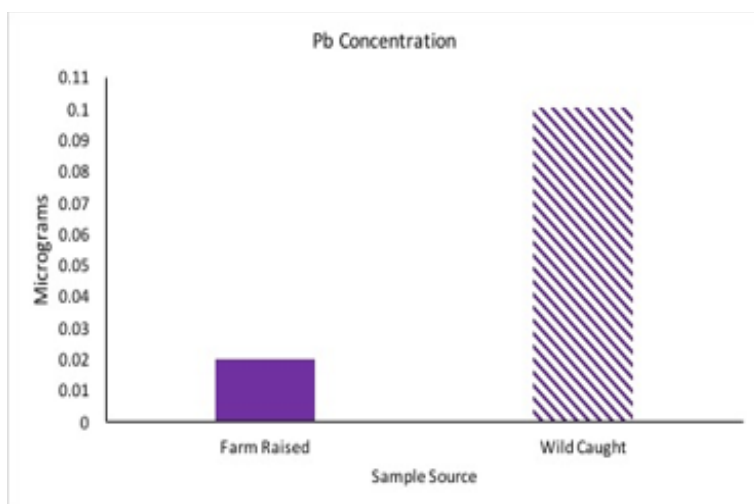


Figure 3. Intake of Pb for every 100 grams of fish tested if consumed.

Discussion

“The exploration for and exploitation of metals have played a crucial role in human history. Although metals are natural constituents of the earth's crust, their prevalence within natural systems has been significantly enhanced by human activity. On a global basis, approximately half of all metal fluxes in the environment are anthropogenically driven. Metals are extremely persistent in the environment; they are not degradable, and thus, readily accumulate at toxic levels¹⁵”. S.K. Agarwal outlined the cycle² as: contaminants from soil reach groundwater which mix with rivers that flow into oceans. The EPA further supports this reasoning by including mining, improper disposal of mining waste, corrosion, erosion, acid rain, air pollution runoff from man-made environment as contributors to an increase in contaminants in environment.³

“Fish respond sensitively⁶ to an increase in heavy metal concentration in water. Being at the top of the aquatic food chain, fish mirror the combination of the biotic and abiotic conditions, in the particular aquatic environment”. The Hg is converted by sulfate -producing bacteria in the aquatic environments into methyl-mercury (MeHg), which is the most toxic form. Methyl-mercury is absorbed by small marine organisms that are food of bigger organisms. They are in turn consumed by their natural predators and thus Hg is concentrated as it passes through the food chain, with highest concentrations in the top predators like salmon.¹⁶ Pb and Cd also similarly contaminate the aquatic environment and enter the food chain. As discussed earlier, these heavy metals adversely affect fish and human health. Fish are consumed not only by humans but also by other animals such as bears, seals, whales, sharks and many more. Human activity is not only causing disease in humans but also adversely effecting life on the planet. This is a serious ecological problem and must be contained. We have a moral responsibility towards our planet that we must not forget. We must work towards preserving our home, our planet. This study was done to experience first-hand the known truth about heavy metals in our fish products.

The farm raised sample was found to contain 0.2 ppm or 0.02 µg of Pb, 0.2 ppm or 0.0016 µg of Hg, and 0 ppm of Cd and was found to be

within agency guidelines. On the other hand, the wild caught Atlantic salmon was found to have 1.0 ppm or 0.1 μg of Pb which is substantially higher than the farm fed variety and also the daily allowance. Mercury levels in the wild caught variety were found to be 0.05 ppm or 0.0045 μg which is under the UDSA's limit of 0.5 μg per day but is higher than that found in the farm fed variety. Cd level in the wild caught salmon was also found to be 0 ppm. The samples were obtained from the local food store and on another day one would have bought the same fish for making a meal for themselves and their family.

These results show real and urgent need for awareness, action and protection from us as a society and on individual level, to save and protect our environment. Society should take the initiative to control the factors contributing and increase awareness that our marine environment is getting affected by these metals. Continued studies for all heavy metals and pollutants and periodic studies should be repeated in the future. Fish farmers must be educated towards the correct and sustainable use of resources and supplements for heavy metals. New ways to tackle the damage done in the past and approaches to avoid future environmental degradation should be explored and developed. Rules and regulations to counteract future abuse of resources and environment and more stringent enforcement of the same should be made a priority. International cooperation on environmental issues is crucial to protect our planet and future generations from ill effects of unrestrained human abuse of planet's resources.

Precautions and Errors

Samples may become contaminated by numerous routes. Potential sources of trace metals contamination during sampling include: metallic or metal-containing labware (e.g., talc gloves that contain high levels of zinc), containers, sampling equipment, reagents, improperly cleaned or stored equipment, lab-ware, dirt, and dust. Even human contact can be a source of trace metals contamination. To avoid contamination, clean work surfaces were used for the experiment and all personnel handling the samples and reagents wore clean, non-talc gloves during all operations involving handling of the samples and materials. To ensure accurate

cy of results, the directions with the test kits were followed carefully and results were concurred by three experimenters.

Conclusion

Farm fed salmon is better than the wild caught variety for consumption as 100g of farm fed salmon would result in 0.02 µg of Pb and 0.0016 µg of Hg compared to 0.1µg of Pb and 0.0045 µg of Hg from consumption of equal amount of wild Atlantic salmon. No Cd was found in either samples. It may prove to be better for health if salmon is avoided and another marine fish be chosen keeping in mind similar results. Another approach is to find a vendor where salmon raised at a different farm is available for purchase.



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Plantains and Turmeric: A Philosophical Production

BY AMBAR CASTILLO

Exploring Ethical Approaches and Merging Public Health-Nutrition Research and the Power of Performance to Address the Chronic Health Gap in Latino and Asian Indian NYC Communities

INTRODUCTION

Asian Indians and Latinos are two of the ethnic groups with the highest rate of diabetes and prediabetes in the United States (1). In New York City, Indian immigrants are at a greater risk of hospitalization for diabetes than any other immigrant group (2). Due to the larger population of Hispanics than Asian Indians in NYC, Hispanics represent a significant number of the total diabetes diagnoses in NYC: 28%. In MASALA and MESA studies conducted in 2010, Asian Indians were found to have a 26% prevalence of diabetes, 25% of prediabetes, and 41% of metabolic syndrome; Hispanics had a 19% prevalence of diabetes, 30% of prediabetes, and 43% of metabolic syndrome--representing the largest rates of diabetes and dysfunctions associated with blood glucose among ethnic groups in the United States (3). These findings are particularly significant when considering the high presence and population growth of these groups in New York City over the past decade: as of the last Census report in 2010, Asian Indians grew 12.5% to 192,209, and Hispanics 8% to 2,336,076 (4).

According to the Institute of Medicine, cultural context is key to better understanding health behavior contributing to chronic diseases like diabetes (6). Public health studies also show evidence that interventions incorporating cultural knowledge improve health outcomes in adults (3, 6, 7). For the purpose of seeking solutions based on already existent health interventions, this paper will focus on diabetes due in part to the

comparatively high level of reported data on cultural adaptive diabetes intervention programming. Such findings help inform my faith in the importance of providing culturally appropriate interventions for nutrition-focused community education through Latino and Asian Indian theater based on their unique theater elements.

This research involves studying the potential for culturally adapted nutrition- and performance-based education interventions targeting the issue of a high prevalence of common chronic conditions such as diabetes linked to dietary choices in both the Latino and Asian Indian populations. I will examine the potential for upholding tradition while empowering activism in food behavior within these communities in efforts to positively influence health outcomes. In this paper, I will consider the chronic health gap among the Latino and Asian Indian communities in NYC through the lens of three moral theories. I will argue that an existentialist ethics approach is most effective in creating a culturally competent yet health-promoting movement to target the disproportionately high prevalence of diabetes in these populations.

METHODOLOGY

In this paper I make use of a variety of methods when exploring the issues and potential solutions involved in the diabetes epidemic: 1) analysis of peer-reviewed academic research to determine cultural contributing factors of diabetes prevalence among the Latino and Asian Indian populations; 2) incorporation of relevant data from research paper on food insecurity by this author; 3) field research: Latino and/or Asian Indian theatre-based health education NYC initiatives; 4) an interview with a theatre expert specializing in Asian Indian performance arts.

RESULTS

Field Research

Field research shows evidence of some Latino theatre programming in NYC that--albeit not diabetes-specific--promotes general health education. Of special interest was the comical use of stereotypes to emphasize cultural food norms as performed in the "Balance What You Eat, Drink and Do!" event at City Tech College on October 13, 2016. In this performance, NYC-based comedy troupe Room 28's skits highlighted

Latino food habits found to be contributors to chronic disease, such as the overconsumption of foods high in saturated fat like salami, pernil (pork roast), and deep-fried foods. Medical database cross-analysis provides information on diabetes intervention programming culturally adapted for the Latino community: out of 29 cultural adaptations reviewed, 44.8% targeted Latinos, specifically Mexican, Puerto Rican, Dominican, and Caribbean populations (3). However, no field research data was available on culturally adapted diabetes interventions targeting the Asian Indian community. Medical database cross-analysis shows that out of 29 cultural adaptations reviewed, no evidence of culturally adapted interventions was found for this population (3).

Cultural Elements in Asian Indian Food/Performance Practice:
Interview with Dr. Claudia Orenstein

According to Dr. Claudia Orenstein, a performance arts expert and the coordinator for the South Indian theatre study abroad program at Hunter College, some key cultural elements to keep in mind when seeking to comprehend and culturally adapt diabetes interventions to South Indian culture include: 1) over-consumption in food culture, and 2) *rasa* theory in performance culture. According to Orenstein, “when you are a welcome guest in someone’s home there, they will keep piling food on your plate until you tell them to stop, and it gives people joy to have a guest eat a lot of food” (8). In terms of performance culture, the aesthetic theory describes the theory of *rasa*, or flavors. The *Natyasastra* compares the process of creating a show more or less to the work of an excellent chef using prime ingredients to make a sumptuous feast for the ideal gourmet who can savor every flavor. There should be a mix of flavors, or emotions, in the performance and should be done through all the elements— text, music, dancing, acting, etc. (9)

DISCUSSION

Culturally adaptive performances promoting the modification of health-adverse Latino food habits such as those of Room28 can be expanded to target vulnerable populations within NYC health clinics, hospitals, schools, and community centers in order to maximize the potential of chronic disease interventions such as diabetes prevention/management programs. Although there is no data available for such programming among Asian Indians, it is likely that culturally adapted interventions would have similar effects (3). *Rasa* theory shows a great deal of potential for connecting performance with food in diabetes

interventions targeting the Asian Indian population. After all, *rasa* theory and the *Natyashastra* guidebook for Hindu performing arts reflect an aesthetic relish framework and food-performance metaphor in Sanskrit *Natya* theory. Some Kathakali dance-drama performances in Kerala, South India also feature a sequence of the demon king eating ravenously, a nod to the cultural norm of overeating Dr. Orenstein points out.

In both Latino and Asian Indian communities, overconsumption of food as a traditional cultural norm is just one of the food habits shared by these populations that is linked to high glycemic load, a factor in the development of diabetes (5). Taking an existentialist approach to reducing the chronic disease gap in these populations may require addressing overconsumption and other food culture facets that are contributors to diabetes. Future efforts to help resolve this issue should integrate other cultural knowledge, such as *rasa* theory/Kathakali dance for an Asian Indian audience and comedy skits/telenovela culture for a Latino community. As more cultural adaptations specific to these at-risk populations are designed and implemented--particularly performance-based health education programs--more research will emerge to evaluate the success of emphasizing certain cultural elements in programming.

ANALYSIS: Applying Three Moral Theories

Applying Ethical Egoism to the Diabetes Epidemic

Ethical egoists may argue that--as each individual has a personal responsibility to his/her own life--individuals must work to safeguard solely themselves from chronic disease. It is an individual issue, not a public one in the sense that the collective masses must merge their many minds to resolve it. If every person were to take charge of his/her own health and make the best decisions for it, there would be no public health epidemic. Furthermore, a person who takes care of him/herself reduces the likelihood and/or the extent to which that person is a burden on others, at every level--individual, familial, societal--and in every facet, including financial, psychological, emotional, physical. By practicing values of ethical egoism, the person ceases, or at least intends to lessen, their potential role as a parasite (9). Yet there are lacunas in this argument, some flaws in adapting this ethical system to the diabetes epidemic.

At first glance, ethical egoism as applied to resolving the diabetes issue at the individual level becomes problematic in its very definition-- "the highest moral value for all humans is to pursue their own happiness" (9). This ambiguity of personal happiness as the sole determinant in ascribing moral value to an act provides many loopholes for the individual to rationalize choices that work against the goal of preventing or managing diabetes. Yet this problem is addressed in ethical egoist author Ayn Rand's incorporation of rationalism into this moral code. Rand clarifies that the pursuit of personal happiness refers to creating a rational set of values that is not detrimental to oneself or others, based on objective measures (9). Partaking in health behaviors that are demonstrated to be destructive and to contribute to diabetes, such as the overconsumption of sweets and high-calorie foods on a daily basis--common customs in Latino and Asian Indian populations--is thus irrational. These behaviors fall outside the rational scope of self-interest and are therefore deemed unethical.

However, a second issue of the ethical egoist approach cannot be brushed away by further defining this moral code: the social disparities in access to information that can help prevent or manage chronic conditions. Be it due to lack of health insurance that covers dietetic services or language barriers in receiving health/nutrition education, certain individuals are disadvantaged in accessing information about the best health choices. For instance, Latinos continue to have the highest uninsured rates among major U.S. racial or ethnic groups, as per a 2014 Commonwealth Fund Biennial Health Insurance Survey (10). Language barriers can further prevent members of the Latino and Asian Indian community from accessing health information.

Third, even if individuals are able to access preventative/treatment information that the individual can use in everyday life, not all people have the ability to equally draw upon the necessary cognitive horsepower or practical skills to properly apply this health information. Moreover, widely accepted health information is not universally applicable. The lines of rationality in determining what is in the individual's best interest can be blurry. Pursuing this facet of personal happiness may lead us in different directions when the logic is applied to constantly fluctuating data results from a myriad of contradictory health studies. Compounding this problem of scientific contradictions is the fact that individuals have different physiological reactions and tolerances to lifestyle factors such as diet and exercise. The presence of these variations makes generalizations about dietary guidelines questionable

when discussing the rational best interest of the individual.

Moreover, not all individuals have the financial or geographic ability to purchase food items that make the most nutritional sense for them. For one, certain more nutritionally dense or higher quality foods are more expensive than ones of lower nutritional quality; not everyone can afford these foods, and thus may opt for fast food or other fuel they view as more affordable. According to a study conducted in hospital settings between 1998 and 2005, food insecurity is more prevalent in the children of immigrant women (11), including those belonging to the Asian Indian and Latin American immigrant groups at the high end of the diabetes epidemic spectrum. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, strives to rectify the financial facet to the food insecurity issue by providing benefits to low-income families (12), and is a major force in preventing food insecurity, particularly in low-income inner-city areas such as NYC. As Castillo (13) argues, SNAP puts the onus on families to buy the food that they need to maintain their health. Yet critics like Castillo question the program's underlying ethical egoist assumption that families should and will naturally purchase nutritionally adequate food, especially in light of constraints such as cognitive and cultural limitations. Furthermore, for individuals with a diagnosis of diabetes or prediabetes, the particular diet necessary for the individual's optimal health may be highly specific, involving not solely food items high in fiber but also with a low glycemic index profile. The specificity of diets can represent a major issue for such individuals when living in a food desert, defined as an area of residents with a low socioeconomic status that lacks easy accessibility to a source of nutritionally adequate food (14).

There is also the complication of the cultural code, the food norms with which the individual has lived his/her entire life. If applying ethical egoism to the cultural issue in the diabetes epidemic, we can assert that every individual needs to break free from their cultural script of food habits and other lifestyle choices in order to do what is in the individual's best interest (i.e., manage their blood glucose level). It is not, after all, up to others to tear the individual's culturally influenced script; no one has any claim or responsibility to the script but that individual. Yet, as we will see in our analysis of cultural subjectivity, ethical relativists would argue that the ethics of such a feat need to be taken into account.

Applying Cultural Subjectivity in the Diabetes Epidemic: An Asian Indian Cultural Lens

When looking through the lens of cultural subjectivity, we must first define the ethics behind it: the belief that each culture determines what is right and wrong, and cannot be judged by someone outside of the culture; it is a wider, societal application of ethical relativism (9). One of its major proponents, Ruth Benedict, called each culture's moral guidelines a "recipe" in which structure is created and maintained through its ethical code (9). This metaphor is particularly interesting when applying cultural relativism to food culture. We must consider the ethics of continuing to allow, or doing nothing to alter, health practices that negatively impact people in populations suffering with diabetes.

In cultural subjectivity, if we consider the example of overconsumption previously explored and determined to be irrational in our discussion of ethical egoism, the ethics in such a situation can become more clouded. We can view the act of overconsumption as one that upholds traditional customs and the value of hospitality and that demonstrates gratitude and enjoyment of the host/cook's meal. A guest leaving nothing behind on a plate served with time and care and sometimes representing financial sacrifice for a host who can barely afford it can thus be considered a virtue in certain cultural contexts. That such an act can lead us to eat to the point of discomfort or have long-term implications like contributing to chronic disease is besides the point. The detrimental effects posed by such behavior for us are ethically irrelevant under this paradigm. The right thing to do in this case is to sacrifice our self-interest if needed. Such altruism can be the culture's moral value if doing the altruistic act represents the good of maintaining and respecting the culture and not offending those of that culture.

Yet, when looking outside the umbrella of cultural subjectively, we can clearly see through the cloudiness of relativism to the thunderstorm we passively create by not providing cultural adaptation to education and application of beneficial versus detrimental food behaviors. In a study of Asian Indians in San Francisco in 2006-2007, it was found that having moderate/strong traditional Indian beliefs was independently associated with increased odds of prediabetes or diabetes (5). When the researchers more closely examined the traditional Indian beliefs to determine which ones were most associated with increased risk, the cultural element culprits were: continuing the tradition of serving sweets at religious ceremonies,

fasting on specific occasions, and having an arranged marriage (5).

Despite popular perceptions about the westernization of diets and the health dangers of cultural assimilation with mainstream food culture in the U.S., this study demonstrates results pointing to the contrary: for the Asian Indian population in the study, having a weaker tie to traditional cultural values and eating patterns was actually associated with more positive health outcomes (5). In particular, the habit of serving sweets at traditional ceremonies was linked to a higher carbohydrate intake and glycemic load, both factors in diabetes development and mismanagement. Fasting, researchers inferred, may promote a “thrifty gene” phenotype and a resulting storage of energy into fat storage (5). Obesity, in turn, often goes hand in hand with Type 2 diabetes. The arranged marriage element, albeit appearing unrelated to diabetes implications, may be linked to other traditional dietary or genetic factors that promote diabetes. Researchers concluded that traditional Indian beliefs must be further examined, as they may unlock potentially modifiable behaviors that can reduce diabetes risk (5).

Of importance in considering potential modifications to culturally based behaviors impacting diabetes risk is a discussion of factors believed to aid public health efforts to alter culturally embedded behaviors. Medical researcher Gawande asserts that, in order to truly create change in public health, the culture around the disparaging and favorable behaviors needs to change first. A success story that Gawande summons to elucidate the possibilities of such cultural diffusion in public health practices involves a campaign to spread the use of a specific salt-and-sugar mixture discovered to cure cholera amid outbreaks in South Asia in the 1960s and 1970s (19). The idea was slow to spread, despite the vast television ad campaign to motivate South Asian villagers to make the simple cure. When teams of young women and a male supervisor were sent on a mission by a Bangladesh nonprofit by the name of BRAC, they went door to door in order to personally teach village women how to make the mixtures (15).

These health educators were ultimately successful not because they represented a research-supported cure or visited a large number of homes. Instead, the women made their health education approach more hands-on--encouraging the mothers to make the sugar-salt solution themselves--and culturally adapted it. The health educators adapted their teaching sessions to the village women's culture by using measurements that incorporated the villagers' customs and setting. For instance, finger measures were used to illustrate the quintessential concentrations of salt and sugar needed to be applied in order for the cure to be effective and to prevent the delicate

electrolyte balance that could result from a too high or low concentration of either ingredient. Such successful measurements utilized included: a fistful of raw sugar, a three-finger pinch of salt mixed in half a “seer” of water—a pint measure villagers used when buying milk and oil. After the practice took off in the visited village homes, the knowledge became widespread on its own. The program resulted in an astonishing 80 percent drop in child deaths due to diarrhea in Bangladesh. This success story demonstrates the power of the personal touch and cultural adaptation in spreading ideas and promoting positive change; as Gawande asserts, “people talking to people is still how the world’s standards change” (15). It is in such cases that we can find the key to balancing respect for another’s culture with the existentially ethical approach to promoting change in negative health behaviors, as we will further see.

Applying Existentialist Ethics:

The Last of the Human Freedoms in Public Health Social Justice

Existentialist ethics does not, by going against ethical egoism, minimize the worth or responsibility of the individual, nor does it belittle the cultural fabric of the society the individual inhabits, as emphasized by cultural subjectivity. On the contrary, existentialism deals with the question of how we can be authentic people while utilizing our unique strengths to create the world in which we choose to live. This chosen world of possibilities created by our fully realized selves invites us to strive to, among other things, improve societal problems such as the diabetes epidemic across various populations. Under an existentialist paradigm, our genetic predisposition to diabetes, hypertension, coronary disease, and cancer, or our gender difference in Alzheimer’s Disease prevalence, is not a life sentence unless we make it so. Accepting our freedom to make choices that increase our alternatives—a greater longevity and quality of life, a lower probability of developing a chronic disease—is ultimately our decision. If we consider the choices we make in which we have the greatest circle of influence, food is one of those areas. The nutritional decisions we make have been shown to have the greatest impact in preventing and/or managing chronic health conditions such as diabetes.

The creativity emphasized in existentialist ethics allows for myriad solutions to the lack of culturally adaptive public health programming targeting populations heavily affected by the diabetes epidemic. For instance, in designing culturally sensitive, nutrition-based programming targeting the Asian Indian population, traditional Asian Indian ingredients with proven health benefits, such as turmeric and jaggery, should be incorporated in different ways. Likewise, in Latino-Caribbean cuisine,

blood-regulating cinnamon and foods like fiber-rich root vegetables, such as yuca, cassava, plantains, can be utilized strategically to manage diabetes.

An Existential Approach to the Diabetes Epidemic: Conclusions and Potential Solutions

The real fight we face as responsible existentialist human beings does not involve practices that protect solely ourselves from diabetes development or uncontrolled symptoms, as in ethical egoism. Nor does it mean blindly, irresponsibly following our food culture, the eating habits and food consumption condoned by familial or cultural tradition, regardless of the effects of doing so, as in cultural relativism. The problem we must pursue and work to resolve--even when it remains comfortably in our peripheral vision--is that of a dearth in culturally adaptive health interventions for chronic diseases like diabetes for the populations that most need them.

It is by facing such seemingly insurmountable, Sisyphus-like problems that we create meaning out of a life that does not intrinsically have value, as existentialist thinker and writer Albert Camus asserts. If we adopt an egoist code that taking care of just ourselves is our sole responsibility, or a 'live and let live with diabetes' philosophy toward vulnerable communities while justifying it as respecting others' food customs, then we fail in our responsibility on multiple levels: 1) we fail to respect the potential of other food cultures to promote the health of their communities by tapping into their own health-promoting ingredients--sometimes untapped, or not fully realized/properly utilized without changing the core of their culture--and cultural habits; 2) we fail as empathic, logical humans who possess the faculties of rationality and sentience to care about and confront issues faced by fellow populations in the diverse NYC looking-glass.

The lack of equal access to research-supported, rational health information and to its application--two issues explored in my analysis of an ethical egoist approach--are behemoths that must be addressed in any responsible discussion of how to appropriately respond to a diabetes epidemic affecting two majority-minority immigrant groups. At the same time, cultural norms must be taken into consideration if we are to plan and design potentially successful health programs that are also ethically sound in their approach to cultural differences in at-risk communities. As an existentialist, I believe that in consistently flexing my unique abilities to increase my chosen circle of influence--for instance, in currently working on a play exploring food dynamics within an immigrant family, while studying theatre and public health--I am living the most ethical life possible. On a larger scale, I plan to promote strategies for communicating with diverse

populations, through cultural elements like those in traditional dance-drama in the Asian Indian community and in maximizing Latino theatre's emphasis on identity to address ethnographic changes that have occurred in food identity due to effects of food health movements that have emerged from living in NYC. The existentialism I will practice involves interventions for reducing/eliminating health disparities from an ethical public policy standpoint.



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Filling in the Gap: A Quantitative Analysis of Food Dye Concentrations in Popular Beverages

BY KEVIN SARMIENTO

Abstract:

This experiment was designed to determine the concentration of FD&C Red No. 40, also known as Red Dye 40 or allura red, in Ocean Spray Diet Cran-Cherry, Sparkling ICE Black Raspberry, Low Calorie Gatorade Fruit Punch, and Hawaiian Punch. In addition, this research allowed community college undergraduates to experience research within the context of their General Chemistry course. Column chromatography was used to separate Red 40 from the rest of the liquid and from other coloring agents like anthocyanins. The experiment revealed that Sparkling ICE Black Raspberry had the greatest concentration of Red 40 per milliliter out of the four beverages. Speculation regarding the safety of FD&C Red No. 40 and its connection between ADHD onset in children and cancers begs us to better understand the prevalence of Red 40 in our goods. Being a conscious consumer is of utmost importance when the health of a population is in question

Introduction

Food dyes have become a common staple in our everyday food supply and can be seen lining the shelves of supermarkets worldwide. Products from sprinkles, juices, candies, and even hot dogs contain these artificial colorings, but what is their purpose? Food dyes add no nutritional value to our diet, but what would cherry soda be without the red color? Their sole purpose is to make foods more aesthetically pleasing to the consumer. That's it. Red dye is one of the most commonly used dyes, specifically FD&C Red No. 40 which makes up 40% of the food dyes used in the United States (Sharma et al, 2011). Red 40 falls under a broader category of dyes called azo dyes, which are most easily characterized by

their double bonded nitrogen group (Peng et al, 2013).

Red 40, along with six others dyes, are the only accepted artificial dyes that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved for use in the United States (FDA, 2011). However, FDA approval is not a failsafe guarantee in the safety of such products. An increasing number of studies indicated a relationship between Red 40's consumption and the onset of developmental conditions like ADHD in children have surfaced (Peng et al, 2013; Bateman et al, 2004). Other studies have analyzed Red 40's toxicity before and after degradation and have demonstrated that certain byproducts can bind to DNA and cause mutations (Brown, De Vito, 1993; Chavez et al, 2016). This property has the capacity to cause mutations in the genome, increasing the risk of cancer. Extensive research is still required and urged for the safety of the public, especially kids considering their attraction to colorful foods and drinks.

In this experiment Ocean Spray Diet Cran-Cherry, Sparkling ICE Black Raspberry, Low Calorie Gatorade Fruit Punch, and Hawaiian Punch were tested for their concentration of FD&C Red No. 40 for comparison amongst each and the EPA standards. Although it was expected for all the beverages to have Red 40 in them It was hypothesized that Hawaiian Punch would have the highest concentration of Red Dye 40 due to its vibrant red color.

Materials:

SPE Cartridge	10mL syringe
Cuvettes	Acidified Methanol
Deionized water	Red Dye 40
Pipette	4% 2-propanol
5% 2-propanol	Spectrophotometer

Methods:

As mentioned, this experiment was aimed at determining the concentration of FD&C Red No. 40, also known as Red 40, in Ocean Spray Diet Cran-Cherry, Sparkling ICE Black Raspberry, Low Calorie Gatorade Fruit Punch, and Hawaiian Punch. To do this 100mg of FD&C Red 40 stock was dissolved in deionized water and diluted to 1L in a volumetric flask creating a 2.012×10^{-4} M stock solution of FD&C Red 40. Serial dilutions of 15 μ g/mL, 10 μ g/mL, 5 μ g/mL, 2 μ g/mL, and 1 μ g/mL were made and placed into spectrophotometer cuvettes. Next, the spectrophotometer was calibrated using deionized water as a blank. Then, the absorbance for each of the serially diluted cuvettes was measured, using the spectrophotometer and recorded. With each cuvette's absorbance measured a standard curve was created and the extinction coefficient extrapolated from the slope of the best fit line of the curve.

The concentrations of FD&C Red 40 for each sample was then

obtained with a solid phase extraction cartridge. The cartridge was first conditioned by passing 5 mL of acidified methanol through it with a syringe and then equilibrated by passing 5mL of deionized water. Next, 1 mL of sample was loaded into the syringe and pushed through the cartridge. The colorless liquid that exited the cartridge was discarded. The Red 40 captured in the cartridge was extracted by running 3 mL of 4% 2-propanol through the cartridge followed by 3mL aliquot of 4% 2-propanol in water and finally 3mL of 5% 2-propanol in water in a stepwise manner. The resulting liquid with the Red 40 was collected in a pre-weighted vial placed under the cartridge. The absorbance was then measured using a spectrophotometer. These steps were repeated for each sample of beverage but before doing so the extraction cartridge was washed with 5mL of acidified methanol, removing any other residues.

Data and Calculations:

Concentration (µg/mL)	Absorbance
15	.889
10	.593
5	.267
2	.074
1	.047

Table 1. Absorbance measure from serial dilutions.

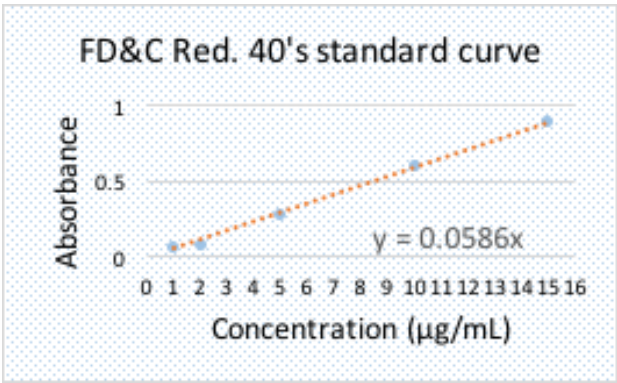


Figure 1. Beer-Lambert graph demonstrating the linear regression between increased concentration and increased absorbance. The slope of the trend line provides the extinction coefficient (E) for the equation $A=Ebc$.

Sample Drink	Absorbance	Concentration ($\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$)	Mass of solution in vials including Red 40 (g)	Volume of solution (mL)	Mass of Red 40 ($\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$)	Total mass of Red 40 per 12 fl oz (mg)
Diet Crancherry	0.155	2.65	9.248	9.302	24.7	8.76
ICE Raspberry	0.632	10.8	9.127	9.180	99.1	35.2
Low Calorie Gatorade	0.274	4.68	9.437	9.492	44.4	15.7
Hawaiian Punch	0.434	7.41	9.175	9.229	68.4	24.2

Absorbance calculation:

$A = Ebc$ (therefore) $c = a/Eb$, where $b = 1$ and $E = \text{extinction coefficient}$.

So, $c = 0.155 / (0.0586 \mu\text{g}/\text{mL}) = 2.65 \mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$

Volume of solution calculation:

Density of solution of Red 40 in the aqueous 2-propanol mixture is $0.9942 \text{ g}/\text{mL}$.

$D = m/v$ (therefore) $v = m/D$. So, $v = 9.248 \text{ g} / (0.9942 \text{ g}/\text{mL}) = 9.302 \text{ mL}$

Mass of Red 40 in beverages:

$m_{\text{bev}} = \text{Concentration} * \text{Volume}$. So, $m_{\text{bev}} = 2.65 \mu\text{g}/\text{mL} * 9.302 \text{ mL} / (1 \text{ mL sample}) = 24.7 \mu\text{g}/\text{mL Beverage}$

Total mass of Red 40 per 12 fl oz of beverage calculations:

Mass of Red 40 in beverage * conversion factor between mL and 12 fl oz * conversion of mg to $\mu\text{g} = \text{mg}/12 \text{ fl oz}$.

$24.7 \mu\text{g}/\text{mL} * 354.882 \text{ mL} / (12 \text{ fl oz}) * 1 \text{ mg} / 1000 \mu\text{g} = 8.76 \text{ mg}/12 \text{ fl oz}$

Discussion and Conclusion:

Sparkling ICE Black Raspberry had the highest concentration of Red 40 per mL than the other three beverages. The hypothesis that Hawaiian Punch would yield the highest concentration was wrong. The total amount of Red 40 in a 12 fl oz serving of Sparkling ICE Black Raspberry was 35.2 mg compared to 24.2 mg in Hawaiian Punch. The FDA's Acceptable Daily Intake for Red 40 is of 7 mg/kg of body weight per day (FDA, 2011). Therefore, it is apparent that an unrealistic amount of servings containing the Red 40 dye would need to be consumed to see an acute health hazard. However, there's still not enough long term and comprehensive studies that have been carried out to understand and make a conclusion on whether such dyes pose a health hazard to humans.

Although the FDA has approved this, and six other food dye for consumption, its safety cannot be currently guaranteed. There have been multiple cases where the FDA has removed a previously approved food dye as was the case with Red 2, banned by the FDA in 1976 (Sharma et al, 2011). Additionally, there seems to be some differences of opinion between the food safety organizations of various nations when it comes to classifying food dyes as safe. For example, Green 3 is permitted in the US but banned in the entire European Union (Sharma et al, 2011). Red 40 on the other hand has also been under the watchful eye of European food safety organizations. Although not banned, the United Kingdom has added a warning label on every product with food dyes, informing the public of the uncertain health concerns associated with the products (Food Colours and hyperactivity, 2012).

This experiment successfully quantified the concentration and total amount of Red 40 in a small sample of four beverages. The concentrations of other beverages however are mostly unknown. Although food and drinks containing food dyes must be labeled as so, they do not specify the exact quantity contained. As scientists continue to investigate the connections between these food dyes and health, it is important to keep the public up to date and informed on the matters that affect their health.

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The Garden City Movement: Why Howard's Urban Planning Fails Today

BY PRINCESS SARAH GARCIA

Abstract

Forest Hills is a neighborhood in New York that was modeled after social reformer, Ebenezer Howard's concept of combining urban and rural life for the working class community. Howard created the urban plan to harmonize living close to nature and yet still having access to the city. Unfortunately, Howard's concept of the Garden City, remains a utopia-like concept. This study aims to understand why the Garden City Movement fails to be applied to our society through looking at contemporary Forest Hills. Did the Garden City Movement withstand the test of time or has the mission been lost for small businesses and residents, and if so why? Methods for this study include analyzation of census data of the neighborhood, primary and secondary resources, an interview with a resident who has been living there for a significant amount of time and the researcher's firsthand account of a community meeting in Forest Hills. It can be concluded that the residential houses that were for the working class community became more desirable to people with higher income, thus increasing housing rates. This has also caused, franchises to take over industry and prevent family owned businesses to flourish. Although originally intended for the working class, Forest Hills has now departed from Howard's vision.

Introduction

Hidden away in Queens is the quaint neighborhood of Forest Hills. Throughout the neighborhood you will notice the refreshing abundant greenery and small stores that seem like they have been there for generations. It has the ambiance of Europe because of the Old English

Architecture and Tudor-style homes. It is conveniently located near the city and easily accessible by trains and buses. In a place like New York, you would normally think that this would be made to cater to people with better means. History would contradict that because Forest Hills was actually intended for the working class population which at the time consisted of immigrants to the United States. In 1909, the Russel Sage Foundation bought 142 acres of Forest Hills from the Cord Meyer Development Company. Forest Hills was then modeled after Howard's concept of combining urban and rural life for the working class community. The architects even designed the area to be similar to an English village which added aesthetics to the neighborhood. The purpose of the project was to improve living conditions of the impoverished population. Most of the first residents in Forest Hills were European and Russian immigrants. The community established a covenant in 1913 to limit businesses and to preserve the design of the neighborhood. Exterior alterations to the homes in the area cannot be done without approval and new owners must sign to an agreement when buying property. The covenant is still in place today and is overseen by the Forest Hills Gardens Corporation.

The population in this neighborhood is increasing in diversity as well as in the median salaries of its residents according to the census data I have gathered. There is an increase of wealthy Asian residents moving into the area and a decrease in the white population. It is hard to imagine that Forest Hills used to be an affordable housing project that was initiated by the city to follow Ebenezer Howard's urban planning. Howard's plan may even have been corrupted by investors to earn more capital. Because this neighborhood was so enticing to live in, investors had to seize the opportunity to earn more revenue. People with higher income started to move in. Not only are they buying properties but they are renovating it and increasing property value, so much so that rents aren't as affordable and this benefits the homeowners and landlords. Forest Hills is currently an upper middle class enclave but that could change soon to just the rich and the wealthy which deviates from Howard's vision.

Ebenezer Howard's Vision

Sir Ebenezer Howard was an English town planner and the principal founder of the English Garden-City movement. He authored the book "To-morrow: a Peaceful Path to Real Reform" in 1898, which was later

reissued as “Garden Cities of To-morrow” on 1902. He was influenced by the utopian novel “Looking Backward” by Edward Bellamy. He outlined an urban planning concept that envisioned a self-sustaining community combining nature and industry as a solution to overcrowding and urban poverty and to make living conditions better. The garden city movement stemmed from Howard’s publication which resulted in building the First Garden City, Letchworth Garden City in 1903. The creation of other Garden Cities soon followed and later on influenced the development of the suburbs in other countries.

Taking into consideration the time that Howard published his book, his ideas were revolutionary. People in England were moving away from the country side and into the cities because of the industrial revolution. Machinery and mass production offered more chances of employment. Howard described these attractions as magnets that would pull individuals into moving. He also observed that because of the growing population and pollution caused by machines, the overall health of citizens deteriorated. Howard mentions in his book that there are many benefits from living in the countryside that should be incorporated into cities. He believed that open space with much land devoted to gardens would help improve sanitation and health of the population.

Although Howard’s garden city movement became popular in the early 20th century, it is still relevant today. In the same way that the industrial revolution attracted more people to work in the city, the technology today and demand for people who can code, create programs and analyze data are in demand in the job market. This is also causing the same effect wherein more people want to move into cities like New York in hope of better job opportunities. This is causing problems in urban areas since there is limited space to be distributed. Being ecological or environment friendly is also a concern that many people share in their living space which makes Howard’s vision more relatable today.

Howard’s vision was not just a solution to overcrowding in cities; he also envisioned it to be economically independent from the government and supervised by the community living in the area. The land would be held in trust through a third party so that the government and community would not have direct ownership. Howard also wanted to attract people of various professions in order to help grow the economy within the garden city. There would be a designated council that would decide how to use the revenue that the land would earn through rents

and contributions of businesses. The revenue earned was to be used for the public good such as building roads, schools and public spaces.

Review of Related Literature

There is a misconception that Howard's urban planning concept failed to improve the lives of the urban poor and instead encouraged social and spatial division between the wealthy and impoverished population. Guy Tragos defends against this accusation in his article "The Dark Side of Garden Cities". He states that the garden suburbs have become a lucrative development model that is driven by consumption. One of the examples that Tragos gives is the development of Pinelands near Cape Town in South Africa during the early 1920s. It was also inspired by the Garden City movement which racially segregated the community. The greenbelts of Howard's vision became a buffer zone between black, white and mixed-raced communities. The term 'Garden City' is also used as a branding strategy to attract investors by playing on its positive connotations. An example of this is in Malaysia's new administrative center, Putrajaya. Putrajaya has manicured gardens, an artificial lake and lavish complexes. It does not really embody Howard's vision because it is exclusive, homogenous, and with limited public space. The rendition of Howard's vision is completely different from the original. Howard encouraged expression of individuality within the lands allotted to its residents and allocated spaces for public use to socialize.

Not only have Howard's architecture plans been changed from their original intentions but so has his vision of an economically independent community. The primary element of giving back to the community through land value-capture has been lost in the interpretations of Howard's Garden Cities. Ben Clark argues in "Garden Cities Mean More than Gardens". Howard, in his book, elaborated a plan for how the Garden City's revenue would be used for creating infrastructure and services such as providing insurance and social security to the community who live in it. Rent rates would differ depending on the tenants' income and whatever excess payment gathered would be used to build roads, hospitals or even insurance and retirement plans for the community. This would make the city economically independent and minimally taxed by the government. Fred Harrison, an economist mentioned in the article, supports the idea of the community earning revenue for the benefit of each other instead of it being privatized by individuals. It does not make sense that land owners are the most to benefit from the increased

property value when it is actually the community who should have a piece of that revenue. Because it is the community that comes together to make the living space better and earn more value, revenue should rightfully be reinvested back to them.

The concept of Howard's plan is community driven and beneficial mostly to its residents. This is why a capitalist country like the United States finds it hard to execute. It was criticized for being the cause of an urban crisis wherein there were disinvestment in the cities, but there is a failure to see that planners and developers were not really staying true to Howard's vision. Even though Howard had specific plans and models on what his vision was, he left it open for interpretation which led investors and planners to pursue their own interests. Evan Richert and Mark Lapping elaborate on this on their article "Ebenezer Howard and the Garden City." They mention that America has never accepted the tenets of the Garden City's urban land ethic of earning revenue and giving it back to the community. One precedent for this is when Clarence Stein, an architect inspired by Garden City movement stated that he struggled to overcome the ideological and financial qualities of American city building practice. This was when he was planning Sunnyside Gardens in New York and Radburn community in Fair Lawn, New Jersey. The American urban land ethic is the opposite of what Howard envisioned. City building is mostly a private enterprise on private land and the revenue gained in increased property value is seen as an ordained right by investors. The distribution of wealth is not properly allocated to allow for better living conditions and equal economic opportunity for the community. The reason why the value of land would go up is because a community is built which makes it more desirable to live in. It is inequitable when there is no reinvestment in these communities and the people who form them: they, after all, are making the land more valuable.

Methodology

This study aims to understand why the Garden City Movement by Ebenezer Howard is difficult to apply in our society through looking at contemporary Forest Hills. The first step in this study is to analyze the census data of the neighborhood. This will give us a better understanding who the residents of Forest Hills are, their income, and how it has changed overtime. An interview was also conducted with a resident who has been living in the area for a significant amount of time. This gives the researcher an in-depth look at the neighborhood and what the experience is like living in the area. A comparison is made between the tenant's experience and what the census data shows to see if it coordinates with the census data. Lastly, a first-hand

account of a community board meeting will be recounted and supported by articles from the local newsletters. The future plans of Community Board 6 of Forest Hills will shed light on how the neighborhood will look like and how it might affect the residents of the area. Interpretation of the collected data and comparison to Howard's urban plans will be discussed.

For the census data interpretation, I compared zip codes to the census tracts. I looked at data from a bigger area first and generated more detailed from specific neighborhoods so that I have a basis of what is standard and what is not. From what I gathered, my observations were in line with what the data shows. The neighborhood has a predominantly white population but as time has passed by it has lessened. In the zip code 11375, the white population decreased from 83.2% in the year 2000 to 65.4% in 2010. There are more Asians who are moving into the area which is increasing the diversity. In 2000 the population only consisted of 12.4 % Asians and then in the 2010 census data it increased to 25.3 %. There is also a trending increase of other races such as African American and Hispanic that are moving in the area although the difference is not as pronounced compared to the increase in Asian population. Most of them still have high income and continue to increase. I checked the economic profile of three census tracts along Austin Street and found that the collected data had an average 60.77% people with occupations in management, business, science and arts. A majority are now white collar workers. Although there is an increase in diversity within the community there is not a lot of income diversity. Most of the people who live in Forest Hills can be considered upper middle class.

I also saw that the majority of Asians who have moved into the area are Chinese. The Chinese make up 51.3% of the Asian population. Most of the residents have lived in the area for more than five years, which indicates that people are satisfied living there and do not want to move. Looking at the economic profile from the census data also shows that the commute to work for the residents is less than an hour and most of them are not blue collar workers so it is more likely that their jobs are in the city. The data follows through with Howard's plans in making sure that the residents of the area have easy access to the city.

In an effort to prove my hypothesis I conducted an interview with a resident of Forest Hills and attended a community meeting. I wanted to know how Forest Hills compares to Howard's original vision and if it has become desirable for investors now. In my findings, I saw that Forest Hills used to be an affordable housing project that mostly consisted of the working class European, Russian and Jewish Immigrants. It is still predominantly a white

population with increasing Asian residents. Sadly, it is mostly of upper middle class and higher income who live there. The person I interviewed also mentioned how certain services in the neighborhood like parks and streets parking are not available to him. He says that “it does feel like it segregates me from the community and it’s a little elitist”. He mentioned that he liked how the abundant greenery and the local businesses there make him want to stay in the area. He says the rent rates aren’t worth what he is getting. The building he lives in is old so some of the facilities need to be changed.

I found out from the community meeting that a luxury tower will be built on Austin Street. The community is not happy about this and is trying to convince their community board to vote no against it. This would drastically change the neighborhood. Rent rates would increase even more and local businesses would be forced out of this area. One of the residents came up to talk about the luxury tower that was going to be built on 107-18 70th road. He tried to appeal to the community board to vote against the construction of a luxury tower. He had gathered a petition with over 2,500 signatures from the community. He did not receive any response, then the meeting was adjourned. I approached him and his associate, Michael, afterwards to ask more details about this. They were very accommodating. I found out that the real estate developer is trying to get a special permit to build the luxury tower higher. It would also take out restaurants that allowed outside dining which the community is fond of. They were also very concerned that this would make the streets more convoluted and take up so much space they wouldn’t be able to have their music festivals during the summer. The design of the building would also make the area lose the aesthetics it was known for: the model they were presented with was modern looking and did not fit what the architecture area is known for.

Conclusion and Discussion

The Garden City in Howard’s original plan presented a solution to overcrowding by providing affordable quality housing to decongest the city. He wanted the Garden City to be surrounded by greenbelts wherein agriculture could flourish and it would be a self-sustaining and economically independent community. Howard also proposed that whatever revenue the Garden City makes is invested back to the community to ensure better resources and better economic opportunity for its residents. Although Howard specifically detailed how the economy and architecture of Garden Cities would work, he opened it for interpretation. He even mentions it in his book that much of his plans may be much departed from, which shows that there aren’t limits to what changes can be done to his plans. This makes

it easier for investors to pursue their own financial interests. This could have been avoided if he cited ways for the garden city to earn more profit so that investors would have less pressure to depart from Howard's original vision.

The reasons behind the failure of the Garden City are further discussed in the articles mentioned in this study, particularly those that stress the poor interpretations of Garden Cities. Guy Tringos' article states that the Garden City encouraged social and spatial detachment which encouraged racism all the while using the positive connotations of the Garden City as a branding strategy. Ben Clark also gives another reason why the Garden City has failed. Contrary to Howard's original vision, the essential concept of revenue being invested back to the community is lost and further deviated from by capital earned in increased property value when a property gets sold. It no longer becomes an independent economy that would benefit everyone in the community and instead becomes capitalist in essence. Even an article in the Journal of American Planning Association states that America has not embraced Howard's vision because of the difference in financial ideals.

In an effort to understand why Howard's vision is difficult to apply today, data was gathered on Forest Hills, which was the first the first neighborhood in New York to be modeled after the garden city. Census data comparisons were made to give the researcher a picture of who lives in Forest Hills. The data indicates that there is a pronounced diversity in the demographics of Forest Hills. There is an increasing trend of more Asians, Hispanics and other races moving in the area but there is not a lot of income diversity since most of the residents' economic profile show that their incomes are considered upper middle class. An interview with a long time resident was also conducted to understand what it's like to live in the neighborhood. The resident's experience reveal segregation within the community through private parks and parking privileges in areas that are more expensive to live in. Lastly, the researcher also gives a detailed account of a Community Board meeting which sheds some light as to what Forest Hills could possibly look like in the future. There were plans that were presented to the community that involves more residential buildings being built and more commercial area to be developed which the residents do not want. All of these factors demonstrate how Contemporary Forest Hills is departing from Howard's vision.

Moving forward with this research I could not help but feel pessimistic for the future. Howard's vision is so lost and used for capital gain of others and it does not seem like it will change soon. Even the positive connotations of the idea of a garden city may not withstand the test of time because of the

taller and modern buildings developers in New York are pushing for. Any effort to stop this cycle should begin with the government implementing new policies for the revenue that is being earned from the sale and use of properties. If these capitalist entities were taxed instead of given tax breaks, then their returns on investment would not be as large. It would keep them from buying properties and increasing property value. Hypothetically, the money would be invested back to the community through the government. This could maybe make it a little closer to what the Garden City originally was.



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Yellow Woman

BY RACHEL LUZ

“Yellow Woman” by Leslie Marmon Silko is a modern retelling of a traditional American Indian story that places it within a contemporary setting. The Yellow Woman is a figure from Laguna Pueblo American Indian folklore. These orally transmitted stories typically center on a mountain spirit who “seduces the Yellow Woman away from her husband and family” (Purdy and Robert 1203). Silko writes her personal Yellow Woman narrative in contrast to the traditionally oral form of narration. Silko reimagines the story in modern times, including a meta-commentary on the relation between that specific myth and her ancestral culture. In fact, Silko uses the Yellow Woman’s typical association with outsiders to explore her personal outsider status inside and outside the Laguna Pueblo community due to her mixed race heritage. Importantly, by using the Yellow Woman story as a literary vehicle, Silko further comments on the assumptions of feminine sexuality. Extrapolating from the already existent motif of feminine cunning associated with the myth, Silko’s depicts the Yellow Women as an active sexual agent and not a passively seduced abductee. The interaction, through fictional narrative, between Silko’s commentary on storytelling, personal identity, and norms of female sexuality allow her to construct a pathway of connection with her ancestors, through assertion of pride in that ancestral culture and tradition.

An awareness about the act of storytelling permeates Silko’s “Yellow Woman.” She adamantly denies that she is telling a “variation” or “version” of the traditional myth, describing that type of description speaks to a very “western” way of thinking about narrative and the act

of narrating (Thompson 22). Stories, in the Laguna Pueblo tradition, are not considered to be closed in the sense of conforming to one specific narrative. Instead, it is implicit in the Laguna Pueblo concept of storytelling that the contours of the story are dependent on the traditions and concerns of whichever family is telling the story. Silko writes, "each version is true and each version is correct and what matters is to have as many of the stories as possible and to have them together and to understand the emergence, keeping all the stories in mind at the same time" (Thompson 22). Silko emphasizes that each retelling of a story is equally as valid and genuine as the others. These "variations" are simply the results of the context and identity of the storyteller.

Thus, the yellow woman narrative emerges from an oral tradition that is defined by its "continual flux" and narrative malleability (Thompson 23). Akin to this assumption of narrative plasticity implicit in Laguna Pueblo storytelling is an unspoken intention behind Silko's *Yellow Woman*. She uses her text as attempt to regain cultural control of the narrative from European-derived scholars who have, by seeking to isolate some kind of pure version of the story, misinterpreted and disrespected the meaning of Laguna Pueblo Folklore. Instead, Silko approaches her written narrative with respect to this oral tradition. Such cultural context, according to Silko, is necessary in order to understand the "intent" behind the *Yellow Woman* story (Thompson 23). European-derived scholars who sought to isolate and transcribe a singular version of the folktale, ignorant of the co-construction of content, narration, and familial context, are in essence perpetrating a form of colonial domination and control. Silko's retelling of *Yellow Woman* is therefore a reclaiming of American Indian tradition and storytelling that has been whitewashed and diluted by acts of scholarly oppression and cultural repression.

In fact, the content of the *Yellow Women* myth allow for an incredibly productive and subtle synthesis of narrative resistance and personal expression. In the story, Silko plays with the ambiguity of the *Yellow Woman* who, in Laguna pueblo folklore, is traditionally symbolic of "all women" yet also symbolic of women who are outsiders or "different" from their community (Thompson 22). This ambiguity of identity is mirrored in Silko's story. In the beginning, when her lover Silva describes her as the *Yellow Women*, she responds with doubt and implicit mockery. The narrator incessantly denies that she is the *Yellow Woman* from the stories, stating that the *Yellow Woman* is "from out of

time past and I live now and I've been to school and there are highways and pickup trucks that Yellow Woman never saw" (Silko 369). Because Silko's retelling is set in a modern time, the narrator has difficulty identifying herself with the woman from the old stories.

Silko is thus illustrating how American Indian culture and voice has been contorted and reduced, and the time in which the Yellow Woman from the stories existed differs greatly from the modern culture within which the narrator was raised. Yet, by the end, she has accepted her mythic identity, and concludes with regret that her "grandpa wasn't alive to hear [her] story because it was the Yellow Woman stories he liked the best" (Silko 374). Silko's grandfather, and other ancestors, illustrate that such figures and the stories they tell can provide moments of contrast to European-derived modernity. Mirroring the anti-colonial intention guiding Silko's identity as author and storyteller is the narrator's personal evolution within the text. Her dismissal of the stories of her heritage transforms into an acceptance of that heritage of stories passed down through persons. In Silko's case, that link to an ancestral non western perspective was her grandfather.

This recognition and respect of ancestry that follows Silko's acceptance of her role as Yellow Woman mirrors her childhood experiences with the myth. She explains that her when her Aunt Alice would tell the story, she would add certain "editorial comments...used to explain the story to her small nieces" (Thompson 24). These halts in the story were importantly, not moments of interpretation or analysis, but rather the minimal amount of "information needed to help a child's understanding, an aspect of "oral tradition [that] allows the listeners to participate in the story by imagining their place in it" (Thompson 24). Hence, while the yellow woman stories transcribed by Western scholars are placed as either referring to a past or universal story-time that is different from the reader's experience, Silko's experience of listening to the story as a child shared no such distinction in time and place between narrative and audience. The telling of the story serves to strengthen familial and cultural bonds between generations, which explicitly or not, impacts how the content of the narrative would unravel. This "link between mythic past and present" that is foundational to both Silko's personal and communal self-understanding, guides her text of Yellow Woman (Thompson 24).

Presumably, for Silko, the Yellow Woman figure, a cunning outsider, resonates with her attempts to understand her own personal and cultural identity. Silko, of bi-racial white, Mexican and American

Indian heritage had always felt like an outsider, although she has always strongly identified as a Laguna Pueblo Indian. This tension between pride and estrangement is at the heart of Silko's text and is mirrored in her narrative progression from ambivalence to acceptance of her role as Yellow Woman. For instance, early in the text, after sleeping with Silva, who calls her the yellow woman, Silko explains to Silva that she was "not really her-- I have my own name and I come from pueblo on the other side of the mesa. Your name is Silva and you are a stranger I met by the river yesterday afternoon" (Silko, 368). After this exchange, wherein the narrator denies the connection between her identity and that of the fictional yellow women, she ironically wonders if the "Yellow Woman had known who she was -- if she knew that she would become a part of these stories" (Silko 368). This moment, although ironic, signals a shift in the narrator's relation to her ancestral myth. She no longer dismisses the story as purely fictional, but begins to question how such narratives relate to the individuals whose experiences become the background of such mythic traditions.

Similar to this recognition of folklore's role in ancestral bonds present in her denial of the Yellow Woman role, specifically in relation to her grandfather, her acceptance also relies on the motif of intergenerational storytelling. Her signal to the reader that she has embraced her place in the traditional myth is made in reference to her grandfather's love of telling these traditional narratives. Mirroring the irony that allowed her initial reflection on the relation between real and fictional Yellow Women, her final acceptance, still maintains a somewhat flippant tone. Although her acceptance of mythic identity is in jest, it also struck by a bittersweet tone of sadness and regret that she could not share her experience with her deceased grandpa, and reproduce the generational links of storytelling discussed earlier (Silko 374). As Grossman notes, such moments of reflection on personal identity allow Silko to blur "boundarie[s] of fiction", and the "reality" of a person's place within a cultural/ancestral tradition (Grossman 77). The narrator's journey toward acceptance of her mythic role in her personal heritage proceeds by a series of reflections on the relation between persons and stories, both in inspiration and narration. Yet, the ironic tone struck by Silko in both the moments discussed gesture toward how that personal relation to the myths of one's culture help uncover the complexities behind the real life cultures, experiences events, places and persons that produce a heritage of myth. Yet this heritage of storytelling revealed by Silko cannot be cut into points of fiction and reality, the mistake of European-derived scholars that Silko is countering.

Accordingly, Silko's expression of personal identity includes an implicit commentary on feminine desire and sexuality that subverts victimhood based ideals of female sexuality. While the Yellow Women from the stories are traditionally and usually portrayed as kidnapped victims, Silko's Yellow Woman is a willing participant. Scholar Heather Holland explains that Silko's Yellow Woman is in no way "forcibly made to accompany" her seducer and adamantly refused to take advantage of the "several opportunities" she had "to leave" (Holland 64). Instead of telling a "story about a happily-married wife who is abducted...and who then is happy to be rescued by her heroic husband [,]" Silko "tells a story about a restless woman who enjoys the romantic adventure... offer[ed]" to her by Silva (Holland 66). Silko crafts an implicit critique of European-derived concepts of culture and storytelling, but to also include a critique of how female sexuality is represented as passive. The narrator's integration of past and present cultures is not some kind of imposed epiphany, but is the result of her active sexual agency and relationship with Silva.

Integral to this assertion of active female desire and sexuality is how the narrator relates to her domestic identity and role. For instance, when reflecting on her lengthy absence from home, she states, "there are enough of them to handle things. My mother and grandmother will raise the baby like they raised me. Al will find someone else, and they will go on like before, except that there will be a story about the day I disappeared while I was walking along the river" (Silko 371). The narrator is prioritizing her desire over the duties that women are assumed to perform. She eschews traditional values such as spousal loyalty, child rearing, and household management. Silko, instead of condemning the narrator's absence, uses her reflection to challenge these patriarchal standards, asserting that her actions, illustrating sexual empowerment, would not be as detrimental to her home as one might assume.

Although the narrator makes excuses for her time spent with Silva, Silva's dominance and assertiveness is an indication of his malevolent power over her. He makes several imperative commands at her throughout their time spent together. In fact, the day after their first encounter, he tells her that she is coming with him. They walk side by side, as he keeps a tight grip on her arm. The narrator notes, "I walked beside him, breathing hard because he walked fast, his hand around my wrist. I had stopped trying to pull away from him, because his hand felt cool and the sun was high" (Silko 368). Silva walks quickly, and is unwilling to walk at a pace that is comfortable for her. He walks

with her almost as if he is guiding an animal, keeping a tight grip so that she stays close and keeps up with him. The narrator is confused by a night with a stranger by the river, a night that she can barely remember. Ann Cavanaugh Sipos perceives Silva as a brutal rapist, stating that the Yellow Woman is “so confused, intrigued and frightened by her mysterious lover that she scarcely realizes that he brutally abducts and rapes her. Damaged by his overpowering of her, she self-protectively romanticizes his violation of her” (Cavanaugh Sipos 67). Silko thus extracts from the Yellow Woman story what she sees to be an ambiguity within female sexuality; sexuality that responds positively to seemingly dominant and patriarchal modes of sexual power.

The narrator is this actively and sexually agentive in her attraction to Silva, while maintaining a fearful awareness of the power and threat of physical violence which marks her attraction to Silva. For instance, when the two go back to Silva's home, where he expects to have sexual intercourse with her, she turns her back to him, he violently responds by pulling her around and pinning her down with his arms and chest, saying “you don't understand, do you, little Yellow Woman? You will do what I want” (Silko 370-71). The narrator accepts that the forced nature of the occurring sexual encounter, while later romanticize from the sexual encounter as a self-protective mechanism.

The narrator further explicated her growing awareness of Silko's power and its complex influence on her sexual agency. She states, “I was afraid because I understood that his strength could hurt me. I lay underneath him and I knew that he could destroy me. But later, while he slept beside me, I touched his face and I had a feeling... that overcame me that morning along the river” (Silko 370-71). She then kisses him on the forehead and he reaches out for her. Her fear of Silva and emotional/embodyed surrender to him, are not incommensurables with her sexual desire, but rather engender the ambiguous web of emotions and urges that constitute her longing.

Silko's portrayal of female sexuality as manifested through the narrator presents a complex relationship. The narrator is afraid that Silva's strength and power could be used to hurt her, and succumbs to his sexual advances and does as he says. She also creates excuses and justifies his actions and her responses to them, revealing a sexual attraction and longing for Silva. When she awakes alone in his home, she wonders where he is, instead of immediately making an escape, as a kidnapped victim might do. There is a shift from her denial of being the Yellow Woman from the story when she begins to doubt his existence. She states, “he was gone. It gave

me a strange feeling because for a long time I sat there on the blankets and looked around the little house for some object of his--some proof that he had been there or maybe that he was coming back" (Silko 371). The narrator feels strange and desperately looks for something that belongs to him so that she can humanize him and establish that all of their encounters were "real." She has begun to doubt that he is truly a man, and now she partly speculates that he may be the mountain spirit from the stories. The fact alone that she seeks out a semblance of his physicality is telling of her suspicions about him. Although she initially refused to believe that she was the Yellow Woman and he was the *ka'tsina*, she slowly begins to think otherwise.

As the narrator's identifying ties with the Yellow Woman culminates towards the story's end, she also finally makes her "escape." In the final sequence, instead of a celebratory outburst when Silko's Yellow Woman return home to her family, the narrator is resigned at best. She does not return home through a heroic rescue, but rather, out her own disappointment and volition, inspired by coming across the initial meeting place by the river. Remarking on how the scenery at the site of their first encounter reminded her of her past lover she describes how she "wanted to go back to him--to kiss him and to touch him--but the mountains" the symbolic origin of Silva and the traditional "spirit" character, "were too far away now.... [H]e will come back sometime and be waiting again by the river" (Silko 374). She returns home, disappointed about her love's non-appearance, yet hopeful about the possibility of a future meeting, and amused, not by the presence of her "husband...playing with the baby" but by her realization and acceptance that she was, in fact, the Yellow Woman (Silko 374).

"Yellow Woman" allows Silko to explore an array of aspects that make up her personal identity, such as tradition, storytelling, gender and sexuality while asserting control over an ancestral narrative in resistance to past acts of colonial repression. Her text thus fits into the largely oral tradition of Yellow Woman stories, and not the written corpus produced by European-derived scholars, precisely because of her attention to her own personal experiences of family, tradition and the act of storytelling itself. This affinity between an oral tradition and written story is precisely what makes Silko's narrative a subtle but compelling form of resistance. In its very form personal narrative Silko is reclaiming not only a myth, but a cultural tradition, speaking with the tropes, motifs and implicit intentions of her ancestral stories in order to understand her own identity and relation to historical forces of oppression.



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CHRISTIAN ESQUIVEL is a Mexican-American student at LaGCC pursuing his Liberal Arts Degree in Social Sciences and Humanities. Upon transfer to a four-year school, he plans to pursue an interdisciplinary track in sociology, business and economics. Ultimately, his goal is to combine his interest in finance and immigration reform to advocate for policies and support structures to promote upward mobility.

ROBERT CLEARY was born in Dorchester, a neighborhood of Boston, in August of 1975, during a heat wave. The day on which he was born holds the record for the highest temperatures ever recorded in the state of Massachusetts. He was raised by his mother. He moved to New York City in 2010, and began attending LaGuardia last year.

AHMED ELSAYEGH will be the first in his family to graduate with a college education. He chose to major in pharmaceutical science due to his interest in chemistry and mathematics. He hopes to transfer to the University at Buffalo to earn his Pharm D. He also wants to focus on research. He chose to transfer to the University at Buffalo because it's the best fit for him and is ranked number one in the United States for its focus on research.

HENRY VARGAS was born in the best borough in New York City, Manhattan. He is currently studying Liberal Arts: Math and Science at LaGuardia Community College. Also, he is an honor student and a Phi Theta Kappa member at LaGuardia. He is doing his best to study and attain his academic goals to become a Molecular Biologist. At the moment, he is doing research with his mentors, Drs. Ingrid Veras and Thomas Onorato, about the functions of yolk proteins in sea stars. This triggered a huge interest in scientific research and he believes he could make a difference to the science community by continuing his studies.

SIMRAN KAUR graduated from LaGuardia with an A.A.S in nursing. Despite a rewarding and gratifying professional path, her desire to expand her education, and her keen interest and aptitude for sciences led her to a decision to change her career path. She plans to transfer to Grove School of Engineering at City University. She wants to focus on creating solutions by combining data science, medicine, natural sciences and engineering to address medical challenges, both present and future. Her interests also include classical history, music, art, sci-fi and appreciates stand-up comedy.

AMBAR CASTILLO is a Brooklyn-born, Queens-raised writer and actor with a B.A. in Latin American Studies/Journalism from Boston University. Her writing has been featured in *The Lit* and *Pustebblume*. Ambar has performed in Boston-based productions of "Vagina Monologues," "Edward II," "A Mad World, My Masters," and LaGuardia's "Tweeting Ives," for which she won an Irene Ryan acting nomination.

KEVIN SARMIENTO is an Environmental Science major currently in his last semester at LaGuardia. His passion for scientific research is well reflected in the various research positions he has held at LaGuardia Community College, Barnard College, and Albert Einstein College of Medicine. He is eager to put science into action someday through the evermore important field of environmental engineering.

PRINCESS SARAH GARCIA was born and raised in the Philippines. She moved to New York in 2014 in pursuit of better education and new opportunities. She is a LaGuardia Community College alumna and transferred to Queens College in Spring 2017. She is currently majoring in accounting and is a recipient of the Guttman Scholarship while being in the Transfer Honors Program. She aspires to earn a master's degree in Forensic Accounting and Financial Statement Fraud and build a career in the Public Sector as a Certified Fraud Examiner. In her spare time, she likes to meditate and write poetry.

RACHEL LUZ is a first generation American and a recent graduate of LaGuardia Community College. After a rough start to her college career, she eventually found herself at LaGuardia as a Liberal Arts major, while regaining a sense of curiosity and willingness to learn. Her next plan is to get a bachelor's degree and further explore her passions and interests.

PATRICK LAVILLA is a Philippine native who aspires to be a Chief Financial Officer of a billion dollar brokerage firm by 2025. Over his 24 months as a foreign student in the US, Patrick evolved to be a leader and artist. Aside from being a college ambassador and a senior HSAC member, he singlehandedly represented New York's Community Colleges in the White House to campaign for Obama's Free Community College proposal. An Accounting major at LaGuardia, this is Patrick's last semester. By June, he considers pursuing Finance at Columbia.

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