

# Momenta

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## On the cover

The dymaxion map projection featured on the cover was invented by Buckminster Fuller. It represents the surface of the Earth on an unfolded icosahedron. Notably, Fuller insisted that this projection does not have an ideal orientation—there is no “this way up”. We chose this cover image to acknowledge that predominant representations of the world are not necessarily the most accurate.

Fuller coined the term dymaxion, a portmanteau of the words dynamic, maximum, and tension.

## **momenta** (n. pl.) Latin

1. The indwelling forces that are the principle of change.
2. The circumstances that precipitate change.

The papers in this volume are momenta in the sense

[ii] that they are reactions to a set of circumstances (the ideas, the work of understanding, the opportunity to consider those ideas), and also in the sense

[i] that they make contribution to ongoing scholarly discussions and so inevitably change the course of those discussions.

*Translated by Darcy Otto, Professor of Philosophy and Classics at Quest University Canada*

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# FOREWORDS

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We Quest students write a lot of academic papers. Whether we are applying critical aesthetic theory to a novel, writing a mathematical proof of a ring theory theorem, or advocating for a certain political position, we are grappling with ideas and putting our thoughts on paper. As the Editorial Board of Momenta, we have the happy privilege of helping young scholars publish their work so that their ideas influence people outside of the classroom. We hope that you, the reader, take the time to engage with these thoughtful, well-crafted pieces, and that you share and discuss the ideas contained within.

This is Momenta's third year of operation, and many of us on the board have had the pleasure to contribute to Momenta in one way or another over all three years. We have seen Momenta grow from a young new project, trying to figure itself out, to a more mature enterprise on solid footing. We are so pleased to present Momenta's third volume. Essential to this were the efforts of numerous students including authors, reviewers, and editors. They should be proud of their work.

Though many of us are graduating, we are excited to see what next year's Editorial Board will do with Momenta; they have our utmost confidence.

Sincerely,

Daniel Herrmann  
Isabella Thorsteindottir  
Mack Marcotte  
Nigel McKenzie

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The university welcomes the latest edition of *Momenta* and the continuation of this important academic tradition showcasing the best work of our students. The journal is a reflection of some of the most thought-provoking, well-researched papers written by Quest's remarkable students and developed under the guidance of our outstanding tutors.

The path that eventually brought me to Quest University Canada began with research. My investigations in nuclear chemistry and rare isotopes led me to planetary science. The furthering of my inquiries in that field catalyzed a twenty-year research process that culminated in my participation in and completion of NASA's Mars Observer and Odyssey missions. When I became Pro-Vice Chancellor of Research at Victoria University of Wellington, I gained a deeper understanding of the pivotal role of research in higher education. The fundamental act underpinning the advancement of knowledge is research.

Once knowledge is codified in a textbook or a university course, it is hard to resist the almost gravitational pull of facts. However, the act of continually questioning and searching for answers, constantly pushing beyond the boundaries of what is known, is simultaneously more fluid and more fundamental to knowledge. To quote the original editorial board, the papers in *Momenta* can be regarded as contributions to our "continually evolving understanding of complex ideas." In my professional experience, there is no firmer footing that one can be upon in the pursuit of knowledge.

The students, staff, and tutors who have endeavored over the past three years to publish this academic journal are to be applauded for promoting the act of research as a fundamental principle of our university. Our founder, Dr. David Strangway, made it his life's work to build research capacity around the world for the betterment of society. I hope that the papers presented in this issue of *Momenta* serve, as the original editorial board intended, as the "indwelling forces" or "circumstances that precipitate change."



Peter Englert  
President & Vice-Chancellor  
Quest University Canada  
April 5, 2017

# Analyzing Media Coverage of the Yekîneyên Parastina Gel

Colin Wilt

Personal perspective is easily manipulated through the consumption of media. No example of this is clearer than that of the People's Protection Unit (YPG - Yekîneyên Parastina Gel). Turkey and the US, both NATO allies, clearly have separate views of the group known as the YPG. Turkey describes them as a “terrorist organization” while the United States prefers the description regional ally. The YPG is an armed extension of the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD – Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat) that operates to protect Kurdish territory in northern Syria. This Kurdish militant group has proven itself to be a key asset in the international fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS/ISIL). However, support for the PYD has not been universal. Turkey has been critical of international (US) backing of this militant group believed to be a threat to Turkish security. Polarizing characterizations of the YPG by American and Turkish media sources highlights how the public can unknowingly form biased opinions of groups based on incomplete information, provided by selectively shared information that creates a certain narrative that can bolster public support for action. Examining regional politics is essential to understanding potential media biases and the role these play in shaping public perception of political and militant groups.

The YPG has played an intricate and important role within the Syrian civil war by acting as a third party associated with neither the Syrian Government nor the main opposition (Free Syrian Army). Some speculate that organization began after the Syrian government cracked down on the city of Qamishli in 2004 (Gold, 2012). However, the only definitive point of origin is between 2011 and 2012 when the YPG began to participate in the Syrian civil war. In 2012, the YPG seized the town of Kobani from Syrian government troops, and soon expanded to the areas surrounding the city. After attacks by Islamic militants in these newly held areas, the YPG started focusing on securing all Kurdish territory. The YPG began to fight back against ISIL and other militant groups, showing promise in a sea of failures by government troops in both Iraq and Syria. By 2014, ISIL had pushed back against the YPG and besieged the city of Kobani, a critical city for the Kurdish militants. This coincided with the beginning of the US intervention in the region following large setbacks in Iraq for both allied government troops (Iraq) as well as the Kurds.

Defending Kobani proved critical to the YPG. The city

was both a symbolic and strategic city within Syria, and the resistance generated a frenzy of media coverage for the Kurdish struggle. Most analyses pointed to a quick win for the Islamic State. The international media continuously publicized atrocities against captives as ISIS pushed through Iraq and Syria, threatening international and regional security. The self-styled caliphate declared territorial ambitions in the Middle East, Africa, and promised to bring holy war to Europe. It seemed unbeatable without a large-scale international coalition intervention, something that seemed unlikely due to war fatigue in the United States and other NATO countries. The world watched, expecting yet another massacre, similar to the type ISIS committed against the Yazidi people (Al Jazeera, 2016). ISIS appeared to be winning the fight against the Kurds, suggesting a bleak outlook for the region. However, against expectations, YPG tenaciously defended the city of Kobani, accomplishing what no other group had been able to do: Kurdish militants stopped the monolithic growth of the Islamic State, prompting the US to seek them out as an ally. US commanders sent special operations troops to provide aid in the form of direct air strikes and tacit help. Within four months, the YPG and other Kurdish forces drove ISIS from Kobani and the surrounding region.

The fight over Kobani was the kind of fight over which the media could fixate. Situated close to the Turkish border, reporters began to relay the life and death struggle of the Kurds against the threat of slaughter by the Islamic State, casting the conflict as a black and white: a story of good versus evil. Headlines such as “US signs first historic military agreement with Kurds to fight ISIS” (Wilgdenburg, 2016) established an image of the YPG as a legitimate security force within the area. The stories cast the YPG as a group putting their lives on the line to protect their people against terrorists. When reports of massacres in Kobani emerged (Alkhshali, Elwazer, Smith-Spark, 2015), media coverage in the United States elevated the plight of the Kurds and the YPG as a besieged group to the point where the Kurds became synonymous with the conflict in Syria.

As positive media coverage poured into the US, demand for intervention increased and military support followed. As positive US perceptions of the YPG grew, the US role transitioned from tacit support of supplies to increased air strikes to the introduction of Special Operations troops to assist in combat against



ISIS militants. Money and weapons began to flow into the region as congressional leaders and the White House felt pressured into taking action to support the Kurds (Rogin, Lake, 2015). The defense of Kobani can be seen as a turning point in the war against the Islamic State. Before this time, US strikes had little effect in the region (mostly in Iraq). After the Kurds showed progress in their struggle, the US air campaign began yielding results as Kurdish ground troops used the strikes to their advantage, pressing ISIL troops back. While the YPG advanced, Turkey seemed unwilling to commit to military action in the chaos of the Syrian civil war while Iraqi troops still struggled to contain ISIL attacks. Suddenly, there appeared to be a winner in the region in the form of the YPG. Unlike other militant groups operating in Syria, YPG seemed to meet certain criteria other groups lacked, specifically with their being a democratic group whose purpose was not to destabilize the Syrian regime or impose religious beliefs on its subjugated territory, signaling they could be a good US ally (Stephens, Stien, 2015). The YPG became the best option for promoting US foreign policy within Syria.

Looking back on American media reporting of these events shows predominantly favorable coverage for the YPG, especially when casting the group as the champion against the enemy of the free world, the Islamic State. Similarly, other Islamic militant groups, such as the Free Syrian Army (FSA), also benefit from the positive press as they fought against ISIS regardless of the fact that they may have radical views similar to those of the Islamic State. Interestingly, the American media has not discussed the potentially destabilizing effects that a powerful Kurdish force could have on post-civil war Syria. Instead, US consumers of mass media have been primed to view the Kurds in a positive light.

The “priming” phenomenon is an especially interesting media effect because it confirms that people do, indeed, absorb information from news stories and use it to guide subsequent thinking. It also confirms the well-documented human preference for “satisficing” rather than “optimizing.” To save time and effort, most people tend to make judgments based on limited subsets of the information available to them (Iyengar 1991, Krosnick & Brannon 1993). If schema that has been recently primed by news stories allow them to form opinions, they prefer to probe no further (Anderson 1983). (Graber, 1993, 548)

This ‘priming’ effect suggests that the positive press associated with the YPG propagates itself as the US public seeks out related articles that reinforce these positive images. For example, the US backed the YPG and other Kurdish militant groups as strategic allies within the region, focusing on their key role in fighting terrorism and downplaying concerns about the effects on long-term security within the region, while distancing the YPG from associations as a terrorist organization, a claim being espoused in other parts of the world.

In contrast, the Turkish media is far more likely to have a negative view of the YPG due to Turkey’s regional policy on the Kurds, mainly because they view the YPG as a threat to Turkey’s security. For Turkey, the historical struggles against Kurdish militants has caused Turkey’s political leaders to cast the YPG in

a more negative light. By portraying the YPG in a negative light, the Turkish leadership is better able to manipulate public opinion in favor of action against the group. This technique is an example of Bernays’ term “engineering of consent”.

To function well, almost all organized groups elect or select leaders who usually remain in a controlling position for stated intervals of time. These leaders reflect their followers’ wishes and work to promote their interests. In a democratic society, they can only lead them as far as, and in the direction in which, they want to go. To influence the public, the engineer of consent works with and through group leaders and opinion molders on every level. (Bernays, 117)

By creating a strong narrative through government propaganda and negative press, the Turkish public is far more likely to fear that a strong Kurdish presence – particularly that of an increased presence on the Turkish border – could embolden members of other known terrorist groups such as the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK- Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê), an organization that is fighting to create an independent Kurdish zone within Turkey. The Turkish government’s policy for Syria does not include a united Kurdish movement near their border. Because of this, media sources portray all Kurdish militant groups negatively, using terms like “terrorist” to elicit a physical reaction among their reader base. For Turks, the YPG is not a “good” organization that is fighting against the “bad” ISIS. In fact, news articles on Hurriyet Daily News, a Turkish media site, often link articles on the YPG to articles on PKK attacks to try to create an association between the two (Hurriyet Daily News, 2016). This coverage builds a consistent narrative for Turkish policy within the region that the YPG is a threat to Turkish national security.

Examining different articles on the YPG shows how media sources effectively use language to paint specific images of the militant group. Obscure and vague language can erase or hide various ideological flaws that could open the group to criticism. Glowing statements elevate the group in the public domain to increase support and awareness. But whether obscure or glowing, this political language is deliberately designed to make the conversation about the YPG one dimensional. US officials and American media created a narrative of good versus evil in the Middle East, implying that the YPG is on the side of justice and can secure peace against a tyrannical threat where other nations have failed. By having prepared phrases and “buzzwords”, there is no gray space to really examine the YPG. This “gray” language has some severe implications. George Orwell talks about how political language is inherently vague.

As soon as certain topics are raised, the concrete melts into the abstract and no one seems able to think of turns of speech that are not hackneyed: prose consists less and less of *words* chosen for the sake of their meaning, and more and more of *phrases* tacked together like the sections of a prefabricated henhouse. (Orwell, 4)

As the narrative of the YPG continues, the American media persists in using the same phrases and idioms over and over again. The analogy of a prefabricated henhouse is apt: if all people hear

is the same repeated phrases, the public discourse on the militant group is constrained by the narrative and so has to be positive by nature. If no media source is reporting the ugly side, the negative aspects of the YPG will not enter into the consciousness of the US public.

Words and phrases that illustrate how the media crafts positive images of the YPG for US readers include 'key ally', 'critical to US efforts', 'best ground force against ISIS', etc (Browne, 2016; Tomlinson, 2016). Phrases such as these constrain the narrative of the YPG. While seemingly innocuous, there are consequences to this strategy (whether purposeful or not). One way to explain this is to use frames to examine media coverage.

Frames, then, *define problems-determine* what a causal agent is doing with what costs and benefits, usually measured in terms of common cultural values; *diagnose* causes-identify the forces creating the problem; *make moral judgments-evaluate* causal agents and their effects, and *suggest remedies-offer* and justify treatments for the problems and predict their likely effects. (Entmen, 2)

The way an issue is presented impacts how we respond to the situation. In this instance, the frame can be loosely arranged as such: The problem is that the Kurds are facing attack by ISIS. The diagnosis is that a group of people is facing annihilation (or threat) by an evil organization threatening their way of life. The moral judgment is that the US needs to support the YPG and Kurds against this threat. There are a variety of remedies to the situation; air strikes and arms drops are just two examples. While this framing example is a little bare, it is a decent setup for the next point. By constraining the issue by only using positive narratives for the YPG, a forced perspective is created.

A result of the one-sided portrayal of the YPG in the US is that any group opposing the YPG is by extension attacking an ally of the US, and will be painted in a negative light. This effect is apparent when observing a US ally in the region: Turkey. The country has been negatively portrayed in the American media for attacking Kurdish troops during Operation Euphrates Shield, as Turkish troops cleared ISIS from the Syrian-Turkish border. Once the operation began, it generated news that attacked the country's position. A Fox News article suggested that Turkey allowed ISIS operations within its borders for years with impunity. Once the YPG was making inroads against ISIS, Turkey committed to a more openly proactive position against ISIS (Mroue, 2016). Positive saturation of Turkish media in favor of the Kurdish militant group was found in multiple publications, evidence of this can be found in the BBC (BBC Monitoring Analysis, 2016) and a range of liberal and conservative leaning news organizations.

In stark contrast, Turkish media plays up the threat of Kurdish attacks, suspicious of a united Kurdish front operating so close to their border. The Turkish media claims that the Kurdish militants are a threat to Turkish security and the media is skeptical of US involvement with the YPG. In Turkey, where the threat of Kurdish terrorist acts is a real danger, media coverage of the YPG deeply affects Turkish citizens. Research shows that people assess danger to themselves through a range of factors, with media exposure often heightening their fears.

Most individuals do not assess threat to personal

and national security on the basis of direct experience but rather on the basis of more indirect forms of exposure. One of the most salient channels through which information and perceptions are gleaned is through mass media coverage of political events, which may mediate assessments of threat. However, the absence of neutrality in the majority of media reports has been cited by critics across the political spectrum (Giner-Sorolla and Chaiken 1994), suggesting that the public is exposed to biased coverage of political events that may influence attitudes and feelings in particular directions. (Slone, 2000, 519)

As a result of media exposure, Turkish citizens perceive the threat of a Kurdish attack as imminent even when no substantiated threat exists. While US coverage of the YPG is favorable, Turkish media links the YPG to the PKK, a real threat to Turkish national security.

One way that this media campaign has played out is through the sharing of pictures of the conflict. Pictures convey powerful messages. Thousands of miles away from a conflict, one can simply open an app on a mobile device to see what war looks like. As a medium, photography can do what words cannot. A good example of how images can sway influence is through studies on elections and of candidates. Pictures of candidates within an election are a salient example.

The conventions of photography, moreover, are themselves replete with signs. A full face photograph underlines the realistic outlook of the candidate, especially if he is provided with scrutinizing glasses. Everything there expresses penetration, gravity, frankness: the future deputy is looking squarely at the enemy, the obstacle, the 'problem'. A three-quarter face photograph, which is more common, suggest the tyranny of an idea: the gaze is lost nobly in the future, it does not confront, it soars, and fertilizes some other domain, which is chastely left undefined. (Barthes)

One might ask how an article about political elections is relevant to depictions of Kurdish militants fighting in Syria. A Google search produces different results depending on perspective. In American media outlets, the YPG is primarily featured through the YPJ, the female branch of the militant group. The Turkish media generally uses pictures of armed men on tanks or grim-faced leaders speaking to reporters to represent the YPG. The pictures often have them smiling into the camera, carrying machine guns, or waving Kurdish flags. There are few images of the YPJ engaged in combat operations, or of women casualties from combat unless we include pictures of women and children killed by Islamic militants. A Kurdish artist living in London gives the following account.

...describes what she calls the mainstream media's "fascination" with Kurdish women fighters as being rooted in capitalist structures. "In capitalist society, this is how money flows. The media will not portray women in the same light as men when it comes to war because it doesn't sell as greatly.

There always has to be some sort of sexualization or controversy attached,” (Chamseddine, 2014)

For Western media, it seems as though even though the YPJ are incredibly effective at fighting against ISIS, their use is as propaganda. Their smiles pose a counterbalance to the balaclava-wearing ISIS fighters. They are polar opposites in almost every way. It would not be a stretch to hypothesize that the use of women fighters in Western media is an attempt to generate interest and concern about the plight of the Kurds in international media. The use of the YPJ in a systematic propaganda role also indicates that the YPG is a progressive organization that does not seek to inhibit or enslave women but has Western-leaning values.

Politics drives the way media presents an issue. Media in the United States generally portrayed the YPG as a bastion of freedom in the chaos of the Syrian civil war. Using positive press and imagery of the YPJ, the American media projected an idealized organization of freedom fighters in contrast with the brutality of the Islamic State. Turkey, wary of a strong Kurdish power, generally portrayed the YPG as a destabilizing force in the Syrian conflict. These contrasting images are indicative of the differences in regional politics between the United States and Turkey. The US sees the YPG as the most effective group in the international efforts against ISIS. Turkey views the YPG with suspicion and links the militant group with known terrorist organizations.

Policy leaders have driven public discourse on the issue of security, and the media has been constant in building two separate narratives of a single organization. There is a forced perspective of black and white when the truth of the situation is very gray. This gray brings up a very relevant point: media has a huge influence on how we interact with the world. When we only are exposed to one aspect of a group, we tend to build the rest of the picture from those positive facts, creating a ‘positive’ or ‘negative’ group mentality. This creates a one-dimensional situation where all negative aspects are swept under the proverbial rug until a terrible situation is created. The US created the Taliban through funding the Mujahideen (freedom fighters) and dealt with the consequences during Operation Desert Storm and the later invasion and occupation of Afghanistan. In democratic countries, citizens are critical in the formation of policy. When there is misinformation or a deliberate message around a certain group or country, there is motivation to act against it. This can be seen in calls to bomb Iran, or in Turkish action against the YPG. There must be a renewed investment in media consumption to counterbalance this trend. Without looking past biases and stereotypes, one cannot truly understand the complexities of international relations, and so can call for misinformed and short sighted policies, resulting in unforeseen consequences across the globe.

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# Reading Science Fiction: A Case Study in What It Means to be Human

Cameron Carrick

The title of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* reveals its main theme: fakes imagining fakes. An android is a robot made to mimic humans; dreams are often a tool for interpreting the unconscious, and an electric sheep is a replicant designed to mimic the “real thing. From the title page, Philip K. Dick’s novel explores notions of alternate, “fake” “realities”.

This essay is about reading science fiction, and *Do Androids Dream* in particular, as powerful investigations into “the way the world works.” I borrow from Pramod Nayar’s critical posthumanism to sketch a picture of human experience as interactional subjectivity that is embedded across traditionally-drawn boundaries like self/other, human/machine, or real/fake.<sup>1</sup> This means reconsidering who we are, and performing this reconsideration on the very presupposition that we are a “who”.

In *Do Androids Dream*, World War Terminus has plunged Earth into barren desolation: the atmosphere is clogged with radiative dust, plants are rare, the mass extinction of animals created a prolific robot-animal market, and all “regular” and willing-to-pay<sup>2</sup> humans are refugees on colonized worlds.<sup>3</sup> “Under U.N. Law each emigrant automatically received possession of an android subtype of his choice,” to accompany and aid during the transition off-world (1: 16). Ironically, the androids—pejoratively dubbed “andys”—sometimes kill their masters and escape slavery to relative freedom on Earth. The role of police-affiliated bounty hunters like Rick Deckard is to “retire”—kill—returned androids (1: 117).

In the beginning of the novel, Rick Deckard is asked to retire six of the newest Nexus-6 androids. Deckard visits the android manufacturing company—the Rosen Corporation—to verify that his equipment works on the new androids. Afterward, he tracks down Luba Luft, an alleged andy, at the opera house where she performs (1: 84). Having made his way into her changing room, Deckard demands a Voigt-Kampff empathy test—the test to distinguish humans from androids (1: 100). Reluctant, Luba Luft asks Deckard, if “an android...doesn’t care what happens to

another android” and “your job is to kill them” doesn’t that mean that you “must be an android” (1: 101)? Deckard says that he has passed a Voigt-Kampff test and cannot, therefore be an android. Luft suggests that “maybe that’s a false memory” or perhaps “there was once a human who looked like you [Deckard], and somewhere along the line you killed him and took his place” (1: 102). Dismissively, Deckard presses on. The test goes awry: Luba feels sexually threatened by Deckard and calls another police officer. The responding officer, Officer Crams, takes Deckard to the police headquarters for questioning. To Deckard’s dismay, the headquarters to which he is delivered are in a different building (on Mission Street, not Lombard), employ a different staff, and use different android-discovering tests (1: 110-116). It seems there are “two parallel police agencies” (1: 113). Already, it’s unclear where real begins and fake ends.

During the investigation at the Mission Street Department, this “reality” doubling becomes more complex. Deckard learns that the detectives of the Mission Street police agency appear on his bounty list; they are all androids. Lead detective Garland confesses not only that he knows himself to be an android but also that he recognizes the andys on Deckard’s list and also—because they all came together from Mars to Earth—knows full well that Phil Resch, the Mission Street bounty hunter, is an android (1: 122). If we read Garland’s story truthfully, here’s what happened: having escaped from Mars, Garland and his compatriots (Luba Luft, Pris Stratton, Roy and Irmgard Baty, and Max Polokov) sought subtle, unseen spots in the strata of Earth society. Garland established a ‘self-contained loop [wherein] we [the androids] know about them [the humans] but they don’t know about us’ under the guise of a police station (1: 123). The Mission Street police station is a surveillance system for androids to keep tabs on their human neighbors. The question here is who, if anyone, has control, the creators or the created?

In the words of critical posthumanist scholar Pramod Nayar, the android police system is autopoietic. An autopoietic system is

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1. For a brief but more thorough overview of critical posthumanism and its history see Ferrando (2013 or 2014).

2. Like any quasi-post-apocalyptic tale, survival is not an equal access endeavor in *Do Androids Dream*.

3. As a result of the radioactive air, “loitering on Earth potentially meant finding oneself abruptly classed as [a special:] biologically unacceptable, a menace to the pristine heredity of the race. Once pegged as special, a citizen, even if accepting sterilization, dropped out of history. He ceased, in effect, to be part of mankind” (1: 16). Despite this, many “regulars” stayed on Earth, Rick Deckard among them.

a “unity<sup>4</sup>... [whose] properties are not the effect of the individual components of [the] system but rather the effect of the interactions of the components” (2: 37-8). Further, the components of the system are themselves the product of these interactions (2: 38). That is, the internal dynamics of a system determine how the system operates as well as define the system as something other than its environment or its neighboring systems (2: 39). In terms of the Mission Street police department, the various social, procedural, and survival-driven interactions among the components (i.e. the persons) are constitutive of the department as such. Without Resch, Garland, and so on, the station would not be a station. As the same time, without Deckard, Resch, and Garland, it would not be the Mission Street department. This accounts for the department’s double existence, as both veritable (to its component persons) and (to those who permeate its boundaries, like Resch, Deckard, and Garland) as a façade, simultaneously. As the novel progresses, more and more of its subjects find that what they originally saw as distinct boundaries are, at best, vague.

The moment when Resch discovers the “truth” about the Mission Street department is also the moment when he questions his own humanness (1: 127). After discovering that Garland was an android, Resch struggles to figure out how Garland was able to convincingly pass as human. Resch reasons that there are two options: either “at one time an authentic Garland existed...and somewhere along the way got replaced” or he was “impregnated with a false memory” (1: 127). Resch decides that, because “false memory systems [have] been found ineffective on humans,” it must be the case that the “real” Garland was killed and replaced with his “fake” (1: 127). If we also accept Garland’s tale that Resch was implanted with a false memory, we realize how convincing false memories actually are: enough to make Resch appear to himself as human.<sup>5</sup> Memory, here, becomes the condition of possibility for constructing oneself as human or android.

Nietzsche traces this idea of memory—as mnemonics to its roots in pain: “a thing must be burnt in so that it stays in the memory; only something that continues to hurt stays in the memory” (3: 38). For Nietzsche, pain is the material practice of enlightenment ascetic ideals; pain, as a type of memorializing learning, constructs the so-called “sovereign individual” who has the authority to inflict violence upon an “other” (3: 39-40). In the human/android relationship, who is the burner and who the burned? Who possesses “agency” over the “other”? Where Nietzsche’s critique of humanism renders morality an animalistic exchange of pain, Dick’s critique blurs the boundaries of master/slave, organism/machine, human/android, and fake/real. By tracing these broken binaries through the novel it becomes clear that *Do Androids Dream* operates on a principle akin to Nayar’s “alterity” (to which I turn below) (2: 50).

There are a number of things in *Do Androids Dream* that appear real but turn out “fake”. Beyond what I’ve already introduced—Deckard, the police stations, empathy—these include the owl owned by the Rosen corporation (1: 60), Rachael Rosen her/

itself (as we will see, Rachel is/was the template for all Nexus-6 androids), and Wilbur Mercer and it/his entire world (Mercerism is a religion of sorts that provides meaning to people’s daily lives).

When Deckard goes to the Rosen corporation to test Voigt-Kampf’s effectiveness on the newest, Nexus-6 androids, he is greeted by an owl. Initially, Deckard has a hard time determining for himself whether the owl is “real” or ersatz. Later, Deckard becomes confused by two competing authorities. On the one hand, Sidney’s, the catalogue of current animal prices and availabilities, says that owls are extinct. But Rachael, of the Rosen corporation, says that this owl is real; it has not been purchased from Sidney’s (1: 41). Deckard’s faith in Sidney’s leads him initially to doubt Rachael but, by the end, he submits to her authority and considers the owl as real. From two localized perspectives of competing authorities (Sidney’s and the Rosens), the owl is both real and fake simultaneously. Deckard, as an intermediary between the two, forces them into conversation. From Deckard’s perspective, then, and hence his confusion, the undecidable “truth” emerges: the owl is a contradictory living-machine.<sup>6</sup> Nayar’s perspective on systems biology resonates here. To summarize, a biological body emerges from the interactions and relations between elements of the body; systems biology studies how the parts interact with the whole (2: 49). Moreover, systems biology views the interactions of a systems components as necessarily including its environment. Systems biology can be applied conceptually so that, in terms of the owl, the parts are the two perspectives and the whole is the owl itself. Systems biology applies also to the larger relationships between animals, robot-animals, androids, and humans.

Is Rachael an android? Is Deckard a human? According to whom or what? When Deckard first meets Rachael Rosen he assumes that she is human but, after Voigt-Kampf testing, she is “proven” an android (1: 59). Rachael’s programming, like Phil Resch’s, is deep enough that she is not aware of her android build so it comes as a shock for her to learn of her origins (1: 59). So Rachael is, verifiably, an android. On the contrary, throughout Deckard’s relationship with Rachael, he treats her as both android and human. These ontological transitions, from Deckard’s point of view, stem largely from his own confusion about with whom/what he is or is not allowed to empathize. Deckard first realizes that he has begun to empathize with androids when he tests himself in the elevator with Phil Resch (1: 142). In bed, Deckard remarks that “legally you’re not [alive]. But really you are” (1: 198). Rachael’s double existence is not limited to Deckard’s eyes; she sees herself as having a mirrored existence. When she realizes that Pris is the same model type as her/itself, Rachael realizes “it’s an illusion that I—I personally—really exist; I’m just representative of a type” (1: 189). Moreover, this “identification” with Pris is a type of empathy, an emotional response reserved for the domain of the human (1: 189-90). Rachael’s ontological complexity is made explicit when Deckard confronts Pris. “As it [Pris] approached him, its arms reaching.... But the eyes, the same eyes. And there are more like this; there can be a legion of

4. “Defined as that which is distinguishable from a background, the sole condition necessary for existence in a given domain. The nature of a unity and the domain in which it exists are specified by the process of its distinction and determination.”

5. It is worth noting again that Luba Luft accused Deckard of being an android with the same reasoning: “maybe there was once a human who looked like you, and so where along the line you killed him and took his place” (1: 102).

6. Like a zombie, both dead and alive.

her, each with its own name, but all Rachael Rosen.... He fired at her as, imploringly, she.... The android burst and parts of it flew" (1: 221). The switching pronouns in this passage show that Pris/Rachael is both a "her" and an "it". Here the question of who is a "who" and what a "what" is unanswerable. The passage also exposes Rachael's clandestine coitus: readers learned earlier that Rachael was sent to delay Deckard's bounty hunter-related tasks by seducing him. On the one hand, Rachael can empathize towards Deckard: "if I entered a room and found a sofa covered with your [Deckard's] hide I'd score very high on the Voigt-Kampf test" (1: 194) and on the other, her empathy is revealed as a ploy to stall Deckard in his quest to retire the Nexus-6 androids (1: 183). Does empathy demarcate human from android? Moreover, Rachael was "the prototype used by the manufacturer to protect the others" and therefore served as the template to create all of the similar androids (1: 221). If the "master" form of android is capable of empathy, human-like memories, and so on, what does it mean to create a "race" of androids from this mold? "Have not its thoughts been suggested in the bone?" (4: 00:02:38). The boundaries between Rachael-as-human and Rachael-as-android have deteriorated.

In similar ways, Deckard too is both android and human. I've already hinted at this but will expand here. When Deckard sleeps with Rachael he is, in his mind, doing what only humans can do: empathize. But he's doing it as a moral violation that might construe him as sub-human (1: 193). Furthermore, why would a human need a mood organ and Mercerism in order to feel empathy? Let it suffice to say that when Deckard says that he "broke down...and had to call [Rachael]" he is only speaking a half colloquialism (1: 198). Deckard is also unconsciously referencing—"the conduits of his brain humming, calculating, and selecting"—his "android" materiality (1: 124). For both Rachael and Deckard, it is unclear where the boundaries for the human and android lie but also unclear what role each of them play within the larger system of android/human relations. What does a bounty hunter represent? What does it mean to be the prototypical form for a "race" of androids?

Before addressing those questions, there is one clear thing about the system in which these characters find themselves: the system of constructs that make humans and androids appear as such functions on alterity.<sup>7</sup> Nayar views "alterity (...and its concomitant characteristic, difference) as constitutive", meaning alterity is the 'source' that construes things as such (2: 51). "The system is not closed operationally to the environment—on the contrary, the environment has a very real "agency"... in the system's reconstitution of itself" (2: 51). This adds to the discussion of autopoiesis by emphasizing that autopoietic systems cannot operate in isolation but rely on ongoing interaction. Moreover, "the human-machine interaction [is] mutually constitutive, and

subjectivity [is] a hybridized condition that emerges in this interaction when the 'subject' accounts for the alterity that is the machine, in-corporates it into itself" (2: 52-53). While an android de-humanizes itself so too do the humans de-androidize themselves; the android and the human are no-things in and of themselves; rather, they are categories that arise from a series of interrelations between 'self' and "other".

The bounty hunter stands in between human and android and in many ways represents Nietzsche's higher man. Phil Resch says "all the bounty hunters—we stand between the Nexus-6 and mankind, a barrier which keeps the two distinct" (1: 141). In "On the Higher Man" Zarathustra addresses the higher men who will enact a becoming *Übermensch* (overhuman): the higher men must become "rulers" to "overcome" the human and are praised for "despising" (5: 231-232). Indeed, the tests of the bounty hunters—their rule—are often used as justification for murder—a literal "overcoming" (5: 231-32). But which one is the animal and which one the *Übermensch*? This is where *Do Androids Dream* departs from Nietzsche's latent teleology. Because the categories of android and human emerged from alterity it is impossible to claim one as "higher" than the other.

Finally, I turn to kipple and Mercerism as fodder for understanding alterity. Mercerism is a material practice of a type of Enlightenment humanism.<sup>8</sup> The first in-depth perspective on Mercerism comes when J.R. Isidore<sup>9</sup>—a "special" living alone on the fringe of the city—"grasp[s] the twin handles" of his "black empathy box" and a "visual image congealed," showing "one single figure, more or less human in form, toil[ing] its way up the hillside" (1: 21-22). Momentarily after grasping the handles, J. R. Isidore himself enters into the Mercerian world and becomes the one walking up the hill. Likewise, everyone in the universe who grasps the handles at the same time joins in the merger. The "fusion of their mentalities oriented their attention on [one thing:] the hill, the climb, the need to ascend" (1: 22). The merger represents the Enlightenment idea of mind/body dualism where man, if only he were separate from his body, could achieve salvation. The ascent almost represents the humanistic telos of progress but differs in one way: characters must return again and again to the ascent, making it more of a cyclic, Nietzschean eternal return than actual telos. Moreover, Mercerism is a counter-force to kipple. "Kipple is useless objects, like junk mail or match folders after you use the last match or gum wrappers or yesterday's homeopage. When nobody's around, kipple reproduces itself.... It's a universal principle operating throughout the universe; the entire universe is moving toward a final state of total, absolute kippleization.... Except of course for the upward climb of Mercerism" (1: 65-66). This quote shows that there is a "natural" order of things from which humans—or at least Mercerians—are exempt. Mercerians are the singular force operating in opposition

7. For those unfamiliar with this term, it speaks to a concept of otherness as being constitutive of subjectivity. Alterity is not a property, quality, or possession; it can't be lost or rad. Rather, alterity recognizes, in spatial terms, the condition of our being as an arising (via autopoiesis in Nayar's argument) from the "chaosmos" or milieu of our surrounding networks.

8. One way that Mercerism fails to represent Enlightenment humanism is that shortly after Mercerian merging "a rock, hurled at him [J. R. Isidore], stuck his arm"—this happens to every character who merges in *Do Androids Dream*. (1: 23). The rock draws blood each time it strikes, showing the Mercerians a strangely tangible link between the "real" world and Mercer's and reminding them of their inescapable embodiment. This aligns with the critical posthuman perspective on embodiment (2: 9).

9. J.R. Isidore, like many of the characters in *Do Androids Dream*, is only vaguely human. When he recalls his upbringing, he can't recall whether or not it was "on Earth or a colony world" (1: 24). Moreover, Isidore seems to be the only character who expresses empathy for every person he encounters (except, perhaps, Deckard).

to the “natural” degradation of the universe. Materially, kipple is a metaphor for the system of capitalist waste-production that threatens the sanctity of our biosphere. For a globe whose inhabitants live amongst the very tangible “entropic” dissolution of matter towards chaos, kipple is an everyday reality (1: 20). Dick and Nietzsche are making similar observations about the unfeasibility of viewing the earth as a readily exploitable resource (5). More basically, though, kipple is like a quantum field of differing, deferring; a network of difference from which things arise (*a la* alterity). “The First Law of Kipple [is that] “Kipple drives out non-kipple” (1: 65). It is precisely this play between two binary ontologies that makes Mercerism and kippleization appear. In Nayar’s terms, the ‘so-called Other is constitutive of the self, the Other is incorporated into the self” (2: 76).

J. R. Isidore has a cunning intuition about the material practices of Mercerian ideology. Reflecting on the various viewpoints he receives—from the radio character of Buster Friendly to Mercerism—Isidore decides that “they’re [all] fighting for control of our psychic selves” (1: 75). In a very real sense, the competing ideologies that confront Isidore and the other characters are brainwashing forces. When Isidore is grasping the handles of his empathy box he feels free and connected to all other humans (1: 22). Žižek critiques democracy for containing a latent dictatorship as “the invisible order which sustains your apparent freedom” (6: 00:04:53). Likewise, the subjects of Mercerism feel free but are constrained by forces they cannot see. The character development in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* progresses similarly to John Nada in *They Live*: throughout the book, the characters become aware of the ideologies at play in their world (7: 00:06:15).

The final ontological blurring for the characters of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* is of the worlds themselves. The Mercerian world that persons experience when they merge is “painted” (1: 207) and Wilbur Mercer himself “is not a human, does not in fact exist,” but is merely the rendition of a movie set (1: 209). Contrarily, Deckard, somewhat dazed and confused<sup>10</sup>, travels to the “uninhabited desolation to the north” (1: 227). In the demolished rocky deserts of southern Oregon, Deckard *lives* the storyline from his Mercerian mergings: “I am Wilbur Mercer; I’ve permanently fused with him” (1: 233). Deckard claims to have *become* the ideology of his time. With astounding acuity, Deckard perceives the alterity that is the “true” structure of his world. We are all “only fragments of crates..., containers which signify nothing in themselves” (1: 228).

In the end, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* suggests that human experience is not summarized as easily as “there is a world out there that I get to decide how to interact with”. On the contrary, our experience of ourselves as ‘selves’ or “human”—or our experience of “things” as inert material—are fictions, albeit fictions with real consequences. *Do Androids Dream* explores these fictions; it asks what is this thing I call “me”? Who “are” we to call us “us” and them “them”? It goes beyond asking “how ought I respond to the world around me?” by destabilizing the meaning of those categories so easily defined by “I”, “around” or “world”. Lastly, we’re challenged to investigate the parameters by which we construct our very real dreams.

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10. “Everything is true. Everything anybody has ever thought” (1: 227).

# The Issue of the Fused Twins: The Consequence of Metaphysical Vagueness on our Understanding of Life's role in Composition

Amanda Nordh

Metaphysics investigates puzzles of existence.<sup>1</sup> It is the study of *being qua being*—that is, studying the most general properties and relations of things. The general properties and relations are considered not insofar as they are manifested in a particular object or set of objects, but rather insofar as they must belong to all objects insofar as they exist. One classic metaphysical question investigates existence from the perspective of persistence through an analogy of an ancient ship called the Ship of Theseus, on which we routinely change planks in reparation. After a few years, when every single plank has been replaced on the ship, is it still the same ship? In his book *Material Beings*, Peter van Inwagen presents a comprehensive metaphysical theory on composite material objects, and his quest is centered on the relations between parts in virtue of which something comes into existence. This is called the special composition question, and I will present it in formal terms shortly.

I will begin this critique of van Inwagen's theory by giving a brief context for the issues dealt with in his book. He introduces his metaphysics by raising questions about existence. Firstly, what is a material object? That is, an object made of matter as opposed to a virtual object (unicorns) or a principle (friendship). Secondly, if the composition of an object changes over time, is it still the same object (e.g. the Ship of Theseus)? Lastly, if we were able to take a ship apart at location A and send its composition to place B,<sup>2</sup> and there put it back together – would we have the same ship? Van Inwagen takes these and other issues to be central to his investigation of material objects as they are connected to issues of construction of an object from its parts (18). His book includes the examination of a number of different principles as possible

answers to the fundamentals of how and when composition happens. His investigation of composition of material objects starts at the level of the parts, as he argues it to be easier to move from the small upward (at what point do planks compose something?) than it is to move from the object downward (when is a plank a part of a ship?) (21). This means he wants to leave the complex object in the background and focus on the parts<sup>3</sup> that make up that object, so that he can hone in on the conditions under which these parts relate to each other in such a way that they compose something. Van Inwagen is not attempting to answer a question of how particular composite objects such as whales or ships come about. He rather wants to focus on the relation between the parts within that object to describe the process bringing about existence in general and not simply the process bringing about a whale or a ship in particular. In other words, he wants to investigate precisely the mutual relationship between the parts that “bind them together into a whole” (21).

For van Inwagen, only the process of “life” is an adequate condition for the composition of material objects (so no issues of the persistence of ships for him). This position has the consequence that he acknowledges the existence of humans and cats, but rejects the existence of tables and chairs as objects<sup>4</sup>. Due to his rejection of the *Definitude* principle and thus the extreme answer, vagueness is at the heart of van Inwagen's answer to his special composition question.<sup>5</sup> This requires him to acknowledge that his answer will be fundamentally vague. Vagueness is, as I will show, ultimately incompatible with one of the marks<sup>6</sup> (defining features) he uses to describe “life” – a concept at the heart of

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1. Aristotle looked at it an attempt at identifying the first causes, what he called the Unmoved Mover. It is more generally referred to as the study of *being qua being* - being of things that exist in so far as they exist, without regard to their particular manifestations. It is a foundational philosophy grounding conceptions of morality and the sciences, in that it investigates relationships preceding the subject matter of later disciplines such as the nature of time and existence, and is in some cases expanded to include the study of the mind and body distinction and their relation in the human being, as well as the nature of the will as well as freedom of the will (Loux, 1-16).

2. This is a scenario of teleportation, and is interested in the nature of existence for a teleported object before and after being teleported.

3. Part here being used in the colloquial sense of the word. The term part will be refined later on.

4. Van Inwagen refers to these non-objects rather as collections of simples in a table or chair receptacle (105).

5. The *Definitude* principle states that you can know with certainty whether the object exists or not after rearranging its parts. The extreme answers, *Nihilism* and *Universalism*, will also briefly be treated later.

6. This is the notion of jealousy, which states that all parts of an object are unique to that object and are not participating in the composition of any other object. The event that is life is also marked by the subordination of the cells participating in that life to the organism (the life) that they participate in composing. This is true of all cells in our body, except tumor cells. They go rogue and seize to work for the life and instead start composing a new unit. However, as this essay will argue, the vagueness van Inwagen's rejection of *Definitude* allows for results in the admittance of cases where it is clear that all cells of a body are not subordinate to the life they are participating in. I will expand on these principles as well as the contradiction later, but wanted to provide introductory definitions of these principles here for the guidance of my reader.



his answer for the conditions of composition.

Van Inwagen's presentation of his theory is guided by two main questions<sup>7</sup>. The first is called the special composition question (SCQ), and it asks "when is it true that there exists a  $y$  such that the  $x$ s compose  $y$ ?" (30). This question asks under which conditions a composite object exists. Another iteration of it is: "in what circumstances is a thing a proper<sup>8</sup> part of something?" (20). Composite objects are objects that are made out of parts that are smaller than the whole, such as cells in a body. This question is designed to focus on what is required for these proper parts to come together and create something (21).

In this essay I examine how Peter van Inwagen's theory of material object deals with problems of metaphysical vagueness. I am going to show that the metaphysical vagueness that van Inwagen's theory acknowledges leads to problems with the marks (i.e. defining features) he has given of life if it is not adjusted. This is particularly true in his notion of jealousy and cell subordination.<sup>9</sup> I will illustrate the problems with the marks through a close analysis of one of the examples discussed by van Inwagen when dismissing the simple bonding answers to his SCQ – the scenario of the fused twins, Alice and Beatrice.

I will begin with a brief introduction to van Inwagen's rejection of the extreme answers to his main question about composition (the SCQ) and thereby show why he chooses a moderate answer. Secondly, I will draw out the two types of philosophical vagueness dealt with in his book, and explain why a moderate answer has to accept the existence of the rather uncomfortable metaphysical vagueness. Thirdly, I will briefly explain his moderate answer,<sup>10</sup> and show how he deals with the issue of vagueness through arguing that a composite object (an organism) has inherently fuzzy boundaries and is thereby composed of fuzzy sets whose members partake in that set to varying degrees. Lastly, I will examine the consequences of organisms being composed of fuzzy sets in light of the particular example, the twins Alice and Beatrice being fused at the wrist. I will thereby demonstrate that the theory he presents fails to be consistent when accepting both the notion of lives having fuzzy edges, and being fully jealous

with all its simples subordinate to it, at the same time.

The issue of vagueness is an inherent part of any moderate answer to the SCQ ("when is it true that  $\exists y$  the  $x$ s compose  $y$ ?"<sup>11</sup> (30).) To demonstrate this he examines two extreme answers, Universalism<sup>12</sup> and Nihilism.<sup>13</sup> Both Universalism and Nihilism are sweeping and definite answers, in that the former maintains everything (every possible set of simples in the universe) composes something (74), and the latter states that there are no composite objects whatsoever, anywhere, and thus results in the conclusion that no composite objects exist – there are only physical simples (i.e atoms of the elements in the periodic table) (72). Although these answers cause no issues of vagueness and thus firmer notions of existence,<sup>14</sup> van Inwagen ultimately considers their consequences for composition severe enough to reject them as implausible<sup>15</sup> (73,80). The rejection of the extreme answers entails the rejection of the *Definitude* principle, and thus a rejection of metaphysical clarity. *Definitude* is a principle that states that composite objects will either be definitely there or definitely not there after having had all its pieces rearranged in any possible way (230). Thus, presuming we rearrange the planks in our Ship of Theseus, *Definitude* would allow us to state whether or not the ship is still there after this rearrangement. This principle maintains that there is always a precise answer available as to whether or not a composite object exists, and thus states that composition, as a metaphysical phenomenon, is precise and not vague. The rejection of the extreme answers leads him to reject *Definitude* and by consequence accept vagueness as an inherent part of composite objects – hence acknowledging a metaphysical vagueness.

Metaphysical vagueness arises from the rejection of *Definitude* because without this principle we are unable to firmly state whether or not something exists after a rearrangement. This is drawn out through an example of the rearrangement of a pile of bricks, where *Definitude* allows us to be certain as to whether there is a pile of bricks after rearrangement or not (230). This example also serves to draw out the distinction between two types of vagueness. The notion of a pile is linguistically vague as

7. This essay will focus only on the special composition question (SCQ), given the general composition question (GCQ) is determined unanswerable by van Inwagen unless one accepts the principle of Definitude and thereby takes the position of one of the "extreme answers". The GCQ asks "what is composition?" (39).

8. A proper part is a concept that corresponds to our everyday notion of part, as in a part of the whole but not the whole itself. Proper parts are also sometime referred to as "independent subunits" of the whole. The word "part" can be used to refer to the whole, but "proper part" cannot. For example, all cells in my body are proper parts of me. I am also a part of myself (but not a proper part) given without me there would be no me.

9. Lives are *jealous* means that all the proper parts of that life are unique to it, and thus two lives cannot share proper parts. *Cell subordination* is the concept that each cell that is part of an organism is working for the sustainment and composition of that organism, and its activity is thus subordinate to that organism.

10. That is, it is an answer that is neither of the extremes. This means that the moderate answers are less sweeping – in fact none of them is able to answer his general composition question (what is composition?).

11. This is the articulation of the SCQ in formal logic, and it says "when is it true that there exists a  $y$  such that the  $x$ s compose  $y$ ?", where the  $x$ s are proper parts of the composite object  $y$ .

12. Universalism says that all composite objects always and already exist whether they are in fact put together or not. This means that for any number of  $x$ s there is an abstract object we can imagine being composed of the sum of them (74). He rejects this answer on the basis of two theses. Firstly, the theory is not intuitive given that it makes it so that an atom from the sun, together with those in my sock and my liver compose an object that exists separately from me. Secondly, it goes against six theses that he holds to be plausible, three of which are: "I exist now and I existed ten years ago", "I am an organism and have always been an organism", and "every organism is composed of (some) atoms (or other) at every moment of its existence." (75). These are incompatible with universalism given that the persistence of objects comes into question when any collection of atoms is considered an object. The sock-liver-sun object is considered a current object, even though these parts are all spatially separate.

13. Nihilism maintains that everything that one thinks is a composite object is nothing but elementary particles – which are considered physical simples rather than composite materials (72). That is, when nihilists talk about you, they really are talking about a collection of atoms and not a composite object. He rejects this by stating that since you and I exist and are composite objects, this theory must be false (73).

14. Nihilism even provides an answer to the unanswerable GCQ (what is composition?): there is no composition.

15. In short, he sees these answers as non-intuitive and too sweeping. This is because both nihilism and universalism assert composition never and always (respectively) to be happening between simples to form an object. This leads to metaphysical issues of great magnitude as illustrated in previous footnotes.

well as metaphysically vague. I am going to start by illustrating the linguistic vagueness, which means that it is difficult to know when to appropriately apply a term to describe an object. In this sense, vagueness can be described as semantic indecision (232). Linguistic vagueness illustrates the difficulty in knowing exactly when to refer to a group of bricks as a pile. Does it take five bricks, ten bricks, or do we need a hundred? This problem arises given the concept of a pile is linguistically vague and therefore fundamentally relative to the speaker's subjective notion of when to apply the term. Linguistic vagueness, therefore, does not arise from the object itself, but rather the confusion in people applying the same term in reference to different objects. Thus the understanding of what a pile is will never be precise by learning the term.

The other sense of vagueness, metaphysical vagueness, arises from the philosopher who, like van Inwagen, rejects *Definitude* and the extreme answers that encompasses this principle (235). These philosophers are, when looking at the example of the pile of bricks, faced with the reality that objects can be vague in themselves, regardless of the terms used to describe them (233). In the example of the brick pile, this means that without *Definitude* we cannot definitely say whether the pile *is there* or not after rearranging it, and must therefore deal with the problem of not being able to tell at which point - with the addition of which brick - the group of bricks *is* a pile<sup>16</sup>. Through illustrating this metaphysical vagueness with the pile example, van Inwagen can continue by saying that the vagueness of composition, arising by rejecting *Definitude*, persists, and will be an inherent part of any composite object given any moderate answer (235).

Van Inwagen's answer to the SCQ says that " $\exists y$  the  $x$ s compose  $y$  if and only if the activity of the  $x$ s constitutes a life<sup>17</sup> (or there is only one of the  $x$ s)"<sup>18</sup> (82). Thus, all composite objects are living. He gives a number of marks for this event that is life. In order to illustrate his marks of life he introduces the idea of a club of automata<sup>19</sup>. This club is sustained by the continuous acquiring of automaton parts that replace worn down parts. The members of the club are brainwashed upon entering the club so that they will only act for the betterment of the club and not as individual agents (thus they become subordinate to the club). Due to this, the club functions by the members themselves being sent out to acquire said parts. Thereby, the event of a life<sup>20</sup> is illustrated as continuous through time and through the replacement of physical particulars (i.e. particular automaton members) (84-87). This helps showcase how the life of an organism is an activity with certain marks. The marks of this activity (life) are that it is self-maintaining (it repairs itself), which is illustrated in the above automaton analogy through each member working to acquire parts that can repair its own or other automatons proper parts.

Life is also jealous (its proper parts are not shared with another organism), given that all the proper parts of life work only for the sustainment of that life. In our analogy, this principle is illustrated by the fact that the automatons are members only of one club, and thus none of their actions help facilitate the repair of any other clubs. Lastly, life is described as well-individuated (it is a path through space and time), meaning that it cannot be conflicted with any other club given its trajectory through time and space is unique to it.

An essential component of rejecting *Definitude* is that van Inwagen must acknowledge a fundamental metaphysical vagueness in his answer to the SCQ. In order to account for this, he continues by saying that in order to be a part of this event that is life, a particle has to be "caught up" in the activity of the life. He explains this concept by drawing out an example of Alice drinking a cup of tea with a dissolved sugar cube in it. In this liquid there are (among others of course) a carbon atom and a strontium atom. The carbon atom goes into Alice's body, through the digestive tract, through the intestinal wall and into her bloodstream. It in fact travels all the way through her blood to her lungs where it gets breathed out in a carbon dioxide molecule (94). Through the course of traveling through her body it was caught up in her life, as it partook in the circulation and was oxidized at several stages. The strontium atom, on the other hand, simply went down her throat, travelled around her circulatory system a few times, and then was excreted by her lower intestine (95). This atom was never caught up in her life given that it never partook in any essential life activity, such as oxidizing. When looking closely at this example, we can see how the vagueness of composition is inherent in the concept of being "caught up" in a life. This can be illustrated by returning to the automaton example above. As the club's members go out scouting for repair parts to bring back to the club, the point at which that part becomes caught up in the club is metaphysically vague. Is the part "caught up" once it is picked up, or does this require it to be attached to an automaton? This question does not seem to have a clear answer.

Although it is fairly easy to illustrate the difference between participating in a life or not when one sees it, it is very hard to say exactly when an atom begins to participate in a life (217). Is the carbon atom in this example caught up from the moment Alice swallows it? Is it caught up first when it is oxidized? Van Inwagen addresses this issue by concluding that the notion of "being caught up in" is a matter of degree, and is thereby a fundamentally vague condition (217). This compositional vagueness seems to present a problem in determining what set of simples are part of an organism at any given time, as there are conceivably many possible sets present that are all equally able to be the one

16. A reader may not be convinced that we need to worry about metaphysical vagueness with piles, given a pile is really nothing but a term we apply when we see fit. However, this example is used simply to illustrate the difference between these types of vagueness. The impact of acknowledging metaphysical vagueness will become clear when looking at living organisms, where we will understand that metaphysical vagueness results in indecision about what is part of an organism and what is not.

17. Van Inwagen uses *life* in the most narrow, biological sense of the word (83). When speaking of a life, he uses the word to mean the process that takes place under that person's skin that keeps them running, and which, when stopped, results in that person's death. Life is a biological event.

18. Which is the formal logic symbolization of the statement "There exists a  $y$  such that the  $x$ s compose  $y$ , if and only if the activity of the  $x$ s constitutes a life (or there is only one of the  $x$ s). This means that for van Inwagen, the process of life is what constitutes composition and thus what binds the proper parts of that object to the whole.

19. A moving mechanical device made in imitation of a human being.

20. Van Inwagen considers these automata to be analogous to the cells of our body in the sense that they are self-maintaining and autonomous, but subordinate to the life they are participating in (that is, the club of which they are members).

composing the organism<sup>21</sup> (214-215).

This problem of determining the set of atoms that composes Alice's body is called *the problem of the many*. Van Inwagen sees this problem of the many, given by Peter Unger, as non-applicable to his theory as it reflects a misunderstanding of composition (221). He rejects that there is a set containing the atoms that compose a person, given that composition and the concept "caught up" are inherently metaphysically vague. This means there cannot be a set in which the objects compose an organism "any more than there can be a set that contains just exactly the men who are tall" (218). By introducing the concept of fuzzy sets – f-sets – he is able to account for the difference between the carbon and the strontium atom without ignoring metaphysical vagueness. An f-set has membership as a matter of degree (221). He describes that membership in classical set theory is definite – either 0 (not a member) or 1 (fully a member) (221). In a fuzzy set, degree of membership can range between these two definite degrees of membership, where the closer the member gets to degree 1 the closer it is to being a definite member of that set (222). In our previous example of the strontium and carbon atoms, this would mean that the strontium is never a member and thus caught up to degree 0 throughout the process of passing through the body. The carbon atom, on the other hand, begins at degree 0, but as it begins participating in the body's circulatory system it is caught up to some degree greater than 0. Eventually, as the atom is breathed out of the body, its membership falls to degree 0 again. Therefore, this notion of fuzzy sets allows van Inwagen to present a solution to the issue of metaphysical vagueness in existence that has arisen in his theory as a result of the rejection of the certainty principle *Definitude*. This notion of membership in a life seems coherent given what we know about the process of a life, but does accepting that lives are composed of fuzzy sets in any way impact his definition of life?

To extend the previous statement of jealousy as a mark of life, the definition van Inwagen gives for life includes the notion that life does not share its parts with other organisms, thus asserts each cell of a life to be uniquely "caught up" in that life. This means that a life must be the only event in which its simples take part at any given time, and so lives cannot overlap or share parts. He says that under no conditions can a simple be caught up in two lives at once (89). When accepting metaphysical vagueness and the notion of fuzzy sets at the same time as maintaining that lives are jealous, it seems they are incompatible. Let's look at an example of twins, Alice and Beatrice, who have been fused at the wrist (59). What is going on in the fuzzy edge that is the fused part of them? Would this be a case in which some cells, specifically the ones at the fuzzy border between the organism Alice and the organism Beatrice, are caught up in both lives at once? The cells in the fused section of the twins are partaking in composing and maintaining the tissue and skin that is right there. But whose skin would that be? It seems as if these cells are caught up in the

intersection of two lives, and maintaining the border of these two organisms – are they then not caught up in any life but caught up in the intersection? That seems unlikely – a position I will expand upon in the following paragraph. It is not likely that any cell is caught up in both lives to degree 1.0, but it is conceivable that some are caught up in both to a degree less than 1.0. This would present a scenario in which a cell is caught up in two lives at once and thus violates one of van Inwagen's marks of life – jealousy.

The proposition that the cells at the intersection of Alice and Beatrice would not be caught up in any life seems unlikely given the notion of jealousy as a mark of life. Van Inwagen speaks of a life as being an event that has living parts composing it, all of which are all subordinate to it. He says, for example, that a life starts first when the cells in a growing embryo are no longer living independently but are subordinate to the event of a life and collectively working to maintain that life (154). This suggests that if the cells at this intersection are not subordinate to one or the other of the twins, the cells would be living their own independent life and thus could not be considered caught up in anyone else's life (these cells would thus be acting for the interests of themselves and the effect would be tumor-like). In the case of Alice and Beatrice, whose life would he say the cells at the intersection are subordinate to? The cell that is caught up to a degree less than one in two lives, does not seem subordinate to any one life.

This leads me to conclude that if taken as first presented, the notion of jealousy and cell subordination does not hold in the face of metaphysical vagueness. Van Inwagen's presentations of jealousy and subordination are too strict and have to be adjusted if his moderate answer "Life" is going to avoid direct contradiction. This means that if van Inwagen is to acknowledge fuzziness as an inherent feature of composition, it follows that he has to adjust his notion of the jealousy of lives. Overall, van Inwagen's theory of material objects can deal with issues of metaphysical vagueness presented by me in a functional manner if he adjusts his marks of life after acknowledging metaphysical vagueness of composition.

Although van Inwagen's text, as it stands, has serious problems due to the fact that conceiving of composition in terms of fuzzy sets and jealousy is incompatible, I believe his theory can withstand my concerns if it is slightly adjusted. To my objection, he could respond by adjusting his notion of jealousy and say it is ultimately more relaxed than it was made out to be as it was first presented.<sup>22</sup> Lives are thus not fully jealous, but mostly jealous. The way he presents the notion of jealousy is too strong, but he can relax the notion of jealousy as a mark of life without rejecting his theory. Thus van Inwagen's theory can withstand my criticism although he will have to adjust the theory to do so. Living organisms are necessarily mostly jealous because they cannot share organs or heart-lung system, given that doing so would make them a singular self-maintaining event rather than two separate ones, and would thus lead to the direct elimination of another defining

21. There are many possible sets that could be composing the organism given there are atoms that are, so to speak, on their way in or out of that set. Many of the cells, and atoms composing said cells, of a body are coming and going on and off that body. Such as the carbon atom in the example above, where it seems as if it was on its way to being caught up, and the point at which that happens seems indeterminate. There are also of course atoms that are on their way to being breathed out and thus on the way to stop being caught up.

22. With the notion of "caught up in" he explains having first described it in a firmer manner to build up his theory and assert what he means in a clear manner, fully intending to relax it when presenting the issue of vagueness in later chapters of the book (220). He could do the same thing with his concepts of jealousy and subordination.

feature of life's existence (existence as in *being qua being*). Most of the cells that are caught up in a life are therefore subordinate to that life, and caught up to degree 1.0. The cells at the fuzzy borders of a life, however, he would say are caught up to a degree less than 1.0 and thereby not fully subordinate to an organism. It also seems<sup>23</sup> that when different lives do share cells, and these cells cease to be subordinate to any one organism, they continue to work to compose and maintain the section of the organism they live in. This can be seen as being subordinate to the process of life as a concept of composition, in that the cells at this intersection are subordinate to the task of composing a body – regardless of whose body that is. Given these adjustments, van Inwagen's theory of composition stays metaphysically consistent albeit controversial.

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23. I use the term “seems” in the sense that in my hypothetical, logically consistent thought experiment, it is convincing that in any possible world (limited to the same logical necessity as this one), lives can share cells at their intersections that do not turn cancerous.

# Who Is Heard?

## A Critical Analysis on the Media Coverage of Idle No More

Madelyn Read

A growing concern in media studies is the standardization of news content: that is, the homogenous, formulaic production of news that results in mainstream news sources producing the same stories and presenting them in similar ways (1, 2, 3). According to Gamson et al. (1992), this standardization stems from a concentration of media ownership (1). Paul Nesbitt-Larking explains that this concentration is particularly relevant in Canada because “of all the capitalist countries, Canada has the highest concentration of [corporate] media ownership in the world.” Further, he illuminates the fact that corporate media ownership directly correlates to political power (2). Lance Bennett (2012) focuses on media standardization through an analysis of journalistic methods and asserts that formulaic approaches to researching and reporting produce homogenous news stories. His concern is that this homogenization excludes important voices that could provide more diverse perspectives or challenge false claims that would otherwise be taken as truth (3). To explore the effects of news standardization and homogenization in Canada, I examine the media coverage of the Idle No More movement.

Idle No More was a Canadian Indigenous movement that took place predominantly during the winter and spring of 2012/2013. It began as a teach-in (i.e., an informal lecture and discussion about a topic of the public interest) to raise awareness about the proposed omnibus bills C-38 and C-45. In particular, the organizers, Sheelah McLean, Jessica Gordon, Nina Wilson, and Sylvia McAdam, challenged amendments to the Navigable Waters Protection Act of 1882, which reduced the number of protected bodies of water in Canada by 97% (4), and amendments to the Indian Act of 1876, which reduced the Canadian government’s duty to consult with Aboriginal<sup>1</sup> peoples and reduced the required threshold for nations to sell reserve lands (5). The movement then grew to involve months of protests, blockades, teach-ins, and ceremonies in opposition to the proposed legislation as well as to raise awareness about Canadian Indigenous issues across Canada. The movement received widespread media coverage in both mainstream and fringe news sources. However, as I will illustrate in this paper, the coverage of the movement varied between mainstream media sources and independent Indigenous

news sources in their descriptions of events and in what content they covered.

To investigate these differences in news coverage, I examined news publications and broadcasts by *The Globe and Mail* (a privately owned national news source), *Aboriginal People’s Television Network (APTN)* (the only Indigenous national broadcasting news source in Canada), and *Windspeaker* (an independent grassroots First Nations news source). I chose these sources because they have varying levels of political power and differing relationships to the government, corporations, and Indigenous communities. To analyze the coverage of these different sources, I divided the Idle No More movement into three sections based on date: section one being November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012 – December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2012, section two being January 1<sup>st</sup> 2013 – February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013, and section three being March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013 – June 1<sup>st</sup> 2013. I chose November 17<sup>th</sup> as the first date because that was the date of the first teach-in (also the first moment at which the title “Idle No More” was used), and I chose June 1<sup>st</sup> as the end date because it was around this time that *APTN* and *The Globe and Mail* stopped covering the movement. Within each section, I chose three stories per news source and analyzed the content covered as well as how the different news sources covered that content. I completed all investigations online.

From this analysis, I contend that the three news sources use conflicting descriptions of events and contain contrasting evidence in their reportage. Combined, these differences suggest a discrepancy in the published narratives of Idle No More, which could impact public knowledge and opinion on the Idle No More movement. Further, I demonstrate that *APTN* and *Windspeaker* present alternative coverage to *The Globe and Mail*, which suggests that the mainstream media lacks voices that Indigenous media represents. Consequently, I assert that these alternative representations challenge hegemonic journalism norms by presenting alternative narratives and information. These alternatives, in turn, challenge the notion of objective journalism – that is, the idea that news presents unbiased truths about the world. In sum, I present that *The Globe and Mail*, *APTN*, and *Windspeaker* provide conflicting accounts of the Idle No More movement. With

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1. Aboriginal is the legal term used in Canada to refer to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. Outside of the legal context, I use Indigenous to refer to the diverse populations of First peoples located within Canada.

this finding, I argue that *APTN* and *Windspeaker* provide alternative voices that challenge the standards of mainstream media and the notion of objective journalism.

The differences between these three news sources lie within the content of their coverages. Joshua Meyrowitz (1999) in his essay, "Understanding of Media," explains that one can divide media into three parts: "medium as vessel/conduit" (i.e. the medium's content) "medium as language" (i.e. the medium's grammar, such as camera angles in a news report or font and paragraph alignment in a newspaper), and "medium as environment" (i.e. the characteristics of a particular form of media that distinguish it from all others) (6). This essay focuses on the differences between the content of the three news sources rather than the language or the environment of the different media because there are significant similarities between the three sources in the latter two areas. *APTN*'s presentation of news stories resembles that of popular mainstream news broadcasters in both textual and visual forms. *Windspeaker* and *The Globe and Mail* are both newspapers that publish on and offline. Yet, *APTN* and *Windspeaker* emphasize the diversity of Indigenous voices and cover certain events that *The Globe and Mail* ignores. Thus, the key differences between the three news sources exist within the content and whose voices are articulated, rather than how they are articulated. This emphasis of Indigenous voices challenges the standard presentation of Indigenous peoples and issues by bringing Indigenous individuals to the forefront of the reportage.

*APTN* and *Windspeaker* place Indigenous voices at the centre of their coverage. They do so by interviewing Indigenous leaders, many of whom do not appear in *The Globe and Mail* coverage, as well as protestors and people of the general public (7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15). *The Globe and Mail* does interview and cite particular Indigenous leaders, but lacks the diversity of voices presented in the other two news sources (16, 17, 18, 19). The Indigenous leaders that *The Globe and Mail* cites are well known and hold significant political power, such as Shawn Atleo, the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, and Chief Allan Adam of the Athabasca Chipewan First Nation. *APTN* and *Windspeaker* showcase a greater diversity of Indigenous perspectives by including the voices of chiefs as well as the voices of Indigenous peoples who may not be recognized as community leaders in this way. This lack of diversity in *The Globe and Mail*'s coverage homogenizes Canadian Indigenous peoples who compose hundreds of distinct nations. In *The Globe and Mail*'s article, "There is still time for #IdleNoMore to learn the lessons of Occupy," Caplan (2013) writes that white Canadians should not expect Indigenous peoples, who form diverse groups and nations, to share a single homogenous voice or opinion (20). However, the coverage that *The Globe and Mail* provides of the movement conceals this diversity. Although *The Globe and Mail* provides Indigenous perspectives in its reportage and includes Caplan's article to ensure that readers do not homogenize Indigenous voices, it lacks variety and depth in its coverage and, consequently, excludes many voices and opinions. Thus, viewers who read this source may only gain a narrow perspective on the movement. These narrow representations could limit a reader's understanding of a movement that is centered on Canadian Indigenous peoples and their experiences.

*Windspeaker* and *The Globe and Mail* also differ in the ways that they describe Idle No More events. The discussions of round dances – a form of protest that was popular during the Idle No More movement – provide an example of these differences. The following excerpts from *The Globe and Mail* and *Windspeaker* cover two round dance protests that took place on December 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012. The protests occurred in different locations across Canada (one in Vancouver, British Columbia and one in Edmonton, Alberta), but the protests share many similar qualities. The differing coverage of the stories, however, may lead one to think otherwise. Galloway's (2012b) report of the Boxing Day protest in *The Globe and Mail* states:

In downtown Vancouver, dozens of supporters disrupted Boxing Day traffic as they marched through the streets in solidarity. Police closed sections of Granville and Georgia Streets and directed traffic as the group wound through the downtown core, banging drums, waving flags, chanting and holding up signs reading, "Assimilate us no more" and "Honour the treaties, stop C-45." At the intersection of Robson and Burrard Streets, the supporters formed a large circle, stalling traffic for about 15 minutes (21).

*Windspeaker*'s account of the round dance at Edmonton Mall states:

The event was part of the Idle No More movement to help draw attention to the issues facing Canada's Indigenous people in a peaceful and positive manner. Before 6:00pm you could see many people trying to look inconspicuous as they took their place around the mall and waited for the signal to begin. In all, hundreds of people took part and hundreds more were witness to the power and grace of the drumming and singing during one of the busier times for Canada's largest shopping mall (22).

These two excerpts discuss essentially the same event, but produce entirely different reports. The articles' titles evince this difference as *The Globe and Mail* calls the assembly a "protest" whereas *Windspeaker* calls it a "round dance." *The Globe and Mail* emphasizes the clamorous disruption, whereas *Windspeaker* articulates cultural significance, ceremony, and peace. In these descriptions, the news sources politicize the events in opposing ways. *The Globe and Mail* describes an obstructive protest tied to government legislation. While still providing context for the protest, *Windspeaker* describes a peaceful and unifying dance that is inherently political given the historical and continued oppression of Canadian Indigenous culture and ceremony (such as the illegalization of the potlatch, which was banned from 1884 to 1951). While the two sources explain the same event, the contrasting language used and narratives produced could lead readers to form distinct understandings and impressions of these acts of resistance and of the movement in general. Additionally, this example illustrates how *Windspeaker* counters standardized news narratives through the contrasting narratives of the round dance news story.

In addition to producing contrasting narratives of events, *The Globe and Mail*, *APTN*, and *Windspeaker* provide

discrepant coverage of the Idle No More movement. Generally, they agree upon a timeline that covers the same stories and events within similar time frames. However, their timelines differ towards the “end” of the movement.<sup>2</sup> A specific example of such discrepancy is the trek of the Nishiyuu walkers to Parliament Hill. The Nishiyuu walkers were a group of six First Nations youth and one adult guide that walked from James Bay to Parliament Hill in solidarity with Idle No More. The walkers went largely unnoticed by mainstream media (including in *APTN*) until the final week of the walk when the group grew to approximately 100 walkers and approached Ottawa. This omission illustrates differing agendas and assertions in the mainstream media and grassroots media. Where mainstream media covered the walk once it had clear political implications – that is, when the walkers reached Parliament Hill – *Windspeaker* covered the walkers throughout their journey, and emphasized the cultural importance of the journey itself. Ball (2013), in a *Windspeaker* article, discusses the arrival of the Nishiyuu walkers to Parliament Hill and quotes Band Councillor Norman Matchewan who states:

Then we danced the night away after. We had music, fiddling, the Cree nation showed their style of jigging. We played some games... It's bringing a lot of communities together. There's a lot of unity showing. They're not getting much media attention, but they're getting a lot of community attention. They're not only bringing unity amongst the nations, but within our communities (15).

Matchewan discusses aspects of the movement that the mainstream media ignores by discussing the cultural experience of the walk for the participants and connected communities. He also highlights that, despite a lack of mainstream media attention, the coverage of the walk in independent news sources and the support of various Indigenous communities created a sense of unity amongst those Indigenous peoples. These features in this news story articulate a cultural significance of Idle No More felt by some Indigenous peoples as well as the cultural significance of the walk itself. Mainstream media lacks this cultural emphasis and, like *The Globe and Mail's* description of the round dance, asserts a definition of political activism that omits the walk from its coverage. This limited account provides readers of *The Globe and Mail* with a narrow definition of Indigenous political activism by reducing the significance of the Nishiyuu trek to the final protest at Parliament Hill and failing to include the months of trekking, celebration, and community building that occurred prior to their arrival. Thus, readers only exposed to *The Globe and Mail's* (or even *APTN's* in this instance) coverage of Idle No More receive a partial representation of the movement.

The presence of Indigenous voices as well as the coverages (or lack thereof) of the round dance protests and the Nishiyuu walk reveal a disagreement between *The Globe and Mail*, *Windspeaker*, and *APTN* about the importance and success of the Idle No More movement. Sentiments like Matchewan's comments on Indigenous unity appear throughout *Windspeaker* publications, in *APTN* broadcasts, and in the academic literature that discusses Idle No More. Morris (2014) emphasizes that the move-

ment focused on improving Canadian Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination. She also discusses that this mainstream media ignores this aspect as critics focus on Idle No More's lack of organization and failure to accomplish its goals of opposing Bills C-38 and C-45 (23). Caplan's (2013) article in *The Globe and Mail* criticizes Idle No More in this way. He argues that Idle No More could fail to achieve its goals because it has too many goals and therefore lacks a clear objective (20). This argument, however, ignores the successes of Idle No More described by Morris and Matchewan. This disagreement also appears in the two round dance excerpts. Based on *The Globe and Mail's* report, one could argue that Idle No More was unsuccessful because Bill C-45 passed. However, based on *Windspeaker's* report, one could argue that Idle No More was successful because it peacefully brought Canadian Indigenous issues to the forefront of Canadian news and politics for multiple months and connected and unified Canadian Indigenous peoples and nations across the country (and arguably across the globe). The focus in mainstream media on Idle No More's failures and the focus in Indigenous media on its successes present conflicting definitions of success. Depending on which news sources people read, the public may have different understandings of the effects of Idle No More and varied opinions about the movement in general.

By countering narratives in *The Globe and Mail* and providing news coverage that *The Globe and Mail* ignores, *Windspeaker* and *APTN* not only challenge dominant news narratives, but also the notion of objective journalism. Lance Bennett (2012) discusses how journalists attempt to tell the “truth” in their reports and thus attempt to provide an unbiased and balanced account of the news (3). Interestingly, both *Windspeaker's* and *The Globe and Mail's* mission statements claim to provide objective reporting in their publications:

The credibility of the reporting, analysis and opinion in *The Globe and Mail* rests on solid research, clear, intelligent writing, and maintaining a reputation for honesty, accuracy, objectivity and balance (24).

[*Windspeaker*] is firm in its commitment to maintain a current, relevant, objective and independent viewpoint while reporting news, and providing information, current affairs and entertainment features with the utmost accuracy – and always from the Indigenous perspective (25).

Contrary to these claims, clear subjectivities exist in both newspapers' publications given the examples explored earlier in this paper. *Windspeaker's* statement implies this subjectivity by asserting that its articles will always be “from the Indigenous perspective.” This statement claims that there are inherent distinctive qualities of an Indigenous perspective, which simultaneously asserts that non-Indigenous news sources are also inherently subjective. *APTN* forgoes the notion of objectivity altogether in its mission statement by declaring

The *APTN* Programming department develops, commissions and acquires distinctive Aboriginal content

2. I place end in quotations because Indigenous movement and struggle is ongoing in Canada.

which reflects our pride and heritage. APTN is committed to enabling Aboriginal Peoples to share their stories and convey them to a domestic and international audience (26).

Thus, APTN argues for honest subjective coverage that promotes the often unheard or silenced voices of Canadian Indigenous peoples. Although *Windspeaker's* mission statement uses the word "objective," it too argues against the notion of objectivity given its assertion of the existence of an Indigenous perspective and evident differences between *The Globe and Mail's* and its own coverage of the Idle No More movement.

Although the three news sources provide varying accounts of Idle No More, the stories themselves are not presented to an equal audience. *The Globe and Mail* has a weekly readership of 3,882,000 readers, APTN has a weekly viewership of over three million viewers, and *Windspeaker* reaches just over 150,000 readers (27, 26, 25). *The Globe and Mail* and APTN have similar readership/viewership levels, which shows that some balance exists between their representations. However, *Windspeaker* has roughly 4% the readership size of the other two news sources. All three sources provide different and valuable information, but not all of them necessarily receive the same degree of public attention. Additionally, audience fragmentation could mean that not everyone who reads *The Globe and Mail* also watches APTN, or that everyone who reads *Windspeaker* also reads *The Globe and Mail*. Because of this fragmentation, the public may not have received a well-rounded account of the events of Idle No More. Further, ownership and the perceived validity of the sources may affect how the audience understands and evaluates the information (3). Oxley (2012) claims, "more media sources... lead to a more informed public" (28). The differences between the news coverage in *The Globe and Mail*, APTN, and *Windspeaker* seem to support this claim, but with varying readership levels, the problem appears to be getting more viewers to examine independent Indigenous news sources and to value these voices as highly as the dominant narratives.

There are distinct differences between *The Globe and Mail*, APTN, and *Windspeaker's* coverage of the Idle No More movement, which challenge the notion of objective journalism. *The Globe and Mail's* coverage follows the standards of mainstream media, and in doing so, ignores the multiplicity of Indigenous perspectives on the movement. APTN and *Windspeaker*, albeit in different ways, center their reportage on Canadian Indigenous voices and provide a greater diversity of Indigenous perspectives on Idle No More. By centering these perspectives, these two Canadian Indigenous news sources challenge mainstream media standards by providing alternative evidence and content. Further, their emphasis of Indigenous perspectives challenges the idea of objective journalism by embracing the diversity of Canadian Indigenous voices in their reports, which conflicts with mainstream media. These alternative perspectives are essential in providing a deeper understanding of the Idle No More movement and its significance to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians.

Importantly, each news source produced many more than just nine stories during their coverage of the Idle No More

movement; therefore, this analysis is incomplete. Additionally, my perspective is that of a white settler Canadian whose analysis may or may not accurately examine the dynamics of an Indigenous-centered issue. Thus, a more thorough analysis of the publications of these media outlets is necessary to make definitive claims about their media coverage of the Idle No More movement. That being said, this analysis may provide insight into how Indigenous peoples are represented in different Canadian media news outlets as well as provide insight into the reality of objective journalism.

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