Black Lives Matter

An Interpretation by Jaysen Bass

Portfolio Introduction

Social media allows people to stay connected regardless of location or time. Nancy Baym's seven key concepts (reach, replicability, mobility, storage, temporal structure, interactivity, and social cues) set the stage for me and allowed me to develop a better understanding of the capabilities of social media as technology. My original goal with this project was to synthesize the ways in which different social justice issues culminate into compounded issues impacting the Black community. When the project started, there was a flood of news related to celebrities such as Ryan Coogler and Will Smith. This is what dominated my tweets for the first week, as well as my first blog post. My focus quickly shifted towards the representation of Black people in the media, as Baym's concepts only serve as a means to exacerbate the issues. Social constructionism is a theory that helped me solidify this approach.

My goal became redefining the ways in which Black people are depicted, which started by giving a few examples of negative portrayals and their immediate effects. By prompting people to confront their implicit bias and to analyze the reasons they view people the way they do, they will be able to understand and further question the larger context of the media environment and how it serves to reproduce specific ideologies. Social media is drastically polarized, so as negative as the effects can be, there is an equal number of positive effects. Baym's ideas can be utilized to help redefine and transform the traditional portrayals, moving away from violent stereotypes towards highlighting Black people as the same as any other human. For this reason, I continually refer to the Paul George definition of social justice, "complete and genuine equality of all people." While it is simple, it is all inclusive and aims at equalizing all people, not just certain demographics. Social justice is amplified by the use of social media and its ability to allow for autoethnographic approaches to problems that have been around for decades.

Introductory Blog Post

The topic for my blogs will be the Black Lives Matter movement. Specifically, I want to address how different institutions and industries facilitate and perpetuate the oppression of black people in the United States. This might include detailing the ways in which other social justice issues relate back to the overarching themes of oppression. For example, the way in which food scarcity is exacerbated in poor, urban, and predominantly minority communities. Another example is how LGBTQ rights intersect with issues of race, leading a black trans woman's life expectancy to be 35. All of these ailments compound into detrimental living conditions for black people around the world. .

The Black Lives Matter movement is beneficial to everyone, because if race is no longer used to oppress black people, it means it probably will not be used to oppress others. Like with Sarda, I hope that the oppression from dominant powers can become highlighted and illuminate the subtle ways in which people face discrimination on a daily basis, especially in fields surrounding fundamental life necessities like food, housing, employment, etc. I also want to highlight capitalism's role in perpetuation oppression, as the ideology of competition is dangerous for black people under the current social constructions of race. .

Socially constructed, Intersecting identities, on top of being black, further cement people into oppression, whether they are cognizant of it or not. A quote from Sarda, "For all that they endure, battered women and low-income people of color still retain the capacity to work rebelliously with both stock and improvised stories - the capacity to resist victimization and subordination and to reverse its tendencies" is important to my approach as I plan to detail how that fight can play out on different fronts like the ones mentioned above. .
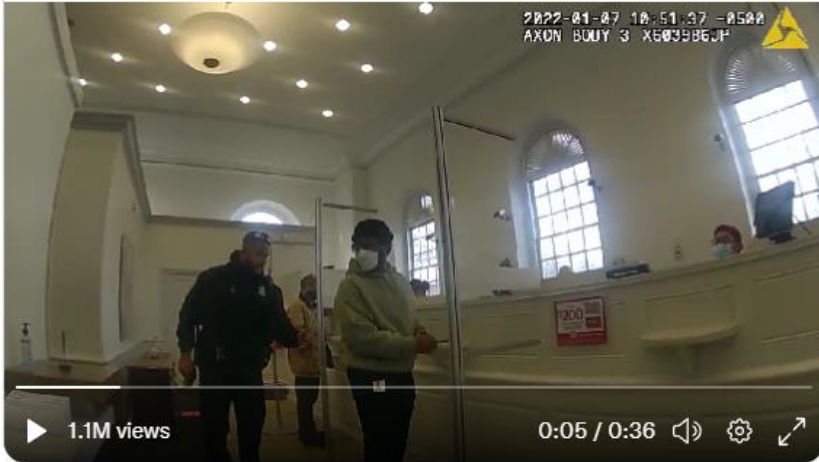
Week One Tweets

Jaysen
@JaysenSM22

It's amazing, yet not surprising, that no amount of wealth, fame, or prestige can save someone from racism and prejudice. Some people are incapable of removing race as a demarcating factor in their treatment of others, and it manifests in their actions/reactions.

> **THEKORTURN, ESQ.** @TheKorTurn · Mar 10
> ICYMI.
>
> They drew not one, but TWO guns on him before Ryan Coogler even knew they were present. You Ryan tense up when he hears it before turning around.
>
> Show this thread

1.1M views   0:05 / 0:36

6:11 PM · Mar 14, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

Jaysen
@JaysenSM22

Building on this, even someone as famous as Lebron James can't escape racism and prejudice, to the point where his home was vandalized with racial slurs and he was told to shut up and dribble the ball by a News host when he tried to use his platform to speak on social justice

5:08 PM · Mar 16, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

Jaysen
@JaysenSM22

Class discussion today reminded me of the Instagram trend of posting the black square to your story for BLM. It's almost trendy to support Social Justice and with 24hr cycles, it suppresses a lot of the day to day injustices and allows people to pick and choose where to focus

5:00 PM · Mar 16, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

Week One Blog:

In my tweets this week, I mention how there is no amount of wealth, prestige, or fame that can protect someone from racism and prejudice. Examples I reflected on were the recent Ryan Coogler bank situation, and the vandalism of Lebron James' home in LA. These are two prominent members of the media world, yet they still experience racism as they are seen individually as just another black person. Some people with racist ideals are unable to separate others from the racial stereotypes they have either consciously or subconsciously, which is more so apparent in the case of Ryan Coogler.

These stereotypes can be damaging to a minority's life, and their well-being. A concrete example of these stereotypes manifesting can be seen in the case of Odell Beckham Jr. and Tom Brady. Within a relative timeframe, both players had passionate outbursts on the sideline after failing to achieve an on-field goal. Odell was seen as a diva and an aggressive overreactor, while Brady was seen as a passionate player who was trying to invigorate his teammates.

This dynamic is dangerous and perpetuates the idea of black people as perpetrators of violence through othering, strengthening the positive stereotypes of white people as caring and looking out for others. When applied in instances of racist acts, this neutralizes and minimizes the effects of the act and places blame on the victim of the racism. When Trayvon Martin was killed, people consistently defended George Zimmerman by saying Trayvon should not have been walking late, nor should he have worn a hoodie up, subsequently saying Zimmerman was justified in his approach as a member of the neighborhood watch. Until these stereotypes are broken down, true equality and justice can never be attained.

Jaysen
@JaysenSM22

Today in class we saw a clip of the Rodney King beating. It's interesting to see the parallels of how it coincides with police brutality today. I'm glad social media has the storage capacities to allow things like that to continue to be shown today

youtube.com
Rodney King Beating Full Video | 8 minutes SCREENER.
THE VIDEO THAT SHOCKED THE WORLD. MARCH 3, 1991. The full footage of the brutal beating by Police wildly out of ...

5:03 PM · Mar 24, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

Jaysen
@JaysenSM22

Is the sharing of videos that depict violence against black people an acceptable and beneficial practice or does the normalization of violence help to perpetuate the issues the graphics are trying to bring awareness to? Just food for thought

5:04 PM · Mar 24, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

Jaysen
@JaysenSM22

I wish people had this same exact energy when it came to people sharing videos of Black Death. Sad and polarized world we live in. It's so interesting how social justice plays out on different fronts depending on who is effected twitter.com/TwinskiesDj/st...

This Tweet was deleted by the Tweet author. Learn more

10:55 AM · Mar 25, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

Week Two Blog: Depictions of violence towards black people and their deaths in the media

Sharing videos of atrocities committed against black people has a polarizing effect. On one hand it shines light on injustices that happen to minorities in the world, while on the other hand, it normalizes this type of violence and desensitizes people to it. Social media allows videos like these to be spread at greater rates than ever before. Even mass media outlets and news outlets use these videos in their reporting. As far as I know, there is no where near as many depictions of violent or aggressive acts that are committed against white people in our media ecosystem.

I believe the videos in of themselves are beneficial as a piece of evidence, but the mass sharing and popularization of them is detrimental to the humanity of minorities. With more and more violence being depicted, it begins to have less of an impact on people with each subsequent video. This leads to more debate on the justification of the action due to the desensitization, rather than the inherent wrongness of the action in the first place. Abuse of power by the police is where this can be seen most clearly.

People always point blame at the person of color in the interaction, and in a case like with George Floyd, will even go so far as using his past to justify the brutality. These issues are exacerbated by the ability for anyone to comment on the event online and add their opinion. People are further desensitized due to representation of black people in media, particularly in the fetishization of "black on black" violence. Black popular culture, especially in the entertainment industry, is over saturated with these depictions, so far as in that term only applies to black people and minorities, there is no "white on white" crime, and the commentary through hegemonic discourse on social media exacerbates these harmful depictions.

Week Three Tweets

Jaysen @JaysenSM22

As someone who doesn't watch the Oscar's but is aware of some of their practices, I'm glad twitter can shed light on issues like these and the constant discrimination black entertainers face. I'm not saying will is right or wrong, but the "standard" shouldn't change for him

> 🟤 **Dedee** 🇲🇽 @thoughtfulbae · Mar 28
> I'm pretty sure Harvey Weinstein, Roman Polanski, and Kevin Spacey still have their Oscars. Seems like The Code of Conduct is very selective on who it applies to. twitter.com/PopCrave/statu...
>
> Show this thread

12:24 PM · Mar 28, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

Jaysen @JaysenSM22

This vilification and demonization of Black people was very apparent in the Brock Turner case, where his year book photo was used during his trial for sexual assault, where as black people have mug shots used for simple "crimes" and stories that are unrelated to criminal activity

> **Lauren O'Neil - CBC News**
>
> Posted: June 11, 2016
>
> Last Updated: June 11, 2016
>
> Black woman let her child play in the park next to where she worked. This is the image the media circulated, her mug shot.
>
> White man raped an unconscious woman in an alley behind a dumpster. This is the image the media is circulating, his Stanford yearbook picture.

2:49 PM · Apr 1, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

Jaysen @JaysenSM22

The portrayal of Black people in the public sphere leads to their persecution in the court room, where they typically receive harsher sentences for than their white counterparts. Particularly when it comes to drug convictions (powder vs crack cocaine, the same chemical compound)

> Policymakers had justified the sentencing disparity by stating that violent crime was associated with crack cocaine more than powder cocaine. The USSC, in a 1995 report to Congress entitled *Cocaine and Federal Sentencing Policy* (one of several USSC reports on federal cocaine sentencing policy), noted that violent crime associated with crack cocaine is directly related to the marketing and distribution of crack—specifically, attempts to consolidate turf and take control of drug distribution in urban areas—and not users of crack cocaine. The USSC stated that while crack and powder cocaine users may commit crimes—such as selling drugs—to support their drug habits, these users generally are not committing large numbers of violent crimes to support their habits.

3:57 PM · Apr 1, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

Social Media and Social Justice Essay: Social Media as a Mechanism for Social Justice and Change

Social Justice is a topic of dissension that has been highly contested over the course of history. As advancements in technology and education have become more widespread, so has the push for equality and justice for people all around the world. Social Justice, as defined by Paul George, executive director of the Peninsula Peace and Justice Center, "means complete and genuine equality of all people." This definition's simplicity speaks magnitudes. When Social Justice is over defined, it leaves room to exclude certain people from the definition. However, a broad and vague definition allows for more inclusion. The goal of Social Justice should be all encompassing, giving justice to people of every and all backgrounds. So long as injustice occurs in any one place, that means there is opportunity for it to happen in others as well. Social media has been fundamental in the progression of Social Justice and has allowed it a platform to proliferate and spread through the documentation of underrepresented perspectives and voices.

Social Justice, as it pertains to a relational approach, benefits from the same concepts that Nancy Baym applies to social media. These concepts are interactivity, temporal structure, social cues, storage, replicability, reach, and mobility (Baym 2015). A perfect example of these concepts in action can be visualized through the Black Lives Matter movement. Interactivity allows users of the platforms to convey their individual opinions and experiences on a collective issue. By allowing for a multitude of expressions over the same grievances, Social Justice can take on a multifaceted approach that enables more comprehensive coverage for everyone impacted or involved. Learning the nuances of an issue like police brutality and the demonization of Black people by the media industry informs people of the subtle ways in which these issues manifest in daily life. In previous forms of media, even coverage of social justice issues could be manipulated so that they still only impacted certain individuals in marginalized groups, rather than the way social media allows for intersectional identities to express the over arching impacts of the issue at hand. The ability to connect with people in similar situations, as well as those of differing backgrounds, accentuates dialogue on pervasive discourse, allowing for exposure to opinions that have previously been silenced through traditional media. This type of comradery is clearly apparent in platforms like twitter, where terms like "Black Twitter" are coined to describe the use of the platform as a way for Black people to share stories, ideas, and to openly communicate free from the oppression of physical places and mass media pressures.

The storage capacities and temporal structures of social media allow society the ability to reference past events to inform the current media environment. Society can look back to previous instances of injustice, such as the atrocities committed against Rodney King to draw parallels to the current political climate, as well as to recognize patterns of abuse and oppression. Additionally, these capabilities allow for people around the world to communicate regardless of time zone and delays in the spread of information through mass media sources, such as the global protests that broke out in the wake of the murder of George Floyd. However, there are downsides to this ability. Due to the sheer volume of interaction that occurs on social media, combined with the "24 hour" news cycle, many injustices and grievances do not reach the mainstream. Furthermore, if you miss the events in the moment, they are easily replaced by future events as new injustices occur continuously. This leads to the prominence of some injustices over others, as they happen more consistently and affect wider ranges of people. Lesser-known injustices are lost, as the amount of time it would take to go back and filter through the same depth information can be overwhelming. Replicability and reach work hand in hand to enlighten the masses on the injustices that happen to minorities. On twitter, injustices can be shared with a simple retweet and when circulated on timelines, can reach exponentially more people than what sharing between individuals can. Though, this also means misinformation can be spread at rates far faster than fact checkers can manage which puts pressure on the individual to sort through the information and determine what should be accepted or rejected.

Social cues are also less apparent in social media than they are in real life, but this can be both advantageous and detrimental to Social Justice causes. By removing them, it allows marginalized groups more freedom of expression, rather than giving the oppressor more cues to enforce the current hegemonic norms. In battles of power relations, it can be beneficial to mask some of the physical attributes of communication. Regardless, those cues can still be portrayed for the purpose of emotional connection through video sharing, which still limits blowback from the oppressor seeing the oppressed in a vulnerable state, as the producer of the content can limit their interaction with comments, whether it be through a live stream or asynchronous mediums. The anonymity of social media makes for a unique system of identity portrayal which can be manifested in various ways. On one hand, it allows fear-free posting and interaction from minorities. Though their race is assumed depending on which stance they take, it cannot be ascertained easily. Finally, the mobility of social media allows for Social Justice to be interacted with at all times from anywhere, rather than only in public spaces or between members of tight knit communities. If a person is connected to the internet, they are always able to interact with others and take part in the ongoing Social Justice debates, regardless of any physical location. One is no longer required to be positioned in front of a T.V. or a near a radio to hear what is currently happening, nor do they have to be in a physical space to voice their opinion. They can just pop on twitter and go to the trending page to see what is currently circulating through the media environment and add their own voice and perspective to it.

Social Media and Social Justice Essay: Social Media as a Mechanism for Social Justice and Change (Final)

The culmination of these concepts, as they coincide with both social media and justice, has allowed for the creation of a new public sphere. As Castells states, there is a shift from a public sphere anchored around the national institutions of territorially bound societies to a public sphere constituted around the media system (Castells 2008 p.90). A clear example of this shift is through the humanization of Black people as a fight against their dehumanization by mass media outlets. The portrayal of Black men and women as inherently violent beings is a portrayal that has lasted through the tests of time and has had pernicious effects on the interactions between Black people and others in public. Michael Brown's physical size was used as justification for his murder, claiming that his size made him a threat to the officers and to anyone in the vicinity. Mass media perpetuates this narrative by portraying Black men as "thugs" (Smiley 2016). Social media is used as a platform to fight against these ideologies and promote Black people as being just as human as anyone else. Since Social Justice is rooted in equality, it is beneficial to have these representations of Black people as liking the same things as everyone else, rather than the media's portrayal as fascination with guns, drugs, sex, and aggression.

In conclusion, autoethnographic approaches to Social Justice are made possible by social media and are the main driver behind it. The platforms give these approaches a means to bypass the traditional barriers to publication and allows for instantaneous commentary on events that transpire in real time. This is unique to social media as one can document the entirety of a Social Justice movement in real time, as well as return to it later. In the case of George Floyd, the first-hand accounts and videos served as fundamental in the trial for prosecuting Derek Chauvin, where the rapid spread of the event had reached an innumerable amount of people globally. As Nelson Mandela says, "education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Social media is the platform that allows for the education, while Social Justice is the resulting change. Society must use both in an intertwined way to produce change for those whose voices have been traditionally silenced by the hegemonic powers at play in the political climate.

Social Media and Social Justice Essay: Social Media as a Mechanism for Social Justice and Change (Bibliography)

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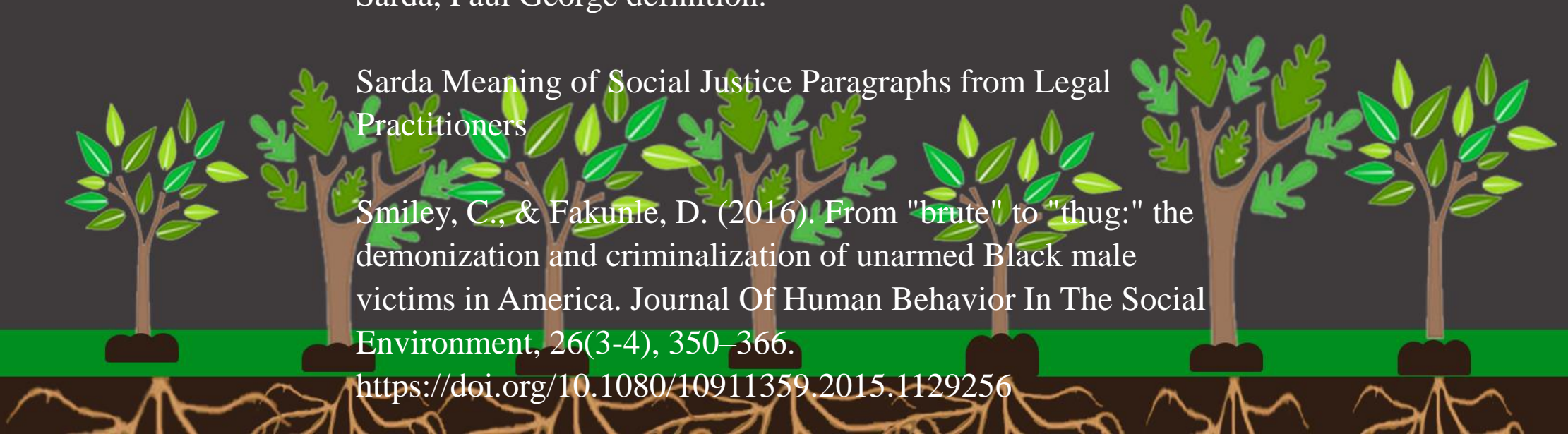
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Sarda Meaning of Social Justice Paragraphs from Legal Practitioners

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Week Three Blog: The Dehumanization of Black People: From Media to Practice

As previously mentioned with the cases of George Floyd, the dehumanization of Black people in their media portrayals have real life consequences. Michael Brown was killed by police because "his physical size was an apparent threat to everyone around." These portrayals extend farther than interpersonal interactions and permeate through the institutions of the United States, as well as global ones. One example is in the American judicial system where Black people are sentenced more harshly than their white counterparts for the same crimes committed.

The culmination of the media portrayals and judicial practices can be seen clearly in the debates surrounding crack cocaine and powder cocaine. Powder cocaine is typically associated with upper class, white people, while crack cocaine is associated with lower economic status and the Black community. This perception affects the sentencing for the drugs, where there is an 18:1 disparity in the threshold amount of powder cocaine and crack cocaine that triggers a mandatory minimum penalty for trafficking related offenses. This is justified in the courts, and through policy, by the claims that violent crime is more associated with crack cocaine than with powder cocaine (Sacco). If someone were to look strictly at the numbers and the statistics, they might be led to believe that violence is a problem that originates within the black community itself.

However, a social constructionist view, and historical analysis approach, shows that these are problems created and perpetuated by the government and policing authorities. There is profit in these perceptions and the subsequent problems that arise from them, such as keeping minorities in deplorable living conditions, while over policing them and creating in fighting among members of the same community. This shields the public from the atrocities committed by the government and places the people affected at the center as scapegoats. This further entrenches minorities in the already corrupt system and allows abuses to continue across many humanitarian fields, simultaneously justifying the injustices committed against them.

Burr, Vivien. *Social Constructionism*. 3rd ed.. Hove, East Sussex ; New York, N.Y.: Routledge, 2015. Print.

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Week Four Tweets

Jaysen
@JaysenSM22

Social media can serve to hold people accountable for things that hegemonic powers may not punish them for directly. Doxxing is an example of how people do this. By publicizing someone who otherwise would be invisible, social pressure is created for them to change or apologize

> For Wikipedia's policy on the doxing of contributors, see WP:DOX.
>
> **Doxing** or **doxxing** is the act of publicly revealing previously private personal information about an individual or organization, usually via the internet.[1][2] Methods employed to acquire such information include searching publicly available databases and social media websites (like Facebook), hacking, social engineering and, through websites such as Grabify, a site specialized in revealing IP addresses through a fake link. Doxing may be carried out for reasons such as online shaming, extortion, and vigilante aid to law enforcement.[3][4] It also may be associated with hacktivism.

2:07 PM · Apr 7, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

Jaysen
@JaysenSM22

Interesting to see the vilification of will smith after years of upholding such a positive image. The media loves to highlight black men and women at their low points in order to disturb the images of them at their best. Do something about the criminals that the academy supports

> **Dr Shola Mos-Shogbamimu** ✓ @SholaMos1 · Apr 8
>
> Will Smith banned from Academy events - OK. He resigned so might not.
>
> But 10 years is harsh & smacks of criminalising him when White male Oscar winners who've done bad & worse are not banned.
>
> The Racism & Double Standards here stinks.
>
> The ideology of Whiteness is a sickness. twitter.com/CNN/status/151...
>
> Show this thread

4:28 PM · Apr 8, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

Jaysen
@JaysenSM22

For example, people exposed a bunch of the people who were at the Jan. 6th capitol attack, or people who were at the white nationalist marches in Charlottesville. Both of which lead to arrests and social repercussions. This type of vigilantism leads to actual judicial response

2:10 PM · Apr 7, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

Jaysen
@JaysenSM22

Even further, first hand accounts of police brutality that would have been suppressed by law enforcement are publicized on twitter, prompting responses and sanctions by the officers department. This gives coverage to the voices that previously would have been silenced

2:12 PM · Apr 7, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

Jaysen
@JaysenSM22

I'm glad people on social media are fighting against these dominant narratives and highlighting the wrong done by people who still get recognition by the academy

4:28 PM · Apr 8, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

Jaysen
@JaysenSM22

The Black Lives Matter movement has been magnified by social media use. Now, more than ever, we as people can highlight injustices that previously would have been kept from the "public." This ability to fight taken for granted knowledge is fundamental in creating lasting change

2:01 PM · Apr 7, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

Week Four Blog: Social Media as a Site for the (Re)Humanization of Black People

Through social media, people can promote the humanization of black people and fight against the established portrayals through mass media. Content Creators can show black excellence and reach a wide variety of individuals who have never seen it represented in wholesome ways. For example, there are many black youtubers who have family style vlogs that display them treating their kids in admirable ways withing a nuclear family. Specifically, someone like Kevin Edwards Jr., a black youtuber who has documented his rise to success, shows the ways in which he was able to attain his position all while fighting back against the turmoil that typically plagues black people as they try to find their place in the world.

This fights against the stereotypes of black men as being absentee fathers. Without social media, there would not be as many effective means of fighting against those stereotypes, and the barriers to getting those stories would limit the amount of people who even have the ability. Furthermore, social media has served to highlight the fact that black people are interested in things that are typically associated with white people or to specific traits. The idea of the "Black Nerd" rose in popularity as social media gives them a space to share their interests free from the judgements of people in real life, as well as free from the exclusivity that white people perpetuate.

In a lot of ways, Black pop culture can be seen as the basis for pop culture at large, and expanding its bounds benefits the portrayals of Black people as whole. The deconstruction of the negative stereotypes helps to associate Black people more closely with their peers and allows them the creative space to express themselves in ways that were previously attributed to white communities through the established, hegemonic norms. Positive interpretations allow for more constructive social justice applications across different fields and issues at large.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tQkuvYGqM1I&ab_channel=ADayWithKev

Week Five Tweets

BreezyScroll
@BreezyScroll

Walker is not just known for his academic talents. He is also into sports, and he invented a device that helps the deaf and blind

Read - breezyscroll.com/world/gifted-t...

11:29 AM · Apr 13, 2022 · Twitter Web App

Jaysen
@JaysenSM22

The freedom of expression that twitter allows is an incredible tool, especially when you combine it with the anonymity of social media. Some may use it to spread hate, but the beauty lies in the ability for people to bond over things they care about

2:20 PM · Apr 15, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

Jaysen
@JaysenSM22

Hashtag activism allows us to easily find groups of people that we share interests with, and those moral connections are more tight knit than random bonds formed through passing interests

2:41 PM · Apr 16, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

Jaysen
@JaysenSM22

#BlackLivesMatter👏🏿 is a cause for all people, once justice is attained for the few, it can be upheld for the many

2:42 PM · Apr 16, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

Week Five Blog: The Duality of Social Media Representations

While social media allows for positive representations of minority groups, it also allows for the perpetuation of the old stereotypes as well as the justification to uphold them. The groups you normally interact with on social media dictate the type of content you end up seeing, so if you see negative representations in your close groups, that will reflect in the bigger picture, and vice versa through the feedback machine. The power of social media is being able to fight back against the established norms and promote the positive view that allows for inclusion rather than suppression, however the converse is that people can also attack the positive views by enforcing the negative ones.

To counteract this, people who are a part of the oppressed group usually come together and fight against this. An example of this is when there are hashtags that promote racist and sexist behavior that get taken over by people flooding the hashtag with the counter power's perspective over just using the same hashtag with a spin on it, essentially another form of social culture jamming. This is also something that is popular within the MeToo movement, where women hijack hashtags that are predominantly used by men to detail their own history with abuse.

One of the most prominent uses, and one that I have seen on many occasions, is when BlueLivesMatter and other pro police hashtags trend, and then people flood the feed with BTS (A Korean boy band) images and quotes in order to silence the oppressors and to takeover the hashtag. This kind of solidarity is highlighted in social media, as the people grouping together are free from the institutional means that allow them to be forcibly removed from physical spaces where racist dialogues and procedures occur.

https://www.theverge.com/2020/6/3/21278950/k-pop-stans-social-media-flooding-hashtags-bluelivesmatter-maga

https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/04/us/kpop-bts-blackpink-fans-black-lives-matter-trnd/index.html

Jaysen
@JaysenSM22

Through the last few weeks of using twitter and interacting with it through a social justice lens, I've truly come to appreciate the capabilities for change that the platform enables

4:20 PM · Apr 23, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

Jaysen
@JaysenSM22

The search bar has been helpful in allowing me to find a constant stream of information on #BlackLivesMatter👊🏾 and I appreciate everyone out there who remains vigilant on social media, allowing others to have a free and supportive space to voice their opinions

4:22 PM · Apr 23, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

Jaysen
@JaysenSM22

Black Lives Matter.

Not just today. Every day.

4:47 PM · Apr 23, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

Jaysen
@JaysenSM22

In class this week we discussed the disassembly of publics, and while the BLM movement seems to whittle away outside of reports by mass media, it is a cause that effects people tremendously on a daily level and is one that won't go away until the issues being raised do

1:11 PM · Apr 22, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

Week Six Blog: Moving Towards a Brighter Future

Even though social media allows for an incredible amount of good and perspective, there is still a long way to go before the grievances previously mentioned are reconciled. It will take more than conversation and must culminate into physical action that leads to institutional change. Some of this has been seen in recent times with the increase in the amount of police officers being prosecuted for their brutality, more people believing the validity of sexual assault claims without trying to halt the process before due diligence is done, and in the policies being enacted by the government like finally making lynching a federal crime.

Social media allows us the platform to voice our discontent with old ideologies and policies that make racism so prevalent in everyday interactions. Humanity is at a pivotal point in history in which the everyday person's voice has more reach and power than it has ever had before. Though the BLM movement may not get as much publicity as it does when big court cases reach mass media, it is a movement that persists every single day. It is crucial to humanity that we fight racism and discrimination on all fronts so that no one has to deal with being oppressed in subtle, or even obvious, ways.

Social media truly is a new public sphere and with more and more users reaching the voting age, we will continue to see an exponential increase in the amount of Social Justice that is produced. Increasingly intersected identities have the use of platform to detail the obscure and ambiguous oppression that they face, allowing people as a whole to become more analytical in their approach to taken-for-granted knowledge. It will be interesting to watch this journey progress and to see how it evolves in the coming years, as technology continues to out pace the moral and legal discussions that surround it.

Social Media Closing Reflection

Social Media has an innumerable amount of uses and throughout the course I continuously developed new perspectives on it. Previously, my social media use was primarily for the purpose of gaining information that is not as widely available through mass media for the things that I am interested in, such as gaming, sports, rap culture, and other news related to my everyday activities. The only time social justice protruded into my timeline on the platforms was when it involved a personality I was interested in, or if it was a big enough event to impact the world of mass media as we traditionally understand it. This made me realize the true power of social media as a new public sphere. In a physical space, if someone is loud enough, their voice will be heard by many people, and those other people may start talking about it. Additionally, if enough people are plagued by the same detriments and voice their grievances, they can unite their voices into a powerful cause for action. As Toscano states, 84% of 18–29-year-old people use at least one social media platform (Toscano). This usage rate makes social media the perfect place to congregate and voice opinions outside of typical physical restrictions.

After listening to presentations of other people in the class, I feel as though social justice is a natural byproduct of social media. When given a platform to voice any type of opinion, people will naturally gather around similarities, and seeing as people tend to "vent" to social media, it allows for a space for people to form solidarity bonds. In the age of the internet subjective identifications need not be anchored in structural contexts (Polletta et al). This describes how you can now act on behalf of a group that you may not directly be a part of. An example can be allies of any cause, which is easily seen when white people support the Black Lives Matter movement and take action on behalf of the people who may not be able to due to different oppressive reasons. Without the autoethnographic nature of social media, people may not feel so strongly about wanting to protect others from oppression, nor would they have as much exposure to it.

Conversely, social media allows the people who vent and have a problem to express it with the hopes of gaining support from people with similar experiences. I found this to be something that happens often on twitter, and through other student's presentations, I can confidently say that at least a few others would agree. Posts that promote hate typically receive less interaction than ones which promote some type of empathy toward others. While the causes that result in this polarity of responses may not naturally appear in someone's feed, they can easily use the search function to find dozens to hundreds of tweets based on the search words. These can be specific phrases or even hashtags. Hashtag activism is something that results from these features of social media. Promoting popular hashtags encourages interaction from people who can relate to the cause, as well as people who use social media to remain trendy or "woke."

This type of trendy activism is simultaneously beneficial and harmful to social justice causes. On one hand, it creates more awareness and subsequently allows a cause to reach more people. On the other, the 24-hour cycle of social media can mean that some causes will be lost in the mix if they do not maintain a certain threshold of interaction. If a movement loses momentum before reaching that point, it can be lost or replaced just as easily as it popped up. However, if it does reach that pinnacle, then it can result in an incredible amount of change, which can be seen in the BLM and MeToo movements. These led to cultural change as well as some institutional change. More and more police officers are being tried for their brutality, lynching has finally become a federal crime, and women experiences are not being dismissed as simple accusations as often as they once were. When grievances are not acknowledged outrage ensues. In a sense it has a compounding effect, where people are irate over the act itself, as well as the lack of resulting change. These powerful culminations lead to even more people joining the movements, and though the resulting change may never come, Baym's seven concepts of social media allow for people at any point in the future to look back and see the foundation laid by the autoethnographic representations of social media users (Baym). Social justice truly benefits from the same advancements in technology as social media does.

Social Media Closing Reflection Final

That may be the reason so many people in the class have a different favorite definition of social justice, and that highlights the beauty of the capabilities of social media. Through our collective interaction with twitter, we all developed different understandings of our place in the world as well as new understandings of how the app impacts us. All of the variety always leads me back to my favorite definition, "Social Justice means complete and genuine equality of all people" (Sarda). The lack of specificity in the definition speaks to its brilliance, as it is so open ended that every type of person can be included. This represents the intention of social media as well, in which anyone with access can voice whatever opinion they have. Even though I have been exposed to all of the progress we have made towards true social justice, I recognize we still have a long way to go before it is realized. The future is just as bright as it is dim, and it is up to us to choose the path we want to traverse. More young people who grow up with social media are approaching the voting age and are more educated on the human rights issues that have been perpetuated for many years. I believe we are at a pivotal point in history due to the immense amount of knowledge and experience being shared. In my circles, I see more skepticism than ever, and the fight back against the established powers is very prevalent. I am more invested than ever in the progress I hope to achieve in creating change in the world, and I hope that social media remains a constructive way support my goals.

Portfolio Conclusion

This project has altered my perception of social media. Previously, I only used it for leisure and news that was inaccessible through mass media, such as gaming and anime news. Now I have a greater appreciation for its transformative nature. With more and more people growing up in the era of social media, we will continue to see change in transformation within society. Castells talks about a new public sphere, but that might be an understatement, especially with new technologies such as the metaverse and virtual reality. Social media is an entirely different world with the bridge being the physical experiences of the users. The connection is clearly apparent when someone voices a grievance, and that is amplified by the relationship of others to it. While using twitter, I noticed that tweets that promoted hate would get minimal amounts of interaction and some of the replies would be people coming together to fight against the destructive narrative. Tweets that promote solidarity and unity over common causes would receive an abundance of affirmation and support.

I found it to be an interesting dynamic as opposed to "real life." I feel that in physical spaces, people are more ready to announce their conservative extremist views, possibly because they know they are backed by institutions. Online, it seems as if they are too scared of backlash from other users or being "canceled" due to the previously mentioned seven concepts as proposed by Baym. In my Tweets I mention doxing and how it has become popularized by members of minority groups as a way to try and enact the justice the physical institutions fail to. The ability for people to gather online is truly astounding and I plan on having a more active approach to social justice as it pertains to social media because of that realization. It truly has transformative abilities and that can be seen in its uses over the past decade. I look forward to being a part of future movements and using my social media presence to connect with more people than I would otherwise be able to.