Original Paper

#BBQBecky & #PermitPatty: African-American Humor & Resistive Discourse on Twitter

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Abstract

Humor has always been a social tool by which to navigate the slings and arrows of human existence. This has been exceptionally true for historically marginalized groups, such as African-Americans. Throughout U.S. history, "Black humor" has served to challenge authority, resist domination, lampoon the powerful and assuage injustices. It has served and both balm and weapon for a cultural group that has often found itself on the outside looking in, while being punished for being in that position. However, even within marginalized groups, canonical examples of cultural humor have been largely produced by a small segment of the population (i.e.,comedians, writers, poets, musicians). Social media, Twitter especially, has removed the barriers of production and gatekeeping of humor. Therefore, by examining responses to a cultural moment by "non-elite" African-Americans on Twitter, as the this paper does, helps to elucidate some evident trends, narratives, rhetorical strategies and tropes that may possibly be considered universal hallmarks of "Black Humor" as resistive discourse. Furthermore, these hallmarks can perhaps be understood to be the preeminent forms by which African-Americans create community, resist oppression and challenge hegemonic norms.

Keywords

twitter, critical discourse analysis, rhetoric, humor

1. Introduction

On April 29th, 2018, Dr. Jennifer Schulte, a white woman, approached two African-American men grilling in a park in Oakland, CA. According to one of the men, Onsayo Abram, who later told the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Schulte called it "my park" and told the men, "you guys shouldn't be here, you shouldn't be doing this". Schulte claimed that grilling in the park was illegal and threatened to call the police. The men refused to leave, and Schulte called 911. Michelle Snider, also white, saw the dispute

and began recording video on her cell phone. Snider is heard confronting Schulte about harassing the men. The exchange goes on for about 20 minutes until a police officer arrives, at which point Schulte begins sobbing and explaining how she felt "threatened" by the two men. In the end, no one was arrested or cited.

That day, Snider uploaded the 25-minute video to YouTube and it was viewed more than 2 million times but did not gain cultural traction until May 11th, when comedian Roy Wood Jr., correspondent for *The Daily Show*, who has 165K followers on Twitter, sent a Tweet suggesting the "Black Twitter Meme Council" replace the iconic "Black Man on Phone" meme with the picture of Schlulte on her phone, which he titled, "White Lady Spoils BBQ". Another Twitter user, @currentmscook, responding to Wood, Jr. was the first to refer to Schulte as "BBQBecky", and with that, a viral sensation was born.

On June 23rd, 2018, Allison Ettel, a white woman living in San Francisco, CA confronted an African-American mother and her 8-year-old daughter, Jordan, who were selling water outside of their apartment complex where they, and Ettel, both lived. The family was trying to raise money for a trip to Disneyland, but Ettel complained that they were being "disruptive" and called the police. A cousin of Jordan's began recording on her cell phone. On video, Ettel is heard telling 911 that the girl is "illegally selling water without a permit". When Ettel moved behind a wall to avoid being recorded, Jordan's mother informed her, "You can hide all you want but the whole world is going to see you, boo".

Jordan's cousin posted the video to her Twitter account @_ethiopiangold, with the explanation, "So my little cousin was selling water and didn't have a permit, so this lady decided to call the cops on an 8-year-old. #PermitPatty". That's all it took. Like Schulte, Ettel also became a viral sensation, forever known as "PermitPatty". Twitter users soon discovered her real name and in no small bit of irony, Ettel's job as CEO of TreatWellHealth, a cannabis company that sells marijuana edibles for pet ailments. A few days after the video was posted on Twitter, seven local marijuana dispensaries cut ties with TreatWell Health and Ettel stepped down as CEO.

Since Schlute and Ettel, we have seen #JoggerJoe, #CornerstoneCaroline, #BurritoBob, and #LawnmowerLucy to name a few. However, we should never forget that #BBQBecky and #PermitPatty were the pioneers of this Twitter trend. Each in their own way became synonymous with social issues such as class, power, race, policing, entitlement, privilege, and gender. For many, they were corporeal and visual markers of a larger social system that needed to be confronted and dismantled. Therefore, this paper utilizes critical discourse analysis to examine the strategic humor, resistance/emancipatory discourse and community building that was utilized on Twitter, primarily by the African-American community, regarding #BBQBecky and #PermitPatty.

Most studies on Twitter have been quantitative, "big data" approaches that seek to identify large-scale patterns. These approaches work from the outside-in, determining connections or networks and seeking to interpret them "objectively" based on statistics and numbers. While this approach can be useful, it often overlooks *how* people do things with Twitter, *why* they do them, and how they *understand* them.

This paper fills that void by explicating not only *what* was said but *why* it was said. Examining a highly-charged, cultural moment such as #BBQBecky and #PermitPatty is tremendously valuable. It serves to not only provide more insight into how individuals use Twitter, but how they use it in making sense of events in the offline world by putting their own personal, ideological and political beliefs on full display. Furthermore, this approach allows for a clear examination of context, audience and discursive practices as they relate to a specific issue, which enables one to see clearly how discourse around race, class, power, etc. are operationalized. However, before doing so, there must be a clear understanding of: (1) Twitter as a means to create community, (2) African-American humor as resistance/emancipatory discourse and (3) the methodology of Critical Discourse Analysis.

Twitter and Developing Community

There have been a variety of conceptualizations of what Twitter is as well as interpretations of its efficacy, primarily, within the areas of: (1) network topology, (2) as a communication tool and (3) social behavior. It is at the intersection of communication and social behavior where Twitter as a community creation tool finds its place. Clearly, a complete review of previous research is not feasible, however, examining some pertinent examples is beneficial.

In defining the concept of community, we should first turn to Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1983), which argues that societies forge new social identities by emphasizing a common—somewhat artificially constructed—community. The key is "somewhat artificially constructed", which leads to Anderson's notion of an "imagined community", a construction he explains as "the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (p. 6). I would argue that "imagined communities" are highly present on Twitter, as users are aware of other's presence in their virtual neighborhood, receive messages from others, and they write for the intended audience who follow them. While one could never meet or know everyone on Twitter, users are aware of their presence, input, influence and ideologies.

Other theoretical frameworks for online communities are Jones's (1997) concept of "virtual settlement" and McMillan and Chavis's (1986) work on what constitutes a "Sense of Community" (SoC). Both works build on Wellman's insight (1979, 2001) that community is based on sociable and supportive relations, not on physical locality. Jones (1997) argued that the prerequisite for an online community is the presence of a "virtual settlement", which meets the following criteria:

- interactivity,
- more than two communicators,
- common-public place where members can meet/interact, and
- sustained membership over time.

Jones's framework is grounded in the combination of computer-mediated communication, cyber-archaeology, and virtual communities. Therefore, it is necessary for researchers to examine the

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"artifacts" that online community members leave behind (i.e., memes, source-follower relationship, postings/tweets, etc.) and, based on these artifacts, quantify each of the four criteria described above (Blanchard & Markus, 2004; Effimova & Hendrick, 2005; Koh & Kim, 2004). Although Twitter allows people to get together and exchange messages it does not necessarily make it a community, nor make people feel like they are part of a community. For that to occur, they need a sense of community.

According to McMillan and Chavis's SoC (1986) members experience a "sense of community" if they feel like they belong (**membership**); they can make a difference to the community (**influence**); they provide support and are supported by others (**integration and fulfillment of needs**); and they share history, common places and similar experiences (**shared emotional connection**). Blanchard's review (2004) argues that the main advantage of McMillan and Chavis's SoC is that "it strengthens some of the connections that Anderson's phrase 'imagined community', implies but leaves rather vague" (Haesly, 2005, p. 9). As Haesly (2005) further explains, McMillan and Chavis's SoC "illuminates both the social and psychological mechanisms that serve to link individuals to their community—even if that community is an imagined community" (p. 9).

African-American Humor & Emancipatory Discourse

In finding an inroad to the dynamic phenomenon known as "African-American humor", we could start at no better place than W.E.B. DuBois who stated, "to the black world alone belongs the delicious chuckle… We are supermen who sit idly by and laugh and look at civilization". DuBois informs us that to understand jokes, we must understand the people who make them, and those that are the subject of them. Humor can maintain social distance and stigma, or it can bring it into the light for examination and confrontation. As Mayo (2008) states, "By disrupting seriousness with laughter, humor can disrupt the sense that because social categories appear intransigent, all thought and action about them must remain stuck" (p. 245). Both DuBois and Mayo recognize that the love-hate relationship between African-Americans and the larger U.S. culture is unlike any other ethnic group in American history. As the well-known, often controversial, African-American comedian Paul Mooney noted:

> "When we were slaves,—lived in their house, nursed their children—cooked their food. Once we got free, they didn't want us in their neighborhood. Ain't that some shit?! Now you don't want me around. Let slavery come back tomorrow, white folks will be right out on the front step—open arms—Welcome home, niggers! Your room is just how you left it! We didn't change a thing. Make sure you get some rest, you got those eight jobs to go to in the morning!"

Emancipatory discourse and African-American humor are not monolithic, one-dimensional entities. They encompass a public pedagogy that teaches social norms, (re)produces ideologies, constructs public memory, manages group affiliation and identity boundaries (Douglas, 1975; Lee, 2012; Mintz, 1988; Walker, 1998). Humor in general, but African-American humor especially, utilizes what Boskin (1997) identifies as "elastic polarity" as "Humor can operate for or against, deny or affirm, oppress or

liberate" (p. 38). Racial humor, however, is a double-edged sword. At worst, it reproduces oppressive meanings, maintains racial divisions/hierarchies, and dehumanizes the "other" (Billig, 2005; Davies, 1982; Howitt & Owusu-Bempah, 2005; Weaver, 2011). At its best, humor about race points out the gap between lofty ideals and the reality of lived experience. Comedians with marginalized identities often use their "outsider" status to critique institutions and values, thereby achieving, "one of the central functions of American humor – to operate as a cultural corrective" (Walker, 1998, p. 33).

Subordinated groups frequently utilize humor to develop community and cultivate the hope necessary for a better future (Haggins, 2007; Krefting, 2014; Rossing, 2013). Dance's (1998) summary of the complexities of African-American women's humor exemplifies the range and diversity of emancipatory humor:

> "We use our humor to speak the unspeakable, to mask the attack, to get a tricky
> subject on the table, to warn lines not to be crossed, to strike out at enemies and the
> hateful acts of friends and family, to camouflage sensitivity, to tease, to compliment,
> to berate, to brag, to flirt, to speculate, to gossip, to educate, to correct the lies people
> tell on us, to bring about change" (p. xxii).

Racial humor is socially and historically situated, with interpretations shifting based on context and audience (Park et al., 2006). Insider/outsider status often muddies the discursive waters, as an "insider joke" told among the community will be met with laughter, while the same joke told in a mixed audience risks being met with uncomfortable silence or resentful anger. Therefore, African-Americans have long used comedic misdirection and coded language to ridicule cultural norms that could not be confronted publicly, which leads us to the final aspect, defining "emancipatory humor" in the African-American culture. Boskin (1997) situates emancipatory racial humor, as a long struggle against racist hegemony:

> "Three and a half centuries of oppression produced a particular style of resistance
> humor that entwined defiance, cunning, inventiveness, and retaliation. Stories,
> anecdotes, jokes and pranks record [B]lack counteraction to oppression and also
> provide insight into the character of the oppression itself" (p. 147).

With Boskin's thesis, we see that emancipatory racial humor raises consciousness about oppression, foregrounds a living history of counternarratives, and provides strategies for resisting oppression. Moving into more specific, operationalized aspects leaves us with the following principles regarding African-American emancipatory humor:

- It reveals the "character of the oppression", exposing the dominant meaning-making practices that legitimize existing power relations as common sense.
- The counterhegemonic humor is a "counteraction to oppression" by providing a forum where counternarratives might gain a hearing.

- Emancipatory, racial humor features cunning, inventive retaliation by interrogating assumptive, naturalized racial constructions, particularly the manifestation of Whiteness.

These three aspects should not be taken to be exhaustive or exclusive. Rather, they are strategies that allow for creativity and invention in their application. In doing so, they serve as a means to read public discourse, respect the unique positionality of racial minorities and promote consciousness of discourse/knowledge regimes that support the logics of racism.

2. Method

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a means by which to examine discourse and language, but more importantly, "as the instrument of power and control as well as with discourse as the instrument of the social construction of reality" (Leeuwen, 1993). The idea of the "critical" approach in CDA is explained by Fairclough (1995):

> "Calling the approach 'critical' is a recognition that our social practice in general and our use of language in particular are bound up with causes and effects which we may not be at all aware of under normal conditions. The normal opacity of these practices to those involved in them—the invisibility of their ideological assumptions, and the power relations which underlie the practices—helps to sustain these power relations" (p. 54).

CDA provides a window into social relations and norms. Language must do two things: (1) convey content and (2) negotiate a relationship. Therefore, the principles of CDA are as follows:

1) Social and political issues are constructed and reflected in discourse.

2) Power relations are negotiated and performed through discourse.

3) Discourse both reflects and reproduces social relations.

4) Ideologies are produced and reflected in the use of discourse.

In the hopes of providing a clear example of CDA, let's look at the following riddle:

> A father and son are in a terrible car wreck. The father dies, but the boy is rushed to the hospital for emergency surgery. The trauma surgeon enters the operating room, ees the young boy and says—"I can't do this surgery. That's my son!"
>
> Who is the surgeon?

If you are stumped or hesitated before saying, "The boy's mother", you see how CDA works. The concept of "trauma surgeon" is not just a job description, it is also imbued with gender norms, social expectations and cultural ideologies (i.e., surgeon=male, father & son, etc.). Through close textual analysis, CDA uncovers these power relationships and links between text and ideology. CDA has proven to be a potent methodology for examining online discourse. For example, Zizi Papacharissi (2012) used CDA in her study of performative self-presentation in Twitter trending topics, in which she

coded for particular words, hashtags, phrases, repetitive themes, etc.

The advantage of CDA over other qualitative and quantitative methods is that it enables one to unearth subtleties of interaction on Twitter as well as illuminating the broader themes present. Twitter is notoriously fluid, as explained by Burrell (2012) in which she describes Twitter as one part of a "network composed of fixed and moving points including spaces, people and objects" (p. 189). As Burrell could have predicted, there were many hashtags that dealt with the actions of Schulte and Ettel, such as #BBQLady, #WaterNazi, #NoSheDidn't, #OaktownBBQ, #WhiteLadyHatesBBQ, etc. For this paper, only two hashtags were examined: #BBQBecky and #PermitPatty. These were selected because they were the highest trending and the most tagged, which enabled coding for themes that were constant across all discourse that was expressed to *include or directly comment on the women*, even if other hashtags were used, which allowed for a more substantive insight into responses and reactions.

The selection of tweets was done by utilizing Twitter's search function to create parameters for date and time and then using Tweetdraw to randomly select tweets with #BBQBecky and/or #PermitPatty. First-level coding was used to separate tweets into: (1) #BBQBecky or (2) #PermitPatty by utilizing their respective dates of inception on Twitter. NVivo12 was used to further code into specific discursive themes. In total, 586 tweets were examined. This paper does not endeavor, nor claim, to be an exhaustive analysis of all the Twitter discourse pertinent to #BBQBecky and #PermitPatty. Instead, it should be understood as an exploratory work that seeks to engage a large enough sample size to see what discursive themes/strategies were utilized and why. In the next section, I present some textual examples and expound on: (1) the discursive frames that were found and (2) their intersections with community building and African-American emancipatory humor.

3. Result

There were a variety of discourses present in discussions of both women. Humor was utilized as well as discourse that reflected community and identity. There were several major discursive frames, each with sub-discourses that were used to achieve the strategic means of the user. In some cases, these were used for both women, in others they were specific, individual indictments. Highlighting a few examples will provide context and clarify the strategic discourse employed.

3.1 Invasion of Space

Throughout U.S. history, control of public places has always been racialized. Segregation, neighborhood redlining, school busing, etc. are just a few examples of how physical space, property and location of the body becomes racialized. This was an issue that was not lost on Twitter users, who approached it in an often-humorous way:

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Fred @MrFREDHAT · May 17
#BBQBecky memes

Brian   @ibrian314 · May 16
Jackson
Replying to @RickeySmiley

Putting Schulte with the Florida A&M University marching band and riding with Suge Knight discursively shows not only the invasion of whiteness into traditionally black spaces, but using the photo of Schulte crying is also strategic, meant to illustrate the stress/anxiety white people have around minorities. This is the inventive retaliation of emancipatory humor arguing that while white people are the last ethnic group that should feel any stress in America-black people or black spaces—have an amazing superpower to cause them anxiety. There was also discourse attempting to show the innate, immutable racial anxiety of whiteness by using celebrities with wide cross-over appeal, as we see below with the musician Prince:

Creative wordplay and design turn Prince's lyrics and body into threats to whiteness. Positioning Schulte in her doorway is a protection of her personal, white space while Prince is outside, in a public space, which should be race-neutral, but is still attempting to be controlled by Schulte. This meme illustrates meaning-making that supports the notion that anything blacks say or do will be twisted to be deemed a threat. Finally, it is humorous, because unlike Suge Knight, who has proven himself to be legitimately dangerous, Prince has never been perceived as such by society. This further highlights the immutable nature of white anxiety and serves as a counternarrative showing that white people will not hesitate to call the cops on even the most non-threatening and supremely famous minority.

Some Twitter users discursively framed the black community around food or food itself became a racialized space, as seen below:

"The cookout" is a black community space involving food, which Schulte has invaded not only with physical whiteness but with "white" food (i.e., raisins) invading "black" food (i.e., potato salad). Here, emancipatory humor reverses the hegemonic power dynamic *by rejecting whiteness* (i.e., no one eats the potato salad). This puts the black community in the position of power, exhibiting agency in deciding who can be in a social space and who's participation will be accepted. Once again, the "crying Schulte" photos argues for the fragility of whiteness at being rejected.

Dulce Sloan, correspondent for *The Daily Show*, uses food as a counterhegemonic narrative, by imagining a reversal of power. The discursive choice of "ran around threatening" frames whiteness as out of control and dangerous. Using "gluten" as a threat to whiteness makes white fears ridiculous in contrast to legitimate black fears (i.e., having the cops called). In short, white fears affect your waistline, black fears affect your existence. Invasion of space discourse also framed *black existence itself* as a threat to white people:

The above examples create community and essentializes the anxiety of whiteness in relation to blackness. "Soul Train", an iconic, racialized show is now dangerous. "Black People dancing and creating some type of line with soul" discursively identifies the larger black community while "I don't feel safe" is emancipatory humor critiquing how power relations become viewed as common sense. Here, the primary operating principle and "common sense" is that white people must feel safe, regardless of where they are. Therefore, any perceived lack of safety is de facto justification for police response. Schulte's decision to "report" black people "minding their own business" is emancipatory humor that engages the oppression that legitimizes power relations. The "character of the oppression" here is that white people actually have the socio-racial power to "report" others and will often report black people for doing nothing.

The *Peanuts* T-shirt humorously recontextualizes larger U.S. culture as a racialized one. Everyone knows the *Peanuts* cartoons and TV specials and you would be hard pressed to find a more racially neutral and well-loved cultural space. However, even here, the white female characters are revealing their true nature—reporting black people for doing common things. Furthermore, it posits that white anxiety is so innate that it reveals itself even in elementary school, a clear counternarrative to what we are traditionally told, that one is "taught to be racist". Some users extended this critique of whiteness to including *imaginary black spaces* as well:
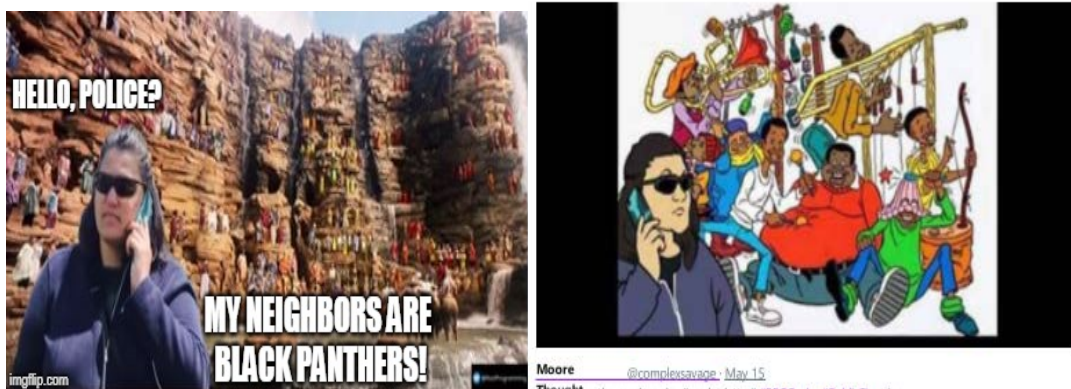
"Wakanda" and *The Fat Albert Show* exemplify the inventive emancipatory humor that discursively interrogates the racial construction of whiteness. Whiteness is so anxiously invasive that it manages to broach the border of reality and even imaginary black spaces must be policed by whiteness. The last major invasion of space discursive strategy humorously presented a counternarrative to how race, class and existence operate:

Once again, Schulte is in distress, with text that criminalizes blackness and pokes fun at white fragility that needs "help" to be "sent immediately". Furthermore, "Black people are existing" critiques the notion that police only engage black people because of legitimate criminal activity. We see this narrative consistently used in wrongful shootings by police. Justifications and excuses all amounting to the victim "must have done something", or the very legally effective, "the officer feared for their life". Here, we see all it takes is a phone call from a white woman.

Schulte's professional headshot is emancipatory humor that calls out race, class and community. Unlike Tweets that use the "crying Schulte" photo, this one connotes professionalism in crushing "the joy from the lives of black people", discourse that creates an imagined community victimized by Schulte. Also, Schulte's desire to "crush the joy" of a minority group makes her a supervillain while maintaining the humor of such a ridiculous life goal. Class and education are also challenged by referencing Schulte's "Parby-Warker.com" glasses. This is a change from the real eyeglass company Warby-Parker, and we can assume it was probably done to avoid legal repercussions. However, the message is clear: we often take comfort in the misguided notion that racism is only found among "uneducated, poor whites" however this meme is a counternarrative that challenges that belief on two levels. First, Schulte has a Ph.D. from Stanford, so education does not remove white racism. Second, class is not the issue because most uneducated, poor whites - like *all uneducated, poor groups*—are in no social/financial position to "crush the joy" of anyone.

The discourse regarding invasion of space is a powerful one that pulls on a lot of cultural threads. Many of these tweets worked from the starting point of traditionally "black spaces" or cultural tropes that other blacks would recognize and identify with. This exemplifies the shared history, common places and similar experiences that create emotional connection online. Furthermore, the recognition of

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these spaces as "uniquely black" creates a sense of membership and belonging. While Twitter and other online spaces are technically racially neutral, we can see how quickly and effectively users can make them racially salient through discourse. The invasion of space discourse is very potent in critiquing social power and relationships, as whiteness is free to invade "black spaces", but it is not allowed in reverse and it was expressed through these rhetorical frames: (1) black spaces/black people create anxiety for whites, (2) whites are emotionally fragile when they are in, or rejected, from black spaces, (3) white physical safety/emotional security are paramount in the U.S. and (4) white racism is innate and has no relationship to class, age, education, etc.

3.2 Resistance

Although humor was highly present, it would be naïve to assume that all discourse around #BBQBecky and #PermitPatty was in that vein. What can best be understood as resistance discourse was very evident. It encompassed several sub-discourses, one of which was the desire for *social/cultural change*:

Tweets like the one above left, broaden the discussion from individual actors (i.e., Schulte and Ettel) to the larger cultural norms and power structures that enable their behavior. "PSA: White Folks" addresses the broadest audience of whiteness and citing common activities that "aren't illegal" is a jab at the propensity for blackness to be criminalized, even during normality. Above right, by framing this issue as a "march for civil rights", Schulte and Ettel, as individuals, are discursively removed and they become the symptom, not the disease. This exemplifies one of the primary means to create community online—to discursivley expand the issue and argue that it problematic in a variety of contexts and social situations, as seen below:

Is There a #BBQBecky or #PermitPatty in Your Classroom?
The recent rash of viral stories featuring white people who call the cops on law-abiding black people is an iteration of implicit bias that happens in schools every day. It's time for educators to reflect. What are you doing to ensure your students don't have to worry about #LivingWhileBlack at school?

Jerry J.   @jerrydwilson · Jul 10
Wilson If we're being honest, a lot of teachers are #PermitPatty and #BBQBecky.

The above tweet tweet brings in the educational system and discusses the concept of "implicit bias" having an effect on "law abiding black people". Furthemore, children, and by extension – attacks on innocence—is invoked with "happens is schools everyday". The highlighted query of "What are you doing?" to support students who are #LivingWhileBlack promotes the idea that people can make a difference in their social environment, discursively utilizing the concept of influence to build a sense of community.

Online community building was also discursively framed by appeals to 3rd parties and supporting *community-based challenges* to the social order:

Mother   @MotherJones · Jul 21
Jones We're seeing an epidemic of #BBQBecky-type calls. Here's how police could deal with them.

AJ+   @ajplus · Jul 14
First #BBQBecky called the cops on him.
Now, he's running for city council.

Above, in the *Mother Jones* tweet, Schulte is indicative of an "epidemic" and they provide a link to info on "how police could deal with them". Bringing in the police discursivley engages what should be a neutral, 3rd party to control/manage innapropriate social behavior (i.e., calling police on black people) and seeks the support of others (i..e., the police) in order to a address a need (i.e., stop the epidemic). This is a classic example of integration and fulfillment of needs—the expression of support/seeking of support by others, that are prerequisites for online communities. Above right, we see Kenzie Smith, one of the men Schulte called the police on, who is now running for city council. This photo was shared numerous times on Twitter and serves as an example of both influence and integration present in online communities. The promotion of Smith encourages the audience to vote for him (i.e., influence) and by providing social/electoral information, they are providing support for one the "victims" of Schulte (i.e., integration).

There was also resistance discourse that revolved around *class and gentrification*. However, the tweets examined revealed discourse that was very specific thematically—not only is gentrification bringing white people into the community, but dangerous white people:

> **LEFT**
> @LeftSentThis · Jun 30
>
> When you critique Gentrification as a human rights violation, you can began to frame #BBQBecky, #JoggerJoe, and #PermitPatty, as not just being petty people, but as provocateurs of potential police terrorism on Black folks that

> **Imani Gandy'd Yams** ‼
> @AngryBlackLady · Jul 24
>
> ~@ANSFreeman and I were talking about the gentrification of Oakland and how it's bringing in terrible white people who think it's ok to attack Black people. From that dude who dumped the homeless man's belongings into lake Merritt, to #BBQBecky and now the murder of #NiaWilson.

> **ashley yates**wnblaze · Jul 23
>
> #BBQBecky, #JoggerJoe and #PermitPatty all happened in the Bay Area, the region of the U.S. facing the most extreme rates of gentrification and homelessness in the nation.

> The only difference between them and the man that murdered Nina is they tried outsource the violence.

The discourse above leaves little to the imagination, gentrification is not a property issue, but a "human rights violation" and those engaged in it are "provocateurs of police terrorism on Black folks". This discourse is a call to membership of physical space (i.e., neighborhood) and racial identity (i.e., Black

folks) that is under threat. It also intensifies this sense of membership by creating an oppositional force that has accelerated beyond "petty" to being "provocateurs", which grants a higher level of agency and intentionality to people like Schulte and Ettel. Furthermore, gentrification is discursively tied to "terrible white people" who think "it's ok to attack black people". This tweet essentializes the results of gentrification (i.e., terrible white people) and also provides support and creates membership with a group that is under attack. The conceptualization of being under attack is explicitily stated with the tweet that claims gentrification is nothing more than outsourcing "the violence". This discursively ties the state to ethnic whiteness and frames the police as sub-contractors for white violence against African-Americans. Another major component of resistance discourse around gentrifiction focused on the "otherness" of those moving into the neighborhood:

Above, the left tweet calls out whiteness by framing them as "brand new". However, what they are brand new to is open to interpretation. New to the area? New to diversity? As the author uses, "socioeconomic", there is argument to be made that it means both. The tweet on the right, all capitalized, is the social media equivalent of "yelling" that discusively "otherrizes" new arrivals with the slur, "Gentrifiers". This discourse of dehumanization increases the humanity of those already in the community while decreasing that of new arrivals. It includes "your neighbors" as a discursive strategy to frame those already in the community as people that should be respected and treated decently, therefore humanizing the community for the benefit of the interloping, "Gentrifiers". Lastly, the explicit threat of being the "next #PermitPatty or #BBQBecky" gives the community the ability to stigmatize and negatively affect the life of an offender. The final type of resistance discourse flowed

from a very clear wellspring: anger. More specifically, payback and punishment for people such as Schulte and Ettel, which is best understood as *retributive discourse*:


Schulte and Ettel were consistently indentified as being deserving of punishment. However, there were varied strategies utilized with retributive discourse. It was often very direct, desiring to give the offenders a "taste of their own medicine" or claiming they will "learn the hard way". There is also a call to weaponizing a 3rd party (i.e., 911), discourse to promotes equality of power and encourage racial/gender performance in order to get justice. (i.e., just like a white lady). As can be expected, there was less emancipatory humor, although there were examples of community building, influence and agency:

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The above tweets are illustrative of the "sense of community" that encompasses membership, influence, integration, and shared emotinal connection. "Have we given her a meme name yet?" creates a sense of membership and discursively challenges the power structure by giving the community (i.e., "we") the ability to exert influence and stigmatize. Futhermore, "these folks" is an oppositional frame of "Us vs. Them", (i.e., membership) which is further enhanced by creating a sense of danger with "are out of control"and requires the support of others in order to resist (i.e., integration).

Referencing #BlackTwitter gives a clear designation to the community that is engaged on this isssue. "Break you in a matter of seconds", "Go viral via black twitter", and "you'll never be seen the same again" are all discourses of power—a reclamation of authority that increases the agency and power of the community to inflict punishment. There were also examples of discursive intersectionality that combined white gentrification, punishment and weaponization of social media:
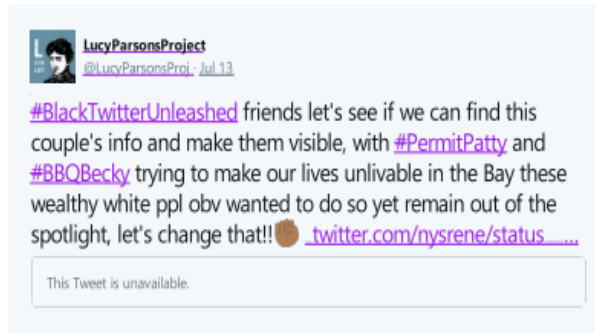
The lack of "legal recourse" for those that "mean us harm", discursively establishes the community as under seige and lacking judicial or political power. However, there is one place in which power resides—memes—more specifically the ability to "meme the chit out of you". This weaponization of social media is counterhegemonic and establishes a forum (i.e., social media) where counternarratives can be expressed. #BlackTwitterUnleashed is a discursively aggresive move to establish the ability to influence, a prime component for creating a sense of community online. Addressing the audience as "friends" creates a sense of membership with readers. This type of discourse promotes the ability of the community to rhetorically, via social media, identify offenders to the broader public. This discourse of exposure interrogates and challenges power dynamics, as seen with "make them visible" and the claim that aggresors "want to remain out of the spotlight, let's change that!!"

Invasion of space, whiteness and the negative aspects of gentrification are reinforced as the author claims that white people are "trying" to make black lives "unlivable in the Bay area". This discourse works on a variety of levels. First, "trying" ascribes strategic intentionality to whiteness. Second, geography and community are codified with "in the Bay area". Third, gentrification is given the defined goal of making the locals distressed to the point of moving out, thereby leaving the area to "wealthy white people". It is not just moving, it is moving to take over. Once again, the overall tone and tenor of the tweet reinforces the weaponization of social media in order to challenge social/economic structures and expose behavior of those bringing harm to the community, something recognized by many on Twitter:

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Restistance discourse was a major component of of how many addressed the issues of #BBQBecky and #PermitPatty, which revolved around the notion that gentrification, and by extension, whiteness is an economic, social and personal safety issue that must be addressed by the community. Understandbly, the presence of humor was not as high as with other discourses, but instead encompassed to some very specific thematic and strategic frames, which were: (1) gentrification is a dangerous invasion, economically and socially, (2) white people, inexperienced with diversity, are using the police as a weapon and (3) offenders of the

community need to be punished for their actions.

3.3 Socio-Political Microcosm

As mentioned earlier, for many on Twitter, the actions of Schulte and Ettel were not veiwed as individual instances, but as being indicative of the larger socio-political system of the U.S. For many white Americans, "racism", with a capital R, is conceptualized as a direct, one-one-one explict occurance, such as using a racial slur or physically assaulting someone based on ethnicity. Conversely, for many non-white Americans, it is less explicit and has systemic, cultural and social dynamics that are more intricately woven together. Therefore, #BBQBecky and #PermitPatty served as tangible examples of a much larger issue and became a means to rhetorically interrogate the larger dynamics that enabled their behavior. One of the discursive strategies used by some was the the use of *racial juxtaposition*:

MDOT
Mafia @mtmafia · Jul 9

Replying to @MandyPlants @wesmorgan1 @TheRileyWilson

If that had been a 19-year-old black man, holding ANYTHING in his hands, he would have been tased, or worse — shot. Also, if #PermitPatty can get an armed response, to eight-year-old selling water — why is this armed officer, allowing someone to

menace, and threaten a citizen?

The above tweet uses "#PermitPatty" as a touchstone to address racial inequity in police response and the danger of police interaction for minorities. A "19 year old black man, holding ANYTHING" is justifaction for being "tased, or worse -shot", discursively challenges the idea that police only harm black people when a weapon is present. This discourse serves to create a sense of racial membership and shared emotional connection through similar experiences. #PermitPatty's ability to get an armed police response regarding a child selling water, challenges the hegemonic notion of whiteness, namely that white people's safety must be protected, regardless of circumstances. Lastly, an "armed officer" is not only failing to do their job, they are allowing someone to "menace, and threaten" a fellow citizen. While the two should be equal under the law, apparently one is allowed to threaten the other with the tacit approval of the state (i.e., police officer) via their nonresponse. If the rhetorical subtlety was lost on some, the tweet below punches the concept of racial juxtaposition straight in the nose, and needs no explanation:


Kev (11-0) #uNDefeated   @NDrules43 · Jul 14

Smart boy takes advantage of heatwave to make $1,500 Didn't see a #PermitPatty anywhere! Is it because the boy was white? Tough discussions on race inequality need to be had whether we like it or not   theweathernetwork.com/videos/gallery

Following along the parrallel tracks of racial juxtaposition, was discourse of *weaponized whiteness*, or as the comedian Paul Mooney calls it, "the complexion for the protection", something that several Twitter users agreed with. Primarily, this rhetoric builds membership within the community by framing white hegemonic norms as a threat:

Above left, our screenwriter has not only equated "villain" with #BBQBecky and #PermitPatty, but with ethnicity as well, with "yeah, that feels about white…" On the right, white people, such as Ettel and Schulte, thanks to whiteness have conceierge service from what should be a neutral 3rd party (i.e., 911). All citizens pay tax dollars for 911 service, yet, for some it is a "personal" tool—like a cell phone app - to be used during moments of racial anxiety or uncomfortableness, and the state will be there soon to take care of it. There is emancipatory humor here that exposes the meaning-making that legitimizes power realtions. For non-whites, 911 is often a life or death situation, for white people, it's a "helpline". This conceptualiztion of the "helpline" and of white racial bias being the instigating factor in police involvement is seen below:
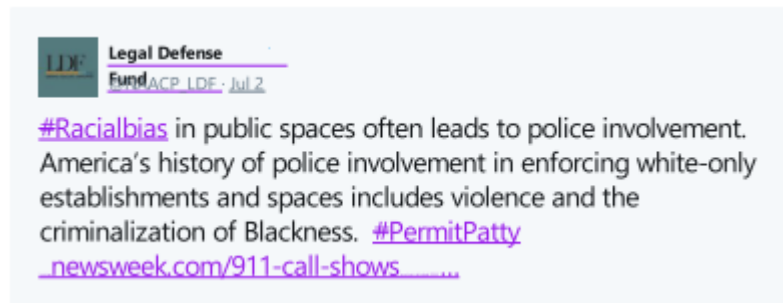
The enforcement of public spaces, as "white spaces" is addressed, which of course leads to the criminalization of blackness. This discourse is counterhegemonic, in that it frames the state as being complicit in in helping white culture carry out ethnic oppression.

Ettel and Schulte were the launchpad to discursively engage larger societal structures and systems that helped to facilitate and enable their behavior. Another component of weaponized whiteness involved the intersection of race and gender, namely the pernicious and manipulative use of "white female tears". The U.S. has a deep historical background and cultural narrative regarding the endangerment of white female purity when it comes into contact with blackness, especially male blackness. Such history reaffirms the creation of community via shared emotional connection, coalescing around the classic African-American admonition, "white lady cry, black man die". The historical weaponization of white female fear was not lost on many:

Shanita Hubbard @tarenee · Jun 30

Let this serve as a reminder that #PermitPatty going on national tv to cry and lie was just another example of how dangerous racist white women are. They victimize black people, then turn on tears and project a false victimhood and are easily believed. Alison Ettel is dangerous

Shaun King
Wow.

So #PermitPatty (Alison Ettel) lied and told the @sfchronicle that she was only pretending to call 911....

Peggy Glynn @pglynn61 · May 30
dYouBelieveAmbienMadeMe into #BBQBecky
I have no idea what happened officer !! I took an Ambien and woke up a meme sensation

(((Nasty Cajsa))) @Cajsa · Nov 14

And it's bias that makes life precarious for Black children. Surely #PermitPatty knew of Tamir Rice, but she called anyway. Jeffrey Ziegler knew about Trayvon Martin so probably thought shooting at a Black child wouldn't even merit a ticket.

"Let this serve as a reminder", discursively reminds the black community that ethnicity can, and has historically, been weaponized. Ettel has gone on TV to "cry and lie", which is factually correct, as Ettel originally claimed she only pretended to call 911, but an audio of the call was later released. Racial manipulation and gender are specifically addressed with "how dangerous racist white women are" who "turn on tears and project false victimhood". Such behavior is "easily believed" which makes Ettel "dangerous". This calls on the common history of white female purity being sacrosanct and something that the white community, and more importantly the state, must protect at all cost. The tweet builds on community by specifically evoking shared common history and specifically indicting—via race and gender—an enemy of the community. Therefore, Ettel is the most dangerous of white people, a white *woman*. The photo Schulte crying in front of the police officer is a visual representation of this thesis as well, which includes some sarcastic retributive discourse with, "woke up a meme sensation". There was

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also discourse that framed female whiteness as economically strategic, by using whiteness for financial gain via manipulation:

The above meme brings in the ideas of both class and whiteness, essentializing both as being agents for economic disenfranchisement of African-Americans. There is argument to be made here that since Ettel was confronting two African-American females, the subtext of dangerous black male identtiy was taken out of the equation in this instance. However, Ettel has explicitly used whiteness not as a weapon against the physical body of a black person, but as weapon against economic progress. This was one of the few tweets that played with whiteness and class within the realm of economics. However, there were Tweets that explicitly addressed economic and entrepeneurial freedom. This was unexpected and interesting to note, because these Tweets did not overtly reference the race as a driving component, but rather spoke directly to the what many saw as the simple arrogance of Ettel. However, it is probably not coincidental that the overwhelming majority of tweets that used economic/entrepenurial discourse came from users who presented their online identity as white or non-defined:
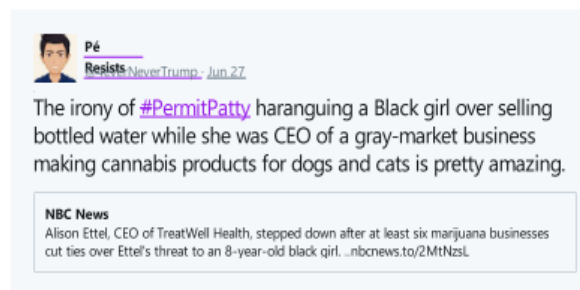
Noting the "irony" of selling water in comparison to operating a "gray-market business" such as Ettel's, clearly calls out economic white privilege, albeit indirectly. Ettel's general ridiculousness is address as well, with the sarcastic tweet that is thankful that "#PermitPatty wasn't aware of this deep, dark underground business". The very essence of Ettel's complaint is lampooned by questioning if the selling of bread was done "Without a permit???" which is obviously "Cray Cray" and discursively frames Ettel as a protector of irrelevant social norms. The tweet by FreedomWorks, a conservative and libertarian advocacy group, is far less sarcastic, claiming that Ettel is a "symptom of our society's entrepenurial decay". This is strong, overtly politcal language that discursively presents Ettel as representative of the problematic situation the country is in economically. Clearly, the discourse attempts to frame Ettel's actions in purely economic terms. Therfore, the discourse does a type of rhetorical inversion by addressing what are percieved as "systemic issues", but racial inequity/racism, however, is not one of them.

The last major component of socio-political microcosm discourse placed the actions of Ettel, Schlute, etc. as being defining characteristics of the current state of America, exacerbated by the election of Donald Trump. There seems to be some collective sense that Trump's rhetoric has given license to this behavior. Ana Navaro, Republican strategists and political commentator shared the following with her 1.07M Twitter followers:

The tweet discursively ties the lack of civility/decency to the cultural ethos Trump's presidency has awoken. Also, the intersections of gender and race were discussed as well:

As seen in the above Tweets, the primary discursive strategy was try to frame whiteness through the prism of political ideology, as there is a "direct correlaltion" between Schulte, Ettel, etc. and Trump winning the "white women's vote". In regard to white female Trump voters, the argument presented on Twitter promoted the idea that white women voted along ethnic lines as opposed to gender, as noted with the "CORRECTION": that makes clear "Trump won the 'white' woman vote". The majority of Tweets, that addressed race and gender politically, framed ethnicity as the most salient identity for

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white female Trump voters. I would posit that there are two primary arguments behind this discursive strategy. First, by voting for a percieved, some would say quite obvious, misogynist and racist, whiteness becomes deviant, something that if one identifies with too strongly, will cause one to take leave of all reason. Second, femininty or any type of gender credibility is removed, as a "real woman" or a woman even moderately cognizant of Trump's behavior could not possibly vote for such a man. For some Twitter users the "Trumpification" of America via whiteness was being exported around the globe as well, as seen below with a photo of the opening of the new U.S. Emabssy in Jerusalem:

There was no substantive text to accompy the above Tweet, which was par for the rhetorical course for most of these types of tweets, as visual representations seemed to be far more potent. Schulte, above, is presented as an iconic representation of America to an international audience. Which is certainly enhanced by the smiling visage of Ivanka Trump, seeming to introduce her to the world. Therefore, the viewer of this image is left to ponder, is Schulte what America already is? Or is it what the Trump administration wants America to be? The tweet below seems to answer the question, by superimposing Trump onto Ettel's photo:
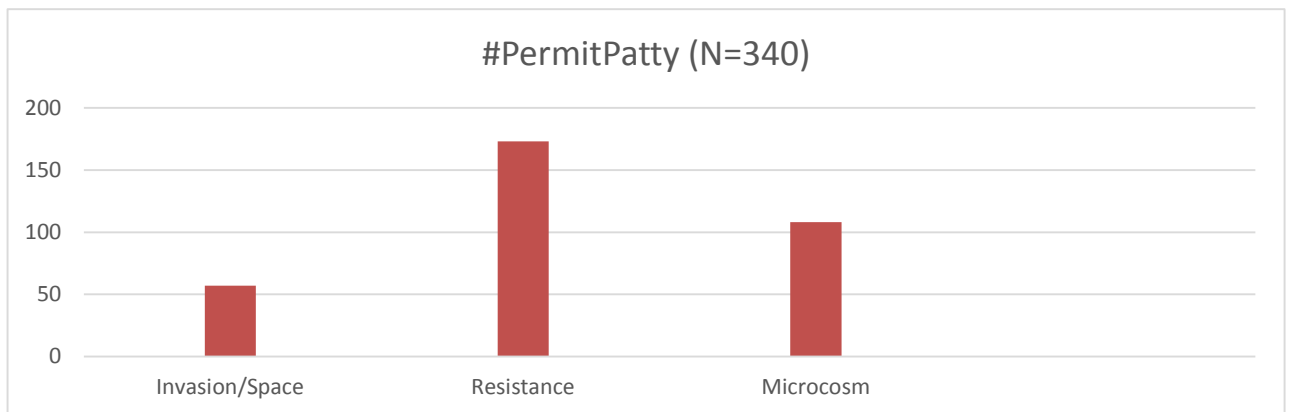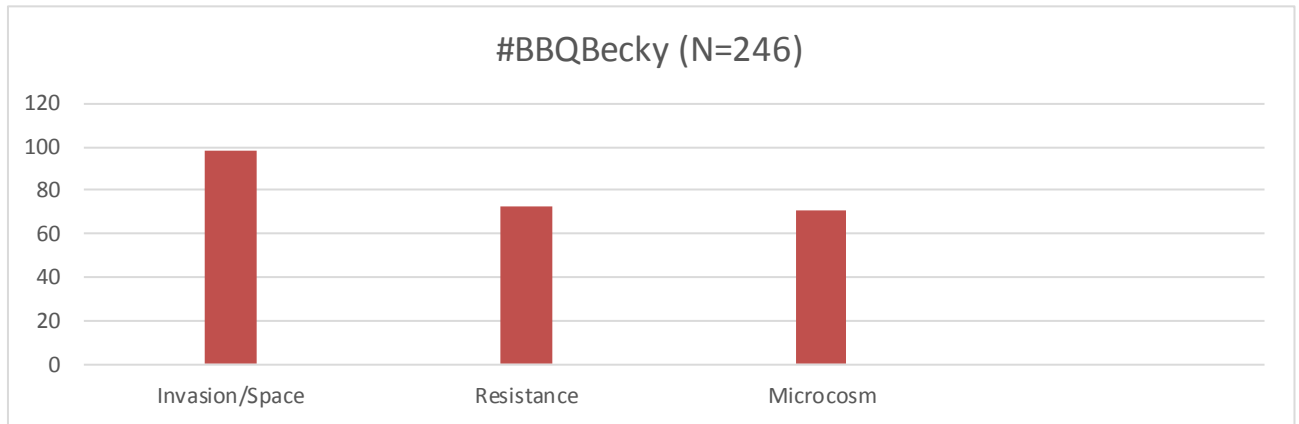
The answer for the viewer is a possible third option. Trump is us. The discourse of Ettel and Schulte as a socio-policital microcosm was highly present throughout the Tweets examined and utlized these major discursive frames: (1) juxtaposing police actions in regard to blacks or whites to highlight racial inequity supported by the state, (2) whiteness is a social, political and economic weapon, (3) white women, especially, weaponize their race and gender to garner support from the state and inflict punishement on African-Americans, (4) White women, not women, were responsible for Trump's victory and (4) Trump's victory is evidence of the incredible power of bigoted whiteness.

4. Discussion

In ascertaining the discusive themes/strategies within an online community, utilizing both qualitative and quantitaive measures is tremendously valuable, as it gives insight to not only *what* was said and *why*, but *how often*. Understanding both can give a deeper insight into the key ideologies and motivations behind the discourse expressed. Furthermore, the strategies employed and the amount at which they were utilized gives substantial insight into what the community views as important discursive issues and the most effective means that they feel can be used to address them. As mentioned earlier, there were 586 tweets examined which broke down along the following lines as seen in the graphs below:

#BBQBecky (N=246)

A bar chart titled "#BBQBecky (N=246)" with a y-axis ranging from 0 to 120 in increments of 20. Three bars: Invasion/Space approximately 98, Resistance approximately 72, Microcosm approximately 70.

#PermitPatty (N=340)

A bar chart titled "#PermitPatty (N=340)" with a y-axis ranging from 0 to 200 in increments of 50. Three bars: Invasion/Space approximately 57, Resistance approximately 173, Microcosm approximately 108.

Invasion of Space

In regard to Schulte, invasion of space discourse was highly evident in the tweets examined (n=98, 40%). However, with Ettel, it was much less so (n=57, 17%). This, I would argue, is largely in part to the physical space in which the two incidents occurred. For Schulte, it was in a public park, a neutral space in which neither she, nor the men she confronted had "social ownership" of. For Ettel, the confrontation took place on a sidewalk outside a mutual residence, a more socially equitable ownership of space. In essence, Ettel was attempting to control as space where she lived, as opposed to Schlute who had no claim to a public park. This inequity of social ownership between Schlute and Ettel had a substantial effect on the use of humor/emanicpatory discourse as well.

Twitter discourse framed Schulte as supremely invasive, and combined with the photo of her crying, as someone who is simply emotionally/psychologically incapable of being around minorities. This type of discourse framed Schulte as weak, making her the perfect subject for ridicule, as opposed to outright anger. Foremost among the discursive strategies, especially with Schulte, was humourously demarcating social spaces by race, thereby giving community members the ability to either discursively

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reject her from those spaces and/or lampoon her for attempting to control neutral spaces with whitness. The most prevalent and creative uses of emancipatory discourse was utilized in critiquing Schulte attempting to control imaginary black spaces (Wakanda, Soul Train, Fat Albert etc.) which was presented as the inate inability of white people to deal with the anxiety caused by minorities in any circumstance.

Resistance

Resistance discourse was substantially present in tweets regarding Schulte (n=76, 31%) and was overwhelmingly framed around the issue of gentrification and control of residential space. Schulte was discursively framed as being a physical manifestation of whitness, as a disease, infecting the community. There were clear attempts to discursivley to create community resistance against Schulte's actions, and by extension, gentrification in general. Furthermore, Schulte exemplified the need for social-cultural change, as she is discursivley symbolic of a larger issue that needs to be addressed, namely the influx of "bad" or "provacative" white people trying to overtake and "attack" racially and economically diverse communities. Discursively, gentrification is not an issue regarding affordable housing or tangible, physical spaces, but is an issue of identity, culture and belonging. The discourse frames whiteness as viewing a "neighborhood" as simply a brick and mortar construct, devoid of identity. The "Gentrifiers" see the area as only a space to be controlled, not as a place of community—therefore, they are an existential threat.

In regard to Ettel, resistance discourse was highly present and the most primary discourse utilized (n=173, 51%). It was extremely personal and retributive discourse was the most often used, as the overwhelming number of tweets sought to exact punishment on Ettel as an individual. This was quite different than the approach to Schulte, who was seen as symbolic of a larger issue. The evidence here suggest the anger and retribution was high in Ettel's case because she was confronting/harrassing a child, as opposed to Schulte who was dealing with adult males. This hypothesis is supported by the numerours tweets regarding Ettel that referenced other African-American children (Trayvon Martin, Jordan Edwards, Tamir Rice, etc.) that have been killed in altercations with either police or civilians. It appears from the Tweets examined that anger/retributive discourse does correlate heavily with the percieved youth or "innocence" of the target of harrassment.

Socio-Political Microcosm

For Schulte, socio-political discourse was the least used (n=71, 29%), but was still present enough to be worth mentioning. However, most of the discourse regarding Schulte *discursively tied her to Ettel* as being just another example of the socio-political framework of the U.S. In Ettel's case, socio-political discourse was the second-most present (n=108, 32%). For both women, gender-based discourse was the most heavily utilized. While gender was discussed in the discourse of invasion and resistance, here it was much more evident and consisten, as there were numerous tweets explicitly referencing that Schulte and Ettel were white women. Not only where they white women, they were taking advantage

of the socio-political structure of America that protects them at all cost.

The other substantial socio-political discourse framed Schulte and Ettel as largely symbolic of the weaponization of female whiteness. Therefore, they were not seen individual agents, but as sympotomatic of the current state of affairs, especially the election of Donald Trump. However, gender was also discursively adressed and many tweets made a specific point to remind readers that "white" women voted for and helped elect Trump. Therefore, it appears that in socio-political discourse both Schulte and Ettel were seen as symbolic gender and racial entities.

There are some that irreversibly convinced that "communities" exist, and can thrive, on social media. There are others who remained equally sure that they cannot. Perhaps the truth is somewhere in the middle and we should be looking at a matter of degrees and efficacy. With the Twitter responses regarding #BBQBecky and #PermitPatty, do we see a community or virtual settlement? Calling back on Jones's (1997) concept of "virtual settelement" we do see that, in this case, there was high interactivity, more than two communicators, a a common-public place to meet/interact. However, there was not sustained membership over time. This is due largely to innate nature and limitations of "hashtag activisim". The majority of Twitter-based campaigns are often *reactive* to an incident that occurs in the offline world, as oppossed to being *pro-active* to something that can be *tangibly addressed and altered*. In order to have sustained membership over time, there needs to be an easily codified, non-moving target which memebers can remain focused on, and more importantly, something that can be objectively seen to have been "fixed" or "stopped" (i.e., voting/elections, labor strike, boycott, genocide, etc.). In essence, it is much easier to get Wal-Mart to stop selling firearms than stop random individuals wandering around the planet being jerks.

Therefore, it is my argument, that hashtags such as #BBQBecky and #PermitPatty do not constitute a true online community, but they do however, provided the sense of community, as posited by McMillan and Chavis's (1986). This is due primarily to the actions of responding collectively to an incident, so basically everyone is talking about the same thing, which creates the sense of membership. There is also the sense of being able to make a difference, even if is unlikely. There is also support/being supported by others through agreement, tagging and retweeting and a shared history, common places and experiences and people share ideologies and cultural/social tropes that resonate within the group. There has been lots of previous work, in a academia and media, about the concept of "hashtag activism". This term, I believe, has often been incorrectly applied, as it is often slapped onto any topic that has has been trending for more than a week. If we really examine the discourse, and the purpose behind it, there is clear evidence that it is not an activist frame, but one based on exposure and collective expression. It occupies that space between random Twitter musings and true social/political activism. This is not to minimize it, as it can often be an important middle step to true social media activism, if it is maintained and given a tangible, real target in the offline world to aim for. #BBQBecky, #PermitPatty, etc. are not communities, virtual settlements or imagined communites. They are instead

best understood as responsive digital discusive spaces, which encompass the following criteria:

- Create collective identity/agreement through discourse.
- Define/identify breeches of social norms.
- Expose/shame cultural offenders.
- The process of self-expression is the ultimate end goal.

Responsive digital discursive spaces should be, at the end, provide a means through which individuals can address grievances, under the sense of collective identity, with others. The ability of to utilize Twitter to post memes, videos, etc. allows for a higher level of creativity in exposing power relationships and breeches of social norms. The platform itself, with its low barrier of entry, is a social space that invites the expression of counternarratives and encourages discursive reataliation against social offenders. These aspects coalesce around a type of social critique based on exposing the improper actions of individuals. Therefore, #BBQBecky, #PermitPatty and other "shaming" hashtags occupy a unique discursive space. Yes, social shaming is not a new concept, however what is new and worthy of examination is the way that reactive digital discursive spaces allow for: (1) the opportunity to use individuals such as Schulte and Ettel as visual markers and representations of larger social ills, (2) engaging in creative/resistive discourse as an emotional release valve and (3) creating community by discursively codifying what is considered appropriate social behavior.

As more of our daily life moves online, communication scholars would be well-served to gain a deeper understand of what types of external situations motivate interaction on Twitter, how those users interpret it and how they try and transmit those interpretations to others. Furthermore, getting a more robust and diversified understanding the discursive frames employed by Twitter users will give scholars a better guide to developing codified terminology and structures that can be applied to a variety of scenarios to see how discourse, social norms, identity and community are operationalized. There has been a lot of research and discussion regarding social media's efficacy in a variety of circumstances. How effective of a tool is it for X, Y, or Z? How can we market a product better? How are people persuaded on Twitter? While these are valid concerns, perhaps they are the wrong question to be asking if we are to truly understand social media. Social media is far too interpretive and allows far too much individual expression to be approached as *means* to reach or persuade *others*. Instead, as #BBQBecky and #PermitPatty have shown, maybe it is best understood as a means to *convince ourselves* our already held views and ideologies are correct by expressing them and finding support/agreement online. Each Tweet is the discursive equivalent of releasing a bird from our ship to find land. Every retweet or "like" is a twig assuring us that a community is close by, and we are not sailing out here all alone.

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