Manufacturing Ideology in Mediated Discourse:
A Cognitive Approach to the Critical Discourse Analysis of Politics and Ideology

By
Tahseen Taha Muhammad

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Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Karen Adams, Chair
Elly Van Gelderen
Mark James

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ABSTRACT

This study tests the hypothesis and assumption of much critical scholarship that the discourse of mass media news transmits prejudicial ideologies to news consumers, influencing the way they think about social justice issues and non-dominant groups in American society, including immigrants, women, and African-Americans. Taking off from the motivations and premises of Critical Discourse Analysis concerning language, power, and ideology, this study aims to extend that paradigm in several ways by applying the analytic techniques of cognitive and critical linguistics to uncover implicit representations in biased discourse. This study also goes beyond previous work by examining the reader comments on media texts to understand how the media’s discourse was received and interpreted, with a focus on the covert transmission of ideological messages. The results reveal how ideologies of prejudice are communicated implicitly through media discourse and how readers’ own ideologies influence that process, as evidenced by their comments. As a study in Critical Discourse Analysis, this study uncovers abuses of power impacting social justice – in this case the power of writing for the mass media to mold American minds, and therefore influence Americans’ behavior, including elections. Specific news articles from the American networks CNN and Fox were chosen on each of two topics for their relevance to current sociopolitical issues of prejudice and social justice: the US Supreme Court June 2018 decision to uphold the Trump administration “travel ban” and the January 2019 Gillette advertisement, considered controversial for its seemingly feminist criticism of male behavior.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Problem

1.1.1 Prejudice in the American Mind

Three decades ago, social psychologists began releasing results of laboratory and survey experiments regarding the subconscious expression of American racism. Gaertner and Dovidio (1986), two pioneers in the field, explored the notion that racism was not going away but rather was mutating in repressed regions of the national psyche. People might no longer admit to racist feelings or beliefs, but that did not mean they were not there. “Although the old fashion ‘red-necked’ form of bigotry is less prevalent,” they wrote, “prejudice continues to exist in subtler, more indirect and less overtly negative forms” (Satangor, 2000: 289).

Now in 2019, this quotation sounds naive, due to the public resurgence of white supremacy in America, and in other nations, which followed Donald Trump’s election temporally, if not causally. Events like the infamous Charlottesville “Unite the Right” rally, and deadly attacks on synagogues, black churches, and mosques, all over the world, since then, seem to testify that bigotry in America and much of the world never faded as far as it may have seemed to in the years preceding Trump’s election.

The events above represent a resurgence of violence against people of many different kinds – hatred based on race, ethnicity, religion, and gender identity. The Trump administration’s “travel-ban” is a form of discrimination, some might say

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[https://www.tpr.org/post/resurgence-violent-white-supremacy-america](https://www.tpr.org/post/resurgence-violent-white-supremacy-america)
violence, against citizens of five Muslim nations – and originally only citizens of Muslim nations – although now also North Koreans and Venezuelans connected to their government. Although it is not possible to say now that the travel ban itself discriminates against Muslims in general, as Trump originally said it would, articles on this topic were chosen for analysis in this study because they represent liberal and conservative discourses about both immigrants and Muslims, two groups whose safety and power have suffered in America during the past few years, as shown by the events described above.

The other form of bigotry shaping discourses examined in this study, sexism, became ostensibly socially unacceptable in America during the 1970s, yet concern about it has resurfaced in a big way since Donald Trump campaigned and won the presidency while bragging about acts of flagrant sexual harassment (“grab ‘em by the pussy”) and while being credibly accused of many other instances of sexual misconduct. At the same time, public discussion of sexual harassment has exploded across social and mass media, making the topic ideal for this study. Articles from CNN and Fox on the January 2019 Gillette advertisement about male behavior were chosen because they clearly attempted to convey feminist and misogynist ideologies, respectively, although not in simple or predictable ways.

The attacks and renewed growth of hate groups confirm that racism and other prejudices are still strong in America; Scholars such as Dovidio (1986), Hoek (1999), and Satangor (2000) note that racism is a social ideology that keeps on emerging across generations. The question then becomes, how do such ideologies keep reproducing when overt prejudice is no longer socially or legally acceptable? Who passes on the “carrier of racism” through generations even when people publicly deny being racist? These

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questions provide a socially valuable motivation for this study; research questions are described in the conclusion to this introduction. The analysis will demonstrate some of the ways, and by whom, prejudice is developed and integrated into American minds in the era of the public denouncement of prejudice.

1.1.2 The Power of the Mass Media to Transmit Ideologies

The mass media has a great role in shaping public opinion and influencing collective attitudes (Chomsky and Herman, 2002). Calculated language and imagery in the mass media can communicate many ideas, including ideas promoting social inequality and injustice. It is important for the well-being of our society (and of all societies) to understand when power is being abused in this way, how such tasks are achieved, and what consequences they may have.

Prejudice and discrimination have been facilitated in public discussions, at times through media held in the highest regard. Today, most Americans claim to reject the attitudes of earlier Americans who were amused by racist stereotypes in the media less than 100 years ago, but seem less aware of more recent racism in the mass media. For example, American children’s cartoons were still rife with parodies of racial / ethnic / gender stereotypes less than fifty years ago, in characters such as Warner Bros.’ “Speedy Gonzales,” a Mexican mouse with pistols and a sombrero. George H.W. Bush was elected after his 1988 election campaigns using the image of African-American convict Willie Horton to stoke American voters’ fear of crime3. Now, America has a president who has referred to African nations as “shithole” countries4 and whom many people argue to have

defeated Hillary Clinton due to voter misogyny. Clearly destructive prejudice is still a huge issue in American public discourse and politics, with major consequences.

1.2 The Project

1.2.1 Uncovering Implicit Ideologies and Their Impact

With the development of greater insights into how ideas can be conveyed implicitly by language, such as in “cognitive semantics,” a field which has only existed since the 1980s, many scholars have demonstrated the existence of implicit ideologies in seemingly innocuous, even everyday, language, especially through the recognition of cognitive structures such as “frames,” “schemas,” and “conceptual metaphors” which pervade everyday language and shape the way we think (Lakoff, 1987, 1991; Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, 1999; Lakoff and Turner, 1989). Conceptual Metaphor Theory, in particular, exposes ideas ‘hidden’ in language and was first used to expose implicit ideologies in political discourse by George Lakoff in his 1991 article, “Metaphor and War: The Metaphor System Used to Justify War in the Gulf.” This article was first distributed in person, by email, and freely by multiple online media outlets due to its perceived value. Since then, many scholars have followed suit with conceptual metaphor analyses of political language about race and the way it may be used to disempower or harm members of minorities (Musolff, 2012). Conceptual metaphor theory is discussed further in Chapter 2, section 2.5.4, Cognitive Semantics.

Yet, despite a lot of significant work in this regard, no studies have examined evidence for how such implicit ideologies in mass media discourse do or do not affect

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their intended audiences’ thinking about issues – in the case of our paper, issues related to social inequality, such as immigration, sexual assault, and affirmative action. At the same time, in addition to measuring the impact on audiences, there is still need for more discourses to be analyzed and analytical methods developed through practice. This paper will both analyze mass media texts never before examined and examine their impacts on audiences, using the (relatively) newly available resource of online reader comments. Specifically, by treating the June 2018 Supreme Court “travel ban” decision and the January 2019 Gillette commercial this study is as current as possible and brings into focus these major topics in current culture, society, and politics.

1.2.2 Project Summary

The goals of this study are to elucidate ideologies purveyed by major American news networks in the context of issues related to prejudice and assess their impact through analysis of reader comments. Studies of this kind can contribute important knowledge to a range of academic fields including, critical, social, political, anthropological, linguistic, and cognitive studies, at least, and they have value for social justice.

The study uses the most powerful American news networks, Fox and CNN, both because of their capacity for influence, and the fact that they are generally recognized as presenting opposing political viewpoints understood to be conservative (Fox) versus liberal (CNN). The research does not assume that these attributions are necessarily correct, but rather takes these public assumptions as relevant context for understanding the discourses and responses to them. The study discovers the ideologies actually present in the news articles and comments through analysis.
1.3 Ideology, Power, and Critical Discourse Analysis

1.3.1 Ideology

The central definition of ideology as a relatively stable series of beliefs, values, and coherent ideas has remained constant in political science over time (Freeden 2013). The connotations of ideology have gone through many transformations. Ideology was often juxtaposed with democracy during the era of communism and the cold war. When we consider the “ideology of new capitalism” we see “ideology” with a positive connotation. And it is certainly valid to speak of many esteemed belief systems as ideologies, including the world’s major religions and accepted theories of science, so ideology should not be understood as inherently negative. However, it is still normal for “ideology” to have negative connotations, perhaps since an ideology is most often not discusses as an ideology unless it seems problematic to someone.

Dominant ideologies may, therefore, not be perceived as such by those who do not practice ideological critique, but rather as common sense, meaning that their premises become unchallenged assumptions; examples of this could include individualism in the West and collectivism in the East. And these examples underscore those ideologies so assumed shape people’s behavior and perceptions deeply.

Organizations that strive for power will often attempt to bequeath this assumed status on their own ideology in a society for their own benefit. One could offer as an example, arguably, the idea that policies profiting large corporations, such as corporate tax breaks, are best for American workers. The politicians promoting such an idea as common sense are, of course, owners or investors (or associated with them) not workers.

As a result of certain parties wielding power over public discourse, we may find ourselves at the Gramscian concept of hegemony when most individuals in a society think alike in certain matters. Although, whom is believed to exercise such power
unfairly always seems to be one’s own ideological opponents. The grass is always greener on the other side. For example, far-right wing discourse in the US credits liberal ideology with that hegemonic status, claiming that it enforces discrimination against white males⁶, even though research asserts that the dominant ideology of US society is conservative⁷. In this light, those who believe that America is dominated by liberal ideology must be understood to do so for the very reason that they have assumed a conservative one.

As in all discourse, this dissertation is informed and guided by elements of multiple ideologies, such as that of social justice, which provides a guiding purpose for the critique, and cognitivism, which underpins its methodology. However, the analysis in this paper seeks to critique the discourse and power of media sources and politicians on all “sides of the aisle” equally. It is possible to critique a discourse with which one agrees (such as for this author, the liberal discourse) as thoroughly as one with which the critic disagrees (in this case, for the most part, American conservatism). Recognizing that there is no such thing as objectivity, one’s responsibility as an academic is to support claims with evidence and analysis well grounded in theory and previous research.

It was decided to contrast articles assumed to represent positions aligned with American liberalism versus conservatism for many reasons. They seem to be the two most widespread but ostensibly conflicting ideologies in America relevant to issues of social justice; since they are roughly correlated with voting for Democratic versus Republican politicians, these ideologies must significantly impact American political

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https://thefederalist.com/2016/05/23/how-anti-white-rhetoric-is-fueling-white-nationalism/

decisions and therefore the lives of people in America and the world over. The vast majority of Americans align themselves with one or the other, as do most mass media not claiming neutrality. The strong and recognized ideological leanings of CNN and Fox news and their similarity in other relevant respects made them ideal choices for this study.

These two discourses, liberal and conservative, most dominant in the data of this study, bring us to the point of seeing ideologies as world-views that shape social cognition. That is to say, world-views are a schematically organized set of representations and attitudes, including concepts of the social world, with its norms, and therefore social behavior. And this is the crucial notion that transforms the study of ideology in discourse from purely a kind of cognitive linguistic business into a matter of social justice.

1.3.2 Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is often used to investigate the role of texts in spreading socially unjust ideologies and facilitating inequality in political and social situations (Jolliffe, 2011). Critique frequently focuses on evaluating structures of power in discourse situations and unmasking implicit ideologies (e.g. Cameron, 2007).

CDA’s recognition of the role of power in social justice causes it to focus on the language of those in positions capable of enforcing social equality or inequality; for example, political leaders. CDA researchers are primarily concerned with the way discourse re-manufactures social dominance (e.g. Xiong, 2018). That includes how power is abused by a particular group against another group and how the dominant and minority groups discursively reinforce or resist such abuse.
This raises a question of how CDA researchers distinguish between power use and abuse. This question often remains unanswered, as is perhaps appropriate; CDA has done its job if it reveal the connections between discourse, ideologies, and social practices; in other words, CDA researchers choose to examine discourses that may facilitate abuse of power, providing society with knowledge which may then be applied to the still open question of whether power is in fact being abused.

1.3.3 Power

There are various concepts of power just as there are of social theories. There is virtually no psychological or sociological theory which does not provide a unique notion of power. Among them, three ideas stand out for our purposes:

1) Power is seen as a result of specific resources of individual actors.
2) Power is seen as an attribute of social exchange in every interaction.
3) Power is seen as a constitutive and systematic element or characteristic of society.

In terms of CDA our data, these ideas are easy to flesh out more specifically:

1) Power through discourse imbues in the resources of the mass media and the politicians and corporate interests whose words media networks relay.
2) This power is involved in the exchange whereby audiences consume the news provided them and may or may not be able to “comment” in such a way that their views will also be consumed by large audiences.
3) The power in this case is, hypothetically, constituting society by spreading consequential ideologies concerning the value and rights of groups of human beings.
Even beyond the activities of the military, judiciary and police, the practice of power often presupposes the management of minds through the influencing of beliefs, knowledge, ideologies, norms, and values. A person or group has discursive power when their ideas about the world dominate through discourse.

1.3.4 Discourse, Ideology, and the Politics of Representation

Ideologies are social cognitions that show the basic interests, aims, and values of groups. These may be seen, metaphorically, as cognitive programs that organize as well as monitor the particular social attitudes of groups and their members. The management of discourse access reveals one of the vital dimensions of dominance in terms of who is allowed to talk, write, read, or hear whom, what, when or where. And there are variations between groups about what are considered accurate, appropriate, or preferred representations (Mey, 2009). Therefore, this competition in relation to meaning between groups constitutes the politics of representation.

It is important to establish how certain discourse structures determine particular mental processes and facilitate the formation of social representations. This study focuses on the production and reproduction of such representations through the mediated discourse of articles published by the two most prominent mass media news sources in America known to represent contrasting ideologies, CNN and Fox. CDA studies the sociopolitical norms that regulate the mediation of discourse. Contemporary attention has focused on how discourse (including mediated discourse) enforces social structure (Fairclough, 2013), as well as individual beliefs (Van Dijk, 1993) and shared ideologies.

However, the extant literature regarding the cycle of production and reproduction of ideologies in discourse and social structure does not address the nature
of human cognition -- specifically how the mind represents beliefs and ideologies and reifies them in concrete attitudes through verbal actions. Incorporating a concern for human cognition, based on the study of cognitive linguistics, leads us to seek answers to the question of what linguistic and other cognitive processes are exploited by texts seeking to transmit a covert ideology to audiences. By analyzing the language in our four articles, which include two major topics with two major perspectives on each, this study can tentatively identify some generalizations about covert ideological transmission in mass media news, and not merely the techniques used in these particular articles.

### 1.4 Conclusion: Questions

This study accomplishes several valuable objectives. The author is not aware of any other published studies which compare individual reader comments to their mass media political news articles in order to look for covert ideological transmission. All articles concerning “mass media”, “critical discourse analysis” and “discourse” were surveyed in the search for relevant articles, although not all studied or cited. A variety of search terms such as “reader comments,” “reader response,” and “twitter” were also tried in conjunction with the terms above. The results may be able to confirm the hypothesis, assumed true by CDA, that such texts convey implicit ideologies to readers, shaping their viewpoints. At the same time, it also has value purely in terms of its analysis of ideologically biased American mass media news articles, rich in linguistic techniques for covert influence. And it has value in terms of demonstrating the use of notions from cognitive science to understand these texts and their impacts on human minds more deeply.

In line with these objectives, this study asks three primary questions:

1. How does language in the texts examined here represent groups defined by their ethnicity, race, gender, or other characteristics subject to prejudice?
2. How do the authors of the texts, their publishers, and those quoted by them, use such language to shape public opinion about such people through the news?

3. How can Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) informed by cognitive linguistics shed light on the role of language in abuse of social power, creation of dominance, and facilitation of social or political inequality?

These are the highest-level questions to be answered by the study. More specific questions, guiding the examination, analysis, and interpretation of the data, are discussed in the following two chapters, Theoretical Background and Methodology. This Introduction has given the motivations for and objectives of this research, an introduction to its theoretical approach and methodology, and the questions to be answered in the end. The next chapter, Theoretical Background, discusses relevant previous theories and research, developing further questions and principles governing analysis and interpretation of the data. The third chapter, Methodology, describes the process followed and techniques employed in more concrete detail. Chapter Four contains the analyses of both Fox’s and CNN’s articles on the Supreme Court travel ban decision, and their reader comments, while Chapter Five does the same for the articles on the Gillette ad. Chapter Six summarizes and interprets these results and concludes the paper.
CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

The primary theoretical frameworks of this dissertation are Critical Discourse Analysis and cognitive linguistics, especially cognitive semantics, although many other related theories are called upon when appropriate. CDA has long been inherently interdisciplinary and already capitalized on the methods of cognitive semantics in many studies. And this dissertation is also concerned with certain key notions more general than either of these frameworks. The presentation here will therefore begin by considering the more general topics of ideology, society, politics, language, mass communication, and discourse, before reviewing the specific theories of CDA and cognitive linguistics.

2.2 Ideology

Ideology is most generally defined as a comprehensive set of normative beliefs and ideas possessed by an individual or a society (Dijk, 1998), potentially influencing sociopolitical attitudes and program⁸. According to Lylo (2016), the most current and relatable understanding of ideology is connected to mass communication, as explained by Dennis McQuail with his Mass Communication Theory (2005); McQuail defines ideology as any organized belief system or set of values disseminated or reinforced by any form of communication, broadening the definition slightly from that given above to include belief systems that may not be comprehensive or normative. This seems appropriate; for example, there are many philosophical or scientific belief systems, such as Newtonian physics, which qualify as world-views without being normative or

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⁸ Combining the definitions of:

Webster: [https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ideology](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ideology)

comprehensive. McQuail’s definition also does not refer to an ideology’s capacity to influence sociopolitical attitudes and actions, which does not seem a necessary stipulation, since all beliefs have such potential. Finally, and most importantly for our purposes, McQuail’s definition emphasizes that ideologies may be communicated or reinforced by any communication – not only explicitly ideological communications.

### 2.2.1 Ideologies and Language

Ideologies are systems of belief about the world. Several traits of ideologies are important from a psychosocial perspective. First, an individual’s attitudes and behaviors manifest and reflect the ideologies they hold. Most saliently, people’s language should reflect the ideologies they hold. Second, ideologies rarely, if ever, appear out of nowhere. Instead, they result from a long process of creation and recreation over time as a result of social conditions and the transmission of beliefs about them (van Dijk, 2006). So, ideologies evolve primarily through language use, especially public language use.

The creation of an ideology has its roots in, and literally begins with labeling phenomenon – perhaps the most basic function of language. This is self-evident; one cannot begin to express an ideology without first having categories / classifications / labels for the people, things, qualities, and actions referred to be the ideologies. The most obvious examples are among the most relevant for this study and others concerned with prejudice: a very high proportion of the belief system known as ‘sexism’ is already expressed in the words for men and women in English, such as master / mistress, lord / lady, slut / gigolo. Such labeling in language is the first step that shapes and frames human understandings of the things around us. This is because the labels available in a discourse imply values: for example, the (thankfully outdated) word-senses listed above imply that men used to be valued primarily in terms of their economic and political
power, while women were valued or devalued depending on the conditions of their sexual availability to men. The usage of specific language cannot fail to maintain, recreate, and further develop ideologies; it is impossible to use words like “mistress” without communicating the value system implied – at least until the word becomes widely used with new meanings. Hence, different uses of language contribute to the development of different ideologies, attitudes, and behaviors.

The fact that the very meanings of words imply ideologies is an example of evidence for the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, which suggests that the meanings of words in any discourse imply beliefs about reality which influence the way people think. Anthropological linguists, Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf were first concerned with models of reality implied by Native American languages they were studying. The “weak” version of the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, also known as linguistic relativism, where language is merely correlated with differences in thought between cultures, is now considered uncontroversially true, but the “strong” hypothesis, linguistic determinism, which claims our thoughts are strictly limited by such influences, is not supported by research (Lucy, 1992; Gumperz and Levinson, 1996). Language influences our beliefs and perceptions of the world, but probably does not finally limit them. This seems to increase the value of analyses such as this study – because not only may covert influence be discovered, but also productively opposed.

2.2.2 Ideology and Mass Communication

Mass media broadcast across society, tend to be ideologically biased, and shape public opinion (Herman and Chomsky, 2002). The fact that such media are typically controlled or influenced by powerful governmental or business interests means that these interests can use them to unbalance equations of struggle (Sinason, 1989). Even if
this were not the case, mass media disproportionately provide attention and podiums for the successful, powerful, or otherwise privileged, enabling them to promulgate their ideologies more than those of less social, economic, or political power (Fairclough, 2013). That means that mass media, at least in a capitalist society, can be expected to contribute to the reproduction of social inequality, unless their controllers make an effort to give voices to members of marginalized groups.

Mass Communication Theory (MCT) claims that most media content selectively emphasizes certain values and norms in a form of ideological influence on people, even if unintentionally. Most media scholars argue that media texts articulate coherent ways of seeing the world and that these ways are interpreted differently by different audiences based on their ideologies. These two ideas – that mass communication transmits ideologies and the idea that audiences interpret communications differently based on their own ideologies do not conflict. Both processes potentially operate in any given communication and surely do so when it comes to mass media political discourse, since the discourse definitely intends to transmit ideology, while audiences always bring their previous influences to bear on interpreting such messages. This study seeks to develop a deeper understanding of how the ideologies implied by mass media political texts interact with the ideological biases of readers, as revealed through the analysis of ideologically biased mass media texts and readers’ comments on them.

Kinzley (1999) acknowledges that media scholars are particularly interested in how media content relates to real world issues and affects people. Both Kinzley and Lylo (2016) consider mass media a powerful tool that influences ideological constructions in a society. For instance, it may involve establishing the dynamics in images about women and how they contribute to the understanding of women’s roles in a society. Kinzley observes that the study of ideology does not assess the accuracy of the ideologies implied
by images and other media representations, but rather how those representations define individuals and the societies they live in.

Mass media concentrates on the most visible, most common, and most powerful “images” (in the abstract as well as concrete sense) defining an ideological construction; for example the ideology of masculinity implied by the literal image of “the Marlboro man” or the ideology of racism implied by George H. W. Bush’s use of African-American convict Willie Horton in his election campaign ads. In other words, the images appearing in mass media tend to be emblematic of the ideologies they express and are therefore good places to discover those ideologies. This applies to “images” literal or invoked by words or sounds, and all these modalities play important roles in our data (in one case, sounds in the background of a news video play a crucial role!); therefore, it is important to assume a multi-modal definition of “image” in discourse studies. This study will examine to what degree such media representations contribute to ideological construction and spread.

2.2.3 Ideology, Society, and News

Ideologies are inherently social, belonging to groups, and inherently carry the potential for political and social conflict between groups. The means that mass media political news inherently carries the potential to affect social behavior regarding groups, including exacerbating or mollifying conflicts.

Since people hold and express a variety of opinions about social issues and inequality, those who share belief systems constitute a ‘collectivity’ of social actors (Omi and Winant, 2014). It is argued that not every collectivity of social actors requires an ideology or the need to develop one. Rather, groups need or develop certain ideologies in relation to other groups. In other words, ideologies are inherently tribal constructs that
exist through the identification of an “in-group” versus “others” (Freeden, 2013). Thus, there are political, social, and professional groups with unique ideologies. Each group ideology represents a shared or common system of beliefs that the group applies to its discursive and social practices. The tribal aspect of some ideologies and discourses plays a major role in identifying implicit ideas in the language of the texts in this study, because many of those ideas are merely alluded to, by “in-group” key words and phrases, while in addition, the ideological perceptions of each group about the other, are significant topics in the texts.

Research has demonstrated the importance of newspaper editorials, particularly among literate circles, simply because readers see them as a reliable source of information about political, religious, cultural, and national issues in a country (Freeden, 2013). The privileged status of the editorial makes it easier for print media to shape the world views of their ideological groups – groups that are often described as homogenous with shared beliefs and values whose defining feature is the news they read (Tahir, 2013). Editorials also assume great importance because individuals turn to experts’ opinions out of ‘cognitive scarcity’ (Every, 2013). That is to say, readers often have difficulty drawing a conclusion about a given topic based on the overwhelming amount of information broadcast and / or published daily. Consequently, these readers look to an authority whose opinion they can trust to avoid the time-consuming analysis they would otherwise need to conduct. Thus, editorials can serve to bring individuals’ beliefs in line with a group’s ideology.

2.2.4 The Role of Editorials and “Opinions”

The articles analyzed in this study include both reports on events and “opinion” pieces which have the same traits as “editorials” although they are often written by
ideologues external to the newsroom. These pieces express and communicate opinions in an effective and persuasive way, so they represent an excellent source of analysis for how media affects public opinion. By commenting on news events, editorials and opinions help readers decide what events mean – ideal vehicles for the promulgation of ideologies. According to Fairclough (2013), newspaper editorials significantly employ a series of arguments to support their stance on any topic, by including polarized vocabulary and specific rhetorical structures to characterize political actors and events in particular ways (Haller, 2013). The use of these strategies is ideological in two senses; they aim to transmit a worldview and they represent “us” (the believers in the ideology) as positive and “them” (those who disagree) as negative. This is quite significant in the present study, in which “us” and “them” are clearly aligned with the two major American political parties, Democrat and Republican, and their (allegedly) contrasting programs for American society.

The American news networks CNN and Fox are broadly perceived to serve as ideological sources for high proportions of American liberals (CNN) and conservatives (Fox). Therefore this study will contrast articles from these sources and their readers’ responses. It is not necessary to establish whether these news sources do or do not truly represent such ideological groups because we seek only to define the ideologies and relationships between each article and its comments. The objective is to see how they convey ideologies and whether they do so in the service of maintaining social inequalities.

2.3 Discourse

The term “discourse” can be used in various ways within the context of discourse analysis. We will address two of the most relevant ways this term may be used. The first is where the term “discourse” is used in an abstract sense as a category that signifies
major semiotic elements of social life such as language as opposed to non-semiotic elements. The second is where the term “discourse” is used as a count noun. As such, “a discourse” signifies an abstract collection of ways of representing anything. For example, it is common behavior to differentiate between certain political discourses that represent, let us say problems of inequality, poverty, and disadvantage in various ways.

2.3.1 Language and Discourse as Sources of Social Reality

The knowledge employed by people to interpret the world around them is sourced from a variety of types of experiences: from personal experiences with other human beings, formal education, participation in social institutions such as consumerism and banking, mass media, social media, educational assignments, and other sources. Every one of the knowledge sources listed above, and more, depend on language -- and the “languages” of gesture, style, image, ritual; all kinds of symbolic behavior can constitute a discourse. Although other means of communicating exist, natural human language remains humanity’s most powerful means for conveying concepts. People seem to make sense of the social and political worlds primarily through language in a discursive process.

The concept of discourse as an instrument in the production and reproduction of ideology and belief is rooted in the works of Austin and Wittgenstein (Holtgraves, 2013) and their theories of language use as social action. Discourse as social practice “contributes to the formation of the social systems, situations, institutions and ideologies in which it is embedded” (Hart 2014, p.3). As such, “... every single instance of language use reproduces or transforms society and culture, including power relations” (Titscher and Jenner 2000, p.146). This is because language implies concepts which may be taken for granted as realities within a culture, such as the concepts informing the words
mistress and master or the concepts informing the words illegal alien. If these concepts are assumed as realities, they can have many consequences for people’s lives within a particular society.

2.3.2 The Social Control and Discourse

In general, the enactment of social power involves social control over others. Such control applies to both the possible actions and cognitions of others. Higher power actors have resources and means to influence the minds or actions of the less powerful. It is assumed that since actions are cognitively based, most forms of power enactment target minds, with the exception of the exercise of bodily force. Mind control is one possible goal/application of text or talk, so analyzing discourse in terms of social power helps us understand social dominance and discrimination.

Social power in discourse is easily illustrated in the use of speech acts. J. L. Austin’s Speech-Act Theory (1962) notes that actions are neither true nor false, but rather valid or invalid, as attempts to perform a certain action, depending on whether the socially conventional conditions for their performance are met – felicitous or infelicitous in Austin’s theory. For example, if the author of this paper gets himself on television and says, “I declare war on China,” probably nothing will happen, because the author of this paper is not vested with such power. Directive speech-acts (commands) can also be felicitous or infelicitous in this way; one person can direct another to step out of his vehicle and put his hands on the hood, but only if the person is authorized by the state, can their speech-act be considered ‘felicitous.’

Police have the conventional/legal right to limit the freedoms of others by command. For example, police officers may threaten “illegal immigrants” with expulsion if they fail to comply with specific police commands. The discursive power in this case
involves limiting the freedom of the immigrants to act by making them aware that the police have the power and intention to hurt them if they do not submit.

In other instances, judges, politicians, or employers may similarly control minority members by constraining their freedom to act. People in such positions can threaten (and have the power to impose) social, physical, and economic sanctions such as prison sentences or the threat of unemployment and poverty. The discursive power in this case refers to social power perhaps beyond the persecuted individual’s own legitimate social powers and therefore those individuals may have little or no recourse. The issue of immigration discrimination is one example where members of majority groups may easily dominate and even harm a less socially powerful group through discourse.

In modern society, however, most power is less directly coercive. More usually, power is subtly negotiated during interaction. People may be “forced to act voluntarily” according to the wishes of the more powerful (Peter H. Kim, Robin L. Pinkley & Alison R. Fragale, 2005). It therefore seems more effective to control minds through persuasion rather than directives. And even in coercive forms of power abuse, such as with police threats, persuasive dominance is still a necessary element of the power enactment; an individual can always refuse to comply with police commands, although, in such a case, they will probably be persuaded by physical force to change their minds. There is only a continuum between discursive coercion and persuasion.

Therefore we come to the conclusion that the persuasive power of a socially empowered discourse exists on a continuum with outright coercion. Mass media news may have no direct coercive power, but it has vast socially empowered persuasive clout. It is empowered, by social convention, with the ability to both determine the facts of situations, and to interpret them – to set the knowledge and understandings upon which
people act, such as to vote. If people do not have access to alternative discourses, this amounts to coercive mind-control; the people affected may not have the resources to judge whether they are being deceived or abused. In fact, most of us have no recourse to determine whether most news is true or not.

This analysis seeks to examine to what degree Americans’ social realities (attitudes) are shaped by the language of mass media news, especially relative to pressing sociopolitical issues. The hypothesis is that such language plays an active role in determining people’s thoughts and feelings about groups of people discussed in the news, in a way that appears intended to maintain or extend certain inequalities in social power. The study focuses on news concerning groups whose well-being is arguably threatened by social or political inequality, such as immigrants, women, and African-Americans.

### 2.3.3 Mind Control through Discourse

The point of mind-control is to control behavior – to cause people to take or not take certain actions. The controlled actions usually presuppose knowledge about certain situations or events involved in the mental models of the situation. This is to say that actions may be controlled indirectly through discursive influence on the models that monitor them. In other words, one can dictate actions to people by controlling what they believe.

The way cults work is one obvious example testifying to such a process (Lalich 2004). The objectives of cult leaders normally seem to be getting money, sex, praise, and power. In order to do so, they convince victims of a belief system in which giving the cult leader what they want fulfills the victim’s own psychological needs, such as to be loved and belong to a group. Or for an example in the news, take the mass media’s promotion
of George Bush’s “weapons of mass destruction” justification for the war on Iraq. If the public had not believed this lie, public outcry might have prevented the war and saved many innocent lives. For another example, producers of health foods have long boosted sales by advertising that foods have healthy qualities which are often simply words chosen by the advertisers for that effect, rather than qualities determined by research to yield health benefits. In this case, the advertisers and their clients are causing people to give them money by controlling what they believe.

The examples above prove that discourse can be used to control minds, however one other example must be mentioned here, because of its relevance to our topic – indirect mind-control through the discourse of news – although it is not possible to say at this time whether it is an example of accomplishing such mind-control through news, or only the effort to do so: Russian interference in the US 2016 presidential election. The Mueller report, which was released yesterday (4/18/2019) for me, as I write, asserts without question that members of the Russian government and their associates carried out a massive effort to change the way Americans vote by feeding calculated messages into the social media feeds of selected audiences (among quite a few other methods). Many of these messages did not directly address the candidates (although many did) but rather aimed at modulating audience world-views in order to generate hostility and conflict between various groups in American society⁹.

The internet, it has been observed, has served as a new domain in which people can have their beliefs controlled more effectively, due, ironically, to users’ ability to choose whatever kind of information they wish to consume. The idea that media consumers, especially online media consumers, live in “filter bubbles” or “echo

“chambers” has been a popular topic on social media. However, studies indicate that social media bubbles may not be as prevalent or as confining as most people seem to think (Eady, et al., 2019). At the same time there is evidence from a peer-reviewed study that self-selected news bubbles are indeed prevalent; Flaxman, et al. (2016) interpret their data to show that the “vast majority” of online news consumption consists of users visiting specifically left- or right-leaning websites. So the hypothesis of the self-chosen news bubble remains supported but controversial.

The fact that, at the least, a very significant proportion of people choose to be informed by an ideologically consistent set of sources – ones that serve some of their psychological needs – is an invitation to ideologues, advertisers, and politicians, to exploit those people and thereby the systems of our society in general, such as when politicians and media producers send messages to the public that profit powerful industries such as oil, weapons, and pharmaceuticals\(^\text{10}\). With repeated exposure to biased models, such as those representing, e.g., economic refugees or black crimes, the recipients of the biased discourse (such as news readers) may adopt their implied social attitudes, such as ethnic prejudices, if they are not exposed and open to alternative models.

The fact that most people choose to consume news and discourses confirming their prejudices complicates the analysis in this study because it is difficult to determine whether readers agreeing with an article have been influenced, or simply choose to read what they already believe. However, the Russian model points to a hypothesis that seems borne out in this study’s analysis as well – that like any persuader, covert influencers aim

\(^{10}\) These industries are mentioned since such a high proportion of their activities are harmful to living things and they maintain their ability to continue these activities by successfully lobbying against laws that would limit them.
to generate assent by telling people things they are sure to agree with, but try to transmit more extreme ideas covertly, through implication.

Discrimination against immigrants could be one result of discourse control by certain actors over attitudes towards ethnicity and nationality. The recent (2017-2019) upsurge in mass shootings at black churches, synagogues, and mosques\textsuperscript{11}, around the world, has been attributed in part to the spread of discourses in social media; many such shooters were known to be active in online communities promoting ideologies of hatred\textsuperscript{12}. Moreover these shooters were almost certainly exposed to the ideologies of hatred implicit in the statements of public figures, such as in America, Donald Trump’s statements about Charlottesville and Africa (described earlier), and probably to similar ideas expressed by their chosen news source, such as when Fox echoes Trump. The degrees of effective influence here cannot yet be established, a difficult task, but given that racism and prejudice have been legally and popularly un-acceptable in American society for over 50 years, the correlation between their sudden upsurge and these discourses cannot be dismissed.

It is difficult to prove that such discourse control effectively reproduces social dominance and hegemony because there are always multiple forces at work encouraging inequity; perhaps controlled experimental studies are needed. However, there can be no doubt that authoritative discourses are often invoked in situations where such control is in the interest of the elites and rulers. And the recipients are also often not exposed to alternatives, even though alternatives are available, usually, in America.

\textsuperscript{11} https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2019/03/14/christchurch-mosque-shootings-latest-places-worship/3171591002/

In any case, authoritative discourses are certainly invoked in ways intended to reproduce discrimination: for example, Fox news’s reporting of the “migrant caravan.” Fox has repeatedly reported Donald Trump’s statements that the caravans consist of dangerous criminals\(^{13}\), while alternative and better supported reports are available\(^{14}\). If a definition of freedom is freedom of expression and thought, then the lack of access to alternative information and ideas is a limitation on freedom. Although Fox cannot prevent its audience members from seeking and finding alternative reports on the “caravan,” they still effectively limit their audience members’ freedom by presenting a biased discourse and claiming it to be factual; news consumers cannot be expected, in general, to question the veracity of most mainstream news reports, and expect them not to contain out-and-out falsehoods, whether that is a justified expectation or not. In fact, these assumptions are part of Americans’ conventional knowledge about mainstream mass media news, and this is a good example of how conventional knowledge about discourse context can be exploited by those with social and discourse power (the news writers and publishers) for their selfish benefit. The limitation of the freedom of others for one’s own interests is one definition of power and domination.

2.4 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

2.4.1 Introduction

The critical framework of this project is rooted in the essentially socio-political critique of CDA as found in the works of Bakhtin, Bourdieu, Habermas and Foucault. These scholars granted CDA its critical nature as a “radical critique of social relations”


(Blommaert and Bulcaen 2003, p.38). Adopting such a socially critical tact allows one to examine how examples of language are used as instruments of power, oppression, or social division. Some of these studies have been based on formal linguistics while others on the use of language relative to social justice. Critical Discourse Analysis now describes research ranging from critical theory to critical linguistics.

**2.4.1.1 Difference between Discourse Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis**

Discourse analysis is the study of the way language shapes communication and social interactions at any scale, from the individual to the cultural level. Because language, society, and culture pervade nearly all human activities, and particularly those that involve interaction with others, discourse analysis is a broad, pan-disciplinary field with a wide range of applications in such areas as psychology, sociology, and philosophy (van Dijk, 1993). Discourse analysis (DA) can be distinguished from the individual fields to which it is applied in several ways. First, it includes larger units of analysis (Wodak and Meyer, 2009). While traditional psycholinguistics might focus on the meaning of individual words in a transcribed conversation, discourse analysis can include the study of entire written works or common ways of speaking. DA is also applied to a wider range of communication including all forms of recorded or performed media as well as nonverbal communications such as body language and images (Wodak and Meyer, 2009). Finally, DA considers a wide range of phenomena, such as pacing, topic, emotional involvement and many other patterns and structures present in communication (Wodak and Meyer, 2009).

Critical discourse analysis differs in several ways from its parent field. First, CDA does not have a single theoretical foundation through which inquiry is conducted (Weiss and Wodak, 2003). This is not necessarily a weakness, as it enables the tailoring of
analysis to the specific and subjective elements of the type of communication under study and permits the incorporation of theories from the disparate fields to which discourse analysis is applied. However, such versatility can lead to a lack of uniformity in theoretical frameworks and research methods. The specific methodology of this study is described in Chapter 3.

Secondly, as the word “critical” suggests, CDA is associated with critical theory through its attention to the “socially informed construction of society” (Wodak and Meyer, 2009). Critical theory involves reflection upon the causal relationships between social constructs, political ideologies and values, and communication (Wodak and Meyer, 2008). By extension, critical discourse analysis can be described as the study of how language shapes these things.

CDA should not be viewed as a sub-discipline of critical theory, as the two developed separately, with CDA later applied to critical theory as a method of analysis. As Threadgold (2003) points out, the historical elitism of literary studies viewed the exploration of traditional literary texts to be explicitly outside the domain of cultural studies. However, at the time of Threadgold’s writing this was beginning to change, due in part to the applicability of CDA to the dissection of culture (Threadgold, 2003).

These “functional” differences do point to a core difference between DA and CDA: the latter is “problem-oriented” (Wodak and Meyer, 2009). CDA is inherently concerned with understanding and addressing social inequalities, including allocation of power, political ability, and media portrayal. This focus on illuminating and resolving social problems inherently prioritizes an interdisciplinary approach over adherence to a single, formal body of knowledge. In effect, CDA’s function of addressing social problems requires it to reach beyond individual fields.
2.4.1.2 Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis

Citing the works of Foucault (e.g. 1980; 2002), CDA maintains that discourse/language cannot be taken as a neutral medium for describing how the world works, but rather one that regulates and constructs knowledge. This implies that discourse can influence individuals vis-a-vis the impact language has on their mental representations of the world, determining, for example, what is deemed acceptable in terms of behavior and belief, and the expression of attitudes and beliefs.

CDA’s initial and foundational principle is concern with societal problems. It studies social phenomena and not just discourse. The second principle is that discourses constitute culture and society and are constituted by them. Thirdly, discourse usually possesses ideological content thereby representing and developing a society, and often promoting unequal power relations. The fourth principle of CDA is that it involves a systematic methodology and an investigation of the context of discourse and this makes it explanatory in nature. The aims of CDA are to investigate and understand critically how social inequality is signaled, expressed, comprised, and legitimized through discourse.

2.4.1.3 Summary of CDA Premises in Study

All in all, this study is framed by five theoretical claims of Critical Discourse Analysis, as explained by Fairclough (2013):

1. Language and discourse shape and are shaped by society. For example, context influences the language used in any given situation (society shapes language) while the language used in, for example, an advertisement or a political campaign, changes audiences’ attitudes and behaviors.
2. Discourse can be used to change and constitute knowledge and social identity and relationships. Because language influences our mental representations. For example, whether one describes a person as “alt-right” versus “white supremacist” versus “terrorist” implies different social identities and relationships (p. 140).

3. Power relations and ideologies shape discourse, which means that specific elements of discourse may imply power relations and ideologies.

4. Power struggles use discourse to control social behaviors (p. 550). Take for example the #METOO movement, in which this hashtag (element of discourse) has become a primary tool of those fighting to reduce sexual harassment.

5. Critical Discourse Analysis, by elucidating relationships between discourse and power, can aid in creating social balance and justice in the world.

Critical Discourse Analysis can, from this perspective, be portrayed as a democratic and sensitive practice which embraces an ethical stance on social matters with the intent of developing society (Fairclough, 1989). It is founded on the recognition that there is, in society, normally, an unbalanced distribution of social and linguistic resources, most of which are institutionally controlled. Critical Discourse Analysis is therefore concerned primarily with institutional discourse, such as the labelling of genders and ethnicities in mass media and the effects of such labelling on people’s lives (Althusser, 1971).

Discourse disseminates and re-manufactures certain ways of viewing the world. This eventually facilitates particular political actions. CDA suggests that critique is vital to ensure such obscured interrelations become visible. CDA is inspired by the idea that
aspects of the world mediated by semiotic systems are not fixed, offering a discourse of possibility.

### 2.4.2 CDA, Politics, and Discrimination

#### 2.4.2.1 CDA and Politics

Critical Discourse Analysis has particular value in discussing politics. This is because demonstrations, presidential campaigns, political debates, and parliaments are all fields of ideological battles (Kotthoff, and Spencer-Oatey, 2007). In these forums, diverse and conflicting groups, interests, powers, and struggles hang in the balance.

Critical Discourse Analysis focuses on the notion that language often helps create socially destructive hegemonies in the way it presents the ideologies of dominant groups as common sense. CDA scholar Fairclough (2013) uses the word ‘naturalization’ to describe these phenomena. CDA maintains that texts never occur in isolation and therefore their understanding absolutely depends on factors of socio-historical and socio-political analysis.

A key factor in political figures’ successes in attaining their goals and winning public consensus in the continuous power struggle is their ability to persuade and impress the masses (Mey, 2009). The winning team will be the party or person whose discourse dominates. Analyses can reveal how reality may be distorted by discourses. Hence, there is a social and political need for someone to dissect the discourses, identify distortions, and contrast them to realities, if possible (Kotthoff, and Spencer-Oatey, 2007).

#### 2.4.2.2 CDA and Prejudice

CDA is concerned with how language shapes communication and social inequities (Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000). This analysis is not dispassionate, as van
Dijk (1993) writes, “... the point of critical discourse analysis is to take a position” (p. 270).

The issue of prejudice persistently looms in the consciousnesses of societies with mixed ethnic profiles. It is evident that despite legitimization of dealing with issues of discrimination through the political process, tensions related to the socio-political inequality of groups still haunt society’s psyche.

That is to say that although prejudice may no longer be considered socially acceptable, it continues to exist, spread, and condition behavior. There is therefore reason to expect that ideologies of prejudice are being transmitted covertly in some sense. CDA gains value due to the fact that superficially non-prejudiced discourse may be seen to convey prejudicial ideologies when examined critically. Covertly prejudiced discourses have a kind of power that overt discourses do not have; they can evade counteraction, punishment, public censure, and individuals’ conscious awareness.

This obviously has potential to be used politically. The meanings of words are not fixed, but subject to interpretation through various psychological anchors and “spaces” -- conceptual worlds created during discourse (Hart, 2010). Further, these spaces may exist through previous definition. Thus, words spoken between two people who are familiar with one another, or share the discourse of a particular social or group, may be interpreted differently by the participants than by those overhearing the conversation.

Political observers claim that these “dog-whistle words” have come to play a significant role in the relationships between politicians, news media, and audiences; the term “dog whistle words” is of uncertain origin although William Safire credited the director of polling for the Washington Post with popularizing it in 1988\(^\text{15}\). Ian Haney Lopez argues in non-academic book *Dog Whistle Politics*, that “coded racial appeals have

reinvented racism” (Lopez, 2015, book jacket). Many mass media news articles use the term, usually in reference to racist code words in conservative political discourse (Wikipedia). Academic studies include a greater diversity of topics, e.g. one on “religious appeals” (Albertson, 2014) and one the role of such words in the politics of sanctuary cities (Lasch, 2016). This study describes several examples of dog-whistle words in the Fox opinion article, such as “Pajama Boy,” and in some conservative reader comments, such as “crying closet”; interestingly both of these terms attack liberals, not races. It is also entirely possible that any racial dog-whistle words in these texts were not recognized by this author. No dog-whistle words were recognized in the CNN articles and this is consistent with previous research which has observed them almost entirely in conservative discourses and in the service of bigoted ideologies.

2.4.2.3 CDA and Discrimination

Cole (2001) describes how those in power use certain language to identify and to legitimize discrimination against certain individuals or groups. For example, he shows how ‘labeling’ has had enormous impact in the education sector, drawing attention to Ballard’s (1995) comments that the dialect of ‘Special Educational Needs,’ particularly the term “special,” fosters continued segregation for individuals who require that type of education. Critical Discourse Analysis can provide insight and understanding into discrimination through the analysis of dominant discourses and how systems of power impact on people by evaluating the meanings constructed by those discourses.

This study notes that it is possible to communicate racism while proposing a policy that appears benevolent or espouses an attitude of compassion. The “soft bigotry of low expectations” is one prominent example, in which an attitude of pity is used as a form of condescension and display of superiority (Delgado, 2000). Examples such as this
demonstrate that the overt intent of a text or speech may not necessarily need to appear discriminatory in order to aid in influencing the listener toward discrimination.

2.4.3 The Interdisciplinarity of CDA

2.4.3.1 The Roots of CDA in Critical Theory

Critical Discourse Analysis, Critical Linguistics, and other similar critical or “critiquing” methods take their foundations from Critical Theory, as explored by Max Horkheimer, Jurgen Habermas, and others of the ‘Frankfurt School’ of social research. The focus of this school of thought was that social theory should be oriented towards changing and critiquing society on the whole. In essence Critical Theory exists to promote social change. This stands in sharp contrast to previous traditional social theory which solely concentrated on understanding or explaining society.

The first core concept of Critical Theory is that the study of society must focus on that society’s historical specificity. Secondly, Critical Theory aims at improving the understanding of society by integrating all the main social sciences together, including sociology, economics, history, psychology, anthropology, and political science. Researchers, philosophers, and scientists are not outside the societal hierarchy of power and status and are considered vulnerable to this structure.

In the studies of language, the term “critical” was first used in a socially critical sense in Critical Linguistics. These scholars held that language abuse could result in the mystification of social events, a process which systematic analysis may elucidate. Today, the concept of critique is much used in a broader sense, signifying the practical linking of political and social engagement within a sociologically informed construction of society. Today the term “critique” essentially means making the interconnectedness of things visible.
Critical theories aim to produce critical knowledge that enables individuals and societies to emancipate themselves from forms of self-destruction and domination. CDA agrees with its Critical Theory predecessors about the need for interdisciplinarity to understand how language transmits and constitutes knowledge in exercising power or organizing social institutions. CDA researchers are aware that their own work is based on economic, political, and social motives or orientations, just as in any other academic work. The intention of CDA researchers is to establish their position, research values and interests, without necessarily having the need to apologize for the critical stance of their work.

2.4.3.2 CDA and Critical Linguistics

Many scholars use Critical Linguistics (CL) as a method of analyzing texts in social and political contexts (Halliday 1978), (Hart 2010) and (Hart 2014). Initially, Critical linguistics was meant to address the way in which texts were produced with less concern for the ways in which the intended audience interpreted the text (Fowler et al. 1979). Critical Linguistics was focused more on the ideational rather than the interpersonal so as to marginalize issues emanating from social identity. However, scholars raised debates regarding these limitations, leading to a more intertextual approach, a concept central to CDA (Fairclough, 1992).

2.4.3.3 CDA and Speech-Act Theory

Elements of discourse are forms of social interaction or action. This is the subject of Speech-Act Theory, a sub-field of linguistic pragmatics, which studies the way language is used to accomplish things (Austin 1962). Speech-acts include, for example, questions, accusations, assertions, and promises – actions typically accomplished through language. The actions are not the same as the content of the sentences. If I
accuse you of being a bad singer that does not mean that you are a bad singer. If I promise to come to your party, that does not mean I will do so. Thus in addition to the content of the sentences, there is what Austin called an *illocutionary force*: this is the promising, asserting, accusing, etc. Speech-act theory studies the way the fulfillment of such acts depends on social conventions; for example, the fact that asking “why” can constitute an accusation in a certain context, or that making a statement can serve as a question under other conditions. Speech-act theory also studies how dialogues follow rules for the orderly exchanges of turns and the collaborative development of knowledge.

In discourse, speech-acts may be used or abused to enact, legitimate, or express power and dominance. For example, any time a person issues a directive to another person based on some socially recognized power, such as that of employer, teacher, or police officer, they enact and express their power and dominance. This is especially evident in the account of direct power abuse through speech acts “given” as orders, threats, or commands against minority groups such as immigrants. Other offensive speech acts, such as accusations, can be used against minority groups, leading to their exclusion, de-legitimization, and marginalization.

Such “speech-acts” may include images implying accusations, such as the one George Bush, Sr. used of Willie Horton, implying that black men are violent criminals. Such an accusation is also a representation, which may come to be associated with a group, if repeated. Another example of such representation is comprised of the accusations discussed above, by Donald Trump and Fox news, that migrants on the US southern border include a high proportion of dangerous criminals. This accusation does not require repetition to be interpreted as applying to Central Americans in general; that implication is part of the accusation. Accusations seem a particularly useful speech-act for covert ideological influence, because there are no social conventions limiting when
and by whom they can be made, and it is conventionally granted that any accusation made by a political figure or news program merits serious consideration. Moreover, even if an accusation is disproved, memory of it can never be erased.

Turn taking can also be influenced by power differences and institutional conventions. For example, some speakers may prevent others from speaking. At other times, some speakers may interrupt others. In formal dialogues, speakers such as chairpersons, professors, or officeholders may overtly or subtly refuse minority members the opportunity to speak or curtail the length of their turns. Such behavior clearly manifests and reinforces discrimination, not to mention reducing opportunities for members of such groups to exercise the opposite influence.

2.4.3.4 CDA and Cognitive Linguistics

According to van Hoek (1999), the field of cognitive linguistics is more like a paradigm than a specific theory, and it is characterized by a focus on “explicating the intimate interrelationship between language and other cognitive faculties” (p. 134). Within the scope of CDA, the application of cognitive linguistics relies to a large degree on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) (Charteris-Black, 2004; Musolff, 2004; 2012). The present study will follow suit, while also using a variety of notions beyond conceptual metaphor when appropriate.

The cognitive perspective in this project relates to the representation of meaning. The project argues that ideology and beliefs are constructed as a result of the audiences' ability to cognitively represent and realize subtleties in the language of public discourse. ‘Meaning’ here is construed, as in cognitivist studies, as consisting of ‘mental representations,’ an extremely general term, as is appropriate for a term referring to whatever meaning consists of in the mind. The term ‘mental representation’ clarifies one essential thing about meaning in the mind versus the more traditional, and still perhaps
dominant conception of meaning, as “that which is referred to” (in reality); it says that meaning is “representation” not “reference” – the difference being that a represented thing may or may not exist in or resemble its representation; unlike referents, representations are inherently incomplete and biased; they are mental and social constructs.

More concretely, a ‘mental representation,’ is presumed to potentially include a variety of cognitive phenomena, not necessarily linguistic; one of the most central tenets of cognitive linguistics is that linguistic thought depends on and connects to many other kinds of cognition, such as social, and sensory-motor cognition. So, mental representations might include literal images in any sensory modality, such as an image of a cat or the memory of giving a kick. But mental representations certainly also include more abstract cognitive phenomena, such as frames, narratives, beliefs, and conceptual metaphors.

Here, in reference to their inherent relationship to CDA, according to cognitive psychology, such representations automatically appear in a listener or reader’s mind as part of the comprehension process of text and talk, including with racist talk (Bloor and Bloor, 2013). Therefore, the nature of mental representations is inherently relevant to CDA; it implies that any time one understands racist talk, one mentally represents those racist notions, even if one rejects them. With repeated exposure to linguistic constructions implying a particular representation, such representations come to influence language and thought (as discussed above, section 2.2.1, in reference to the “Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis”), and therefore behavior, and society. Van Dijk’s socio-cognitive approach to discourse analysis is favored in this research paper because, as

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16 See the first chapter of Lakoff and Johnson’s Philosophy in the Flesh, 1999, for an extended argument contrasting the cognitive semantic conception of meaning with that of analytical philosophy, as summarized here.
noted in Van Dijk (2013), it takes into consideration discourse as the subject matter, and society and cognition. In this paper, a socio-cognitive CDA approach will be used to understand the production and maintenance of prejudicial ideologies.

2.5 Cognitive Science

2.5.1 Cognitive Psychology

Cognitive psychology refers to the scientific study of the mind as an information process. Cognitive psychologists often build models of those information processes. These include models of attention, perception, memory, language, thought, and consciousness. Cognitive psychology began to develop during the mid-1950s. Behaviorism had proved dissatisfying due to its exclusive emphasis on external behavior. Cognitive psychology offered more fruitful insights. This new focus led to the development of better experimental methods coupled with the burgeoning computer era. The computational power afforded by newer computers provided opportunities of comparison between computer processing and human processing of information. There was a paradigmatic shift from the study of conditioned behavior in psychology towards the study of human information processing in individuals under strict laboratory conditions.

During the late 1950s and early 1960s, the cognitive approach revolutionized psychology and developed to become the dominant approach in psychology. Through the work of Piaget and Tolman, there was gradual restoration of interest in mental processing in the field of psychology. The arrival of the computer era gave cognitive psychology the vigor it needed in terms of generating the necessary metaphor and

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17 The nature and history of cognitive psychology and behaviorism described here synthesizes ideas and information from Hart (2010) and Kellogg (1995).
terminology to study the human mind in information processing terms. The conceptual metaphor, THE MIND IS A COMPUTER, gave psychologists a hugely productive, although also partly deceptive way to think and talk about human information processing.

The metaphor had a variety of valuable implications for cognitive science. The first is that information obtained by the mind from the environment goes through a series of unconscious processing systems, such as discrimination and classification. Perhaps the most general and far reaching implication of that metaphor, and discovery of cognitive science, is that human behavior is underpinned by vast amounts of unconscious processing. For cognitivist studies of language, this has meant an increased focus on the non-conscious apprehension of meaning, with the field of cognitive semantics, described in more detail below, identifying a variety of un- or sub-conscious processes, such as conceptual metaphor, which demonstrate that language transmits implied ideas of which people are not always consciously aware. Thus, the cognitivist revolution underpins all research on language and discourse today that recognizes the essentially representational and non-objective nature of linguistic meanings. The analyses in this study find numerous examples of the phenomena posited by cognitive semantics, which are discussed in greater detail below.

2.5.2 Cognitivism versus its Critics

The behaviorist approach holds the view that internal “behavior” cannot easily be studied since there is no way people can see what happens inside the mind of a person. Behaviorism, therefore, studies only external phenomena, such as stimuli and responses, which can be measured objectively. The proponents of this approach believe that the internal “behavior” of a person cannot be objectively measured. The cognitive approach
holds that scientific studies can investigate internal human “behavior” using experiments. Here, the cognitive approach assumes that between stimulus / input and response / output, there is a mediating process. Mediating processes might include, for example, a memory search, mental simulation, or feelings.

B.F. Skinner criticized cognitive psychology arguing that only external stimulus and response behavior can be investigated scientifically study (Kirschenbaum and Henderson, 1989; Swaim, 1974). Another critic, Carl Rogers, a humanistic psychologist, argues that cognitive psychology creates an artificial environment through the control of variables and, therefore, this approach using laboratory experiments yields low ecological validity (Kirschenbaum and Henderson, 1989; Swaim, 1972). Rodgers, therefore, calls for a more holistic approach to understanding human behavior.

Another criticism of the cognitive psychological approach regards the comparison of the human mind with the computer in terms of information processing. It can be argued that there are big differences between humans and computers that should be considered of great importance in this comparison. The human mind only works as a symbolic machine when consciously thinking in language or other symbolic images. Unconscious cognition deeply involves embodied experience and the neurological apparatus involved, which does not resemble computer technology.

2.5.3 Cognitive Linguistics

Understanding the way language is produced and received has benefitted from cognitive science and computational modelling. It is now thought that comprehension of expressions and words involves the sensory, motoric, and affective (emotional) systems of the human brain (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999). These systems are also essential to behavior so the hypothesis of cognitive semantics that language is intimately
interconnected with these systems in the brain makes the linguistic analysis of discourse essential to understanding human attitudes and behaviors, especially in social contexts.

### 2.5.4 Cognitive Semantics

To place cognitive semantics in contrast to the more traditional “objectivist” semantics of analytic philosophy, it takes as its subject matter meanings in the mind, rather than the things in reality to which language refers (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999). Thus, meanings are considered “mental representations” of whatever they purport to refer to, as previously reviewed.

Representation is a relationship between things in the world, minds, and the thoughts and signs of discourse. This is not a set of codes; there is no one-to-one correspondence between linguistic structures and concepts; rather, the concepts activated by language in the mind are influenced by many considerations already referred to in this chapter – not only linguistic structure, but also linguistic, non-verbal, social, political, and mental contexts. Each person using language is engaged in constantly updating mental models, based on the synergetic combinations of these elements. Thus, cognitive semantics implies that the study of discourse must be socially and politically critical in order to understand the models created in people’s minds by language.

The value of these premises is better appreciated in contrast to competing models. ‘Meaning’ is most generally understood in three ways among philosophers of various schools18. *Meaning as reference* is thought of as an objective connection between a linguistic structure and the situation in the world, or imagination, to which that

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18 This author’s own observation, based on reading, Cummins 1991, Lakoff and Johnson (1999), Beavers (2010), and Soames (2015).
language “refers.” *Meaning as speaker intention* is discussed primarily in terms of pragmatics – socially conventional rules governing how to use language to accomplish specific purposes. Finally, the idea of *meaning as a social construct* recognizes and appreciates the public social character of language as it admits that neither things by themselves nor an individual user of language fixes meaning in language. Cognitive semantics and the idea of mental representations seem consistent with the above-mentioned understandings of speaker intention and socially constructed meaning; mental representations provide vehicles for non-objective meaning.

The idea of objective reference, which originated in analytic philosophy, is not consistent with the premises of cognitive semantics, pragmatics, or socio-linguistics, Lakoff and Johnson argue in *Philosophy in the Flesh* (1999). This study assumes that while there are many ways to approach meaning, that meaning in the mind consists of non-objective representations constructed by the mind, based on linguistic structures but under the influence of the many contextual factors discussed above, ranging from the audience's previous ideas to subtle signals of social power relationships in the communicative situation.

**2.5.5 Social Cognition**

Social cognition includes socially shared representations of societal arrangements, arguing, thinking, and inferencing (Fiske, 1991). Social cognition, in a sense, occurs in the minds of individuals, however, the beliefs and scripts executed by social cognition are embodied in the public world in countless ways, in all forms of discourse and behavior. Because social cognition monitors both interpersonal interactions, and people’s understandings of their individual roles in society, it informs virtually all human behaviors. Because social cognition includes beliefs concerning the
social values and statuses of people and how we should treat them, it includes ideologies supporting social equity and inequity.

### 2.5.5.1 Social Cognition and Mental Models

The socially mediated cognitive structures that represent or maintain social inequality may include world knowledge, cultural knowledge, knowledge about language, and more; thus the “mental model” is an essential cognitive notion in the account of discursive dominance and influence (Gentner and Stevens, 1983). This model is a subjective representation of an event or situation including setting, participants, and actions, among other possible elements. An event may also include less concrete “things” such as opinions and evaluations. For example, whenever we read a text or listen to/watch news in the media, we either recall and update an existing mental model of the situation reported on, or construct a new one based on what we have experienced and been told. These models can also feature instances of more generally applicable socio-cognitive structures such as scripts dictating behavior and frames (discussed below) for understanding. In general, every text or talk is monitored or evaluated by underlying context models which may include socially mediated knowledge, attitudes, or ideologies.

### 2.5.5.2 Political Discourse, Frames, and Metaphors

In political discourse, metaphors and other rhetorical techniques communicate implications and presuppositions, contributing to mental models of both the discourse situation and the world. Frames are conceptual structures implied by words, often metaphorical, that evoke sets of beliefs, organizing thought, discourse and policies into standard categories in perception, reasoning, and action (Cruse, 2004). For example, the word “test” can imply an entire frame of knowledge about test taking and its relation to society; so when the Fox “travel-ban” article in this study (Myers, 2018) says that Trump
“passed a test” when his “travel-ban” was upheld by the Supreme Court, it implies a validation of Trump that might affect a reader’s future perceptions and actions, although it is only a metaphor. Thus, cognitive semantic structures in political discourse are central in the enactment, reproduction, and legitimization of power and domination.

2.6 Critical Cognitive Semantic Analysis of Political Discourse

In 2003, Threadgold noted that the discourse of global politics was only beginning to be analyzed. Since then CDA has increasingly directed its attention to power relations. This is particularly true of immigration. Every (2003) analyzed expressions of shaming and privilege in public media and their effect on the popular consciousness. Kim (2014) applied corpus analysis, particularly collocation patterns, to investigate attitudes toward North Korea in US media. Non-print media is increasingly the subject of analysis, with Catalano and Waugh (2013) treating media images as descriptors of groups with a high relative power differential. Thorbjornsrund (2015) discusses all of these in the context of media relations.

It is notable that both Kim and Baker (2008) focus on the intentions and attitudes of the speaker, rather than the construction of this experience by the listener while Every (2003) and Catalano, et al. (2013) focus on both. It is not necessary to limit the focus to speakers when analyzing online media and print publications which allow for responses from readers, mediated though they may be by the publishers of such media. This suggests that while immigration and global politics are now receiving due attention as topics of analysis, there is a need for increased focus on the role of the listener in media analysis today. This is one of the most original contributions of this study.

Looking at the cognitive semantic aspect, topics (semantic “fields” or “domains”) shape what people perceive as important information. Certain words act as keys to
knowledge, implying most of the information associated with their topic; for example, most of our ideas about vehicles are not invoked by the word “vehicle” or by specific designations like “Toyota 4-runner,” but rather by words of a particular set, at a certain level of generality: car, truck, bicycle, motorcycle, boat, plane, etc. (Lakoff, 1987).

In the context of immigration, certain terms become keys to larger systems of thought. Some key-terms imply premises, perhaps unnoticed and taken for granted by audiences. For example, the term “alien” implies foreignness and danger while the word “migrant” implies a valid social role. Discourse meaning and coherence may be understood through models featuring much presupposition, which is of particular concern, because communicating ideas implicitly, which is to say, subliminally, yields less chance of them being challenged (whether in explicit verbal response or in the audience’s private thoughts).

One kind of vehicle for implicit ideas recognized by cognitive semantics is the “schema,” short for “sensory-motor image schema” (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999). Schemas can be defined as recurring patterns of cognition formed from previous experiences. For example, Lakoff and Johnson (1999 and elsewhere) have pointed out that we reason about categories based on schemas derived from experience with containers. Thus we understand what it means to be in or out of a category, although in fact, non-academically defined categories do not generally have container-like boundaries; it is not always possible to say whether a particular object is or is not, say, a “table” or a “desk.” In other words, we may be somewhat deluded by the metaphor, categories are containers. For another fundamental example, it seems as if our notions of change are heavily informed by the schema of “going” from one place to another: for example, we say, “he went from rich to poor.” Or “the crowd went wild.” Thus we see that this schema is employed both metaphorically and pervasively in language. We might
describe the metaphors referred to as “change is movement.” These are examples of “conceptual metaphors,” a term which distinguishes them from metaphors existing only in particular phrases. “Categories are containers” may never be said; it is a concept that implicitly structures all the ways we think and talk about containers. Thus, conceptual metaphors have a particularly great and often un-noticed influence on human thought.

The understanding that language pervasively encodes metaphors not necessarily recognized as such has constituted a huge boon for critical discourse analysis. For example, in George Lakoff’s seminal paper on the metaphorical justification for the first gulf war (Lakoff, 1991), he noted that it is easier to carry out military action against an entire population when one speaks of nations as individuals and military actions as fistfights. Political speech seems to be simply saturated with biasing conceptual metaphors. Take for instance the phrase “surgical bombing” invented to describe targeted airstrikes during the first Gulf war. The phrase implies that bombing is a kind of medical procedure, one destroying only a small specific piece of its target, with the people or structures bombed and deserving removal for the health of the target. The word “surgical” is a key-word invoking a frame with all our knowledge and feelings about surgery, which include such notions that it is beneficial for the patient, carried out by compassionate experts, and should be submitted to passively. Thus one phrase proves to conceal a wealth of implicit ideas aimed at the minds of American voters who might have otherwise felt more negatively about initiating that war.

Van Dijk (1993a) has related the manipulation of schemas to subtle projections of power in racist speech. This occurs as certain values can be invoked during such speech that associates a particular schema with the speaker’s position. In Van Dijk’s (1993b) example, the invocation of “free speech” enabled a prime minister’s criticism of his opposition to be perceived as a “breath of fresh air” in a burdened area of public
discourse, thus permitting him to project power in a way that was appreciated for its integrity rather than being viewed as derogatory, as it might have been under a different cognitive mode (pp. 273).

The analyses in this study show many examples of schema manipulated to project biased representations of groups of people and social relationships. One example seen in this study and likely already familiar to readers is the invocation of the word “stereotype” to re-represent criticism of prejudice as prejudice against the prejudiced. This is performed by Fox author Todd Starnes in order to represent criticisms of sexism as hateful of men. Another example from Starnes article is his citation of a female author noting that men can be heroes, warriors, and leaders, in order to imply that men should be dominant and aggressive towards women. The articles analyzed in this study proved quite rich in deceptive schema with potential consequences for social equity, thus demonstrating the value of critical cognitive discourse analysis.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Because CDA is not grounded in a single theoretical framework, it is adaptable to a variety of methodologies. A focus on real-world communications and the construction of received messages grounds the CDA perspective by calling for the analysis of both sides of a communication. This helps to protect conclusions against the charge of subjective interpretation on the part of the researcher. That is to say that one can compare the message apparently received by audiences (as inferred from their responses) against the researcher’s analysis of the messages conveyed implicitly by the discourse.

This study goes beyond previous such efforts by examining the relationship between the discourse of major partisan news articles on these issues, and the comments of readers responding online, testing the hypothesis that prejudicial ideologies in the discourse of the articles are conveyed to readers. The study uses articles from CNN and Fox news networks because of the potential for influence in their great reach and relationships with politicians.

3.2 Selection of Media

The use of news media as data controls for some variables because it tends to use a uniformly stylized language, reducing the noise in semiotic analysis. Since news media focus on topics of current social significance and represent most of the socio-political spectrum, analysis need not be limited to a single ideology or set of beliefs. Because of its well-recognized relationship with social behaviour, through both the representation of and ability to influence opinions (Wanta, Golan, and Lee, 2004; Scheufele, 1999), well selected news media can constitute a reasonable representation of the sociocultural orientation of a society, making them an excellent focus for CDA. In the case of this
study, comparing news articles with contrasting ideologies on the same issues sheds light on the biases of each article.

Online news articles have the advantage of allowing readers to comment easily, and these comments reflect, in part, the ways readers constructed meaning from each article. This approach is limited in regard to detecting the influence of the article in that such comments will also reflect the unique opinions of the readers, as well as the views prevalent in the population represented by the general readership of each paper; however, a great number of useful observations can be made by comparing the articles with their respective comments, as demonstrated in this study’s analyses.

The historical period under consideration also merits concern. The media available for research typically reflect a limited historical record, particularly if only a certain perspective has been preserved (Hilpert and Gries, 2013). In this way, academic research can unintentionally contribute to how the winners write the history books. Fortunately, modern technology has made public discourse easy to preserve and recall, though only for very recent history. In addition, discourse in the media, while broadly consistent, is topically in flux alongside popular opinion. Research design should strive as accurately as possible to capture a period in time, ideally the current one. For the purposes of this study, selecting contemporary and contrasting texts on the same situation is ideal and easy to accomplish; CNN and Fox cover a very high proportion of the same events at the same time, and contemporary news is rife with contentious issues related to immigration, sexism, and racism.

In addition, to the articles from CNN and Fox, reader comments were also examined. Since many popular news sites, such as CNN now disable comments, in order to gauge user reactions, the Twitter comments from which the articles were linked, were examined. In each case, the first 100 comments available on each article were taken and
their sources noted. All comments on CNN’s articles and all except for 57 on the Fox Gillette article were taken from Twitter, where the articles have dedicated threads/Twitter-pages. The Twitter page for Fox’s Gillette article only had 43 comments, so 57 were taken from the Foxnew.com for the article itself. Differences in content between these 57 and the other comments are discussed in the analysis. The presentation of the comments was almost identical between Twitter and Fox. They are provided in order, underneath a link to the article itself – or in the case of the comments on Fox’s webpage, farther down the page below the article itself. The comments are provided with their commenting users’ identifications, and replies distinguished from non-reply comments. However, the user-identifications were removed before analysis and the comments color-coded to show which replies to immediately preceding comments are. All memes, hashtags, and emojis were recorded and included in the analysis.

3.3 Analysis

3.3.1 Introduction

A number of studies have shown CDA a useful tool for the analysis of language and discourse (Shojaei, Youssefi and Hosseini, 2013). One of the major objectives of CDA as stated in these studies is to deconstruct the explicit and implicit ideologies of discourse that encourage inequality in power relations within society (Wodak and Meyer, 2015). This is the main objective of this paper, which identifies linguistic strategies that convey biased ideologies through wording, grammar, and discourse structure.

The specifics of the methodology in this paper aim to provide as unbiased and comprehensive as possible examination of the ideological implications of each text, including reader comments, using four approaches, to be detailed below:
(1) **Context:** Each article and collection of comments is first contextualized, relative to its producers, consumers, media, and purposes, as is essential for critical interpretation. These “critical questions” are answered within the introductions to each issue and set of articles, as they provide necessary context for further analysis.

(2) **Representations:** each article refers to a variety of entities and events involved in the issues discussed, including individuals, social groups, and actions. All representations of such entities, both in the articles and in the reader comments, are examined exhaustively to determine how the discourse conceptualizes them. This is the central locus of cognitive linguistic analysis, in which the metaphors, schemas, frames, and other biased representations of the discourse are spelled out, including their implications.

(3) **Narrative analysis:** Each article is also analyzed for its sequential rhetorical structure in order to understand how these aspects contribute to discursive ideological influence. As context is all important to interpretation, the significance of the representations examined first cannot be fully understood until they are viewed in this way.

(4) **Word frequency analysis:** word-frequencies accomplish several important purposes in this study. They are the most objective measure we have to measure influence between articles and comments, they reveal themes in both the articles and comments that might not be noticeable otherwise, and they may even reveal ideological implications existing purely in the relations among the words used to describe particular topics in the discourse. The word frequencies in both articles and reader comments are discussed and compared.
(5) **Comparison of articles to reader comments**: as summarized above, reader comments are subjected to all forms of analysis applied to the articles except for narrative structure (for obvious reasons). The results of the analysis for each article are compared with the results of the analyses of the comments in order to answer the questions:

1. To what degree (numerically) do the opinions expressed or implied in reader comments agree, disagree, or neither with the ideas expressed or implied by the articles. Especially, are there more reader comments supporting a particular idea in response to an article expressing or implying said idea, versus in comments on other articles.

2. What specific ideas, figures of speech, and rhetorical techniques appear in reader comments that mirror the content of the article they follow.

3. What else do these comments tell us? As a technique still in its infancy, relatively speaking, the analysis of reader comments in this study looks at many notable properties of the comments that may or may not bear directly on the other goals of this study, especially when the contents of those comments include ideas not discussed in their article.

   Looked at as a whole, this methodology addresses all levels of linguistic structure and their contexts both as instances and as parts of extended sequences of discourse acts.

### 3.3.2 Critical Questions

This study borrows from Hyatt (2006), a series of principles that gives teachers, students, and researchers a perspective for viewing textual elements is both a ‘micro’ lexicogrammatical level and on the more ‘macro’ societal and semantic levels. To
expound on these concepts, this study draws on the systemic works of Critical literacy and Critical Discourse Analysis, CDA (Foucault, 1980).

The following are some of the core questions for CDA:

1. What type of text is this?
2. Who is the producer of the text?
3. Who is the intended reader?
4. Will the text be understood by all readers in the same way?
5. What was the intended purpose of production?
6. Are there any missing contents in the text?

These questions are answered for the texts examined in this study. The answers indeed prove of great significance relative to the socio-politics of the discourses. Especially because this study examines the relationship between reader comments and news articles, the questions of intentions and interpretations inform each step of the analysis, as do the question of purposes, and things not said.

3.3.3 Representations

In terms of methodology, “representations” were taken to mean any and all ideas conveyed about a particular topic – the set of ways in which a particular “entity” or event was represented by the language examined. These included both the explicit topics of the discourse, such as “woman” and “subjects of the travel ban” and also in many cases, entities in the context of the discourses, about whom ideas were projected through implication, such as the news agencies publishing the articles, conservatives, liberals, and American society in general.

Each pair of articles showed a somewhat similar set of entities represented in the following senses: each concerned a single public discourse event – in one case, a US
Supreme Court decision, in the other, an advertisement published by the Gillette (Proctor and Gamble) company. Each made reference to a non-dominant group of humans – in these cases, travelers to America from certain nations in one case, and American women in the other. The articles on the Gillette advertisement also discuss American men a great deal, however, in a way which reflects as much on representations of women as men. Each discusses two groups of Americans distinguished by their collective attitudes towards the events in question, which roughly corresponded to conservative versus liberal. Each also discusses the authors of the discourse embodied by the event in question – in one case, the Trump administration as the authors of the “travel ban” and in the other, the Gillette company as authors of the advertisement. Finally each also conveys implicit representations of American society and some of its institutions, such as the courts opposing the travel ban, and the advertising industry.

The process of analysis was similar for each category of representation. From each article all instances of language referring to, alluding to, or otherwise conveying ideas about each entity, were collected and listed together. The most consistent patterns and contrasts among these instances were first identified to thematically organize the analysis and further subdivide categories of representation to be discussed. Each instance of language was analyzed to discover what the word-choice, grammar, and pragmatic structure of each phrase implied about the entities represented. Schemas, metaphors, and frames, and their implications were then identified, in some cases, as functions of single keywords, and in other cases, arising from the comparison of multiple phrases used to describe a topic.

The analyses of the representations showed that they were frequently ideological, and the implied ideology was spelled out in as much detail as could be derived from the words used, with consideration of context. As the analysis progresses through each
section, the ideological implications of the discourse are further synthesized to describe as fully as possible the various ideologies conveyed by the articles and their relationships.

This aspect of the readers’ comments was also analyzed, however organized differently, because the comments were first classified in terms of whether each comment echoed the ideas of the article, opposed them, or did something else. Nevertheless, for each of those cases, the process was repeated where the entities discussed were listed and the collection of comments representing each topic from a particular side were listed for each category, and then the collection analyzed, attending to wording, grammar, pragmatics, and context, and discussed in detail, focusing on ideological implications.

3.3.4 Narrative Analysis

I called this “narrative analysis” because each analytical section proceeds through its article from beginning to end sequentially. Much of this analysis concerns rhetoric, however, in line with the theoretical commitments of this project, these sections also go substantially beyond standard meanings of “rhetoric.” By rhetoric, in this context, I mean argumentative and persuasive strategies, including but not limited to such traditional but important ideas as the “ad hominem” attack, “emotional appeals,” and “generating assent.” Many such elements were found in the opinion articles examined, on the Gillette advertisement, and a few in the non-opinion articles as well; most interestingly the strategies favored by each author were different and consistent; for example, Fox’s Todd Starnes made many emotional appeals in his article on the Gillette ad, while CNN’s guest author, Jill Filipovic employed several “ad hominem” attacks, among other strategies.
But these sections also track how the implicit representations discussed in the previous section are built up, not only through the words of each phrase, but also through the order in which ideas are implied, such that edifices of ideology are prepared and augmented through the courses of the articles.

Moreover, the “narrative analysis” is crucial for understanding how ideological transmission relates to other persuasive elements. The issues discussed in these articles evoke strong emotions and interact with readers views of themselves and their worlds. Therefore, it was important to look at the articles’ use of emotions and social allegiances to sell ideology to readers.

Again, the analysis of readers’ comments differed in respect to this type of analysis, since the comments did not constitute a sequential discourse. Instead most readers’ comments largely stood on their own. However, every effort was made to examine inter-relations between different comments and dialogues between commenting readers when they occurred.

3.3.5 Word Frequencies

Although word-frequencies are most often examined for corpus linguistics (as discussed below), they are also invaluable in this analysis. Perhaps the most objective source of information about influence from the articles to their comments is whether the comments use the specific terms introduced by the articles more than do comments on other articles. As this study examines two sets of articles and comments for each issue addressed, it seems entirely possible to answer the question of whether commenters on one article have been primed to talk (think) in the specific terms of the article they read.

In recent years, various authors have attempted to combine the CDA perspective with quantitative analysis. Several previous studies have combined corpus analysis and
CDA, though many of these focus on standardizing a methodology and the area is still in development. This exposes one of the weaknesses of such previous research: the inability to analyze the discourse of audiences as opposed to speakers or publishers, who, it can be assumed are not representative of the general population in many ways, including most saliently, their social power. Baker et al. (2008) used a corpus of over 140 million words drawn from news articles to analyze cultural attitudes on immigration. This study focused on determining a meaningful framework for combining CDA with a quantitative approach and shows the relatively recent attention this method has received. However, it only identified the attitudes of published elite, and by nature of its design could not explain the perceptions of a silent observing audience.

In the case of our study, it was decided to use word-frequencies despite the small size of the corpus (the articles) because the first experiments in doing so revealed that they were significant. The turned out to be significant for the simple reason that they both confirmed the conclusions of the other analytical sections and revealed relevant patterns not otherwise observed. For one compelling example, it was discovered that the Fox article used the word “every” many times, which upon examination, turned out to show that the Fox article was making many irrational over-generalizations with ideological implications, such as “every woman wants . . .” and “every man . . .” This pattern was unlikely to get noticed by any other method because the “every” statements were widely scattered across the article. Other significant patterns that were not observed without using word-frequencies included a variety of unexpected themes, such as the fact that the CNN article about the Supreme Court decision made many more

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19 Word-counts for the articles in this study:

Travel ban: CNN, 959 / Fox, 1,112.

Gillette ad: CNN, 785 / Fox, 699.
references to “countries” and “nations” (other than the US) than did the Fox article. This is one example of examining the words used in terms of their relations in the network of terms which might be used to refer to the same entities.

Therefore, by using word-frequencies to identify semantic clusters of words, themes appeared that confirmed and enriched the conclusions of the earlier analytic sections, adding a much welcome more “objective” dimension to these conclusions – potentially a check on the researcher’s projection of biases into the conclusions. So although, word-frequencies may be most appropriate and useful for studies of large corpora, the methodology of this study makes a valuable contribution to the field by demonstrating that they can have significant value to a study of even single articles.

3.4 Conclusion

The methodology used by this study was designed to provide the most complete analysis of the study’s chief target – covert ideological transmission through discourse. Therefore it was, in general, a study of implications – the implications of single words, grammatical structures, speech-acts, rhetorical strategies, metaphors, and more. In the spirit of CDA, a fully interdisciplinary approach was assumed, allowing the researcher to spell out the representations conveyed by the articles and their discourse strategies as fully as possible, and from multiple perspectives, in the hopes of “triangulating” on firm conclusions. In other words, the fact that the conclusions of each type of analysis in the study supported each other is taken as further evidence that they contain some truth and value.

In addition, the analytical methods used aim to ensure thorough coverage of the different types of elements requiring analysis – context, words, sentences, discourse, and interactions between discourses. It is hoped that the success of this analytical scheme may contribute towards further such work. The value and challenges of the methodology
will be further discussed in the final chapter of the study, and recommendations made for future research there.
CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Section A: ARTICLE ANALYSIS
Critical Discourse Analysis of Fox and CNN on June 2018 Supreme Court Travel Ban Decision

4.1.1 Introduction

The primary function of language is to generate mental representations (concepts) in the minds of interlocutors or audiences; this is the essence of linguistic communication. For that reason, language is among the most dangerously subtle and deceptive tools for manipulating minds; whenever we interpret someone’s language we may be ‘programming’ our minds to some extent. Critical linguistic analysis seemingly always reveals ‘hidden’ (or at least implicit) conceptual, social, political, and ideological biases.

Analyses by cognitive linguists of texts concerning political events have been among the most successful in demonstrating such implied and manipulative concepts in text, such as in George Lakoff’s seminal article “The Metaphor System used to Justify War in the Gulf” (1991). Lakoff’s article stands as a model for Critical Discourse Analysis not only in that it provided simultaneous insights into human cognition, language structure, the rhetoric of persuasion, and politics, but also perhaps as the first of a fresh wave of sociopolitical activism among academics, as Lakoff’s article conveyed the urgency of exposing such manipulation and fighting its detrimental impacts on human well-being. Such should certainly be considered the ideology motivating this study, while the analysis aims at relative objectivity by simply describing the ideas represented (although it must always be admitted that complete objectivity in language is impossible).
Our present analysis attempts to fulfill all of these functions and to extend the depth and value of such an analysis in a way only recently become possible—through the analysis of reader’s Twitter comments on news articles, including how the mental representations implied by the articles correlate with readers’ comments, demonstrating their potential to shape readers’ perceptions of a topic.

While it might, unfortunately, be difficult to say which of the ideologies or prejudices spreading through media today has the most potential to cause human suffering, prejudices against various groups of human beings are either on the rise, or appear to be so, and have become a persistent issue regarding the policies of the Trump administration and the statements of its members and supporters, which continue to be accused, by liberals, of promoting prejudice and attempting to enact discrimination against women, people of color, Muslims, Mexicans, and members of the LGBQT community.

The controversial nature of many of the Trump administration’s policies has generated an immense amount of news coverage, perhaps more than ever before, on policies and events potentially affecting these populations. It is reasonable to hypothesize that the language in these news articles includes language conveying biased mental representations of the parties involved. However, we should keep in mind that, as we shall find, articles on these topics push biased mental representations of many other phenomena as well. The following analysis discusses only representations which seem relevant to the central issues of the article and American politics, not necessarily every biased representation which might be found, since work in Conceptual Metaphor theory (such as that of George Lakoff) has shown that even English is saturated with biased representations of such general phenomena as time, space, causation, and meaning, among others.
We have analyzed two articles about the June 2018 Supreme Court ruling upholding the Trump administration’s third version of a ‘travel ban’ which allows authorities to deny entry to the US for nationals of certain nations, five of which have Muslim-majority populations, plus North Korea and Venezuela.

The articles, from CNN and Fox, contrast ideally; they both constitute the first full-length article announcements of this ruling by these news sources, released within less than 24 hours of each other (Fox June 26 / CNN June 27), with similar word counts (Fox 1,111 / CNN, 965). The CNN article was written by Ariane de Vogue and Veronica Stracqualursi, the Fox article by Bill Mears. And their narratives, to summarize before detailing below, both adopt a pretense of political neutrality during their early paragraphs but grow more explicitly biased later on, until each makes a strong partisan statement. However, our analysis focuses on implicit communications of bias, which, hypothetically, are more pernicious than clearly avowed biases, as they can take root in readers’ minds without the potentially protective mechanism of readers’ conscious critical attention.

We have taken three primary approaches to the analysis. In each case, rather than analyze each article in full separately, we compare and contrast the articles along each of these dimensions as we proceed because preliminary analysis suggested this would be more efficient and more revealing than separate analyses and provide a better foundation for the subsequent analysis of readers’ comments. The analysis will be presented in this sequence:

(1) How each article represents all major entities and role-players discussed, including the subjects of the ban, the Trump administration, the Supreme Court, the policy itself, its other supporters and opponents, the case, and previous rulings.
(2) A narrative analysis of the articles focusing on the rhetorical exploitation, through sequencing, of subtle (and not so subtle) linguistic mechanisms for implying bias.

(3) A contrastive analysis of word frequencies in each article.
The rationale for this order of presentation is rhetorical. The first section provides the major landmarks delineating each article’s implicit ideologies, the second section details the rhetoric used to push these ideologies on readers, and the word frequencies of the third section can better be understood upon the foundation of sections (1) and (2). These analyses will then provide a context against which to interpret their impact in readers’ comments.

4.1.2 Preamble: The Issues

Among the first major policy moves of the Trump administration were a series of highly touted executive orders, many of them challenged in courts across the US and, in some cases, modified multiple times in efforts by the administration to get them implemented in some form after their rejection by judges during litigation. Our articles concern the third version of the administration’s ‘travel ban’ – an order restricting entry to the US for citizens of, in this version, seven nations, five of whom are Muslim-majority. The list of targets has changed with each iteration until reaching the form in which it was finally upheld by the US Supreme Court on June 26, 2018. Meanwhile the arguments against the bans have remained the same – that they are discriminatory, unlawful, and in violation of the Constitution. Arguments for the ban have always claimed it is for the sake of national security, however arguments that it is non-discriminatory and within the president’s legal powers have evolved as the
administration revised the ban in order to meet those criteria. This is sufficient background to proceed.

**Section One:**

**4.2.1 Representations of Role-Players and Other ‘Entities’**

The list of role-players and other entities described by language of interest is the same between the two articles, at least at the general level (e.g. both discuss supporters and opponents of the ban but not all the same individuals). Before analysis, all language in each article describing or directly reflecting on each entity was listed; this showed, that in terms of number of references, those receiving the greatest attention in both articles are the ban itself, the ruling, the subjects of the ban, its supporters and opponents, and Donald J. Trump. One item perhaps less expected is the concept of executive authority, a major topic in both articles with perhaps frightening implications; although we sought to examine especially attitudes towards the discriminated against populations, it became apparent upon analyzing the articles that both sides were as much if not more concerned with ideological positions regarding presidential authority, with Fox clearly pushing for the support of expanded presidential authority, of indefinite scope. The CNN article focused more on the putative discriminatory nature of the ban. In fact, in general, the first major apparent contrast between the articles is that for Fox and its readers, the primary issue seems to be authority, whereas for CNN, prejudice.

**4.2.1.2 Representation of the ‘Travel Ban’**

References to the ban itself differ between the articles in many ways. Firstly, Fox refers to the ban in ways that imply it is well considered, thoughtfully engineered, polished, and functional, for example claiming that it is known as “travel ban 3.0” (Fox,
them in no way implies the latest version is an improvement. In fact, by not referring to improvement, it implies that the policy may be inherently resistant to successful refinement.

Secondly, Fox repeatedly refers to the ban as the “Trump travel ban” (1) or “Trump administration policy” (8-9) whereas CNN refers to the ban as “Trump’s travel ban” (6) only once, but thereafter refers to it only as “the travel ban” (6, 17, 26, 31, 51, 81, 84, 86). The difference here between CNN and Fox is consistent with Fox’s emphasis (further explicated below) on the validation of Trump’s authority and his administration. Whereas the only other CNN description of the ban mentioning the president says it “exceeded the President’s authority under immigration law as well as the Constitution” (28). This is the CNN article’s description of an accusation from the State of Hawaii, and indeed both articles seem frequently to exploit their sources in order to convey a biased representation without fully laying claim to it.

In a seemingly similar strategy, Fox recounts the Supreme Court’s statement that the ban is “squarely within the scope of presidential authority,” and, adds Fox in its own words, “under federal law” (Fox, 20). Although these expressions are explicit in their import, their language (provided by the conservative Chief Justice Roberts in this case) is more subtly biasing; the word “squarely” implies law, order, normality, and security, the

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20 Numbers cited for the articles indicate line numbers in the article’s texts, as appended to this analysis.
most general, even perhaps highest, values of political conservatism. Those notions are further amplified by Fox when it quotes Justice Robert’s statement that the order, “undoubtedly fulfilled that requirement” (“that the president finds that the entry of the covered aliens would be detrimental to the interests of the United States”) (Roberts in Fox, 22). Fox’s writer also tells us that the ban “enjoy[ed] a favorable reception” by the Supreme Court in April of 2018 (44) -- implying that the ban was never far from legal approval. These phrases carry other implicitly biasing features. “fulfilled” is a verb with powerfully positive associations, implying that the ban remedied a persistent and regrettable lack or absence. And “enjoyed a favorable reception” exploits conceptual metaphor, implying that the ban is a person with feelings and one with very high social or political status; “a favorable reception” evokes a visiting dignitary welcomed with honor. A key implication of this representation is that liberal objections need not be heard or addressed; any entity given such honor by the highest court has already been vetted (in the minds of Fox readers).

In contrast, expressions in the CNN article referring to the ban’s relationship with the courts say that it “ricocheted through the courts” (27) and “fails that test . . . [because it is] . . . unconstitutional, unprecedented, unnecessary and un-American” (Katyal in CNN, 85-87). The first expression, “ricocheted,” obviously invokes a conceptual metaphor in which the ban is an out-of-control bullet failing to hit a valid target but possibly causing damage anyway, and one which was fired perhaps not well. It also implies that the ban’s journey through the courts to its new status has been far from principled or well-reasoned, but rather more desperate and random. Meanwhile, “fails the test” [of constitutionality], conveys another conceptual metaphor with clear implications; the ban and its creators have failed a test, showing that the ban is incorrect and its proponents substandard competitors, in this case, substandard in their adherence
to the US Constitution, a document conceptualized with the inviolability of religious scripture by most Americans.

It is telling of the discourses that we have not yet had occasion to discuss what the ban does, which is indicative of both articles. In this respect, Fox describes the ban as “selective travel restrictions” (9), “affecting” (16) “some travelers” (87), and “needed for security reasons,” (10) to “secure our border and our country” (Trump in Fox, 15). In contrast, CNN only describes the ban’s concrete activity as “restricts entry from seven countries” (27), although certainly implying it is a form of discrimination, and citing sources who say so outright (as detailed below). Meanwhile Fox says the ban affects “five” Muslim-majority nations (16) (because two of the countries banned, North Korea and Venezuela, are not Muslim-majority). Although both descriptions are accurate, it is obvious that many readers will note only the number, not its explanation; therefore, uncareful readers of CNN may come away with the impression that seven nations are being blocked purely because of their Muslim majorities, while uncareful Fox readers may think only five nations are being blocked at all.

Returning to Fox’s descriptions of the ban’s activity, “selective travel restrictions” accomplishes much. The word “selective” is almost always used to describe statuses to which a person might aspire – to become a member of an exclusive club. It implies that the “selective” entity is high-class, desirable, and beneficial for the person selected, and that the selected individual deserves to be so selected due to their qualities. Presumably this is not the way travelers “selected” for “restriction” feel about it. “Restriction” is, of course, much less harsh than “ban” and does not necessarily imply being entirely refused or shut out. “Restrictions” is usually used in the context of air travel in reference to luggage and carry-on items, not travelers. However, there may be more sinister implications here; items subject to “restrictions” are, most saliently, those with the
potential to be used in a terrorist attack. We have all seen the signs listing “restricted items” at the airports. Therefore, Fox’s use of the word not only makes the ban sound less severe, but also perhaps implies that the banned travelers pose a terrorist threat. Which leads us to Fox’s other description of the ban’s activity, a Trump quotation – “to secure our border and country.” Fox uses the words “order” and “security” in association with the ban several other times. In summary, these descriptions implicitly argue that the ban’s purpose is not to impinge on anyone’s freedom, but rather to protect Americans from members of these nations, who may be terrorists. This is confirmed by the president’s own words again, near the end of its article (when Fox may rightly judge that remaining readers are on one’s side): "This is not about religion -- this is about terror and keeping our country safe" (Trump in Fox, 91). It is no news that safety and security are among the most compelling motivations for conservative voters. We may also note that both the words “us” and “country,” like the “our country” in this quote, are used more frequently by Fox than CNN. An unstated implication is clear – that the country belongs to “us” as opposed to the kind of people who are being denied entry.

In contrast, CNN offers a complete contradiction of this idea, from Tom Perez, chair of the Democratic National Committee: “Discrimination is not a national security strategy, and prejudice is not patriotism. Let's call this ban for what it is: an outright attack on the Muslim community that violates our nation’s commitment to liberty and justice for all” (Perez in CNN, emphasis added). This is a rousing quote but also notably manipulative in its implied representations. Perez’s rhetoric implies that ban supporters and Trump-style patriotism are prejudiced, discriminatory, hateful, violent, unjust, and un-American, none of which are their avowed motivations for supporting the ban. Perez does not state this directly – that Trump and his supporters are such – because to do so would be politically unwise, but instead describes only the ban itself, leaving readers to
complete the equation themselves. “Liberty and justice for all” is a quote from the American Pledge of Allegiance (to the flag), which likely reminds most Americans, at least sub-consciously, of standing with their hands over their hearts and declaring their allegiance, as children, every morning in school, or at a baseball game. Perez may or may not have intentionally selected the phrase with those memories in mind, but regardless, it seems intended to drive home the idea that ban supporters oppose all that is good and American.

4.2.1.3 Representations of the Human Role-Players

Major role-players discussed in these articles include Donald J. Trump, the people subject to the ban, and opponents and supporters of the policy, including especially judges, politicians, and lawyers.

The people subject to the ban are not the group most discussed in either article, where they oddly seem almost like bystanders in this conflict between Americans. The CNN article seems to make an effort to oppose this trend by quoting one Congressman and one lawyer who are Muslims (detail below). Fox discusses the opinions of no Muslims. Verbal references to the banned populations differ significantly between the two. CNN presents the complete list of nations banned early on (24-5), but after that only refers to the travelers when saying that Trump wanted to ban “all Muslim-majority countries” (33-34). It is also worth noting that only CNN refers to “members of minority religions in our country” (Sotomayor in CNN, 64). In summary, CNN represents American Muslims as Americans, and part of our communities, including lawmakers and lawyers, and says nothing at all about non-American Muslims except to imply (as shown above) that Trump wants to ban all of them, although that is far from true of the ban approved by the court in June.
Fox is quite another story in two main ways. Firstly, Fox makes a constant effort to downplay the extent of the ban with phrases such as “several mostly Muslim nations” (5) and “some travelers” (87), and secondly, Fox implies they are alien and likely to be terrorists, while maintaining a facade of neutrally respectful language. Remarkably, Fox manages to literally call them “alien” several times in a row, and imply that they are “detrimental to the interests of the United States” and full of “hatred,” without taking responsibility for such ideas (Immigration and Nationality Act, as quoted in Fox, 58-60); I detail this passage in section two, below.

Opponents of the ban are discussed more than any other single group, although for distinct reasons in each case. The majority of Fox’s references look to discredit the opposition and dismiss their claims, CNN’s, the opposite. Fox refers to opponents of the ban as “hysterical” (Trump in Fox, 14), “critics” (Fox, 9) who “refuse to do what it takes,” (Trump in Fox, 23) and who “[contest] all the president’s orders” (Fox, 78) with “chaos and protests” (Fox, 87). They include “media and Democratic politicians” (Trump in Fox, 23), “liberals” (Fox, 24), a “coalition of groups in opposition” (49), and “Hawaii officials” (78). Some of these are worth unpacking. The “hysterical” “chaos and protests” have only recently been noted by the media as a trope of anti-opposition conservative rhetoric under the Trump administration. The administration and its supporters have recently latched onto the characterization of liberals as a hysterical mob because it accomplishes a variety of rhetorical political goals, making the opposition appear irrational and dismissable, yet potentially dangerous and therefore a further reason to support increasing the power of the administration. Meanwhile, “refuse to do what it takes” implies that something (the ban) needed to be done in order to prevent looming unspecified disaster, and that the ban’s opponents are ill-motivated or weak for perversely refusing to take action.
CNN refers to the ban's opponents as “challengers” (31) including “the state of Hawaii” (31), “liberal lawmakers” (74), “the first Muslim elected to Congress” (76), the ACLU (93), and the Democratic National Committee (96). These groups are not said to protest hysterically, but rather to “condemn” (89) the ruling. The word “challengers” evokes sympathy and admiration because a challenger is by definition in the position of weakness relative to that which they challenge, but one who is strong, forthright, and making an effort to oppose someone who perhaps should and will be unseated from dominance. On the other hand “condemn” implies righteous judgment, usually by qualified and moral critics. The overall implication is that opponents of the ban have both the moral high ground and superior faculties of judgment, yet are underdogs in this contest who, one may hope, will eventually unseat the undeservedly dominant powers.

Beyond this, CNN’s selection of cited authorities seems strongly tilted to curry favor with American liberals incensed against the many policies of this administration they perceive as discriminatory and racist. The only selfish rhetorical value for CNN in quoting the first Muslim in Congress would be to demonstrate to their liberal readers that CNN shares their values. Finally, CNN refers to the “blistering dissent” (59) of the “four dissenting justices” (86) while Fox refers to them only in terms of the “5-4 ruling” (8).

There is much less to say about either article’s representations of policy supporters, whose contrast is straightforward. Beyond quoting Justice John Roberts, Fox refers to “sixteen state leaders led by Texas [who] were among a number of coalitions backing the Trump” (Fox, 77), while CNN refers to “Congressional Republicans” who “applauded” (CNN, 100) and Republican Senator Lindsey Graham who said he was "pleased" (CNN, 103). While Fox’s reference implies broad support for the ban outside of Congress, led by a respectably conservative state, CNN mentions only “Congressional Republicans,” who are characterized as sycophantic followers of the Trump agenda (who
“applauded” in CNN’s words) and uncompassionate -- because Graham is “pleased” (again, in CNN’s words) about a policy liberals see almost solely in terms of its discriminatory impact. This characterization of Republican politicians may seem fair to liberal readers, however it accomplishes the same purpose as Fox’s characterization of liberals; it licenses people to dismiss the other side out of hand. If CNN were to mention the “sixteen states” and “number of coalitions” (Fox, 77) backing Trump, CNN’s readers would likely feel greater openness to their point of view than they do to Senator Graham’s being pleased.

Although Donald Trump is certainly a supporter of his policy, his unique role in the affair demands separate treatment here. His representation by CNN seems designed to perpetuate the tropes already popular among his opposition, that he is emotionally immature, reactive, narcissistic, crude, intolerant, un-American, in violation of the constitution, if not downright criminal, and a fundamental danger to America and its values. This seemingly partisan representation, however, is presented in a way that maintains CNN’s image of relative objectivity. The insulting characterization of Trump’s personality is to some degree implied by innocuous sounding statements like “Trump immediately reacted” (CNN, 15) and “said he felt vindicated” (20); we examine how these statements function in Section Two. However, CNN uses indirect quotation, and quoting out of context in order to voice the most extreme condemnation of Trump without appearing to do so. CNN quotes Justice Roberts’ explanation that opposition to the ban was based on people’s perception that the “president’s words strike at fundamental standards of respect and tolerance, in violation of our constitutional tradition” (Roberts in CNN, 37), thereby using the conservative justice’s own words to invoke the most negative liberal representation of Trump in readers’ minds. This is not the only place where CNN seems to use a citation deceptively. The article also manages to say that
Trump “called for a ban on travel from all Muslim-majority countries” (CNN, 33) – in reference to Trump’s campaign statements – in a way that is likely to leave many readers with the impression, conscious or otherwise, that this is a description of the currently enacted travel ban.

The representation of Trump by Fox is, in direct references, for the most part, neutrally respectful, with frequent uses of his title of office. However, this would be a misleading contrast were I not to mention Fox’s emphasis throughout their article on the validation of Trump’s “powers” (Fox, 40) and of expanding them, as we discuss further below. We can only speculate that Fox avoids dwelling on the person of the president because they are aware that many conservative voters admire the president’s personal qualities little more than do liberals.

The phenomena represented most differently between the two articles are the case and its history in the courts. Fox and CNN contradict each other concerning the significance of the case and all previous rulings, and imply drastically different and politically motivated narratives. CNN implies, not says, that the case is a referendum on Trump. It does this by quoting the part of Justice Roberts’ opinion that says the judges needed to determine whether to denounce Trump’s campaign statements about Muslims; then CNN notes, very much in passing, that Roberts “dismissed” (34) those concerns, in the same sentence that describes the court’s decision. CNN offers no other definition of the central issue debated by the court, thus implying that it’s all about the racism of Trump and his supporters, represented by his campaign statements.

Fox on the other hand describes the case as a “hardest-fought battle” (6), a “significant legal test” (34) of Trump’s authority (not his character), and a fulfillment of the law. This last point is dwelled on to such a degree, one might think that the Constitution in fact stipulated a travel ban; Fox describes the case as now having been
“fully litigated” (43) and the central issue faced by the judges, “reviewing a Presidential directive, neutral on its face, addressing a matter within the core of executive responsibility” (Roberts in Fox, 74). The narrative here is that the travel ban should always have been considered an uncontroversial example of Trump doing his job and that a heroic battle to validate this president’s authority has now justly been won. As for the campaign statements to which CNN often returns, Fox says only, “the high court’s majority downplayed Trump's campaign statements.”

Both articles quote the president’s assertion that the ruling was a “profound vindication” and a “tremendous victory for the American People and the Constitution,” although CNN describes Trump as referring to his personal vindication (20), while Fox presents it as a conclusion (60), rather than an immediate reaction as CNN describes it (11). Fox also describes the ruling as licensing a “precedent-setting expansion” (35) of the “chief executive” to whom it gives “broad authority” (59). Finally, Fox makes a remarkable effort to imply that this latest ruling was consistent with or a natural conclusion to its treatment by previous courts (most of which blocked it). Fox refers to the Supreme Court’s supposed earlier limited endorsement of the policy (in April 2018) (35-37) and mentions that the court is historically “deferential” (Fox, 54) to presidential authority. Finally Fox “marks” the ruling as a “first major high court decision” of Trump’s administration, implying it is worthy of commemoration (6), and the use of words like “first,” “major”, and “high” in reference to the decision should, hypothetically, leave it with a golden aura in readers’ minds.

CNN describes the latest ruling in many purposeful ways – “along partisan lines” (7), a “veil of constitutionality” (Katyal in CNN, 85), a “big “win” (Vladeck in CNN, 44) for the White House, and “a strong message” that Trump “has broad powers under immigration law” to “protect national security” (CNN, 10-11). At the same time, expert
commentary presented by CNN also says the ruling is one of the “great failures” of the Supreme Court (Jadwat in CNN, 94), which has been “wrong” before (CNN, 71), and which has now “allowed official racism and xenophobia” (ACLU in CNN, 90-91) by approving a policy which “give legitimacy to discrimination and Islamophobia” (Ellison in CNN, 77) and “erodes the foundational principles of religious tolerance” (Sotomayor in CNN, 63). CNN seems strangely validating to Trump in its writers’ interpretation of the ruling as in fact licensing those Trumpian “broad powers under immigration law” (CNN, 10). One might infer from the subsequent piling on of harsher expert commentary that CNN is hesitant to explicitly describe conservative America as racist but happy to do so indirectly, through citation. This of course was our conclusion earlier regarding the Tom Perez quote.

Rulings on previous versions of the travel ban are described in CNN as “invalidating the first two iterations” (52) and “striking down the first two travel bans [. . .] the judiciary forced a recalcitrant administration” (Katyal in CNN, 84). Fox refuses to say in any way that previous rulings invalidated the ban, saying instead “refused to allow the ban to be enforced” (Fox, 42) a phrase with so much superfluous syntactic embedding one may pause to work it out. As if they validated the ban but perversely disallowed its enforcement. Fox also mentions that these courts were in “San Francisco,” “California,” and “Virginia,” (37) presumably signaling to conservative readers that they can be dismissed as epicenters of liberal madness. These courts, implies Fox, did not disapprove of the ban except that it “overstepped” Trump’s “powers to regulate” and one decision even “allowed the current restrictions to be enforced” when ruling against them (Fox, 42).

There is no reconciling this representation with Katyal’s description in CNN, “forced a recalcitrant administration”! The most common usage of “recalcitrant” is in
reference to children. This description implies not only that Trump is a child and behaving badly, but also that he lacks the strength necessary to buck the courts, who are both more mature and more powerful. Katyal’s “striking down” (CNN, 84) also implies solid defeat for the administration. At the same time, “standing up to”, “official racism” (CNN, 90) implies that Trump and his ilk are still dominant and scary but can be defied.

Which brings us back to our initial observation about these articles; they both seem more concerned with their characterizations of the two sides into which America is allegedly divided, than they do with their characterizations of banned travelers, although Muslims are certainly represented in biased ways.

To summarize, this section of the analysis has shown that these articles paint pictures of two worlds. In one world, half of American voters and politicians are happy to grant unprecedented power to a childish, narcissistic, and sadistically discriminatory president, through a corrupt court, which has approved a law being enacted out of pure intolerance, and a betrayal of America’s deepest and most foundational values. In the other world, liberal America consists of a mob of hysterics who, for some mysterious reason, keep perversely opposing a president who is finally trying to protect America from, in conservative’s words, “alien” terrorists, even when his decisions are “squarely” within the scope of his “vindicated” authority. Now as we turn to a contrastive narrative reading of the two articles, we shall delve into these themes, their implications, and roots, more clearly.

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4.2.2 Section Two: A Narrative Interpretation

The impetus for writing a contrastive narrative analysis of these articles arose as we were taking notes on the articles; it became apparent (1) that the sequencing of linguistic events in the article constituted a large part of its technique for planting representations in readers heads implicitly and (2) the chosen articles are similar enough in structure to render parallels and contrasts revealing. So, we ask now how these articles are designed to affect readers during a sequential reading.

Both articles begin by reporting the 5-4 ruling and summarizing its significance; all the main messages of each article are introduced and especially their respective foci – in the case of Fox, the perversity of the ban’s opponents, and in the case of CNN, the poor character of its supporters and especially the president. As mentioned in the last section, neither article foregrounds the banned people.

CNN does not even refer to the people banned within the first few paragraphs, while Fox immediately refers to the ban as “affecting several mostly Muslim countries” in a sentence interpreting the ruling primarily as a validation of executive authority (7-8). Fox’s substitution of “countries” for their citizens is repeated several times in their article. It is a well-known and invisible metaphor commonly used in political rhetoric to make actions taken against people seem less personal or harmful to human beings. One can take action against a country more justly than one can a person.

Fox often refers to ‘executive authority’ (6, 33, 40, 59, 74, 86) in the abstract, presumably to make it sound more sacrosanct and less partisan than “Trump’s
authority” – and, admittedly, whatever authority Trump is granted will be difficult to take away from future presidents. Fox seems to avoid Trump’s name within the first two paragraphs in other ways, referring when necessary to his “administration,” (8, 10, 16, 38, 44, 51, 66, 78, 83, 99) which it says has fought a hard battle for national security (10). We can only hypothesize that although Fox consistently aims at the expansion of Trump’s powers, they de-emphasize Trump the man because readers are more likely to take the administration’s side if it is not explicitly identified with a man whom so many readers find personally objectionable. It also supports our notion that sanctification of the administration’s expanding powers is more important (for conservative ends) than Trump the man.

In contrast, CNN’s first few paragraphs take every opportunity to associate the policy with the man, saying the ruling licenses Trump’s powers (10) while raising the issue of the president’s anti-Muslim campaign statements:

Challengers, including the state of Hawaii, argued that the travel ban exceeded the President’s authority under immigration law as well as the Constitution. They also used Trump’s statements during the campaign, when he called for a ban on travel from all Muslim-majority countries, but Roberts dismissed those concerns. (CNN, 31-34)

Then after quoting the decision very briefly, CNN reports Trump’s immediate Twitter reaction, which, ending in the word “Wow!”, seems presented solely to make the man look childish (CNN, 17).

At this point in Fox’s article, there is a second sentence de-emphasizing the effect of the ban, as “travel restrictions,” and then contrasting the “critics” and their accusations of discrimination against the administration’s argument for security. The
implied conclusion is that the critics are hysterical about an innocuous security measure (Fox, 10).

At this point in the articles, both sources seem on the surface relatively unbiased, because Fox has drawn attention to its opponents and their accusations, while CNN has stated clearly that the court validated Trump’s powers. These paragraphs seem intended to introduce the articles’ biases while defusing objections to their sides by raising them immediately and then diverting from them.

Fox then takes off from the subject of the ban’s critics, who in its second reference begin to sound more hysterical as they “continued to decry the policy as ‘xenophobic,’” juxtaposing this image with Trump’s well composed statement of vindication and victory for “the American people and the Constitution,” – a statement which explicitly contrasts that “victory” with the “hysterical” “commentary” of the “media and Democratic politicians” who “refuse to do what it takes” for border security (Fox, 10).

CNN also presents this victory statement of Trump’s, although needlessly prefaces it with a statement that Trump said he felt vindicated (20), thereby ensuring readers will interpret the quote as primarily indicative of Trump’s self-centeredness rather than his patriotism. CNN then specifies the countries banned and purports to explain the main history of the ban and its challenges, emphasizing that the bans always exceeded Trump’s authority. But here, CNN repeatedly and implicitly associates the ban with Trump’s campaign statements, barely tagging that “Roberts” dismissed them (CNN, 34).

The first few paragraphs of both articles have focused on simultaneously representing Fox and CNN as relatively objective while slipping through their most biased and seemingly highest priority messages – (CNN) that Trump and his supporters
are immoral, and (Fox) that the policy’s opponents are hysterical and perverse, while Trump and his supporters have all legal authority behind them in their responsible effort to bolster national security. It is ironic, that as a result of these priorities, CNN discusses Trump more than Fox, and Fox liberals more than CNN.

The middles of the articles begin as they delve into greater detail about the case, its history, and implications. CNN first relates challenges against previous bans in a way that allows it to present many reasons they were considered invalid by opponents, without emphasizing that the latest version has supposedly remedied all of those faults (31-100); CNN’s presentation could leave casual article-skimmers with the impression that the current ban blocks travelers from ALL Muslim-majority countries, although that was never true of any version of the ban, but rather only of Trump’s campaign statements.

Then CNN does a remarkable thing; they quote from conservative Judge Robert’s dismissal of the Trump campaign statements, using the quote to attack Trump. CNN quotes Robert’s description of the plaintiff’s arguments against Trump: “This President’s words strike at fundamental standards of respect and tolerance, in violation of our constitutional tradition” (37). The next sentence, although it reports Roberts’ dismissal of the campaign statements, does so by quoting Roberts discussing them in several ways, thus implying that they are the central issue:

But the issue before us is not whether to denounce the statements. It is instead the significance of those statements in reviewing a Presidential directive, neutral on its face, addressing a matter within the core of executive responsibility. In doing so, we must consider not only the statements of a particular President, but also the authority of the Presidency itself. (37-41)
Although CNN reports that Trump’s campaign statements are not the issue, it implies exactly the opposite, especially since CNN does not devote as many words to the question of executive authority, which it acknowledges the court sanctioned.

The Fox article, at this point says a little more about the ban, which it has not yet described except to be played down, within the first few paragraphs. Yet again now, Fox downplays it as “affecting visitors from five majority Muslim nations,” then calls it “travel ban 3.0,” a rehabilitating metaphor we discussed in section one, and says the court faced the decision of “whether it discriminates on the basis of nationality and religion, in the government’s issuance of immigrant visas” (16-18). Thus Fox implies that the court decided the ban is not discriminatory, while CNN cannot frame it this way; the latter parts of the CNN article define the ban as discriminatory and worse – which is best supported by focusing on the president’s campaign statements, rather than the ban.

The next landmark in Fox’s article quotes from Robert’s “decision” (Roberts writing for the conservative majority) that the president has such authority – focusing on Roberts’ citation of a federal law that refers to the banned group as “aliens [that] would be detrimental to the interests of the United States” (22). Although this describes groups which presidents are authorized to keep out of the US, its use in context here obviously implies that the members of Muslim majority nations (and the other banned nations) are so detrimental. And Roberts’ says, “The president has undoubtedly fulfilled that requirement here” (23); this is only one of the many ways Fox implies that Trump’s actions are not only legal, but even demanded by the law.

CNN, in contrast, at this point, quotes “Stephen Vladeck, CNN’s Supreme Court analyst and a law professor at the University of Texas School of Law,” saying that this ruling increases Trump’s authority in a way likely to “justify” “more aggressive restrictions,” however then brings up the invalidation of the earlier travel bans (in the
process of mentioning that this one has ‘changes’ (not described by CNN at all) (46-53). Thereby, CNN paints a picture where a ban invalidated several times for exceeding presidential authority has now been approved, giving the president unprecedented powers which are likely to increase. While Fox refers to a new faultless travel ban which is not merely “squarely” within traditional presidential authority, but really an urgent responsibility which the president was previously prevented from fulfilling due to liberal perversity.

CNN has two further major sections, detailing the court’s liberal dissent and the denunciations of the ban by liberal politicians and lawyers. Its description of the dissent revolves around liberal Justice Sotomayor’s comparison of the ruling to the court’s previous approval of Japanese internment camps in 1944, even entitling that section “Sotomayor and Korematsu” (the 1944 plaintiff) (57-72). This not only implies that the court’s decision was wrong, but also that Trump and the ban’s supporters are prejudiced and nationalist to a degree that raises the specter of genocide. Although the US Japanese internment camps murdered no one (as far as I know), simply mentioning them in the context of WWII can be expected to remind readers of the Holocaust and genocide. Again, CNN’s primary ideological mission seems establishing that Trump and his supporters are the most dangerous kind of racist/white supremacist/Christian nationalists. Consistently with this project, although Justice Sotomayor’s dissent in fact focused on the question of whether to consider Trump’s campaign statements, her CNN quote primarily concerns religious tolerance, court precedent, and the political disenfranchisement of minorities:

The majority here completely sets aside the President's charged statements about Muslims as irrelevant [. . . ] That holding erodes the foundational principles of
religious tolerance that the court elsewhere has so emphatically protected, and it
tells members of minority religions in our country ‘that they are outsiders, not
full members of the political community’.

(Sotomayor in CNN, 62-65)

Strangely, CNN’s article does not state why the last phrase of Sotomayor’s
comment is surrounded by quotation marks; I therefore infer it is a reference to
Korematsu, further emphasizing Sotomayor’s emphasis on prejudice rather than
executive authority.

This section ends, most interestingly, with CNN saying that Roberts took “the
unusual step” of declaring the WWII decision wrong (70-71). Interesting because Fox, at
this point in their article uses the exact same phrase, saying that two dissenting justices
took “the unusual step” of reading aloud their dissent (30). It almost seems as if these
writers were following a checklist of verbal techniques for subtly denigrating their
opponents. This one seemingly implies that an “unusual step” is a sign of guilt, or
ulterior motives. Why did these judges feel it necessary to deny something out loud in a
public statement they didn’t have to make? It subtly implies guilt on the part of the
speakers. In fact, this is more or less Fox’s entire discussion of the dissent.

Then Fox proceeds to the history and debate over the case, which it treats at
greater length than CNN, which spends those words on partisan quotes driving home its
interpretation of the ruling.

Fox begins its review of the case by re-describing the ruling again as one on
executive authority, and a “test,” which Trump has passed, validating expanded powers
of unknown extent: “It was the first significant legal test so far of Trump's policies and
power and could lead to a precedent-setting expansion on the limits of presidential
authority, especially within the immigration context” (36). In addition to implying that the ruling licenses indefinitely expanded presidential powers, the “passing a test” metaphor implies that the test-taker has achieved something which certifies their intelligence, strength, or right to the status granted by passing.

Following this statement Fox summarizes the history of the order as “Federal appeals courts in Virginia and California in recent months had ruled against the administration” (37-38). Fox also names San Francisco and Hawaii as opponents at other points. CNN does not identify the locales of as many lower courts, naming only Hawaii, and does not describe them as “against the administration,” but rather against the ban, explaining why in terms of its discriminatory nature and expression of presidential power (CNN, 31-34). CNN conveys the idea that previous rulings have established these charges against the ban, while Fox seems to feel obligated to explain them, perhaps in order to defuse any objections.

After mentioning Virginia and California, Fox picks out the San Francisco court decision, as discussed earlier, which is said to have “concluded [that] Trump's proclamation, like the two previous executive orders, overstepped his powers to regulate the entry of immigrants and visitors” (40-41). Not a ruling, a conclusion. And “overstepped” is the closest Fox comes to the “violations” and “exceeding” described by CNN. Finally Fox characterizes the “overstepped” powers as powers “to regulate,” a positive and much more innocuous description than that of CNN.

Fox’s history concludes, “the justices had allowed the current restrictions to be enforced at the Justice Department’s request, at least until the case was fully litigated” (43). As a conclusion, this sounds as if the previous rulings were in favor of the ban. In order to drive home that idea, the following paragraph begins, “The Trump administration also seemed to enjoy a favorable reception” before the Supreme Court in
April (35). We don’t know if that is true. Fox supports the statement by citing that one justice at the time noted there are only five countries on the list (51-51). And Fox follows that by adding that the administration originally framed the orders as temporary, and for national security (48).

Having firmed up the notion that the ban had never been worse than “overstepping” and has at this point been approved of more than once by the court, Fox mentions groups that call it religious discrimination in passing, lists the countries banned, and describes Chad’s removal from the list in very comforting terms; it “beefed up its information-sharing” (Fox, 51-52). CNN described it as “having met baseline security requirements” (CNN, 28-29). Fox’s description gives the ban’s requirements a more cooperative, reassuring, and positive aura. CNN’s description implies a more adversarial relationship between the US and the nations banned.

Then Fox plunges further into the issue of presidential authority under the law, pointing out that Carter, Reagan, and Obama, also exercised the authority to deny entry to certain refugees, such as from Cuba and North Korea, thereby implicitly comparing the banned Muslims to refugees, communists, terrorists, and enemies, while also supposedly negating objections to the extent of Trump’s power (43-45). Never mind that it is a poor comparison; refugees from Cuba and North Korea are clearly not a racial or religious category. But Fox moves on quickly from this notion to one better: a 1952 Cold War act is cited as granting the authority in question (46-47). Mentioning this act provides Fox an excuse to present the following quote (emphasis added):

Whenever the president finds that the entry of any aliens or of any class of aliens into the United States would be detrimental to the interests of the United States, he may, may by proclamation, and for such period as he shall deem necessary,
suspend the entry of all aliens or any class of aliens as immigrants or nonimmigrants, or impose on the entry of aliens any restrictions he may deem to be appropriate. (Immigration and Nationality Act in Fox, 58-60)

Only by dredging up something from 1952 could Fox legitimately get away with calling immigrants “aliens” five times while implying that subjects of the ban are confirmed detrimental to the US!

As ever assiduous to head off accusations of discrimination, Fox next reports Trump’s denial that it is a Muslim ban but somewhat calls the president on that lie by admitting that judges have cited Trump’s campaign statements. However, by the end of that very sentence it becomes clear why Fox is willing to allude to the president’s campaign statements. Fox ends this sentence by quoting Trump campaign literature that “cited” (the same word used for what the judges did) “hatred” by “large segments of the Muslim population”:

The administration strongly denies this is a ”Muslim ban,” but federal judges across the country cited statements by then-presidential candidate Trump and his advisers, including a December 2015 campaign press release calling for such restrictions and citing ”hatred” by ”large segments of the Muslim population.” (68-69)

This is bad and bizarre writing but impressively clever manipulation. This sentence about judges citing Trump’s campaign statements to show his prejudice ends with Trump citing hatred “by” Muslims, which implies that the ban is truly, but not officially, intended as a Muslim ban, because, as Trump pointed out, Muslims are dangerously hateful people.
Finally, Fox says, “The high court’s majority downplayed Trump’s campaign statements as a major factor in its decision” (70-71). “Downplayed” is very different from “dismissed.” It implies that those statements may in fact be important, but not the legal justification to be cited by the court. This position, basically approving of the prejudice against Muslims while justifying the ban politically in other ways, becomes increasingly clear near the end of the article, where it seems likely to receive a positive reception among Fox’s more devoted readers. Fox finally stuffs the admission of prejudice back in the box by sharing Roberts’ quote (previously cited in this analysis) that it’s not a ruling on Trump’s statements, but rather on executive authority (75-76).

Then Fox discusses supporters and opponents – “16 states led by Texas,” versus Hawaii in Fox’s description (77). Hawaii is noted as having contested ALL of the president’s orders, implying that their objections cannot be principled. But Fox quotes Hawaii at surprising length describing exactly what Trump’s order does:

Any reasonable observer who heard the president’s campaign promises, read his thinly justified orders banning overwhelmingly Muslim populations, and observed his administration’s persistent statements linking the two, would view the order and each of its precursors as the fulfillment of the president’s promise to prohibit Muslim immigration to the United States.

(“Hawaii officials” in Fox, 77-80)

Again, immediately after just ostensibly reassuring readers that the ban is not an expression of prejudice, Fox uses Hawaii’s very objections to tell Trump supporters that it is in fact a Muslim ban, without appearing to endorse discrimination.

Then, in the next paragraph, Fox doubles down on a weapon metaphor for the ban, which, in an earlier version, “aimed at” seven Muslim countries, and “triggered” the
chaos of liberal protests (87-88). The only thing we can be sure this metaphor accomplishes is to associate an image of deadly violence with both Muslim countries and liberal protests. In contrast, then summarizing the effects of that ban, Fox says “some travelers” were “stopped from boarding international flights and others detained at airports for hours” (88-89)– making it sound like nothing more than a long wait in line, not mentioning that the ban had drastic effects on the lives of some people from those countries, who were unable to return to their schools, jobs, or families in the US.

But, Trump modified the earlier ban, Fox tells us, after courts “refused to allow the ban to be enforced” (89), an insanely ornate way to avoid saying directly that the courts ruled against it. This is when Fox quotes Trump: ”This is not about religion -- this is about terror and keeping our country safe” (90-91). The new revision of the ban is then described in glowing terms; it was “unveiled,” having “got rid of” (its flaws) – but its critics were not satisfied (93-94). Finally, the article ends with a simple statement that the latest ban introduced a country-by-country assessment of cooperation (99-100). This may be considered a crucial piece of information justifying the ban, however it is presented by Fox as an afterthought, with no follow up comment. I infer that Fox’s emphasis, instead, on Trump keeping America safe from “alien” terrorists better reflects the concerns of its readers and advertisers.

We return now to CNN’s final section, a parade of expert condemnation rather than a history (74-100). It begins with the nation’s “first Muslim lawmaker,” Keith Ellison, who states that the ban’s function is to "give legitimacy to discrimination and Islamophobia" (76-77). Then Hawaiian lawyer Neal Katyal is quoted saying there is still hope and that Congress could reverse the ban, characterizing opposition as standing up to a lying and unconstitutional administration (79-87). He characterizes the ban (and
here implicitly the administration) as “unconstitutional, unprecedented, unnecessary and un-American.” The ACLU is then quoted expressing these tropes; the ban is racist and opponents are standing up to racism (89-91). ACLU lawyer Omar Jadwat (an Arabic name) is quoted as declaring the court’s ruling a “great failure” (93-94). Finally DNC Chairman Tom Perez gets the last word, confirming that CNN’s article also assumes an increasingly partisan audience near the end: "Discrimination is not a national security strategy, and prejudice is not patriotism. Let’s call this ban for what it is: an outright attack on the Muslim community that violates our nation’s commitment to liberty and justice for all” (Perez in CNN, 96-98). This implicitly characterizes the administration as “outright” attacking Muslims, including American citizens, and ‘violating’ . . . ‘our nation’s commitment to liberty and justice.’

It is probably because the court’s ruling contradicts this claim that CNN reserves the ‘violation of justice’ for the end, presenting it only after previous experts have characterized the action as morally wrong. The strategy is presumably to get sympathetic readers nodding assent at the accusations of discrimination until they find themselves agreeing at last with the DNC and the implication that the Republicans are violating “liberty and justice.” With the next and last sentence of CNN’s article, it becomes clear that the final objective was indeed to represent the Republicans as evil in the reader’s mind, as CNN tells us that they “applaud” [the violation of liberty and justice], dismiss the accusations, “win,” and are “pleased,” the last descriptor applying specifically to Senator Lindsay Graham (R-SC) (100-103).

In summary, both articles are structured to implant a variety of biased representations in readers’ minds, using much insinuation, implication, metaphor, authorization, and a very calculated sequencing of topics and citations, including out-of-context quotes used against their speakers’ intentions. So far it seems that in addition to
the predicted prejudices represented against Muslims by Fox, both news sources appear to prioritize biasing their readers’ images of Democrats, Republicans, Trump, and the administration -- with two different foci; Fox is most concerned with validating increasing presidential power for Trump and representing liberals as irrational, dangerous, and perverse, while CNN is most concerned with representing Trump and Republican lawmakers as immoral, un-American, and criminal. CNN also includes a few phrases seemingly intended to represent American Muslims as Americans, community members, and respectable professionals.

4.2.3 Section Three: Word Frequencies

We examined the frequencies of all words in each article and selected from them the words and word-stems that seemed most significant\textsuperscript{21}:

prejudic-, constitution, religion, us, right, crime, federal, law, travel, executive, dissent, test, restriction, decision, we, terror, conclude, nation, campaign, justice, islamophobia, president, people, muslim, detriment-, twitter, republican, rul-, promise, led, court, order, discriminat, limit, majority, immigr-, uphold, ban, ruling, country, secur, statement, denounce, liberal, alien, congress, all, authority, trump, justif-, rely, islam, administration, america, toler, upheld, conservative, victor, fail, public, state, win, democrat.

We used a python script to tally the words in each article, including those containing the partial word-stems defined on this list; so, for example, the words “justify,” “justified,” and “justification,” would all be tallied under the stem “justic.”

\textsuperscript{21} All words referring to the people banned, or to Muslims, were examined regardless of how many or few, and discussed below.
Finally, in order to isolate true differences between the articles, we scaled the word frequencies relative to the word-counts of the text.

The results are interesting and consistent with observations made throughout the preceding analyses of articles. Here are the words most distinctive of each text, ranked from most to least different in scaled frequency, and followed in each case by the difference between the two sources’ scaled frequencies for that word and then the un-scaled word counts in each of CNN versus Fox:

**Words most used more by Fox, in order from largest difference to smallest:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>scaled frequency</th>
<th>raw counts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>7</td>
<td>CNN-2 / Fox-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'us'</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>'order'</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>'immigr'</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>CNN-4 / Fox-9</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>CNN-0 / Fox-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>CNN-2 / Fox-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'test'</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>CNN-1 / Fox-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'led'</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>CNN-4 / Fox-8</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>CNN-1 / Fox-4</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>CNN-5 / Fox-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'justice'</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>CNN-4 / Fox-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'country'</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>CNN-2 / Fox-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'discriminat'</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>CNN-2 / Fox-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'president'</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>CNN-14 / Fox-18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Words most used more by CNN:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>scaled frequency</th>
<th>raw counts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'court'</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>CNN-18 / Fox-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'ruling'</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>CNN-9 / Fox-2</td>
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<td>'travel'</td>
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<td>CNN-11 / Fox-6</td>
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<td>'rul'</td>
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<tr>
<td>'dissent'</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>CNN-4 / Fox-2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first thing to note here is that Fox refers more to the Trump administration ('administration', 'federal', 'executive', 'president', 'trump', 'majority') than any other referent, and to the targets of the ban, negatively ('immigr', 'alien', 'Muslim,' 'detriment'), while CNN does neither, almost at all, instead referring to the politico-legal system ('court', 'ruling', 'law', 'dissent', 'constitution') and parts of the government other than the Trump administration ('state,' 'congress').

Secondly, we see the sources contrasting characterizations of the ban itself, 'travel ban' in CNN, versus in Fox, 'restriction,' 'limit,' and 'order.' And contrasting references to America (CNN – America and public, Fox – us and country). These facts are easy to interpret as consistent with the values of their respective party and cultural affiliations. The idea of “us” versus “them” seems to belong more the conservative side, consistently with the nature of the ban, and we can at least speculate that Trump’s base identifies with the cultural meaning of the word ‘country’ more than do liberals. While CNN’s
“public” is a keyword word for liberals, such as in “National Public Radio” and “Public Broadcasting Service.”

Fox refers to the ban’s fulfillment in a strongly positive way (test, majority, upheld, promise, conclude), and CNN the opposite (denounce and fail), while tolerance is an issue for CNN that Fox does not mention. Not too much can be read into the remaining differences, some of which seem strange, such as Fox mentioning “discrimination” more and CNN using the word “win” more – but with word counts of 1-2, these do not require explanation; and both these specific cases reflect the news source characterizing claims of its opposing political camp.

Words referring to the subjects of the ban and / or to Muslims included the following (with raw, rather than scaled word-counts):

CNN:
- 'muslim(s)' 5
- 'terrorists' 1
- 'immigrants' 1

Fox:
- 'alien(s)' 6
- 'immigrant(s)' 5
- 'population(s)' 3
- 'muslim(s)' 3

The differences here are striking. First it should be noted, that the CNN reference to the banned population as ‘terrorists’ in the CNN article is within a quote from Republican Senator Lindsey Graham, in the last line of the article (107). While the CNN reference to ‘immigrants’ occurs only in the citation of a quote: “Omar Jadwat, director of the ACLU’s Immigrants’ Rights Project” (93). Two of the uses of “Muslim” occur in
quotes from Tom Perez, DNC chair, and liberal Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor. The other three uses of “Muslim” then constitute the only way CNN’s writers refer to the banned population, except for their list of the specific seven countries banned. CNN’s arguably deceptive effort to characterize the ban as a Muslim-ban is discussed elsewhere.

The first thing to note when contrasting CNN with Fox here, is the much larger number of times the banned ‘population’ is referred to at all by Fox (in an article of approximately the same word-count). This is unexpected given that the article does not directly discuss the nature of the banned population, but rather focuses on executive power; however, the analysis of the article also indicates that it conveys a covert message to supporters that the ban is in fact a Muslim-ban, as discussed elsewhere; perhaps the large number of mentions of the banned subjects helps convey that implicit thesis.

‘Immigrant(s)’ is primarily a choice of the Fox writers (3 out of 5 mentions); its other two instances occur in the same quoted 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act containing all the instances of ‘alien(s)’; this quote then is Fox’s primary vehicle for referring to the subjects of the ban using the key terms adopted by conservative anti-immigrant discourses (immigrant and alien). The scant use of ‘Muslim(s)’ is consistent with Fox’s effort, elsewhere discussed, to define the ban as non-Muslim specific. Finally, the three uses of ‘population(s)’ is perhaps the most interesting, because unexpected. Although two uses occur in quotes, one from the Trump administration (56) and the other from Hawaii’s anti-ban lawyers (66), nevertheless, they would seem to serve somewhat to distance the reader from the people in question, a connotation that can only be appreciated in contrast to CNN’s non-use of the term.
In conclusion, word frequencies were not unrevealing, strongly reinforcing our previous analysis and providing additional evidence for those interpretations. This is to say, that Fox does try to purvey a negative representation of the ban’s subjects, and CNN a positive one, however, that Fox is most concerned with validating presidential authority and CNN with the power of the public and other branches of government. While Fox may (arguably) be sending covert messages to its readers that although it says otherwise, the court decision really is about the people banned, not executive power.

4.2.4 Conclusion

Our analysis of these news articles shows that they do indeed imply biased mental representations of all the parties and phenomena discussed, in this case, including not only Muslim travelers, but also the president, the courts, other politicians, and lawyers, the ban, and the rulings. We find it significant that the articles seem more concerned with partisan politics and presidential authority than they do with the ban itself, which even CNN fails to describe in any detail. Fox’s emphasis on the expansion of presidential authority (to an explicitly unspecified degree) seems unfortunately consistent with the idea that conservative America is moving towards the support of fascism. In contrast, CNN’s writers clearly see the primary issue as discrimination, however, their coverage nevertheless focuses to a great extent on bolstering the Democratic party’s support. In other words, the two news sources disagree on the essential issue at stake, and both press for ideologies and political allegiances of broader relevance than the event being discussed.

In the next section, we will examine the mental representations implied by readers’ comments on these articles and attempt to determine whether the articles were effective at implanting particular representations in readers’ minds.
4.3 Section B: COMMENT ANALYSIS

Critical Analysis of Readers’ Comments on “Supreme Court Upholds Travel Ban”

4.3.1 Introduction

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is motivated by the premise that language in discourse creates mental representations in readers’ or listeners’ minds, thus potentially implanting in readers prejudicial concepts implicit in the discourse. In the previous section we identified such prejudicial representations, such as representations of politicians and visitors to America from other nations, found implicit in the discourse of CNN and Fox articles reporting the US Supreme Court’s June 2018 approval of the Trump administration’s “travel ban.” A natural and urgent question which distinguishes this project from others is that of how (or whether) the prejudicial, and seemingly ideological, biases implicit in Fox’s and CNN’s articles show up in their reader’s comments, supporting the hypothesis that such implicitly biased discourses and representations influence minds – or at least reinforce beliefs already held by the readers they attract. We cannot surely distinguish between influence and correlation in this study; to do so would probably require experimentation; but we shall address the question throughout our analysis.

Before discussing these readers’ comments, it seems essential to note that not only is the discourse of readers’ comments different from that of new articles in ways relevant to our project, but that we are looking at them with a different goal than we did the articles, making their analysis a different kind of CDA. Relevant differences for us include the drastically different sociolinguistic registers of the discourses, their intended
audiences, their goals, and the origins of any ideas that appear in them (chiefly whether those ideas were influenced by the article).

The different sociolinguistic registers of the articles (high and standard style in the articles versus medium to low colloquial style in the comments) make it more difficult to judge the influence of the articles on readers. In strong support of hypothetical influence is the fact that for certain ideas, the precise language of the articles shows up in the comments, while other comments seem grounded in the assumptions of the articles.

If we expected to see that readers primarily reproduce the ideas conveyed by the news they read we will be partly gratified, but also sorely confused. We naively approached this analysis with the natural (but unresearched) assumption that most people most often read the political news that supports their own political leanings. However, although many readers’ comments do reflect those prejudices, and even in the specific language of the articles, that is *primarily* so only for the Fox article – and that is because only in the case of the Fox article do the majority of commenters agree with the article’s bias. *Over 75% of the comments on either article support the ban,* and the pro-ban majority of comments on the anti-ban CNN article reflect neither the statements in CNN’s article nor the pro-ban ideas in the Fox story. The rather small approximately 20% of liberal comments on the CNN story do reflect its language and ideas. While the rebuttals from either side against the other, for either article, have their own characteristic foci. Altogether, the analysis to follow supports the idea that representations implicit in the articles’ discourses influence their readers’ perceptions: *because conservative readers of CNN comment differently than conservative readers of Fox and likewise for the much smaller number of liberal comments.* This fact alone
suggests the articles influence readers’ comments, although not necessarily in a simple way; and it must be admitted that the explanations for these differences could lie with the readers and their choices of networks, and whether to comment or rebut on each one, rather than in the specific content of the articles.

Although the analysis supports some effect of the articles on readers’ minds, that is not the most salient fact about the comments, which is that the comments perhaps say more about the minds readers brought to the articles than they do about the articles. For example, the single topic most discussed by conservative readers of the CNN story (the topic of 1/3 of conservative comments) was not mentioned within the CNN story at all – liberal protesters outside the Supreme Court. The reason for this at first mysterious discrepancy turned out to be that the text article was accompanied by a video version of the report in which the protesters could be heard loudly in the background. The contents of the video reports on both articles were more-or-less the same as their textual contents, not word for word, but close. And neither mentioned the protesters – but their sound in the background of CNN’s report is the first stimulus to present itself after one clicks on the story. As virtually none of the conservative comments on the CNN article (the majority of comments on the CNN article) responded to the article’s content at all, but rather addressed the protesters, we infer that a high proportion of conservative ‘readers’ neither read the story nor listened to the words of the reporter in the video, responding only to the protesters.

The second thing to leap out about the comments seems similarly expressive of readers’ characters, perhaps consistently with the other two anomalies (that most commenters are pro-ban, and that many only watched the video) – which is that most of the comments discuss neither the ban nor the people banned; the majority of comments
consist of taunting, mocking, gloating, sneering, and sarcasm directed against representatives of the opposing political stance. In other words, the majority of comments resemble bullying and psychological abuse more than discussions of ideas or facts, and concern tribal partisanship more than immigration issues. First, from the comments on Fox’s article\textsuperscript{22,23}:

F1.

F7. Thank god

F10. Outstanding

F11. Trump

\textsuperscript{22} Comments are numbered according to their order as posted, as in the accompanying appendix. Comments in red are replies to previous comments.

\textsuperscript{23} We present many of these comments here, including some presented again later in the analysis, because one reviewer of the analysis was never convinced of our most central and repeated claim in the analysis to follow; that readers’ comments on these articles are more generally characterized by emotion than reason; the claim applies to many more comments not presented; we have chosen only the clearest examples of the thesis for display here.
F25.

F26. God Bless Gorsuch!

F27.
F29. Boom!! Winning!!

F32. Excellent

F39. Here we go....Lord help us.

F40. LOL! You people are unhinged.

F46. Thank God! This is a great day for America! Ok liberals, man your closets lmao

F47. Ok pardner. You rustle up some grub for lunch yet? Little taters and baky. Waky waky.

1. F48. If you had my conservative taters you would #WalkAway for sure!

F49. love all the people thanking God lmao!!! Pretty sure he is disgusted with our country!

F55. I hope you have one of those crying closets, because you are going to need it for all the winning that is going to continue to happen! #SnowflakeCentral

F58. OMG the Supreme Court is going to be on the protest list next! Haha. I will never be tired of winning after 8years of losing! Suck it libs. We win again!

F63. YES. YES. YES. YES.

F64. Triggered lefties in 3 2 1 . . .

F70. Lunitic left is slapped down again

71. YES!!!!!

77. WAHOOOOOOO!!!

F80. #WON!!
F83. Just watch SCOTUS justices will be put on the Dems list of who to harass.

F84. Nice!

F87. At least five of those justices are not idiots.

F88. As expected.

F89. TRUMP JUST KEEPS ON WINNING !! BEST PRESIDENT EVER !!

#MAGA #MYDOGTRUMP

And from CNN’s article:

C1. God bless President. Trump

C5. Breaking. Ruling changed due to protesters!

C7. Supreme CT should be ashamed

C8. TY, protesters! Could you please kick Gorsuch in the shin for me?! 😎

C9.

C10. Cute.

C12. hahahahahahHAhAhahahahahahahahahahahahahahahahahahahahahahahahahahahahahahahah

C13. Wish I was there!! Dang!!

C14. Who cares! Protest all you want too.

C18. Sad

C24. There are alot of hurt people in this country. Whine about EVERYTHING!
C29. Must be nice not to have to work like normal people

C34. What has America become? A sad day.

C36. Do we need to be nice to McConnell and Gorsuch?

C37. NO, NEVER!

C39. Do they look like this? 😂😂

C44. The #clowns will never get it.

C45. I didn’t know protesting was a career... 😲

C46. It’s a code word liberals use for unemployed.

C49. Keep crying your tears are delicious 😂😂😂

C50. Trump thinks he’s on an episode of Judge Judy and he’s just won some special verdict. He’s insane.

C56. The fake media and the democrats are in a complete meltdown and it is beyond hilarious.

C57. Hahahahaha

C58. Have they been told that they are wasting their time?

C60. Don’t they work?
C82. #ignorance is bliss. Or hysteria, as the case may be.

C83. Ignorance is bliss. Trump is president. Same thing.

C84. Scream louder. It’s how policy gets made.

C85. (reply)

😂😂😂

C86. Stop the temper tantrums when u don’t get ur way

I have presented above approximately 30 posts above from each article’s set of 100 examined, selected because they present no reasoning or facts. Many of these comments are discussed in detail during the analysis below; here they are presented only to establish the claim that the single most prevalent category of comments on both articles are more concerned with emotional allegiances and antagonism than reasons or facts. Were we to include all the posts merely including such content, there would be few remaining undisplayed. These comments might be supposed to have been inspired by the thinly veiled partisan antagonism in both articles, but when none of the articles’
specific ideas are represented, except the idea “us against them,” we cannot cite specific evidence for influence; presumably many commenting readers already felt antagonism toward those they disagreed with, even before they read an article.

4.3.2 Word Frequencies

As discussed in Chapter Three Methodology, word frequencies are typically most enlightening for large corpora of text, not single articles. However, the analytical method of this dissertation is new in that it compares reader comments to the texts and seeks to answer the question of influence. Word frequencies have never been used for this purpose, so they are included here, despite the assumption they may not be hugely revealing, as an experiment which will be valuable to the field of discourse analysis as such. At the same time, our analysis below shows that indeed some valuable observations can be garnered even from such a small corpus.

The most notable differences in word frequencies between the two articles’ comments are words used 5-10 times more in one article’s comments than in the other’s (in fact, all but one of these words were used in only one article’s comments at all)\(^{24}\):

**Words most used more in Fox:**

('god', CNN-1 / Fox-10), ('judges', CNN-0 / Fox-6), ('sure', CNN-0 / Fox-5),
('wrong', CNN-0/ Fox-5), ('law', CNN-0 / Fox-5), ('winning', CNN-0 / Fox-5), ('yes.',
CNN-0 / Fox-5), ('standard', CNN-0 / Fox-5)

**Words most used more in CNN:**

\(^{24}\) The full complement of words referring to the banned populations is also discussed below.
Although these sets of words contrast greatly, only the Fox words reflect their article’s content at all – and only a few of them. Although “judges” and “law” figured heavily in Fox’s article, the other words did not (nor their topics). None of the CNN words reflect the article’s content directly.

“God,” the word most distinguishing the Fox comments, appears as five “thank god”s, three “god bless”s and two other comments. The thanks and blessings regard the Supreme Court as a whole, Neil Gorsuch, Mitch McConnell, and America, except for one mention of thanking god that criticizes other commenters for doing so; and this comment is the beginning of an exchange between conservative and liberal commenters containing other two unique mentions of “god” which bear examination:

F49. love all the people thanking God lmao!!! Pretty sure he is disgusted with our country.

F50. I would agree, but not because of this. Bet he would be a little more disgusted with the killing of unborn children and not upholding his standard for marriage.

F51. probably more disgusted by "religious" people using his name to decide other peoples rights instead of looking in their own mirror!!! Hypocrites using God to push others around!  Worry about what you do, not what i do!

F52. No, that would be wrong to. It’s a simple standard of right and wrong. We all fall short, but that doesn’t change God’s standard of right and wrong. I do look in
the mirror and understand I am a complete failure versus his standard. But, it doesn’t change the standard.

Also note that this exchange contains most of the “wrongs” and “standards” accounting for their high frequency in Fox’s comments. To summarize, then, seven of Fox’s ten “gods” indicate that a high proportion of Fox’s readers supporting the ban are partially motivated by a belief that some actions of the Trump administration and its allies are in some sense, given by God. Two come from liberals objecting to what they consider the hypocrisy of this perspective, due to what they see as bigotry in the policies. And the remaining mention comes from a conservative reader who makes it clear they believe United States law should be wholly in line with “God’s standard of right and wrong.” Fox’s article does not express any religious sentiment, so this picture of (some) Fox readers does not speak to direct influence (in this case).

Four of the six “judge”s among Fox comments refer to the dissenting liberal judges and express inability to understand or disapproval of their choices to do so. The fifth “judge” occurs in a sarcastic conservative comment criticizing liberal’ opposition to the “law” (a word we discuss next):

F21. Wait.... judges upholding the law?? Seems weird.

The remaining “judge” in Fox’s comments comes in fact as the last word in the conservation about God’s standards quoted above. After the conservative claim about God’s inviolable standards, a presumably liberal commenter responds:

F53. It is your belief. Not everyone else. Their belief may differ, doesn’t make them wrong and you right. It is not for us to judge others beliefs.
In summary, five of the six “judges” in Fox’s comments point not only to the conservative opinion of the court’s decision, but more interestingly, also to the facts that (1) these commenters are concerned with the individuals involved in these decisions, as also suggested by readers thanking God for Neil Gorsuch and Mitch McConnell, and (2) they comment more on their disapproval of liberal than their approval of conservative judges. Meanwhile the comment above does not concern the judges, but rather the way people in general regard each other, implying a humanistic rather than religious ethos, which in context, clearly represents an anti-ban commenter.

The word “law” in Fox’s comments is used twice in the phrase “rule of law” and both that and all of its other uses come in the context of conservative comments approving or arguing that the court’s decision constitutes upholding the law. This characterization was strongly conveyed by Fox’s article itself, as discussed in detail in the previous chapter.

Not only are there five “winnings” in the Fox comments but also several “winners” and “we win” in the comments, all except two referring to the administration or conservative America in general. The other two uses of the “win” stem are sarcastic, such as in:

F17. Bigotry and Islamophobia are the winners today

Interestingly, the Fox article did not describe the Supreme Court’s decision in terms of “winning,” perhaps because they took the tact that the decision was really never controversial (see the previous chapter). CNN’s article did refer to the decision as a big “win” for the Trump administration, but the word is not used in the CNN article’s comments.
And as displayed above in comments 49-52, almost all the uses of the words “wrong” and “standard” come from their repetition in that exchange. Finally, “sure” is used in a variety of senses and ways, with no pattern, however, it does occur with much greater frequency than in the CNN comments and may nevertheless take part in a larger pattern. The words *god, judge, law, sure, wrong, winning,* and *standard,* seem closely related in a rather abstract way; they all concern the inter-related topics of correctness, rightness, surety, dominance, and authority. This seems too clearly reflective of conservative values to dismiss. Further examination of the words used 3-4 more times in Fox than in CNN supports this observation; all were used three times in Fox comments and zero in CNN: *defeated, Trump, supreme court, religion, rule, upholding, followers.* These words also all concern issues revolving around authority, such as judgment, tradition, obedience, and law, and the comments we have examined above support the idea that these are among the ideals most strongly motivating pro-ban commenters on the Fox article; here are a few more examples of such comments:

F66. The president has the power to control who comes in the judges do not know what the president knows heck congress doesn’t know whats going on yet congress gave him the power for that reason to protect the Nation and Republic

F90. Yes. Trump has this executive power to keep the country safe

F93. The President has national authority for immigration, which makes sense because for the protection of the American citizens. I don’t hear you Liberals

F95. The law does not appeal to emotions but the rule of law. Maxine Waters and those emotionally disturbed people must start using their brains.
These comments emphasize three conservative ideals – presidential authority, the rule of law, and their necessity to protect Americans (from threats here unspecified). These seem to this author abstractly consistent with the many conservative comments appealing to “God” and dogmatic standards of right and wrong, discussed earlier in this section; the common threads are faith in paternalistic authority figures (under this president) and legal precedent (both religious and secular). The liberal comments we examined in this section also support such an interpretation by demonstrating that other readers may approach the issues from a wholly different perspective, emphasizing concern for the well-being of individuals potentially harmed by the laws in question.

Words referring to the subjects of the ban are scant in Fox’s comments (as well as CNN’s, see below): (‘muslim’, 3; ‘asylum seekers’, 2). This seems to support a conclusion to which we return in Chapter 6; that the articles were successful in influencing readers with their most overt and repeated ideas, but not so much their covert ones. Because, as reviewed previously, “Muslim” is the word used least by Fox for the banned people, and none of the article’s other terms for them are used at all in the comments. The data here from the comments suggests that Fox readers took Fox’s overt emphasis on executive power to heart and did not discuss the banned populations much in the comments, which is true, as reviewed elsewhere. Both uses of “asylum seekers” occur in anti-ban comments (41 and 81).

4.3.3 CNN Word Frequencies

CNN’s comment word frequencies have little connection with the words or ideas of the CNN article. We are unsurprised to see “protesters” near the top of the list, for reasons explained in the previous section; here are just a few of those comments:
C3. Are those protesters Americans?

C5. Breaking. Ruling changed due to protesters!

C15. Paid protesters. ..

C45. I didn’t know protesting was a career...

C88. Professional protesters, one of the many jobs The Trump administration has created

The presence of “CNN” among the most frequent words reflects the fact that most of the comments on CNN’s article come from conservative readers, many of whom attack CNN for its imputed liberality:

C59. CNN and the dems are for open borders.

C73. Sorry, they lost. They should go home and watch #CNN to make them feel better.

C89. Hahahaha this is comical. People are absolutely clueless. Wonder y? Could be bc they believe the horse shit cnn posts

C98. Those who get their news from CNN are the most misguided and uninformed. CNN has no credibility unless you think bashing the president 24/7 is news or if you think it is honest to examine everything he says and does and manipulate it to be negative for him.

The word “wall” refers of course to Trump’s proposed southern border wall and points to the fact that CNN readers discussed topics not mentioned in the article:

C4. No ban, no wall, ...............and no borders, no country?
C11. We need a wall. We don’t have any room for more immigrants who will just feed off of welfare.

C16. No wall, no welfare.

C79. Well Trump has Mexico paying for the wall, so there is no need for Congress to approve any funds for a wall. Trump said Mexico would pay for the wall. His words.

Further examination, of slightly less frequent words in CNN comments (differences of 2-4 words), is not terribly revealing, but revealing enough to justify brief comment; the most salient are America or Americans (CNN-11 / Fox-7), Muslim ban (CNN-3 / Fox-0), country or countries (CNN-12 / Fox-8), need congress (CNN-2 / Fox-0), Mexico paying (CNN-2 / Fox-0), paid protesters (CNN-2 / Fox-0), and Venezuela (CNN-2 / Fox 0). Perhaps the most significant pattern among these terms is that so many of them come from comments criticizing or arguing with supporters of the opposing political stance – such as comments by conservatives about why the ban is not a “Muslim ban,” or comments from liberals with sarcastic citation of “Mexico paying” (as displayed above).

The slight preponderance of America, countries, and the names of other countries stand out as a perhaps unexpected difference from the Fox article comments, suggesting perhaps that CNN readers, even conservative commenters, take a more international perspective than Fox readers.

Words referring to the banned populations occur slightly more in CNN comments than Fox, perhaps reflecting the fact that CNN made prejudice against these people a primary topic of its article (as opposed to with Fox):
This list is interesting in comparison to the words used by the CNN article; unlike between Fox’s article and its comments, these words and their frequencies precisely parallel (proportionately) those occurring in CNN’s article (‘Muslim(s)’, 3; ‘immigrant(s)’, 1; ‘terrorist(s)’, 1). The word ‘Muslim’ is used in two anti-ban and two anti-ban comments (twice in one anti-ban comment), ‘immigrant(s)’ and ‘terrorist(s)’ in one comment each. Therefore CNN’s vocabulary seems to have influenced all commenters alike if at all, priming their choice of words in parallel with the article.

Altogether the word frequencies examined here seem consistent with commonly accepted generalizations about the concerns of conservatives versus liberals. They do not, for the most part, seem to indicate influence from the articles’ texts, and the numbers of words we have discussed are not, in any case, large enough to reliably infer anything, only to suggest; most of all, these results indicate that larger bodies of data need to be considered in order to draw strong conclusions from word frequencies.

### 4.3.4 Pro-Ban Comments on Fox’s Article

We begin with conservative readers’ comments on the Fox article – the category of comments most strongly reflecting the discourse of its article. All of the topics emphasized in the Fox article appear in these readers’ comments, often in the same words as the article. These ideas include “the rule of law,” the sanctity of the US Constitution, the idea that immigrants are dangerous and criminal, the fears of terrorism
and invasion, the emphasis on executive authority and responsibility, and the implied representation of liberals as hysterical\textsuperscript{25}.

To summarize before examining the comments in detail, the largest groups of conservative comments on Fox’s article are those attacking liberals (21 comments) and those congratulating, blessing, cheering, or thanking the conservative justices or Donald Trump or other conservative leaders (also 21 comments). About half of the attacks are directed against Democratic politicians, half against the four dissenting liberal Supreme Court judges, one against Obama, one against several specific liberal celebrities, and one against “the media.” Of the remaining conservative comments, six express fears of invasion or terrorism, five mention presidential authority, and three state the need to ban Mexicans for “MS13 and drugs.”

To begin with the comments attacking liberals, many do not mention any political positions, but rather only partisanship:

F62. And all 4 liberal judges voting against. WHAT A SHOCKER!!! #MAGA

F64. Triggered lefties in 3 2 1 . . .

F70. Lunitic left is slapped down again

87. At least five of those justices are not idiots.

Although the first and last comment above imply support of the ban and the Trump administration, they do not concern the issues, only partisan pride and hostility. This emotional tone pervades comments from both sides on both articles, although there are certainly exceptions to be discussed. One meme attacking liberals well represents the

\textsuperscript{25} The themes of each article are discussed in detail with all relevant quotes in the previous chapter.
general absence of facts and reasons in favor of expressions with only socio-emotional content:

![DEMOCRATS, THE TEST RESULTS ARE BACK](image)

One could add much about the “meme.” This author is not familiar with the man being depicted, however, the patriarchal values are clear, not only in the figure of the older man and the representation of Donald Trump as a “daddy” but also in the implicit allegiance to the polarities of dominance / submission and winning / losing. Note that these values again support the cluster of conservative concerns revolving around authority identified in regards to the Fox comments word frequencies.

The Fox article also described the ruling as Trump passing a test, a metaphor implying that Trump has been validated by a more objective authority. This idea also seems consonant with the conservative desire for authoritative validations, although that is not to imply that liberal readers might not take a similar perspective on any political victories. However, it is notable that this comment uses the same “test” metaphor as Fox’s article, but with a more socio-emotional spin, and that this is representative of the relations between the comments and the articles. This also has lots of additional issues, such as the mother cuckolding the husband, Trump as sexual and sexual assault.

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26 I am also unable to supply the name of the man depicted here, out of ignorance.
Which leads us to the other large group of conservative comments, those congratulating, celebrating, thanking, or blessing the Supreme Court or Donald Trump (and Mitch McConnell in one case):

F8. GOD BLESS YOU SUPREME COURT THE RULE OF LAW DOES STILL EXCITED GOD BLESS AMERICA.

F13. HUZZAH!!! #MAGA #MAGA2018 #MAGA2020 @POTUS #scotus

F78. Awesome vote thank you for upholding travel ban.

F89. TRUMP JUST KEEPS ON WINNING !! BEST PRESIDENT EVER !! #MAGA #MYDOGTRUMP

F91. Thank God for Mitch McConnell

And if that were not clear enough, one conservative comment presents the following thought, sure to keep liberals up at night:

F92. It is difficult to say to what degree Fox’s discourse influenced these expressions in terms of their devotion to Trump as an individual. As mentioned in our analysis of the articles, on the surface Fox seems to distant itself from Trump the man, but at the same time subtly pushes the idea of granting Trump indefinitely greater executive authority
than has been previously recognized. It does not seem unreasonable to suggest that the presence of this idea in the discourse is one of the forces behind comments like the image one above, although Trump followers perhaps require no such priming for their devotion. Moreover, other elements of the comments above, such as “rule of law,” come directly from Fox’s discourse.

The majority of the attacks on liberals indeed appear to be shaped by the specific discourse of the Fox article. For example, the single largest category of such attacks among the Fox comments, criticizes the dissenting judges for failing to uphold the constitution and the “rule of law,” specifically, by failing to confirm the president’s authority:

F4. Good! But, don’t understand why 4 Judges would vote against this? Thought they were to make sure the President and Congress upheld the Constitution! Looks like 4 of the Judges do not understand their responsibilities!

F15. The fact that 4 SCOTUS judges had the audacity to vote to strike down the travel ban is incredible, since previous presidents have rightfully done the exact same thing. Wait ...

F74. Alternate hardline: Four of nine members of the Supreme Court chose a partisan interpretation of the law and ignored precedent.

The idea that the president was not only authorized but responsible to enact the travel ban, is found, as far as this author is aware, only in the discourse of the Trump administration and its supporters, such as in the Fox article. Here are some of the further reader comments reproducing that idea:
F18. Actually I think the powers of all presidents to come just won’t so don’t complain about it because it could one day prove useful to a president you support.

F22. This is well within the powers of the Presidency. Nothing Constitutional to debate here. This is why we hold elections. We support or remove people who act in ways we fundamentally disagree with.

F66. The president has the power to control who comes in the judges do not know what the president knows heck congress doesn’t know what’s going on yet congress gave him the power for that reason to protect the Nation and Republic.

F90. Yes. Trump has this executive power to keep the country safe.

In summary, Fox’s conservative readers seem to believe that the travel ban was always, uncontroversially, within the president’s authority and responsibility to protect America, and that liberals have been perverse and “obstructionist” in opposing it; this is exactly how the Fox article frames the case, unlike CNN’s article.

The last comment displayed above subtly represents Donald Trump as a guardian or parental figure and America as something precious, or a child, easily threatened by theft or attack. These metaphors do not appear in the Fox article, but their potential psychological impact seems notable and highly consistent with many conservative points.

27 The word “republic” is used twice by conservatives commenting on Fox’s article and not at all otherwise.
of view, such as the need for citizens to have guns to protect America from invasion, or the idea that President Trump should not be questioned\(^{28}\).

Another large group of attacks on liberals emphasizes another idea conveyed, for the most part indirectly, by the Fox article, although it has become, admittedly, a trope of conservative discourse recently, as discussed in our previous analysis – that liberal dissent is hysterical:

F30. Are the DEMs calling SCOTUS Nazi yet?

F64. Triggered lefties in 3 2 1..

F70. Lunitic left is slapped down again

F85. #LiberalismIsAMentalDisorder #MAGA #stillwinning

The word “triggered” in comment 64 alludes to the recently popular idea of a “trigger warning,” i.e. that certain ideas can emotionally destabilize people who have become hyper-sensitive to them, perhaps due to a traumatic experience. The idea of such “triggers” and that we should care about them is heavily associated with stereotypically liberal social concerns, especially sensitivity to victims of sexual assault, bullying, or discrimination, and often cited in public discourse as an example of political correctness gone too far at liberal universities. It is clear that many conservatives feel derision towards the idea, as demonstrated by for example, the “crying closet” memes popular among conservatives and discussed below, which also mock liberals for their alleged emotional over-sensitivity. It also seems important to note that this cluster of ideas

\(^{28}\) Although the conservative comments expressing this notion generally purport to concern presidential authority in general, it would assume to much to accept the implication that they also oppose questioning liberal presidents.
characterizes liberals as more feminine (according to very traditional gender roles) than conservatives, and pathetic for being so.

Again, although it would be impossible to prove that this attitude results from reading Fox, Fox’s article did insinuate such a representation of liberals, at the very least priming it for readers and laying the groundwork for overt antagonism (see previous chapter).

Putting aside the majority of comments, i.e. those devoted to partisan politics and the issue of presidential authority, there remain a significant number of other conservative comments expressing notions implicitly pushed in Fox’s discourse -- the dangers of terrorism and invasion, the association of Mexico with “MS13 and drugs,” and the idea of “illegal” immigration. As these three topics overlap significantly, one set of examples covers all three simultaneously:

F6. Drugs and MS13 are a national security risk, move now to add Mexico to the travel band! Make Congress fix the immigration once and for all.

F12. MS-13 and other criminal supporters were the 4. Supreme Court justices supporting terrorism and crime.

F67. It’s about time—- We could have been ruled by an outside force by now !!!

F75. Put Mexico on that list.

F79. It's not a 'religious' ban. It's that we're not able to verify and vett from these 5 terrorist stronghold nations.

F94. If you come in America Illegally we should send your asses back where you came from.
The first comment above – one of the first on the article – stands out in many ways; it is the most complete statement of the prejudices expressed in all the other conservative comments, combining the fears of terrorism, crime, invasion, and immigrants, and directly linking those fears to partisan politics and judicial appointments. This comment also stands out for the fact that it looks as if it could have been written by a non-native speaker of English. Although the “travel-band” could be a smartphone auto-correct error, or the error of a partially illiterate English speaker, the use of the definite article before the word “immigration,” the failure to pluralize the word “risk” and the needless use of the cliché idiom “once and for all” are all hallmarks of non-native English. The completeness of the ideology conveyed, and its poor English makes one wonder if this post might not represent an example of the psychological warfare allegedly being waged by Russian intelligence operatives against American voters through social media. Or it could just be sloppy commenting from an American. One other comment on the Fox article could raise the same speculation:

F31. Liberals want to sell our NATION. They don’t care our customs and traditions.

Aside from the missing “about” after “care,” the remaining phrases strike one as strangely “off”; one is unsure what the author means by “customs and traditions” or “to sell our NATION.” This might just represent an individual’s unique head-space, or it might represent ideas poorly conveyed in translation. But as these comments must remain speculative, we leave it at that.

4.3.4 Comments Against the Travel Ban on Fox’s Article

We treat these comments more briefly; they reflect the discourse of Fox’s article only in opposition to it. Virtually all of the liberal comments on Fox’s article consist of
attacks against Donald Trump, the GOP, the conservative judges, and Fox's readership. Out of the 27 liberal comments (out of 100 comments total), there are 17 partisan attacks and 10 other ideas mentioned. Of the attacks, the majority are not purely partisan or emotional, in the sense that they do focus on an issue, and one not supposed to be inherently partisan – racism and prejudice:

F38. This is what happens when you get 'illegal' Supreme Court Justices, such as, Neil Gorsuch; handpicked by Trump's Senate sycophants (think Mitch McConnell). Gorsuch's vote was instrumental (& will be moving forward) in implementing Trump's inexorable 'white nationalist' agenda.

F39. Trump governs only for white people, full stop.

F17. Bigotry and Islamophobia are the winners today #TravelBan

F19. 'Merica: Where, in 2018, People Applaud The Discrimination Of An Entire Religion And Its 1.3 Billion Followers. #TheWorldIsWatching

F61. Hey Fox, do you ever read the racist quotes of your followers? Do you like them?

F97. This is why @SenateMajLdr fucked over @BarackObama and #MerrickGarland...to push Republican racist agenda.

Although some of these comments compete well with those of conservative readers in terms of sarcasm and bullying, they do focus on issues, just not the issues discussed in the Fox article.

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29 Presumably ‘Merica is intended as a mocking representation of the English of conservative voters, which the commenter presumably associates with the American South, which is itself being mocked.
The same is true of the other largest category of liberal comments on Fox’s article, suggesting that they are based on readers’ own thoughts about the issue, and those thoughts seem to revolve around the perceived hypocrisy of Trump and / or his followers:

F43. Citizenship on the basis of religion. Unconstitutional. What about the countries of the 9/11 attackers? They’re not on the list.

F44. The ban is based on Islam. Trump said “total and complete shutdown of Muslims.” The 9/11 attackers’ countries not banned though. Thoughts?

F51. probably more disgusted by "religious" people using his name to decide other peoples rights instead of looking in their own mirror!!! Hypocrites using God to push others around! Worry about what you do, not what i do!

F53. it is your belief. Not everyone else. Their belief may differ, doesn't make them wrong and you right. It is not for us to judge others beliefs

F82. Nice one, should ban all those people from countries which have no history of committing terrorist acts on US soil. What’s next? Banning ice cream for causing tsunamis?

These are not points commonly argued in any news articles (to this author’s awareness). CNN and other liberal media sources do not seem to juxtapose 9/11 to Trump’s policies, probably because they correctly suspect that doing so might serve conservative political goals better than liberal, with most readers perhaps remembering only that 9/11 was perpetrated by Arabs, not caring which Arabs.

as stereotypically less correct than the English of more northerly regions, more of which “vote blue.” I do not wish to imply that anything about these stereotype are necessarily true.
The remaining attacks against conservatives by liberal commenters on the Fox article seem less focused on relevant issues. A few even display the same kind of prejudice and intolerance supposedly opposed by liberal readers, except targeted against the stereotype of conservative, uneducated, southern, white, Christians:

F47. Ok pardner. You rustle up some grub for lunch yet? Little taters and baky. Waky waky.

F49. love all the people thanking God lmao!!! Pretty sure he is disgusted with our country!

I honestly am not sure what the first comment above is intended to convey except that I infer it mocks Fox readers, who it imagines as uneducated and vaguely “country and western” (pardner, rustle, grub, taters); this author is entirely at a loss to interpret the “waky, waky”!

Other liberal comments on Fox’s article focus on the technically irrelevant issues of Trump’s relationship with Russia or his past lies:

F54. Along party lines of course. Freedom is dead. Russia and the fascist trump regime have won. Traitors all.

F60. Wow this third try Trump actually used lawyers this time rather then Steven Miller & Steve Bannon. So much for all the terrorism that Trump predicted, another lie to Americans.

F98. Is the ban still in effect after Trump is indicted?

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30 Laughing my ass off
Others seem aimed at denying the narrative that characterizes this court decision as a big win for the Trump administration:

F76. Trump's Muslim ban is defeated. He waters it down. It's defeated. He waters it down again. It's defeated. He makes it the bare minimum he can. It barely passes. Followers claim it's "winning"

We close our discussion of liberal comments on the Fox article here. Much can be said about them, but they reveal little about the influence of the discourse in Fox's article. In summary, these comments are consistent with the majority of readers' comments on both sides in focusing more on partisan attacks than issues, however, those liberal comments least reflecting the discourse of the article show the most substantive concern with issues. This suggests another pattern in this data – that comments on Fox's article that are influenced by Fox's discourse may be more likely to consist of reasonless antagonism than comments not so influenced. Whether this holds true for CNN as well, we shall return to after treating CNN's comments.

4.3.5 Conservative Rebuttals Against Liberal Comments on the Fox Article

Conservative rebuttals against liberal comments on the Fox article differ from the simply pro-ban comments. Although eight of the dozen conservative rebuttal comments on Fox either criticize or taunt liberals in some fashion, as do many of the pro-ban comments, other ideas raised in these comments are specific to the rebuttals. As far as the purely hostile rebuttals go, several allude to "crying closets" – mentioned earlier in our discussion as crystallizing the conservative disdain for the alleged over-emotionality of liberals:
F55. I hope you have one of those crying closets, because you are going to need it for all the winning that is going to continue to happen! #SnowflakeCentral

F46. Thank God! This is a great day for America! Ok liberals, man your closets lmao

A Google search reveals that “crying closet” comes from an April 2018 Fox story based on reporting about a Utah University library with a “cry closet” for stressed out students during final exams. The “cry closet” in Utah appears to have been a student art project (although also serving its ostensible function), however Fox used it as the taking-off point for an episode of a show called “Liberal Sherpa,” a satirical news program featuring interviews with people whom Fox and its readers apparently perceive as embodying liberalism, or at least aspects of liberalism worth mocking. The “sherpa” interviewed about “crying closets” was a woman sincerely promoting the practice of therapeutic crying, who used new-age terms like “centering” and “bioenergetic” during the interview while the host mocked the ideas as flaky and feminine. The fact that two readers of this June article referenced the April “crying closet” story certainly demonstrates the impact Fox can have on its readers’ perceptions Two other rebuttals describe liberals as “unhinged,” reflecting the “liberal mob” narrative now prevalent in conservative media discourse about liberals.

The other idea most uniquely raised among the conservative rebuttals on Fox is that the travel ban is not a Muslim ban:

F79. It's not a 'religious' ban. It's that we're not able to verify and vett from these 5 terrorist stronghold nations.
F45. False. It goes against your narrative I know, but there is no mention of religion in the travel ban.

F42. having just spent the week at @disneyworld @Florida, I can assure you, the #Muslim #travelban is largely a myth.

The appearance of this argument is no surprise. It is perhaps the conservative side’s strongest argument, since it is, technically, true. The ban includes neither most nor only Muslim-majority nations, at least in the third revision, upheld by the court. That position is a largely implied assumption of Fox’s discourse, in which, as discussed earlier, the Muslim focus of the ban is downplayed and dismissed, while the article focuses on executive authority and national security instead. Of course, we see that dynamic in the first comment above, where the reader replaces the idea of a Muslim ban with protection from “terrorist stronghold nations.”

One singular conservative rebuttal comment on Fox reflects general conservative discourse more than this article, specifically. We present this already cited exchange again, in order to focus on these issues not previously discussed:

F49. love all the people thanking God lmao!!! Pretty sure he is disgusted with our country!

F50. I would agree, but not because of this. Bet he would be a little more disgusted with the killing of unborn children and not upholding his standard for marriage.

Presumably, the last part of comment F50 alludes to the legalization of gay marriage. This comment is not as disconnected from the topic of the Fox article as it might seem, especially from the point of view of conservative discourse. Because, as just
discussed, the conservative / Fox discourse on the travel ban casts the Supreme Court decision as a triumph and vindication of Trump’s right and the new conservative bias of the court, while the June 2015 decision upholding gay marriage, and the still controversial Roe V. Wade decision on abortion, may symbolize to many readers the potential importance of the court’s leaning left or right.

4.3.6 Gifs and Emojis on the Fox Article

Discussion would be incomplete without mention of the comments’ graphic elements, however these are too sparse to justify generalizations. Two pro-ban comments included multiple “thumbs-up” emojis and one a smily face. One anti-ban comment included a frowny face. There were eight panel-graphics, including gifs and memes. Only one of them contained any substantive information or arguments; it is on the anti-ban side:

F56. Discuss this amongst your "experts"

The remaining images consist purely of partisan celebration or taunting, such as:
These gifs contribute no new ideas to our analysis, however we note that they support previous conclusions already demonstrated by example sets during the preceding discussion, that a) Twitter comments on these articles more concern partisan allegiance than the issues, and b) that conservative comments, like the articles, concern power more than the travel ban.

4.3.6 Comments for the Travel Ban on CNN’s Article

Comments on CNN’s article were surprising both in the ways in which they were similar to the comments on Fox’s article and the ways in which they were different. The two most salient generalizations are a) that the majority of comments come from conservative readers attacking liberals and Democrats (80 out of 100), which is also true
of the Fox article (73 out of 100); and b) that the most consistent target of these (at least 23 of the 80) is the group of the protesters that can be heard chanting in the background of the accompanying video report, rather than the content of either the text or video reporting.

Upon first examination, a high proportion of the comments on CNN's article seemed cryptic, until I realized that so many of them alluded to the protesters not even mentioned in CNN's text article and barely in the video, where they can only be heard, not seen. Now, let us look at the 23-30 comments (out of 100) attacking them: Here I think you need to mention that the examples which are indented are responses to the one above that is not indented.

C3. Are those protesters Americans?

C4. No ban, no wall, ................and no borders, no country?

C5. Breaking. Ruling changed due to protesters!

C6. yes let everyone in, just along as they dont move into my neighborhood (yes, this is  how every liberal really feels)

C8. TY, protesters! Could you please kick Gorsuch in the shin for me?! 😊

C13. Wish I was there!! Dang!!

C14. Who cares! Protest all you want too.

C15. Paid protesters. ..

C16. No wall, no welfare.

C21. They might as well be chanting: No Safety, no freedom.

C22. Precisely
C24. There are a lot of hurt people in this country. Whine about EVERYTHING!

C25. All 4 of them.

C29. Must be nice not to have to work like normal people

C40. A very small group getting national media.

C43. all 20 of them?

C45. I didn’t know protesting was a career...

C46. It’s a code word liberals use for unemployed.

C48. They can chant...yell and scream, but will achieve only a sore throat. But, I certainly support and served our Nation, for their right to get that sore throat.

C58. Have they been told that they are wasting their time?

C60. Don’t they work?

C62. National guard to prevent liberal democrat violence that was called on by Maxine Waters.

C73. Sorry, they lost. They should go home and watch #CNN to make them feel better

C84. Scream louder. It’s how policy gets made.

C86. Stop the temper tantrums when u don’t get ur way

C88. Professional protesters, one of the many jobs The Trump administration has created

C89. Hahahaha this is comical. People are absolutely clueless. Wonder y? Could be bc they believe the horse shit cnn posts

C90. Where is ice check them out
C91. Muslim obstructionists care nothing about safety of American people only themselves...they say travel should be wide open...everyone good, no one lies, no criminals, no terrorists......I believe Obama also passed ban on similar countries.

C92. Paid protesters

C93. Sounds like crybabies to me. Y do democrats care more about illegals than true Americans? Losing strategy

C94. Ban and wall! 😂

C96. Meanwhile the rest of America has jobs

C97. Yes all 5 of them. #SCOTUS

C98. Those who get their news from CNN are the most misguided and uninformed. CNN has no credibility unless you think bashing the president 24/7 is news or if you think it is honest to examine everything he says and does and manipulate it to be negative for him.

C99. I think you misspelled traitors...

C100. Shut off the cameras the protesters will stop. They all must live with there door and windows open and allow anyone into there homes. Or there hipocritical assholes.
Several themes leap out of these comments, none of which can be attributed to CNN’s words; I will spell these out here as simply as possible: a) many liberals do not need to and choose not to work for a living, b) many liberals are not true Americans, c) liberals are immature and emotionally weak, like small children, e) liberals are bad losers, d) opposing the travel ban is inviting invasion, and e) those protesters are paid for, presumably by wealthy elite liberal forces.

Although these comments do not reflect CNN’s article, they are enlightening in several ways. For one they provide a contrast with other categories of comments, which do reflect the articles, demonstrating that influence in contrast to its absence with these comments. They also provide us with valuable context; these comments must reflect an issue closer to these readers’ hearts than the ban itself – their feelings and beliefs about “liberals” (a label used too liberally).

Putting aside the protesters, there are still more cryptic comments on the CNN article than on Fox’s. Here is one image among the CNN article’s comments whose meaning still eludes me:

![Image](image1.jpg)

C9.

What does this express? Whose side is it on? Presumably the man in the photo is a celebrity; this looks like an image from a sit-com, perhaps. But this author is not aware
of the man’s identity. Note that there is an image of African drumming and dancing in the background, and the man is wearing a probably African style shirt, as can be seen from its collar.

There is among the comments, one other wordless image of a black male:

![Image of a black male](image1)

C87.

This image, presumably, is intended to represent a liberal individual responding to the travel ban decision. In fact, there are several other gifs of crying people among the comments; comments nearby them somewhat support this interpretation, although it is not perfectly clear:

C39. Do they look like this? 😂😂

![Image of protesters](image2)

Unfortunately, the referent of “they” is not indicated by nearby comments, so we suppose it means the protesters (who never appear on screen in the video). Here is another example, perhaps from the same poster, with more comments referring to the protesters:
C84. Scream louder. It's how policy gets made.

C85. (reply) 😂😂😂

C86. Stop the temper tantrums when u don't get ur way

It is difficult to make claims about what a set of images insinuates, but one must note that the images show no white men, only white women – relatively androgynous looking women -- and black men, one with a markedly effeminate expression, the other, crying rather dramatically. This prompts me to speculate that these represent a trope among conservative readers associating the idea of liberalism with androgynous women, effeminate men, African-Americans, and a kind of emotionality conservatives apparently consider both feminine and childish.

The second largest group of comments on the CNN story are the 30+ conservative comments attacking liberals, Democrats, and CNN, other than (or in many cases, in addition to) the protesters; we display only a selection here, especially as this group overlaps with the criticism of the protesters:

C89. Hahahaha this is comical. People are absolutely clueless. Wonder why? Could be bc they believe the horse shit cnn posts
C56. The fake media and the democrats are in a complete meltdown and it is beyond hilarious

C59. CNN and the dems are for open borders.

C23. Just imagine if Obama passed this ban, he would be crowned king. Hypocrisy at its finest.

C19. But when the Supreme Court okayed same sex marriages those against it didn’t go to the Supreme Court protesting. We can’t cherry pick what the Supreme Court rules on. That’s why we are a country of laws. The dems and their liberal / fake news side kicks are hypocrites

C6. yes let everyone in, just along as they dont move into my neighborhood (yes, this is how every liberal really feels)
These comments bypass the content of the CNN article almost entirely, however they are not without ideological content. Several ideas are emphasized: a) that liberals are under the influence of “fake media” such as CNN, b) that liberals are hypocritical, secretly fearing immigrants and opposing the ban purely out of partisan animus, and c) that liberals are criminal and destructive, posing a threat to American freedom and democracy. And let us not fail to note that the kamikaze CNN plane in C98 is portrayed as not only dangerous and violent, but belonging to a foreign power, who was America’s greatest threat during WWII. Again, although these comments do not reflect CNN’s content, they support our previous analysis showing influence in Fox’s article through contrast; the comments on Fox’s article by conservatives did reflect the articles content and were different from the comments by conservatives on CNN, thus the contrast provides some support for the influence of Fox on its readers.

Secondly, we should once more note that the content of the ban itself is not an idea much discussed by these comments, which reflects both networks’ articles in their emphasis on the partisan over other aspects of the news. In fact there is only one comment on this article from pro-ban forces directly discussing banned individuals:
C11. We need a wall. We don’t have any room for more immigrants who will just feed off of welfare

This idea too is completely disconnected from either article’s content.

The remaining dozen or so pro-ban comments on CNN take a variety of angles mentioned in previous sections – thanking god for Trump or the Supreme Court, discussing the constitutionality of the ban, or discussing presidential authority, especially in connection with the wall. The second two topics, constitutionality and presidential authority, are strongly emphasized in the Fox article and all of them in its comments. Since there are far fewer of these among the conservative comments on CNN’s article than among the conservative comments on Fox’s article, only 1-3 on each point, this contrast indirectly supports the hypothesis of influence in the Fox case.

4.3.7 Anti-Ban Comments on CNN

As previously remarked, the most salient difference between the pro-ban comments on Fox’s article and the anti-ban comment on CNN’s is that they are in no way proportional to the political leanings of the respective stories. Nor is this because CNN’s story is perceived as pro-ban by any readers; it is not. It simply seems that conservative leaning readers comment much more often on stories by either news source. The only objective clue we have to explain this phenomenon is the character of the comments, which as we have noted are, overall, more expressive of partisan rancor than issues, no matter the political bias of the commenter\textsuperscript{31}. Thus, we hypothesize that conservatives, at least at this moment in our nation’s political history, are themselves, overall, more motivated by partisan antagonism than liberals. This would be at least consistent with

\textsuperscript{31} By which I mean that fewer comments discuss anything concrete, such as immigrants or laws, as opposed to simply attacking, mocking, gloating, and so on.
the conservative position on the issue itself; an anti-immigrant posture reflects a more “us versus them” perspective on human beings than does a pro-immigration posture.

Putting aside this asymmetry in the numbers of conservative versus liberal comments, the anti-ban comments on the CNN have much in common with their conservative parallels (I am confused here, do you means with anti-ban comments on Fox or with the comments attacking the people who were mentioned as responsible for the ban?) on Fox – most saliently, that 16 of the 20 anti-ban comments on the CNN story (out of 100 total) consist of attacks on conservative Americans, with Donald Trump, the conservative justices, and the GOP base receiving about equal numbers of attacks, plus one on Mitch McConnell and Neil Gorsuch. The most consistent group of these attacks, four of them, say or imply that their GOP targets are racist, insane, and / or comparable to the Nazis and their policies equivalent to official religious intolerance or the internment of ethnic groups:

C27. This has got to be most shameful SCOTUS ever! The people will have to put a check on tRump’s power because the SCOTUS surely will not!!! How you gonna uphold a Muslim Ban and at the same time condemn Japanese Internment camps. Feckless Court!! Vote Blue for SANITY-Save America

C53. The entire SCOTUS is Racist!!!

C54. We’re not going to go docile into those trains chugging toward their "camps", some of us that didn’t live that history read it.

C68. Slogans are of no use, because #US government has no respect for humanity

C75. But in Trumpistan they definitely believe North Korea and Venezuela are muslim countries.
The first comment above clearly demonstrates an effect of CNN’s specific discourse. As discussed in our analysis of that article, liberal justice Sonia Sotomayor’s comparison of the travel-ban case with the 1944 Japanese internment camp decision was disproportionately emphasized by CNN – highlighted with one of the only two subheadings in the article, even though it was an entirely philosophical comparison, without legal import for the current case. The reader making the first comment above obviously absorbed this representation of the issue thoroughly. The third and fourth comments also seem likely influenced by that comparison, which, as mentioned earlier, not only criticizes the US for its actions against Japanese Americans, but more subtly primes our feelings about the Nazis, as any mention of internment camps and WWII is bound to do. In the final analysis, although the liberal sentiments expressed above are not entirely dissociated from the issues at the heart of the travel ban, they do more strongly express and serve to increase partisan antagonism, rather than the discussing reasons or facts impacting the putative legality of the ban.

However, some conservative readers are apparently fighting back against the “GOP Nazi” trope, although this example of turning the tables from the CNN comments, seems to us somewhat distant from reality:

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32 Although this is not an ‘anti-ban comment,’ we display it here for comparison with the characterization of the GOP as Nazis, just discussed. And since it cannot really be labeled ‘pro-ban’ either, this is the most relevant point for sharing it.
Again, we cannot in anyway attribute this meme to the CNN article’s content!

The remaining attacks by liberals on conservatives primarily concern Donald Trump’s stupidity, ignorance, or insanity, with some disapproval for the court mixed in. These need to be counted together with some comments described above and further on for a complete picture, since many comments combine attacks on multiple targets, and with multiple complaints:

C50. Trump thinks he’s on an episode of Judge Judy and he’s just won some special verdict. He’s insane.

C61. This is a green light to trump’s recklessness. The supreme court has just poured more gasoline into a raging fire.

C7. Supreme CT should be ashamed

At this point, we need to add in the next most common category of comments, which overlap with those above – liberal “doom crying” (five comments, including the “green light” comment above):
C31. Trump stole the presidency and has a justice on the court that does not belong. America is in peril and Trump and Putin will destroy America.

C33. SUPREME ENDS CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY Uphold unlimited presidential power

C77. We will all suffer the consequences of Trump’s agenda. #FakeAmerican

C34. What has America become? A sad day.

This is perhaps exactly the kind of rhetoric earning Democrats the “hysterical” description from some conservatives, although we do not intend to imply here that liberal doom-crying is necessarily irrational; we, however, cannot make that evaluation here. (Yes, I am not sure what you are labeling hysterical here in comparison to what the conservatives were saying.) As far as media influence goes, the second comment above seems clearly influenced by the CNN article’s discourse, which indeed conveyed such a characterization, as an alarm. The other comments, cannot be seen as specifically influenced by this CNN article (which does not mention the Trump-Russia affair).

4.3.8 Conservative Rebuttals to Liberal Comments on CNN

While there are far more conservative comments on both articles than liberal, there are far fewer conservative rebuttals against liberal comments on the CNN article (2) than liberal rebuttals against conservative comments on Fox (12). But given that over 75% of all comments on either article are conservative, this does not change the overall imbalance significantly.

The fact that first comments come in a ratio of 4 to 1, conservative to liberal, and rebuttals 1 to 6, may be related to evidence of some other differences between conservative and liberal readers of these articles. One difference already discussed is
that a high proportion of conservative readers on CNN commented on the protesters that could be overheard in the background of the video report, rather than the content of the report. This could be read as consistent with their relative lack of interest in rebuttal, if it indicates that their comments were made quickly, in reaction to the sound of protesters, rather than after reading or deliberating over the content of the article, or liberal comments on it. There is only one mention of the protesters among liberal comments on the CNN article.

That being said, the only conservative rebuttals on CNN’s article raise what we previously noted as almost certainly the most factual of conservative claims about the case – that the travel ban, *technically*, is definitely not a Muslim ban: (O.k. but you are indicating/formatting these paired statements and rebuttals differently than you did above. Please make sure you have a consistent way to do it. Using rebuttal as a term can be good.)

C75. But in Trumpistan they definitely believe North Korea and Venezuela are muslim countries.

C76. Actually those two countries prove it wasn’t a Muslim ban.

C28. Is there many muslims in North Korea, or Venezuela? It's a travel ban, not a Muslim ban. Quit changing what things are for what you think will help your cause

Although such comments are not frequent, the fact that the only conservative rebuttals on CNN’s article focus on a substantive issue, without irrational attacks, stands

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33 C77 rebuts C76 which itself was a sympathetic response to a previous liberal comment. While C28 responds to the mention of “Muslim ban” in the previous comment, from a liberal, which is otherwise irrelevant for this point.
out. Also to the credit of the rebutter in C76, he or she does not take the bait of the liberal attack implied by “Trumpistan,” clearly intended to insinuate something negative about the Trump administration’s approach to governing although it is unclear exactly what since the most consistent property of countries ending in “-stan” is that they tend to have Muslim majority populations. However, once can infer from context that this commenter associates “-stan” with ignorance, which is seems quite ironically hypocritical in context. So, in this case the conservative response seems more principled than the liberal prompt.

The relative rationality of these two conservative comments was also a characteristic of the larger number of liberal rebuttals on Fox’s article (as previously displayed). This suggests that readers who rebut tend to be more thoughtful in general, than others. Although this correlation could only be verified by further research, it would be consistent with our observation that the majority of commenters, who are conservative, show more passion for an “us versus them” mentality than the liberal minority of commenters.

This conveniently brings to our last category of comments on the CNN article – those which either do not seem primarily partisan in point of view, or which, if partisan, do not take a typical partisan approach to the issue:

C30. Considering Americans are lazy asf, good point, if you look at the labor force statistics, immigrants are approx 72% where Americans are 49% so who's lazy?

C35. America is like a company. There were good times, and free goodies goes to everyone who can pronounce USA. Due to the bad management or bad luck, the financial situation deteriorates it has to adjust. It becomes stingy and mean. Otherwise, the country goes into bankruptcy.
C48. They can chant...yell and scream, but will achieve only a sore throat. But, I certainly support and served our Nation, for their right to get that sore throat.

C19. But when the Supreme Court okayed same sex marriages those against it didn’t go to the Supreme Court protesting. We can’t cherry pick what the Supreme Court rules on. That’s why we are a country of laws.

C20. Or, you can move to one of those countries and apply for citizenship. There is nothing about traveling TO one of the countries on the travel ban list, right?

C69. I wonder why so many are literally dying to come here with such an oppressive government...shut up...stay in your zone and don’t get caught sneaking in...we are watching you!!!

C70. I have no desire to settle in a country, where terrorists are attacking schools & killing innocent children on every second day. To Hell with #US

Although these comments are rich, they show no connection to the discourse of the CNN article. The only generalization that can be made about them is that they are rare in not being clearly partisan and in their originality (that their ideas appear neither in the article nor other comments).

**4.4 Conclusion: The Influence of Media Discourse**

We approached this analysis, originally, with some skepticism about our hypothesis, reasoning that, of course, readers of Fox and CNN will reflect the ideas expressed by their favored new source, not necessarily because they were influenced by the articles, but because they already believed those ideas before reading the articles. In an interesting turnabout, not only has the analysis strongly supported the hypothesis of influence, at least for certain categories of comments, but it has done so precisely
because the comments do not reflect their articles in a balanced way. Had liberal / conservative commenters on these articles merely reproduced their political party's usual claims and emphases, it would be difficult to deny that their expressions could reflect ideas they brought to their reading as much or more than the ideas pushed by the articles.

But this was not the case. It was demonstrated (1) that most of the commenters on these articles were conservative, (2) that conservative commenters on the Fox article expressed different ideas than conservative commenters on the CNN article, and likewise for their liberal counterparts, and (3) that the different content of these two kinds of commenters is correlated with differences in content between the articles – with the caveat that conservative ‘readers’ responded primarily to the presence of protesters in the sonic background of a reporter, rather than to the content of the report.

While these observations partly confirm the hypothesis of influence, they also point to another disturbing conclusion about media influence. That it influences readers to approach politics as a war between two Americas – the liberal and conservative – with the issues we disagree about taking second seat to inter-partisan anger, hatred, mockery, derision, gloating, and other expressions of social competition. While the articles avoided overtly antagonistic expressions themselves, they nevertheless implicitly demonize the opposing political camp, and imply the same accusations made in the comments (e.g. that conservatives are ignorant and racist or that liberals are hysterical and un-American). In other words, although the news sources do not tell readers to hate or denigrate those they disagree with, that is the way readers come away from these articles, and it is an attitude supported implicitly by the articles (as shown in the previous chapter). We are not suggesting that employees of either news platform desire
for America to tear itself apart (although this is an accusation made by readers, especially by conservatives against CNN).

The travel ban itself, according to some, is a manifestation of growing tribalism and prejudice. However, our analysis does not strongly support the idea that hatred of Muslims is the primary motivation for conservatives. Objectively, the content of the comments suggest that prejudice is a major factor, but that, in addition to personal distaste for the character of liberals (as stereotyped among them), conservatives are more motivated by fear and insecurity and a commensurate attraction to authoritarianism, protectionism, and the “rule of law” – which is, of course, a well-trodden path to state-sanctioned bigotry. While the CNN article’s discourse and liberal comments do, in contrast, appear primarily concerned with the issues of bigotry and its consequences, they also reflect a strong impulse to demonize Trump-supporting conservatives and to prophecy doom, messages conservatives have correctly observed in liberal discourse and which were clearly transmitted from CNN to some readers by this article. In other words, both articles have influenced readers’ perceptions, but not primarily in regards to Muslim travelers, but rather more in regards to their fellow Americans.
CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS

5. Section A: ARTICLE ANALYSIS
Critical Discourse Analysis of CNN and Fox Opinions on Gillette Ad “The Best Men Can Be”

5.1 Introduction
In January of 2019, the Gillette company released a television advertisement immediately garnering attention (and opinionated statements) from probably every major American news source, including The New York Times, The Washington Post, CNN, and Fox. Both the ad and the opinion articles about it circulated widely on Facebook and Twitter; it would not go too far to say the majority of Americans, even those who don’t watch commercial television, were exposed to discussion of the ad, which was associated with public discourse about the recent anti-sexual-harassment social media “me too” movement and more generally, the recent prominence of issues about gender throughout mass media.

One reason the ad garnered so much attention was it addressed these issues from an uncommon angle for American media; it concerned primarily men, contrasting aggressive and sexist male behaviors, portrayed as undesirable, with more nurturing and compassionate male behaviors, characterized by the Gillette company as “The Best Men Can Be” – part of the official title of the ad. (“We Believe: The Best Men Can Be”). The ad is described in more detail in the analysis below.

34 For example:
The advertisement and the editorial (or editorial-like) opinions on it constitute an exceptional chapter in the history of public discussions about gender in the United States and an exceptional case for Critical Discourse Analysis for several reasons. In addition to the fact that the ad commented on common and, arguably, socially accepted male behaviors, the fact it was created for profit, rather than for political or social goals complicates the issues and reactions to it. The fact that those most sympathetic with the ad’s message, liberals or progressives, are also those least sympathetic with commercialism, consumerism, and corporate capitalism, presented an interesting challenge for the feminist author of CNN’s article, Jill Filipovic. On the “other side of the aisle,” the author of the Fox article, Todd Starnes, who recently published a book on “Making America Great Again” not only criticized the ad for being anti-male, but also invoked tropes verging on the conspiratorial from the recent American conservative discourse on liberalism. Starnes literally warned his readers of the “professors” throughout America waging a “war” to turn young American men into “pajama boy,” a conservative meme mocking the alleged un-manliness of liberal males.

There could hardly be a clearer case of discourse directed at maintaining what liberals consider the social inequality of women and men, than the Fox article, making it a compelling candidate for CDA. Meanwhile, CNN’s article presents an interesting opportunity to critique a liberal discourse troubled by conflicting allegiances (feminism versus corporate capitalism).

The articles discourses are of different types, beyond content. Their rhetorical goals are of different types; where Starnes is trying to raise resistance to an enemy, with a strongly persuasive essay, Filipovic is evaluating the significance of the ad, in order to claim that it is a sign of feminist success. While both essays are argumentative, Starnes’ is a call to action, whereas Filipovic is painting a picture. Therefore, the two writers’
rhetorical strategies are not comparable. The Fox article is also written in a “lower,” more causal, and inflammatory style, implying an intended audience who identifies with (contrived) “plain” talk more than intellectualism. While the CNN article is written in the language of casual intellectual discourse, like a TED talk, perhaps. These differences make the analyses of the two articles more independent than this study’s previous analysis of the “travel ban” articles which shared a similar style and feigned objectivity.

5.1.1 Sociopolitical Context

As discussed in this paper’s introductory chapters, sociopolitical context is essential to understanding discourses and their interpretations. In the case of this Gillette ad, that context has been especially volatile and subject to passionate argument and posturing in regards to gender-related issues for the three years preceding the ad’s appearance – the time corresponding to Donald Trump’s presidential campaign and term in office (at the time of this writing in 2019). Although gender roles, sexism, and sexual harassment have been volatile issues in American public discourse for decades at least, there has been a marked increase in discussions about them, and especially about sexual harassment, since Donald Trump became the Republican candidate for 2016, due to reports of sexual harassment by Trump and, separately, by numerous other politically and / or economically powerful men. What began as feminist opposition to seemingly sexist politicians quickly snowballed into a far reaching movement to expose and punish numerous prominent men accused of using social and economic power to get away with sexual harassment.

The movement to make sexual harassers accountable then rolled into the “me too” movement. This social media campaign began with a focus on women simply demonstrating the prevalence of sexual harassment by using the hashtag “me too” to
indicate that they personally had at one point or another been harassed. But naturally, like all social media campaigns, the phrase immediately became a badge of feminism, broadly construed, and of the movement to remove sexually harassing men from positions of power. In other words, context for this ad includes one of the most prominent ongoing news items for the past several years – a sociopolitical grassroots movement simultaneously and consciously feminist, anti-Trump, and opposing the economic, political, and social power of men to violate women’s rights and get away with it. The ad actively urges men to abandon that power.

And there is another quite distinct element of sociopolitical context also recently pushing for the abandonment of traditional gender roles, or at least their prevalence and power; that is the recent visibility, particularly among young adults and yet without a name, of a movement against the assumption that people must be either ‘male’ or ‘female’ in traditional terms. Although this movement is partly associated with LGBQT identities and rights, it nevertheless seems distinct and new. Although many societies have traditional “third gender” roles, they are quite specific and narrowly applied. The new anti-gender-duality ideology opposes the idea that people are ‘normally’ born as simply ‘male’ or ‘female.’ Proponents of the movement are correct that in any case, the recent popularity of this movement, which opposes the idea of inherently male or female behavior, must be counted as a contextual factor supportive of the Gillette ad’s message at this historical moment, and the ad’s opposition to traditional American gender ideology should be understood with this too in mind; a lot of American young people today seem passionate about abandoning that ideology.
5.1.2 The Article Analysis

The analysis in this chapter follows a similar plan to others in this study. There are three sections, as in other chapters, (1) on the representations of major ‘entities’ discussed in the articles, (2) separate narrative analyses of each article, and (3) an analysis of word-frequencies in the articles. The next chapter will compare readers comments to the ideologies conveyed by the articles.

5.1.2.1 Representations

The fact that the subject of these articles is an advertisement adds an interesting dimension to the analysis of representations in their discourses; not only must the analysis consider the way the article / news source / author represents ‘entities’ such as men, women, liberals, conservatives, and Gillette, it also concerns how the news source represents Gillette’s representations -- Gillette’s discourse.

It is worth considering the complete list of representations to be discussed, which are subtly different between the sources; that is to say, that while both sources represent most of the referents mentioned above, the representations are so different as to demand distinct descriptions for each news source: Fox represents (1) Gillette, the message, feminism, liberalism, and even “society” as basically one entity, (2) Gillette’s representation of men, (3) the real male behaviors shown in the ad, (4) men, (5) women, (7) a nebulous enemy of American men, (8) the liberal agenda, and (9) itself. CNN represents (1) Gillette’s ad, (2) the Gillette company, (3) opponents of the ad, (4) American society today, (5) the significance of the ad, and (6) itself. Some of the differences include that Fox’s article does not significantly distinguish between the ad and Gillette as a company, while CNN’s does, that CNN’s article does not necessarily equate Gillette’s ad with the feminist movement, while Fox’s does, and that CNN does
not represent a danger or enemy, while Fox does; CNN represents opponents of the ad, but does not characterize them as an enemy or danger. CNN also does not represent men and women enough to make it a separate topic of analysis for that article. While this is a major concern of the Fox article.

It is interesting to see that Fox’s discourse implies more distinctions than CNN, such as recognizing Gillette’s representation of men, real men, and the real behaviors shown in the ad as different entities, while CNN’s article does not make the last distinction; the ad is simply treated as an accurate representation of reality. The other clear pattern evident in these lists is that Fox’s article is more concerned with the liberal agenda and what the Fox writer claims that society and a vague implicit ‘enemy’ are doing to men. Most of the entities represented in both articles are indisputedly real – men, women, the ad, the company, the two networks, but the Fox article imputes the existence of a dangerous trend, associated with liberalism that aims to emasculate American men and exacerbate the threatening downfall of American society. The parallel to this in CNN’s article is its representation of society today as increasingly feminist in a positive way. Both are strongly ideological, but since Fox’s is more extreme, it includes representations of ‘entities’ which may or may not exist at all (the liberal conspiracy against men).

The discussion that follows varies between discussing both networks’ representations of one topic at the same time, versus discussing each article in isolation, depending on which strategy makes better rhetorical sense for the sub-topic in question.

5.2.1.1 Representations of Gillette’s Ad

There are major differences between the two article’s approaches to the ad itself. CNN’s article describes the ad primarily in terms of the concrete images and words appearing in the ad, otherwise giving only one evaluative description of the ad’s
depiction – “toxic masculinity, bullying, and harassment.” Fox’s article barely describes any image from the ad at all except for “chasing around women,” which in fact refers to an image of a man grabbing a women’s butt, so it must be considered more of an interpretation than concrete description. In contrast to CNN’s article, Fox’s spends many words evaluatively interpreting the ad’s message and purpose, without citing specific images from the ad. CNN describes the ad’s message and purpose primarily in terms of what the ad itself says, although it is important to note that the words chosen are still interpretive not objective. Fox also quotes the ad, especially the phrase “boys will be boys” but misleads its audience as to the ad’s usage of it, claiming the ad equates it with, and opposes, “little boys who climb trees and tussle in the playground” which is not only not Gillette’s apparent intention, but there is no tree-climbing depicted in the ad, and the “tussling” consists of one boy sitting on top of and beating another.

How CNN represents the Gillette ad

CNN’s article describes the following concrete images and words from Gillette’s ad:

- “a boy bullied and called a ‘sissy’” (12)
- “audiences laughing along as a man on a sitcom grabs at a woman’s behind” (13)
- “a businessman in a corporate boardroom condescending to a female employee” (14)
- “notes that men keep on ‘making the same old excuses’: Boys will be boys” (15)
- “It's only by challenging ourselves to do more,’ the ad concludes, ‘that we can be our best.’” (18)

CNN’s article also describes the ad interpretively in the following ways:

- “slamming toxic masculinity, bullying and harassment” (1)
- “Represents some of the worst of male behavior” (12)
• “The best a man can be is kind instead of cruel, generous instead of petty, protective instead of predatory.” (12)

• “men doing better” (15)

• “[men doing better is] intervening against sexual harassment, teaching self-love to their daughters, promoting peace over violence” (16-17)

• “[the ad is] imploring men to be better” (20)

CNN’s concrete descriptions of the ad seem accurate, although a few notable elements are glossed over; CNN’s article does not mention:

(1) That between the depictions of male behaviors represented as negative versus positive, there is a brief segment of the ad alluding to the “me too” movement and its media popularity as thread shows a room full of adult men (and two women) watching a wall of talking heads on screens discussing sexual harassment while the voice-over says “there will be no going back.”

(2) That the ad begins by depicting grown men but ends with images of young boys, and words emphasizing that the desired cultural changes begin with children.

It is plausible that these elements of the ad were not mentioned in CNN’s article only because they were not directly relevant to the author’s rhetorical purpose. However, it is also plausible they were omitted because these two elements seem the most likely to alienate readers who might have issues with the ad. Conservatives do not, in general, conceive of themselves as anti-female, or pro-harassment, and thus, many might not find the ad’s basic message off-putting, but might be more skeptical of the ad’s alignment with the “me too” movement, considered a liberal bandwagon. And implying that
people’s children should be raised differently, or even merely capitalizing on images of children, seems likely to anger some viewers. Therefore, CNN’s author may have elected not to mention these points in an effort to maximize reader assent to the ad and the article’s approval of it.

CNN’s interpretive descriptions convey a more biased ideology than its descriptions of the ad’s images. CNN’s author refers to the ad’s contents as depicting “the worst of male behavior” (12) and “the best a man can be” (12). Thus, it is clear that we are being presented with a non-objective ideology intended to define norms for social behavior. Summarizing Filipovic’s evaluations, in combination with her descriptions, we learn that “the worst of male behavior” = sexual harassment, bullying, unequal treatment of women in the workplace, abuses of power, the imposition of traditional gender roles, violence, and “making excuses” for such behavior. And “the best” = kind, generous, protective, teaching self-love to their daughters, and promoting peace (16-17). There is a lot to unpack here.

One ideological implication of Filipovic’s discourse is defining the value of male behavior in terms of either abusive or caring behavior towards others, especially but not only towards women. This seems to be a relatively new lens; it does not correspond to the way men are valued in any of the world’s major religions, except perhaps Buddhism – not to the way men have been valued in any famous major culture, political, or economic system since Sumerian times, to the best of this author’s knowledge. Although there is evidence that during a long stretch of time previous to Sumerian times (i.e. the late Neolithic), there were major culture complexes throughout the world worshipping a goddess, and therefore, perhaps behaving according to more “feminine” values (whatever those were in that era), but since that time, men seem to have been consistently valued in terms of their power – physical, economic, political, cultural, and
domestic power. Aggression, domination, and even violence towards women on the part of men has been at least acceptable to some degree, if not mandatory, throughout most of the world for most of the 5,000 years of recorded history; Filipovic’s precise list of “worst” behaviors could literally describe a most respected man in America as recently as the 1950s, and in many other nations, still today.

Interestingly, though, Gillette’s “best” behaviors, especially as described by Filipovic, do not seem to have been condemned in most sexist societies. Although, even peace and love have been condemned for men in sometimes and places, not as a rule. The same ideologies which have promoted male domination throughout history, have also promoted a male duty to protect and promote peace in the home, village, or state. The potential inconsistency between traditional ideologies’ promotion of both male violence and peace-making is resolved by the realization that it is the power which both values have in common; in other words, men have always been valued primarily in terms of power – and protecting and making peace can also belong to the powerful.

“Teaching self-love to daughters” seems a carefully formulated phrase. There is nothing in it definitely opposed to most traditional ideologies of masculinity, but that is perhaps because most traditional ideologies simply do not touch the question of men nurturing daughters. Such behavior is neither praised nor condemned; it simply is not represented in traditional discourses. The exceptionality of this phrase, compared to the other “best” behaviors, points to the origin of this ideology, in feminism. That is to say that Gillette and Filipovic are promoting an implicit ideology in which males can sometimes play a facilitating rather than a leading role with women, a role facilitating female empowerment. It is difficult find examples of such an idea historically, making the ideology described by Filipovic as new as is implied by Gillette’s representation of the “me too” movement in their ad.
Filipovic conveys further elements of implicit ideology in her more specific descriptions of the ad and choices of scenes to mention. The first is “a boy bullied and called a ‘sissy’.” Young boys typically bully and make fun of each other for many reasons, and with many epithets, including many unrelated to gender roles. Filipovic’s choice to mention the use of “sissy,” a word that implies that a man should not be feminine, implies that one of the worst elements of male behavior is reinforcing that particular notion. This implies not only a demonization of traditional gender roles, but also, to some degree, of the two-distinct-genders ideology in general. This may or may not be a necessary implication of feminism, but its presence on Filipovic’s list subtly implies a promotion of anti-gender-duality ideologies in addition to feminism, a prevalent alliance in contemporary progressive politics.

“The business man [. . . ] condescending to the female employee” also carries implicit ideological baggage; it implies that the roles of “business man” and “female employee” are implicated in the “condescension” and the wrongness of the situation. That is to say, it implies that the statistically greater economic power of men and male exploitation of such roles to dominate women, is as much the problem as the “condescension.” However, applying the cognitive psychological notion of a frame to this image reveals much more. The frame evoked by Filipovic’s description is specific to late corporate capitalism, subtly evoking that entire paradigm as the target of criticism and implying that corporate capitalism is associated with male dominance. Moreover, the context of the representation, the discourses of the ad and the article, thereby imply that feminism and female empowerment may disrupt that entire system, not just men behaving badly.

Filipovic also cites Gillette’s . . . mocking? . . . of men for “making the same old excuses: Boys will be boys.” This implies that men have been dishonest about their
motives, whether to themselves or women, and perhaps not only dishonest – also lazy, or stubbornly refusing to change. On the surface, this criticizes men for excusing their own bad behavior by fiat; “boys will be boys” simply means that one ought to not oppose traditional male behaviors, period. So, it implies that part of the problem with “boys will be boys” is not just what boys do, but that they have the social license (power) to excuse their behavior at will. At the same time, it also accuses men of not caring enough to try to be better.

The notion that men are not sufficiently cooperative or engaged with the need to change is also implied when Filipovic writes that the ad “implores” men to change. One does not implore somebody who has already agreed to do something; “implore” implies that the person being implored is stubbornly refusing to listen or act. Thus, Filipovic, above and beyond the ideas conveyed by Gillette’s ad, is implicitly expressing an ideology which represents men in general as partly opposing the changes desired by feminism. This does seem to be a common element of feminist ideologies, but by no means universal, and certainly in disagreement with many of the men who consider themselves feminist. I do not mean that Filipovic is necessarily incorrect, but rather that Filipovic’s discourse contains covert ideology, regardless of its constructive intentions.

Filipovic’s covert implication that men are not yet trying hard enough to change is not unrelated to the remaining Gillette quotation in Filipovic: “It’s only by challenging ourselves to do more,’ the ad concludes, ‘that we can be our best.”’ This sentence also implies that men are not being their best and not challenging themselves sufficiently yet, however, with a much more positive spin. Reframing a painful change as a challenge must be one of the most common, and perhaps powerful, of cognitive behavioral devices for personal change. Then, capped off with “be our best,” it is implied that the goal of the challenge is the best thing we (men) could possibly strive for. Better than a million
dollars. This is clearly a manipulative discourse implying a biased ideology, however one would be hard pressed to disagree with its goals.

In summary, Filipovic’s discourse conveys implicit ideological notions in many ways; while Filipovic is highlighting and reinforcing the subtle implications of the ad’s own images and words, which she agrees with, she is also implying additional elements of her particular feminist ideology in subtle ways – through her selection of images from the ad, through the wording of her descriptions of them, and through both her explicit and implicit evaluations. The mechanism used to imply ideology most subtly was the evocation of a cultural conceptual frame – the male dominated corporate boardroom.

5.2.1.2 How Fox Represents the Gillette Ad

As earlier mentioned, the representations of the Gillette ad in Fox versus CNN differ more than in terms of their ideology. CNN’s article both describes and interprets most elements of the ad as Gillette seems to have intended, while subtly transmitting a little further ideological content. The Fox article does not describe anything that actually appears in the ad except for “boys tussling” and the ad’s rejection of “boys will be boys”; and the Fox writer, Todd Starnes, interprets the ad’s message differently than intended by Gillette, setting up a rather different discourse situation than that navigated by Filipovic for CNN. Starnes tackles this situation by delivering an overtly inflammatory and ideological discourse, in more casual than high-style language; in fact, Starnes composition may be considered an instance of a venerable but somewhat forgotten genre in political discourse – the rant. The following is all of Starnes’ concrete description the Gillette ad’s content:

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“Is this the best a man can get? Is it? We can’t hide from it. It has been going on far too long. We can’t laugh it off, making the same old excuses,” a narrator declares. The ad condemns the phrase “boys will be boys” and then proceeds to show guys chasing around women, engaging in bullying and basically acting like every anti-male stereotype you’ve ever seen. (8-14)

This description seems mostly accurate within the limits of its vagueness; it gives the appearance of describing the ad without actually describing any of the specific behaviors. In fact, the most concrete image offered, “guys chasing around women,” cannot be called accurate; it presumably refers to the image of butt-grabbing. So, Starnes seems to be intentionally hiding the fact that the ad criticizes sexual assault, and perhaps more sinisterly, describes assault as pursuit. This then is one element of implied ideology in Fox’s article – that men should have the right to touch women sexually without their consent.

Starnes’ objection to Gillette’s condemnation of “boys will be boys” becomes one of the central themes of his article. Although it is true Gillette condemns this phrase, the ad explicitly condemns it as an excuse for behaviors like bullying and sexual harassment. With Starnes not having made this clear at all, it sounds as if Gillette is condemning whatever boyish activities the reader might think of as “boys will be boys,” which in America would typically includes things like playing with tadpoles and “climbing trees,” as Starnes himself lists – although no tree-climbing was depicted in the ad. So, Starnes intentionally misrepresents Gillette’s message, which is not that boys should engage in no stereotypically boyish activities. In fact, Starnes is here building a distorted representation of Gillette’s ideology as one anti-male and toxic in other respects.

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Interestingly, Starnes selects verbs here that seem to distance real men from the negativity of the behaviors referred to. Men do not bully, they “engage in bullying.” And they do not actually perform the other alluded to noxious behaviors; they are “acting like every anti-male stereotype.” Not only do they only “act like” these things, but these things they are shown “acting like” are not necessarily real behaviors, according to Starnes but rather “anti-male stereotypes,” which implies again that Gillette is presenting an anti-male ideology, an ideology whose representations are unjust. He also capitalizes on the baggage of the word “stereotype” in America; in our culture, people who stereotype are automatically classified as less intelligent, less moral, and more bigoted, than those accusing them of stereotyping. Starnes is implying that Gillette’s discourse is the one conveying an ideology of prejudice.

The remainder of Starne’s descriptions of the ad support this strategy, which is kicked off by the first two sentence-paragraphs of the article:

The makers of the Gillette razor have a message for the men who use their products: you are horrible, horrible people.

Proctor & Gamble released a two-minute commercial that accuses men of being incubators of sexual harassment and bullying and toxic masculinity.

(6-9)

These sentences include some intriguing linguistic elements. The use of “you” to refer to the men attacked by the ad seems a transparent device to mobilize male readers’ emotions against the company. Even if those men might sympathize with the ad’s message, nobody likes being told they are a horrible person. That message is then reinforced by the use of the word “accuses” in the next sentence, which at the same time implies that the ‘charges’ may not be true. The list of charges takes the liberty of using an
extra “and” for no reason other than to give each charge more punch. Starnes is expending some effort to raise his male readers’ ire from the start.

The most intriguing word-usage in these quotations is “incubators,” which somewhat incredibly both represents men as women, and simultaneously represents women as essentially baby-making machines. Starnes uses this technique several times in the article – the technique of hiding sexist ideology within phrases describing Gillette’s representation of men:

Does Gillette want men to start shaving their legs, too? (article title)

Before too long, they’ll be telling us to shave our legs. (54-55)

These lines work similarly to the “incubator” comment. Where “incubator” defines women in terms of their capacity to carry a baby to term, these lines imply that femininity equals the values implied by the idea that women should shave their legs – which are that women’s value lies in their appearance, specifically in appearing attractive to men, and more specifically by appearing cleaner and more child-like than men. Since the qualities of women are not the subject of the ad, nor an explicit topic in Starnes’ discourse, these particular implications seem quite covert in context.

The repetition of the leg-shaving trope at the end of the essay is prefaced by the sentence, “Enough with the gender shaming, Gillette,” which (1) implies that Gillette is attacking men, (2) attempts to make male readers’ feel attacked, and (3) also implies that femininity is shameful – because Starnes has said, Gillette is trying to feminize men, and apparently to be feminized is a cause for shame. Few readers are likely to pick up on this last implication – consciously. The wording also subtly conveys several other ideas. “Enough with the . . . “implies that the ad is only the latest of a plethora of such attacks on men, implicitly, by Gillette, although this is the company’s first ad on the subject. But
readers are unlikely to notice this implication of “enough with . . .”; they will only pick up on the emotional tenor of that idiom – that of a person righteously calling for an end to too much of a noxious thing – “enough is enough.” Moreover, by addressing “Gillette” (Proctor and Gamble) in the vocative case, Starnes represents the company as a person, framing the situation as a personal issue between Starnes and his readers on one side, and Gillette, an obnoxious personage, on the other.

One phrase in the Fox article reinforces most of the ideas described above, adding another twist requiring comment: Starnes says it is “an incredibly unfair stretch to lump all men into the hashtag ‘me too’ basket” (48-49). This seems true, which is why neither the ad nor the “me too” movement does accuse all or even most men of sexual harassment. But Starnes apparently believes his readership can be led to perceive the ad as doing so, if they did not already, and as Starnes is a successful “MAGA” writer, we must suspect he knows this readership well. So once again, Starnes implies that the ad and its makers are attacking men unfairly – persecuting them – and we return to the earlier observation that Starnes discourse as a whole is trying to turn the tables to imply that opposing the behaviors in question is a kind of anti-male bigotry. This in turn further implies that the behaviors in question define “maleness” to a large degree, the very accusation Starnes is making against Gillette’s discourse. In other words, altogether, Starnes is rather covertly conveying the ideology that maleness is defined partly in terms of an unconditional right to sexually harass and bully without censure.

Starnes makes clear there is little room for ambiguity or variety in the ideology of masculinity shared by himself and the reading males he is implicitly addressing: “And therein lies the issue – what constitutes the ideal version of a man over at Proctor &

[36] Author of “The Deplorables’ Guide to Making America Great Again” according to his byline on the article.
Gamble headquarters? John Wayne or Pajama Boy?” (26). “Pajama Boy” refers to a popular conservative meme mocking liberal men as weak, childish, and effeminate, or perhaps ‘effete’ would be more accurate; as with many memes, the message remains slightly ambiguous in words because it is implied primarily by the image, in this case a photograph of an Obamacare-supporting male wearing pajamas. The meme is discussed in more detail below in reference to Starnes’ characterization of liberalism. For our purposes in this section, it is sufficient to say that Starnes here once again implies that the Gillette ad and the company are out to feminize men, and that to be so feminized is the opposite of being a real man, represented as John Wayne, and a terrible fate.

It can be inferred from the context that the “John Wayne” identity is emblematic of true masculinity for many of Starnes’ readers, and that Starnes encourages that identification. Apparently, late in his life, John Wayne increasingly made public statements against feminism and liberalism, not to mention “minorities”37. Unfortunately, it is beyond the scope of this paper to describe in detail the ideology of masculinity represented by John Wayne, but anyone raised in America knows his name as an emblem of emotional and physical “toughness”; the characters he portrayed embodied a romantic American trope of the ‘loner’ cowboy, living outside society, but potentially a hero, defending the weak and standing up for the good. Unfortunately, Wayne himself apparently stood for racism, homophobia, and hatred of liberals. Assuming that many of Starnes’ conservative male readers are aware of these attributions, Starnes is telling them, more than other readers, “if you want to be a real man, you must” embody this model of masculinity as well as oppose liberalism and feminism politically.

37 John Wayne’s Playboy Interview: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L2eN2MQV7SQ
5.2.1.3 How Fox Represents Men and Women

The discussion above demonstrated certain ideologies about gender covertly pushed by Todd Starnes’ Fox article. This article conveys further representations of men and women, or masculinity and femininity, in other ways.

Starnes represents men in a consistent but difficult to describe manner. He refers to them as “guys” several times, which connotes casualness and lack of pretension. Whether such qualities truly belong to conservatives more than liberals cannot be evaluated here, but that characterization implies a central and crucial element of contemporary American conservative ideologies – that Donald Trump’s election, and the values he claims to stand for, represent a populist revolution and that conservatives in general are aligned with the common and folksy versus liberals who are thought (in the ideology) to represent intellectual pretension and elitism. This is also implied by Starnes’ claim that Gillette stands against “little boys who climb trees and tussle on the playground” (33). In other words, Starnes and the conservative ideal of a man reminds one of the good old days and simple earthy values. This is also implied by Starne’s statement that “men behaving badly is not a chromosome issue, it’s an issue of the heart” (42). Although, strangely, Starnes develops this topic no further, saying not one word about what he means by “an issue of the heart” here. One wonders if there is another allusion to in-group conservative discourse here, of which this author is unaware.

Starnes’ one other representation of men, independent of Gillette, reinforces all the themes discussed above and adds several ideological elements: “Most of the guys I know are gentlemen - they provide for their families, they protect their loved ones and they stand up to the bullies. They’ve been doing what men have done since the days of Adam” (53). Now, before considering the ideological dimension, note that Starnes’ statement is crafted to flatter male readers, especially those who believe in the ideology
being presented; they are “gentlemen,” and more subtly, they are the kind of men Todd Starnes associates with personally. This statement comes only after Starnes has presented the numerous messages discussed above likely to make these same readers feel insulted, set upon, or even threatened by ‘the enemy.’ Starnes is offering these readers a remedy to their insecurity – a kind of salvation – at this point, and I say “salvation” because as implied by the end of the sentence, Starnes is also inviting his readers to join him fully in subscribing to a rather particular source of truth – Christian dogma. The hyperlink for “most of the guys I know . . . “ takes one to www.toddstarnes.com, where the first thing one sees is the slogan, “defending the faith by reporting the truth.” The slogan implies that Starnes reports only truths which agree with his Christian faith. And the remainder of the sentence hints that Starnes’ believes in a literal reading of the Bible. According to the story about Adam (and Eve) that most Christians know, women were created to serve men, and women are responsible for corrupting humanity, out of their moral weakness. In context, Starnes’ reference to Adam also implies an association between being one of the “gentlemen” he is addressing and being a faithful Christian.

Now, finally, the ideology being presented defines such a man as a family provider and protector. These roles are carefully chosen; they embody aspects of traditional Christian gender roles least objectionable to most people. Who can object to a man providing for and protecting a family? Nevertheless, in context, even this characterization does carry a potentially less acceptable ideology. In context, we must take these roles as epitomizing the best of men, above all other roles, and in addition to benefiting the family, these roles emphasize power, control, and dominance over the

38 “Adam” could technically imply Judaism rather than Christianity, but with the link to Starnes “defending the faith” webpage, that possibility can be dismissed.
family and outside the home. In fact, although “provider” and “protector” sound good, they cast men’s purposes in society as “bringing home the bacon” and employing violence if necessary to defend the home – and that’s all. Moreover, in context, the sentence implies that women should not play these roles, which implies they should be submissive to men at least in terms of money and power.

This same ideology is promoted from another angle elsewhere in the article, when Starnes quotes from a conservative female writer purporting to tell the reader what, really, “women want”; she says first that women want men to be “leaders, warriors and heroes” (39) and then:

Women want real men—men they can count on and, yes, look up to . . . I don’t know any woman, at any age, who is attracted to a passive man who looks to her to be his provider, protector and leader. Every woman I know wants a strong, responsible man. That’s not a consequence of a social construct or cultural pressure—it’s innate. (43-47)

As with other examples from Starnes’ article, this ideology is delivered through a rhetorical vehicle specially designed to assuage insecure men, especially those insecure over the issues raised in the ad. In our previous example of this strategy, we saw Starnes’ implication that his readers are “guys” who know Starnes personally, and “gentlemen.” In this case, Starnes and Stucky appeal to the insecurity behind the perennial (heterosexual) male desire to know “what women really want,” which is itself, a desire for power over women. It is especially clear the message is aimed at insecure men because Stucky discusses female attraction and passive men. Emotionally secure adult human beings are not overly concerned about whether they are sufficiently attractive or too passive – but these are among the greatest insecurities of lonely men. Starnes here offers
insecure men the answer they have been searching for and, lo and behold, it is one that will make them feel powerful and righteous. In other words, altogether Starnes and Stucky are offering an ideology of male dominance and rightness as a solution to the insecurity and loneliness of many of their male readers; Starnes is probably aware that recent research claims a current epidemic of loneliness among working class American men.39

The quotations from Stucky imply that women innately prefer to be supported rather than to support themselves and to be shielded from others by a protective male. Meanwhile, the only other representations of women in Starnes’ article are as leg-shavers, and perhaps ‘incubators’ (although that terms are explicitly assigned to men, it must be meant to evoke women). These devices subliminally suggest that women are primarily baby-making machines and objects of sexual desire, with male desire being keyed to women removing the hair that marks them as adults rather than children. Altogether, it seems that Starnes article covertly pushes the most traditionally sexist ideology of gender roles possible. As we remarked earlier, Starnes’ article directly addresses insecure men as its primary audience.

As CNN does not express any representations of men and women beyond those presented in the ad itself, we continue now with other topics represented by Fox’s article before returning to CNN’s.

5.2.1.3 How Fox Represents ‘The Enemy’

While Starnes’ Fox article nowhere explicitly labels the enemy as “liberals” it contains a relatively long section on a somewhat undefined enemy which includes “professors” – who are regularly demonized as liberals in current American conservative discourse (henceforth CACD). However, the ultimately nebulous enemy referred to has a more complex identity than simply ‘liberal’ (italics added):

There’s no doubt that men who bully and sexually harass women need to be – and must be - called out. But society wants us to believe that masculinity breeds such behavior - that inside the heart of every man is a bully and a boor.

*There is literally a war on masculinity in America. It’s being waged in classrooms where professors* are trying to convince a new generation of students that there’s something wrong with men who want to protect and provide for their families.

*They want you to believe little boys who climb trees and tussle on the playground should be medicated.* They believe there’s something evil about letting boys be boys. (27-34)

To focus first on the issue at hand, in this rather rich passage, it concerns Starnes use of “society” to refer to what should probably be “Proctor and Gamble” To refer to the ad or company as “society” implies that the company or ad-makers represent a coherent, liberal, mass socio-economic-political entity – somewhat like the international Zionist conspiracy and the deep state, but in this case, one that dominates mainstream American society (according to Starnes). And by designating “society” as the enemy of masculinity, the author defines himself and his readers in opposition to a society which is trying to
brainwash them. As this idea is totally consistent with CACD’s opposition to mainstream mass media, universities, and secular education in general, it seems likely that Starnes is indeed consciously defining himself and his readers as counter-society, because he knows it will appeal to many of the male readers he is trying to reach.

This interpretation also explains the incongruous immaturity of a professional writer saying, “society wants us to believe . . .”, an idea every college writing teacher has struck from 100s of student essays for its irrationality and vagueness. It is the way most people write until they take a college writing class, and Starnes must be aware that the most conservative leaning single group in America consists of white males who never went to college. His use of the phrase here implies, ideologically, that mainstream American society is trying to make Starnes’ male readers feel terrible about themselves; Starnes also uses the term “gender-shaming” in reference to the ad, which he said told men they are “horrible, horrible people.” This reasoning should appeal most to men who already feel bad about themselves and are tempted to blame society – exactly the psychological type who joins an angry extremist group.

The second paragraph reinforces and builds on this implied ideology. First it says, there is “literally” a war on masculinity in America. Again, we face the question, why would a professional writer be making the most stereotypical of uneducated writing mistakes, using the word “literally” either to mean its opposite, “metaphorically,” or simply for emphasis? The only answer must be that it is a signal to his audience that Starnes is not what they might regard as an overeducated and pedantic liberal. Putting aside the usage issue, that sentence reinforces the notion of a coherent enemy (who

40 https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/03/who-are-donald-trumps-supporters-really/471714/
remains vague) intentionally trying to take away readers’ masculinity (their pride, their virility, their power). The enemy finally, is concretely represented as “professors,” a familiar far-right punching bag. Starnes may have selected this target as a signal to conservative readers strengthening the identification of the enemy as liberal. But the professors are also probably a particularly salient target for Starnes personally, since his career is “defending the faith by reporting the truth”; in other words, Starnes opposes the teaching of truths that disagree with his faith and therefore might be expected to feel antagonistic to the academic establishment41.

Then finally, we get an explicit statement about what the enemy wants – to teach young men that it is wrong to want to provide for and protect a family. The falseness of this statement, vis-a-vis the ad itself, cannot be denied; the ad shows no men being stopped from providing for or protecting anybody. In fact, it shows men protecting women from harassment, and boys from bullies, and it shows a father providing for his daughter, by telling her she is strong. So, what is Starnes referring to? The only interpretation that makes senses in our social context are that “provide for” means “be the family’s primary source of income”; in other words, the family must be dependent on the “provider.” “Protect” can mean many things, but since the forces of liberality are not trying to stop men from going to the gym or having security cameras, and considering Starnes’ political context, it probably means “having the right to buy guns” – and to build border walls, perhaps? So, probably, Starnes means that professors are teaching young men that families don’t need to be dependent on men, that women can be primary income-sources, that gun ownership should be more strictly controlled, and that it is

41 A perusal of the titles of Starnes’ columns on his website does not show any definite conflicts with science. Most of the ‘truths’ Starnes reports to ‘defend the faith’ are events of alleged discrimination and injustice perpetrated by academics and liberals against Christians.
wrong to fear immigrants or people of color. This, admittedly, is rather a lot to put in Starnes mouth, but the opposition to economic equality for women is undeniable.

Then it gets a little weirder as Starnes alludes to a conspiratorial campaign on the part of the professors to medicate boys for behaviors such as tree-climbing and “tussling.” The Gillette ad did not show tree-climbing, and the “tussling” shown was bullying, not play. So, one implication is that boy-on-boy bullying should not be stopped. And in fact, Starnes also subtly implies so in the first paragraph quoted above when he says “men who bully and sexually harass women” need to be “called out” (27-28). It is unclear whether the two items listed are “bully” and “harass women” or “bully women” and “harass women.” In any case, this is an important ideological implication – it is only wrong for males to attack women, not wrong for males to attack males. And there is another implication of Starnes distinguishing between males and females in this way; women are weak and men are strong. Finally, by saying that these men need to be “called out,” rather than stopped or punished, Starnes implies that even when men are in the wrong in these ways, they should merely be told so, rather than receive more compelling consequences, even for sexual assault; this of course does accurately reflect the way men are often still treated in our society, such as in the case of the convicted rapist Brock Turner who received only nominal punishment for his crime.

Now, to continue with the last paragraph concerning the “war on masculinity,” Starnes claims that the enemy wants to medicate boys who do boyish things. Before addressing medication, we need to identify what qualities of males are here referred to by “boys will be boys.” They seem, based on “tree-climbing” and “tussling,” to be energy and aggression. A quick Google search of “liberals” and “medication” reveals that some conservatives worry that “liberals” (doctors and university researchers) are trying to
emasculate young boys by over-prescribing Ritalin\textsuperscript{42}. There have been reports claiming Ritalin is massively over-prescribed, due to over-diagnosis of bipolar disorder and ADHD, with researchers arguing that the conditions were previously under-diagnosed\textsuperscript{43}, while right-wing news sources focus on claims the practice may put children at risk to develop addictions and anti-social tendencies later in life\textsuperscript{44}. So, Starnes’ “they” who want to medicate away little boy’s essences does indeed refer to the “professors” of the previous paragraph.\textsuperscript{45}

Both the articles and the Yahoo “Answer” thread footnoted above (notes 9-11) reveal further elements of the discourse / ideology apparently circulating among American conservatives, concerning liberals, child-rearing, and the effects of such on society. Commenters on the Yahoo thread (note 9) mention that liberals’ opposition to spanking will make children soft and lazy. This sheds light on some of Stucky’s statements, quoted by Starnes; note that Stucky is described as a “commentator” and friend,” no expert qualifications mentioned, on the subject of what’s wrong with men today:

“The growing problem in today’s society isn’t that men are too masculine; it’s that they’re not masculine enough,” she said. “When men embrace their masculinity in a way that is healthy and productive, they are leaders, warriors and heroes.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[42] https://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20071010122134AAS38J4
\item[44] https://www.libertynation.com/ritalin-prescribed-study-suggests-yes/
\item[45] I do not mean it is paranoid to believe that Ritalin has been over-prescribed, and could hurt children, but over-prescription could not benefit anyone working for a university; it could only benefit the men who own the pharmaceutical companies and health insurance companies. Also, there is no evidence or reason given for WHY professors would want to hurt children or our society. Starnes implies that liberal professors simply hate masculinity which they want to eradicate in order to destabilize our society. And I can only ask, WHY would they?\end{footnotes}
When they deny their masculinity, they run away from responsibilities, leaving destruction and despair in their wake.” (Stucky in Starnes, 37-41)

This quote helps fill out our sketch of the ideology Starnes is delivering. First of all, we get another angle on the difference between “society” and Starnes’ male readers. Most men in “today’s society” which we previously learned is dominated by liberals (in the ideology), are not masculine enough. An unspoken and false implication of Stucky’s first sentence is that those who support the Gillette ad say men are too masculine. Feminists, liberals, and Gillette seem always careful to make it clear that they oppose a certain conception of masculinity, not masculinity. This is a crucial covert ideological element for Starnes and Stucky: masculinity = that which “society” / liberals oppose about men. Which implies again, covertly in context, that masculinity should be defined in terms of male dominance and aggression? This is also implied by Stucky’s next statement; although it is healthy, as Stucky says, for men to embrace their masculinity, and although “leaders, warriors, and heroes” can be roles for men valuable to society, they are all dominant and aggressive roles. The implication is that only roles meeting those criteria are healthy and socially valuable for men. This is then confirmed with reference to the contrasting case; men who “deny their masculinity” (men who do not dominate and act aggressively) abandon their responsibilities and cause “destruction and despair” wherever they go. And so it is implied, social movements against male dominance and aggression (feminism and the anti-sexual harassment movement) place society in some kind of vague danger loosely characterized by a potential epidemic of deadbeat men.

These statements of Stucky’s allude to further elements of in-group American conservative ideology. In this paper’s analysis of articles on the Supreme Court’s travel
ban decision, it was noted that many conservative readers commented that the presumably liberal protesters must not have jobs, revealing that the idea of deadbeat liberals is another conservative trope, one associated with activities such as protest, and considered socially destructive by many conservatives (as demonstrated by the cited comments).

In summary, Starnes’ article presents itself as a defense of men and masculinity, identified with men who feel threatened by the feminist bent of contemporary society, who are under attack by a society dominated by a liberal ideology almost conspiratorial in its effort to emasculate men from an early age, which turns men into deadbeats and addicts, threatening social stability.

**5.2.1.4 How CNN Represents Opponents of the Gillette Ad**

The CNN article differs from Fox’s in not representing opponents to its position as enemies. Filipovic instead represents them as a “sad and predictable,” “loud and angry,” “backlash”:

It’s sad but predictable that imploring men to be better -- not just for women, but for other men and boys -- is met with such hostility from people who apparently accept the lie that cruel and predatory behavior is part of men’s natural makeup. There’s a stereotype that feminists hate men, but the opposite seems to be true: Anti-feminists who claim to be defending men are the ones who actually seem to have a fairly low opinion of them. (20-24)

So, Filipovic’s explicit characterizations of the ad’s opponents are “people who apparently accept the lie that cruel and predatory behavior is part of men’s natural
makeup,” “anti-feminists . . . who actually seem to have a fairly low opinion of [men],”
and later in the article, “a handful of loud and angry men” (34).

“Cruel and predatory,” within the context of Filipovic’s article, must be interpreted as referring to behaviors represented and condemned by the ad. Those behaviors mentioned by Filipovic were “a boy bullied and called a ‘sissy’” (12), “audiences laughing along as a man on a sitcom grabs at a woman’s behind” (13), and “a businessman in a corporate boardroom condescending to a female employee” (14). “Cruel” must refer primarily to the bullying, which showed one boy sitting on top of and beating the other, while “predatory” must refer to the butt-grabbing. It must be admitted that some people would disagree with these attributions, so they can be considered biased, however, this author is unable to construe a sense in which they are false, except within the ideology opposed by the ad and defended by Starnes in his Fox article.

However, “cruel and predatory” is not precisely Filipovic’s characterization of the ad’s opponents; her claim is that they “accept the lie” that men are “cruel and predatory” by nature. This is false; opponents of the ad do not see these behaviors or men as “cruel and predatory”; Todd Starnes, who represents opposition to the ad, in his Fox article implied that what he believes is innate (natural) in men is what he considers a healthy degree of aggression and desire to dominate. In this light, Filipovic’s characterization of the ad’s opponents is more ideological and biased than it seems at first. Although it is difficult to disagree with the attribution of “cruel and predatory” for the behaviors referred to, it is not fair to say the ad’s opponents believe men should be cruel or predatory.

Moreover, to say that the ad’s opponents “accept the lie” that men are “cruel and predatory” by nature implies the belief that men are less aggressive and dominating by
nature than to bully or prey on women if they were not socialized to do so. This is a popular feminist position on the nature of male aggression and violence but highly controversial; some research indicates that males are in fact more aggressive and violent by nature than women, and this is more consistent with evolutionary science than the idea that such behavior is solely due to culture. However, there are strong arguments on both sides and this is not a question for this paper to resolve; the point is that Filipovic is using an ideologically colored representation of her opponents, while covertly implying a feminist position on male nature that many readers might find more questionable than her support of the Gillette ad.

Filipovic’s expression that her opponents have a “low opinion” of men develops this same game further. Interpreting Filipovic’s statement depends on readers understanding that its opposite is true in at least two senses – (1) that they (the opponents) themselves would claim to esteem men highly, and (2) in the sense that Filipovic and her liberal readers believe the ad-opponents esteem men too highly, which is to say, more than women. Therefore, Filipovic must be implying they have a low opinion of men in another sense – which is that that whatever the ad-opponents do esteem about men is an insult to men. Although implied, this cannot be considered a covert expression because readers are expected to see the implication very consciously. But it does, less overtly, reinforce the false notion that the ad-opponents believe in cruelty and predation, rather than that the behaviors shown in the ad are neither cruel nor predatory. And it also covertly reinforces the same feminist ideological premise Filipovic supports explicitly – that the behaviors displayed are shameful – however, the covert implications of the “low opinion” sentence are a bit harsher – that men should feel ashamed, and be judged, for behaving that way, or even feeling drawn to such behaviors.
Later in the article, which does not primarily concern opponents to the ad, Filipovic returns to the subject, describing opposition as a “backlash and an alleged boycott led by a handful of loud and angry men” (34). Now, the truth is that, at the time of this writing, the ad has 774,000 “likes” and 1.4 million “dislikes” on YouTube, so even given that these numbers may not reflect the allegiances of the population in general, nevertheless Filipovic’s implied claim that opponents of the ad constitute a tiny minority is false. It is impossible to know whether Filipovic was aware of this fact or not at the time of her writing. A perusal of the comments on the YouTube video immediately reveals women who dislike the ad and assert their belief in a traditional un-feminist gender ideology. So, Filipovic’s representation of her opponents is false – not a handful of angry men who believe in cruelty and predation, but rather a significant group of American men and women, possibly even a majority, who believe that their traditional un-feminist gender ideology embodies the highest of values.

The starkness of the discrepancy between Filipovic’s representation and the reality here points to the fact that Filipovic’s discourse is indeed designed to promote an ideology – but not, in this case, mainly to promote feminism, in which her mostly liberal readership already believes, but related ideas – that feminism has just about won its war, that its opponents are a minority of extremist men, that their opposition is selfish and based on toxic male psychology, and finally that they can be dismissed. One can only speculate that Filipovic’s distortions in this regard are motivated as a kind of spin-control and prophylactic in the face of the fairly widespread anti-feminism revealed by backlash to the ad.

Filipovic returns to summarize the same message more clearly at the end of the article: “And the backlash shows that that progress has been less linear than we would
like, and that with forward movement comes those reactionaries who dig in their heels” (57-58). This seems a little optimistic considering a blatantly misogynist man has been elected president, but it serves Filipovic's political purpose; it transmits the idea that opponents of the ad are an irrational extremist minority, thus discouraging any readers who might sympathize with them and boosting the confidence of feminist readers.

5.2.1.5 How the Articles Represent Contemporary American Society

Both Fox’s and CNN’s articles imply representations of contemporary American society (CAS) but the prominence, content, and rhetorical roles of these representations differ. Fox’s representation of CAS has already been described, since Starnes posited it as the enemy, discussed above. CNN’s writer, Filipovich, agrees with Starnes about this one point, in a sense – that society is currently trending feminist and in sympathy with the ad:

- [the backlash. . . ] will surely be countered with pro-feminist consumers buying more razors in defiance of the Piers Morgans of the world. (35-37)
- While the Gillette ad is hardly a way to move gender equality forward, it is a marker of that movement. (43-44)
- why so many ads have been so sexist for so long: There was very little cost to misogyny in the service of capitalism. But thanks to significant feminist progress in recent years, that calculus is shifting. (45-47)
- [the ad . . . ] suggests a significant and feminist-minded cultural shift. (50-51)
- These campaigns tell us a lot about ourselves. (60-61)
The “Piers Morgan” Filipovic expects consumers to oppose is the author of an article in the UK’s Daily Mail which expresses ideas very similar to those in Starnes’ Fox article46.

Ironically, as mentioned earlier, the YouTube video of the ad has garnered about twice as many ‘dislikes’ (1.4 million) as ‘likes’ (approx. 750k), suggesting that both Starnes and Filipovic may be incorrect about the dominance of feminist ideals among consumers47. Filipovic’s claim that society is trending towards the ad’s values is based primarily on the ad’s existence and the recent “me too” movement. So, her representation of society is intimately tied up with her representation of Proctor and Gamble and the significance of the ad. And here she plays somewhat of a delicate game, clearly uncomfortable with the idea of being in allegiance with a large company and advertising made for profit through capitalism. In fact, the relationship between Gillette, as a commercial entity, and feminism is Filipovic’s largest topic in the article, in order to argue that the ad shows society is becoming more feminist.

5.2.1.6 CNN’s Representation of Gillette and the Significance of the Ad

The first thing Filipovic says about Gillette is to distance herself from the company and establish her belief that the company was motivated mainly by profit in producing the ad: “Gillette isn’t trying to promote a more gender-equal society as much as it is trying to sell something. This ad wasn't made out of the goodness of the company's heart; it was made because the company of course knew it would merit significant media coverage and boost sales” (29-30). And she continues further with


47 Or that opponents to the ad are more organized or motivated than supporters.
establishing her lack of sympathy with the company by representing it as recently unsuccessful, implying it may be desperate for a sales boost: “And Gillette needs it. The company has been hit hard by the trend away from a clean-shaven face and toward beards” (31-33). Finally, she expresses her thesis about the significance of the ad, being so careful not to imply support for capitalist interests that she repeats three times the mantra that Gillette and capitalism in general are no way to forward gender inequality (italics added), and twice the accusation that Gillette is exploiting feminism for profit (bold added):

*Buying consumer goods won’t bring about the end of gender inequality,* and

**Gillette is far from the first company to use feminist ideals to sell a product** . . . No, *the revolution will not be advertised.* But **feminism can indeed be co-opted to sell you stuff** . . . But that doesn’t mean the ad is bad.

While *the Gillette ad is hardly a way to move gender equality forward* . . . (37-43)  

After presenting the positive part of her thesis, to be discussed below, Filipovic returns to more disclaimers; it is evident she greatly fears anyone might misunderstand her to approve of any association between capitalist forces and feminist progress:

The monetization of feminism is far from the dreams of our foremothers. (58)

Gillette advertising on gender equality isn’t a feminist victory. (61)

feminists need not do their advertising for them. (61-62)

There is a major ideological implication to Filipovic’s opposition to commercialism – the idea that feminism and commercialism are inherently inappropriate allies. Within the context of liberal discourse in general, capitalism,
commercialism, and consumerism, have long been discussed as, at best distasteful, and at worst, the greatest evil ever undertaken by humanity, to be blamed for economic inequality, climate change, and most of the imperialism and slavery of the past two hundred years. So, it is crucial for Filipovic to establish her lack of appreciation for Gillette if she is not to alienate otherwise sympathetic liberal readers, but at the same time, she does not want to attack Gillette or capitalism too baldly, so as not to alienate more moderate readers who might be more sympathetic with feminism than they are with anti-capitalist ideologies. This is the second instance in the article of Filipovic implying a more radical feminism than she lays claim to outright, a natural stance for a radical feminist writing for mainstream, only moderately left-wing, CNN.

Following the first round of anti-capitalist comments, Filipovic presents her most positive representation of the Gillette company (bold added), but prefaces it with implicit accusations of sexism and exploitation of feminism (italics added), just to make sure!:

Advertising is still a boys’ club, but the people who tell us aspirational stories to sell their products apparently believe that a good chunk of the American public, including men, yearn for greater gender equality. They believe we are so sick of male entitlement and aggression, and so attuned to how those behaviors are nearly as damaging to men as they are to women, that we will want to buy products from companies that share our values. (51-55)

Now, this being Filipovic’s one and only representation of what the Gillette company allegedly, “believe[s],” its structure is interesting. The first clause describes the content of the ad – “sick of male entitlement and aggression,” however, the idea that the ad is “attuned to how those behaviors are nearly as damaging to men as they are to women” seems less supportable. The ad barely touches on the idea that the behaviors
criticized are damaging to men, except in the very abstract sense of not embodying the best a man can be. Filipovic’s sentence seems designed to encourage readers to accept the idea represented in the second clause, which may be new to them, along with the idea in the first clause, which is less radical. By putting the second idea in Gillette’s mouth, she avoids expressing it as her own claim; for her to say, “gender-inequality is almost as damaging to men as to women” could arouse disagreement from some liberal or conservative readers, but not as much as an indirect attribution.

Filipovic saying that a “boys club” of advertisers believe that these behaviors are damaging to men also walks an interesting line. By calling it a “boys club,” she signals to liberals and feminists the usual idea that corporations are ruled by and for men, while at the same time, she implies that male advertising executives, not just feminists, believe that sexism is damaging to men. This is an unusual situation; Filipovic is using men, implied to be the problem, to authorize a feminist ideology.

A few lines later, Filipovic again offers a representation of the Gillette company, or its ad agency, which is simultaneously critical and flattering, calling the ad “what some savvy and powerful people believe we want to see” (60). This implies that the advertisement’s message truly is what the majority of Americans want to see, while simultaneously implying that the company’s leaders are exploiting that message manipulatively; “savvy” means wise, not in the sense of a scientist or saint, but of a salesperson. The adjectives “savvy” and “powerful” both validate the message and imply criticism of those entities at the same time.

Finally, Filipovic summarizes the take-away: “it is an indication of feminist progress” (62), a straightforward statement of her thesis, but nevertheless carefully worded to avoid any sense of allegiance with the company.
5.2.1.7 *How the Authors and Networks Represent Themselves*

This discussion brings us nicely to the last category of representation to be discussed, how the authors and networks represent themselves.

In CNN’s case this has just been almost entirely covered; Filipovic tries to represent herself as a non-radical feminist, while implying some notions of radical feminism covertly, and one who is not very sympathetic with the “boys club” of advertising, but not to such a degree she might alienate readers sympathetic with capitalism. The only element remaining to be discussed is how CNN describes her in the byline to the piece: *Jill Filipovic is a journalist based in Washington and the author of the book "The H-Spot: The Feminist Pursuit of Happiness." Follow her on Twitter.* CNN is apparently happy to explicitly ally itself with feminism, but is also careful to characterize Filipovic as a Washington “journalist,” although her book’s title implies more a combination of culture criticism, feminist philosophy, and self-help for unhappy women who identify as feminists. And if Filipovic can draw conclusions about the ad’s audience based on the advertisers’ message, we can draw tentative conclusions about CNN’s audience based on this message; a good chunk of them must be unhappy women who are liberal and feminist, and who respect journalism. Based on Filipovic’s presentation, it must be suspected that her largest such audience is critical of commercialism but not as critical of capitalism as the far left; this describes mainstream American liberalism.

While Filipovic and CNN strike somewhat of a balance in their self-representations to please their projected audiences, Starnes and Fox play a more complex game, hitting a lot of bases. Predictably, they prioritize defining themselves as
pro-woman, but also sensitive, down-to-earth, and allied with “good old” traditional values and icons. And this is almost all implied, not explicit.

Fox’s prioritization of appearing on the more enlightened side is first demonstrated when Starnes describes Gillette’s ad as “acting like every anti-male stereotype you’ve ever seen” (13-14). This implies that Starnes opposes stereotyping of any kind, automatically placing him on the enlightened side relative to the general American discourse concerning prejudice. This implies that Starnes is not sexist, and that the advertisement is. The line more subtly builds credibility for Starnes by implying that the ad’s depiction is predictable and hackneyed, and that Starnes is perceptive enough not to be taken in by it. Starnes represents himself implicitly as a sensitive critic concerned that the ad is attacking men in a low fashion.

This pattern continues through the article – that Starnes uses descriptions of the ad to imply his own qualities, such as when he says “Instead of virtue signaling, I was sort of hoping Gillette would declare war on razor burn, but whatever” (20-21). His description of the company as “virtue signaling” implies that the company’s virtue is calculated for profit and influence, but the second half of the line seems to be there mainly to characterize Starnes as a down-to-earth unpretentious no-B.S. kind of guy, which is certainly the winning character among conservatives, as demonstrated by Donald Trump’s success through representing himself in a similar way. At the same time, the entire line reinforces the idea previously mentioned, of representing Starnes and his audience as more perceptive and principled than the company.

Penetrating further into the article, after establishing his relative enlightenment, Starnes turns to descriptions of the ad, which covertly imply that Starnes represents traditionally sexist attitudes: “And therein lies the issue – what constitutes the ideal
version of a man over at Proctor & Gamble headquarters? John Wayne or Pajama Boy?” (25-26). The last phrase in this quote firmly establishes Starnes’ values for in-group readers. Not only is John Wayne an icon to those supporting the most sexist and traditional gender roles for men, but Wayne is also known among contemporary conservative readers for vocally expressing his opposition to feminism and dislike of minorities.

Meanwhile, “Pajama Boy” is a recently popular conservative in-group meme. It is based on a political advertisement from a liberal group supporting “Obamacare”; it depicted a young man appearing happy in his pajamas, smiling, and drinking from a mug, with the slogan, “Wear pajamas. Drink hot chocolate. Talk about getting health insurance.” It must have been quite a surprise to the campaigners that the most striking thing about the ad to many conservatives, apparently, was what they considered the effeminate or effete character of the young man; apparently a lot of conservatives feel that being comfortable in pajamas, sipping hot chocolate is unmanly. And so, “pajama boy” became a popular meme mocking liberals; here is an illustrative example of those memes, which uses the original photo:

48 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g9C9u_ffUA0
Also, note this meme’s mockery alludes to the other conservative trope for liberal men, as ‘deadbeats,’ with its “#GetOutOfMomsHouse.” While Starnes has earlier represented himself primarily in opposition to insulting anti-male stereotypes, this clearly applies only to the ones shown in the Gillette ad! Meanwhile, he is, to use his own description of Gillette, “virtue signaling” to conservative readers that he believes all men should be more like John Wayne than “pajama boy.”

Naturally Starnes immediately follows this implication with a statement designed to head off any ideas that he is in fact anti-women: “There’s no doubt that men who bully and sexually harass women need to be – and must be - called out” (27-28). This introduces the section of the article in which Starnes argues that there is a conspiratorial war on masculinity being perpetrated by professors. Starnes’ balancing act is to appear opposed to the ad only because it constitutes an unfair attack on men, not because he supports misogyny (but . . . John Wayne).
After the “war on masculinity” rant, Starnes delivers another line intended to make him look sensitive and compassionate: “men behaving badly is not a chromosome issue, it’s an issue of the heart” (42). It is amusing to note that this is in fact the feminist position as well – that misogyny is not part of innate male psychology (if there is such a thing), but rather a program in the mind. The covert idea implied by this statement is that ad-supporters do think men are innately misogynist, which is definitely not true, while ad-opponents are more concerned with “the heart” – another trope that invokes non-pretentious, non-intellectual, down-to-earthness. The synthesis of these ideas is clear; Starnes is reassuring readers who believe in a traditionally sexist gender ideology that to do so puts them, along with Starnes, on the sensitive and caring side.

5.2.2 Narrative Analysis

Both CNN’s and Fox’s articles are highly structured to deliver their respective ideologies. Although this is true of many texts in the mass media, perhaps never more so than in persuasive “opinion” articles such as these, each written by an ideologue – Filipovic the liberal feminist for CNN and Starnes for Fox – a self-avowed spokesperson for applying Christian conservative ideology to social and political issues in the media. Both authors faced major potential challenges with the rhetoric of these essays because they were tasked with delivering messages likely to put off some of their target audiences in multiple ways. Filipovic was concerned with being seen as a mainstream liberal which meant both opposing the commercialism of the ad she supports and promoting some ideas from feminist theory with which many readers might not agree. Starnes was concerned with promoting traditional gender roles without presenting himself as anti-woman while at the same time representing liberal feminism as a dire attack on men.
Both articles demanded subtlety of expression, careful sequencing of ideas, implicit arguments, and many rhetorical devices.

5.2.2.1 Narrative Reading of CNN’s Article

Filipovic’s title accomplishes many things: “Why Gillette’s ad slamming toxic masculinity is drawing cheers -- and anger.” Formulated as the answer to a question, readers are unlikely to realize it has many presuppositions, most of them ideological: (1) that the behaviors shown in the ad are in fact “toxic masculinity,” (2) that Gillette believes in “toxic masculinity” (which is not mentioned in the ad), (3) whatever is implied by the metaphor of “toxic” masculinity (see below), (4) that more viewers are responding with “cheers” than “anger”; this is implied by the main clause specifying “cheers,” with “and anger” merely tacked onto the sentence, separated by a long dash; and (5) that there is a good reason for the cheering, but not necessarily the anger.

It implies there is good reason for the cheering because, as a title, the question implies that it has an answer, and if it were not a good answer, it would not be the title of an article. The “anger,” being tacked onto the sentence, does not inherit the implication that the article is going to give a good reason for it. In other words, the title implies the article’s thesis rather than stating it.

The use of the metaphor “slamming” draws one’s attention and is surely meant to; the word connotes violent action. The use of “slam” to mean “criticize” is a pervasive trope of the mass media – a metaphor seen in the news almost every day. It seems intended to arouse readers’ emotions by representing criticism as violent antagonistic conflict. In other words, “Gillette encourages men to be more compassionate” would not garner as many clicks, not give readers as much of an emotional reward, as “Gillette slams toxic masculinity.” “Slam” in this usage also seems to imply success on the part of
the slammer, not necessarily in the sense that the slammer wins (defeats the enemy), but in the sense that a blow was successfully delivered – that the slammed one has indeed taken a hit.

Finally, “toxic” masculinity needs to be discussed, especially since the words are not used in the “ad” although Filipovic and Starnes both use it. As far as I can tell from familiarity with public discourse, it means behaviors and attitudes of men which are bad for other people’s well-being, broadly construed. It is an extension of a more general metaphorical idea of “toxic” people or behavior. It seems to combine several ideologies popular in recent American discourse – the development of literal “toxicity” in food and the environment as a major topic of public discussion and news, and many ideas about how people should or should not behave so as not to impact others negatively, especially in ways related to “political correctness.” These concerns are associated with liberal more than conservative discourses, and this explains why Filipovic uses the term as a criticism of the behaviors, while Starnes uses it as a criticism of the ad.

Filipovic’s byline declares her author of the book "The H-Spot: The Feminist Pursuit of Happiness," from which we can infer that CNN believes a significant proportion of its readers are feminist women. At the same time, it should be noted, Filipovic’s book sounds like it may be aimed at conservative feminist women as much as liberal; her title does not explicitly concern politics at all, but rather something all women can relate to. It is worth noting that similarly, Starnes, for Fox, cites at length a conservative female writer, presumably in an effort to appeal to feminist-leaning conservatives and women in general.
Filipovic’s first paragraph continues the strategy of the title, assuming the truth of points she will argue for. She says the ad’s message “shouldn’t be a controversial proposition,” implying that it is obviously true; a “controversial” proposition is, literally, one worth debating. If it “should not be controversial,” that means nobody should disagree with it. And the structure of that same sentence allows her to present a series of juxtaposed good versus bad male character traits, implying that the behaviors criticized in the ad show the negative traits while promoting the positive ones; but these attributions are highly ideological and subjective interpretations of the ad, delivered here as objective descriptions: “It shouldn’t be a controversial proposition: The best a man can be is kind instead of cruel, generous instead of petty, protective instead of predatory.” Set up this way, the ad could hardly be wrong; the sentence implies that anyone who disagrees with the ad believes men should be cruel rather than kind, petty instead of generous, and predatory instead of protective. Therefore it implies that ad opponents value cruelty, greed, and preying on women. Of course, opponents of the ad would disagree!

The next two paragraphs attempt to justify Filipovic’s summary of the ad by describing some concrete details from the ad that support her evaluation. She makes a good case for cruelty (physical bullying) and predation (a man grabbing a women’s butt), but her third example, corporate male condescension to a female employee, does not seem quite like an example of pettiness, so one is forced to search for a meaning to her “generous instead of petty” interpretation. Subconsciously, readers should infer some relationship between the corporate boardroom scene, generosity, and the empowerment of young women; the inference seems clear – that part of empowering women is getting male corporate leaders to be more generous to female employees.
Corporate pay inequality is only subtly alluded to by the scene in the ad; a man simply begins to tell the boardroom what his female colleague “was trying to say” while putting his hand on her shoulder, as a signal of ostensible reassurance, but also to indicate he will speak for her. Most viewers should recognize, at least sub-consciously, that this man is purposely denying this woman a speaking role associated with higher status at work and potential promotion. She is obviously not being groomed to stand in the man’s position in this boardroom. Perhaps Filipovic means “generous and petty in terms of socio-professional status”? Whether referring to pay or status, this seems a somewhat indirect implication of the scene, more of an idea Filipovic is piggy-backing on the ad’s message because of its urgent status within her ideology and the concerns of her female readers. She says nothing directly about this issue during the essay, although she once refers to the ad makers as a “boys club,” which is a traditional way to describe any industry, profession, or pursuit effectively controlled by men, and so, like “generous instead of petty” also seems to evoke the discrimination of men in corporate power against women trying to succeed in their industry. One can see multiple reasons Filipovic did not want to present this argument more directly: (1) it may not be implied by the ad, (2) it is more threatening to some men than many other feminist positions, and (3) it implies that men currently do have the power, which Filipovic should not wish to emphasize here since, for one, she argues the ad is a sign that feminism has been successful, and wishes to promote feminism through optimism, not by dispiriting her readers.

Having set up a representation of the ad that once could not expect anyone to disagree with (who claims to support cruelty and predation?), Filipovic turns to stage two of her argumentative strategy with a paragraph that accomplishes many things, first
and foremost a basic *ad hominem* attack on ad opponents, sweetened with the implication that she and her readers are more intelligent and moral:

It's sad but predictable that imploring men to be better — not just for women, but for other men and boys — is met with such hostility from people who apparently accept the lie that cruel and predatory behavior is part of men's natural makeup. There's a stereotype that feminists hate men, but the opposite seems to be true: **Anti-feminists** who claim to be defending men are the ones who actually seem to have a fairly low opinion of them. (23-25)

The implication that Filipovic and her readers are superior begins with “it’s sad but predictable.” To say that anyone’s behavior is sad and predictable immediately casts the person who says so as more perceptive, more mature, and more intelligent than the person who has done something “sad and predictable.” “Sad” in this phrase is understood to mean “pathetic,” not the opposite of “happy.” Behavior is normally “predictable” when it comes from someone less mature or intelligent than the predictor. In other words, Filipovic is subliminally inviting her readers to feel superior by accepting what she implies about the ad-opponents, which is that they are hostile, gullible, brainwashed, and ignorant — “hostility from people who apparently accept the lie . . .” — and anti- both women and men Finally, the paragraph ends by implying it is feminism which is pro-men, an essential element of Filipovic’s argument, paralleled in Starnes’ Fox article by the idea that his side is more pro-woman than (liberal) feminism. In this paragraph, Filipovic does not say in what way feminists are more pro-men, but implies it is because feminists do not believe men are *innately* cruel and predatory.

The paragraph quoted above also accomplishes something more subtle; while explicitly focusing on what her readers most want to hear — that they are more
enlightened than the ad’s opponents, who are bad people – Filipovic draws conscious attention away from her most ideological and controversial claim – that men are not innately predisposed towards aggression, violence, and dominance struggles. This sentence and its ideology are discussed further in this chapter’s section on representations.

At this point, Filipovic changes subject, a rhetorical device certain to make the implications of the previous paragraph sink in without the readers’ conscious examination. She raises the issue of Gillette’s profit motive and presumed lack of humanitarian motivations, at the same time implying something she will later say directly – that the ad is evidence of a historical shift in America towards feminism: “This ad wasn’t made out of the goodness of the company’s heart; it was made because the company of course knew it would merit significant media coverage and boost sales” (29-30). This summarizes Filipovic’s strategy for promoting the ad as a positive development while simultaneously aligning herself with the left’s critical attitude towards capitalism.

Filipovic follows the statement quoted above with another paragraph that represents Gillette in both a positive and negative light: “And Gillette needs it. The company has been hit hard by the trend away from a clean-shaven face and toward beards; direct-to-consumer affordable-razor companies have also undercut the company’s prices and its profits.” Although Filipovic describes Gillette here as a troubled, currently weak, company, in terms of profits, the rhetorical role of this statement is positive for Gillette in two ways; for one, it discourages readers from thinking of Gillette as overly powerful and rich, which many liberal readers would disapprove of. Secondly, it further supports Filipovic’s contention that the ad reflects
what Americans want to see; a struggling company must cater to the desires of consumers.

The next several paragraphs, the bulk of the article in fact, amplify this message, that Gillette is acting for profit and cares little or not at all about the feminist cause, but the ad “suggests a significant and feminist-minded cultural shift” (52). This section ends then with a definition of that shift: “[the advertisers] believe we are so sick of male entitlement and aggression, and so attuned to how those behaviors are nearly as damaging to men as they are to women . . .” (53-54). Because this sentence concludes the long section about the ad revealing America’s attitudes, it implies that Filipovic’s interpretations of what the ad says about men and women are what the majority of people in our society now believe. This is ideological and manipulative because no evidence, but the ad is presented for such a conclusion, and Filipovic has not had to argue that the ad says what she says it says. However, the idea that the majority of Americans agree with Filipovic and the ad should encourage readers to adopt those attitudes and discourage those who disagree.

The remaining few paragraphs of the essay fill-out elements of Filipovic’s argument set in place earlier. Immediately following the section described above, Filipovic characterizes ad opposition as a “reactionary” “backlash,” heading off the possible objection to her position that opposition to the ad may be more popular and mainstream than she implies.

Following that she concludes the essay by re-stating the pro-feminism + anti-capitalism platform several times in different words, such as “The monetization of feminism is far from the dreams of our foremothers. But we do live in a capitalist nation awash in advertising, and these campaigns tell us a lot about ourselves” (59-60). Note
that this sentence is intentionally vague and general, with the phrase “tell us a lot about ourselves”; Filipovic wants the reader to accept a more specific thesis, not spelled out, but implied, that this ad tells us that more of us sympathize with the ad’s message than otherwise. Or more accurately, that more of us agree with Filipovic’s reading of the ad than otherwise. However, that specific proposition would be accepted by fewer readers than the one presented – that ad campaigns, in general, say ‘a lot about ourselves,’ which seems undeniable. By putting it this way, Filipovic should garner more automatic assent from readers, most of whom lean towards feminism to begin with, according to the political character of CNN’s regular readership.

To summarize, Filipovic needs no manipulation to sell her readers on the feminist position in general, which she does not attempt to do; instead, she is tasked with selling more specific and potentially arguable ideas, such as her unique interpretation of the ad’s images, a feminist theory of human nature, and the idea that our society is now substantially feminist. And she had to align herself with the ad but not the corporate “boys club” (51) that produced it. Most of these ideas were largely implied but mostly not in a ‘hidden’ way.

5.2.2.2 Narrative Reading of Fox’s Article

Todd Starnes’ Fox article begins with the title: “Does Gillette want men to start shaving their legs, too?” Beginning with a question, especially one (intended to be) shocking or absurd49, is a time-honored technique for engaging audiences. Perhaps it should not be felt shocking or absurd for men to shave their legs, but clearly Starnes believes much of his audience will find it so; and by raising the image, he is reminding

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49 It is pragmatically clear that Starnes intends the idea of men shaving their legs to be shocking or absurd, although as several commenting readers point out, competitive male swimmers shave their legs (see comments analysis).
that audience, perhaps sub-consciously, of the norms / ideology within which it is absurd. Even most liberal men probably find the idea of shaving their own legs ridiculous, so this question might make them more open to Starnes’ discourse than otherwise. Although it is technically an open question whether men do shave their legs, pragmatically, asking the question implies that men do not shave their legs. And as audiences understand that this image is intended to stand symbolically for Gillette’s message, they are invited to subconsciously complete the equation: men do not do what Gillette wants them to.

The rich ideological implications of this statement were discussed above in the section on representations – mainly the idea that femaleness is largely a combination of sex appeal and childlike purity. So, by sending this message very implicitly in this title, Starnes further activates the gender ideology he wishes to sell subconsciously in the minds of his audience. The question implies both what women are and what men are within a traditional conservative gender ideology.

On another level, the question is a threat, subliminally; it will make many of Starnes’ male readers feel fear or disgust, consciously or subconsciously, at the thought of shaving their legs, and worse, being perceived as feminine. This is groundwork for Starnes’ ‘argument,’ which seems to focus on making male readers angry at Gillette and the ideas they represented in the ad (a persuasive strategy not properly an ‘argument’). In the first sentence of Starnes’ text, he says Gillette is making men out to be “horrible, horrible people” in general, amplifying this anger further before describing the ad.

Then Starnes summarizes the ad in one sentence reinforcing both messages discussed above: “Proctor & Gamble released a two-minute commercial that accuses men of being incubators of sexual harassment and bullying and toxic masculinity” (6-7).
Putting aside the details of the representation, discussed earlier, this sentence further serves to make men feel they are shameful, under attack, and in danger of being redefined as women (‘incubators,’ subconsciously). Rhetorically, “accuses” implies here that the charges may not be true; otherwise it might say, “a commercial that portrays” certain kinds of male behavior. Being unfairly accused of wrong-doing makes most human beings angry and hostile toward the accusers.

With the audience’s fear and anger primed, the words of the ad cited next must be perceived as attacking men: “Is this the best a man can get? Is it? We can’t hide from it. It has been going on far too long. We can’t laugh it off, making the same old excuses.” (Gillette in Starnes, 8-9). This is the most negative statement about men actually cited by Starnes in his article. Rhetorically, he has established that the advertisers are out to make men feel terrible, without describing the behaviors, and instead subtly implying a misogynistic gender ideology.

At this point, Starnes’ text is interrupted by a large blue link to a companion Fox article: “GILLETTE'S 'WE BELIEVE' AD FOCUSING ON 'TOXIC MASCULINITY' GETS MIXED RESPONSE, SENDS UPSET CUSTOMERS TO SEEK OTHER BRANDS” (10-11). This can be considered a persuasive device in the context of Starnes’ essay, especially as it is highlighted by color and capitalization; it tells readers that they are not extremist or in a tiny minority if they dislike the ad, and it suggests a way for them to make their disapproval impactful without telling them to do so. As mentioned previously, Starnes essay must be considered partly a call to action.

Then follows a non-specific description of the ad, which subtly implies that Starnes and Fox represent the more compassionate or enlightened side, by referring to the ad’s “anti-male stereotype[s]” (13). This implies that to criticize the behaviors or
types of men shown in the ad is anti-male. Starnes ostensibly means it is anti-male because it accuses men unjustly of reprehensible behavior. But at the same time, he has been implying that the reforms suggested in the ad would emasculate men, which implies the behaviors criticized are both non-reprehensible and essentially masculine. In other words, he implies the ad is anti-male both for implying that men behave that way, and for implying that they should not. Because the contradiction between these ideas never becomes obvious through Starnes’ rhetoric, both ideas might influence readers to agree with Starnes, despite the contradiction.

The next section focuses further on discrediting Gillette’s motives. Starnes first presents a long quotation from a Gillette spokesperson, taken from the Wall Street Journal, that seems to represent Gillette as they wish to be represented; the quote concludes, “We are taking a realistic look at what’s happening today, and aiming to inspire change by acknowledging that the old saying ‘Boys Will Be Boys’ is not an excuse.” Starnes’ follow-up to the quote, though, not only deflates it completely, but is also pitched, pragmatically, and socio-linguistically, to score points with his audience by landing blows against Gillette and its failure, at least in the quote above, to assert its profit motive: “Instead of virtue signaling, I was sort of hoping Gillette would declare war on razor burn, but whatever” (20). This conversational usage of “whatever” normally implies that the topic of discussion can be dismissed, or not taken seriously, usually with a derisive connotation. The fact that the joking sentence is a hyperlink to Starnes own webpage also shows that it is meant to attract readers to Starnes, perhaps to read his

50 Starnes cites the speaker as “Proctor and Gamble’s Pankaj Bhalla.” Google reveals that Bhalla is the Director of Gillette and Venus for North America.

51 Some English speakers feel the phrase is particularly associated with female television characters. This author intuitively associates it with “valley girls” – a negative stereotype of young women from the central valley of California.
work for further such incisive and amusing commentary. More directly, the line implies that Gillette is manipulative and deceptive – that they are attempting to increase profits by “virtue signaling” rather than providing a better product – that the ad aims to attract viewers by presenting Gillette as socially concerned and compassionate -- and readers do not require much prompting, if any, to believe that Gillette cares more about profits than reforming society. Starnes simply alludes to the idea, and most readers will agree (this is one of the few ideas held in common between both articles). And this is probably the reason Starnes quoted a Gillette representative (Bhalla) expressing ideals that appeal to many readers – “to inspire change by acknowledging that the old saying ‘Boys Will Be Boys’ is not an excuse” -- so that he could cast these motives as fake; after Starnes’ statement about “virtue signaling” versus “razor burn,” readers may interpret Bhalla’s statement as deceptive, manipulative, or even exploitative.

Next Starnes, continues to defuse objections to his side, still trying to generate assent before presenting most of his ideology. He repeats the strategy just used now again, describing Gillette’s intentions from their point of view, which imply objections to Starnes’ position, and then afterwards deals a death blow to those objections:

Gillette wants all of us guys to hold each other accountable for our behavior - and they have dedicated themselves to promoting positive, attainable, and inclusive versions of what it means to be a man. And therein lies the issue – what constitutes the ideal version of a man over at Proctor & Gamble headquarters? John Wayne or Pajama Boy? (22-26)

Starnes presents the most positive possible interpretation of Gillette’s ad and then immediately equates that point of view to the emasculation of his male conservative readers, for whom John Wayne and Pajama Boy are rich ideological symbols, as detailed
previously. This completes Starnes ‘defusing objections’ section and re-raises the fear of emasculation, perhaps the dominant theme of Starnes’ essay.

Almost, at this point, Starnes turns to the meat of his message, but throws in one more attempt to win the sympathies of his most feminist or liberal-leaning readers before doing so: “There’s no doubt that men who bully and sexually harass women need to be – and must be - called out. But society wants us to believe that masculinity breeds such behavior - that inside the heart of every man is a bully and a boor” (27-29). This joins with previous expressions to imply that Starnes and Fox are not sexist but rather standing against anti-male sexism. At the same time it sets up the “society versus us” dichotomy that plays a central role in the next paragraph.

The next two paragraphs, discussed previously at length, begin with the “war on masculinity in America” (30) and end with college professors wanting to medicate “little boys who climb trees” (33). Rhetorically, it completes the system of ideas, and emotional appeals, prepared by the essay up to this point, to sell an extremist ideology to men by generating insecurity, fear, and paranoia, and offering traditional conservative values as a remedy.

This section seems to mark the point at which Starnes has accomplished his primary mission and after which he can assume few unsympathetic readers will continue reading. So, he turns to supporting his position by citing the words of his “friend” Allie Stucky, with a rather lengthy quote – eight sentences (35-38 / 40-44); that she is a woman claiming to express “what women want” implies she is an unimpeachable

52 There is no link to Stucky in Starnes’ article. This is her website: https://allie-stuckey.com/. Her slogan appears to be (lol) “the conservative millennial.” The featured video-article on the home-page concerns a person “not knowing if homosexuality is a sin.” In the first minute of the video, Stucky explains that it definitely is a sin, citing Bible chapter and verse, and that marriage can only be between a man and a woman, and speaks against “progressive Christians.”
authority on the subject, even though we know that is false, because each woman may want different things. This is especially notable because Starnes has taken a strong stance against stereotyping. And perhaps that is why he does not himself assert “what women want” but rather uses Stucky’s words. Stucky’s quote, also discussed in detail previously, focuses on the idea that men in America are, in fact, not masculine enough, which is a major source of all our (unspecified) social ills, and that “what women want,” innately, is dominant men.

In terms of persuasion, this section both offers men a solution to the terrifying situation presented in the previous paragraphs, and a reward for coming on board Starnes’ bandwagon: “When men embrace their masculinity in a way that is healthy and productive, they are leaders, warriors and heroes” (Stucky in Starnes, 39-41). The grammar of this sentence is significant. The ostensibly intended interpretation is: “being leaders, warriors, and heroes is a healthy and productive way for men to embrace their masculinity.” But this interpretation is licensed only by the fact that no definition or examples of the positive ways are given. The sentence can also be interpreted as saying, *there are some healthy and productive ways for a man to embrace his masculinity, which are not being specified here, which make a man a leader, warrior, etc.* In other words, it incorporates an implicit promise with an emotional appeal for men who feel ashamed or attacked, or simply have low self-esteem. They can find a source of self-esteem and empowerment in roles which license male dominance and aggression in positive ways. It is hard to argue with the value of “heroes,” but the sentence also invites men to decide for themselves which aggressive/dominating behaviors make them “leaders” and “warriors” and this seems worrisome. Some men, certainly, might consider violence or discrimination against some kinds of people to fulfill such roles. It
also implies that behaviors in which men are neither dominant nor aggressive are neither healthy nor productive for men.

One might argue that Stucky does not intend to pick out “dominance” or “aggression” as the quality of heroes; however, a few lines later she says, “Here’s a secret that every woman knows: Women want real men—men they can count on and, yes, look up to. No amount of feminist theory will change that” (Stucky in Starnes, 43-44). In other words, this section offers an ideology of natural male dominance as the potential solution to all of men’s economic and personal woes.

The remaining few lines of the essay bring back the Gillette ad, which now seems uglier in contrast to Stucky’s inspiring vision of “heroes”: “And that’s what bothers me the most about the Gillette commercial. It’s an incredibly unfair stretch to lump all men into the hashtag ‘me too’ basket” (48-49) What man would prefer the ‘me too basket’ over leadership and heroism? Note the choice of “basket.” The only English phrases normally putting people in baskets are “basket-case” and being “carried away in a basket,” both of which imply that the person in the basket has been thoroughly beaten / defeated. The word “basket” here may refer to the Hillary Clinton’s remark “basket of deplorables” to describe during the 2016 presidential election to describe Trump supporters. However, the most well-known “basket” phrase is “putting one’s eggs in one basket” which is something one should not do, because it is risky. It also associates “eggs” (a symbol of the feminine) with “basket.” Perhaps Starnes did not consciously intend all of these associations, but the use of the word is definitely intended to belittle, in contrast to, say, “the #metoo movement.”

Starnes then reiterates this contrast between “heroes” and feminist men. He mentions the “gentlemen” who “provide for their families [. . .] protect their loved ones
and [. . .] stand up to the bullies,” (52) then rebukes Gillette again, repeating his main accusations against Gillette: “Enough with the gender shaming, Gillette. Before too long, they’ll be telling us to shave our legs” (54-55).

By the end of the essay, Starnes has given male readers a choice between the shame and emasculation allegedly promoted by the ad and being the provider/ protector / leader/ hero/ warrior to fulfill every woman’s desire for man to look up to and save society.

5.2.2.3 Word Frequencies

Word frequencies cannot be expected to reveal much for such short articles (less than 1000 words each) or in contrast to each other, since the articles are written in different registers of style and focus on different issues.

Here are all the words, except for the author and network names, used at least three more times in one article than the other (most of them used in only one of the articles); Since even these frequency differences reveal nothing not previously discussed about the articles, words with lower frequency differences will not be examined.53

Words most used more by Fox, in order from largest difference to smallest:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>scaled frequency difference</th>
<th>raw counts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>masculinity / masculine</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>CNN-2/Fox-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>issue</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>CNN-0/Fox-4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

53 All words referring to women and men are also discussed separately at the end of this section, regardless of how low their counts.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>scaled frequency difference</th>
<th>raw counts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>every</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>CNN-0/Fox-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>guys</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>CNN-0/Fox-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proctor and gamble</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>CNN-0/Fox-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>know</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>CNN-0/Fox-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wants</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>CNN-0/Fox-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>news</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>CNN-0/Fox-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boys</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>CNN-5/Fox-7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Words most used more by CNN, in order from largest difference to smallest:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>scaled frequency difference</th>
<th>raw counts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sell</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>CNN-4/Fox-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feminist</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>CNN-5/Fox-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>company</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>CNN-5/Fox-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>advertising</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>CNN-4/Fox-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>backlash</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>CNN-4/Fox-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>companies</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>CNN-3/Fox-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ads</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>CNN-3/Fox-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>significant</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>CNN-3/Fox-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>progress</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>CNN-3/Fox-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>equality</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>CNN-3/Fox-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gender</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>CNN-4/Fox-1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These sets reveal little about the content of the articles not already demonstrated better during the discourse analysis above, but they do support the observations of that analysis. First, it is gratifying to see that the word-lists above neatly sketch the topic-differences between the articles, and in the case of CNN’s words, almost express Filipovic’s entire thesis.

One potentially intriguing pattern above is “Proctor & Gamble” (CNN-0 / Fox-3), versus “compan(y/ies)” (CNN-8 / Fox-1). Not listed above is “Gillette” (CNN-9 / Fox-7). The reader should recall that Gillette / Proctor & Gamble being a company (i.e. a capitalist commercial organization) was a major sub-topic of Filipovic’s discourse, while Starnes criticizes Proctor & Gamble for hypocrisy in trying to profit off the ad’s message. But Starnes made no statements implying it is wrong for companies to do anything for profit – only Proctor & Gamble, for making this ad. That is part of the difference reflected by these word-counts; Filipovic implied criticism of “companies” in general, but not Proctor & Gamble, in particular, or for making the ad. While Starnes did the reverse. But also, we may presume Starnes chose repeatedly to use the parent company name, partly to make sure his readers know how to boycott the company for greatest effect (by not buying any P&G products).

Also notable is that the difference in style between the articles is very clear from these short lists, in which Starnes has only two words longer than one syllable, and only one that could possibly be unfamiliar to an uneducated individual – ‘masculinity’; CNN’s most used vocabulary, on the other hand, although not demanding higher education, consists almost entirely of multi-syllabic words used more often in intellectual discussions than casual conversation.
A few of the words on Fox’s list above could be interpreted as more revealing in ways worth noting, although it is necessary to recognize that, given the low word-counts, these interpretations might be justly accused of ‘reading in’ too much. The presence of “every” on the list seems to highlight Starnes inflammatory use of over-generalization:

[the ad shows] “every anti-male stereotype you’ve ever seen” (13)

“society wants us to believe […] inside the heart of every man is a bully and a boor.” (28-29)

“Every woman I know wants a strong, responsible man.” (46)

Much can be seen here. First of all, such over-generalizations, like Starnes’ use of ‘literally’ and ‘society wants us to believe . . . ’ are considered poor writing and poorer argumentation in educated circles; they too would be circled in red by not only college, but probably high school English teachers. But, Starnes is not using them through ignorance but rather calculation. As that high school English teacher and common sense would tell you, these statements, with the “every”’s cannot be true, but are more emotionally compelling than they would be with “some” or “most.” They are obviously incorrect and illogical statements, if the “every” is taken literally, but they are licensed here by the conversational tone of the essay; people use “every” this way in conversation to mean “a lot of.” So, this allows Starnes to pass these dangerously extreme and false statements to readers who accept them. It also makes Starnes’ argumentative style more similar to that of his target audience than to that of a writer with Starnes’ savvy and experience.

The presence of “know” and “want” on Fox’s list is unexpected. While the instances of “know” in the article seem to show nothing of interest, the “want”s do:
“Does Gillette want men to start shaving their legs, too?” (title)

“Gillette wants all of us guys to . . .” (22)

“Society wants us to believe . . .” (28)

“They want you to believe little boys who climb trees . . .” (33)

“Here’s a secret that every woman knows: Women want real men.” (43)

“Every woman I know wants a strong, responsible man.” (46)

“. . . men who want to protect and provide for their families.” (31-32)

To summarize, all but one of the “wants” are demands being made on men by Gillette, society, liberals, and women, the final one listed being men’s supposed demands on themselves; Starnes seems to be subliminally overwhelming his male readers with pressures, which is consistent with his general strategy of trying to provoke anger and insecurity.

Words referring to women and men also support the other analyses of these articles, as described in the previous sections:

**Fox:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'boy(s)'</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'guys'</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'us'</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'gentlemen'</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'incubators'</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'leader'</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘provider’</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘protector’</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This perspective on the articles is certainly striking. Fox refers to men twice as much as CNN, reflecting the fact that Starnes’ article is primarily for and about men, not women, while CNN’s article does not focus on either gender, but rather the role of the advertisers in advancing feminism. Furthermore, Fox’s vocabulary very clearly implies an ideology emphasizing men and representing them very positively, and somewhat traditionally (gentlemen, providers, protectors, and leaders), although it must be mentioned that the last three terms all appear in one sentence quoted from Starnes’ ‘friend’ Allie Stucky, as discussed elsewhere. The appearance of ‘us’ is also striking. Although ‘us’ and ‘we’ appear in all articles in this study, only in this article does ‘us’ refer specifically to Starnes and other men, as opposed to all readers or all Americans. The implication of this list is clear; this discussion is for men; women are merely topics. Starnes use of ‘guys’ also serves to imply that his article is a discussion among the ‘boys,’ unlike CNN’s. The large numbers of ‘boy(s)’ in both articles is primarily a result of both discussing the ‘boys will be boys’ idea criticized by Gillette’s advertisement. The odd appearance of ‘incubator’ indicates Starnes effort to imply that Gillette is treating men as women, as previously discussed, and perhaps should be counted among Starnes’ terms.
for women, where it characterizes them as breeders; however, technically it refers to men in the article.

Finally, the use of many different terms for women, including those referring to relationships with men, in CNN’s article, versus only ‘woman / women’ in Fox’s, also seems to raise the importance and individuality of women in CNN’s discussion versus Fox’s. Filipovich was also probably going out of her way to represent women with words that would arouse the compassion of male readers, with the words ‘girlfriends’ and ‘wives.’

Altogether, the examination of word-frequencies and semantic networks above strongly supports both the articles’ overt emphases and the conclusions of the analysis in this chapter and Chapter 6.

5.2.3 Gillette Analysis Conclusion

Both these articles certainly demonstrate that some mass media news texts are worded in ways which covertly (and overtly) imply ideologies, with the intent to influence audiences, and sometimes with the intent to influence readers subliminally or emotionally. This is far from new (perhaps it has always been so); what is newer is our ability to analyze such discourses critically with the conceptual tools of cognitive linguistics and the concept of ‘social justice.’ Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) demands we examine such texts to show how they may be transmitting ideologies of hatred, prejudice, or inequality, and expose both their methods and messages for criticism and awareness. While both Gillette articles proved fruitful subjects for discourse analysis in general, Starnes’ Fox article seemed very much to demonstrate the value of CDA and show that at least one ideology of inequality is being covertly broadcast in an effort to influence its audience. Whether it succeeded or not will be taken up in the next chapter.
5.3 Section B: COMMENT ANALYSIS

5.3.1. Introduction

The most unique effort of this paper is to test the hypothesis of covert ideological influence from mass media news articles to their audiences. In the chapter on reactions to the Supreme Court’s pro-’travel ban’ decision, we saw indications that there is some influence, but many signs that readers were more preoccupied with their own concerns and previous allegiances, and that it is difficult to distinguish influence from resonance between comments and articles. Signs of influence were belied by the fact that most commenters on BOTH articles expressed conservative opinions, and by the fact that a high proportion of the comments made addressed topics not mentioned in their respective articles.

The situation is both similar and different for the comments analyzed in this chapter – on reactions to Gillette’s “The Best Men Can Be Ad.” We shall not review the ad’s content here, as it has been discussed in detail in the previous chapter. The situation is similar to that of the travel ban article comments in that (1) there are signs of ideological influence, especially among the comments on Fox, but not for the majority of comments, and (2) the proportions of comments expressing liberal versus conservative viewpoints do not entirely reflect the presumed biases of each news source, chiefly because the Fox readers were split evenly on siding with or against the article rather than the majority aligning with Fox itself:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>On CNN article</th>
<th>On Fox article</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pro-Gillette / ad (*or anti-Fox author)</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Gillette / ad</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mixed or unclear</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

216
However, there is little point in trying to draw conclusions from these numbers, because each of the categories above show great diversity in content, including quite a few sub-categories, some of which, it could be argued, do not belong in the simplistic scheme assumed for the above chart. For example, most of the comments against Fox’s article are directed against writer Todd Starnes, many of which appear to be from conservative readers, and some of these comments are sexist, so despite their opposition to Starnes, they do not belong with the pro-Gillette / feminist comments. But there are also three truly feminist conservative comments, three left-wing anti-Gillette comments, and many other ideologically unique comments. And there are anti-Gillette comments unrelated to the ad or its issues.

Finally, some comments in the mixed / unclear category might appear differently to different interpreters; some seem fairly cryptic, even considering context, and one must infer their allegiances. The important point here is that the comments are quite diverse, even individualistic.

This situation seems a reason to suspect that many readers have not been influenced, at least in a simple direct way, by the content of the articles. Instead they have interacted with the articles, each in unique, complex, and significant ways. This is consistent with theories of cognitive and social constructivism—that meanings are not like objects transferred between people, but rather constructs, created anew during each interaction between an individual and a text. The readers are not swallowing the articles naively; they are, in general, critiquing them. However, a significant number of the anti-Gillette comments on Fox’s article do show strong signs of influence by the article, as we shall see.
5.3.2 Comments on CNN Article (from Twitter)

Almost half (43/100) of the comments on CNN’s article, by Jill Filipovic, support Gillette’s ad, the company, or feminism, in some sense. About one quarter (22) stand clearly against the ad in some sense, and nearly a third are more ideologically complex than that or unclear.

5.3.2.1 Comments Supporting Gillette, the Ad, or Feminism, in Some Sense

The largest sub-group (16) of these comments agree with one or more specific elements of the ad’s message. The second largest (15) simply support the ad, without saying why, but based on their seemingly unconditional enthusiasm, it is fair to assume they agree with most of it. The remainders agree with the ad in more unique senses, to be discussed.

5.3.2.2 Comments Agreeing with Specific Elements of the Gillette Ad’s Ideology

The largest group of these comments cite or allude to the ad’s primary idea – urging a subset of men, perhaps most, but not all, to become the “best” men they can be, by changing their behavior in specific ways. There were several exchanges between disagreeing readers in which a supporting commenter attempts to correct what they believe to be another’s misunderstanding of the ad’s message by repeating this basic idea – although, as it will be seen, the supporting commenters’ interpretations of the main idea are nevertheless, each unique:

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54 In this chapter, when presenting interchanges among the comments, the comment whose content is being pointed to will be presented in bold and any opposing comments in red with other comments necessary for context not highlighted. Context will not be given for every comment; if context is not given, the reader can assume it is not helpful.
C68. This is a great ad....advertising is a mirror, it doesn't change behavior, it reflects it back at us and sometimes the truth hurts; sometimes the reflection isn't aspirational, it's reality and it can be painful. Good for them.

C69. RE: Except 99% of men aren’t abusers or criminals. So don’t draw a false equivalency between masculinity and violence. The problem isn’t the message, it’s the assumption that we need to be taught this when virtually all of us already know it and practice it.

C70. RE: Oh for crying out loud.....is the ad claiming that? No, they are asking men if they are being the best they can be....are they being complicit when they see stuff happening. It's not addressing domestic violence but the little things, the little discourtesies that happen.

Certainly, C70’s choice of the word “discourtesies” cannot be attributed to the ad, article, or previous comments, so it represents that reader's unique personality, subculture, or other influences. This is also partly true for the mention of “domestic violence”; although it is a response to the previous commenter’s concerns about equating masculinity with violence, that commenter (C69) must be understood, in context, to refer to the bullying in the ad. C70 reads into C69, that he feels accused of domestic violence and reads into the ad that its selection of behaviors are intended to stand for only non-criminal, relatively trivial acts – which implies that C70 considers the behaviors shown in the ad to be relatively trivial. This is one example of how readers interact individualistically with the ideologies in texts rather than simply absorbing them. The same could be said for another example:
C77. If your first response to this ad is to angrily insist “not all men are bad” know two things 1- we know that not all men are bad 2- We absolutely do know that you, specifically, are one of the bad men.

C78. Maybe because men don’t like being stereotyped any more than women do? 
C79. Let’s guess - it’s the first ever ad suggesting how good men act so men are mad and women don’t understand why because we have millions of ads telling us how to act.

The last comment, from a woman, reformulates the ad’s main idea as: there are good men and a way they behave and other men who need to act more like the good ones. Unlike in the previous example, it sounds like this commenter may be thinking of more than “discourtesies.” Again, neither the ad, nor the article represents men as “good” men and not-”good.” One would be surprised to see Gillette or Filipovic say such a thing, because they must have examined their presentations carefully to avoid saying anything so politically unjudicious. Almost surely, Gillette tried not to make male viewers feel attacked.

This commenter also sees the ad as parallel to numerous previous ads telling women how to behave. She does not imply that such a parallel was part of Gillette’s intention. Her contrast between men and women in this respect is interesting. Gillette’s ad might be the first overtly saying it is telling men how to behave, but, in reality, almost all representations of men in ads have always told men how to behave, just as representations of women tell women how to behave. This is the normative nature of images in the mass media. Nor are there “millions” of ads overtly instructing women, in the way the Gillette ad does to men; almost all of the ads telling women how to act are of the former kind, instructing only implicitly, by representing women in the ways the
advertisers believe consumers want women to be; this is how advertising usually works. However, this commenter’s perception is far from meaningless; when she says this ad is “the first ever suggesting how good men act,” that is probably because it is the first one she has seen telling men to act in ways she believes would be good.

Here are a few more individual comments supporting the idea of men acting better:

C92. I wonder why asking men to act better is causing an outrage

C98. Cheers here... and is probably drawing anger to the men who feel like there's nothing to change. Oh yes men...a lot has to change... like my father always says "where are all the men at??...there are no men anymore!" ..."they need to stand up and be a man."

C98 presents another interpretation of men being their best – that for a man to reform his behavior in the ways shown by the ad would make him more manly. This is probably implied by Filipovic’s argument but her only statement to that effect merely implies that men are not innately cruel or predatory; Filipovic does not address the nature of a “real man.” On the other hand, this idea could be seen as an implication of the images in Gillette’s ad, since all the positive examples of men in the ad look strong, healthy, and happy, with traditionally American male clothing and hair. However, it is not possible to argue from these images to the idea of being a “real man,” only to note the implication.

Leaving the comments about “men being best” behind, the second largest group of topically similar comments supporting the ad’s ideology, focus on the bullying:

C50. hol up did gilette attack its main consumers?

C51. RE: Are its main consumers bullies?
C54. RE: FR tho, watch the ad. It’s mostly about holding men to the sort of standard I’m pretty sure most men would say they aspire to. Men helping men. Boys helping boys. **Men teaching boys to be the kind of men who break up a pile-on instead of cheering it on.**

C55. It doesn’t make sense. Who are they trying to sell razors too? And I’ve never seen a group of men stand back and watch to boys fist fight. Just stupid.

C56. RE: I have, many times. And heard the cheering on.

* * *

C60. I get the respect for women. No problem. But tell me again what is wrong with a bunch of boys running and a couple of boys wrestling around. We are becoming a nation of total pansies.

C61. RE: No, we are becoming a nation of people who know to fight when it’s necessary and not as a reaction to every perceived slight.

Most of these do not require comment; they refer accurately to the scene in the ad and its implied message. Filipovic did use the word “bully” which might have primed C51’s usage. Filipovic did not allude in any way to a “pile-up” or “pile-on” and did not mention the cheering of the other men, which seems to have been salient for most of these commenters. The last comment (C61) seems unusual and interesting; it implies that the male aggression seen in bullying and boys fighting is related to either the offense-sensitivity of public discourse or to some other perceived pervasive hostility in American society. It seems an unusual but not empty connection to make. In what ways are such emotional dynamics in public discourse (the offense-sensitivity) linked to our gendered emotional expectations? In any case, it is another idea that does not seem to come from Filipovic or the ad.
There remain several unique comments or exchanges supporting specific ad content. One commenter, a man, resists the idea that the ad condemns most men; and the idea of not condoning other men’s misbehavior touches him personally:

C16. RE: I’ve been saying this all day .. it isn’t a bashing of masculinity as far as I can see ..it’s encouraging men to be the best of men and I love it for that reason! I’m sick of seeing all men castigated as abusers or misogynists..it’s wrong and this ad is just brilliant

C17. RE: "I’m sick of seeing all men castigated as abusers or misogynists" Thank you. Same here. I’m not so positive about this ad though. It does at least say that "some men" are ok but the implication is that most men aren’t.

C18. RE: I’ve never felt castigated as an abuser or misogynist. Mostly because I know that I have never been one. I do know, that when I was younger I didn’t always speak out against people who were though, because I worried about their approval

These men seem to feel that the ad made a point of distinguishing between men who should be “castigated” and those that don’t. Although this supports the ad, it was also not a feature of Filipovic’s discourse.

Another commenter also resists the idea that the ad condemns all men, and sees the essence of the reforms suggested by the ad as “how to be respectful”:

C32 (2 tweets): I just don’t understand the total outrage by it. They’re not saying all men are this way, and I don’t think they’re even saying that masculinity is bad. I think it’s more about doing the right thing and showing your sons (who will grow up to be men) how to be respectful.
In the past, there have been behaviors that were deemed acceptable that turned out to be wrong either towards women or people in general. You can be masculine, but masculine in a way to stand up for what’s right rather than being a part of the problem. Again, although consistent with Filipovic’s argument, the focus on respectful-ness is the commenter's own spin.

Only one of the comments on CNN focuses on the ad’s opposition to sexual harassment:

C47. RE: You’ll have a tall hill to climb to convince us that the goosing incident (& others) in that ad are anything other than offensive. Enough already.

Filipovic did implicitly characterize the “goosing” as sexual harassment, but the reader may have needed no prompting to form such an opinion.

One other comment supporting the ad focuses on women, but in a different sense:

C27. RE: The ad is beautiful. I truly think it is aimed heavily at women who may do a lot of the purchasing of items for their respective households & men who appreciate the need for it. It is time for them to back it up & practice what they preach. @ProcterGamble #BoycottTuckerCarlson

Since this comment implies sexist assumptions about American households, although the reader signals a liberal alignment with the hashtag “#BoycottTuckerCarlson,” this interpretation of the ad was not prompted by Filipovic, who might not agree with it.

5.3.2.3 CNN Comments Supporting the Ad Non-Specifically

Fifteen CNN comments fully support the ad without citing any ideas they agree with, such as:

C3. It's a great ad
C15. Who in their right mind would be angered by this commercial?

There are also several distinct groups of such comments with particular spins. A few note that it is “a great start”:

C4. Re: I think it’s a great start.

C31. It’s a great start to what should be a long process.

This perspective does not seem attributable to Filipovic. She claimed that the ad was a sign that society is already trending predominantly feminist – and emphasized that the ad itself is not a progressive action, but merely a sign of progress.

A related exchange seems more in agreement with Filipovic:

C22. I don’t have an issue with this commercial. I do have a problem with anyone who thinks the complex issue of gender relations can be solved with a 90-second commercial aimed at only one of the genders. We all have a role to play in fixing this.

C23. RE: Who thinks that? It’s the cumulative effort. This is one in the right direction.

C24. RE: Well then... I guess I don’t have a problem then, right?

But even this exchange contradicts Filipovic’s position since she does not see the ad as a step toward solving the problem, but only a sign of progress.

Here are a few more examples of the many vaguely approving comments:

C33. Its an ad with a message. I don't see what the big uproar is all about. Unless you're guilty of some or all of it.

C34. RE: I was surprised by all the negative reactions.

C35. RE: Me too.

C66. I thought it was touching..
5.3.2.4 Comments Partly Supporting the Ad and Partly Doing Something Else:

Beyond the 31 comments just reviewed, 12 more comments support the ad in part, taking one or another perspective requiring analysis. There are five kinds of these:

(1) The generalizations are true; men are too aggressive, perhaps by nature:

C9. Re: I think you would agree men have more power over women in the world we live in and tend to be the aggressors in most situations. Not saying bullying is a male-only thing, but there’s a reason why it was targeting men

C13. Re: If most men are “already better” there wouldn’t have been a need for a #metoo movement. This commercial isn’t saying that all men are bad, but that even good men that stay silent in the face of bullying and harassment can be better. If you see an injustice take action.

It is interesting that comment C9 appears to come from a man, who somewhat focuses on male power, while C13 almost surely comes from a feminist woman, based on the #metoo tag and empowerment emoji. And these two are the closest any CNN comments come to claiming that men are pervasively or innately bad (which they do not do).

(2) Masculinity does not equal bullying and harassment:
C7. The problem for a lot of men is the association of intrinsically bad behavior with masculinity, whether you qualify it as "toxic" or not. Bullying and harassment are indeed toxic behaviors, but there's nothing masculine about them. They're the actions of cowards and cretins.

C8. Re: I posted basically the same thing. Nothing masculine about bullying or harassment. The fact they are being portrayed has masculine is what I object to.

These commenters appear to agree fully with Filipovic, who said that people who believe men are inherently aggressive have a “low opinion of men.” These commenting men however seem conscious of having arrived at these opinions independently, so they do not constitute covert influence:

(3) Ad-supporters concerned for more positive images of men:

C10. Re: I understand the point they were making, and I largely agree with it. There are indeed toxic behaviors, and I have no problem with a campaign targeted at men addressing these behaviors. But I see masculinity as embodying noble qualities in men, just as w/ femininity in women.

C11. I think we see that marketed in different ways. Men in truck commercials are tough, home improvement commercials show men as builders and hard workers, etc. I think companies appeal to them in a different way

C16. RE: I’ve been saying this all day .. it isn’t a bashing of masculinity as far as I can see ..it’s encouraging men to be the best of men and I love it for that reason! I’m sick of seeing all men castigated as abusers or misogynists..it’s wrong and this ad is just brilliant.
These comments too could be seen as wholly consonant with Filipovic’s position but introduce their own elements. Although Filipovic spoke positively of men behaving well, she did not discuss “masculinity as embodying noble qualities,” and certainly would not have interpreted the notion as C11 does, as being all about strength, toughness, and diligence – even specifically as workers; Filipovic cited kindness, generosity, and empowering daughters. Meanwhile C16, separately, agrees on the positive focus, but seems to disagree with the implications of C11 and C10 that the Gillette ad failed to show the images those commenters think of as “noble” masculinity. Perhaps C16 was influenced by Filipovic’s interpretation of the ad.

(4) Agreeing with the ad but talking about women’s behavior instead:
C19. RE: Women are not exempt from this. We can be vicious to each other while also being susceptible to peer pressure that prevents us from sticking up for each other. We all have work to do. I like that the ad put it out there to start the conversation. Brave.

Filipovic did not introduce women’s relations with each other as a subject in the ad, although her status as the author of *The H-Spot: The Feminist Pursuit of Happiness* could perhaps prime the idea in C19.

(5) Agreeing with ad but focusing on male opponents to the ad:
C95. A lot of very tough masculine men are suddenly very fragile over a commercial

Like the author of C95, Filipovic criticized men who are upset about the ad, calling them an “angry” “loud” “backlash,” but Filipovic also called them a “handful,” not
a “a lot” and did not imply that they were “fragile” in any way; so this spin too appears to originate largely with the reader, not the article.

5.3.2.5 Comments on CNN Neutral, Mixed, or Unclear in Perspective

One quarter (22/100) of the comments on Filipovic’s article do not seem to take an unambiguous “side” for or against the Gillette article, Filipovic, and feminism. They do so in over eight different ways, with the largest of those eight groups being the “miscellaneous” or “other” category. In other words, these comments show even more individuality than those reviewed above. The analysis will deal first with the more easily classifiable of these comments and move gradually into less clear realms.

The single largest category of “mixed” comments includes those which at least partly support the content of the ad, but express misgivings about advertisers getting political. Here is an exchange where two people muses on several aspects of this sentiment:

C38. Ads are supposed to get people to buy stuff.
C39. RE: I agree but based on how the country is today, one never can count on the sincerity of the ads.
C40. RE: Such a shame, everything is getting so serious. Ads used to try to be funny, not political.

These thoughts could likely have been inspired by Filipovic’s discussion in the article, which asserted that the Gillette ad was made primarily for money and implied it might not be sincere.

Here are two separate comments upset about identity politics in the mass media, although it is unclear what “side” they are on:
C65. RE: Generalizations are acceptable again. I get so confused on what’s allowed and who I should hate.

C96. Everyone so divided and sensitive on EVERYTHING these days.

This perspective is also implied by other comments to be regarded for other reasons below. It is not clear whether these commenters lean left or right, but their sentiment seems opposed to Filipovic, who expresses no misgivings about identity politics.

A related perspective is “most men are not that way.” This idea has already been seen in some comments supporting the ad; in those comments, readers noted that Gillette did not say “most” men are bad. In the comments below, other readers disagree, pointing to Gillette’s use of the word “some” instead of “most” to describe men who do the right thing:

C12. The ad says “some” men are doing the right thing. Gillette..most men, that includes men with lots of fine masculine traits, abhor bad behavior, do not tolerate it and certainly do not need a patronizing ad to tell them how to behave like decent human beings -again ..MOST men.

C17. RE: “I’m sick of seeing all men castigated as abusers or misogynists” Thank you. Same here. I’m not so positive about this ad though. It does at least say that "some men" are but the implication is that most men aren’t.

Considering that only a minority of comments refer to specific content from the ad, it seems notable that these readers paid attention to the wording of Gillette’s narration. This clearly matters a lot to them. Filipovic simply referred to “men” when describing the ad’s message (lines 15-22 in CNN article). Undetermined generic nouns in
English normally imply “in general,” so these readers could be reacting against the possible implication of Filipovic’s language that the ad points to “most” men. The readers feel patronized and persecuted, and one can infer that behind their “some” versus “most” issue is the question of whether they are among the ad’s targets.

The scope of the people who need to improve is an issue for readers in a variety of ways, although barely touched on by Filipovic. In another exchange, one reader says, yes, “most,” but not all men, and another says that although “most” is better than “all,” it’s still unfairly biased against men:

C13. Re: If most men are “already better” there wouldn’t have been a need for a #metoo movement. This commercial isn’t saying that all men are bad, but that even good men that stay silent in the face of bullying and harassment can be better. If you see an injustice take action.

C14. RE: At least you said most and not all. As for the me too movement it’s not limited to just women.

C14 implies that men are also victims of sexual assault and focuses on C13’s casual use of “most.” Implicitly, C14 contradicts C13, because C13’s point is that the ad does address all men, not because all men are bad, but because there are things all men can do to improve the situation. It is unknown whether C14 intended to imply C13 is wrong, or was simply focused on their own concerns. Neither of the comments’ unique concerns were discussed by Filipovic – neither the responsibility of men to speak out against other men’s behavior, nor any question of whether men are being unfairly targeted, as opposed to both sexes; although, the first issue, men calling out other men, is a central notion of the ad.
One other commenter raises the question of women’s role in reforming “gender relations”:

C22. I don't have an issue with this commercial. I do have a problem with anyone who thinks the complex issue of gender relations can be solved with a 90-second commercial aimed at only one of the genders. We all have a role to play in fixing this.

This comment echoes Filipovic’s emphasis on the triviality of the ad relative to feminist progress, although Filipovic does not address the question of women’s role in the process.

All of the comments examined so far in this chapter either fully or partly approved of the ad’s message. The remaining comments addressing the ad’s content oppose it. However, before turning to these, there is a handful of ideologically unique exchanges to be examined.

One reader says it is wrong not to take certain other forces (other than individual men and women) to task for fostering “toxic” masculinity:

C28. Why does it seem that Hollywood and the entertainment industry always get a pass for the messages they send? The sexual video the boys are watching on the couch? Who produced that? As a parent, navigating through the toxic waste that is pop culture is exhausting. Anyone relate?

C29. RE: Definitely!

C28 expresses exasperation at the prevalence of sexuality in video entertainment. From a pro-ad point of view, she seems to be trying to change the subject, raising a topic popular on the right-wing agenda – censuring, or censoring, sexuality in video entertainment. The perception that mass media are feeding dangerous messages to
children seems bipartisan. But this comment seems anti-ad and anti-feminist in two ways. One is the effort to substitute this topic for the ad’s. The other is the idea that the sexuality in Hollywood entertainment is such a major concern. YouTube and PornHub are reputedly awash in extreme and sometimes violent sexuality, but the reader refers to Hollywood, which means she is worried primarily about simple nudity and representations of people having consensual sex. Although feminists take many different positions on sexuality in media, fear of nudity and healthy sexuality in art comes from Puritan Christianity originally, in America, and is related to sexism as it serves to control women (for example, in the taboos against extra-marital sex and prostitution) while simultaneously demonizing women as temptresses and corrupters of men. Therefore, hiding behind this comment’s understandable concern about messages in the media may be a traditionally sexist, puritanical, ideology; nudity in art is more harmful than sexism. There is no way of knowing whether the probably conservative reader in C28 was conscious that her comment implies opposition to feminism.

One other exchange features readers trying to change the subject in a suspicious way:

C89. You’ll notice how in most commercials nowadays they are over-the-top diverse, but in this particular Gillette commercial it’s about 98% white. You can’t make this stuff up!

C90. Let’s adjust it to 95% white, but notice every action by a black male is positive, examples include two groups of black men shaking hands and not escalating their issues. In two other short clips the black men step in to confront a white guy that’s being “toxic.”
C91. You're still completely wrong. But it's useless to attempt to reason with someone who feels victimized by a TV commercial.

The implications of C89 and C90’s comments, which support each other, are that this commercial features a higher proportion of white people than most commercials do these days, hypothetically because it is critical of men, and the advertisers, these readers imply, are unwilling to criticize non-whites or at least black males. The readers note that all the black men in the ad are shown as positive examples.

It seems possible this analysis of the advertiser’s concerns is partly correct. However, their argument, in context, seems to allude to the extreme right-wing conspiracy theory that the mass media is controlled by liberal forces consciously waging some sort of abstract war against white males. The fact that C90 puts “toxic” in quotes implies he or she questions whether the behaviors criticized in the ad are “toxic,” supporting the implication that the ad’s criticisms of men are invalid. C91’s “you’re still completely wrong” implies that this exchange continues an earlier disagreement, however I was unable to identify the earlier exchange.

Another reader implies that he or she agrees with the ad’s opposition to “toxic masculinity” but is angry at Gillette for using “lifestyle branding to sell product”:

   C45. I think the majority of anger is from how few people (men generally) understand what toxic masculinity is. People should be angry instead that companies use lifestyle branding to sell product. They should show razor, say works. Done. But capitalism sells lifestyle not product

   This is the comment closest to repeating Filipovic’s precise message in her article. Filipovic did not express overt anger at what this reader implies is the exploitation of
feminism for profit, but rather accepted it with reluctance and implied criticisms of male
corporate culture and capitalism. Filipovic also implied that people who oppose the ad
misunderstand the nature of toxic masculinity. So, there could be ideological influence
here.

5.3.2.5 Anti-Gillette Comments on CNN’s Article

32 of the 100 comments on CNN’s article oppose either Gillette or the ideas
expressed by the ad. Hardly any of them present themselves overtly as sexist; they
complain that the ad is anti-male and some even call the ad “sexist” for that reason.
There are also some comments against Gillette for reasons other than the content of the
ad, and a few such comments that seem more left-wing than right.

5.3.2.6 Comments Opposing the Ad and its Content

The very first comment downloaded for CNN’s article, one consisting of nothing but
two memes by Todd Mitchem, seems the most overtly sexist and angry:

C1. Only anger here!
A visit to ToddMitchem.com reveals that Mr. Mitchem is a motivational speaker, writer, and business consultant, with a list of major corporate sponsors. No obviously sexist statements were immediately in evidence on his website. Perusing Mitchem’s article titles indicates he writes and speaks mainly about how to be a leader and maximize one’s potential. So, the misogynist aspect of Mitchem’s belief system shown in the first meme is probably known only to devotees who follow his communications closely. It seems interesting the idea represented in the first meme above should come from someone with Mitchem’s particular career and appeal. The discourse on his website suggests Mitchem would claim he is not sexist, but rather that he does not like “weak” people, be they men or women. His main message, like that of motivational speakers in general, is that his readers can triumph, dominate, etc. and get everything they want, through strength and aggression. This ideology does not seem unrelated to “toxic” masculinity, although it does not explicitly concern gender identities.

Mitchem’s meme says that “weak” women “always want men to control” which seems doubly sexist: (1) invoking the stereotype of a “shrewish” woman, while (2) also saying those women are weak. It seems like a model of reality designed to bolster the egos of men who fear assertive women. Meanwhile the first part of the meme might seem
less sexist at first since it is talking about strong women, however, taken in conjunction with the second half of the sentence, it implies that the “strong” women do not like men who are not dominant, which implies that all women, including the strong ones, innately wish to be dominated by men.

In addition to the sexism, the meme represents a worldview obsessed with dominance and submission in general, and projects that model of reality into female psychology. Finally, it should be mentioned, that the target of “only anger here!” seems, in context, Filipovic; it responds to her characterization of ad opponents as a handful of angry, loud men.

But a much larger number of anti-ad comments do not present themselves so misogynistically. Several exchanges revolve around the idea that Gillette is attacking men with unfair / sexist representations:

C55. It doesn’t make sense. Who are they trying to sell razors too? And I’ve never seen a group of men stand back and watch to boys fist fight. Just stupid.

C56. RE: I have, many times. And heard the cheering on.

C57. (or)

C57 is intended as a sarcastic rejoinder to C56. This should probably be clear to most Americans through a combination of context and the fact that the word “right,”

55 This is certain for those who have viewed the Austin Powers films whence the image comes.
spoken slowly, is a sarcastic trope of popular discourse. However, for those who have seen the “Austin Powers” films, whence the image comes, the sarcasm is indubitable, because the character portrayed, Dr. Evil, indeed spoke the word with marked sarcasm and just such a look on his face in the film; in fact, more than sarcasm, this meme implies a thoroughly derisive attitude towards its target (the previous comment). The following long exchange includes several more comments on the same idea seen above.

C67. RE: Boys (and girls) playfighting is wrong? We don't have to toughen up and deal with crap life will inevitably throw at us?
Bullying is an exclusively male thing? Only men look at an attractive member of the opposite sex with awe/lust?
Sorry but you find it touching due to filming techniques and well placed music. The logic of the as is asinine and pretty sexist.

C68. This is a great ad....advertising is a mirror, it doesn't change behaviour, it reflects it back at us and sometimes the truth hurts; sometimes the reflection isn't aspirational, it's reality and it can be painful. Good for them.

C69. RE: Except 99% of men aren’t abusers or criminals. So don’t draw a false equivalency between masculinity and violence. The problem isn’t the message, it’s the assumption that we need to be taught this when virtually all of us already know it and practice it

C67 and C69 have slightly different complaints. C67 says the implied asymmetry between men and women in the ad is sexist. But before he says that, C67 says something easy to gloss over that may explain how he could not understand the asymmetry between men and women in our society that the ad is trying to convey. The second sentence looks like it is meant to say, “Don’t we have to . . . “not “We don’t have to” – the latter of which
would not make sense in context. If so, this reader feels that men are unfairly beaten down or persecuted by society or life in general, to the degree that they have to be tough to survive. As if women don’t have the same problem! But this is not a comment to be dismissed; the number of American men who feel this way is large and growing due to economic struggles56.

C69, on the other hand, is a particularly extreme expression of “not all men”; he insists that only 99% or “virtually all” men have already learned the ad’s lesson and practice it. And he finds the assumption that things are otherwise to be offensive. Based on the number of comments and YouTube “dislikes” against the ad, he is probably incorrect. More importantly, his comment joins others by men who are more worried about being accused of sexism than they are about being sexist.

Here are a few more individual comments accusing Gillette of sexism:

C2. #Gillette charges women notably more for plastic razors than they do for metal men’s versions. They have been #SEXIST for a long time (I’ve written them about this for years) so I don’t accept this campaign when that same toxicity clearly rules their business model.

C93. Because it generalizes all men into one category. We’re just fighting grilling and yelling at women right? Its ridiculous and %100 prejudice. i know some beautiful women who would, out swear, out grill, out drink and beat up most men. Are they toxic?

C62. RE: I’m referencing two boys wrestling around on the commercial. I grew up wrestling around with my buddies. Guess what, I’m not a criminal, I have a great

https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/the-unhappiness-of-the-us-working-class/
career, been married for over 26 years, have two well adjusted boys, a beautiful granddaughter, etc.

Especially the last two comments above go out of their way to imply that the commenters are not misogynists. This paper cannot judge whether they are sexist or not. However, I will point out that the only way in which these comments connect to Filipovic’s discourse is her reference to the ad as “imploring” men to be better, implying that men have been resisting self-examination and change. Ironically, the men making the comments above might be thought to justify her characterization.

Instead of a continuum from these relatively moderate comments to those representing the far right-wing, there is a leap. A handful of anti-ad comments raise seemingly out-of-place ideas that probably come from extreme right-wing discourses – ideas which indeed appear in Todd Starnes’ Fox article (which these readers are assumed not to have read):

C58. "Toxic masculinity" is a made-up phrase to try and shame men who like to do things that have always been seen as manly. The real problem is young men without fathers who turn to gangs.

This comment hits several points also seen in Starnes’ article; these ideas must be popular on the far right to appear both there and here. One is the focus on “shame,” also a word Starnes uses. Another is the insistence that the behaviors criticized by the ad are in fact “manly.” The third is the implication that opposing aggressive male behavior is connected to the problem of absentee fathers, and the fourth that being raised by a woman only causes young men to turn to crime. The ideology is a mish-mash of devotion to traditional ideals of manliness and a variety of anti-liberal ideas about the sexes, society, and economics.
Here is a related exchange:

C84. If there is a domestic problem lets say, it’s not toxic masculinity. It’s a LACK OFF masculinity in raising that boy without a respectable father. A father should teach his son respect, morals, to be a protector. And especially how to treat women with respect.

C85. The heart of the issue is the massive welfare system created by liberals that has destroyed the nuclear family. 73% of back children are born to single mothers and liberals are happy keeping it that way.

C86. Bingo

These readers must be aping some ideological sources (they probably did not make up the statistics), but not Filipovic. At the same time, it is valuable to see, as previously noted, that even such right-wing readers, might, if asked, describe themselves as feminist. These readers claim to believe that liberal policies are worse for women, especially poor black women.

Here is one of the most overtly sexist exchanges not yet examined:

C87. Does toxic femininity exist and is it ever presented?

C88. who do you think made the ad?

It is not necessarily sexist to suggest that “toxic femininity” exists. But it is in this context – that C87 would rather search for examples of bad female behavior than discuss the issues of the ad. And C88 implies, like so many already seen, that the ad comes from a place of feminist hatred for men or masculinity. These comments seem especially divorced from the article, since Filipovic suggested the ad was made by a “boys club” of not-especially-feminist men.

The remainder of the anti-Gillette comments do not overtly address the content of the ad, although they do allude to it. Most of them criticize Gillette for hypocrisy,
virtue signaling, or trying to profit off the issues. A few are hard to categorize. Here are the ones accusing Gillette of hypocrisy, opportunism, exploitation, and/or manipulation for profit:

C30. Increasingly seeing the evil genius of the basically innocuous and really meaningless Gillette ad. They got us to talk about them, mention their name over and over again without actually going out on a real limb. #advertising #evilgenius #theygotus

C81. Gillette has drawn cheers from me for their decision. We have been told many times in recent years that corporations can do whatever they want with loyal paying customers and yearly profits. This includes taking a fresh, virtue signaling crap on them.

C81 may be confusing. At first, I thought it was pro-Gillette, with the final phrase intended positively. But a closer look shows that the paragraph is sarcastic: “do whatever they want with loyal paying customers” is intended as a criticism; the last phrase is the main point.

Here are two others criticizing Gillette for trying to play politics at all, a sentiment also mentioned in some of the pro- or mixed responses earlier reviewed:

C59. How about you just concentrate on making a good Affordable Razor.

C97. Boost sales? Am I the only one who uses Dollar Shave Club because it’s a DOLLAR? 16 count for $50 that might last half a year. $1 for a five count that you get 12 times a year = $12. If Gillette wants to boost sales, this ad isn't the way to do it. The way to boost sales is to lower your prices.... LOL

Finally, a few comments criticize Gillette for not being left-wing enough:
C4. When #proctorandgamble becomes the darling of the left for a woke ad, despite it's profiteering, polluting, and animal testing, the right has won. The left is broke. #Gillette #GilletteAd #Gillette #bestamancanbe

***

C74. I’m less concerned about this than I am about Gillette funding animal testing.

C75. RE: I am more worried about all that plastic waste from disposable razors.

These perspectives owe nothing to Filipovic’s article.

5.3.2.7 Gillette CNN comments: Conclusion

The Twitter comments on CNN’s feminist article about Gillette were surprisingly diverse, individualistic, and rich in ideological elements from a variety of sources. A significant minority of them could owe some of their content to Filipovic’s influence, but none for certain, and definitely not the majority. Those that discussed the ad’s content or feminism commented mainly on specific aspects of the ad not mentioned by Filipovic, and not a one of them re-expressed her thesis that the ad should be interpreted as a sign of feminist progress rather than a feminist act. Quite a few did approve of the ad only guardedly, while criticizing Gillette for its corporate capitalist activity and these comments may have been primed by Filipovic’s article.

However, other analyses in this dissertation still suggest such influence does happen more significantly – although perhaps not to the majority of readers. In this regard, it seems important to note that a minority of the comments on this (as well as other) articles show strong signs of having been influenced by narratives and ideologies from media sources other than in the article being analyzed. For example, the comments on Filipovic implying that there is a liberal conspiracy against masculinity and white males. Taken together, these observations could prompt the hypothesis that a certain minority of readers are strongly influenced by ideological messages in their media. This
would prompt the hypothesis that we should at least see more anti-Gillette comments on
the Fox article by Todd Starnes, which is significantly so with 34 anti-Gillette comments
on Filipovic’s article and 45 on Starnes’. On the other hand, the fact that few comments, on any article, reference the
specific content of the articles, hints that perhaps many readers do not read most of the
articles on which they comment, which would also factor into the relative absence of
influence. This is a question that must be set aside for the current research, since we do
not have such knowledge of commenters’ reading habits, however it is an important
question for future research, both relative to the question of influence, and probably with
further implications for American society and politics.

5.3.3 Comments on Fox Article

The 100 comments on Todd Starnes’ Fox article come from two sources – Twitter
(57 comments) and Fox’s website, Foxnews.com (43 comments). They will be cited with
the prefix “T” or “F” below, and each set is numbered separately.

These comments are almost evenly split in terms of opposing Gillette/ feminism /
liberals (45 comments) versus supporting Gillette / feminism (42 comments), in some
sense – because some “pro-Gillette” comments are more anti-Starnes than pro-Gillette.
This is approximately the same number of comments against Gillette / feminism as on
the CNN article, and a larger number pro-Gillette (counting the anti-Starnes). But these
statistics are not very meaningful considering the diversity and complexity of opinions
represented, so let us turn to the details.

5.3.3.1 “Anti-Gillette” Comments on Fox’s Article

The majority of the “anti-Gillette” comments on Fox’s article (27/45) are indeed
sexist, anti-feminist, or otherwise offended by the ad’s message. Other anti-Gillette
comments include six wanting Gillette to stick to business, four opposing Gillette on issues, but not about gender, two against the ad without regard to any issues, four simply pro-Starnes, and two simply anti-liberal. A few contrasts are clear between the Fox and Twitter comments. Many more of the Twitter comments are pro-Gillette or anti-Starnes, while more Fox comments are anti-Gillette. And among the anti-Gillette comments, there are more clearly sexist comments on Fox than Twitter and more comments offended at the ad, but not clearly sexist, on Fox. Although . . . all the comments criticizing Gillette for not sticking to the razor business are on Fox.

We begin with the sexist or anti-feminist comments; as with the CNN comments, most of these present themselves as pro-male rather than sexist, however, unlike on CNN, most of these are clearly misogynistic or like this one (F13), otherwise bigoted:

F12. The closer to home this ad hits, the more offended the person seems to be.

F13. Sure they do..........this is nothing but the removing of Masculinity from men. Kinda like the CW channel shows are all turning #LGBTQSHIT.

In addition to F13’s hate-speech (“SHIT”) about “LGBTQ” people, the claim that the ad urges nothing but the removal of masculinity is clearly misogynist in context, since the behaviors in question include casual sexual assault (the “goosing”) and condescension from a male to a female corporate employee. Certainly, this point of view was encouraged by Starnes, who also implied that the behaviors being criticized represented valuable masculine traits.

Here is another exchange ending in a comment which explains in rather more detail how the ad, and feminism, aim to take away masculinity:
F23. As someone who swam competitively the idea of men shaving their legs being some sort of insult to masculinity is hilarious.

F24. RE: I am sure he does not mean someone who shaves their legs to give them a competitive advantage in swimming competitions. These feminists are opposed to men being men, against being competitive, being leaders, being aggressive and dominate and wanting them to show emotions like women do, to cry and whine as they do. The point was they want to make men into sissies, so that is why you would expect them to want males to shave their legs to look more pretty and affemanite. Shaving your legs to be more competitive and dominate in your sport is something these anti-male people like the ones making this commercial would be against. You missed the entire point.

Although this comment presents itself as pro-male, its implications seem radically sexist and anti-feminist. Masculinity is defined as aggression, dominance, and not showing emotion. Femininity is defined as being overly emotional in a negative way (“whine”) and pretty. Feminists are defined as wishing to emasculate men (“make men into sissies”). And this last idea is implicitly bigoted against men who have “affemanite” personalities. Feminists, according to the commenter, oppose men winning or dominating at all.

This comment may owe a lot to Starnes who conveyed all of these messages. The particular obsession with male dominance, and hatred of “sissies,” shown in this comment and Starnes’ article crops up consistently in the most misogynist comments/ideologies in this data. These two ideas are essentially one – an extremely
narrow and defensive concept of masculinity; all men should be John Wayne, not Pajama Boy.

Here is another exchange demonstrating this pattern. The first comments in the exchange concern a deleted image-comment and so are partially unclear:

F19.

F20. RE: We are now all better people . . . thank you . . . for sharing your personal grooming habits . . .

F21. RE: If you have to get lucky to get attention from your husband, maybe it’s about time to look at the mirror and the bathroom scale. You sound like a sexually deprived woman, maybe your husband wants to follow Bruce Jenners footsteps.

F22. Have they seen the armpit hair on some women? Maybe they should’ve brought back Joe. Broadway Joe shaved his legs and put on a pair of Hanes’ Beautymist Pantyhose for a TV ad. In the spot, the camera slowly pans across a pair of sexy, reclined legs until we get ... to Joe’s face.“Now, I don’t wear pantyhose. But if Beautymist can make my legs look good, imagine what they’ll do for yours,” he purrs.

We can infer from the comments that the deleted image probably displayed a hairy women or man shaving their legs, with a verbal message on the image implying that the shaver is doing so in order to attract a mate. But it is not necessary to know precisely what the image showed to see the misogyny in the responses. Firstly, F21 must be addressing a female commenter who represented some kind of feminist position, perhaps the presenter of the image in F19, implying that feminists are likely to be
sexually deprived. This idea resonates with many traditional misogynist stereotypes – that feminists are unfeminine, unattractive, and perhaps lesbian and/or feminist for those reasons. The idea has no known basis in evidence; it seems a psychologically defensive belief for men who feel threatened by feminism. It belittles the threat. And that is only half the sentence.

Next it implies that men romantically involved with feminists are likely to be either so sexually unfulfilled, or so unmasculine as to be candidates for gender reassignment – which implies that is a usual reason for gender reassignment. And it implies that feminists should not be attractive to cis heterosexual males. Also, because the statement is implicitly an attack on the feminist, it also implies that it is an insult to be a trans person or to be in a relationship with one. It is difficult to fully fathom the layers of hatred in this short comment.

F22 begins by pragmatically implying agreement with F21 (“have you seen . . .?”). In context, the comment about hairy armpits must be taken again as an attack on women with supposedly “masculine” qualities (although armpit hairiness is a gender-neutral biological characteristic). Then the commenter’s joke about Broadway Joe (Namath) uses the leg-shaving as an emblem of feminizing men, implying that women exist mainly to appear attractive to men, and that for a man to be so feminized in any way deserves contempt and ridicule. These comments reproduce the implications of Starnes title (“Does Gillette want men to shave their legs?”) and ideas on the subject, and so may be considered strongly influenced by the article.

Here is another exchange including two similar comments, probably from the same reader, while the other comments are notable in other ways:

**F28. RE:** I did the same more than a year ago. The Gillette ad is a nice, positive message that goes along with Melania’s cause.
F29. RE: RE: No, it is a feminist message that being a male is in itself something that is toxic. It is a hateful feminist anti-male message, they want to turn males into sissies, and wimps.

F30. didn't trash their target...Don't be so sensitive

F31. New ad ... Jillett. 'The Woman's choice for shaving legs and armpits!'

F32. The ad basically says we can all Be Best. It's odd that Fox/Trump world is so triggered by Melania's cause.

F33. No this feminist message is that you can only be best by being less than a man, and behaving like a female, they want all men to be effeminate sissies.

F28 and F32 come, almost surely, from one reader. One wonders if they come from a truly feminist but deeply Republican reader, or a liberal feminist reader just using “Melania's cause” in an attempt to connect with the presumably right-wing commenter of F29 and F33. In any case, F29 and F33 express the same extreme ideology seen in the past few comments examined: masculinity is conceived of as precisely the traits opposed by the ad and feminists are conceived of as an anti-male hate group out to emasculate men, which implies that asking men not to sexually harass and dominate women is emasculating.

All these comments, which seem to follow Starnes closely, came from Fox’s website. Here is one though with the same message from Twitter:

T41. be if I'd start shaving with their Venus razors, it would make me a better man.
Venus razors are marketed for women, so this reader implies that the ad wants him to be more like a woman, and that this would make him less of a man (since the last phrase is sarcastic).

Another Twitter comment echoes the anger and hatred seen in some comments above:

T13. @Gillette can eat big bags of razors. Men need to be men not tender tots. #yourproductsstillsuck one blade is all that is needed.

This one is a little different, but the anger marks it as extreme\(^{57}\), and although it does not mention women, the idea that the reforms shown in the ad would make men “tender tots” also defines masculinity in terms of toughness and dominance, and implies that women are more like “tender tots” than masculine men; the representation of women as children is a traditional sexist trope.

Other comments represent the ad as promoting persecution of men. To the following reader, for men not to harass women means women are harassing men:

F16. Proctor and Gamble has been a terrible company for a long time. I have done everything I can do to check labels and never buy P&P products. I will not buy them and you should not either. To put out a message like this shows the kind of stuff that goes around in the P&P offices. IT would be hard for a male to work there I am sure. Let them know that some women harass men as well. So, shut up P&P.

In the context of the ad, this comment must be considered sexist and anti-feminist, because the commenter is simply not concerned about the male-to-female

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\(^{57}\) Not only the anger of “eat big bag of razors,” but also, this phrase is probably meant as a play on “eat a bag of dicks,” a more common attack.
behaviors displayed by the ad. Apparently, they consider criticism of men more threatening than the threat some men pose to women. Of course, such commenters often say that they are offended at the implication that they personally might have something to learn:

T54. I’m a 44 year old man with a wonderful wife & a beautiful 8 year old daughter, both of whom I love dearly. I thought I was an okay guy. Then @Gillette lectured me on what a horrible person I am & always have been, because I’m a man. Who knew?

One might argue this is a sexist position because it discounts the harm done to women by other men, as if the commenter is the only man who counts. On the other hand, those who are offended might argue that we do not usually criticize men in general, or people in general, for most crimes committed by some men or some people. In other words, the commenters seem correct that “men” are being singled out and generalized as a category. However, one hesitates to credit these commenters with humanitarian concerns because they seem concerned only with the ad’s relevance to their own behavior. One suspects that their opposition to the ad is founded on more sexist reasons because otherwise, why wouldn’t they think the ad is valuable for its impact on men who do behave as shown in the ad? This suspicion seems confirmed for T54 after another reader responds to it:

T55. Showed my husband and he said I don’t need their crappy product anyway.

T56. Good, glad he gave you permission to boycott them...

T56 appears to represent the same commenter as T54. Therefore, T56 is not sarcastic. The fact that T54 / T56 felt compelled to allude to T55’s need for her husband’s
permission shows that comment T54 did indeed come from a sexist ideology, although he offered a more broadly palatable reason.

T55 was not the only woman to assert her opposition to the ad:

F11. As a woman, I’m offended by this ad, no more Gillette products for me.

To continue with comments against the ad that do not cite its content, some are tired of “identity politics insanity”:

F10. RE: maybe, but they should be sure to not say things that will hurt razor sales - and i’m afraid they have, at least for me. just tired of anyone and everyone jumping on the identity politics band wagon

T52. Identity politics brings insanity.

Again, as with many reasons given for disliking the ad, although a person does not need to hold conservative or prejudiced points of view to be sick of identity politics. it is reasonable to infer that these readers oppose the ad’s message.

Several other comments imply or assert their disdain for liberal and / or feminist politics, one of them also alluding to “identity” politics:

T46. You gonna be OK, snowflake⁵⁸?

F36: Gillette without a gender identity is worse than pelosi off her Dementia meds.

F38. Liberals embrace toxic Feminism.

F36 above interprets the ad as anti-gender-identity. I did not categorize this comment as citing the content of the ad, since the ad represents nobody without a gender

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⁵⁸ “Snowflake” has become a popular pejorative term for liberals in common conservative discourse, implying that liberals are delicate, in reference to liberal sensitivity about identity politics.
identity; interpreting the ad that way implies that . . . were men to change as shown in the ad, they would not be men, and then women would not be women, which, consistent with the other anti-Gillette comments above, and Starnes’ article, sees the ad as emasculating.

Much worse, the second half of the comparison reveals deep and intentional misogyny towards women and specifically feminists, which by implication, is the real reason for the commenter’s dislike of the ad. The commenter presents himself as objecting to the alleged erasure of gender identities in the ad, while making a pointed joke – a much more pointed joke than may be obvious. There is a famous quotation using almost this exact sentence structure: “A woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle” – by Gloria Steinem. The commenter almost surely had this quotation in mind when choosing his play on words; especially since, the message of his joke is, precisely, hatred of women like Steinem and Pelosi – strong women, liberals, feminist leaders, and old (in the commenter’s estimation). The “off her Dementia meds,” is meant to describe what the commenter finds most offensive about Pelosi, implying she behaves or speaks as if senile at times, which also has the effect of implying that her political positions are incoherent. So, the traditional misogynist characterization of women as hysterical and unsuited for leadership roles is embedded in this cruel “joke,” as well as opposition to Gloria Steinem’s sentiment, showing it is indeed the empowerment of women this reader objects to.

The commenter’s comparison follows Starnes’ lead in characterizing the ad as an erasure of male identity while embedding misogynist implications about women in jokes; this is the nature of Starnes’ title. And the association of “meds” with liberals was also primed by Starnes in his article.
One longer exchange among the Twitter comments further demonstrates that Starnes’ article is partly responsible for forming these reader’s opinions:

T27. RE: And there’s no shame into boycotting Gillette. If they can stereotype, their customers can leave in droves.

T28. RE: No shame in expressing your free speech. Just make sure you’re doing it for the right reasons.

T29. RE: Just make sure you're doing it for the right reasons? What the hell does that even mean in this case? Gillette makes a shit commercial and you criticize Todd for "drawing" conclusions? Pretty sure Todd is spot on here.

T30. RE: Starnes connects feminist theory, gender shaming, and the “war on masculinity” to this advertisement. If you watch the ad, it’s clear @Gillette is trying to empower men to be their best. They aren’t trying to strip you of your masculinity, medicate you, or otherwise.

T31. RE: Empower men? Not in this ad whatsoever. Gillette is getting crushed all over so I feel solid that my opinion of this crappy ad line up with Todd.

These comments are triggered by Starnes’ article perhaps even a little more deeply than the obvious. T27 and T28 introduce their ideas with a “there’s no shame in . . .” trope. This was more than likely triggered by Starnes mention of “gender shaming” near the end of his article. Starnes also emphasized the word “stereotype” for reasons previously discussed. T29 and T31, perhaps the same reader, credits Starnes and popular opinion with the solidification of their point of view. However, if they believe that “Gillette is getting crushed all over” (by popular opinion) this impression can only be
attributed to Fox’s coverage, including the link in Starnes’ article to a news item about the ‘boycott,’ because other news sources report a much more mixed response than “getting crushed all over” (see the news articles cited at the beginning of the Gillette article analysis).

The boycott appears in other comments. Many say that Gillette has attacked men and must pay:

T29. Just made my first order from Harry's shave club... quick, easy, cheap.. replacement blades are 2$ or cheaper in bulk. Hey Gillette, stick to selling razors, trashing your target market is a strange business plan
T50. Why would you isolate your base customer
T37. Boycott Gillette
T38. and our response back to Gillette is "go pound sand, we will never buy another Gillette product again.
T39. Hope Gillette goes broke!
T19. boycott Gillette products.....their managenent has gone nuts like Target......tell Gillette to CUT it out by stop buying their products....

Beyond the boycott, a few comments also allude to other specific elements of Starnes’ article:

T20. Schools whip the maleness out of young men also

This one seems intended to build on Starnes’ accusation of the professors trying to eradicate masculinity in young men through medication. Starnes’ article seems to have resonated powerfully with a minority of readers. Some find him addictive:

F15. I wish I knew how to quit you, Todd. How about a fresh article?
However, there are more readers who speak against Starnes than otherwise, as we shall see below with the pro-Gillette comments, many of which express anger at Starnes. Ironically, several comments attack Starnes personally for not being ‘manly’ enough, in a homophobic sense of ‘manly’:

F44. Leave it to Todd Starnes to just start fantasizing about smooth, hairless men's legs for no reason . . .

Live by the sword, die by the sword. The reader implies Starnes has a consistently, in his terms, unmanly character. The comment may be intended to suggest that Starnes' perceived unmanliness (see his photo further below) partly motivates the content of his article. Although this paper cannot weigh in on the truth of that idea, we can note that it would be consistent with the fear of unmanliness implied by Starnes rhetoric.

A significant group of comments against the ad focus more on what they see as Gillette’s manipulative business practices, in general:

F4. The wilkinson blade came out, it was sharp and smooth. Gillette I believe bought their company and raised their prices. It must fit the definition of an illegal monoply. I bet the japanese could make a good blade reasonably priced.

F5. RE: They make an incredible disposable double edged blade, for old school shavers like me. The Feather blade is considered one of the sharpest and cleanest shaving blades in the world, by many. But you would need to buy a DE razor and learn how to wet shave. Unless you're old enough to remember the days befor disposables.
F6. I make my own decisions I do in my life I don't need politicians or companies telling me what to do. One decision I have made us not to buy Gillette products.

F7. I bet Gillette wishes they kept the cost of razor blades down in price so a guy can afford to buy them. When they raised the price to rediculous levels it had to be one of the worst decisions in the corporate world.

F8. thats odd, I didn’t read anything about corporate greed in their rant!

F9. They will say anything if it results in more razor sales. Nothing new in this concept from a manufacturer marketing it’s product.. Pay them no mind.

F17. And also, Gillette, who is all for women, charges women more for the exact same products. See many twitter feeds on this.

F18. If it means selling more Gillette products, lather up them sticks boys.

F39. Investors should sue the management for this failure.

Only F6 and F39 above contain any hint the readers oppose the Gillette ad’s politics. However, Starnes may have primed their perspectives with his comment: “Instead of virtue signaling, I was sort of hoping Gillette would declare war on razor burn, but whatever” (20). In this case, criticizing Gillette’s business practices would imply criticizing their “virtue signaling,” i.e. their feminist message.

Starnes rhetorical strategy in the line above is to offer a non-bigoted reason for opposing the ad, while implying opposition to the ad’s ideology. This is also true of many of the the anti-ad reader comments; however, readers do not necessarily require Starnes’ model to light on such a strategy.
5.3.4 Comments Pro-Gillette, Anti-Starnes, or Otherwise Feminist on Fox’s Article

There are 42 comments on Fox’s article either anti-Starnes, pro-Gillette, or pro-feminism. By far the largest thematic group consists of those saying or implying that the article expresses Starnes’ insecurities about his manliness, guilt, fear, or malicious intent:

F1. Why does Todd assume that Gillette is accusing all men of bad activities? I don’t feel indicted. Todd must have some serious guilt.

T18. Geez, Todd, your insecurity is showing again. There’s NOTHING in the spot on which that conclusion can be based, except in the mind of someone intent on being divisive and derisive. Don’t you have anything better to do?

T21. Of course the promotion of empathy scares you. And your headline is pure hyperbole. Be best. #InsecureMuch???

T25. Wow. No. Todd, you’re an insult to real men everywhere. Any man offended by this is weak.

T33. Thank you for giving such a perfect example of #fragilemasculinity. Fascinating that you feel your maleness is dependent on the presence of leg hair.

T48. Yes, they do, Todd. Gillette demands it. They’re going to send feminists to your house specifically to shave your legs.
T40. Oh honey. If that is what you took away from this commercial you need to re-evaluate your life choices.

All of the comments listed above imply support for Gillette’s ad and its message. However, a few of the anti-Starnes comments are different:

T43. Please. Tell me more about real masculinity, you box of candy corn left in a hot car.

T44. RE: Ha! Funny how he could think anyone would attack his masculinity
F34. I love how Todd "most likely to play the Stay-Puft marshmallow man", the NYC dwelling, Chick-fil-a schlepping, disgraced reporter Starnes knows how a real man should act.
F41. Toddler Starnes is an embarrassment to any "real man"!!
F42. I find it a bit challenging to see Starnes defining what a 'real man' is. He, himself, is a whiny lump of intentional mental density.

These comments barely allude to the ad. And other aspects of them suggest the commenters are coming from a very different place than Starnes’ pro-Gillette critics. These commenters evidently have no problem with shaming or attacking men, and the nature of their attack on Starnes suggests they share something like Starnes’ own
ideology of masculinity; they do not attack him for what he said in his article; they attack him for being fat and out of shape, “whiny,” and “mental.” Based on sexist comments examined earlier, “whiny” is associated with “sissies” in conservative discourse.

A few other comments which may be criticizing Starnes personally, or criticizing other readers who agree with him personally, also state support for the ad:

F12. The closer to home this ad hits, the more offended the person seems to be.
T4. Such thin, sensitive skin. I think Gillette has a razor for that.
T22. **If that’s the message you get from this ad, then you’re a horrible human being.**

T31. RE: Empower men? Not in this ad whatsoever. Gillette is getting crushed all over so I feel solid that my opinion of this crappy ad line up with Todd.
T32. **RE: Yeah John, to real men who don't mind being held accountable for their actions, the ad is empowering. Get out of here with your insecure takes.**

These comments criticize opponents of the ad in the same way as the pro-Gillette anti-Starnes comments above; they believe ad opponents must have insecurities, guilt, or a lack of empathy.

Several pro-Gillette comments addressing Starnes directly express question his claim that there is a “war” on masculinity and contrast it to their own ideas about what men or other women experience:

T1. Dude, if this stuff is what you think constitutes a “war” on masculinity, then you wouldn’t last 5 minutes as a woman.

T5. "There is literally a war on masculinity in America. “That’s what you got from this ad? Todd, help me out here. Remind me what % of women are responsible
for mass shootings, committing domestic violence, committing sexual assault, etc?

Asking for my friends who don't watch Fox News.

T34. If you feel prejudiced against - again - welcome to the rest of the country. It's high time your segment of the population is held accountable for your behavior at even remotely the same levels as the rest of us. I find this editorial's defense inherently offensive and entitled.

Each of these comments contrasts Starnes' “war on masculinity” with something – T1 with an implied “war” on women in our society, T5 with the idea that men are the perpetrators of violence rather than its recipients, and T34 that men have previously been privileged not to have their behavior censured, making the “war on masculinity” simply the end of privilege. None of these ideological elements were transmitted by Starnes obviously.

One other comment interrogates Starnes representation of feminism as anti-male, zeroing in on the narrow and extreme nature of Starnes’ ideology:

F25. writing off all feminists as anti-male is pretty ridiculous. There's a lot of space between "hey stop being so abusive" and "all men should disappear". Both exist, and by painting everyone as extremist you don't give yourself any opportunity to realize that there are problems that need to be worked on. also in the immortal words of Prof. Oak "there's a time and place for everything" aggressiveness or being dominant all the time isn't a great life strategy. I got the point, but Starnes uses it like an insult. And it seems you miss my point, there's lots of shades of grey out there and not everyone is going to be exactly like you or your ideals, so get over it.
Comments like this one, and others above in this section, demonstrate that many readers not only are not influenced by the article’s ideology, but also see through the writer’s language, to some degree, to its sources and goals.

Aside from comments attacking Starnes and his supporters, a large group of pro-Gillette comments focus on dispelling what they see as misunderstandings of the ad by its opponents:

T2. A dose of seventh grade grammar is helpful here:

The essay at the end of this link, by Rebecca Reynolds explains the implications of adjectival modification in a phrase like “toxic masculinity” – that it defines a subset of masculinity rather than implying that all masculinity is toxic. Of course, to describe this comment or essay as simply an attempt to help out would be deceptive; it is argumentative and an intentional insult to ad-opponents, implying that they do not possess seventh grade reading skills. This is also notable because conservatives do frequently accuse liberals of intellectual elitism and pedantry.

Several other comments also argue that the ad does not overgeneralize about men:

T3. It's saying the ones who act like horrible pee are horrible. Otherwise if you're supposedly an upstanding man than you are one of the good ones they are talking

59 https://www.thistleandtoad.com/wwwthistleandtoadcom/writings/
about being! There were some great and proud men in that video im sorry you missed them

T23. It’s absolutely not saying men are horrible.. I can't believe you think that’s what they are saying . . .

One of the comments making this point, adds the obvious implication that those who have a problem with the criticism of the male behaviors in the ad must approve of it:

T10. No, not the customers. Just men who behave badly. I guess you’re OK w/people who bully, when men patronzingly place hands on women's shounders in mtgs. It’s strange that this ad, which helps to teach more positive messages, gets turned into some left vs right battle. Seriously?

T10 also resists the idea that the reactions to the ad should polarize right and left – and in fact, what we have seen is that the comments for and against the ad are not entirely divided along party lines.

Some comments explaining the ad also introduce new ideological elements:

T7. (1) of (2) - The ad, in no way, states that men should be less "manly". It simply raises men to the same basic humanity expectation placed on the rest of us. Welcome to our world. It’s been a tough place to maneuver for minorities and women for 250 years in the US.

The idea presented in T7 was also seen in T34 above – that the reform suggested by the ad is to hold men accountable for their behavior to the same degree that women have previously been, and in this case, “minorities.” The contrast with female and
minority accountability does not seem expressed in the ad, or directly provoked by Starnes’ article. But it is evidently a perception of multiple female readers.

Further pro-ad comments also take off from the idea that the ad is not aiming to strip anyone of their manliness; it is notable that these comments refer to many specific elements of Starnes’ discourse:

T26. You drew a lot of conclusions out of a 90-second advertisement. Not once was "toxic masculinity" mentioned. And the stereotypes? There’s no shame in calling men to be good examples to the next generation. @Gillette isn’t trying to strip away masculinity, rather refine it.

T30. RE: Starnes connects feminist theory, gender shaming, and the “war on masculinity” to this advertisement. If you watch the ad, it’s clear @Gillette is trying to empower men to be their best. They aren’t trying to strip you of your masculinity, medicate you, or otherwise.

A number of comments criticize Starnes’ title – “Does Gillette want men to start shaving their legs, too?” and the idea behind it:

T16. YOU’RE MAD bc men should be held accountable for their actions? Don’t harrass people, don’t assault people, don’t mansplain? Also, some MALE athletes do shave their legs. I’m sure @Gillette wants their business so...have fun shaving your balls with a one blade Bic. Oh. Wait.

F23. As someone who swam competitively the idea of men shaving their legs being some sort of insult to masculinity is hilarious.

F37. What is wrong with shaving your legs?
As hinted at by these comments, some readers found Starnes' fear of leg-shaving laughable, even prompting an exercise in parodic comedy from one reader:

T15. Men SHOULD shave their legs. It makes them more aerodynamic when they fight. You can cat call thirty percent more women with sleek limbs. It displays confidence when you're at a business meeting where your female colleagues are ignored. #Facts #ShaveTheLegs #GrowTheThicket

This reader's somewhat sophisticated response parodies Starnes' implicit admiration of several behaviors criticized by the ad – fighting, cat-calling, and not taking women seriously in the corporate business world. Starnes did not claim to admire these behaviors, but his article implies support for them, so this reader is parodying that support in order to expose it.

Another reader also tries to expose what he or she sees as Starnes' covert malicious intent towards women, comparing it with one politician's attempt to defend racism:


#embarrassment

Rep. King is apparently an emblem of racism and divisiveness due to a long history of remarks.60 Again, as noted earlier, these comments show not only that readers may be resistant to ideologies they disagree with, but also that they discern the mendacity of Starnes' rhetoric, recognizing that he is not truly "pro-male" but rather sexist.

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5.3.4 Word Frequencies

The primary purpose of examining word frequencies in this analysis was to determine whether the words of the comments reflected influence from the articles. As with the Supreme Court articles, the results here are mixed. There are clearly topical influences; the comments reflect the topics discussed by the articles, and in each case a few words which figured heavily in the articles, however in order to determine whether these words appear due to ideological influence, one must look at specific usages, which has largely been accomplished during analysis of specific comments. This discussion will refer to some of those conclusions, rather than repeating the analysis.

5.3.4 .1 Words Used More in Fox’s Article:

The words used most more in Fox’s article than CNN’s are ‘Gillette’ CNN-10/Fox-30, ‘legs’ (CNN-0/Fox-14), ‘shav(ing)’ (CNN-0/Fox-16), ‘blade(s)’ (CNN-0/Fox-15), and ‘Todd’ (CNN-0/Fox-14). The first item, “Gillette” somewhat testifies against influence. Although the Fox and CNN articles used ‘Gillette’ about equally, Fox’s article included more mentions of “Proctor & Gamble” which does not appear in the comments. The ‘Todd’ simply reflect the author’s name; the list also includes ‘Starnes’ starnes (CNN-0/Fox-7).

The remaining words are thematically related. The ‘legs’ and ‘shav(ing)’ words appear mainly because the title of the article asked if Gillette wants men to shave their legs, and the subject of men shaving their legs was much discussed in the comments, but primarily in order to ridicule Starnes for making an issue of it, so this does not reflect ideological influence in general – although, the fact that readers went away with the leg-shaving image uppermost in their minds, suggests it is likely to have transmitted its ideological message to readers who did not question it. The words ‘blade(s)’ and ‘razor’
(CNN-2/Fox-7) on the list allude to the fact that so many of Fox’s readers discussed Gillette’s business and their own preferences in purchasing products. The ‘words most used more’ also include ‘products’ (CNN-1/Fox-8), ‘new’ (CNN-0/Fox-4), ‘old’ (CNN-1/Fox-5), and ‘buy’ (CNN-2/Fox-6). Although Starnes did want readers to think about Gillette as a business trying to make a profit, these word-usages do not seem to reflect any of Starnes’ gender ideology.

The remaining words use most more in Fox show little of significance. The word ‘make’ (CNN-2/Fox-10) was used both in reference to whether Gillette wants to ‘make’ men shave their legs, and whether liberals want to ‘make’ children or men less masculine. This shows readers remembered these ideas. ‘Horrible’ is also on the list (CNN-0/Fox-4), suggesting readers remembered Starnes claim that Gillette was telling them they are ‘horrible people.’ The remaining words on the list show no seemingly significant patterns; some have little content such as ‘sure,’ ‘time,’ and ‘maybe.’ Some small groups are: ‘better’ (CNN-3/Fox-5) and ‘best’ (CNN-2/Fox-6); ‘message’ (CNN-3/Fox-6) and ‘point’ (CNN-1/Fox-4). But these do not seem to merit analysis here.

One other word bearing on the list is ‘feminist(s)’ (CNN-0/Fox-7). It is intriguing that Fox readers mentioned “feminist(s)” seven times and CNN readers none. The Fox mentions were about 5/7 negative, repeating Starnes’ claims, so this is perhaps the most prominent sign of ideological influence among the word-frequencies.

5.3.4.2 Words Most Used More in CNN

Only a handful of words on CNN’s list stand out as significant. In general they seem to reflect topics more than ideologies, but there are some surprises. The word most used more was ‘commercial(s)’ (CNN-12/Fox-4), showing that CNN readers’ did pick up Filipovic’s greater focus than Fox on the commercial nature of the ad. The second word
‘boys’ (CNN-10/Fox-1) reflects a wide variety of usages, some supporting Filipovic and against. Why her article primed such a usage is intriguing as she used the word only a couple of times herself, most notably to refer to the “boys club” of advertising. The next four words on the list can be mentioned together as they all appear in discussing the ad’s main topic – “toxic” male behaviors: ‘masculine’ (CNN-7/Fox-0), ‘behaviors’ (CNN-8/Fox-1), ‘toxic’ (CNN-10/Fox-4), ‘bullying’ (CNN-5/Fox-0), and 'women' (CNN-13/Fox-9). Although these words are predictably used many times, given the topic, it is notable that a similar word-group does not appear in Fox comments’ most frequent list. This may be a sign of the fact that Starnes and those readers who supported him discussed the behavior of liberals and their ideal of a masculine man more than the people or behaviors shown in the ad.

Two other most-frequent-word groups in CNN’s comments look vaguely significant, but do not seem to show ideological influence. The first group is ‘know’ (CNN-9/Fox-3), 'think' (CNN-11/Fox-4), and 'understand' (CNN-4/Fox-1); the second group is 'right' (CNN-9/Fox-3), 'wrong' (CNN-5/Fox-2), 'bad' (CNN-9/Fox-1). The first group includes 24 word-usages in CNN comments versus 8 in Fox. Apparently CNN readers use more “propositional attitude” verbs. This seems more likely indicative of their personalities and verbal styles than the articles’ content. The second group looks more significant. The values ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ were used more among CNN comments discussing whether the male behaviors in question are right or wrong. Again, although this does not necessarily indicate the influence of Filipovic’s article, it is intriguing to note that these words were not so frequent in Fox comments, suggesting those questions were not as frequently discussed, which agrees with the previous observation that Starnes, at the very least, influenced his readers to think about what the ad is doing to men, rather than what men may be doing to women.
5.3.4.3 Words for Women and Men

The words used to refer to women and men among each article’s comments differ significantly, although not in ways easy to interpret:

**CNN comments:**

- 'women' 13
- 'mothers' 1
- 'boy(s)' 11
- 'fathers' 1
- 'guy' 1

**Fox comments:**

- 'women' 9
- 'female' 2
- 'wife' 1
- 'male' 3
- 'husband' 3
- 'guy' 2
- 'boys' 1

As the reader can see, the numbers of references to each group are similar between comment sets, but with a few more references to men in the comments on CNN’s article. This, as in many other cases examined, definitely differs from the articles, in which, as discussed previously in this chapter, Todd Starnes’ Fox article made a much larger number of references to men (19) than CNN’s (8), as might be seen to befit their respective ideologies. At the same time the specific words used in each set of comments, although different and interesting, do not echo the differences observed in the articles.
themselves, in which CNN used a greater diversity of words for women than Fox, and Fox a much greater diversity of words for men than CNN. That difference between the articles made sense for their content, as discussed previously in this chapter. The similar levels of diversity for terms referring to men and women among the comments leads to no conclusions.

Clearly some significance should be granted to the contrast between ‘mother’ and ‘father’ (CNN) and ‘husband’ and ‘wife’ (Fox). This seems obvious in that marriage is considered a more conservatively ideological institution than parenting, and one frequently characterized by conservative ideologues as intended exclusively for heterosexual relationships, an idea inherited from all of the Abrahamic religions, and especially Christianity, which looms large in conservative socio-political discourses about gender identities. So, this contrast indeed reflects the articles’ respective ideological contexts, and presumably those of their readers to some degree (although it should be kept in mind that the ideological leanings of readers commenting did not correlate well with the articles’ respective points of views).

The extreme contrast in number of uses of the word ‘boys’ to refer to men, between the two comment sets, begs for interpretation, but only speculation can be offered. One could argue that referring to men as boys characterizes them as less mature and dominant than otherwise, which would then be consistent with the respective ideologies of the articles; however, since Starnes himself used the word ‘boys’ seven times, and Filipovich only five, in their articles, such a conclusion seems questionable.

5.3.5 Conclusion

This analysis set out to examine evidence of covert ideological influence from the articles examined to the readers commenting. Although many comments show evidence
of influence, and many show evidence of resistance, only a few show evidence of
“covert” influence – where a reader repeats an idea or vocabulary from the article
without consciously attributing it to the article. Of course, this does not mean that
significant covert influence does not exist; one third to one half of the comments on each
article, agree with the article in general, and most do not indicate whether they are
conscious of being influenced by the article or not. But most comments did not seem to
require influence from the article, and many alluded to ideas not found in the articles.
One important lesson of this project is that covert influence is difficult to distinguish
from simple resonance between reader and article.

That being said, it is clear from the above analysis that Todd Starnes’ article,
and Starnes from many commenters, also influenced some readers powerfully, solidifying prejudices, reinforcing extremist elements of right-wing discourse, and providing perspectives, talking points, and strategies for readers to articulate their already bigoted views. More invisibly it influenced readers by setting the boundaries of the discussion, which concerned what liberals, Gillette, and feminists allegedly want to do to men, rather than what men do to women.

Much less evidence of influence was seen for Filipovic’s article, and this seemed related to the fact that Filipovic presented a point of view more nuanced than most readers’, only one of whom mentioned her idea that the ad was a symptom of progress, not a progressive act. However, many of Filipovic’s comments did re-express her mixed attitude towards the ad without attributing their point of view to Filipovic, which could be evidence of covert influence. Only more research, using larger data sets, may be able to distinguish between influence and resonance in such comments.
CHAPTER 6: RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

Results in this study, largely, consist of answers to two questions:

(1) How did the articles try to transmit ideology, especially covertly?
(2) What was the effect?

These are the main topics of this chapter. Larger questions, and there are many, regarding the discourses examined here and their relationships to society, shall be addressed in the conclusion.

To summarize the answers to the questions above, without repeating the article specific generalizations to be show below:

(1) All of the articles examined contained many elements seemingly intended to transmit ideological elements to audiences, both overtly, and less certainly, but most likely, covertly. Many implications of the articles’ discourses are never stated explicitly in the articles and could be noted by readers sub-consciously. Cognitive science strongly supports the reality of this kind of perception, however it cannot be proven without controlled experiments.

All of the articles seemed intentionally written to generate some sort of prejudice – in the case of the CNN articles, only prejudice against those who supported the travel-ban or opposed the Gillette ad’s statement. The Fox articles also aimed at generating prejudice against those who disagree with their opinions – liberals and feminists primarily, but also attempted to transmit bigoted ideological notions – to a lesser degree in the travel ban article, regarding Muslims, and to a shocking degree, a rather extensively hateful gender ideology in the article about the Gillette ad. I say “gender ideology” because it is not limited to misogyny but also has many other elements. It was
also this last ad which appeared most influential, to judge by reader comments’, with each other article-comment set showing some signs of influence, put much less for CNN than Fox; and only Todd Starnes’ article could be considered highly successful at influence, judging by reader comments. These generalizations will be explored further in the conclusion.

All of the articles attempted to transmit ideologies overtly through a variety of common persuasive rhetorical techniques, such as ‘defusing objections’ and citing authorities, and all committed some fallacious argumentative moves, such as ‘begging the question’ and ‘false dichotomy.’ All of the articles invoked some conceptual metaphors, although some, just barely. All employed ideologically relevant framing, invoked by word choice some much more than others. Only some of the articles used elements of linguistic structure to create ideological implications, some used pragmatics, and some used emotional manipulation (psychological abuse), especially Starnes’ article.

In the following four major sections of this chapter, the results of each article-comment set are summarized. First, the articles’ attempts at ideological transmission are summarized, by technique. Then the comments are grouped in terms of whether they show signs of ideological influence or not, for which ideas. And finally, it is summarized, which techniques and ideas seemed most successfully transmitted. The conclusion then discusses further reasons and implications of the situation so discovered.

6.2 CNN’s Article on the ‘Travel Ban’

This article by Ariane de Vogue and Veronica Stracqualursi concerns the June 2018 Supreme Court ruling upholding the Trump administration’s third version of a ‘travel ban’ which allows authorities to deny entry to the US for nationals of certain
nations, five of which have Muslim-majority populations, plus North Korea and Venezuela.

The Fox article examined was on the same topic and both were published within 24-hours of the Supreme Court decision on June 26, with similar word counts (Fox 1,111 / CNN, 965). Both articles presented themselves and conformed to the standards of articles reporting on events; neither was an opinion article. Both adopted a pretense of political neutrality during their early paragraphs, and then grew increasingly partisan, and increasingly explicit about their partisanship, across the articles, until by the end, they each made a strong partisan statement.

The CNN article’s main idea was the putative discriminatory, socially destructive, hateful, and unconstitutional nature of the ‘ban.’

A high proportion of the comments expressed the ideas that American Republicans are dangerously racist, that Donald Trump is stupid or insane, and that the travel ban represents a move in a dangerous direction for America as a whole. The first two ideas were more implied than stated explicitly in the article. There were also many ideas transmitted by the article that do not show up in the comments, and many ideas in the comments that do not come from the articles. Details follow.

6.2.2 Conceptual Metaphors for the ‘Travel Ban’ in CNN’s Article

CNN’s metaphors represent the ban as invalid, damaging, and launched by incompetent actors. In addition to deploying weapons metaphors, both CNN and Fox characterized the ban as having undergone a test – for CNN, the test of the US Constitution, which it is said to have failed. The Fox metaphors are discussed in 6.3.
6.2.2.1 The Ban is Badly Fired Projectile

CNN’s article says the ban “ricocheted through the courts” (27). Trying to assume as little as possible, we describe this metaphor as concerning an unspecified type of projectile, although bullets seem the most common and natural association to be made. The implications are then:

(1) The ban is an attack
(2) It was badly aimed or launched
(3) It has encountered obstacles at every turn
(4) It may be causing damage anyway

These are certainly consistent with CNN’s representation of the ban in general: that is an attack on Muslims motivated by hatred and wrongly launched by a clumsy administration. These ideas can all be considered part of an ideology opposing discrimination and evaluating the Trump administration as morally and legally wrong and incompetent. The second idea is not strictly speaking ideological, in and of itself, but implies many ideological commitments in its opposition to the administration and its policies.

6.2.2.2 The Value of Our Society are Rock Foundations and the Ban is Erosion

Although clumsy to describe, there can be little doubt this is the metaphor implied when Supreme Court Justice Sotomayor is quoted by CNN, saying that the ban “erodes the foundational principles of religious tolerance” (Sotomayor in CNN, 63-64). Kudos to Justice Sotomayor for implying so much through the judicious use of one word! The word “foundation” implies an architectural metaphor common in English, such as in phrases like, “the results shook the foundations of his theory.” Altogether, the sentence implies:
(1) Religious tolerance is a strong edifice
(2) The ban reduces religious tolerance, and will do so more and more over time
(3) The ban could lead to the disappearance of religious tolerance

This metaphor seems to highlight aspects of the case most salient to a Supreme Court judge and is well chosen by the CNN writers to support their own implied position as discussed above – that the ban is a damaging attack. There are only a few comments on the article alluding to the importance of religious tolerance to our society. Many comments characterize the ban as destructive.

6.2.2.3 Approval of the Ban is a Test

CNN says that the ban has undergone a test, most concretely of constitutionality, although implying more than that: “fails that test . . . [because it is] . . . unconstitutional, unprecedented, unnecessary and un-American” (Katyal in CNN, 85-87). Katyal is a lawyer opposing the ban for the State of Hawaii. The implications of Katyal’s metaphor here seem simple: the ban is unconstitutional. There may be a richer ideology implied in terms of the value it gives to precedence and necessity relative to constitutionality, and what is “un-American”; or, perhaps Katyal lists these qualities simply because they seem compelling, in convincing listeners to oppose the ban. The emphasis on constitutionality appears among the comments, although that could be expected, given the topic.

6.2.3 CNN’s Framing and Word-Choice

It was decided to treat “framing” and other implication by word-choice together both because these categories of expression overlap to such a large degree; one cannot always clearly distinguish between a word’s implying something, and implying a frame. Perhaps any knowledge pertinent to a limited context and including multiple inter-relating entities constitutes a frame.
The topic most represented by biased language is the ban itself, followed by the ruling and the proponents and opponents of the ban. The expressions agree with the metaphors just examined; CNN’s article implies the ban is a danger and that opposing it is noble. However, it will be seen below, that framing can have far richer implications than simply to imply certain qualities of the subjects described.

6.2.3.1 The Policy

The CNN article’s reference to the ban as the “third version” (26) seems neutrally accurate, although it alludes to the policy’s need for repeated revision in a way that does not imply the latest version is necessarily an improvement. By doing so, it implies that the policy has had flaws and may be resistant to successful refinement. This specific point was not alluded to by any comments.

The article also, in strong contrast to Fox’s, refers to the ban as “Trump’s travel ban” (6) only once, and thereafter refers only as “the travel ban” (17, 26, 31, 50, 80). The difference here between CNN and Fox is consistent with Fox’s emphasis (further explicated below) on the validation of Trump’s authority and his administration. The only other CNN reference to the ban mentioning the president says it “exceeded the President’s authority under immigration law as well as the Constitution” (32). In other words, CNN’s wording de-emphasizes the power of Donald Trump, as much as possible. This covert implication is not replicated by the comments in general, many of which mention Trump specifically.

6.2.3.2 The Ruling

Both articles quote the president’s assertion that the ruling was a “profound vindication” and a “tremendous victory for the American People and the Constitution,” but unlike Fox, CNN represents Trump as referring to his own personal vindication (22).
This seems consistent with CNN’s avoidance of referring to Trump’s authority and power.

CNN’s biased framings of the court rulings are conveyed largely through the words of quoted authorities (see below). These descriptions say or imply that the ban is a policy of hatred, rejected unambiguously by previous courts, and now a landmark “failure” of the Supreme Court: The Supreme Court “allowed official racism and xenophobia” (ACLU in CNN, 91) by approving a policy which “give[s] legitimacy to discrimination and Islamophobia” (Ellison in CNN, 77). The ruling is one of the “great failures” of the Supreme Court (Jadwat in CNN, 93-94), which has been “wrong” before (CNN, 71).

These statements are quite explicit; there is nothing covert here, although the implication of all these statements that the Trump administration is consciously instituting official policies of bigotry, is perhaps not quite as explicit as it could be.

Rulings on previous versions of the travel ban are described in CNN’s own words as “invalidating the first two iterations” (52). And Katyal also says “striking down the first two travel bans [. . .] the judiciary forced a recalcitrant administration” (Katyal in CNN, 84). This seems to flesh out a frame, contributed to by many phrases, in which the Trump administration has been struggling to implement a policy clearly and fully condemned by the courts, with the courts being driven to stop the administration by force – an administration which prefers not to obey courts, it is implied. Note that the quote not only implies the ban’s irredeemable wrongness, but also the idea that this administration consciously acts in opposition to US legal authorities. The strength of Katyal’s accusations – official racism, xenophobia, and Islamophobia – appears in some comments – however none echo the implication that the administration has been uncooperative with courts.
6.2.3.3 Opponents of the Ban

CNN refers to the ban’s opponents as “challengers” (31) including “the state of Hawaii” (31), “liberal lawmakers” (74), “the first Muslim elected to Congress” (76), the ACLU (93), and the Democratic National Committee (96). These groups “condemn” (89) the ruling. The word “challengers” and “challenge” evoke sympathy and admiration because a “challenger” is, by definition, non-dominant, relative to that or whom is challenged, but trying to win or accomplish something. Therefore “challenge” connotes courage and effort to overcome. Along with the phrase, “standing up to” “official racism” (CNN, 90-91), a frame is invoked here in which Trump and his ilk are powerful bullies with malicious intent, defied by courageous challengers. “Condemn” implies righteous judgment. The overall implication is that opponents of the ban have both the moral high ground and superior faculties of judgment, yet are underdogs in a contest where, one may hope, they will eventually overcome.

CNN also refers to the “blistering dissent” (59) of the “four dissenting justices” (86). CNN therefore invokes an image of nearly half the court engaged in “blistering” disagreement with the ruling, implying the ban may be outrageously wrong, in contrast to Fox’s picture.

6.2.3.4 CNN Framing American Politics

CNN explicitly contradicts the Fox article’s implication (section 6.3) that Muslims are “aliens,” using a quote from Tom Perez, chair of the Democratic National Committee: “Discrimination is not a national security strategy, and prejudice is not patriotism. Let’s call this ban for what it is: an outright attack on the Muslim community that violates our nation's commitment to liberty and justice for all” (Perez in CNN). This quote expresses a clearly anti-discrimination ideology and respect for Muslims. It does also play its own
“us” versus “them” game to some degree, accusing ban supporters of attacking Muslims. This idea, as already mentioned, pervades the anti-ban comments.

6.2.4 Pragmatics

The perspective of linguistic pragmatics is applicable to many of the linguistic devices already discussed in these articles. In this section, only devices normally classified as primarily ‘pragmatic’ are discussed. One is quotation, the other conversational implicature (Grice).

6.2.4.1 Quotation

Both articles frequently employ quotations to convey strong ideas without taking responsibility for them. CNN’s writers use quotation in order to condemn Trump in harsher terms than they could in their own voices. CNN quotes Justice Roberts’ explanation that opposition to the ban was based on people’s perception that the “president’s words strike at fundamental standards of respect and tolerance, in violation of our constitutional tradition” (Roberts in CNN, 36). It is a particularly well-chosen quote for this purpose, since Roberts is a conservative judge, and, we can infer, disagrees with this description of the president’s statements. But the description has its own impact, regardless of Roberts’ disagreement. It also echoes other elements of the article’s ideology, as examined above – the unconstitutionality and the attack on tolerance as a foundation of our society. This representation of Trump is also consistent with many anti-ban comments.

6.2.4.2 Conversational Implicature

Conversational implicature is a pragmatic device whereby a speaker implies something by violating our conventional expectations for communication. Here, we examine one such a usage exploited in both articles. The expectation violated is what
Grice called the “maxim of quantity” – the assumption that people will only say as much as is relevant. When someone says anything more than is strictly necessary, we infer that it is in fact relevant and search for an interpretation of its relevance.

Surprisingly, both articles describe the Supreme Court justices opposing the news source’s politics as taking an “unusual step” in their statements about the ruling, without evaluating the significance of that step for the reader. This is clearly conversational implicature; the significance of the step’s being unusual is to be inferred from context and background knowledge.

CNN’s writers say that (conservative) Justice Roberts took “the unusual step” of declaring wrong the WWII Supreme Court decision to allow the internment of Japanese in the United States (70-71). His doing so follows liberal Justice Sotomayor’s raising of the comparison. Roberts therefore implies that the two cases are no comparable. But CNN picks up on the fact that his need to comment implies the cases have something in common. By highlighting it as an “unusual step,” CNN implies Roberts must have an unusual motivation; the reader should infer, through social cognition, that the similarity between the two cases, discrimination, is salient to Roberts, compelling him to vocally deny the implication.

6.2.5 Rhetoric

Rhetoric includes indefinitely many discourse techniques and strategies for accomplishing a purpose, in the cases below, to influence readers mental models of the situations discussed.
6.2.5.1 Omission or Avoidance

Each news source avoids or de-emphasizes certain facts through wording, with the seeming intent to influence readers' models of the world. Their choices in that respect nicely point to a weakness in each article's argument and an element of ideology.

CNN presents the complete list of nations banned early on (24-5), but after that only refers to the travelers at all, when saying that Trump previously wanted to ban “all Muslim-majority countries” (33). This seems likely to leave readers with the impression that it is a Muslim-ban, even though CNN technically reported the truth. The idea that the ban is a Muslim-ban is ideological.

6.2.5.2 Comparison

CNN spends several paragraphs on Justice Sotomayor’s comparison of the ruling to the court’s previous approval of Japanese internment camps in 1944, even titling that section “Sotomayor and Korematsu” (the 1944 plaintiff) (57-72). This implies that the court’s current decision is discriminatory, prejudiced, and nationalist, and also evokes the specter of genocide. Although the US Japanese internment camps murdered no one (as far as I know), mentioning racially-based internment camps during WWII, and in the context of a ban allegedly focused on members of a religion, must remind readers of the Holocaust. This seems in line with CNN’s rhetoric reviewed elsewhere that implies Trump and his supporters are motivated by hate and that the ban could be dangerous.

6.2.6 Word Frequencies

The words used in the CNN article most more than in the Fox article referring to the politico-legal system (‘court', ‘ruling', ‘law', 'dissent', 'constitution') and parts of the US government other than the Trump administration (‘state,’ ‘congress’). And the words America and public are also among the most more used by CNN. Altogether these imply
a stronger concern by CNN for the legal and constitutional status of the ban, and the voices of states, Congress, and the American public, in contrast to Fox’s heavy emphasis on the Trump administration and executive authority, the main topic of its article. These emphases do have ideological implications; CNN’s is that all of the above mentioned entities and forces are important. Fox’s is that the president’s authority is the central concern. CNN’s emphasis on entities other than the Trump administration does not appear to have influenced the comments, which refer to Trump and his administration more than anything else.

6.2.7 Comments on CNN Article

One hundred comments were examined. The two most salient generalizations are a) that the majority of comments come from conservative readers attacking liberals and Democrats (80 out of 100), which is also true of the Fox article (73 out of 100).

6.2.7.1 CNN Comment Word Frequencies

CNN’s comment word frequencies have little connection with the words or ideas of the CNN article. The word “protesters” nearly tops the list of most used words, for reasons explained in Chapter Four. A slight preponderance of the words America, countries, and the names of other countries stands out as a perhaps unexpected difference from the Fox article’s comments, hinting, perhaps, that more CNN readers take an international perspective than Fox readers.

6.2.7.2 Ideas Appearing in Both Article and Comments

Only 20 out of 100 comments on the CNN article oppose the ban and few other comments contain any ideas similar to those of the article. Sixteen of the 20 anti-ban comments on the CNN story consist of attacks on conservative Americans, with Donald Trump, the conservative justices, and the GOP base receiving about equal numbers of
attacks, plus one on Mitch McConnell and Neil Gorsuch (see Chapter Four for details). Nevertheless, three ideas appear in a high proportion of the anti-ban comments, that were perhaps covertly promoted by the CNN article to some degree; the ideas that Republicans are racist, Donald Trump an idiot, and America in immediate peril because of them, could be seen as somewhat implied by CNN’s discourse as reviewed above, but then again, they are also common elements of public discourse today in America.

6.2.7.2.1 Ban Supporters are Dangerously Racist

As far as the CNN article, this idea was implied by the discussion of “Korematsu” as described above and the quotes by several authorities describing the policy as blatantly racist and dangerous. Also reinforcing this notion indirectly were the many expressions in the article implying the ban was indeed intended as an anti-Muslim ban. The relevant reader comments mainly say it’s all about racism:

C27. This has got to be most shameful SCOTUS ever! The people will have to put a check on Trump’s power because the SCOTUS surely will not!!! How you gonna uphold a Muslim Ban and at the same time condemn Japanese Internment camps. Feckless Court!! Vote Blue for SANITY-Save America

C53. The entire SCOTUS is Racist!!!

C54. We’re not going to go docile into those trains chugging toward their "camps", some of us that didn’t live that history read it.

It is interesting that the reader in C53 appears not aware that 4/9 of the court dissented. This does not speak to article influence, as the CNN article made a point of the dissent. C27 and C54 almost surely represent influence from CNN’s highlighting of Sotomayor’s “Korematsu” comparison and Roberts’ response to it.
6.2.7.2.2 America is Headed Towards Disaster

This idea figures in four of the twenty anti-ban comments:

C31. Trump stole the presidency and has a justice on the court that does not belong. America is in peril and Trump and Putin will destroy America.

C33. SUPREME ENDS CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY Uphold unlimited presidential power

C77. We will all suffer the consequences of Trump's agenda. #FakeAmerican

C34. What has America become? A sad day.

C33 is the comment above most similar to the article’s discourse, which did convey such a characterization, such as in the Katyal quotes previously discussed. Also perhaps supporting this idea could be added a variety of expressions, previously examined, implying that the ban was presently causing damage.

6.2.7.2.3 It is a Muslim-Ban

This idea, heavily implied but not said by the article, seems assumed by all of the comments about racism. However, the couple of anti-ban commenters who touch on the question, are aware that Cuba and Venezuela are on the list, but discount that as evidence against its being a Muslim ban, for example: “But in Trumpistan they definitely believe North Korea and Venezuela are Muslim countries” (C75). Most readers seem to take it as a given that the policy was motivated by racism, perhaps based on Trump’s public statements, and perhaps to some degree based on CNN’s framing.

6.2.7.3 Ideas Appearing Only in Article

Many of the ideas in the CNN article, especially those implied, rather than stated, do not appear in any comments. Of course, the main reason for this, we must keep in
mind, is that 80 of the 100 comments supported the travel ban. Nevertheless, reviewing the ideas that did not appear in the anti-ban comments does hint at patterns.

One implication and explicit statement of CNN’s discourse, discussed previously, was that Muslims are important and have a right to contribute their voices to the discussion. This idea did not appear among comments. Another powerful idea expressed both overtly and covertly in the article was that religious tolerance is a foundation of American society, Democracy, and freedom. What these two ideas have in common, which in general does not appear among anti-ban comments is positivity; as mentioned above, 16 of the 20 anti-ban comments were attacks on Republicans.

Also not present in the article and not in the comments is the idea that the ban exceeds the president’s legal authority; readers cared only about the racism. Readers also did not reproduce the idea from the article that the administration has resisted the courts in general.

6.2.7.4 Ideas that Appear Only in Comments

Although these comments do not reflect CNN’s article, they are enlightening in several ways. For one thing, they provide a contrast with the comments reflecting the articles, suggesting patterns. As said before, 80/100 comments came from conservative readers attacking liberals and Democrats (80 out of 100), which is almost the same number as for the Fox travel ban article (73 out of 100).

Several themes stand out of these comments: a) many liberals do not work for a living, b) many liberals are not true Americans, c) liberals are immature and emotionally weak, like small children, e) liberals are bad losers, d) opposing the travel ban is inviting invasion, e) the protesters are paid for by wealthy elite liberal forces, f) liberals are under the influence of “fake media” such as CNN, g) liberals are hypocritical, also fearing
immigrants, and opposing the ban out of partisan animus, h) liberals are a danger to America as a society, and i) CNN is an enemy of America. The comments presenting these ideas are analyzed thoroughly in Chapter Four. There are of course quite a few pro-ban comments on the CNN article alluding to a variety of more unique one-comment-ideas, all interesting and previously analyzed but not relevant to the question of influence.

6.2.7.5 What Techniques had What Impact?

The strongest similarities between article and comments were the expression of several ideas: (1) that the ban is motivated by racial hatred comparable to that of the nazis, (2) That Donald Trump is stupid, immature, and crazy, (3) that America is in peril, (4) that the ban IS a Muslim-ban. These ideas were supported by a variety of techniques including especially quotation and word-choice, but also conceptual metaphor and various rhetorical techniques. Perhaps what they most have in common is that they were conveyed in more than one way, which would certainly make sense, for influencing ideas. However, these ideas are so common in current public American discourse that most of their comments cannot be assumed to have been influenced. A few have been highlighted above, that can be traced to specific elements of CNN’s discourse.

One other generalization previously mentioned about these ideas is their extreme negativity, representing polarized thinking, not to mention fear and anger. Altogether, these observations lead to several questions to be addressed in this study’s conclusion:

(1) Do these comments represent influence or resonance?

(2) Is polarized thinking an effect of the articles or trait readers bringing with them?
(3) Is CNN, or are the politicians and lawyers it cites, trying to incite such thinking, such as for political reasons?
We defer these questions to the conclusion.

6.3 Fox’s Article on the Supreme Court Travel Ban Decision
The main idea of Fox’s June 26 article on the travel ban ruling, by Bill Mears, seems to be approval of the expansion of presidential authority. Fox refers to Trump’s authority as “executive authority” six times (6, 33, 40, 59, 74, 86), presumably to make it sound more sacrosanct, less partisan, and less tied to a man that so many Americans (including many conservatives) find personally offensive. However, just as important as Fox’s distancing of the phrase from Trump’s name, is its emphasis as the main significance of the ruling.

Fox barely alludes to Muslims at all, and does not cite any Muslim voices. It is striking then that the article nevertheless manages to covertly imply that the ban was indeed intended as a weapon against Muslims (as explained below) despite saying and implying otherwise more directly. Although Fox does not refer to the banned travelers much, it nevertheless manages to call them, indirectly by implication, “alien” several times in a short space and that they are “detrimental to the interests of the United States” and full of “hatred” – through a combination of quotations ostensibly intended to convey other ideas.

Since 73/100 comments on this article agreed with the article’s slant, in favor of the ruling, there are many comments potentially influenced by the article. Most generally, the largest number of those comments attack liberals (21 comments) or praise the conservative justices, Donald Trump, or other Republican politicians in favor of the ban (also 21 comments). About half of the attacks are directed against Democratic politicians, half against the four dissenting liberal Supreme Court judges, one against
Obama, one against several specific liberal celebrities, and one against “the media.” Of the remaining conservative comments, six express fears of invasion or terrorism, five mention presidential authority, and three state the need to ban Mexicans for “MS13 and drugs.” Of these various categories, although attacks against liberals are consistent with the article’s political slant, most of their more specific ideas were not promoted by the article. The full discussion concludes this section, 6.3.

**6.3.1 Conceptual Metaphors for the “Travel Ban” in Fox’s Article**

Fox’s article represents the “ban,” an abstract entity, in terms of a piece of software, an honored person or delegation, and a weapon, and each of these metaphors gains ramifications through associated frames and connotations in various discourses in the context of the article. The common import of these devices is to represent the “ban” as something professional, respectable, and effective. Each metaphor is evoked by one word, used in relatively common expressions, so the metaphorical implications are likely to be overlooked consciously by readers; the question of whether they are conveyed to readers is addressed in conclusion to section 6.3.

**6.3.1.1 The Ban is an Upgrade Software Application**

Fox refers to the ban as “travel ban 3.0” (Fox, 17) once, early in the article. The bare bones of the metaphor, so to speak, indicate that it is the third version (which is true). Software upgrades normally solve bugs in the software and increase functionality and security. This message is 100% consistent with other representations of the ban in Fox, as will be reviewed below, which center on its putative function as a security measure which solves an urgent problem. According to the Trump administration / Fox narrative, “the system” has been broken, particularly with a security flaw, and the new policy fixes it. The primary ideological implications of the metaphor seem to be:
(1) The policy is essentially an application – a useful thing, a tool

(2) Bugs have been fixed

(3) The new version solves problems that existed before

And the basic metaphor has further, looser implications by connotation; it is modern, hip, technological, and professional. Moreover, the designation of a new version of anything by, e.g. “2.0,” has become a popular trope recently on social media (a Google search reveals multiple unrelated articles and books with “You 2.0” in the title). So, this style of designation should connote positive emotions and values to many readers. However, these implications about the travel ban are not mentioned or implied by any reader comments, except in terms of their approval for the ruling, which indeed could have been influenced by them, although there are no specific indications.

6.3.1.2 The Ban is a High-Status Person

Fox says the Trump administration’s initial arguments to the Supreme Court for the ban, in April of 2018, “enjoyed a favorable reception” (44). This metaphor could probably be described in other ways than above. It is an extremely common metaphor for describing the response of a potentially critical audience to . . . just about anything. It seems, subjectively to me, that it is used most often to describe the reception of a work of art, especially a performance. Then secondarily, any sort of proposal; one might joke that a tuna sandwich received a favorable reception from a finicky child.

The oldest relevant meaning of “reception” was the aristocratic ritual of a ruler or host formally receiving visitors61. While potentially indicating favor or disfavor towards them. And this meaning is still very active in English. Other common meanings, such as

61 https://www.etymonline.com/word/Reception
the “receptions” for guests at formal parties, and the “reception” of works of art, seem natural metaphorical extensions.

It seems possible to get to the “proposals” application of the metaphor equally well from either the visitor reception or the reception of a performance. The implications are slightly different, but both applicable. In the case of the received visitor, the proposal is implied to be respectable, of relatively high social status. In the case of the performance, the proposal is implied to be a work of art or scholarship. If the reception is favorable, its object is implied to have met with its audience's approval. In other words, the most important implication of the metaphor here is that the proposal was approved of by the Supreme Court even before the decision of June 2018. A discussed previously, the Fox article promoted the notion, in several ways, that the ban was always favorably regarded by courts, although needing a fix. This idea may well have influenced comments implying that the court's verdict should have been a foregone conclusion (comments discussed at the end of 6.3).

6.3.1.3 The Ban is a Projectile Weapon

The Fox article, relatively close to the end, mentions that the ban in an earlier version, “aimed at” seven Muslim countries (69). This seems an interesting choice of words. On the one hand, this is an extremely common, conventional, use of “aims,” normally designating a goal, or the objects of an action, without necessarily implying anything more. On the other hand, it does metaphorically imply that the purpose of the ban is to be used as a weapon against Muslim nations, or against Muslims, represented figuratively in terms of their nations. It is not possible to assume such intentions by the writers, as this is such a common phrase, they may not have even been conscious themselves, of the implications, although that does not mean those implications did not influence the writers’ choice. The Fox readers commenting on this issue emphasize that
it is NOT a Muslim ban, and this could have been influenced by the article’s explicit claims in that regard, although, again, the article was more focused on the vindication of executive authority.

6.3.1.4 Liberal Protests are Explosions

The Fox article says that the ruling “triggered” the chaos of liberal protests (87). Although “trigger” evokes guns, perhaps purposely, this usage of “triggered” seems to be that of triggering an explosion; the protests are like a bomb which has been set off. The implication is simple: liberal protests are explosive and dangerous. On another level, though, the word “triggered” is saliently associated, in conservative discourse, with disdain for the neo-liberal idea of emotional “triggering,” a concern frequently mocked by conservatives, in reference, for example to “trigger warnings.” So, along with the idea that the protests are explosive and dangerous, this phrase also alludes to liberals’ alleged hysterical over-sensitivity. Thus, the phrase aims both to discount opposition to the ban and to increase the dislike of conservative readers for liberals and protest, as appears very significantly in the readers’ comments.

6.3.1.5 The Ruling was a Test of Trump’s Policies and Power

Both CNN and Fox articles use a test metaphor. CNN, as reviewed, said that the ban had failed a test of constitutionality. Fox says that Trump’s policies and power have passed the test of legality, validating their expansion:

It was the first significant legal test so far of Trump's policies and power and could lead to a precedent-setting expansion on the limits of presidential authority, especially within the immigration context (34-36).

The Supreme Court’s ruling has validated Trump’s policies and power perhaps beyond the ban itself, according to this sentence. This is consistent with the fact previously noted
that the Fox article focuses primarily on the issue of executive authority and Trump’s validation by the ruling. This idea is alluded to by some reader comments, but not the main point of any.

6.3.2 Fox Framing and Word Choice

Again, as with conceptual metaphors, the topic most represented by biased language is the ban itself, followed by the ruling and the proponents and opponents of the ban. These expressions agree with the metaphors previously examined; Fox implies the ban is a boon and its opponents are dangerous. However, it will be seen below, that framing goes much further than to simply imply certain qualities of the subjects described. In many case, words are chosen to describe one thing which imply a frame-full of ideas about something else, making such word-choices a locus of “covert” implications.

6.3.2.1 Fox Framing the Ban

“Selective Travel Restrictions”

As in other sections, we find the ban to be the subject most represented with covert implications. Fox describes the ban’s activity as “selective travel restrictions” (9). As previously discussed, the word “selective” evokes a variety of frames – “selective entry,” “selective admission,” “a selective process,” etc. – in which it is a status to which a person might aspire – to become a member of an exclusive club. More generally, it implies that the ban is not applied in a sweeping way to a large number of people, as it, of course, is. It also connoted that the “selective” status is desirable and beneficial for the person selected, and that the selected individual deserves to be so selected due to their qualities. These implications contradict the significance of the travel ban for those selected but make the policy sound more appetizing to readers.
“Restrictions,” in the context of air travel, normally refers to restrictions on luggage and carry-on items, not travelers. In a context where terrorism is an explicitly connected issue, the word alludes to items banned items banned for fear of a terrorist attack. Therefore, Fox’s use of the word both implies that the ban acts against objects, not people, but also that those banned are likely dangerous.

“to secure our border and country” (12)

Fox’s other description of the ban’s activity is a Trump quotation – “to secure our border and country” and other phrases repeating the same idea. Fox uses the words “order” and “security” in association with the ban several times. This implies that the ban’s purpose is not to impinge on anyone’s freedom, but rather to protect Americans from dangers, thus implying that the banned travelers are terrorist suspects.

“squarely . . . fulfilling requirements” (Roberts in Fox, 20)

This quote from conservative Justice Roberts implies law, order, normality, security, and more. All three words mentioned are inherently reassuring, and together imply that the ban remedied a lack, and did it properly. Although reader comments do not say this in so many words, it may be relevant that over 21 conservative comments expressed thanks to God or great relief in some other sense, that the ban was upheld, suggesting perhaps that they had subconsciously absorbed messages implying that it was a perfect fix for an urgent problem.

“Trump travel ban”

Fox repeatedly refers to the ban as the “Trump travel ban” (1) or “Trump administration policy” (8-9) whereas CNN refers to the ban as “Trump’s travel ban” (5) only once, but thereafter refers to it only as “the travel ban” (17, 26, 31, 50, 80). The difference here between CNN and Fox is consistent with Fox’s emphasis (further explicated below) on the validation of Trump’s authority and his administration. This
does seem to be an idea in common with the comments, so many of which focus on Trump, whether for or against.

**Comparison with previous “bans”**

Fox also implies much about this ban by comparing it to previous presidential travel bans. Fox notes that Carter, Reagan, and Obama exercised the authority to deny entry to certain refugees, such as from Cuba and North Korea (56-57). In other words, Fox implicitly compares Trump to these three formidable presidents and the travel ban to decisions they made. The explicit argument is that this demonstrates the travel ban is not beyond presidential authority.

The comparison has a heavily ideological ramification – comparing the banned travelers to those banned from Cuba and North Korea – enemies of the US and its allies. It is a poor comparison with banning (5/7) Muslim nations; refugees from Cuba and North Korea are not a racial or religious category. But the comparison tries to exploit social cognition as well as making an invalid comparison; it also implies that if travel bans were okay for these highly admired presidents, the new one should be kosher as well. One of the reader comments mentioned this comparison (see below).

**6.3.2.2 Fox Framing Rulings on the Ban**

Fox’s readers do not comment on the previous rulings, however, their representation plays into the framing of the current ruling, so they are discussed here. Fox makes a remarkable effort to imply that this latest ruling was a natural conclusion to its treatment by previous courts (most of which blocked it). Fox’s writers choose words implying that those decisions did NOT in fact disapprove of the ban in essence; in one case, the earlier version of the ban is said to have “overstepped” Trump’s “powers to regulate,” implying that the essential policy, of banning Muslims, was valid, but the ban rejected on the basis of a technical legal issue – which, may be how these writers truly
see the ban’s earlier rejection, but is deceptive, since it is Trump’s powers to ban people based on a religious or ethnic characteristic that “overstepped.”

Fox’s article says a previous judge “refused to allow the ban to be enforced” (Fox, 89). This invokes the same “refusal” frame Fox used to describe other ban opponents, a frame in which the ban was not being declared invalid, but rather, people are perversely standing in its way. In another description of one of the earlier cases, Fox implies that the earlier court approved of the ban, by saying it “allowed the current restrictions to be enforced” (Fox, 42), although the court did not approve the ban; it allowed the restrictions to be enforced pending the Supreme Court decision. These devices avoid transmitting the idea that any judges have truly rejected the ban while simultaneously representing opponents as perverse.

As for the latest ruling, Fox “marks” it as the “first major high court decision” of Trump’s administration, implying it is worthy of commemoration (8), and using the words “first,” “major”, and “high,” all of which imply a positive landmark. Both articles quote the president’s assertion that the ruling was a “profound vindication” and a “tremendous victory for the American People and the Constitution.” Fox presents it as a conclusion (11), implying that it was well-considered, rather than as an immediate reaction, as CNN describes it.

Fox’s characterization of the Supreme Court’s supposed earlier limited endorsement of the current policy (in April 2018) (44) as a “favorable reception” was discussed among metaphors. The Fox article also invokes a non-metaphorical frame for the Court’s responses with similar implications when it says that the Court has been historically “deferential” (Fox, 54) to presidential authority. This is not a metaphor; if the justices validate the ban, they literally “defer” to the president’s proposal. However, to frame the courts’ relationship to presidential authority as traditionally “deferential”
distorts the Court’s relationship to presidential authority within the American system of checks and balances. It implies that the court should defer to the president’s positions and policies, which is untrue. If our system was intended to validate all of the president’s policies, they would not be subject to Supreme Court review. Thus, “deferential” here invokes a frame (that of legal “deference”) with extremely ideological implications – that the court should defer to executive authority. A number of reader comments clearly allude to this idea (see below).

Fox also describes the ruling as licensing a “precedent-setting expansion” (35) of the “chief executive” to whom it gives “broad authority” (59), a “hardest-fought battle” (6), a “significant legal test” (34) of Trump’s authority (not his character), and a fulfillment of the law. Fox describes the case as now having been “fully litigated” (43) and the central issue faced by the judges, “reviewing a Presidential directive, neutral on its face, addressing a matter within the core of executive responsibility” (Roberts in Fox, 74-76).

Another word-choice that characterizes the ruling appears in the following: “The high court’s majority downplayed Trump’s campaign statements as a major factor in its decision” (Fox, 70). This is interesting because although it does not imply that Trump’s campaign statements (about banning Muslims) were not sincere, it also does not imply that they are not significant; “downplay” implies that what is downplayed is one of the reasons for something, but that those downplaying it wish to emphasize something else. In fact, CNN used the word “dismissed” in its version of this assertion. This is only one of several places in the article where Fox subtly implies that the ban is in fact a “Muslim-ban” although stating otherwise on the surface.

The narrative here is that the travel ban should always have been considered an uncontroversial example of Trump doing his job and that a heroic battle to vindicate
executive authority, has now justly been won. These ideas definitely show up multiple
times in the pro-ban Fox comments (see below).

6.3.2.3 Fox Framing Opponents of the Ban

Just as CNN writer’s invoked a frame in which the “recalcitrant” administration
was forced into line, Fox invokes a similar frame to characterize ban opponents by
quoting Trump’s statement that Democrats “refuse to do what it takes to secure our
border and our country” (23), implying that the ban is necessary to prevent looming
unspecified disaster, and that the ban’s opponents are ill-motivated or weak for
perversely refusing to take action. It is interesting to note that the phrasing implies
something about the ban (that it is a necessary measure) purely through the words
chosen to describe the activity of opponents – “refuse to do what it takes.” This is a good
example of how one element of a frame (the recalcitrant actor) can be used to invoke
others, unmentioned (the action demanded).

6.3.2.4 Fox Framing American Politics

Both articles attempt to influence readers by defining an “us” and “them.” The
Fox article uses the words “us” 12 more times than does CNN. And quotes Trump’s
phrase, “secure our border and our country.” These usages emphasize in-group / out-
group thinking: Americans versus others.

Fox also divides humanity into those on the side of the Trump administration
and those against it. And uses keywords such as “hysterical” (22) to remind conservative
readers of the entire conservative discourse discrediting liberals (the same could be said
of CNN’s characterization of conservatives described elsewhere). To summarize, Fox
refers to opponents of the ban as “critics” (Fox, 9) who “refuse to do what it takes,”
(Trump in Fox, 23) and who “[contest] all the president’s orders” (Fox, 78) with “chaos
and protests” (Fox, 87). They include “media and Democratic politicians” (Trump in Fox, 23), “liberals” (Fox, 24), a “coalition of groups in opposition” (49), and “Hawaii officials” (78). Since attacks on liberals are one of the two most comment types (21 comments each), along with celebration of the ruling, there is strong possibility of influence here, although, as usual, because this frame is already a pervasive aspect of our public discourse, influence from the article in particular is impossible to prove.

6.3.3 Pragmatics

6.3.3.1 Quotation

As discussed for CNN, both articles use quotations mainly to voice stronger, less ambiguous, statements than they could in their own words, and to invoke authorities as support for their interpretation of events. Fox quotes the Immigration and Nationality Act, which describes potentially banned travelers as “alien” several times in a row, and says they are “detrimental to the interests of the United States” (21-23).

Although Fox, on the surface, does not claim prejudice against Muslims, it implies that the ban’s purpose is precisely to discriminate against Muslims in several other ways. Only this motivation explains Fox’s decision to quote its ideological opponents, representatives of the Hawaiian government, explaining that the ban was indeed originally intended to target all and only Muslims:

Any reasonable observer who heard the president's campaign promises, read his thinly justified orders banning overwhelmingly Muslim populations, and observed his administration's persistent statements linking the two, would view the order and each of its precursors as the fulfillment of the president's promise to prohibit Muslim immigration to the United States.

(“Hawaii officials” in Fox, 81-85)
This is also the message of Fox’s only quote from the dissent: “Based on the evidence in the record, a reasonable observer would conclude that the proclamation was motivated by anti-Muslim animus” (Sotomayor in Fox, 28-29). Fox wants its readers to know the president has fulfilled his promise to them, and that it is about Muslims, just not to say so straight out. Similarly, pro-ban comments argue explicitly that it is not a Muslim-ban while others imply animosity and fear of immigrants.

Fox’s failure to quote any Muslims or anyone concerned for their rights constitutes, also carries a sort of pragmatic implication. It is normal to imply that people are not socially important or have no right to contribute to a discussion by barely referring to them and not including their voices in discussions about events affecting them. Similarly, Muslims are not discussed directly at all during the comments.

6.3.4 Omission

Each news source avoids, de-emphasizes, or omits facts with the seeming intent to influence readers’ beliefs about reality. Their choices in that respect point to the weaknesses in each of their positions.

The point Fox’s writers avoided is that the ban hurts innocent people. It avoids or de-emphasizes this fact in two ways. First, the article says that the ban affects “five” Muslim-majority nations (16-17) (because two of the countries banned, North Korea and Venezuela, are not Muslim-majority); quick readers will infer that only five countries were banned, not seven, making the ban affect fewer people. Then Fox says “some travelers” were “stopped from boarding international flights and others detained at airports for hours” (87-88) – making it sound like nothing more than a longer wait in line for a few people, omitting that the ban has drastic effects on the lives of an estimated
90,000 people\textsuperscript{62}, some of whom may be unable to attend to school, jobs, or families in the US.

\textbf{6.3.5 In-Group Signaling}

Fox mentions, without reason, that the courts rejecting earlier versions of the travel ban were in “San Francisco,” “California,” and “Virginia,” (37) presumably signaling to conservative readers that those decisions can be dismissed as coming from epicenters of liberal madness. This implication may contribute to conservatives not taking the liberal position seriously, but such influence cannot be demonstrated.

\textbf{6.3.6 Word Frequencies}

The Fox word frequencies show a text disproportionately concerned with executive power, security, and fear of immigrants. Fox refers more to the Trump administration (‘administration’, ‘federal’, ‘executive’, ‘president’, ‘trump’, ‘majority’) than any other referent, and to the targets of the ban, negatively (‘immigr’, 'alien', 'Muslim,' ‘detriment’).

Also, as previously reviewed, Fox refers to \textit{us} more than CNN and also to “our country” while CNN in contrast uses the word public more. Clearly the conservative position on the ban is more protective and possessive of “our country” and this sentiment appears in comments, as it does throughout conservative discourses.

\textbf{6.3.7 Comments on Fox Article}

To summarize before examining the comments in detail, the largest groups of conservative comments on Fox’s article are those attacking liberals (21 comments) and

those congratulating, blessing, cheering, or thanking the conservative justices or Donald Trump or other conservative leaders (also 21 comments). About half of the attacks are directed against Democratic politicians, half against the four dissenting liberal Supreme Court judges, one against Obama, one against several specific liberal celebrities, and one against “the media.” Of the remaining conservative comments, six express fears of invasion or terrorism, five mention presidential authority, and three state the need to ban Mexicans for “MS13 and drugs.” Animosity towards liberals and celebration of the administration’s win in court are major themes of pro-ban comments, on both articles. Virtually all of the liberal comments on Fox’s article consist of attacks against Donald Trump, the GOP, the conservative judges, and Fox’s readership. Out of the 27 liberal comments (out of 100 comments total), there are 17 partisan attacks and 10 other ideas mentioned.

6.3.7.1 Fox Comment Word Frequencies

The most notable differences in word frequencies between the two articles’ comments are words used 5-10 times more in one article’s comments than in the other’s (in fact, all but one of these words were used in only one article’s comments at all):

**Words most used more in Fox:**

('god', CNN-1 / Fox-10), ('judges', CNN-0 / Fox-6), ('sure', CNN-0 / Fox-5),
('wrong', CNN-0 / Fox-5), ('law', CNN-0 / Fox-5), ('winning', CNN-0 / Fox-5),
('yes.', CNN-0 / Fox-5), ('standard', CNN-0 / Fox-5)

Although “judges” and “law” figured heavily in Fox’s article, the other words did not (nor their topics). “God,” the word most distinguishing the Fox comments, appears as five “thank god”s, three “god bless”s and two other comments. The words god, judge, law, sure, wrong, winning, and standard, seem closely related in an abstract way; they
all concern the inter-related topics of correctness, rightness, surety, dominance, and authority. Further examination of the words used 3-4 more times in Fox than in CNN supports this observation; all were used three times in Fox comments and zero in CNN: defeated, Trump, supreme court, religion, rule, upholding, followers. These words also concern issues revolving around authority, such as judgment, tradition, obedience, and law, and the specific content of the comments supports the idea that these are among the ideals most strongly motivating pro-ban commenters on the Fox article. The focus on the Trump administration’s authority, as already reviewed, perhaps the main theme of Fox’s article, while religious authority was not mentioned.

8.3.7.2 Ideas Appearing in Both Article and Comments

All of the topics emphasized in the Fox article appear in readers’ comments, often in the same words as the article. These ideas include “the rule of law,” the sanctity of the US Constitution, the idea that immigrants are dangerous and criminal, the fears of terrorism and invasion, the emphasis on executive authority and responsibility, and the implied representation of liberals as hysterical.

The 21 comments attacking liberals indeed appear shaped by the specific discourse of the Fox article. For example, the single largest category of such attacks among the Fox comments, criticizes the dissenting judges for failing to uphold the constitution and the “rule of law,” specifically, by failing to confirm the president’s authority:

F4. Good! But, don’t understand why 4 Judges would vote against this? Thought they were to make sure the President and Congress upheld the Constitution! Looks like 4 of the Judges do not understand their responsibilities!
The idea that the president was not only authorized but responsible to enact the travel ban, is found, as far as this author is aware, only in the discourse of the Trump administration and its supporters, such as in the Fox article. Here is another example of such comments:

F66. The president has the power to control who comes in the judges do not know what the president knows heck congress doesn’t know what’s going on yet congress gave him the power for that reason to protect the Nation and Republic.

In summary, Fox’s conservative readers seem to believe that the travel ban was always, uncontroversially, within the president’s authority and responsibility to protect America, and that liberals have been perverse and “obstructionist” in opposing it; this is exactly how the Fox article frames the case.

Another group of attacks on liberals emphasizes another idea conveyed, for the most part indirectly, by the Fox article, although it has become a trope of conservative discourse recently, as discussed in our previous analysis – that liberals are hysterical:

F64. Triggered lefties in 3 2 1 . . .

F70. Lunitic left is slapped down again

Two other rebuttals describe liberals as “unhinged,” reflecting the “liberal mob” narrative now prevalent in conservative media discourse about liberals.

Going beyond the majority of the pro-ban comments, i.e. those devoted to partisan politics and the issues of presidential authority, there remain a significant number of other conservative comments expressing other notions implicitly pushed in

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63 The word “republic” is used twice by conservatives commenting on Fox’s article and not at all otherwise.
Fox’s discourse -- the **dangers of terrorism and invasion, the association of Mexico with “MS13 and drugs,” and the idea of “illegal” immigration.** As these three topics overlap significantly, one set of examples covers all three:

F6. Drugs and MS13 are a national security risk, move now to add Mexico to the travel band! Make Congress fix the immigration once and for all.

F12. MS-13 and other criminal supporters were the 4. Supreme Court justices supporting terrorism and crime.

The other idea most uniquely raised among the conservative rebuttals on Fox is that the travel ban is not a Muslim ban:

F79. It's not a 'religious' ban. It's that we're not able to verify and vett from these 5 terrorist stronghold nations.

Also note, that this commenter says “five” nations, when the ban affects seven nations. Fox prompted this misunderstanding, as discussed in the section on “omission” (8.3.4)

**6.3.7.3 Ideas Only in Article**

As stated previously, few of the article’s messages fail to appear in the comments. However, as most of the article's messages are general and pervasive aspects of conservative discourse (the 42 pro-ban comments either attacking liberals or celebrating conservatives), we cannot be sure of influence in most cases. Some more specific correspondences between articles and comments are discussed above. As reviewed above, Fox’s metaphors represented the ban as a weapon and as an improved piece of software. The implications of these metaphors do not appear in the comments.
6.3.7.4 Ideas Appearing only in Comments

Naturally, most of the ideas not appearing in the article belong to the 27 anti-ban comments. The majority of these focuses on some issue, in addition to attacking – racism and prejudice:

F39. Trump governs only for white people, full stop.

F17. Bigotry and Islamophobia are the winners today #TravelBan

F19. 'Merica: Where, in 2018, People Applaud The Discrimination Of An Entire Religion And Its 1.3 Billion Followers. #TheWorldIsWatching

These comments do not seem influenced by the Fox article. The same is true of the other largest category of liberal comments on Fox’s article, those concerning the perceived hypocrisy of Trump and / or his followers. And other more unique liberal comments, although interesting, and detailed in Chapter Four, do not bear on the question of influence.

6.3.7.5 Techniques that Worked

As discussed in section 6.2.7, for the CNN article, the analysis above suggests that if similar content between comments and the article do reflect influence, by the article, then no particular techniques appear more effective than others, except that the more expressions and techniques contributed to a message, the more comments they seem to affect. Thus, animosity towards liberals and Trump’s authority were the two ideas most pervasively implied by the article and those shaping the most comments.

Secondly, the comments on Fox’s article, and for that matter, the comments on CNN’s article, reflect the content of Fox’s article much more than the contents of CNN’s article did for its comments. In other words, about ¾ of the comments on both articles
expressed pro-ban sentiment. This may be the only reason for the greater influence seen with the Fox article. Although the 20 anti-ban comments on CNN’s article did reflect the CNN discourse in some ways, there were just not enough of them to see the degree of influence observed for the Fox article, where 73 readers agreed with it. This raises the question of why so many readers and commenters on both articles were conservatives. It may be a factor of the medium, the topic, and / or the willingness to comment, among other reasons. This cannot be answered surely here, but it shall be discussed in the conclusion.

6.4 Fox’s Articles on the Gillette Ad

The content and context of the Gillette “Best Men Can Be” advertisement is discussed at length in Chapter Five. Fox’s opinion article about it, by Todd Starnes, who recently published a book on “Making America Great Again,” condemned the ad as anti-male and also warned his readers of the “professors” throughout America waging a “war” to turn young American men into “pajama boy,” a conservative meme mocking the alleged un-manliness of liberal males. There could hardly be a clearer case of discourse directed at maintaining what liberals consider the social inequality of women and men, than this article and most of its ideas show up strongly among the comments, but the not the majority of comments.

Both articles on this topic are highly opinionated and persuasive. Starnes’ is a call to action, implying, although not stating, that readers should boycott the company, not to mention, arm themselves against the “war on masculinity” without entire society. Starnes article is written, purposefully, in a “lower,” more causal and inflammatory style than other articles in this study, implying an intended audience who identifies with “plain” talk more than intellectualism. The conclusion shall try to address how this fact may have played into the question of influence, versus the other articles.
This section shall proceed as others, to summarize the techniques used, the ideas they conveyed, and then whether those ideas appeared in the articles or not, with or without specific signs of influence.

6.4.1 Conceptual Metaphors

6.4.1.1 Gillette Wants to Turn Men into Women, Who are Baby-Making Machines

At least three times in his article, Starnes implied that Gillette is representing men as women, while simultaneously implying the most conservative traditionally misogynist conception of being a woman. The first instance is the title: “Does Gillette want Men to Start Shaving Their Legs?” This is a complex and odd example of conceptual metaphor. To define the first metaphor, would be to say “Suggesting men curtail aggressive and dominating behaviors is to suggest turning men into women.” Then the misogynist model of women is conveyed in the title by the idea the “leg shaving” is emblematic of what it means to be a woman. The other two instances are also unusual and hard to characterize; technically they represent men as “incubators” and “breeders,” but in the context of the essay, these metaphors must be interpreted as alluding to women: “Proctor & Gamble released a two-minute commercial that accuses men of being incubators of sexual harassment and bullying and toxic masculinity” (7,10); and, “But society wants us to believe that masculinity breeds such behavior” (29). Fox implies that Gillette and liberal society accuse men of being women and that women are baby-making machines, incubators, or animals, breeders. The idea that Gillette’s message implies feminizing men is pervasive among the anti-ad comments. Highly traditional notions of women’s roles in society are alluded to by a number of comments,
but not significantly represented. This supports the conclusions of sections 6.2 and 6.3 that the most influential ideas in the article were explicit, rather than the hidden implications of metaphors, in general.

6.4.1.2 The War on Masculinity

The proper description of this metaphor would be something like “feminism is a war on masculinity,” or more carefully, “asking men to act less aggressively or dominatingly is a war on masculinity.” The metaphor is carried by one sentence: “There is literally a war on masculinity in America. It’s being waged in classrooms” (31). However, the entire article implies support for this characterization with its much developed idea that the ad is anti-male. As mentioned above, the more general notion is the most repeated idea among anti-ad comments.

6.4.1.3 Toxic Masculinity

Finally, “toxic” masculinity needs to be discussed, especially since the words are not used in the “ad.” The metaphor itself is discussed in detail in Chapter Five. Here we only mention that it is an accusation of Starnes against the ad, that the ad criticizes “toxic masculinity,” and indeed, the pro-ad CNN article does use the phrase to describe the ad’s target. So, relative to Starnes’ article the implication of the phrase is simply to amplify the idea that the ad is anti-male.

6.4.1.4 The #MeToo Basket

The complete metaphor in this case would be, “suggesting that some men behave misogynistically is ‘to lump all men into the #MeToo basket’:

And that’s what bothers me the most about the Gillette commercial. It’s an incredibly unfair stretch to lump all men into the hashtag ‘me too’ basket (50).
The only English phrases normally putting people in baskets are “basket-case” and being “carried away in a basket,” both of which imply that the person in the basket has been thoroughly beaten / defeated. The most well-known “basket” phrase is “putting one’s eggs in one basket” which is something one should not do, because it is risky. It also associates “eggs” (a symbol of the feminine) with “basket.” Perhaps Starnes did not consciously intend all of these associations, but the use of the word is definitely intended to imply that accusing men of misogynistic behavior is simplistic, unfair, risky, and dismissive of the men. So, this metaphor accomplishes exactly the same purpose as the others discussed above in the end: to represent Gillette’s message as an unfair attack on men, and implying that any criticism of male aggression and dominance is an attack on men.

6.4.2 Fox Framing and Word Choice

6.4.2.1 Who is Prejudiced?

One of Starnes clear “framings” is to frame criticism of men as bigotry. Starnes develops this in his section describing what the ad does. Starnes says the ad shows men “acting like . . . anti-male stereotypes”; this implies that Gillette’s representation is bigoted against men. As with the Fox travel ban article, it is important for people supporting discrimination to deny that they are bigoted. In the case of the Gillette ad, calling the ad an attack on men is a strong and easy argument that enables Starnes to almost completely avoid addressing the problematic nature of the male behaviors criticized. This is entirely consistent with the anti-ad comments on the article which either do not allude to the behaviors criticized or focus on the idea that they do not apply to most men. No commenters attempt to explicitly justify or praise the male behaviors criticized by the ad, nor does Starnes. However, both Starnes and his sympathetic
readers imply support of the behaviors by ranting that eliminating them is tantamount to turning men into women.

6.4.2.2 Society Wants Us to Believe . . .

An unusual aspect of Starnes article is that it frames the issue being discussed as a conflict between “society” and “us” (men? Or only Starnes’ men?) in which ‘society’ is trying to manipulate men’s beliefs for sinister reasons. These paragraphs are dissected in Chapter Five. One implication is that the company or ad-makers represent a coherent, liberal, mass socio-economic-political entity – like the “deep state,” one that dominates mainstream American discourse. Starnes defines himself and his readers as potential brainwashing victims of liberalism, which allegedly dominates American discourse, although concrete research on the subject says there are more Americans calling themselves “conservative” than “liberal.”64 A very high proportion of the anti-ad reader comments exhibit fear and animosity towards liberals, however the “society wants us to believe” trope is notably absent; these commenters do not hesitate to name the Gillette company and Democratic politicians as the enemy.

6.4.2.3 What are Men?

While Starnes characterizes women mainly covertly, through the metaphors discussed above, he frames the meaning of being a man more explicitly, primarily through lengthy citations from a conservative female writer friend, Ally Stucky, who discourses on what men should be (34-42). Her discourse is detailed thoroughly in Chapter Five. The main points are that men, at their best, are “leaders, warriors, and heroes,” valuable social roles to be sure, but all dominant and aggressive roles. In contrast, men who “deny their masculinity” (men who do not dominate and act

aggressively) abandon their responsibilities and cause “destruction and despair.” And so it is implied, social movements against male dominance and aggression (feminism and the anti-sexual harassment movement) place society in some kind of vague danger loosely characterized by a potential epidemic of deadbeat men. This is apparently an idea common in American conservative discourse, and it indeed shows up a few times in the comments (6.4.7).

6.4.2.4 Starnes Framing Gillette’s Message

Starnes’ objection to Gillette’s condemnation of “boys will be boys” becomes one of the central themes of his article. Although it is true Gillette condemns this phrase, the ad explicitly condemns it as an excuse for behaviors like bullying and sexual harassment. With Starnes not having made this clear at all, it sounds as if Gillette is condemning whatever boyish activities the reader might think of as “boys will be boys,” which in America typically includes things like playing with tadpoles and “climbing trees,” as Starnes himself lists – although no tree-climbing is depicted in the ad. So, Starnes intentionally misrepresents Gillette as opposing boys being playful, energetic, and adventurous, which does not seem implied by the ad; the only representation of negative “boy” behavior was one boy sitting on top of another and beating the other one. Starnes’ discourse then implies that male violence is a valuable aspect of male energy, although one has to have seen the ad to complete the equation, as most readers surely have. However, no commenting readers speak in favor of male violence; many do however accept and repeat Starnes characterization of the ad’s message. Again, Starnes explicit content appears to have been more “influential” (or echoed) than more covert implications of his discourse.
6.4.3 Implication by Linguistic Structure

One observation to emerge surprisingly from the word-frequency analysis of Starnes’ article was his inflammatory use of over-generalization: [the ad shows] “every anti-male stereotype you’ve ever seen” (14); “society wants us to believe [. . . ] inside the heart of every man is a bully and a boor” (30); “Every woman I know wants a strong, responsible man.” (47). The anti-ad comments certainly agree with these misrepresentations; the primary objection to the ad from readers, as well as, Starnes is the idea that it stereotypes all men as bad guys – even though the ad itself indeed portrays more men behaving positively than negatively, a simple fact omitted by Starnes.

6.4.4 Pragmatics

Starnes exploits the conversational style of his discourse to deploy a number of conversational devices, used to color his readers’ perceptions of the Gillette company, whom he addresses as an interlocutor. In one, he says, “Enough with the gender shaming, Gillette” (55). This statement implies (1) that Gillette is attacking men based on their gender, and (2) that Starnes is standing up for men. The conversational gambit “Enough with the . . . “implies Gillette is “gender shaming” repeatedly and continually, although this is the company’s first ad on the subject. But readers will only pick up on the emotional tenor of that idiom – that of a person righteously calling for an end to too much of a noxious thing – “enough is enough.” Moreover, by addressing “Gillette” (Proctor and Gamble) in the vocative case, Starnes represents the company as a person, framing the situation as a personal issue between Starnes and his readers on one side, and Gillette, an obnoxious personage, on the other. These implications are reflected in the many reader comments expressing anger at Gillette.
In another case, Starnes uses a popular idiom for implying disdain to dismiss Gillette’s avowed rationale for the ad. He quotes a company representative: “We are taking a realistic look at what’s happening today, and aiming to inspire change by acknowledging that the old saying ‘Boys Will Be Boys’ is not an excuse.” Starnes then deflates this quote completely by pointing to Gillette’s failure to admit that they are motivated by profit: “Instead of virtue signaling, I was sort of hoping Gillette would declare war on razor burn, but whatever” (22). This usage of “whatever” implies that its referent can be dismissed, or not taken seriously, with a derisive connotation. Gillette’s profit motives and allegedly manipulative way of doing business is also a major topic of anti-Gillette comments, as reviewed previously and below.

6.4.5 Rhetoric

6.4.5.1 Authorization

Starnes quotes from a conservative female writer, Ally Stucky, purporting to tell the reader what, really, “women want.” The ideology itself will be reviewed in 6.4.6. Here, it is perhaps worth noting that there were several anti-ad comments from conservative women; perhaps they were encouraged by Stucky’s discourse.

6.4.5.2 Omission

One crucial aspect of Starnes discourse, for his purposes, is that he does not describe concretely what the ad portrays. In fact, the most concrete image offered, “guys chasing around women,” cannot be called accurate; it presumably refers to the image of a man

65 Starnes cites the speaker as “Proctor and Gamble’s Pankaj Bhalla.” Google reveals that Bhalla is the Director of Gillette and Venus for North America.

66 Some English speakers feel the phrase is particularly associated with female television characters. This author intuitively associates it with “valley girls” – a negative stereotype of young women from the central valley of California.
“goosing” a women’s butt, but apparently Starnes wants to avoid such specificity. So, Starnes seems to be intentionally hiding the fact that the behavior opposed is a kind of sexual assault, and perhaps more sinisterly, Starnes describes assault as pursuit. Altogether this implies men should have the right to touch women sexually without their consent. Again, since readers are expected to have seen the ad, they should be able to complete this equation.

In a parallel way, Starnes, or rather, Stucky, is equally vague about what sorts of masculine behaviors should be embraced: being “leaders, warriors, and heroes” is a “healthy and productive way” for men to “embrace their masculinity” (Stucky in Starnes, 39). But no examples are given. For contrast, consider that the CNN article specifically mentions the positive behaviors portrayed in the Gillette ad, which include empowering little girls and stopping fights. Starnes never mentions these. Stucky’s sentence can be interpreted as saying, there are some healthy and productive ways for a man to embrace his masculinity, which are not being specified here, which make a man a leader, warrior, etc. In other words, it allows male readers to decide for themselves which aggressive / dominating behaviors make them “leaders” and “warriors.” Some men, certainly it seems, many who agree with Starnes, might consider goosing women and dominating them in board meetings to fulfill such roles. One reader comment bemoans what they see as a lack of positive examples for men in the mass media; this may have been influenced by Stucky’s discourse; they evidently did not see, or have forgotten that the ad in fact spends more time portraying the positive male behaviors than the negative ones.

6.4.5.3 False Dichotomy

Establishing a false dichotomy seems one of the most common and effective persuasive strategies of all time; it is, in a sense, the essence of the American political
system. Starnes’ false dichotomy is: “And therein lies the issue – what constitutes the ideal version of a man over at Proctor & Gamble headquarters? John Wayne or Pajama Boy?” (27). These figures are detailed in Chapter Five. They represent a radically polarized conception of men, who must either embody traditional sexist masculinity, or be considered weak and laughable. Stucky promotes another similar false dichotomy in her discourse by implying that a man can be a provider/ protector/ leader/ hero or a destructive drag on society. Interestingly, these false dichotomies do not manifest in reader comments as much as Starnes’ other ideas. They are consistent with a few reader comments, but many readers, including conservatives, criticized Starnes’ narrow conceptions of what a man should be.

6.4.5.4 Begging the Question

As reviewed, Starnes’ article begins with the title: “Does Gillette want men to start shaving their legs, too?” Although it is technically an open question whether men do shave their legs, pragmatically, asking the question implies that men do not shave their legs. The question thus already implies both what women are and what men are within a traditional conservative gender ideology. Many readers questioned or mocked this title and its implications, while others expressed complete sympathy with Starnes.

6.4.5.5 Defusing Objections

At one point, Starnes expresses Gillette’s point of view more-or-less accurately and kindly: “Gillette wants all of us guys to hold each other accountable for our behavior - and they have dedicated themselves to promoting positive, attainable, and inclusive versions of what it means to be a man” (23-25). Immediately followed by the quote previously discussed, “And therein lies the issue – what constitutes the ideal version of a man over at Proctor & Gamble headquarters? John Wayne or Pajama Boy?” (27). This
seems a purposeful defusing, or at least distracting, from objections. Starnes presents a positive interpretation of Gillette’s ad and immediately equates that point of view with the emasculation of his male conservative readers, for whom John Wayne and Pajama Boy are rich ideological symbols, as detailed previously. Few comments describe what the ad does positively; even those comments supporting the ad focus on its criticisms, not positivity.

6.4.5.6 Emotional Appeals

Starnes opening line is: “The makers of the Gillette razor have a message for the men who use their products: you are horrible, horrible people” (5). The use of “you” to refer to the men attacked by the ad seems a transparent device to mobilize male readers’ emotions against the company. And it may have worked. Anti-ad comments were, for the most part, quite angry. Then again, reader comments may be angry in general. So resonance versus influence remains difficult to determine.

Starnes makes several ploys for readers to like him personally: “Instead of virtue signaling, I was sort of hoping Gillette would declare war on razor burn, but whatever” (21-22). The second half of the line seems to be there mainly to characterize Starnes as a down-to-earth unpretentious no-B.S. kind of guy, the winning character among conservatives, as demonstrated by Donald Trump’s success through representing himself in the same way. However, there are more reader comments expressing dislike than affection for Starnes.

6.4.6 Social and Emotional Manipulation

Once might suspect this category could go under “emotional appeals”; emotional appeals are a kind of emotional manipulation; however, the gambits described below go well beyond the concept of “emotional appeal” in argumentation.
6.4.6.1 Most of the Guys I know . . .

“Most of the guys I know are gentlemen - they provide for their families, they protect their loved ones and they stand up to the bullies” (53), says Starnes.

Starnes’ statement is crafted to flatter male readers who agree with Starnes; they are “gentlemen,” and the kind of men Todd Starnes associates with personally. This statement comes only after Starnes has presented the numerous messages discussed above likely to make these readers feel insulted and set upon, so, here. Starnes is offering them a kind of social salvation for their self-esteem.

This device of offering reassurance to insecure men occurs several times in the article. After Stucky says that women want men to be “leaders, warriors and heroes” (40), she continues:

Women want real men—men they can count on and, yes, look up to . . . I don’t know any woman, at any age, who is attracted to a passive man who looks to her to be his provider, protector and leader. Every woman I know wants a strong, responsible man. That’s not a consequence of a social construct or cultural pressure—it’s innate. (44-48)

In this case, Starnes and Stucky appeal to the insecurity behind the perennial (heterosexual) male desire to know “what women really want,” which is itself, a desire for power over women. Starnes and Stucky offer an ideology of male dominance and rightness as a solution to the insecurity and loneliness of many male readers; Starnes is surely aware of the recent epidemic of loneliness among working class American men.67

### 6.4.6.2 The Boycott

Starnes does not directly tell readers to boycott Gillette. But there is a link in the middle of his article, closer to the beginning, in bold blue letters:

“GILLETTE’S ‘WE BELIEVE’ AD FOCUSING ON ‘TOXIC MASCULINITY’ GETS MIXED RESPONSE, SENDS UPSET CUSTOMERS TO SEEK OTHER BRANDS” (12-13).

Telling people what everybody else is doing is a tried and true method for manipulating people. This device here tells readers that they are not in a minority and encourages them to follow suit. Many anti-ad reader comments declared that they would boycott Gillette.

### 6.4.6.3 Mirroring

One well known device for covertly influencing people is to mirror their behaviors, sending the perhaps sub-conscious message that they are like the person doing the mirroring. In fact this technique is sometimes used by professional hypnotists to induce trance. Starnes at one point says “society wants us to believe . . .” an idea every college writing teacher has struck from 100s of student essays for its irrationality and vagueness. It is the way most people write until they take a college writing class, and Starnes must be aware that the most conservative leaning single group in America consists of white males who never went to college\(^\text{68}\). Likewise, Starnes says there is “literally” a war on masculinity in America (not metaphorically). This is also signals that Starnes is more like his readers than over-educated (pretentious) liberals.

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\(^{68}\) [https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/03/who-are-donald-trumps-supporters-really/471714/]
6.4.6.4 In-Group Signaling/ Defining the Enemy

Late in the article, the enemy is represented as “professors,” a familiar far-right punching bag. Starnes may have selected this target as a signal to conservative readers strengthening the identification of the enemy as liberal. This is the same passage that accuses those professors of trying to medicate away the maleness of young men. As discussed in Chapter Five, this notion alludes to a larger conservative discourse in which “liberals” (doctors and university researchers) are trying to emasculate young boys by over-prescribing Ritalin. These ideas are alluded to within reader comments.

6.4.6.5 The appeals of Faith and Tradition

As discussed in Chapter Five in more detail, a hyperlink on Starnes’ “most of the guys I know . . . “ takes one to www.toddstarnes.com, where one is greeted with the slogan, “defending the faith by reporting the truth.” And the following sentence in the article also says, “They’ve been doing what men have done since the days of Adam.” Starnes’ webpage shows that he believes in a literal reading of the Bible. According to the story about Adam (and Eve) that most Christians know, women were created to serve men, and women are responsible for corrupting humanity, out of their moral weakness. In context, Starnes’ reference to Adam also implies an association between being one of the “gentlemen” he is addressing and being a faithful Christian.

The ideology defined by Stucky and Starnes explicitly defines such a man as a family “provider and protector.” These are traditional Christian gender roles that emphasize power, control, and dominance over the family and outside the home.

69 https://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20071010122134AAS38J4
Moreover, in context, the sentence implies that women should not play these roles, which implies they should be submissive to men at least in terms of money and power.

Starnes has also said that what liberals want is to teach young men that it is wrong to want to provide for and protect a family. The ad shows no men being stopped from providing for or protecting anybody. In fact, it shows men protecting women from harassment, and boys from bullies, and it shows a father providing for his daughter, by telling her she is strong. So, probably, Starnes means that liberals are teaching young men that families don’t need to be dependent on men and that women can be primary income-sources, and this, he implies, is an ideology destructive to men and American society. No reader comments spell out this gender ideology and it is even alluded to only by a few. In contrast with the many messages in Starnes’ article reflected well by the comments, this again supports the previously mentioned tentative conclusion that the more covert messages in these articles were less likely to influence reader comments than the overt ones.

6.4.7 Fox Word Frequencies

As with the other articles, examination of word frequencies highlighted some unexpected patterns.

The presence of “know” and “want” on Fox’s list of most used words is unexpected. While the instances of “know” in the article show nothing of interest, the “want”s do:

- “Does Gillette want men to start shaving their legs, too?” (title)
- “Gillette wants all of us guys to . . .” (23)
- “Society wants us to believe . . .” (29)
- “They want you to believe little boys who climb trees . . .” (34)
- “Here’s a secret that every woman knows: Women want real men.” (44)
To summarize, all but one of the “wants” are demands being made on men by Gillette, society, liberals, and women, the final one listed being men’s supposed demands on themselves; Starnes seems to be subliminally overwhelming his male readers with pressures, which is consistent with his general strategy of trying to provoke anger and insecurity, which appeared to be successful, based on the comments.

One surprising word on the list is ‘feminist(s)’ (CNN-0/Fox-7). It is intriguing that Fox readers mentioned “feminist(s)” seven times and CNN readers none. Five out of seven of the Fox mentions were negative, repeating Starnes’ claims, so this is perhaps one of the most prominent signs of ideological influence among the word-frequencies.

The remaining patterns are thematically related sets of words used most in the article. The ‘legs’ and ‘shav(ing)’ appear as that idea was discussed by several comments. The words ‘blade(s)’ and ‘razor’ (CNN-2/Fox-7) allude to the fact that many readers discussed Gillette’s business and their own preferences in shopping.

Also, there are a couple of patterns that cannot be appreciated except in comparison to CNN’s article, so we defer summarizing those until section 6.5.5 below.

6.4.8 Comments on Fox Article

There are many signs of ideological influence, or at least resonance, among the comments on Fox, but not for the majority of comments. The proportions of comments expressing liberal versus conservative viewpoints do not fully reflect the presumed biases
of each audience, chiefly because the Fox readers were split evenly on siding with or against the article rather than the majority aligning with Fox itself:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>On CNN article</th>
<th>On Fox article</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pro-Gillette / ad (*or anti-Starnes)</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Gillette / ad</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mixed or unclear</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each of the categories above show great diversity in content, including quite a few sub-categories, some of which do not belong in the simplistic scheme assumed above.

For example, most of the comments against Fox’s article are directed against writer Todd Starnes, many of which appear to be from conservative readers, and some of these comments are sexist. And there are many other ideologically unique comments.

The 100 comments on Todd Starnes’ Fox article come from two sources – Twitter (57 comments) and Fox’s website, Foxnews.com (43 comments). They are cited with the prefix “T” or “F” below, and each set is numbered separately.

**6.4.8.1 Ideas Appearing in Article and Comments**

The majority of the “anti-Gillette” comments on Fox’s article (27/45) are indeed sexist, anti-feminist, or offended by the ad’s message. Other anti-Gillette comments include six wanting Gillette to stick to business, four opposing Gillette on issues, but not about gender, two against the ad without regard to any issues, four simply pro-Starnes, and two simply anti-liberal. Many more of the Twitter comments are pro-Gillette or anti-Starnes, while more Fox comments are anti-Gillette. And among the anti-Gillette comments, there are more clearly sexist comments on Fox than Twitter. Also, all the comments criticizing Gillette for not sticking to the razor business are on Fox, which may be among the best evidence for influence from the article.
The 27 unambiguously sexist comments on Starnes article generally reproduce more than one element of the article’s misogynist ideology. Some representative comments are F13, F24, 21, 22, 29, and 33. The ideological elements most observed are:

**Approving of the behaviors shown in ad**
- Misogyny, homophobia, and hatred of ‘sissies’ and feminists, etc.
- Belief masculinity is under attack – fear of emasculation by ad’s ideas

**Adoration of male dominance**
- Some other specific elements of Starnes discourse were notably echoed by Starnes’ discourse. There are five comments criticizing identity politics and liberals (F10, T52, T46, F36, and F38). F36 mentions medication (“meds”) and one other comment alludes specifically to Starnes “war on masculinity” as he described it; T20 says that schools are trying to whip the masculinity out of boys. As mentioned above, a large number of comments criticize Gillette for being manipulative in business (F4-9, 17, 18, 39) as Starnes implies.

**6.4.8.2 Ideas Appearing in Article but not in Comments**

Perhaps none. None noted.

**6.4.8.3 Ideas appearing only in comments**

There are 42 comments on Fox’s article either anti-Starnes, pro-Gillette, or pro-feminism. By far the largest thematic group consists of those saying or implying that the article expresses Starnes’ insecurities about his manliness, guilt, fear, or malicious intent. At least six attack specific elements of Starnes’ presentation, mainly the “war” on masculinity (T1,5,26,30, and 34, F25) and the idea that men don’t shave legs (T15-16, F23 and 37). In other words the only ideas that appeared only in the comments were criticisms of Starnes’ article.
6.4.8.4 Techniques that Worked

Although so many readers agreed with and mentioned specific aspects of Starnes ideology, the more covert the implications, the less they appeared in the comments. Hardly any comments alluded to Christianity, none characterized women as breeders, and relatively few viewed themselves as set upon by a predominantly liberal society. These were the most covert messages of Starnes’ presentation. This supports the conclusions of 8.2 and 8.3 that most influence was created by those messages communicated repeatedly, explicitly, and in a variety of ways.

6.5 CNN’s article on the Gillette Ad

CNN’s opinion article by Jill Filipovic supporting the Gillette ad, and speaking against its detractors, conveys implicit ideological notions in many ways; while Filipovic highlights and reinforces the implications of the ad’s own images and words, which she agrees with, she also implies additional elements of her particular feminist ideology in subtle ways – through her selection of images from the ad, through the wording of her descriptions of them, and through both her explicit and implicit evaluations. The summary of results will proceed along the lines of 6.2-6.4, describing the techniques used, then the ideas appearing or not appearing in both article and comments.

6.5.1 CNN Articles’ Conceptual Metaphors on Gillette Ad

6.5.1.1 “Slamming Toxic Masculinity”

Filipovic’s article title describes Gillette’s ad, capturing her main idea, that the ad effectively criticizes “toxic masculinity” which is an appropriate description of the male behaviors criticized in the ad. The usage of the word “slam” in this phrase implies that the slammed one has indeed taken a hit.
6.5.1.2 “Toxic Masculinity”

Although this metaphor is now extremely common in American public discourse, it still carries a heavy ideological burden, discussed in more detail in Chapter Five. In addition to referring to male behaviors regarded as harmful to others, it assumes a model of social reality, in which (1) human beings are consumers of each other’s’ behaviors, and (2) in which genders can be reified as a set of behaviors.

6.5.2 CNN’s Framing and Word Choice

6.5.2.1 The Corporate Boardroom Frame

This is one of the scenes in Gillette’s ad, described by Filipovic and detailed in Chapter Five: “The business man [. . . ] condescending to the female employee” (14). It implies that the roles of “business man” and “female employee” are implicated in the “condescension” and the wrongness of the situation. That is to say, it implies that the greater economic power of men and male exploitation of such roles to dominate women, is as much the problem as the “condescension.” The frame evoked is specific to late corporate capitalism, subtly evoking that entire paradigm as the target of criticism, and implying that corporate capitalism is associated with male dominance. This notion was not alluded to among the comments.

6.5.2.2 Uncooperative Men

Filipovic also cites Gillette’s . . . mocking? . . . of men for “making the same old excuses: Boys will be boys.” This implies that men have been dishonest about their motives, lazy, and / or stubbornly refusing to change. Explicitly, it criticizes men for excusing their own bad behavior by fiat; “boys will be boys” means one ought not oppose traditional male behaviors, period. So, it implies that part of the problem with “boys will
be boys” is not just what boys do, but that they have the social license (power) to excuse their behavior at will. At the same time, it also accuses men of not caring enough to try to be better. Filipovic also writes that the ad “implores” men to change. One does not implore somebody who has already agreed to do something; “implore” implies that the person being implored is stubbornly refusing to listen or act.

Filipovic’s covert implication that men are not yet trying hard enough to change is not unrelated to the remaining Gillette quotation in Filipovic: “‘It’s only by challenging ourselves to do more,’ the ad concludes, ‘that we can be our best.’” This sentence also implies that men are not being their best and not challenging themselves sufficiently yet, however, with a much more positive spin. These ideas show up in several pro-ad comments, saying they are surprised so many people are offended by the ad suggesting men could behave better.

**6.5.2.4 Insult to Men Frame**

According to Filipovic, the ad’s opponents “accept the lie” those men are “cruel and predatory” by nature and have a “low opinion” of men. This implies that men are less aggressive and dominating by nature than to bully or prey on women if they were not socialized to do so. This is a popular feminist position on the nature of male aggression and violence but highly controversial; some research indicates that males are in fact more aggressive and violent by nature than women, and this is more consistent with evolutionary science than the idea that such behavior is solely due to culture. However, these relatively implicit notions do not seem to show up in the comments.

**6.5.2.5 Backlash Frame**

Filipovic calls opponents of the ad a “Backlash and an alleged boycott led by a handful of loud and angry men” (34) and says, “And the backlash shows that that
progress has been less linear than we would like, and that with forward movement comes those reactionaries who dig in their heels” (57).

This implies that opponents of the ad are an irrational extremist minority, thus discouraging any readers who might sympathize with them and boosting the confidence of feminist readers. This idea is also not repeated as such among the comments, although it does resonate with the readers who are surprised at the ‘backlash.’

6.5.2.6 Framing Gillette, the Company

Here I describe one of Filipovic’s primary notions, repeated in many ways, throughout the ad – that Gillette is not a feminist crusader, but rather a money-making enterprise, like their advertisers, both of whom are presumably controlled mainly by old men:

– Gillette isn’t trying to promote a more gender-equal society as much as it is trying to sell something. This ad wasn’t made out of the goodness of the company’s heart; it was made because the company of course knew it would merit significant media coverage and boost sales (26-30).

– Buying consumer goods won’t bring about the end of gender inequality, and Gillette is far from the first company to use feminist ideals to sell a product . . . No, the revolution will not be advertised. But feminism can indeed be co-opted to sell you stuff . . . (37-39)

– The monetization of feminism is far from the dreams of our foremothers. (58)

– Gillette advertising on gender equality isn’t a feminist victory. (61)

– Feminists need not do their advertising for them. (62)
Advertising is still a boys’ club, but the people who tell us aspirational stories to sell their products apparently believe . . .

[comment]

6.5.2.7 Framing Male Behavior

Filipovic refers to the ad’s contents as depicting “the worst of male behavior” (12) and “the best a man can be” (8). She then informs the reader that “the worst of male behavior” = sexual harassment, bullying, unequal treatment of women in the workplace, abuses of power, the imposition of traditional gender roles, violence, and “making excuses” for such behavior. And “the best” = being kind, generous, and protective, teaching self-love to their daughters, and promoting peace (17). Although the specific qualities of positive and negative male behavior are not significant topics among the comments, the idea that what’s at stake is “the worst” and “the best” of men, informs many comments.

6.5.3 Sentence Structure

Filipovic’s title accomplishes many things: “Why Gillette’s ad slamming toxic masculinity is drawing cheers -- and anger.” Formulated as the answer to a question, readers are unlikely to realize it has many presuppositions, most of them ideological: (1) that the behaviors shown in the ad are in fact “toxic masculinity,” (2) that Gillette believes in “toxic masculinity” (which is not mentioned in the ad), (3) whatever is implied by “toxic” masculinity, (4) that more viewers are responding with “cheers” than “anger”; this is implied by the main clause specifying “cheers,” with “and anger” merely tacked onto the sentence, separated by a long dash; and (5) that there is a good reason for the cheering, but not necessarily the anger. These notions all pervade the pro-ad comments, which could have been influenced by the title; it was noted Fox’s title also
seemed particularly salient among the comments. This might also be because many readers do not read anything except the titles of articles before commenting on them (common knowledge).

6.5.4 Rhetoric

6.5.4.1 Begging the Question

First, we note that the title of the article already assumes its conclusions; Gillette has slammed toxic masculinity. Filipovic’s first paragraph also assumes the truth of points she will argue for. She says the ad’s message “shouldn’t be a controversial proposition” (8). And the structure of that same sentence allows her to present a series of juxtaposed good versus bad male character traits, implying that the behaviors criticized in the ad show the negative traits while promoting the positive ones. These attributions are ideological, delivered here as objective: “It shouldn’t be a controversial proposition: The best a man can be is kind instead of cruel, generous instead of petty, protective instead of predatory.” Set up this way, Filipovic and the ad could hardly be wrong; anyone who disagrees believes men should be cruel rather than kind, petty instead of generous, and predatory instead of protective. Therefore, it implies that ad opponents value cruelty, greed, and preying on women. This sentence then, like the title, also assumes the truth of a high proportion of Filipovic’s argument. This section is discussed in much greater detail in Chapter Five, as it has a great many implications. Here, it should be noted that only the general idea appears in the comments, but no the specific attributions, and even less so, they’re more subtle implications, described in Chapter Five.

Another instance of begging the question appears when Filipovic describes the putative change in our society signaled by the ad: “[the advertisers] believe we are so sick
of male entitlement and aggression, and so attuned to how those behaviors are nearly as
damaging to men as they are to women . . .” (23-54). This implies that Filipovic’s
interpretations of what the ad says about men and women are what the majority of
people in our society now believe. This is ideological, no evidence but the ad is presented
for such a conclusion, and Filipovic has not had to argue that the ad says what she says it
says. It also may very well not be true, but that is another study! Again, as mentioned
before, the comments do not explicate this idea, but it might explain how surprised pro-
ad commenters are at the “backlash.”

6.5.4.2 Ad Hominem

One of the passages already mentioned several times also implies an *ad hominem*
attack on ad opponents, sweetened with the implication that she and her readers are
more intelligent and moral:

It’s sad but predictable that imploring men to be better -- not just for women, but
for other men and boys -- is met with such hostility from people who apparently
accept the lie that cruel and predatory behavior is part of men's natural
makeup. There's a stereotype that feminists hate men, but the opposite seems to
be true: *Anti-feminists* who claim to be defending men are the ones who actually
seem to have a fairly low opinion of them. (20-25)

The implication that Filipovic and her readers are superior begins with “it’s sad
but predictable.” “Sad” in this phrase is understood to mean “pathetic,” not the opposite
of “happy.” Behavior is normally “predictable” when it comes from someone less mature
or intelligent than the predictor. In other words, Filipovic is inviting her readers to feel
that ad-opponents are hostile, gullible, brainwashed, and ignorant -- “hostility from
people who apparently accept the lie . . .” – and anti- both women and men, in other
words that anyone who agrees with her is the worst kind of human being. This sort of sentiment certainly informs some reader comments.

6.5.4.3 Generating Assent

All articles examined aim to generate assent in multiple ways. One of the sneakier ways to generate assent is to precede a highly arguable proposition with one your target readers are sure to agree with:

They believe we are so sick of male entitlement and aggression, and so attuned to how those behaviors are nearly as damaging to men as they are to women, that we will want to buy products from companies that share our values. (53-55)

The ad barely touches on the idea that the behaviors criticized are damaging to men, except in the very abstract sense of not embodying the best a man can be. Filipovic’s sentence seems designed to encourage readers to accept the idea represented in the second clause, which may be new to them, along with the idea in the first clause, which most readers sympathetic to the ad already agree with. By putting the second idea in Gillette’s mouth, she avoids expressing it as her own claim; for her to say, “gender-inequality is almost as damaging to men as to women” could arouse disagreement from some liberal or conservative readers, but not as much as an indirect attribution. This idea is raised in quite a few comments.

6.5.4.4 Defusing Objections

Filipovic characterizes ad opposition as a “reactionary” “backlash,” heading off the possible objection to her position that opposition to the ad may be more popular and mainstream than she implies.
6.5.4.5 Implication by Selection of Details

Filipovic conveys elements of implicit ideology through her choices of scenes to mention. The first is “a boy bullied and called a ‘sissy’.” Young boys bully and make fun of each other for many reasons, and with many epithets, many unrelated to gender. Filipovic’s choice to mention the use of “sissy,” a word that implies that a man should not be feminine. This implies criticism of traditional gender roles, including the idea that men can’t have feminine traits. This may or may not be a necessary implication of feminism, but it is a covert implication in this context. As with highly covert implications in the other articles, this one does not appear in the comments.

6.5.4.6 Omission

Filipovic’s concrete descriptions of the ad seem accurate, although a few notable elements are skipped; she does not mention:

(1) a brief segment of the ad alluding to the “me too” movement as the ad shows a room full of adult men (and two women) watching a wall of talking heads discussing sexual harassment while the voice-over says, “there will be no going back.”

(2) That the ad begins by depicting grown men but ends with images of young boys, and words emphasizing that the desired cultural changes begin with children.

It is plausible that these elements of the ad were not mentioned in CNN’s article only because they were not directly relevant to the author’s rhetorical purpose. However, it is also plausible they were omitted because they seem most likely to alienate readers who might have issues with the ad. Conservatives do not, in general, conceive of themselves as anti-female, or pro-harassment, and thus might not find the ad’s basic message off-putting, but might be more skeptical of the ad’s alignment with the “me too” movement. And implying that people’s children should be raised differently, or even merely
capitalizing on images of children, seems likely to anger some viewers. Therefore, CNN’s author may have elected not to mention these points in an effort to maximize reader assent to the ad and the article’s approval of it. It can be noted that few reader comments raise the #meToo movement.

6.5.5 Word Frequencies

One potentially pattern in the word-frequencies between CNN’s and Fox’s articles is “Proctor & Gamble” (CNN-0 / Fox-3), versus “compan(y/ies)” (CNN-8 / Fox-1). Gillette / Proctor & Gamble being a company (i.e. a capitalist commercial organization) was a major sub-topic of Filipovic’s discourse, while Starnes criticizes Proctor & Gamble for hypocrisy in trying to profit off the ad’s message. Thus, Filipovic implied criticism of “companies” in general, but not Proctor & Gamble, in particular, or for making the ad. While Starnes did the reverse. Starnes also probably chose to use the parent company name partly to make sure his readers know how to boycott them most thoroughly.

The difference in style between the articles also stands out. Starnes frequent words includes only two longer than one syllable, and only one that could possibly be unfamiliar to an uneducated individual – ‘masculinity’; CNN’s most used vocabulary, on the other hand, consists almost entirely of multi-syllabic words used more often in intellectual discussions than casual conversation, although nothing that should be unknown for a fairly literate reader.

6.5.6 Comments on CNN’s Gillette article

The situation here, as reviewed in 8.4, is similar to that of the travel ban article comments in that (1) there are signs of ideological influence, but not for the majority of
comments, and (2) the proportions of comments expressing liberal versus conservative viewpoints do not entirely reflect the presumed biases of each news source:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Pro-Gillette / ad (or anti-Fox author)</th>
<th>Anti-Gillette / ad</th>
<th>Mixed or unclear</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On CNN article</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On Fox article</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


This situation seems a reason to suspect that many readers have not been influenced, at least in a simple direct way, by the content of the articles. Instead they have interacted with the articles, each in unique, complex, and significant ways. This is consistent with theories of cognitive and social constructivism—that meanings are not like objects transferred between people, but rather constructs, created anew during each interaction between an individual and a text. The readers are not swallowing the articles naively; they are, in general, critiquing them.

8.5.6.1 Ideas Appearing in Both Article and Comments

The largest sub-group (16) of these comments agree with one or more specific elements of the ad’s message. The second largest (15) support the ad, without saying why, but based on their seemingly unconditional enthusiasm, it is fair to assume they agree with most of it. The remainders agree with the ad in more unique senses, to be discussed.

The largest group of these comments indicates the ad’s primary idea – urging a subset of men, perhaps most, but not all, to become the “best” men they can be, by changing their behavior in specific ways. Although, the supporting commenters’ interpretations of the main idea are nevertheless, each unique, for example:

C70. RE: Oh for crying out loud.....is the ad claiming that? No, they are asking men if they are being the best they can be....are they being complicit when they
see stuff happening. It’s not addressing domestic violence but the little things, the little discourses that happen.

C79. Let’s guess - it’s the first ever ad suggesting how good men act so men are mad and women don’t understand why because we have millions of ads telling us how to act.

Both of these comments definitely bring their own elements to the discourse, as previously discussed. Nevertheless, they could be influenced by the articles discourse, with which they agree.

Leaving the comments about “men being best” behind, the second largest group of topically similar comments supporting the ad’s ideology, focus on the bullying, e.g.:

C50. hol up did gilette attack its main consumers?

C51. RE: Are its main consumers bullies?

Filipovic did use the word “bully” which might have primed C51’s usage.

Several other unique comments or exchanges support other specific ideas consonant with Filipovic and / or the ad:

C18. RE: I’ve never felt castigated as an abuser or misogynist. Mostly because I know that I have never been one. I do know, that when I was younger, I didn’t always speak out against people who were though, because I worried about their approval

Fifteen CNN comments support the ad without citing any ideas they agree with, such as:

C3. It’s a great ad

C15. Who in their right mind would be angered by this commercial?

As mentioned earlier, it is possible that Filipovic’s characterization of the ad as in tune with mainstream America might have influenced comments like C15.
However, there is another larger category of pro-ad comments which contradict Filipovic; these are ideas “not appearing in the article” but can most appropriately be discussed at this point:

C4. Re: I think it’s a great start.

C31. It’s a great start to what should be a long process.

Filipovic claimed that the ad was a sign that society is already predominantly feminist – and emphasized that the ad is not a progressive action, but merely a sign of progress. Another exchange better echoes Filipovic:

C22. I don’t have an issue with this commercial. I do have a problem with anyone who thinks the complex issue of gender relations can be solved with a 90-second commercial aimed at only one of the genders. We all have a role to play in fixing this.

C23. RE: Who thinks that? It’s the cumulative effort. This is one in the right direction.

Beyond total agreement with the ad, 12 more comments support the ad in part, some of these echoing Filipovic:

(1) The generalizations are true; men are too aggressive:

C9. Re: I think you would agree men have more power over women in the world we live in and tend to be the aggressors in most situations. Not saying bullying is a male-only thing, but there’s a reason why it was targeting men.

C13. Re: If most men are “already better” there wouldn’t have been a need for a #metoo
movement. This commercial isn’t saying that all men are bad, but that even good men that stay silent in the face of bullying and harassment can be better. If you see an injustice take action.

These two are the closest any CNN comments come to claiming that men are pervasively or innately bad (which they do not do).

(2) Masculinity does not equal bullying and harassment:

C7. The problem for a lot of men is the association of intrinsically bad behavior with masculinity, whether you qualify it as "toxic" or not. Bullying and harassment are indeed toxic behaviors, but there's nothing masculine about them. They're the actions of cowards and cretins.

C8. Re: I posted basically the same thing. Nothing masculine about bullying or harassment. The fact they are being portrayed has masculine is what I object to.

These commenters agree fully with Filipovic, who said that people who believe men are inherently aggressive have a “low opinion of men.”

Another group of comments disapproves of advertisers for getting political:

C38. Ads are supposed to get people to buy stuff.

C39. RE: I agree but based on how the country is today, one never can count on the sincerity of the ads.

C40. RE: Such a shame, everything is getting so serious. Ads used to try to be funny, not political.

These thoughts could likely have been inspired by Filipovic’s claims that the Gillette ad was made primarily for money and might not be sincere. One related comment comes closest to repeating Filipovic’s precise message in her article:
C45. I think the majority of anger is from how few people (men generally) understand what toxic masculinity is. People should be angry instead that companies use lifestyle branding to sell product. They should show razor, say works. Done. But capitalism sells lifestyle not product.

Filipovic did not express overt anger at what this reader implies is the exploitation of feminism for profit, but rather accepted it with reluctance and implied criticisms of male corporate culture and capitalism. Filipovic also implied that people who oppose the ad misunderstand the nature of toxic masculinity.

Thus, it is clear that most of the ideas covered by the article did show up in the comments, however, because they are obvious and common ideas, it is impossible to establish influence. Moreover, the ideas that did not make it from the article to the comments are major ideas, but not nearly as common in public discourse, suggesting that the ideas in the comments were influenced more by public discourse than the article.

6.5.6.2 Ideas Appearing only in Article

Only two major ideas appear in the article that does not appear in the comments, but they are big ones: (1) that the ad is not a progressive feminist action at all but ONLY a sign of feminist progress in our society. And (2) that advertising is a club of savvy old men who are exploiting feminism for profit. These were among Filipovic’s main ideas, and not covert at all. Perhaps they simply did not resonate emotionally with readers, who were more concerned with the ad’s content than its source. And perhaps many commenting readers did not read the article, but only its title.
6.5.6.3 Ideas Appearing only in Comments

Some comments agreeing with the ad wanted to focus on women’s behavior instead:

C19. RE: Women are not exempt from this. We can be vicious to each other while also being susceptible to peer pressure that prevents us from sticking up for each other. We all have work to do. I like that the ad put it out there to start the conversation. Brave.

Filipovic did not introduce women’s relations with each other as a subject. Here are two separate comments upset about identity politics in the mass media:

C65. RE: Generalizations are acceptable again. I get so confused on what’s allowed and who I should hate.

C96. Everyone so divided and sensitive on EVERYTHING these days.

It is not clear whether these commenters lean left or right, but Filipovic expresses no misgivings about identity politics.

A related perspective is “most men are not that way”:

C12. The ad says “some men are doing the right thing. Gillette..most men,that includes men with lots of fine masculine traits,abhor bad behavior, do not tolerate it and certainly do not need a patronizing ad to tell them how to behave like decent human beings -again ..MOST men.

Comments like this are discussed a length in Chapter Five, as this was a common sentiment.

32 of the 100 comments on CNN’s article oppose Gillette or the ideas expressed by the ad. Many are overtly misogynistic (see Chapter Five) but as these do not bear on the influence of Filipovic’s article, we do review them further here.

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6.5.6.4 Techniques that Worked

The Twitter comments on CNN’s feminist article about Gillette were surprisingly diverse, individualistic, and rich in ideological elements from a variety of sources. A significant proportion could owe some of their content to Filipovic’s influence, but none for certain. Those that discussed the ad’s content or feminism commented mainly on specific aspects of the ad not mentioned by Filipovic, and not a one of them quite re-expressed her main thesis that the ad should be interpreted as a sign of feminist progress rather than a feminist act, although one or two came very close. Quite a few did approve of the ad only guardedly, while criticizing Gillette for its corporate capitalist activity and these comments may also have been primed by Filipovic’s article.

Filipovic’s comments show a somewhat different pattern than other article’s analyzed because they did not largely reproduce the most repeated ideas in the article, which were (1) the reluctance to view the ad as an intentionally feminist act, rather than for profit, and (2) the idea that the “backlash” was led by a “handful” of men. As with other ads, the comments also did not reproduce the most covert of Filipovic’s implications, for example, that men are not innately more aggressive than women. Why did the comments on this ad not reproduce some of the most repeated ideas in the article? They did of course reproduce the criticism of sexism and praise for the ad.

The most likely answer has already been speculated at the ends of sections 8.2-4: as mentioned there, the ideas most reproduced by the comments are not only the most repeated in the articles, but also most common in public discourse. The fact that commenters on Filipovic’s article reproduced ideas of this type, but NOT others emphasized by Filipovic strongly suggests that comments mainly voice ideas readers brought with them to their reading – although certainly we have seen more signs of
specific influence elsewhere, especially for the Fox articles, and if articles are only reinforcing readers’ beliefs, that is nevertheless a non-trivial kind of influence.

6.6 Conclusions

In Chapter One it was noted that this study should aim to answer three questions in the end:

1. How does language in the texts examined here represent groups defined by their ethnicity, race, gender, or other characteristics subject to prejudice?

2. How do the authors of the texts, their publishers, and those quoted by them, use such language to shape public opinion about such people through the news?

3. How can Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) informed by cognitive linguistics shed light on the role of language in abuse of social power, creation of dominance, and facilitation of social or political inequality?

Analysis of these news articles showed that they do indeed imply systematically and ideologically biased mental representations of all entities discussed, pervasively, using a wealth of linguistic devices, exploiting every level of linguistic processing. It was difficult, however to find any articles containing significant numbers of expressions referring to populations subject to prejudice. In the case of the travel ban articles, they promised more in that regard than any other articles concerning immigrants available at the time. The articles on the Gillette ad were fairly ideal in this respect.

After analyzing the articles, some reasons became apparent for the non-existence of mainstream articles full of representations of minorities:

(1) The articles about immigration policy were barely concerned with actual immigrants at all; they were primarily concerned with American partisan politics. The CNN article was focused on the issue of immigration, although still did little to
characterize immigrants, and the Fox article did covertly characterize immigrants negatively, but its main concern was not arousing anti-immigrant sentiments, but more supporting the power of the Trump administration and attacking liberals. In other words, mass media news sources seem more concerned with partisan politics than minorities, but they do also characterize minorities to some degree.

(2) Mass media news writers avoid making bold or socially unacceptable ideological statements in their own words. They either quote other people voicing them, or imply them.

(3) The articles indeed demonstrated, as discussed in Chapter One, that racism, bigotry, and misogyny are now considered socially unacceptable by the entire mainstream, including Fox’s editors, although they are still promoted, such as by Fox, through implication.

Nevertheless, question (1) can be answered. The Fox article on the travel ban ruling implied, but never said, that the ban indeed targeted Muslims, whom conservatives suspect of being terrorists. There were absolutely no indications in either the article of the comments that any writers or readers were prejudiced against Muslims for specific reasons other than suspecting them of terrorism, although they were also represented, by implication, as not worthy of a voice and not necessarily true members of American society.

Another group represented by Fox’s writer Todd Starnes was ‘women’ who were explicitly represented as leg-shavers and desperate for a strong man (according to Stucky). And were implicitly represented as baby-making machines who exist to be attractive to men, and to be provided for and protected by men. The characterization of men in the article also implied that feminine qualities are shameful for men. Meanwhile men were represented by Fox as at their best in positive social roles characterized by
aggression and dominance, but also as a group that should have the right to sexually harass and dominate women and bully each other – a groups so entitled to these rights that to say otherwise can be considered a terrible attack on them.

Although not among the populations mentioned in question (1) above, it must be noted as an aside that liberals and conservatives were both represented in extremely prejudiced ways in the articles; it is interesting to note that it is socially acceptable to say things about political groups that one could never say in public about members of a race, religion, or gender. Liberals were characterized as hyper-sensitive, overly-feminine, weak and childish, and hysterical. Yet, at the same time, they were also represented by Starnes as the dominant ideology of American society, and one intending to emasculate men by medicating little boys and destroying the American economy by encouraging men to be ‘deadbeats.’ Meanwhile, hardly more kindly, conservatives were represented by both CNN articles as bigoted, ignorant, angry, and malicious.

The articles also provided instructive ideologically biased representations of many other entities and phenomena, including the president, the courts, politicians, lawyers, rulings, companies, American society as a whole, and more.

Question (2) concerns how speakers used language to convey these ideas. These answers cannot be much better summarized than in the preceding chapter sections. As mentioned before, every level of linguistic structure was exploited and the ideas with the most influence were those repeated using a variety of techniques. The specific techniques predicted by CDA and cognitive linguistics indeed bore a huge burden – such as especially frames and conceptual metaphors. While traditional rhetorical moves, including many logical fallacies, were exhibited in full force. What perhaps has not been noted before in regards to this question, is that each article furnished a platform for ‘authorities’ other than the writers, whose words had definite political aims, supported
by the networks. And these quotations seemed among the most consistently influential elements of the articles.

In terms of the concerns of CDA, the point is the abuse of discourse by those with unfair power through their ownership of the media companies, or roles as writers or quoted authorities. If Fox’s prodigious efforts to demonize liberals has any influence, it could be just as damaging to the rights of minority populations as if they had demonized the minorities themselves. Meanwhile CNN’s most powerful act in regards to minority representation was not the way they described Muslims, but the fact that they quoted a Muslim politicians and lawyers. In other words, the concerns of CDA seem right on target, although the expectation of finding many covertly bigoted representations of minority groups was naive.

But Fox’s discourses in this study do seem aimed at reproducing inequity. Fox’s emphasis, in the travel ban article, on the expansion of presidential authority to an explicitly unspecified degree seems unfortunately consistent with the idea that conservative America is becoming increasingly sympathetic with fascist values. 

**Meanwhile, Starnes’ Fox article most showed an ideology of inequality covertly broadcast in an effort to influence its audience.**

These observations also point to another disturbing conclusion about media influence -- that it influences readers to approach politics as a war between two Americas – the liberal and conservative – with the issues we disagree about taking second seat to inter-partisan anger, hatred, mockery, derision, gloating, and social competition. While the articles avoided overtly antagonistic expressions themselves, they strongly but implicitly demonized the opposing political camp. In other words, although the news sources do not tell readers to hate or denigrate those they disagree with, that is the way readers appear to come away from these articles.

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The travel ban itself, according to some, is a manifestation of growing tribalism and prejudice. While the Gillette is a sign of growing confidence on the part of those who wish to reform age-old prejudices of our culture. However our analysis does not support the idea that hatred of Muslims is a primary motivation for conservative bigots. The comments suggest that prejudice is a factor, conservatives are more motivated by fear and insecurity and a commensurate attraction to authoritarianism, protectionism, and the “rule of law” – which is, of course, a well trodden path to state-sanctioned bigotry. While the CNN article’s discourse and liberal comments do, in contrast, appear primarily concerned with the issues of bigotry and its consequences, they also reflect a strong impulse to demonize Trump-supporting conservatives and to prophecy doom, messages conservatives have correctly observed in liberal discourse and which were clearly transmitted from CNN to some readers by this article. In other words, both articles have influenced readers’ perceptions, but not primarily in regards to Muslim travelers, but rather more in regards to their fellow Americans.
References


APPENDIX A
CNN SUPREME COURT UPHOLD TRAVEL BAN
The Supreme Court has upheld President Donald Trump’s travel ban. The ruling was 5-4 along partisan lines, with Chief Justice John Roberts writing for the conservative majority.

The ruling sends a strong message that Trump has broad powers under immigration law to act to protect national security and that statements made during a campaign may not be legally determinative of the President’s intent.

"The Proclamation is squarely within the scope of Presidential authority," Roberts wrote. Trump immediately reacted on Twitter:

SUPREME COURT UPHOLDS TRUMP TRAVEL BAN. Wow!

The President then called the ruling "a tremendous victory for the American People and the Constitution" and said he felt vindicated.

"This ruling is also a moment of profound vindication following months of hysterical commentary from the media and Democratic politicians who refuse to do what it takes to secure our border and our country," Trump said.

This is the third version of the travel ban. It was issued in September -- after previous bans had ricocheted through the courts -- and restricts entry from seven countries to varying degrees: Iran, North Korea, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Somalia and Venezuela. Chad was originally on the list but it was recently removed after having met baseline security requirements.

Challengers, including the state of Hawaii, argued that the travel ban exceeded the President’s authority under immigration law as well as the Constitution. They also used Trump’s statements during the campaign, when he called for a ban on travel from all Muslim-majority countries, but Roberts dismissed those concerns.

"Plaintiffs argue that this President's words strike at fundamental standards of respect and tolerance, in violation of our constitutional tradition," Roberts wrote. "But the issue before us is not whether to denounce the statements. It is instead the significance of those statements in reviewing a Presidential directive, neutral on its face, addressing a matter within the core of
executive responsibility. In doing so, we must consider not only the statements of a particular President, but also the authority of the Presidency itself."

Stephen Vladeck, CNN's Supreme Court analyst and a law professor at the University of Texas School of Law, called the ruling a "big win" for the White House.

"The Supreme Court has reaffirmed the President's sweeping statutory authority when it comes to deciding who may and who may not travel to the United States, authority that both President Trump and future presidents will surely rely upon to justify more aggressive immigration restrictions," Vladeck said.

However, Vladeck noted that this was the third version of the travel ban and the administration made significant changes in response to lower-court rulings invalidating the first two iterations, including one issued one week after Trump became president in January 2017.

The Supreme Court will wrap up its term Wednesday.

**Sotomayor dissent and Korematsu**

Justice Sonia Sotomayor, in a blistering dissent, said the court was wrong to ignore Trump's various comments.

"The majority here completely sets aside the President's charged statements about Muslims as irrelevant," she wrote. "That holding erodes the foundational principles of religious tolerance that the court elsewhere has so emphatically protected, and it tells members of minority religions in our country 'that they are outsiders, not full members of the political community.'"

She also compared the opinion to one that came down in 1944 in which the court blessed the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II.

Reacting to the dissent, Roberts took the unusual step to declare that the 1944 case, Korematsu v. United States, was no longer good law and was wrongly decided. It is the first time the Supreme Court has ever made this public determination.

**Liberal lawmakers, groups denounce ruling**

Minnesota Democratic Rep. Keith Ellison, the first Muslim elected to Congress, said Tuesday's decision "give legitimacy to discrimination and Islamophobia."

Neal Katyal, one of the lead attorneys for Hawaii in the case said although he was "disappointed" in the court's decision, he argued that the process gives him hope and called on Congress to reverse the President's travel ban.
"While we continue to believe that this third version fails that test, there is no question that by striking down the first two travel bans, the judiciary forced a recalcitrant administration to at least give its order the veil of constitutionality," Katyal said in a statement Tuesday. "We continue to believe, as do four dissenting justices, that the travel ban is unconstitutional, unprecedented, unnecessary and un-American."

The American Civil Liberties Union also strongly condemned the court's ruling, writing on Twitter that "this is not the first time the Court has been wrong, or has allowed official racism and xenophobia to continue rather than standing up to it."

Omar Jadwat, director of the ACLU's Immigrants' Rights Project, said in a statement that the court's "ruling will go down in history as one of the Supreme Court's great failures."

Democratic National Committee chair Tom Perez said, "Discrimination is not a national security strategy, and prejudice is not patriotism. Let's call this ban for what it is: an outright attack on the Muslim community that violates our nation's commitment to liberty and justice for all."

Congressional Republicans applauded the court's decision, arguing that it was a win for national security and dismissing the accusations that it is a ban on Muslims entering the United States.

Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina said he was "pleased."

"As I stated when the new Executive Order was issued, it is not a religious ban," Graham said on Twitter. "The order was focused on countries that are in true states of disarray and would have great difficulty vetting to ensure terrorists are not coming into the United States."
APPENDIX B

FOX SUPREME COURT UPHELD TRUMP TRAVEL BAN ON SOME MUSLIM-MAJORITY NATIONS
Supreme Court Upholds Trump Travel Ban on Some Muslim-Majority Nations

Bill Meyers, Fox News

The Supreme Court on Tuesday upheld President Trump’s controversial travel ban affecting several mostly Muslim countries, offering a limited endorsement of the president’s executive authority on immigration in one of the hardest-fought battles of this term.

The 5-4 ruling marks the first major high court decision on a Trump administration policy. It upholds the selective travel restrictions, which critics called a discriminatory “Muslim ban” but the administration argued was needed for security reasons.

In a written statement, Trump called the ruling "a tremendous victory for the American People and the Constitution." As critics continued to decry the policy as "xenophobic," Trump described the court decision as "a moment of profound vindication following months of hysterical commentary from the media and Democratic politicians who refuse to do what it takes to secure our border and our country." At issue was whether the third and latest version of the administration’s policies affecting visitors from five majority Muslim nations – known as travel ban 3.0 – discriminates on the basis of nationality and religion, in the government's issuance of immigrant visas.

Chief Justice John Roberts, who authored the conservative majority opinion, wrote that the order was “squarely within the scope of presidential authority” under federal law. “The sole prerequisite set forth in [federal law] is that the president find that the entry of the covered aliens would be detrimental to the interests of the United States. The president has undoubtedly fulfilled that requirement here,” he wrote.

Associate Justice Sonia Sotomayor was among the court’s four liberals that wrote a dissent. “This repackaging does little to cleanse [the policy] of the appearance of discrimination that the president’s words have created,” she said. “Based on the evidence in the record, a reasonable observer would conclude that the proclamation was motivated by anti-Muslim animus.”

She and Justice Stephen Breyer took the unusual step of reading their dissents from the bench.

While the policy was upheld, the case was sent back to the lower courts, which were told to rely on the Supreme Court’s interpretation of executive authority.
It was the first significant legal test so far of Trump's policies and power and could lead to a precedent-setting expansion on the limits of presidential authority, especially within the immigration context.

Federal appeals courts in Virginia and California in recent months had ruled against the administration.

The San Francisco-based 9th Circuit Court last December concluded Trump's proclamation, like the two previous executive orders, overstepped his powers to regulate the entry of immigrants and visitors.

But the justices had allowed the current restrictions to be enforced at the Justice Department's request, at least until the case was fully litigated.

The Trump administration also seemed to enjoy a favorable reception before the court during arguments in April. Associate Justice Samuel Alito, during those April arguments, noted that of the 50 or so mostly Muslim majority countries, only five were on the current banned list.

The White House had framed the issue as a temporary move involving national security.

A coalition of groups in opposition called the order blatant religious discrimination, since the countries involved have mostly Muslim populations: Iran, Libya, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. Chad was recently removed from the list after the administration said that country had beefed up its information-sharing.

A major sticking point for the justices was navigating how much discretion the president really has over immigration. Courts have historically been deferential in this area, and recent presidents from Jimmy Carter to Ronald Reagan to Barack Obama have used it to deny entry to certain refugees and diplomats, including nations such as Iran, Cuba and North Korea.

A 1952 federal law -- the Immigration and Nationality Act, passed in the midst of a Cold War fear over Communist influence -- historically gives the chief executive broad authority.

It reads in part: "Whenever the president finds that the entry of any aliens or of any class of aliens into the United States would be detrimental to the interests of the United States, he may, may by proclamation, and for such period as he shall deem necessary, suspend the entry of all aliens or any class of aliens as immigrants or nonimmigrants, or impose on the entry of aliens any restrictions he may deem to be appropriate."

The administration strongly denies this is a "Muslim ban," but federal judges across the country cited statements by then-presidential candidate Trump and his advisers, including a December 2015 campaign press release calling for such restrictions and citing "hatred" by "large segments of the Muslim population."

The high court's majority downplayed Trump's campaign statements as a major factor in its decision.
"The issue before us is not whether to denounce the statements," wrote Roberts. "It is instead the significance of those statements in reviewing a Presidential directive, neutral on its face, addressing a matter within the core of executive responsibility. In doing so, we must consider not only the statements of a particular President, but also the authority of the Presidency itself."

Sixteen state leaders led by Texas were among a number of coalitions backing the Trump administration. But Hawaii officials, who filed the appeal contesting all of the president's orders, said the president's policies violate the Constitution's guarantee of religious freedom:

"Any reasonable observer who heard the president’s campaign promises, read his thinly justified orders banning overwhelmingly Muslim populations, and observed his administration's persistent statements linking the two, would view the order and each of its precursors as the fulfillment of the president's promise to prohibit Muslim immigration to the United States."

Trump's first executive order was issued just a week after he took office, and was aimed at seven countries. It triggered chaos and protests across the U.S., as some travelers were stopped from boarding international flights and others detained at airports for hours. Trump modified the order after a federal appeals court refused to allow the ban to be enforced.

"This is not about religion -- this is about terror and keeping our country safe," the president said on Jan. 29, 2017.

The next version, unveiled weeks later, dropped Iraq from the list of covered countries and made it clear the 90-day ban covering Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen didn't apply to those travelers who already had valid visas. It also got rid of language that would give priority to religious minorities. Critics said the changes did not erase the legal problems with the ban.

When that second temporary travel ban expired in Sept. 24, it was replaced with Proclamation 9645 -- what the administration said was a country-by-country assessment of security and cooperation with the U.S.
APPENDIX C

CNN WHY GILLETTE’S AD SLAMMING TOXIC MASCULINITY IS DRAWING CHEERS—AND ANGER
Why Gillette's Ad Slamming Toxic Masculinity is Drawing Cheers -- and Anger

By Jill Filipovic

It shouldn't be a controversial proposition: The best a man can be is kind instead of cruel, generous instead of petty, protective instead of predatory. But already, Gillette is facing backlash for its latest ad, which takes on toxic masculinity, bullying and harassment.

The ad presents some of the worst of male behavior -- a boy bullied and called a "sissy," audiences laughing along as a man on a sitcom grabs at a woman's behind, a businessman in a corporate boardroom condescending to a female employee -- while a voice over notes that men keep on "making the same old excuses": Boys will be boys.

And then it transitions to images of men doing better: Intervening against sexual harassment, teaching self-love to their daughters, promoting peace over violence, all while little boys watch and absorb. "It's only by challenging ourselves to do more," the ad concludes, "that we can be our best."

It's sad but predictable that imploring men to be better -- not just for women, but for other men and boys -- is met with such hostility from people who apparently accept the lie that cruel and predatory behavior is part of men's natural makeup. There's a stereotype that feminists hate men, but the opposite seems to be true: Anti-feminists who claim to be defending men are the ones who actually seem to have a fairly low opinion of them.

The Gillette ad, and the backlash to it, illustrate the peculiarity of this time in American history. First, Gillette isn't trying to promote a more gender-equal society as much as it is trying to sell something. This ad wasn't made out of the goodness of the company's heart; it was made because the company of course knew it would merit significant media coverage and boost sales.

And Gillette needs it. The company has been hit hard by the trend away from a clean-shaven face and toward beards; direct-to-consumer affordable-razor companies have also undercut the company's prices and its profits.
Backlash and an alleged boycott led by a handful of loud and angry men? More press, which will surely be countered with pro-feminist consumers buying more razors in defiance of the Piers Morgans of the world.

Buying consumer goods won't bring about the end of gender inequality, and Gillette is far from the first company to use feminist ideals to sell a product (remember that Dove "Real Beauty" campaign? And Pantene's "strong is beautiful" spot?)

No, the revolution will not be advertised. But feminism can indeed be co-opted to sell you stuff.

But that doesn't mean the ad is bad. While the Gillette ad is hardly a way to move gender equality forward, it is a marker of that movement. Companies don't advertise on concepts they think will tank their brands. That's why so many ads have been so sexist for so long: There was very little cost to misogyny in the service of capitalism. But thanks to significant feminist progress in recent years, that calculus is shifting.

That the advertisers behind the Gillette spot believe men will be receptive to these ads -- or perhaps that those mothers, wives and girlfriends who do the family's personal care shopping will be receptive to these ads -- suggests a significant and feminist-minded cultural shift.

Advertising is still a boys' club, but the people who tell us aspirational stories to sell their products apparently believe that a good chunk of the American public, including men, yearn for greater gender equality. They believe we are so sick of male entitlement and aggression, and so attuned to how those behaviors are nearly as damaging to men as they are to women, that we will want to buy products from companies that share our values.

And the backlash shows that that progress has been less linear than we would like, and that with forward movement comes those reactionaries who dig in their heels.

The monetization of feminism is far from the dreams of our foremothers. But we do live in a capitalist nation awash in advertising, and these campaigns tell us a lot about ourselves -- and what some savvy and powerful people believe we want to see.

Gillette advertising on gender equality isn't a feminist victory, and feminists need not do their advertising for them. But it is an indication of feminist progress.
APPENDIX D

FOX Does Gillette Want Men to Start Shaving Their Legs, Too?

OPINION
Does Gillette want men to start shaving their legs, too?

By Todd Starnes | Fox News

The makers of the Gillette razor have a message for the men who use their products: you are horrible, horrible people.

Proctor & Gamble released a two-minute commercial that accuses men of being incubators of sexual harassment and bullying and toxic masculinity.

“Is this the best a man can get? Is it? We can’t hide from it. It has been going on far too long. We can’t laugh it off, making the same old excuses,” a narrator declares.

The ad condemns the phrase “boys will be boys” and then proceeds to show guys chasing around women, engaging in bullying and basically acting like every anti-male stereotype you’ve ever seen.

“This is an important conversation happening, and as a company that encourages men to be their best, we feel compelled to both address it and take action of our own,” Proctor & Gamble’s Pankaj Bhalla told the Wall Street Journal. “We are taking a realistic look at what’s happening today, and aiming to inspire change by acknowledging that the old saying ‘Boys Will Be Boys’ is not an excuse.”

Instead of virtue signaling, I was sort of hoping Gillette would declare war on razor burn, but whatever.

Gillette wants all of us guys to hold each other accountable for our behavior - and they have dedicated themselves to promoting positive, attainable, and inclusive versions of what it means to be a man.

And therein lies the issue – what constitutes the ideal version of a man over at Proctor & Gamble headquarters? John Wayne or Pajama Boy?

There’s no doubt that men who bully and sexually harass women need to be – and must be - called out. But society wants us to believe that masculinity breeds such behavior - that inside the heart of every man is a bully and a boor.
There is literally a war on masculinity in America. It’s being waged in classrooms where professors are trying to convince a new generation of students that there’s something wrong with men who want to protect and provide for their families.

They want you to believe little boys who climb trees and tussle on the playground should be medicated. They believe there’s something evil about letting boys be boys.

My friend, the conservative commentator Allie Stucky, addressed this issue in a powerful “Prager University” segment.

“The growing problem in today’s society isn’t that men are too masculine; it’s that they’re not masculine enough,” she said. “When men embrace their masculinity in a way that is healthy and productive, they are leaders, warriors and heroes. When they deny their masculinity, they run away from responsibilities, leaving destruction and despair in their wake.”

In other words, men behaving badly is not a chromosome issue, it’s an issue of the heart.

“Here’s a secret that every woman knows: Women want real men—men they can count on and, yes, look up to. No amount of feminist theory will change that,” Stuckey said. “I don’t know any woman, at any age, who is attracted to a passive man who looks to her to be his provider, protector and leader. Every woman I know wants a strong, responsible man. That’s not a consequence of a social construct or cultural pressure—it’s innate.”

And that’s what bothers me the most about the Gillette commercial. It’s an incredibly unfair stretch to lump all men into the hashtag “me too” basket.

CLICK HERE FOR THE FOX NEWS APP

Most of the guys I know are gentlemen - they provide for their families, they protect their loved ones and they stand up to the bullies. They’ve been doing what men have done since the days of Adam.

Enough with the gender shaming, Gillette. Before too long, they’ll be telling us to shave our legs.

CLICK HERE TO READ MORE FROM TODD STARNES

Todd Starnes is host of Fox News & Commentary. His latest book is “The Deplorables’ Guide to Making America Great Again.” Follow him on Twitter @ToddStarnes and find him on Facebook.
APPENDIX E

READERS' COMMENTS ON CNN SUPREME COURT UPHOLDS TRAVEL BAN
Data collected from CNN Twitter
https://twitter.com/CNN/status/101164031422681088

Data and readers’ comments are Collected 6: 38 pm ET, Oct 22, 2018

1. God bless President. Trump
2. Damn, it must suck when that pesky US Constitution keeps messing things up for you.
3. Are those protesters Americans?
4. No ban, no wall, ................and no borders, no country ?
5. Breaking. Ruling changed due to protesters!
6. yes let everyone in, just along as they dont move into my neighborhood (yes, this is how every liberal really feels)
7. Supreme CT should be ashamed
8. TY, protesters! Could you please kick Gorsuch in the shin for me?! 😊
9. 🤔

10. Cute.
11. We need a wall. We don’t have any room for more immigrants who will just feed off of welfare 😞
12. HahahahahahHAhahAhahahahahahahahahahahahahahahahahhahahahahaha
13. Wish I was there!! Dang!!
14. Who cares! Protest all you want too.
15. Paid protesters. ..
16. No wall, no welfare.
17. I don’t about the others countries ... good travel ban for Venezuela !!
18. Sad
19. But when the Supreme Court okayed same sex marriages those against it didn’t go to the Supreme Court protesting. We can’t cherry pick what the Supreme Court rules on. That’s why we are a country of laws . The dems and their liberal/ fake news side kicks are hypocrites
20. Or, you can move to one of those countries and apply for citizenship. There is nothing about traveling TO one of the countries on the travel ban list, right?

21. They might as well be chanting: No Safety, no freedom.

22. Precisely

23. Just imagine if Obama passed this ban, he would be crowned king. Hypocrisy at its finest.

24. There are alot of hurt people in this country. Whine about EVERYTHING!

25. All 4 of them.

26. TWEET FROM 2015.THE 2 FACES OF MIKE PENCE.

27. This has got to be most shameful SCOTUS ever! The people will have to put a check on tRump’s power because the SCOTUS surely will not!!! How you gonna uphold a Muslim Ban and at the same time condemn Japanese Internment camps. Feckless Court!! Vote Blue for SANITY-Save America

28. Is there many muslims in North Korea, or Venezuela? It's a travel ban, not a Muslim ban. Quit changing what things are for what you think will help your cause

29. Must be nice not to have to work like normal people

30. Considering Americans are lazy asf, good point, if you look at the labor force statistics, immigrants are approx 72% where Americans are 49% so who's lazy?

31. Trump stole the presidency and has a justice on the court that does not belong. America is in peril and Trump and Putin will destroy America.

32. Lol

33. SUPREME ENDS CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY Uphold unlimited presidential power

34. What has America become? A sad day.
America is like a company. There were good times, and free goodies goes to everyone who can pronounce USA. Due to the bad management or bad luck, the financial situation deteriorates it has to adjust. It becomes stingy and mean. Otherwise, the country goes into bankruptcy.

Do we need to be nice to McConnell and Gorsuch?

No, never!

Do they look like this? 😂😂
40. A very small group getting national media.
41. The Donald & 70 million trump voter's will take it from here!
42. Wrong on both hee hee.
43. all 20 of them?
44. The #clowns will never get it.

45. I didn't know protesting was a career...
46. It's a code word liberals use for unemployed.
47. They can chant...yell and scream, but will achieve only a sore throat. But, I certainly support and served our Nation, for their right to get that sore throat.

49. Keep crying your tears are delicious
50. Trump thinks he’s on an episode of Judge Judy and he’s just won some special verdict. He’s insane.
51. So much 4 Kim visiting the White House...
52. Progressives and Liberals are upset that @Scotus followed the US Constitution. Take a step back and let that sink in folks.
53. The entire SCOTUS is Racist!!!
54. We're not going to go docile into those trains chugging toward their "camps", some of us that didn't live that history read it.
55. There is a sale at penny's
56. The fake media and the democrats are in a complete meltdown and it is beyond hilarious.
57. Hahahahaha
58. Have they been told that they are wasting their time?
59. CNN and the dems are for open borders.
60. Don't they work?
61. This is a green light to trump's recklessness. The supreme court has just poured more gasoline into a raging fire.
62. National guard to prevent liberal democrat violence that was called on by Maxine Waters.
63. Yeah cause those are totz stable governments
64. Too little. Too late.
65. Whoa the voting booths are gonna be packed in Nov...
66. Let them run the country. It is going that way fast
67. I eagerly await the Vice President's arrival:

68. Slogans are of no use, because the government has no respect for humanity
69. I wonder why so many are literally dying to come here with such an oppressive government...shut up...stay in your zone and don't get caught sneaking in...we are watching you!!!

70. I have no desire to settle in a country, where terrorists are attacking schools & killing innocent children on every second day. To Hell with it!
71.
72. he can do it. let him go to the border and start now. he's the only one who can do this. 
   LOL let him wear a watch so he knows when it's lunch time.
73. Sorry, they lost. They should go home and watch CNN to make them feel better
74. Isn't that exactly what you're doing right now on their Twitter page? Lol
75. But in Trumpistan they definitely believe North Korea and Venezuela are muslim 
countries.
76. Actually those two countries prove it wasn't a Muslim ban.
77. We will all suffer the consequences of Trump's agenda. #FakeAmerican
78. (reply)
79. Well Trump has Mexico paying for the wall, so there is no need for Congress to approve 
   any funds for a wall. Trump said Mexico would pay for the wall. His words.
80. Tariffs bud
81. No need for Congress to appropriate any funds. Trump already said repeatedly that 
   Mexico was paying for the wall. His words. If he plans to get it via tariffs, oh well. 
   Regardless. No need for Congress to allocate any money. Mexico has it covered per 
   Trump.
82. Ignorance is bliss. Or hysteria, as the case may be.
83. Ignorance is bliss. Trump is president. Same thing.
84. Scream louder. It's how policy gets made.
85. (reply)
86. Stop the temper tantrums when u don't get ur way
87.
88. Professional protesters, one of the many jobs The Trump administration has created
89. Hahahaha this is comical. People are absolutely clueless. Wonder y? Could be bc they believe the horse shit cnn posts
90. Where is ice check them out
91. Muslim obstructionists care nothing about safety of American people only themselves...they say travel should be wide open...everyone good, no one lies, no criminals, no terrorists.....I believe Obama also passed ban on similar countries.
92. Paid protesters
93. Sounds like crybabies to me. Y do democrats care more about illegals than true Americans? Losing strategy
94. Ban and wall!
95. The 4th version passed? The one that includes N. Korea? We have more important issues than this. It’s meaningless
96. Meanwhile the rest of America has jobs
97. Yes all 5 of them. #SCOTUS
98. Those who get their news from CNN are the most misguided and uninformed. CNN has no credibility unless you think bashing the president 24/7 is news or if you think it is honest to examine everything he says and does and manipulate it to be negative for him.
99. I think you misspelled traitors...
100. Shut off the cameras the protesters will stop. They all must live with there door and windows open and allow anyone into there homes. Or there hipocritical assholes.
APPENDIX F
READERS’ COMMENTS ON FOX SUPREME COURT UPHOLD TRUMP TRAVEL BAN
OF SOME MUSLIM-MAJORITY NATIONS
1.

2. About time - this is a free country - which means we do NOT have to admit people who can jeopardize our freedom - good job Supreme Court!
3. “the significance of Barack Obama being denied the chance to fill a seat in his fourth year as president it only grows in insignificant...”
4. Good! But, don’t understand why 4 Judges would vote against this? Thought they were to make sure the President and Congress upheld the Constitution! Looks like 4 of the Judges do not understand their responsibilities!
5. Terrific news! Our President standing for right!
6. Drugs and MS13 are a national security risk, move now to add Mexico to the travel band! Make Congress fix the immigration once and for all.
7. Thank god
8. GOD BLESS YOU SUPREME COURT THE RULE OF LAW DOES STILL EXCITED GOD BLESS AMERICA.
9. Well sure, that is why Gorsuch was brought in. Duh
10. Outstanding
11. Trump

12. MS-13 and other criminal supporters were the 4. Supreme Court justices supporting terrorism and crime.

13. HUZZAH!!! #MAGA #MAGA2018 #MAGA2020 @POTUS #scotus

14. Well North Korea is on the list, so

15. The fact that 4 SCOTUS judges had the audacity to vote to strike down the travel ban is incredible, since previous presidents have rightfully done the exact same thing.

16. Bigotry and Islamophobia are the winners today #TravelBan

17. Actually I think the powers of all presidents to come just won so don’t complain about it because it could one day prove useful to a president you support


19. Two rulings in one day. Does #MaxineWaters call for violence against the Supreme Court now. Stop the idiocy and become an American. Thanks to our forefathers we have a republic not a mob rule

20. Wait.... judges upholding the law?? Seems weird.
22. This is well within the powers of the Presidency. Nothing Constitutional to debate here. This is why we hold elections. We support or remove people who act in ways we fundamentally disagree with.
23. It must be very painful for the media to have to report so many Trump victories. # MAGA!
24. Should have been 9-0
25.
26. God Bless Gorsuch!
27.
okay important question does this effect the#NorthKorea negotiations? because that means #KimJung can't come to the #WhiteHouse now

Boom!! Winning!!

Are the DEMs calling SCOTUS Nazi yet?

Liberals want to sell our NATION. They don't care our customs and traditions.

Excellent

Here we go....Lord help us.

And we wonder why it takes so long for things to work and even longer to see results. Man... can't President protect us? Many other never had it this hard. I know...they weren't Trump. But does that make it wrong? Obstructionism is an enemy itself at times.

Another payoff for @SenateMajLdr and @SenateGOP, just keep those children locked up and see what else you can get.

Glad that this has held up

Check and understood!

This is what happens when you get 'illegal' Supreme Court Justices, such as, Neil Gorsuch; handpicked by Trump's Senate sycophants (think Mitch McConnell). Gorsuch's vote was instrumental (& will be moving forward) in implementing Trump's inexorable 'white nationalist' agenda.

Trump governs only for white people, full stop.

LOL! You people are unhinged.

Nope, we very much have our eyes and ears open. Trump demonizes those who didn't vote for him, and that includes vast majorities of AAs and Latinos. He demonizes and lies about immigrants and asylum seekers. People in his base - such as you - don't, won't, or can't see that.

having just spent the week at @disneyworld @Florida, I can assure you, the #Muslim #travelban is largely a myth.
43. Citizenship on the basis of religion. Unconstitutional. What about the countries of the 9/11 attackers? They’re not on the list.

44. The ban is based on Islam. Trump said “total and complete shutdown of Muslims.” The 9/11 attackers’ countries not banned though. Thoughts?

45. False. It goes against your narrative I know, but there is no mention of religion in the travel ban.

46. Thank God! This is a great day for America! Ok liberals, man your closets lmao

47. Ok pardner. You rustle up some grub for lunch yet? Little taters and baky. Waky waky.

48. If you had my conservative taters you would #WalkAway for sure!

49. love all the people thanking God lmao!!! Pretty sure he is disgusted with our country!

50. I would agree, but not because of this. Bet he would be a little more disgusted with the killing of unborn children and not upholding his standard for marriage.

51. probably more disgusted by "religious" people using his name to decide other peoples rights instead of looking in their own mirror!!! Hypocrites using God to push others around! Worry about what you do, not what i do!

52. No, that would be wrong to. It’s a simple standard of right and wrong. We all fall short, but that doesn’t change God’s standard of right and wrong. I do look in the mirror and understand I am a complete failure versus his standard. But, it doesn’t change the standard.

53. it is your belief. Not everyone else. Their belief may differ, doesn't make them wrong and you right. It is not for us to judge others beliefs

54. Along party lines of course. Freedom is dead. Russia and the fascist trump regime have won. Traitors all.

55. I hope you have one of those crying closets, because you are going to need it for all the winning that is going to continue to happen! #SnowflakeCentral

56. Discuss this amongst your "experts"
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of Americans killed by their citizens (1975-2015)</th>
<th>Included in Trump's Muslim Ban?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
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<td>YES</td>
</tr>
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<td>Yemen</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

57. Lmao there isn’t even a source. I could’ve made that in MS word
58. OMG the Supreme Court is going to be on the protest list next! Haha. I will never be
tired of winning after 8 years of losing! Suck it libs. We win again!
59. @Alyssa_Milano @GeorgeTakei Just in case you missed it!
60. Wow this third try Trump actually used lawyers this time rather then Steven Miller &
Steve Bannon. So much for all the terrorism that Trump predicted, another lie to
Americans.
61. Hey Fox, do you ever read the racist quotes of your followers? Do you like them?
62. And all 4 liberal judges voting against. WHAT A SHOCKER!!! #MAGA
63. YES. YES. YES. YES.
64. Triggered lefties in 3 2 1..
65. Where is the party at @FoxNews ??
66. The president has the power to control who comes in
the judges do not know what the
president knows heck congress doesn't know whats going on yet congress gave him the
power for that reason to protect the Nation and Republic

67. It’s about time— We could have been ruled by an outside force by now !!! 😞😞

68. "See you in court" doesn't seem to be working well for the ACLU.
69. ONE MORE GOOD day for #AMERICA #TRUMP #Muslim #travelban
70. Lunatic left is slapped down again
71. YES!!!!!!
72. Not sure, but if North Korea is on the travel ban then how was Kim Yong-chol, the former military intelligence chief and one of the North Korean leader’s closest aides able to recently visit the U.S.??
73. Great news. God is giving us another chance to do different.
74. Alternate hardline: Four of nine members of the Supreme Court chose a partisan interpretation of the law and ignored precedent.
75. Put Mexico on that list
76. Trump’s Muslim ban is defeated. He waters it down. It’s defeated. He waters it down again. It’s defeated. He makes it the bare minimum he can. It barely passes. Followers claim it’s "winning"
77. WAHOOOOOO!!!
78. Awesome vote thank you for upholding travel ban.
79. It’s not a 'religious' ban. It’s that we’re not able to verify and vett from these 5 terrorist stronghold nations.
80. #WON!!
81. Weak victory still for revised version ... As the question is fair if usa government would get a truthful answer on the citizen of that country ..But asylum seekers of those countries should be allowed for hearings etc as you say you dont trust that government
82. Nice one, should ban all those people from countries which have no history of committing terrorist acts on US soil. What’s next? Banning ice cream for causing tsunamis?
83. Just watch SCOTUS justices will be put on the Dems list of who to harass.
84. Nice!

85. #LiberalismIsAMentalDisorder #MAGA #stillwinning

86. #civility is a joke to fan-atics. Fighting back harder starting yesterday.
87. At least five of those justices are not idiots.
88. As expected.
89. TRUMP JUST KEEPS ON WINNING !! BEST PRESIDENT EVER !! #MAGA #MYDOGTRUMP

90. Yes. Trump has this executive power to keep the country safe

91. Thank God for Mitch McConnell

92. (reply)

93. The President has national authority for immigration, which makes sense because for the protection of the American citizens. I don’t hear you Liberals

94. If you come in America Illegally we should send your asses back where you came from.

95. The law does not appeal to emotions but the rule of law. Maxine Waters and those emotionally disturbed people must start using their brains.

96. (reply)

Donald J. Trump 🇺🇸
@realDonaldTrump

My supporters are the smartest, strongest, most hard working and most loyal that we have seen in our countries history. It is a beautiful thing to watch as we win elections
97. This is why @SenateMajLdr fucked over @BarackObama and #MerrickGarland...to push Republican racist agenda.

98. Is the ban still in effect after Trump is indicted?

99. LOL!! I guess you still stuck in 2016 talking points. That is falling apart by the day. Wake up idiot!

100. The Supremes finally got one right!
APPENDIX G

READERS’ COMMENT ON CNN
WHY GILLETTE’S AD SLAMMING TOXIC MASCULINITY IS DRAWING CHEERS—
AND ANGER
1. Only anger here!

2. #Gillette charges women notably more for plastic razors than they do for metal men’s versions. They have been #SEXIST for a long time (I’ve written them about this for years) so I don’t accept this campaign when that same toxicity clearly rules their business model.
3. It's a great ad
4. Re: I think it's a great start.
5. We will miss it when it is gone. All sensitive all the time stands directly in the way of progress.
6. When #proctorandgamble becomes the darling of the left for a woke ad, despite it's profiteering, polluting, and animal testing, the right has won. The left is broke. #Gillette #GilletteAd #Gillette #bestamancanbe
7. The problem for a lot of men is the association of intrinsically bad behavior with masculinity, whether you qualify it as "toxic" or not. Bullying and harassment are indeed toxic behaviors, but there's nothing masculine about them. They're the actions of cowards and cretins.

8. More
8. Re: I posted basically the same thing. Nothing masculine about bullying or harassment. The fact they are being portrayed has masculine is what I object to.
9. Re: I think you would agree men have more power over women in the world we live in and tend to be the aggressors in most situations. Not saying bullying is a male-only thing, but there’s a reason why it was targeting men
10. Re: I understand the point they were making, and I largely agree with it. There are indeed toxic behaviors, and I have no problem with a campaign targeted at men addressing these behaviors. But I see masculinity as embodying noble qualities in men, just as w/ femininity in women.
11. I think we see that marketed in different ways. Men in truck commercials are tough, home improvement commercials show men as builders and hard workers, etc. I think companies appeal to them in a different way
12. The ad says "some" men are doing the right thing. Gillette...most men, that includes men with lots of fine masculine traits, abhor bad behavior, do not tolerate it and certainly do not need a patronizing ad to tell them how to behave like decent human beings - again ..MOST men.
13. Re: If most men are "already better" there wouldn’t have been a need for a #metoo movement. This commercial isn’t saying that all men are bad, but that even good men that stay silent in the face of bullying and harassment can be better. If you see an injustice take action.
14. RE: At least you said most and not all. As for the me too movement it's not limited to just women.
15. Who in their right mind would be angered by this commercial?
16. RE: I’ve been saying this all day .. it isn’t a bashing of masculinity as far as I can see ..it’s encouraging men to be the best of men and I love it for that reason! I’m sick of seeing all men castigated as abusers or misogynists..it’s wrong and this ad is just brilliant
17. RE: "I'm sick of seeing all men castigated as abusers or misogynists" Thank you. Same here. I'm not so positive about this ad though. It does at least say that "some men" are ok but the implication is that most men aren't.
18. RE: I've never felt castigated as an abuser or misogynist. Mostly because I know that I have never been one. I do know, that when I was younger I didn't always speak out against people who were though, because I worried about their approval
19. RE: Women are not exempt from this. We can be vicious to each other while also being susceptible to peer pressure that prevents us from sticking up for each other. We all have work to do. I like that the ad put it out there to start the conversation. Brave.

20. RE: I didn't like the ad, but I did like your tweet 😊

21. RE: Ah shucks. 😞

22. I don't have an issue with this commercial. I do have a problem with anyone who thinks the complex issue of gender relations can be solved with a 90-second commercial aimed at only one of the genders. We all have a role to play in fixing this.

23. RE: Who thinks that? It's the cumulative effort. This is one in the right direction.

24. RE: Well then... I guess I don't have a problem then, right?

25. Proctor & Gamble still advertises on Tucker Carlson's show so the hypocrisy is real. @Gillette

26. RE: Damnit, I really wanted to like this ad and feel it’s genuine 😞

27. RE: The ad is beautiful. I truly think it is aimed heavily at women who may do a lot of the purchasing of items for their respective households & men who appreciate the need for it. It is time for them to back it up & practice what they preach. @ProcterGamble #BoycottTuckerCarlson

28. Why does it seem that Hollywood and the entertainment industry always get a pass for the messages they send? The sexual video the boys are watching on the couch? Who produced that? As a parent, navigating through the toxic waste that is pop culture is exhausting. Anyone relate?

29. RE: Definitely!

30. Increasingly seeing the evil genius of the basically innocuous and really meaningless Gillette ad. They got us to talk about them, mention their name over and over again without actually going out on a real limb. #advertising #evilgenius #theygotus

31. It's a great start to what should be a long process.

32. I just don’t understand the total outrage by it. They’re not saying all men are this way, and I don’t think they’re even saying that masculinity is bad. I think it’s more about doing the right thing and showing your sons (who will grow up to be men) how to be respectful. In the past, there have been behaviors that were deemed acceptable that turned out to be wrong either towards women or people in general. You can be masculine, but masculine in a way to stand up for what’s right rather than being a part of the problem (2).

33. Its an ad with a message. I don't see what the big uproar is all about. Unless you're guilty of some or all of it.

34. RE: I was surprised by all the negative reactions.

35. RE: Me too.

36. Ridicule is what it deserves.
Ads are supposed to get people to buy stuff.

RE: I agree but based on how the country is today, one never can count on the sincerity of the ads.

RE: Such a shame, everything is getting so serious. Ads used to try to be funny, not political.

I think the real crime here is wearing khaki shorts to a backyard barbecue

RE: Seriously...searsucker or cargo shorts, but not plain khaki

RE: Unreal, right?

When #Gillette cuts deep and feels so good

I think the majority of anger is from how few people (men generally) understand what toxic masculinity is. People should be angry instead that companies use lifestyle branding to sell product. They should show razor, say works. Done. But capitalism sells lifestyle not product

Cheers???? It is will probably end up being the most hated ad in history. FYI I think if you looked a bit deeper you will find there is backlash because generally people are opposed to social engineering and stereotyping. Companies should stick to selling products!

RE: You'll have a tall hill to climb to convince us that the goosing incident (& others) in that ad are anything other than offensive. Enough already.

RE: But Billene, as ET has so eruditely argued, if we don't permit goosing it leads to social engineering and people like ET becoming an incel (if he's not there already).

RE: He???

hol up did gilette attack its main consumers?

RE: Are its main consumers bullies?

RE: tbh i havent seen the ad but i saw a meme about it

RE: this is the realest twitter reply ever. You just went full Socrates. KNOW THYSELF.

RE: FR tho, watch the ad. It’s mostly about holding men to the sort of standard I’m pretty sure most men would say they aspire to. Men helping men. Boys helping boys. Men teaching boys to be the kind of men who break up a pile-on instead of cheering it on.

It doesn’t make sense. Who are they trying to sell razors too? And I’ve never seen a group of men stand back and watch to boys fist fight. Just stupid.

RE: I have, many times. And heard the cheering on.
"Toxic masculinity" is a made up phrase to try and shame men who like to do things that have always been seen as manly. The real problem is young men without fathers who turn to gangs.

How about you just concentrate on making a good Affordable Razor.

I get the respect for women. No problem. But tell me again what is wrong with a bunch of boys running and a couple of boys wrestling around. We are becoming a nation of total pansies.

RE: No, we are becoming a nation of people who know to fight when it's necessary and not as a reaction to every perceived slight.

RE: I’m referencing two boys wrestling around on the commercial. I grew up wrestling around with my buddies. Guess what, I’m not a criminal, I have a great career, been married for over 26 years, have two well adjusted boys, a beautiful granddaughter, etc.

RE: SWING and a miss! Thanks for playing!

Thank you Gillette! Great ad! Those offended by an ad condemning bad behavior, are probably guilty of the bad behavior being condemned...

RE: Generalizations are acceptable again. I get so confused on what’s allowed and who I should hate.

I thought it was touching..

RE: Boys (and girls) playfighting is wrong? We don't have to toughen up and deal with crap life will inevitably throw at us? Bullying is an exclusively male thing? Only men look at an attractive member of the opposite sex with awe/lust? Sorry but you find it touching due to filming techniques and well placed music. The logic of the as is asinine and pretty sexist.

This is a great ad....advertising is a mirror, it doesn't change behaviour, it reflects it back at us and sometimes the truth hurts; sometimes the reflection isn't aspirational, it's reality and it can be painful. Good for them.

RE: Except 99% of men aren’t abusers or criminals. So don’t draw a false equivalency between masculinity and violence. The problem isn’t the message, it’s the assumption that we need to be taught this when virtually all of us already know it and practice it

RE: Oh for crying out loud.....is the ad claiming that? No, they are asking men if they are being the best they can be....are they being complicit when they see stuff happening. It's not addressing domestic violence but the little things, the little discourtesies that happen.

RE: You buy their product if you want. Quit splaining why some respond the way they do.
72. RE: Triggered much? Hit a nerve? There's a lot of truth in that ad guess it hurts.
73. RE: More irritated than anything. And being angry about something doesn’t mean there was any truth in what I saw. When I get angry seeing old nazi propaganda from the 40’s in my classes, is that because the images are true?
   Or is it due to the fact that the message being sent is both reprehensible and insulting?
74. I’m less concerned about this than I am about Gillette funding animal testing.
75. RE: I am more worried about all that plastic waste from disposable razors.
76. ...and ridicule. But mostly ridicule.
77. If your first response to this ad is to angrily insist “not all men are bad” know two things 1- we know that not all men are bad 2- We absolutely do know that you, specifically, are one of the bad men.
78. Maybe because men don’t like being stereotyped any more than women do?
79. Let’s guess - it’s the first ever ad suggesting how good men act so men are mad and women don’t understand why because we have millions of ads telling us how to act
80. Clickbait
81. Gillette has drawn cheers from me for their decision. We have been told many times in recent years that corporations can do whatever they want with loyal paying customers and yearly profits. This includes taking a fresh, virtue signaling crap on them.
82. Did you just assume that commercials gender?!!!!!! IM LITERALLY SHAKING.
83. What else ya got..

84. If there is a domestic problem lets say, it's not toxic masculinity. It’s a LACK OFF masculinity in raising that boy without a respectable father. A father should teach his son respect, morals, to be a protector. And especially how to treat women with respect.
85. The heart of the issue is the massive welfare system created by liberals that has destroyed the nuclear family. 73% of back children are born to single mothers and liberals are happy keeping it that way.
86. Bingo
87. Does toxic femininity exist and is it ever presented?
88. who do you think made the ad?
89. You’ll notice how in most commercials nowadays they are over-the-top diverse, but in this particular Gillette commercial it’s about 98% white. You can’t make this stuff up!
90. Let’s adjust it to 95% white, but notice every action by a black male is positive, examples include two groups of black men shaking hands and not escalating their issues. In two other short clips the black men step in to confront a white guy that’s being “toxic.”
91. You’re still completely wrong. But it’s useless to attempt to reason with someone who feels victimized by a TV commercial.
92. I wonder why asking men to act better is causing an outrage
93. Because it generalizes all men into one category. We’re just fighting grilling and yelling at women right? Its ridiculous and %100 prejudice. i know some beautiful women who would out swear, out grill, out drink and beat up most men. Are they toxic?
94. #Rock isn’t dead, it’s #Sick! Catch “Toxic Rock Syndrome”:
   http://youtu.be/iEHUzRm9u0g #POTUS #plasticfree #Earth #pollution #planet #environment #climate #water #cleanenergy #oceans #BREAKING #maga #qanon
   #DrainTheSwamp #rocknroll #EPA #MusicMonday #Metal #ALLCAPS #Art
   Toxic Rock Syndrome
   Heavy metal music makes me groan Bad puns always make me moan Lead pipes caused the fall of Rome
   Think I got Toxic Rock Syndrome Pump it underground...
youtub.com

95. A lot of very tough masculine men are suddenly very fragile over a commercial

96. Everyone so divided and sensitive on EVERYTHING these days.

97. Boost sales? Am I the only one who uses Dollar Shave Club because it's a DOLLAR? 16 count for $50 that might last half a year. $1 for a five count that you get 12 times a year =
$12. If Gillette wants to boost sales, this ad isn't the way to do it.

The way to boost sales is to lower your prices.... LOL

98. Cheers here... and is probably drawing anger to the men who feel like there's nothing to change. Oh yes men...a lot has to change... like my father always says "where are all the men at??...there are no men anymore!" "they need to stand up and be a man."

99. It touched my heart.

100. RE: It touched my fart.
APPENDIX H-1

READERS’ COMMENT ON FOX DOES GILLETTE WANT MEN TO START TO SHAVE THEIR LEG TOO?
1. Dude, if this stuff is what you think constitutes a “war” on masculinity, then you wouldn’t last 5 minutes as a woman.

2. A dose of seventh grade grammar is helpful here.

3. It’s saying the ones who act like horrible people are horrible. Otherwise if you’re supposedly an upstanding man than you are one of the good ones they are talking about being! There were some great and proud men in that video im sorry you missed them.

4. Such thin, sensitive skin. I think Gillette has a razor for that.

5. "There is literally a war on masculinity in America." That's what you got from this ad? Todd, help me out here. Remind me what % of women are responsible for mass shootings, committing domestic violence, committing sexual assault, etc? Asking for my friends who don't watch Fox News.

6. RE:

7. (1) of (2) - The ad, in no way, states that men should be less “manly”. It simply raises men to the same basic humanity expectation placed on the rest of us. Welcome to our world. It's been a tough place to maneuver for minorities and women for 250 years in the US.

8. It’s ok. I just added them to my list

9. That'll show them!

10. No, not the customers. Just men who behave badly. I guess you're OK w/people who bully, when men patronizingly place hands on women's shoulders in mtgs. It's strange that this ad, which helps to teach more positive messages. gets turned into some left vs right battle. Seriously?
11. Excellent idea. Yes they should, further they should ALSO be harassed and ridiculed if they don't.
12. That's OK. My Norelco works just fine.
13. @Gillette can eat big bags of razors. Men need to be men not tender tots. #yourproductstillstuck one blade is all that is needed.
14. This sort of vid has been around since the 1950's.
15. Men SHOULD shave their legs. It makes them more aerodynamic when they fight. You can cat call thirty percent more women with sleek limbs. It displays confidence when you're at a business meeting where your female colleagues are ignored. #Facts #ShaveTheLegs #GrowTheThicket
16. YOU'RE MAD be men should be held accountable for their actions? Don’t harrass people, don’t assault people, don’t mansplain? Also, some MALE athletes do shave their legs. I’m sure @Gillette wants their business so...have fun shaving your balls with a one blade Bic. Oh. Wait.
17. Geez, Todd, your insecurity is showing again. There’s NOTHING in the spot on which that conclusion can be based, except in the mind of someone intent on being devisive and derisive. Don’t you have anything better to do?
18. boycott Gillette products.....their managenent has gone nuts like Target...... tell Gillette to CUT it out by stop buying their products....
19. Schools whip the maleness out of young men also
20. Of course the promotion of empathy scares you. And your headline is pure hyperbole. Be best. #InsecureMuch???
21. If that’s the message you get from this ad, then you’re a horrible human being.
22. It's absolutely not saying men are horrible.. I can't believe you think that's what they are saying..
23. Of course you would have a problem with this. SMH.
24. Wow. No. Todd, you're an insult to real men everywhere. Any man offended by this is weak.
26. You drew a lot of conclusions out of a 90-second advertisement. Not once was "toxic masculinity" mentioned. And the stereotypes? There's no shame in calling men to be good examples to the next generation. @Gillette isn't trying to strip away masculinity, rather refine it.

27. RE: And there's no shame into boycotting Gillette. If they can stereotype, their customers can leave in droves.

28. RE: No shame in expressing your free speech. Just make sure you’re doing it for the right reasons.

29. RE: Just make sure you're doing it for the right reasons? What the hell does that even mean in this case? Gillette makes a shit commercial and you criticize Todd for "drawing" conclusions? Pretty sure Todd is spot on here.

30. RE: Starnes connects feminist theory, gender shaming, and the “war on masculinity” to this advertisement. If you watch the ad, it’s clear @Gillette is trying to empower men to be their best. They aren’t trying to strip you of your masculinity, medicate you, or otherwise.

31. RE: Empower men? Not in this ad whatsoever. Gillette is getting crushed all over so I feel solid that my opinion of this crappy ad line up with Todd.

32. RE: Yeah John, to real men who don't mind being held accountable for their actions, the af is empowering. Get out of here with your insecure takes.

33. Thank you for giving such a perfect example of #fragilemasculinity. Fascinating that you feel your maleness is dependent on the presence of leg hair.

34. If you feel prejudiced against - again - welcome to the rest of the country. It's high time your segment of the population is held accountable for your behavior at even remotely the same levels as the rest of us. I find this editorial's defense inherently OFFensive and entitled.

35. Your hearing comprehension is sad

36. You have almost 100K followers and only 30 comments. Over 90% of those 30 are critical of you. I don’t know how Twitter does it, but they know how to control the narrative.

37. Boycott Gillette.

38. and our response back to Gillette is "go pound sand, we will never buy another Gillette product again.

39. Hope Gillette goes broke!

40. Oh honey. If that is what you took away from this commercial you need to re-evaluate your life choices.

41. Maybe if I’d start shaving with their Venus razors, it would make me a better man.

42. RE: Judging by this comment, highly unlikely.
43. Please. Tell me more about real masculinity, you box of candy corn left in a hot car.

44. RE: Ha! Funny how he could think anyone would attack his masculinity
45. You need to learn what the word literally means or stop using it.
46. You gonna be OK, snowflake?
47. I still don't understand all the hate towards this ad, what has y'all so triggered?
48. Yes, they do, Todd. Gillette demands it. They're going to send feminists to your house specifically to shave your legs.

49. You sound like Rep. Steve King defending white supremacy. #embarrassment #NotClever

50. Why would you isolate your base customer
51. I’m pretty sure they are saying we as men can be better. Don’t you agree we can all be better?
52. Identity politics brings insanity.

53. RE:

54. I’m a 44 year old man with a wonderful wife & a beautiful 8 year old daughter, both of whom I love dearly. I thought I was an okay guy. Then @Gillette lectured me on what a horrible person I am & always have been, because I’m a man. Who knew?

55. Showed my husband and he said I don’t need their crappy product anyway.

56. Good, glad he gave you permission to boycott them...

57. That is NOT what they tried to say in that commercial, you blind dumbass!
APPENDIX H-2

READERS’ COMMENT ON FOX DOES GILLETTE WANT MEN TO START TO SHAVE THEIR LEG TOO?
READERS’ COMMENT ON FOX DOES GILLETTE WANT MEN TO START TO SHAVE THEIR LEG TOO?

Data collected from Foxnews.com


Data and readers’ comments are collected 02:27 pm Feb 16, 2019

1. Why does Todd assume that Gillette is accusing all men of bad activities? I don't feel indicted. Todd must have some serious guilt.

2. Does Gillette make any products for Constipation ... when the turtle gets stuck . . . I just want to . . . bully it . . . I even want to slap a little toxic masculinity on it . . . is this wrong?

3. A story and I am gone for the night. I was walking through the razor blade isle in Walmart. I met this old timer looking for raizor blades and he was talking to me and told me this company send him a brand new razor in the mail for a couple bucks? But he said the replacement blades cost almost $50.00. I said sir throw the damn rasor out.

4. The wilkinson blade came out, it was sharp and smooth. Gillette I believe bought their company and raised their prices. It must fit the definition of an illegal monoply. I bet the japanese could make a good blade reasonably priced.

5. RE: They make an incredible disposable double edged blade, for old school shavers like me. The Feather blade is considered one of the sharpest and cleanest shaving blades in the world, by many. But you would need to buy a DE razor and learn how to wet shave. Unless you're old enough to remember the days befor disposables.

6. I make my own decisions I do in my life I don't need politicians or companies telling me what to do. One decision I have made us not to buy Gillette products.

7. I bet Gillette wishes they kept the cost of razor blades down in price so a guy can afford to buy them. When they raised the price to rediculous levels it had to be one of the worst decisions in the corporate world.

8. thats odd, I didn’t read anything about corporate greed in their rant!

9. They will say anything if it results in more razor sales. Nothing new in this concept from a manufactuer marketing it's product.. Pay them no mind.

10. RE: maybe, but they should be sure to not say things that will hurt razor sales - and i'm afraid they have, at least for me. just tired of anyone and everyone jumping on the identity politics band wagon

11. As a woman, I’m offended by this ad, no more Gillette products for me.

12. The closer to home this ad hits, the more offended the person seems to be.

13. Sure they do.........this is nothing but the removing of Masculinity from men. Kinda like the CW channel shows are all turning #LGBTQSHIT.

14. I’ve disliked Gillette for a long time . When I was starting to shave , there was the spoiler , every time a new blade came out , the last best blade was dull . Now what are they Ten blades in one , $5 bucks , forget that > Harry's or $ shave club .

15. I wish I knew how to quit you, Todd. How about a fresh article?
16. Proctor and Gamble has been a terrible company for a long time. I have done everything I can do to check labels and never buy P&P products. I will not buy them and you should not either. To put out a message like this shows the kind of stuff that goes around in the P&P offices. IT would be hard for a male to work there I am sure. Let them know that some women harass men as well. So, shut up P&P.

17. And also, Gillette, who is all for women, charges women more for the exact same products. See many twitter feeds on this.

18. If it means selling more Gillette products, lather up them sticks boys.

19. This message was deleted.

20. RE: We are now all better people . . . thank you . . . for sharing your personal grooming habits . . .

21. RE: If you have to get lucky to get attention from your husband, maybe it's about time to look at the mirror and the bathroom scale. You sound like a sexually deprived woman, maybe your husband wants to follow Bruce Jenners footsteps.

22. Have they seen the armpit hair on some women? Maybe they should've brought back Joe. Broadway Joe shaved his legs and put on a pair of Hanes’ Beautymist Pantyhose for a TV ad. In the spot, the camera slowly pans across a pair of sexy, reclined legs until we get ... to Joe’s face.”Now, I don’t wear pantyhose. But if Beautymist can make my legs look good, imagine what they’ll do for yours,” he purrs.

23. As someone who swam competitively the idea of men shaving their legs being some sort of insult to masculinity is hilarious.

24. RE: I am sure he does not mean someone who shaves their legs to give them a competitive advantage in swimming competitions. These feminists are opposed to men being men, against being competitive, being leaders, being aggressive and dominate and wanting them to show emotions like women do, to cry and whine as they do. The point was they want to make men into sissies, so that is why you would expect them to want males to shave their legs to look more pretty and affemanite. Shaving your legs to be more competitive and dominate in your sport is something these anti-male people like the ones making this commercial would be against. You missed the entire point.

25. writing off all feminists as anti-male is pretty ridiculous. There's a lot of space between "hey stop being so abusive" and "all men should disappear". Both exist, and by painting everyone as extremist you don't give yourself any opportunity to realize that there are problems that need to be worked on. also in the immortal words of Prof. Oak "there's a time and place for everything" aggressiveness or being dominant all the time isn't a great life strategy. I got the point, but Starnes uses it like an insult. And it seems you miss my point, there's lots of shades of grey out there and not everyone is going to be exactly like you or your ideals, somget over it.

26. Isn’t this Melanias campaign?
27. Just made my first order from Harry’s shave club... quick, easy, cheap. replacement blades are 2$ or cheaper in bulk. Hey Gillette, stick to selling razors, trashing your target market is a strange business plan
28. RE : I did the same more than a year ago. The Gillette ad is a nice, positive message that goes along with Melania's cause.
29. RE: RE: No, it is a feminist message that being a male is in itself something that is toxic. It is a hateful feminist anti-male message, they want to turn males into sissies, and wimps.
30. didn't trash their target...Don’t be so sensitive
31. New ad ... Jillett. 'The Woman's choice for shaving legs and armpits!'
32. The ad basically says we can all Be Best. It's odd that Fox/Trump world is so triggered by Melania's cause.
33. No this feminist message is that you can only be best by being less than a man, and behaving like a female, they want all men to be effeminate sissies.
34. I love how Todd "most likely to play the Stay-Puft marshmallow man", the NYC dwelling, Chick-fil-a schlepping, disgraced reporter Starnes knows how a real man should act.
35. Todd! Come back!
36. Gillette without a gender identity is worse than pelosi off her Dementia meds.
37. What is wrong with shaving your legs?
38. Liberals embrace toxic Feminism.
39. Investors should sue the management for this failure.
40. Schick......the best a man can get.
41. Toddler Starnes is an embarrassment to any " real man"!!
42. I find it a bit challenging to see Starnes defining what a 'real man' is. He, himself, is a whiny lump of intentional mental density.
43. Make America Gillette Again.
APPENDIX I

UNIVERSITY HUMAN SUBJECT INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL LETTER
EXEMPTION GRANTED

Karen Adams
English
480/965-3013
KLAdams@asu.edu

Dear Karen Adams:

On 1/22/2018 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Review:</th>
<th>Initial Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title:</td>
<td>Manufacturing Discriminatory Ideology through Mediated Discourse:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigator:</td>
<td>Karen Adams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRB ID:</td>
<td>STUDY00007578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding:</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Title:</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant ID:</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documents Reviewed:</td>
<td>• Manufacturing Discriminatory Ideology_ Tahseen Taha, Category: IRB Protocol;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (2) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation on 1/22/2018.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: Tahseen Muhammad
    Mark James
    Elly Van Gelderen