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CLITERACY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL: A CRITICAL RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF
SOPHIA WALLACE'S CLITERACY CAMPAIGN

BY
VANESSA CONDON

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Master of Science

Major in Communication Studies & Journalism

South Dakota State University

2015

CLITERACY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL: A CRITICAL RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF
SOPHIA WALLACE'S CLITERACY CAMPAIGN

This thesis is approved as a credible and independent investigation by a candidate for a Master of Science in Communication Studies and Journalism and is acceptable for meeting the thesis requirements for this degree. Acceptance of the thesis does not imply that the conclusions reached by the candidate are necessarily the conclusions of the major department.

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ABSTRACT

CLITERACY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL: A CRITICAL RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF

SOPHIA WALLACE'S CLITERACY CAMPAIGN

VANESSA CONDON

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Female sexuality is constantly restricted in public discourse in the United States. To combat this, Sophia Wallace created the Cliteracy campaign: a project that sought to challenge the stigmatization of female genitals. Wallace's attempt to create a new language regarding female sex and sexuality revealed critical implications for how we discuss sex in American culture. For an in depth analysis, I utilized feminist, materialist, and social movement rhetorical lenses. This study revealed that while text is viewed as an objective mode of communication, however, it is ingrained with hierarchal societal constraints. Moreover, Wallace's rhetoric suggested that a god term is reliant on the communicative magnitude of the devil term. The research also detailed severe implications for a single leader led social media movement and for a text that challenged multiple counterpublics. The Cliteracy campaign featured persuasive techniques that attempted to bypass double binds that commonly restricted feminist movements and featured text that provided a beneficial addition to feminist rhetorical scholarship.

INTRODUCTION

An Introduction to Cliteracy

Between a ride-able golden clitoris, revealing statistics, and provocative word play, artist and gender activist Sophia Wallace created a campaign that illuminated the “idea of total illiteracy and incompetence when it comes to the female body” (Mosbergen, 2013, para. 11). Entitled “Cliteracy,” Wallace’s campaign was created in 2012, went viral in 2013, and almost immediately ignited controversy within the feminist community. A project that has been dubbed transmisogynist, or prejudice against those whose born sex does not align with their born gender, as well as “superficial and reductionist” (Pflug, 2013, para. 1), this multifaceted campaign simultaneously provided a space for a taboo subject to be discussed and celebrated (Mosbergen, 2013; Riley, 2014). To begin examining the Cliteracy campaign, this chapter includes a statement of the problem, the background of the problem, definitions of critical terms, a description of the artifact, justification for analysis, and three research questions integral for the research project. I take a rhetorical approach to this text because Wallace attempted to ignite action amongst female individuals to understand and enjoy their sex and sexuality; her use of persuasion and the reach of the message created a rich text for analysis. Wallace’s work is reminiscent of a modern, artistic Koedt: an iconic radical feminist who fought for female sexuality and the clitoris in the 1970s. Both challenged the idea of female “lack” and misinformed Freudian norms that have continued to overwhelm female sexuality to this day.

Statement of the Problem

The problems Koedt and other feminists faced in the second wave of feminism did not come to a halt after their years of activism. Female sexuality continued to face several issues even 44 years after Koedt (1970) published her revolutionary essay denouncing the idea of an inferior clitoral climax. First, the patriarchal traditions of Western society have normalized viewing the world phallocentrically (Greer, 1970; Halberstam, 2005; Koedt, 1970; Du Plessis, 2010; Stiritz, 2013). Generations of Western cultures developed with an ingrained perception that males are dominant and females are submissive, which perpetuated a male centered norm (Friedan, 1963; Greer, 1970). Moreover, these cultures' traditions of performing gender roles unified perceived sex and gender traits, such as linking physical strength to males or emotional vulnerability to females. Because of continued male dominance and male privilege, female sexuality was commonly denigrated and forgotten for years at a time (Friedan, 1963). Females were seen as incomplete men looking to fill a desire to have a penis (Aristotle, 1992; Freud, 1933). Braun and Kitzinger (2001) acknowledged that we live in a society that has framed the clitoris as inferior, which has resulted in females having negative sexual experiences. Stiritz (2013) also acknowledged that "cross-cultural comparisons show that differences in how societies value a woman's genitals change how the woman experiences them" (p. 248). In short, the fact that females' genitals have been culturally framed as inferior posed a clear problem with how they experienced their sexuality.

Additionally, misinformation regarding the clitoris was astounding. While feminist activists articulated the importance of the clitoris as early as the second wave (Koedt, 1970), the clitoris, female sex, and female orgasm, were simultaneously declared

a mystery (Greer, 1970). Moreover, it was not until the 1990s that scientists began to medically study the clitoris. By this turn from the 20th to the 21st century, “intricate details of the penis were already well known” (“The Internal Clitoris,” 2011, para. 13). Of the few studies on the topic of the clitoris (Kulish, 1991; Francoeur, Noonan, Oplyo-Omolo, & Pastoetter, 2004; Ostrenski, 2012), critical information, especially in regards to anatomy, is incorrect and reduces the clitoris to a “tiny ball” (Stiritz, 2013, p. 247). Even after O’Connell, Hutson, Anderson, and Plenter (1998) published the size of the clitoris and Foldès and Buisson (2009) published a three-dimensional scan of the entire clitoris, recent studies have still presented incorrect information on the size of the clitoris (Francoeur, Noonan, Oplyo-Omolo, Pastoetter & 2004; Ostrenski, 2012). Furthermore, researchers such as Ostrenski (2012) featured “proof” of the existence of the G-spot; however, Silver (2013) pointed out that Ostrenski is motivated because of his business in G-spot surgical augmentation. She then noted that, in the same year, Kilchevsky (2012) published an article reviewing 29 different studies and found no anatomical structure that could be considered a G-spot. Scholars and medical professionals have debated the myth of the G-spot during the last 60 years (“The internal clitoris,” 2011). The back and forth research has led to textbooks, professional medical guides, as well as internet posts that have featured vast amounts of incorrect information and established a norm of misinformation and mystery – a norm which Wallace sought to overturn (Mosbergen, 2013).

Background of the Problem

The devaluation of female sexuality is far from a new concept. The Bible, a foundational text for Western culture, established a subservient role for women that

continues into today's gender and sex expectations. Bryant (2009) articulated that "although the Church as a whole has made progress in recognizing and fighting physical abuse, it has often indirectly promoted emotional and spiritual abuse through overemphasizing teachings on submission" (para. 4). She noted that through the centuries, physical, spiritual, and emotional abuse against women created a sense of inferiority amongst Christian women. The Bible continually defined women in relation to how they should act for men. *Genesis*' remarks that females should be ruled by their husband as well as experience pain in childbirth contributed to females being defined reproductively and as less than their male counterparts ("King James Bible," 1997, p. 3).

Additionally, Stiritz (2013) described Classical Athens in the fourth and fifth centuries as a phallocracy that denied females education and citizenship, while marrying them off when they reached puberty and restricting them to confined domesticity, inferior food, and an earlier death rate. The epitome of the Athenian elevation of the male ego, however, was the greeting ritual from one male to another: the flash of the erect penis. Even Aristotle (1992) equated women to a mistake: a mutilated man. In fact, Aristotle's arguments were weighted so heavily, they went unchallenged until the twentieth century when ovulation began to be studied (Laqueur, 1990). Aristotle's view of female anatomy allowed individuals to justify their claims of male superiority and female inferiority for centuries after Aristotle died. However, it was not until the Middle Ages that there was a mass spread of fear of female bodies. The Inquisition positioned women as not only inferior, but dangerous. According to Walker (1979), during the 250 years of the Inquisition, 9,000,000 women died labeled as witches, justified by the Medieval Church

describing the clitoris as “the devil’s teat” (p. 442) where these individuals supposedly had their souls sucked out by the devil.

Following the Inquisition, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw a growth in scientific differentiation between males and females. There was not simply a superiority-inferiority complex for males and females; the sexes were established as “the polar opposite” (Stiritz, 2013, p. 252). Illustrations of skeletons constructed women with small skulls and large pelvises to emphasize female reproduction and that women were not constructed to think rationally (Schiebinger, 2000, p. 25). The nineteenth century also saw the erasure of female sexual pleasure. Females were depicted as not having sexual passion or desire (Maines, 2001; Shuttleworth & Bourn-Taylor, 1998; Stiritz, 2013). In fact, the vibrator was invented in the mid-1800s to medically give relief to hysterical women, while doctors largely failed to understand that they were providing their patients with sexual pleasure (Maines, 2001).

As noted earlier, the twentieth century saw a growth in the study of female anatomy and sexuality; however, a majority of this research was either incorrect or highly phallogentric. Earlier in the century, Freud (1933) published his revolutionary text defining the clitoral and vaginal orgasm. Freud classified female maturity as abandoning the clitoral orgasm and embracing vaginal stimulation, referred to as the vaginal orgasm: a myth that has persisted into the twenty-first century. When Freud (1933) defined the clitoral orgasm as inferior, public discussion of the clitoris seemingly disappeared. In what Stiritz (2013) called “one of the most effective examples of discursive clitoridectomy in history” (p. 253), communication about the clitoris fundamentally changed. Freud (1933) denied female sex a chance of equality and silenced discussion

surrounding the uniquely female sex organ. Generations of females were unfamiliar with their sexuality because a male psychological figurehead placed penetration as the sexual priority.

This did not stop in 1933. Surgeries to enhance or alter the vagina continued. The World Health Organization (n.d.) noted that between 100 and 140 million females worldwide underwent genital mutilation. Moreover, Stiritz (2013) categorized operations that create “designer vaginas,” such as those moving the clitoris closer to the vagina, as parallel to the clitoridectomy. Not only were the clitoris and vagina altered, Kelly (2000) noted that in the 1970s, sterilization was a growing trend. Used as a form of birth control, she noted that women who underwent abortions or delivered a baby were often sterilized without their knowledge (Kelly, 2000). Between clitoridectomies, vaginal rejuvenation, and sterilization, the array of surgeries to obliterate female sex and sexuality in the 20th century was destructively extensive.

These surgeries, however, brought an expansion in the scientific study of female sexual organs. Yet reoccurring, long established norms perpetuated misinformation. Kinsey, Wardell, Martin, and Gebhard (1953) described the vaginal walls as insensitive, Greer (1970) countered saying that this was a ridiculous claim, and people continued to have an inaccurate understanding of female anatomy (Stiritz, 2013). It was not until 1998 that O’Connell published her findings that the true size of the clitoris was comparable to the penis. Moreover, it was not until 2009 that Foldès and Buisson published the first three dimensional sonogram of the stimulated clitoris – revealing that when aroused, the clitoris engorges, surrounds the vagina, and that what had been defined as a vaginal orgasm was actually an internal clitoral orgasm. Considering the forty-six percent orgasm

gap between males and females in the United States (Laumann, Gagnon, Michael & Michaels, 1994; Stiritz, 2013) and that Foldès was the one doctor repairing mutilated clitorises world-wide (Mosbergen, 2013; “The internal clitoris”, 2011), the timing of Wallace’s artifact was essential. Michigan’s House of Representatives featured a controversy the same year as Cliteracy’s debut, when Representative Lisa Brown was denied access to the floor due to her use of the term “vagina” in regards to reproductive legislation. The debacle of Brown’s public use of the word provided an immediate relevancy to female genitals. More specifically, it provided immediate relevancy to discussing female genitals in a public setting. Females being sexually unsatisfied has extended throughout history. If Wallace wanted to reintroduce the idea of female sexuality and expect any change to spread, it required a moment where every individual was listening – not just women. The reaction to Brown demonstrated a desire for widespread change; it opened the possibility for Wallace to rhetorically reach a necessary audience.

Definition of Terms

Given this complicated history of the devaluation of female sexuality, I specifically define some key terms that are important to this study: cultural cliteracy, campaign, social movement, feminist, gender performativity, intersectionality, materialist, and critical rhetoric. First, in Stiritz’s (2013) landmark paper she addressed the lack of centralized, accurate, and academic knowledge of the clitoris. Within this paper, she provided the foundational definition of cultural cliteracy: “a counter or reverse discourse to current medical, gender, and consumer discourses that interpolate women as sex objects in the heterosexist regime that constitutes our current sexual culture” (Stiritz,

2008, p. 244). In short, cultural cliteracy is defying sexist norms and altering discourse that limits female sexuality.

Second, Delvin, MacAskill, and Stead (2006) defined a health campaign through three objectives: awareness-raising about the particular condition; increasing knowledge of the services, support, and treatment available; and encouraging donations and reducing stigma as well as misperceptions surrounding the condition. They articulated a need to spread information, increase support, and enhance clarity for a lay audience.

Next, to classify Wallace's Cliteracy campaign as a social movement one must comprehend what a social movement is. Simons (1970) provided a clear definition:

[Social movements are] an uninstitutionalized collectivity that mobilizes the action to implement a program for the reconstruction of social norms or values. Movement should be distinguished, as such, from panics, crazes, booms, fads, and hostile outbursts, as well as from the actions of recognized labor unions, government agencies, business organizations, and other institutionalized decision-making bodies. (p. 407)

A social movement is a group of individuals with a shared purpose and a desire to change or promote a shared value or vision.

Next, Jackson, Fleury, and Lewando (1996) offered a broad definition of feminism when they stated that it included "issues of equality, valuing what is female, political inclusion, and freedom of choice" (687-688). While subtleties and academia's contribution to feminism is offered in chapter three, this contribution is imperative when reading the details of the artifact and examining this study's research questions.

Considering the influence of gender performativity for Wallace and the Cliteracy campaign, I briefly define it here before expanding in later chapters. At the forefront of gender scholarship is Butler (2004), who defined gender as how we perform femininity and masculinity. She and other scholars (Halberstam, 1998; Sloop, 2004) acknowledged a separation between biological sex and gender characteristics, and that neither is binary. Gender was dependent on doing or publicly acting out masculinity or femininity (Butler, 2004), and the cardinal rule of gender was that “one must be readable at a glance” (Halberstam, 1998, p. 23). If an individual was not performing their expected gender role, they were often classified as deviant or unacceptable.

However, gender performativity also featured differences based on other personal characteristics. Intersectionality discussed the vitality of difference in groups. Crenshaw (1991) acknowledged that “ignoring the difference within groups contributes to tension among groups” (p. 1242). Crenshaw (1991) illustrated the need to examine how issues collide, come together, or intersect. For example, sexism and racism continually intersect; how a black female experienced sexual harassment could be completely different than how a white woman experienced a similar conflict. Thus, it was necessary to examine the influence of intersectionality.

Additionally, whether textual or visual, materialist rhetoric puts a concept into a tangible entity (Butler, 2007; Garland-Thompson, 2011; Wittig, 1983). This is a powerful tool for concepts that have remained absent from public discourse due to social norms. Greene (1998) noted that a concept becoming an entity came from repetition. Being institutionalized and being discussed on a regular basis allowed a concept to remain an active part of public discourse when it could easily be lost or forgotten. For Wallace, she

is working with making female sexuality and the clitoris a more visible, concrete part of public discourse through a materialist rhetoric.

Lastly, I define critical rhetoric. “McKerrow reversed the phrase ‘rhetorical criticism’ to ‘critical rhetoric,’ a twist that linguistically helped refocus the mission of the rhetorical critic” (Sloop, 2004, p. 17-18). Sloop (2004) continued to list three implications of critical rhetoric: first, it emphasized public argument instead of focusing on finding an ultimate truth; second, it framed the researcher as creating rhetoric through their own research; and third, critical rhetoric views “the discourse of power itself as material and as working within public debate” (p. 18). A major critique of critical rhetoric was that it was idealistic and apt for arrogance (Clark, 1996). However, for this particular rhetorical act, critical rhetoric is essential for analysis. The extent of misinformation surrounding the clitoris in our current society frames research on the clitoris as research participating in the social movement’s mission, especially since this research is on a text seeking to expand societal understanding of the clitoris on such a massive level (Mosbergen, 2013). Wallace wanted people to talk about the silenced sexual organ (Mosbergen, 2013); by conducting this research, I am participating in her purpose and becoming a rhetor spreading her message. This comes not from a sense of superiority, but as a result of a massive lack of cohesive, centralized information regarding the clitoris. After clarifying these terms, I now turn to what constitutes Wallace’s text for rhetorical analysis.

Description of the Artifact

Wallace’s campaign used four visual events to conceptualize the clitoris as a primary sex organ: the 100 Natural Laws, various street art, the Clit Rodeo, and the

Whitney Museum Intervention. While Wallace participated in interviews and Cliteracy is an ongoing campaign, I limited her texts to these three visual-heavy texts. I did this for two reasons: text similarity and time. First, I chose three events where Wallace rhetorically presented the information in a similar fashion. Wallace offered a clear set of texts designed and dispersed through a creative lens. Her interviews did not undergo that same artistic design. Second, Wallace is currently continuing the Cliteracy campaign. Because of my time frame as an author, there is a necessary point where I have to stop collecting texts in order to complete my analysis. This allows me to have a cohesive and rich analysis that is not disrupted by a constant influx of new rhetorical strategies.

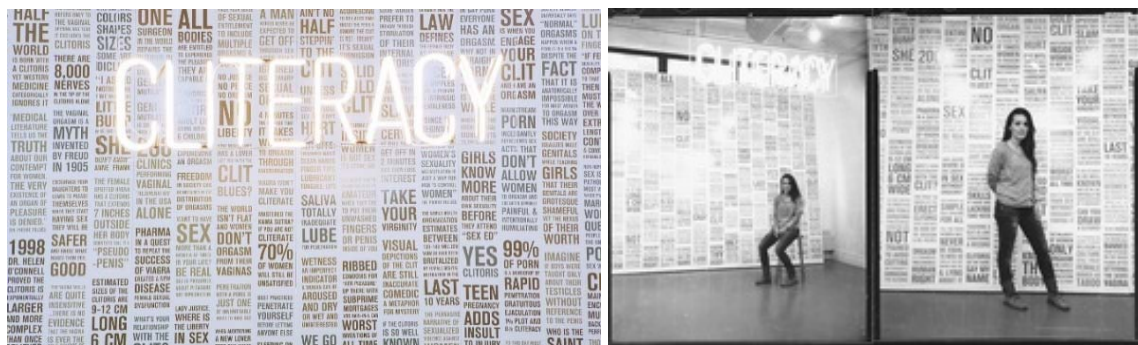


Figure 1. Left: Cliteracy: 100 Natural Laws. This figure shows Wallace's art piece detailing various facts about the clitoris as well as multiple puns. (Wallace, n.d.a.)

Figure 2. Right: Wallace and the 100 Natural Laws. Wallace stands with her art project, the 100 Natural Laws, and demonstrates the size of the piece. (Wallace, n.d.a.)

To begin examining these texts, I first turn to Cliteracy: 100 Natural Laws (see Figure 1). This figure shows Wallace's art piece detailing various facts about the clitoris as well as multiple puns. Using wordplay such as "democracy without cliteracy? Phallacy" and "the hole is not the whole," Cliteracy's 100 Natural Laws utilized text to create an engulfing presence (see Figure 2). Wallace "wanted to create something so big that it would make everyone, including a football player or basketball player, feel small

next to it” (Mosbergen, 2013, para. 13). This created an atmosphere that cannot be imitated. The piece is ten feet by thirteen feet, and features a six foot neon sign reading “CLITERACY.” Wallace wanted to encourage a work where “you can’t just glance at it and expect to have gotten it. You have to spend time with it and think about it” (Mosbergen, 2013, para. 13). In short, seeing the art was about the experience of witnessing the piece as well as the information provided through the various quips.

Wallace (2013) noted that she used text to explore the paradox that media emphasized sexualized females while female sexuality remained unknown. Wallace made the deliberate decision to focus on text despite being a well-established photographer. Wallace argued that she knew “with this subject that photographs would not help me in any way. If anything, pictures would do harm by giving the false impression that by seeing the clit, it could be known” (Mogilyanskaya, 2013, para. 9). She fully acknowledged the ramifications of representing or misrepresenting women’s bodies. Plus, because people have been trained to consume the female image, her use of real female bodies would detract from the information the campaign wanted to spread.



Figure 3. Left: Wallace and her Street Art. Wallace stands by posters she created depicting the entire clitoris- the external and internal clitoris. (Wallace, n.d.l)



Figure 4. Right: Billboard. One of Wallace’s tag lines on a billboard in New Mexico. (Wallace, n.d.c)

Expanding from the 100 Natural Laws, Wallace also used street art to propel Cliteracy. Wallace herself as well as other individuals inspired by her campaign glued posters to buildings and spray painted clitoris visuals on underpasses around New York and nationwide (Riley, 2014). While spray painting is illegal in New York City, Wallace's personal use of posters was a safer approach ("City and state anti-graffiti legislation," n.d.). While featuring images of the external and internal clitoris, these pieces also featured text such as "don't tread on my clit" and "solid gold clit" (see Figure 3). Moreover, near mile marker 247.2 on Southbound I-25 in New Mexico, from November 11th through the 25th of 2013, a Cliteracy billboard presented a message of clitoral awareness (see Figure 4). While Wallace and other sources provided little to no information on the billboard, including it is necessary because of a nearby Cliteracy demonstration. At the University of Santa Fe, students posted and spray painted Cliteracy street art of their own, only to then have every student at the University be fined 250 dollars (Riley, 2014). The University claimed it was because of the cost of cleanup; however, Wallace publically challenged this and reemphasized the continued erasure of the clitoris from daily discourse (Riley, 2014).



Figure 5. Left: Individual Riding the Golden Clitoris. A person rides the golden clitoris at the Clit Rodeo and is critiqued by a panel of judges seen on the left. (Wallace, n.d.d)

Figure 6. Right: Wallace and Thomas at the Clit Rodeo. Wallace and Thomas celebrate after riding the golden clitoris. (Wallace, n.d.d)

The third component of the campaign was the Clit Rodeo. Wallace took on the project with sculptor and co-worker Kenneth Thomas to create the bull riding meets clitoris rodeo. Both encountered opposition: Wallace was told that her work was feminist and thus only for women and queer individuals; Thomas was told his work was masculine and dominating (Gonzo, 2013). However, Wallace and Thomas took on this challenge by featuring the Clit Rodeo at the 2013 Wassaic Summer Festival in Wassaic, New York. Wallace and Thomas met while they were Wassaic Artist Residents, where the organization pays artists to live in rural America and develop their art in a variety of media surrounded by fellow artists and guided by experienced artists (“About”, n.d.). This program also partnered with the Wassaic Summer Festival, connecting Thomas and Wallace for their Clit Rodeo. This rodeo was meant to be a performance (see Figure 5 and Figure 6) and interactive (Wallace, n.d.d). People rode the clitoris as if it were a bull, while a set of choreographers featured line dancing. This piece of Cliteracy formed an image of the clitoris while getting people involved.

Fourth, Wallace created the Whitney Museum Intervention. Wallace (n.d.j) offered cut outs of clitorises to people at the Whitney Museum. Participants then took pictures placing the multicolored clitorises over various artwork. Moreover, individuals were given paper glasses with “cliteracy” cut out of the lenses. Participants were told to then upload these photographs to twitter as a representation of the activity.

Overall, the purpose of this piece was political while initiating public discourse to try to change social norms around female sexuality and the clitoris. Wallace claimed that “cliteracy is a new way of talking about citizenship, sexuality, human rights, and bodies. The project discussed the ‘phallic-as-neutral’ bias in science, law, philosophy, politics,

mainstream and even feminist discussion, and the art world” (Wallace, 2013, para. 1).

Wallace (2013) argued that individuals with a clitoris have had their sex lives reduced because of the widespread belief in the vaginal orgasm and a phallic-centric culture. Her 100 Natural Laws revealed that the clitoris was never mapped or scientifically discovered until 1998 by Helen O’Connell, Hutson, Anderson, and Plenter, that there was only one urologist working on restoring pleasure to individuals who have undergone clitoral mutilation, and that Freud’s construction of the vaginal orgasm was a myth.

Justification

This historical and current devaluing of female genitals and the people who inhabit them established a need for public discourse. These texts responded to physical and discursive problems in the United States and on a global scale. The World Health Organization (n.d.) reported that between 100 and 140 million females worldwide have been subjected to genital mutilation and that 9 million females are at risk for genital mutilation each year. Again and again, women have literally and figuratively removed the clitoris or had it removed for them. Stiritz (2013) stated that, primarily before 1940, females received clitoridectomies as a medical treatment if they expressed themselves sexually (p. 253). She claimed that Westerners usually disregard clitoridectomies because they categorize the practice as exotic and primitive; however, it “has been a fundamental strategy for containing the power of women in Western cultures. Denying, numbing, and cutting the clitoris teaches women their proper place in relation to men” (p. 249-250). The physical as well as discursive aspects of female genital mutilation required further analysis of Wallace’s campaign, because it attempted to overcome these social and cultural norms regarding the clitoris and female sexuality.

Furthermore, quite simply, “the clitoris has fascinated few” (Stiritz, 2013, p. 243). Doing a simple search of “clitoris” in the Communication Source search engine yielded only three results: one article coding dictionary definitions of the clitoris and vagina and comparing them to the penis (Braun & Kitzinger, 2001), one book review examining *The Clitoris* (Maurer, 1977), and one article analyzing a self-help book entitled *Sex Positive* that focuses on female sexuality through the vagina (namely), the uterus, and the clitoris (Du Plessis, 2010). Considering first, this general lack of communication research on the clitoris as a whole, and second, the fact that the only rhetorical criticism offered used Irigarayan theory to analyze only the phallocentric nature of a text, examining the Cliteracy campaign as a social movement and campaign will begin to expand communication research into an underrepresented area.

As previously mentioned in the statement of the problem, misinformation regarding the clitoris is a norm. The extreme lack of unified information socially reveals the importance of Wallace’s text and clearly justifies this artifact’s analysis. Wallace noted that “cliteracy is about creating a new language that doesn’t put shame on anyone’s body... Unfortunately this old language that still exists has a particular agenda, but what else do we have to work with?” (“Love the clit! Get your clit on with Sophia Wallace,” 2013, 7:25). Doing a critical rhetorical analysis of Wallace’s Cliteracy campaign is beneficial to the development of the discipline as well as for overall clarity about the clitoris. Creating a new language offers a fresh analysis of clitoral communication, as well as beneficial insight into the long dominant clitoral language. The taboo of clitoral communication is a center of Wallace’s rationale for the Cliteracy campaign. In order to dissolve this communication barrier, we must critically analyze Wallace’s

communication and her attempts at changing public discourse about how people represent and discuss the clitoris (Riley, 2014).

Wallace stated that Cliteracy “addresses a void in a much larger discourse” (Wallace, 2013a, para. 3). She wanted to challenge a culture that accepted Lisa Brown’s dismissal from the Michigan House of Representatives floor for saying the word “vagina” while talking about abortion: a culture that accepts “legal stigmatizations of the female body” (Wallace, 2013a, para. 10). Wallace formed this project to combat the vast misinformation regarding the clitoris, to articulate that pleasure is a fundamental human right, and to create a space for people to “have autonomy over their own bodies” (Wallace, 2013a, para. 14). However, Wallace’s communication revealed a portion of sexual discourse that was essential for analysis: assumptions of sex and gender. Studying how the clitoris was talked about in this campaign will help examine assumptions about having a clitoris, and an individual’s sex and gender. Considering the campaign was received negatively for neglecting transsexual and transgender individuals (Pflug, 2013), examining how Cliteracy portrayed sex and gender is integral to developing a larger dialogue about inclusion and repression (Wallace, 2013a).

Wallace claimed in an interview with Mogilyanskaya (2013) that this piece is responsible for women being more pleased sexually and cited multiple testimonies from people who experienced her artwork. She described women who shared the project with their partner and are finally satisfied, women who assumed sex was supposed to hurt, and women whose partners had forcibly restrained them from stimulating their clitoris (Mogilyanskaya, 2013). Wallace articulated that “the government doesn’t care about it, society doesn’t care about it, religious authorities don’t care about it. But it happens over

and over again. This is something to be enraged about” (Mogilyanskaya, 2013, para. 21). This text is imperative for analysis because Wallace used her campaign to change how we communicate about the clitoris on a larger scale.

Between the 100 Natural Laws, the street art, and the Clit Rodeo, Wallace constructed a rhetorical act powerful enough to engulf the Internet and go viral. Thus, it was vital to study this text and its attempts to initiate public discourse to change social norms about female sexuality, and specifically, how we talk about the clitoris in the United States. To analyze this campaign, I electronically retrieved the artifact. I examined eight articles debriefing the campaign and/or interviewing Wallace; two video depictions of the events; and Wallace’s homepage. On her website, there were tabs correlating to the components of the campaign. I used the “100 Natural Laws,” “Billboard,” “Whitney Museum Intervention,” “The Clit Rodeo,” and “Street Art” tabs for my analysis.

Along with these texts, I posed four research questions to guide my study. My primary research question (RQ1) asked, “how does Wallace’s campaign communicate about the clitoris?” The remainder of my research questions were more specific and less overarching. RQ2 asked, “how does Wallace’s emphasis of text regarding a taboo subject materialize the clitoris?” RQ3 followed with, “how does Wallace’s use of social movement rhetoric represent female sexuality?” Finally, RQ4 asked, “how, if at all, do counterpublics develop Cliteracy as a social movement?” These four research questions provided a beneficial structure to ensure in depth analysis.

To answer these questions, I addressed the historical context and the challenges the text faces in Chapter 2, and then examined feminist, social movement, and materialist lenses for rhetorical analysis in Chapter 3. I followed these with a rhetorical analysis of

the campaign in Chapter 4, and finally concluded with a discussion chapter detailing the implications of Wallace's communication in Chapter 5. Cumulatively, these chapters attempted to unravel Wallace's live and complicated text as a feminist, materialist, social movement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Historical Context of the Cliteracy Campaign:

Understanding Cliteracy Through Audience, Rhetor, and Purpose

Sexual norms guided how Wallace framed Cliteracy. Wallace launched her artwork in 2012: a year when female genitalia were in the spotlight more than ever – especially politically. As noted earlier, in June 2012, Lisa Brown was banned from Michigan’s Senate floor for using the word vagina: a term representative Mike Callton told the press was “so vile, so disgusting, that he could never bear to mention it in front of women or ‘mixed company’” (Brown, 2012, para. 4). Similarly, Barb Byrum, a fellow Michigan state representative, was barred from speaking on the Michigan House floor because of her suggested implementation of a vasectomy bill to curb unwanted pregnancies and abortions. Jim Stamas, Republican majority floor holder for the Michigan House of Representatives, classified her as out of order when she attempted to speak, and Press Secretary to the Michigan Speaker of the House Ari Adler noted that both Brown and Byrum “failed to maintain the decorum of the House of Representatives” (Wittrock, 2012). Brown (2012) received state and national support for her use of the anatomically correct term, noting a state of “protest” (para. 6) regarding her silencing and the clear male-dominated legislative discussion regarding a female issue.

When the Cliteracy campaign debuted in 2012, United States culture, especially amongst women, was ready to see a change in the communication, or lack thereof, in regards to female genitals. Furthermore, discussion on equality and gender issues continued to rise. Between Emma Watson’s HeForShe campaign speech (McDonald, 2014) working to involve all genders in feminism, or Patricia Arquette’s feminist speech

attempt at the Oscars (Grimes, 2015), feminism has regained attention on a national scale. This is especially true within the realm of social media, and Wallace's campaign was no exception.

Cliteracy went viral throughout various social media platforms. Though released in 2012 at the Art Basel SCOPE in Miami, Florida, Cliteracy gained most of its recognition through social media. After Wallace posted photographs of the 100 Natural Laws premiere to her blog two weeks after Cliteracy's debut, and had over 20,000 reblogs on the social network Tumblr alone (Mosbergen, 2013). 2013 saw new social media articles and interviews, as well as the first Clit Rodeo in Wassaic, New York. Street art sprouted from New York as far as New Mexico, igniting \$250 fines and controversy on a national level (Riley, 2014). A fresh movement appeared in a time when "women are seeking the sexual agency that at least some men have always felt entitled to" (Stiritz, 2013). To begin this examination of the historical context surrounding Wallace's Cliteracy campaign, I analyze the audience, rhetor, and purpose, along with possible challenges that come with Wallace's text.

Audience

Sophia Wallace encountered three audiences: the empirical audience, a created audience, and her target audience, or those who can actually make a change. First, the empirical audience, also noted as the immediate audience, are those who directly encounter the text; "obviously, if people do not encounter the rhetorical act, nothing can occur" (Campbell & Huxman, 2009, p. 192). For Wallace, her immediate audience included those physically attending the art shows, being involved in the street art, and participating in the Clit Rodeo. The empirical audience was extremely limited because of

the location. While occurrences such as the New Mexico University street art rally suggest a larger participatory radius than the United States east coast, the vast majority of events happened either in New York or Pennsylvania (Wallace, n.d.m). Thus, a significant portion of her empirical audience were those from the eastern United States. Moreover, from the photographic representations Wallace released, most of the immediate audience were white American women (Wallace, n.d.j).

Second, Wallace created an audience of sexually empowered women. Quips such as “Democracy without Cliteracy? Phallacy” contributed to creating the idea of a political public (Mosbersen, 2013). Resembling protest slogans, the 100 Natural Laws proposed a sect of females who felt that they had the agency to combat the taboo and silence surrounding female sexuality. The claims of advice such as “take your own virginity” suggested that the individuals embraced in this text were those who had agency over their own bodies (Mogilyanskaya, 2013). On top of the 100 Natural Laws, the immediate audience of women riding a giant golden clitoris illustrated another example of an empowered woman figuratively (though mildly literally) taking control of their sexuality.

Next, her target audiences were those with a lack of knowledge on the topic, those who were afraid to ask, and those who could act on the new knowledge. Because the issue of female sexual satisfaction was labeled as private and defined through penile priority and satisfaction (Braun & Kitzinger, 2001), spreading knowledge about the clitoris to the uninformed allowed women to apply the information in the bedroom as well as expand their simple body knowledge. However, when dealing with an uninformed audience, I also examine the challenges for Wallace and these particular audiences, namely, the misperception and misinterpretation of the text.

Misperception and misinterpretation. Wallace framed her artifact around the misperception and misinterpretation of her audience. Quite simply, not only do people not think about the clitoris, but the information that they do have is inadequate or incorrect (Stiritz, 2013, Mosbergen, 2013). In 1998, O’Connell noted that medical and societal representations of the clitoris were frustratingly inconsistent. While research and textbook pages were devoted to the anatomy of the penis, some recent textbooks do not even have a description of the clitoris (“The internal clitoris”, 2011, para. 16).

Researchers have published information that turns scientific data into a confusing collection of seemingly contradictory information, which can be a challenge for a lay audience. Scientists such as Ostrenski (2012) published research that was challenged and labeled as propelled by potential economic benefit. Yet, Ostrenski’s piece remains one of the most popular studies on female sex (Silver, 2013). His claim that the G-spot was real may have been well-received; however, it was quickly questioned because of his business in G-spot surgical augmentation. In fact, in the same year Ostrenski’s research was published, Kilchevsky (2012) reviewed 29 studies and denied the G-spot’s existence due to a consistent lack of evidence. This was the type of work that defined clitoral research when Cliteracy first debuted: inconsistent data and an audience that had more anecdotal knowledge than knowledge gained from reliable, scholarly work. Because of colloquial knowledge, uninformed or unreliable experts, and how the clitoris has historically “been systematically attacked” (Stiritz, 2013, p. 247), many men and women in the United States have an incredible lack of centralized and organized female sexual knowledge. Instead, any accurate information was either dismissed or muddled by inaccurate studies receiving better press.

Secondly, and more personally for Wallace, she articulated that a major challenge she faced going into the campaign was the reaction that because Wallace is queer, the issue would be viewed as a lesbian issue (Mosbergen, 2013). She fought this idea by stressing the plethora of women who have had children without ever experiencing an orgasm, and by discussing the importance of the clitoris in every person's life ("Love the clit! Get your clit on with Sophia Wallace," 2013). However, because sexuality has been stereotyped as a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Transgender, Queer, and Asexual (LGBTQA) issue, making Cliteracy a human rights issue has been one of Wallace's main goals. Wallace (n.d.a) combatted this constraint by choosing terms such as "Natural Laws" in order to emphasize that this is an issue for everyone, no matter one's sex, gender, or sexuality.

A major constraint of her audience was cultural values regarding female sexuality in the United States. Specifically, Wallace faced two challenges: negative connotations of feminism and the discomfort regarding the publicity of sexuality. First, feminism has a negative connotation for many men and women in the United States because of the media's framing of feminists as immature or radical (Dow, 2003). Because of these connotations with the feminist movement, many individuals who may hold feminist values would rather not classify themselves as feminists (Goudreau, 2011). Thus, when Wallace suggested Cliteracy was a feminist piece, she met individuals who had misconceptions about what being a feminist meant or would rather not associate with the movement simply because it could be classified as feminist. This text challenged the cultural belief of what feminism was and who could fight against sexual norms.



Figure 7. Left: Street Art. Wallace's street art advocating for the clitoris. (Wallace, n.d.k)

Figure 8. Right: Spray Paint Street Art. Wallace's spray painted clitoris. (Wallace, n.d.k)

Next, Wallace faced difficulty regarding the publicity of the text. Sex and sexuality were labeled as a private matter, not public, especially in the United States. Female sexuality in particular was seen as taboo to discuss (Francoeur, Noonan, Opiyo-Omolo, & Pastoetter, 2004). Wallace's audience was of a culture that valued privacy in regards to sexuality. Thus, when Wallace put the clitoris on display for a mass-public, it clashed with a culture that had remained silent about the clitoris for such an expansive period of time. The tabooed nature of female sexuality ensured that they did not know how to communicate about the organ now that it had been reintroduced in public discourse.

Finally, Wallace faced the constraint of where her campaign was held. Whether in Miami, New York City, or Wassaic, the immediate audience was constrained by an ability to get to her event (Wallace n.d.m). Air travel, time off work, or cost of entry were all limiting factors that resulted in a smaller immediate audience. Wallace countered that by posting street art and using the internet. Through using art on the street with little context (see Figures 7 and 8), Wallace had the potential to reach vast quantities of individuals by having random people on the street see her work. However, the information can be easily passed by when surrounded by art such as graffiti. Moreover,

the audience potentially could walk past the work without taking in the information. Wallace even noted that most individuals cannot even draw a clitoris (Mosbergen, 2013). Therefore, when distributing a minimalistic image (see Figure 8) of the clitoris, people could easily not comprehend what they are looking at.

This struggle encouraged a multi-media approach. Wallace used the Internet to propel Cliteracy. She asserted that Cliteracy should be (and was) a meme, or a rapidly dispersed and witnessed image launched through the Internet (“Love the clit! Get your clit on with Sophia Wallace,” 2013; Mosbergen, 2013). Yet, Cliteracy was often incomplete because the Internet provided a virtual experience, not an in-person experience. Instead, Cliteracy was more impersonal because of the setting. The computer, tablet, or smartphone screen offered a barrier between the audience and the text, leaving Wallace to combat unique challenges as a rhetor.

Rhetor

A photographer with flair, the central rhetor of this text was Sophia Wallace. While Kenneth Thomas could be considered a minor rhetor, his involvement in the campaign featured minimal impact, and thus he would not be classified as a central rhetor. Considering Wallace’s mass-persuasion and poster-child leadership of the Cliteracy campaign, focusing on her involvement provides an analysis representative of the majority of Cliteracy’s communication. Thus, I first briefly explain Thomas’ contribution, before going in depth regarding Wallace’s context as the primary rhetor.

Kenneth Thomas. Only appearing for the Clit Rodeo, rhetor Kenneth Thomas is almost entirely removed from the text. He exclusively worked with the immediate audience and was known as the golden clitoris sculptor (Wallace, n.d.j). He was available

during the Clit Rodeo performance; however, he was almost never mentioned in media discourse about the campaign. Only described as the co-artist for the rodeo, little information is available regarding his background, or continuation with the campaign. The immediate audience and those who participated online were disconnected because of this confusion and the resulting misinformation. For example, those who attended and participated in the Clit Rodeo might have interacted with Thomas; for those online, they might never have heard of him or saw only a minimal connection between him and the Cliteracy campaign.

Sophia Wallace. In contrast, Sophia Wallace takes on a central role as the primary rhetor behind the Cliteracy campaign. Wallace, a young, conceptual artist who graduated with a Master of Arts from New York University and the International Center of Photography in 2005 (Wallace, n.d.m), contributed to a plethora of art campaigns. Specifically, she had five collections and art works that focused on gender, sex, and female sexuality: *Girls will be Bois*, *Truer*, *Berlin Lookbook*, *Modern Dandy*, and *On Beauty*. First, the *Girls will be Bois* campaign was one of Wallace's more famous contributions. This documentary sought to present non-normative femininity and female masculinity. This project started in reaction to deaths such as Sakia Gunn: a butch, black, lesbian who was killed in 2003 (Monroe, 2013). Wallace articulated that she shot the documentary from 2002 to 2007 in order to examine how homophobia and sexism could be mutually reinforcing forms of harassment (Wallace, n.d.e). The *Girls will be Bois* campaign centered on "how otherness is constructed visually on the gendered, sexualized, racialized body" (Wallace, n.d.e). This documentary centralized and previewed arguments Wallace made after the film in the Cliteracy campaign. It examined

the influence of otherness and how it impacted what we see, how we are seen, and how we prepare to be seen.

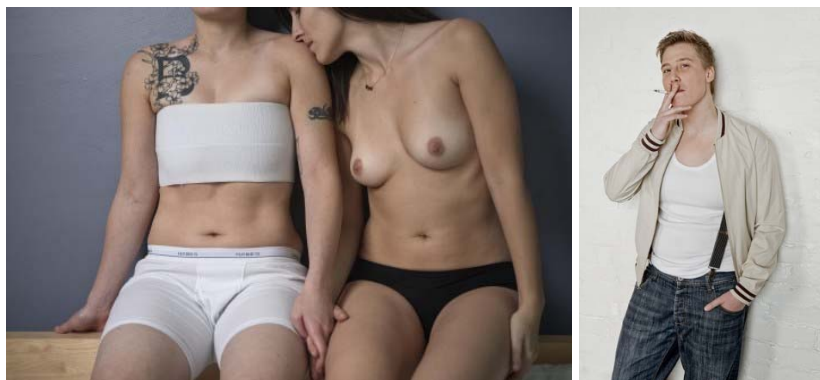


Figure 9. Left: Truer. A photograph from Wallace's collection attempting to create a queer narrative for lesbian relationships. (Wallace, n.d.i)

Figure 10. Right: Berlin Lookbook. Wallace created images challenging normative femininity and masculinity while trying to instill discomfort and intrigue amongst viewers of the art. (Wallace, n.d.b)

Different from her other collections, between 2008 and 2009 Wallace documented her own love story. Titled Truer, Wallace built a photography series she classified as “evidence” (Wallace, n.d.i). She argued that lesbian portrayals were typically a heterosexual pornographic prop. She sought to construct a queer narrative while interrupting the male gaze (see Figure 9). Wallace wanted to illustrate a more realistic portrayal of lesbian relationships and to call out those who still adhered to a fantasized heteronormative lesbian story.

Next, in 2009, Wallace offered her collection the Berlin Lookbook. This photography series focused on the aesthetic appeal of a more masculine femininity. Using fashion and an urban backdrop, Wallace wanted to articulate that these images produce intrigue. The subjects, the angles, and the lighting all constructed a resonating visual while a majority of the purpose was based in fascination. Wallace sought to examine the unique “pulse” (Wallace, n.d.b) of female masculinity, this time using photographs

seeking to instill discomfort amongst the viewer (see Figure 10), instead of using a documentary format.



Figure 11. Left: Modern Dandy. Wallace created a collection exploring androgyny. (Wallace, n.d.g)

Figure 12. Right: On Beauty. Wallace utilized commonly perceived attractive men to pose in modeling positions historically reserved for women. (Wallace, n.d.h)

In the following year, Wallace publicized her collection Modern Dandy. Here instead of exploring femininity or masculinity, Wallace analyzed androgyny. Wallace defined a dandy as being an immaculately dressed, dignified, attractive man heavily connected to the influence of beauty (Wallace, n.d.f). Using men and women in her work, she modernized a term active in the late eighteenth century (see Figure 11). She examined how femininity commonly constructed an individual as weak, but showed the evolution of that representation when offered through an androgynous host.

Finally, 2010 saw one more collection, this one entitled On Beauty (see Figure 12). Using portraiture, Wallace posed male models in traditionally female poses. She sought to analyze misogyny through the feminized man (Wallace, n.d.h). Wallace used models that could represent idealized masculinity, and hoped to see the connection

between beauty and sexual objects. These dynamics created a collection with a unique analysis of the construction of gender.

Within her quickly advancing career, she earned five different art related awards between 2008 and 2011, including the Curator Award in 2011, the Griffin Museum's Critic's Pick in 2011, the American Photography AP 25 award in 2009, the ARTslant Showcase winner in 2009, and the American Photography AP 24 award in 2008 (Wallace, n.d.m). She has been a part of three different solo exhibitions as well as twenty-five group exhibitions (Wallace, n.d.m). She also participated in eight various art auctions and fairs, while still finding time to be active in print media.

She also published nineteen written pieces varying from critiques in the Feminist Wire to essays in magazines and newspapers (Wallace, n.d.m). Moreover, she was featured in five various television shows and other videos, as well as nearly fifty press remarks on her works (Wallace, n.d.m). These print contributions helped to build her credibility as an intellectual outside of her extensive visual talents. In short, Wallace created a public discourse about gender, sex, female sexuality, and how femininity and masculinity interact with the culture around us. Wallace shaped public discourse about how to combat gender and sex norms in a heteronormative public sphere. Her presence via a plethora of media – television, social media, and art galleries – ensured that she was a dominant voice on the issue while having access to a massive audience. Considering her elaborate background and the influence of an uninformed audience, I next examine two challenges commonly faced by rhetors: the rhetor's prior *ethos* and the *ethos* of the actual text itself.

Prior *ethos*. Aristotle (2010) remarked that “persuasion is achieved by the speaker’s personal character when the speech is spoken as to make us think him credible” (p. 7). Centuries after Aristotle’s existence, Campbell and Huxman (2009) define and categorize prior *ethos* as the “attitudes toward the rhetor prior to the rhetorical act” (p. 233). Campbell and Huxman classified three major areas of prior *ethos*: the rhetor’s reputation or track record; appearance; and the exigence of the rhetorical act. First, Wallace admitted that she began with little to no knowledge on the clitoris, but researched to understand the complexities of the organ (Mosbergen, 2013). Moreover, she fought this original lack of knowledge by advertising her credibility. On her webpage, she included a Curriculum Vitae (Wallace, n.d.m), detailing the awards, exhibitions, writings, appearances, television and video appearances, lectures, and educational background previously mentioned.

Wallace’s elaboration on her achievements offered expansive credibility when she did not have the historical knowledge of the clitoris before undergoing the Cliteracy campaign. This lack of knowledge, however, created an opportunity for enactment for Wallace. Campbell and Huxman (2009) defined enactment as when “the speaker or writer is proof of the claim that she or he is making” (p. 174). Wallace (2013) described that this art project was built while filling gaps in her own knowledge, framing Wallace herself as a part of the movement instead of the direct leader of the movement. By acquiring knowledge and advocating for the clitoris, Wallace embodied her purpose and provided an example for her audience to follow.

Finally, the occasion, or exigence (Bitzer, 1968), of Cliteracy is a state of misinformation and taboo. State legislatures in the United States classified anatomically

correct terms such as vagina as disgusting, and Western slurs associated the female sexual experience with weakness and inadequacy (Brown, 2012; Mosbergen, 2013, “Love the clit! Get on the clit with Sophia Wallace, 2013). However, U.S. citizens’ support for change regarding these social norms was clear (Brown, 2012). Women felt a need to change how they communicate about their bodies, offering Wallace’s target audience a sense of agency, or capacity for action.

Ethos from the rhetorical act. While there was the potential for agency in the target audience, a major limitation of Wallace as a rhetor was that she had such little knowledge on the topic pre-campaign (Mogilyanskaya, 2013). However, she battled this constraint by acknowledging the limitation and showing what can happen when an individual takes action to learn. While it is possible that some individuals may search for information about the clitoris, because of the societal taboo of discussing female genitals there is a greater likelihood that people would not research a topic historically kept quiet (Stiritz, 2013). Wallace gained *ethos* by taking the step many individuals are still afraid to do: researching the clitoris. Considering credibility is the main component of *ethos* (Aristotle, 2010), Wallace increased credibility by following through with the research, becoming knowledgeable and well-versed in the information, and distributing the information in a way that is more retrievable for a common individual in a lay audience. She gained this *ethos* by enactment; she took on the role of her audience. Wallace provided a guide of what she learned with her artwork. Cliteracy was not portraiture photographs like she had done in the past; it was a text-heavy, centralized source of information (see Figure 2). She acted as she asked her audience to act: to research and

teach others in order to promote public discourse about the clitoris and female sexuality in U.S. culture.

Purpose

Wallace (2013) described her primary purpose of Cliteracy: “to think about the clit, to talk about the clit, to treat the clit on equal terms as the penis” (para. 1). Females were being denied sexual pleasure because U.S. society prioritized heteronormative male satisfaction through vaginal penetration, leading to females not being satisfied and thinking a lack of satisfaction is their problem (Mogilyanskaya, 2013). Therefore, the major purpose of Cliteracy was to rectify the disparity between male orgasms and female orgasms through information.

Yet Wallace introduced this idea through a unique lens: she used her text to categorize sexual pleasure as a human right. Hauser (2008) developed human rights rhetorically when he noted that human rights came down to agency and a focus on human rights abuses. He articulated that human rights discourse emphasized an agreement on consequences for human right violations, as well as accountability for the violators. There was not a focus on coming together with mutual values, but instead there was an emphasis of punishment (Hauser, 2008). Doxtader (2010) also focused human rights discourse on subjection and the removal of expression. Lyon and Olson (2011), however, framed human rights through the entity in control excluding or displacing those who resist their power. Foley (2012) framed human rights as coming from unspoken moral perceptions that try to define what entails a ‘good’ life. Hauser (2008) continued by noting that moral vernacular came from performance- an influential point for a text as performance heavy as the Cliteracy campaign.

Hauser (2008) also emphasized several important factors regarding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). He discussed that this revolutionary piece of legislation pushed natural rights into a dominant ideology, defined human rights, universalized those rights, and put human rights on a worldwide, international level. Kuehl (2012) dissected the social emphasis within the UDHR and revealed the metaphor of the human family; the UDHR encompassed economic as well as social rights. This was a difficult task considering the issue of sovereignty and the cautious balance between viewing each person as an individual and each person as a member of a certain society (Hauser, 2008).

In an example of defiance of power, Wallace purposefully used the language of 100 Natural Laws to classify this campaign as universal and above political law (“Love the clit! Get on the clit with Sophia Wallace,” 2013). First, she uses the term “natural” to reach a larger audience. Instead of being a female issue, a woman’s issue, or a lesbian issue, sex and gender were not even mentioned in the title. Instead, Wallace focused the purpose of her campaign on classifying the clitoris not as strange, taboo, or a sexual option: it was natural. Plus, using political terminology throughout the campaign, specifically with this title, allowed Wallace to propel Cliteracy to a human right. Sexual satisfaction, including female sexuality, is a human right for all.

In order to act on this human right, Wallace also wanted to instigate public discourse about the clitoris, which serves as a secondary purpose of the Cliteracy campaign. Because the clitoris was framed as inferior for such a drastic period of time (Freud, 1933), the word “clitoris” became absent from communication almost entirely (Stiritz, 2013, p. 253). Wallace focused on the publicity of the clitoris by referring to

Cliteracy as an advertisement (Mosbergen, 2013). By combining advertisement and political language, Wallace created a clear secondary purpose: to advocate for the clitoris publically and loudly. Considering that sexual education only began in the early 1900s and that today the largest debate regarding sex education centers on abstinence only curriculum in primary education (Fisher, Herbenick, Reece, Dodge, Satinsky, & Fischtein, 2010), a piece of advocacy such as Cliteracy is powerful. Shtarkshall, Santelli, & Hirsch (2007) acknowledged that while sexual health remained a highly recognized important topic in the United States, social conflicts prevent overarching sex education from becoming a national trend. Shtarkshall, Santelli, & Hirsch (2007) continued to distinguish sexual literacy; instead of fact consumption, literacy “encompasses the skills needed to combine knowledge in a meaningful way” (p. 116). Literacy is about applying knowledge, not simply having knowledge.

Cultural values. However, cultural values were the largest constraint of accomplishing Cliteracy’s purpose. The patriarchal traditions of Western society normalized viewing the world phallocentrically. As detailed in the last chapter, how a society valued female genitals changed how their genitals were experienced (Stiritz, 2013). The history of the devaluation of women’s genitals has engrained cultural values that are phallocentric to the point of removing the possibility of viewing the world through a female-dominant lens. From classical Athens’ phallocracy to twenty-first century vaginal modification surgery, there has been a consistent message of phallic-superiority, female genital inadequacy, and a suppression of female sexuality (Stiritz, 2013).

This suppression led to women not being sexually satisfied, especially in heterosexual relationships (Mosbergen, 2013). In fact, while 89% of women who had sex with other women achieve orgasm, only 29% of women who had sex with a man do; this is while 75% of men orgasm when participating in heterosexual sex (Stiritz, 2013). Moreover, orgasms have historically been defined through a male lens. For example, Freud's (1933) myth of the vaginal orgasm constructed a cultural value that has been engrained for decades. Wallace combatted a social reality long established in U.S. culture. These cultural values are a part of the ideologies of Wallace's audience and limit the ability for Wallace to obtain the campaign's goals.

While Wallace created an impactful text, constraints from misinformation to societal norms challenged the purpose of the campaign. After examining this context surrounding the audience, rhetor, and purpose, I now turn to three theories crucial for using rhetorical analysis to examine Cliteracy: feminist rhetorical theory, materialist theory, and social movement criticism.

Chapter Three

CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

A Feminist, Materialist, and Social Movement Framework for Rhetorical Analysis

The depth of misunderstanding regarding females' primary sex organ illustrated a wide-spread ignorance of female anatomy and the normalization of male sexuality. A history ground in patriarchal traditions ensured that Wallace would have a variety of challenges as she attempted to promote public discourse about the clitoris. The layers of communication regarding sex within Wallace's text can best be analyzed using three rhetorical theories: feminist rhetorical theory, materialist theory, and social movement criticism. Because Wallace looked for equality of sexual experiences, brought the concept of the clitoris into a tangible, material object, and framed sexual equality in terms of democratic activism, these theories for analysis fit the rhetorical artifact. After defining each in turn, I further justify why these theories are necessary and detail the limitations of the study.

Feminist Rhetorical Theory

Through years of advocacy, scholars have molded and adapted various classifications of feminist rhetorical criticism. Foss and Foss (1996) stated that the feminist lens was used to examine gender communication, how such communication rhetorically developed oppression, and how feminist rhetorical scholars can fight that process (p. 168). They elaborated that specifically women, minorities, and the impoverished lived in a culture dominated by rich, white, men who had the influence to maintain control, and the oppressed had no choice but to live in a patriarchal society (1999). Cragin (2010) turned to a media approach, and focused on the representation of

women. Cragin (2010) examined the disparity between how a woman experiences her life, versus how the media or culture represented a woman's experience (p. 154). In regards to a multi-media campaign such as Cliteracy, how females experienced their orgasms versus the cultural representation of how females experienced orgasms was a priority for Wallace's campaign. Moreover, the historical framing of women as reproductive beings and not people who experience sexual pleasure emphasized a form of oppression that continues into the twenty-first century (Stiritz, 2013). Resisting this oppression is a foundational component of Cliteracy's rhetoric.

In fact, overturning women's societal inferiority was a cornerstone in scholarly feminist literature as well as in Wallace's artifact. Alongside Foss and Foss (1996) and Cragin (2010), Campbell (1973) illustrated an inferiority complex between males and females in her foundational and seminal work. Campbell (1973), however, illustrated this idea through legal terms. She acknowledged the reciprocation that came with marriage, noting that legally within a marriage it was required for the wife to perform chores in the home, to be continually available for sexual relations, and that there was no direct compensation, other than the husband "maintaining" the wife and children (p. 563). Stillion-Southard (2007) furthered how laws cast women into an outcast role through women fighting for the right to vote. Even when protesting the disparity in citizenship, female participants remained silent. Laws such as the lack of women's suffrage established a reality structure of inferiority. Meanwhile, as women tried to combat this continued sense of being the lesser sex, Campbell (1973) argued that feminist discourse violated "the reality structure by treating 'social outcasts' as sisters and credible sources"

(p. 567): meaning that substantial change was severely limited because it was quite simply unfathomable.

Additionally, feminist critique utilized the ideas of god terms, devil terms, and symbolic reversals. First, god and devil terms dictate how we react to various words. Burke (1969) and Weaver (1979) established god and devil terms and explained that the god term was a word or phrase that aligned with extreme positivity. Devil terms, in contrast, aligned with extreme negativity. Griffin, Ledbetter, and Sparks (2014) described the terminology as “the speaker’s god-term is the word to which all other positive words are subservient” (p. 291), devil terms being the opposite. Griffin, Ledbetter, and Sparks (2014) noted the importance of not abiding by dictionary definitions of words such as freedom or communism because of the intense meaning behind these terms. According to Campbell (1973), there was the possibility to transform devil terms – an integral component considering Wallace’s desire to create a new language that does not condemn female sexuality. Campbell (1973) explained that by reversing the societally constructed devil terms associated with females to positive god terms, there is the possibility to “exploit the power and fear lurking in these terms as potential sources of strength” (p. 568). Pelle (2010) examined how comedian Margaret Cho turned the term “pussy” into a positive representation of herself by taking pride in having large amounts of sex. Challenging female devil terms provided feminist criticism an ability to examine specific gender norms that undergird public discourse and everyday conversation. Campbell (1973) also discussed symbolic reversal through the idea of an unsexed individual. For women, the more successful they became, the more they lost their sexuality. For men, however, it was the opposite. As they gained success, they became hyper-sexualized.

Campbell's critical concepts of symbolic transfers between god and devil terms, as well as the reversal between unsexed and hyper-sexualized success, display the importance of terminology and success for Wallace's text.

Waves of feminist ideology. The evolution of feminism saw a sharp divide in ideologies. To have a complete understanding of the feminist lens, I examine different waves of feminism. First, 1917 saw the National Woman's Party step up to U.S. President Woodrow Wilson and fight for support of women's suffrage. The priority of first wave feminism was to gain the right to vote. However, even through that process, many women remained silent (Stillion-Southard, 2007). Groups such as the Silent Sentinels created a militant group through banners and posters. They used silence as a strategy to highlight their demands. Wearing long sleeved dresses and hats, the Silent Sentinels represented how the first wave of feminism saw more adherence to social norms while combatting the inability to vote.

After the first wave of feminism, women's influence altered dramatically. Post World War II, military men were returning to the United States, meaning that the jobs women had previously filled were facing a new influx of men (Friedan, 1963). In an attempt to reintegrate veterans into the workforce, being a housewife was glorified as the ultimate goal, and women were placed into the role of the consumer (Friedan, 1963). Women were also framed reproductively (De Beauvoir, 1949) and were not given many opportunities for formal education. In fact, in 1940 only 26 percent of American women completed college (Baxandall & Gordon, 2000). Conformity to social norms was classified as positive because of a fear of communism, and deviants of female sex roles were publically punished (Warner, 2002). It was not until women began forming their

own communities that they realized they were not alone (Friedan, 1963). This led to another development: the positivity of change. It was not until the 1960s that women formed a movement towards active social change regarding their equality and position in society. Between being active in the civil rights movement and the unfavorable war in Vietnam, seeking change for women began to be a societal force (Baxandall & Gordon, 2000; Friedan, 1963). The protest phenomenon began to develop a clear women's liberation movement that fought against workplace norms, societal inequality, and a dominantly patriarchal society.

Third wave feminism, on the other hand, focused on women "actively seeking new ways of actually inhabiting their own bodies" (Rubin, Nemeroff, & Russo, 2004, p. 35). This wave was fluid in its boundaries: in regards to its beginnings and their focus. This quasi-1990s wave focused more so individually while utilizing concepts from past waves of feminism. Dicker and Piepmeier (2003) described third wave feminism as contemporary feminism: "as a movement that contains elements of second wave critique of beauty culture, sexual abuse, and power structures while it also acknowledges and makes use of the pleasure, danger, and defining power of those structures" (p. 12). It allowed individuals to deconstruct societal norms while utilizing their own power to do so. There was less emphasis on formalized movements and more on renovating the image of feminism.

Most recently, however, postmodernism created enormous tensions for feminism. Halberstam (2005) classified postmodernism as confusing. She noted that postmodernism existed outside of time and space, within a perpetual present. As such, many postmodern scholars saw no need for the label of feminism. According to Johnson (2004), post

feminism was the idea that women were in a “historical moment, literally after feminism” (p. 331). Gill (2007) went as far as to identify the normalcy of feminism; “everywhere, it seems, feminist ideas have become a kind of commonsense, yet feminism has never been more bitterly repudiated” (p. 1). Post feminism is the idea that society has moved beyond feminism. Post feminists’ argument is that equality has already been achieved between the sexes, so women need not identify with a feminist cause. Moreover, Gill (2007) attacked current feminist media scholars as more apprehensive, less certain, and less academically directed than previous scholars. Quite simply, post feminism has articulated a need to become flexible and label-less, while generations of scholars who fought for women’s rights viewed feminism as still necessary to continue publically advocating for change (Halberstam, 2005). These different waves of feminism were wrought with tension and disagreements, developing contradictory opinions and different divisions within the same movement.

Previous campaigns. The long history of feminist ideology resulted in a variety of attempts to battle the oppression of women, females, and female sexuality. Two monumental cornerstones of this movement were the Vagina Monologues and secondly, Sprinkles public cervix announcement. First, the Vagina Monologues (VM) represented feminist performance. Ensler’s (2001) dramatic readings and innovative questions probed the audience to discuss and be comfortable with the vagina. VM focused on openly discussing the taboo and the idea that “we must hear each other’s stories to understand each other, that understanding thus fueling....a sense of shared mission to foster change for the better in our lives and the world” (Cooper, 2007, p. 728). This feminist play celebrating the vagina through witty scripts and humorous questions was performed in

different locations globally hundreds of times every year. Secondly, Sprinkle created an artistic project highlighting the cervix. Sprinkle (2001) challenged the taboo of female sex by taking as set on stage, exposing her genitalia, and having a line of audience members approach her individually- flashlight in hand- to examine her cervix. These pieces are beneficial for further analysis because they detail the previous attempts to combat the stigmatization of female sex.

Viewing females. Yet, performance is reliant on the witness. At the center of patriarchal norms was a society assuming that the default viewer was male. This idea was explained through the concept of the male gaze. Describing the male gaze is vital for this artifact because of Wallace's use of performance. De Lauretis (1984) explained that the feminist critique is twofold: from within the woman as a person and outside of the woman as feminine practices – specifically in regards to performance. De Lauretis (1984) detailed that women may be visualized, however that does not mean that an audience member who is a woman was meant to or could identify with that individual. Women were not designed to be the dominant viewer of other women; instead, men are the assumed viewers of women. Mayne (1993) described this complex by stating that “it is not always clear just where the image of woman as contained by patriarchal ideology leaves off and where the woman as historical subject begins” (p. 73). Mulvey (1990) and Borda (2009) also articulated that this viewership of women reduced female characters' authority and control.

Additionally, Foss, Foss, and Griffin (1999) asserted that women are incapable of being the gaze holder. They articulated that considering the subjugation of women in the past, U.S. culture cannot foster the development of a female gaze. Foss Foss, and Griffin

(1999) claimed that both men and women subscribe to a larger mainstream culture, implanting hierarchy and preventing a woman-identified world. Foss et al. (1999) illustrated that there were a set of requirements for a culture to be able to raise women's comfort with visibility in U.S. culture. To develop a women's culture and a female gaze, it was necessary to have a group of women with a strong relationship. Moreover, when this group is together, the relationships amongst them must be equal. Each individual woman must feel like the space is safe. Thus, women would experience a decrease in negative self-consciousness and a freedom to discover women's characteristics and identities without negative repercussions from a male-dominated culture.

Sex and gender. Equating sex and gender is extraordinarily common; however, there are clear distinctions between what constitutes a person's sex versus what is a person's gender. Butler (2004) and Halberstam (1998) distinguished that gender was a social construction and that sex was biological. Gender was a representation of femininity and masculinity, while sex was defined by the genitals of an individual. According to Fausto-Sterling (2000), there was a false dualism of sex. She noted that our bodies are far too complex to constrain sex to either male or female. She described individuals who were intersex: those who were born with male and female genitals or DNA. These people are living proof of a false binary of biology. In accordance, Butler (2004) also acknowledged that biology was not destiny; just because a person had certain genitals when they were born, does not mean that those genitals align with their internalized sex. Halberstam (1998) noted a similar issue with gender. She observed tomboyism and female masculinity as an example of the fluidity of gender roles and representations. How these gender portrayals and sex representations intertwined came from a continual

societal need to categorize and label. Butler (2004) specified that we often use gender as a means to identify sex. In other words, we would take a person's performed gender to be a representation or symbol of that individual's genitalia.

Gender performativity. In fact, Butler (2004) defined gender as how people perform femininity and masculinity, apart from one's biological sex. She focused on the importance of action. Actually participating, acting, and doing gender norms were how a person presented their gender identity to themselves and to others. Butler (2004), Sloop (2004), and Halberstam (1998) also recognized the power of not conforming to gender norms. Those of ambiguous gender were categorized by being close to male, close to female, a third gender, or quite simply as a deviant (Halberstam, 1998). Though female gender deviance was more accepted than male deviance, tomboyism was "subject to the most severe reorient" (Halberstam, 1998, p. 6). In other words, females who appear tomboyish at a young age are quickly turned away from this masculinity. Furthermore, Halberstam (1998) noted that heterosexuality was the common solution to correct gender deviance – a binary tactic, considering sexuality had been classified as a continuum (Rich, 1980). If an individual did not perform their expected gender role, they were classified as deviant.

Justification. Quite simply, Cliteracy was framed as a feminist work (Gonzo, 2013). While this alone gives validation that feminist rhetorical theory is needed for analysis, the fight for equal sexual enjoyment further establishes the need for this lens in analyzing the rhetorical strategies of the Cliteracy campaign. Moreover, the fact that the rhetor acknowledged the belief that this piece was being cast aside because of its

classification as only a feminist work (Gonzo, 2013), illustrated the lack of desire to classify as a feminist.

Materialist Theory

Next, beyond feminist rhetorical theory, this text can be analyzed through the lens of materialist theory. Materialist theory serves one major purpose: to put a concept into being, as a tangible experience in the world. McGee (1982) put materialist rhetoric in terms of constitutive rhetoric. In short, he focused on the creation of a concept as a process outside of history. Instead of creation, McGee's (1982) perception of materialist rhetoric moreso aligns with discovery; the idea has always been there, we are only now discovering it in the world. Greene (1998), however, disagreed and asserted a need to "insist on the materiality of constitutive rhetoric in and through its reiteration and institutionalization" (p. 26). In other words, for Greene, materiality does not occur until the concept becomes more like a habit: used repeatedly and on a substantial scale.

Wittig (1983) and Butler (2007) also detailed major components of materialist theory; however, they specifically focused on materialist theories in relation to minorities. Garland-Thompson (2011) offered a clear definition, stating that a material perspective "provides conceptual language that expands the idea of the social construction of reality toward material-discursive understanding of phenomena and matter" (p. 592). Materialist theory allowed the study of "the discrepancy between body and world" (Garland-Thomson, 2011, p. 593). Butler (2007) noted that materialist theory "posits a new reality" (p. 521), "acts on bodies and on prior discourse" (p. 523), and "relocates formal truths as effects of positions of power" (p. 523). In short, materialism constructed a physical reality that restructured power. Wittig (1983) remarked that this

creation of a concept is far from a visual-only entity; materialists do “not accept a distinction between the textual and the material” (Butler, 2007, p. 521). Text as well as visual presentations had the ability to make a concept tangible (Garland-Thompson, 2011).

Moreover, Butler (2007) and Wittig (1983) acknowledged the influence of universalization with materialist rhetoric. Butler (2007) defined universalizing in terms of sex labels, stating that to universalize is “to render categories of sex obsolete in language” (p. 520): in short, making language universal no matter what sex an individual may be. Butler defined universalizing as a type of assault, a war on societal norms, through presentation – not only thought (p. 522). She focused on the impact of radical norm reversal in public discourse instead of only focusing on pronouns and literature.

Slater (2002) also noted the necessity to materialize in order to achieve a stabilized, organized society. However, while Wittig (1983) and Butler (2007) remarked on a text’s ability to create, Slater (2002) introduced the idea of dematerialization: not only could a concept be created, it could disappear. Slater (2002), in direct opposition to Wittig (1983), categorized the use of text as a removal of the body and a removal of tangibility.

Furthermore, Slater (2002) explained that, in accordance to his study, Internet Relay Chat (IRC) featured two components in relation to materialization: digital textuality and dynamism. First, digital textuality equated the person to the text they type. Because of this study’s use of a chat setting and the fact that individuals remained behind a computer screen, they were materialized when they actually sent messages. Moreover, whatever they did type became their identity. Considering that “the relationship between

virtuality and materiality in everyday life continues to be an underdeveloped subject in much new media scholarship” (Van Doorn, 2011, p.533), Slater’s thread between the virtual and the created emphasized the seldom discussed solidification of an idea without a direct connection to a verified person. This question of whether or not there is an actual person behind the computer screen revealed another factor of digital textuality: malleability. This is the idea that the objects who created the image of the individual presented through the computer can be shaped, altered, or used by the ‘person’ who receives it. For example, if a provocative picture was sent between IRC participants, the picture shared could be edited. There is little to verify if the object itself is the same as the original photograph taken – that is, if it is even of the same person.

Next, dynamism revolved around the necessity of participants. While the people behind the screens may vanish as soon as they appeared, there were still at least some people behind the screens. According to Slater (2002), it was necessary to have a present physical entity (pictures, video, etc.) consistently available. If that physical representation were to leave, the materialization would cease. Thus, without live performers, there is no materiality. This is similar to Greene’s (1998) standpoint that material cannot simply exist outside of history. Instead, there needs to be repetition and institutionalization in order to ensure the material’s continuation.

Slater (2002) finally proceeded to acknowledge that people want to materialize: they “persistently experience the need to produce it themselves” (p. 233). Mitchell (2002) connected materialism to visual culture. In fact, according to Mitchell (2002), “we do not live in a uniquely visual era...Images are convenient scapegoats, and the offensive eye is ritually plucked out by ruthless critique” (p.171). He analyzed the concern for authentic

representations of visuals, while providing some hypotheses on visual culture. Moreover, Mitchell (2002) articulated that every day we study unmediated images. He accentuated that not only are visuals prominent, but they are continually used as evidence: whether to try to get out of an unflattering situation, or in general to deflect and explain. However, as Slater (2002) explained, the online participants sought to create a tangible presence on the chat site: meaning that they would send photographs or videos in order to make their online-selves real. However, these photos- this material- ensured that they were constantly balancing what that material represented. Slater (2002) described it as fluctuating between a commodity and a gift. The moment a person became an entity, they gained value. It was possible to approach this value mainly in two levels: to disregard (commodity) or to appreciate (gift). Overall, “visual culture is the visual construction of the social” (Mitchell, 2002, p. 171), casting society into the limelight. Thus, in a sense, the use of visuals alone was a materialization of societal views – a concept that is important in considering Wallace’s use of pointed visuals in the Cliteracy campaign.

Justification. By remaining taboo, female sex organs continue to be demonized through language, practice, and silence (Stiritz, 2013; Mosbergen, 2013; Riley, 2014). This muting of the female sexual experience invited Wallace to create conversation through a concrete representation of the primary female sex organ. By constructing the Cliteracy campaign following her previous artwork, Wallace offered levels of materiality. She created an image of the clitoris; she created an image of female masculinity. Wallace argued that the absence of accurately distributed clitoral information resulted in sexually unsatisfied females and fostered a culture where these individuals are not fully able to demand the pleasure that is their natural right (Mosbergen, 2013). Thus, Wallace’s

construction of a giant golden clitoris as well as the development of her 100 Natural Laws served to materialize this primary sex organ. This task was complex considering historic dematerialization of the clitoris. Therefore, examining the Cliteracy project through the lens of materialist rhetoric is vital to a complete comprehension of the campaign as well as of the status quo regarding female sexual understanding.

Social Movement Criticism

After the creation of a concept through materiality, instilling that idea in the audience to motivate them to take action is another challenge for a given rhetor. When Wallace used social movement rhetoric, she began the process of institutionalizing Cliteracy. Moreover, Wallace's battle with societal taboos alongside a non-institutional collaboration to advocate for the clitoris clearly classifies Wallace's work as a social movement. Thus, looking at what constitutes social movement rhetoric is beneficial for the Cliteracy campaign's rhetorical analysis. I first examine the components of a social movement before looking to major factors for social movements.

Evans (1980) categorized a movement by the experience: the community and sense of common purpose. According to a seminal work, Simons (1970) noted that "movements threaten and are threatened by the society's sanctions and taboos" (p. 409). Moreover, fellow seminal author, Griffin (1958) established the process of developing a social movement. He named the concept of inception: the first segment of a social movement. During this phase, the members of the movement set a standard for their rhetorical structure, lay the groundwork and goals for the movement, develop ways to spread their message through the media, decide the geographical and social spread of the movement, and classify the basic charges against the opposition. One of the most striking

portions of the article, however, was when Griffin described the period of rhetorical crisis. According to Griffin (1958), in a rhetorical crisis a direct incident irrevocably disturbs the balance between the groups that exist in the eyes of the collective audience. Usually these groups would be the two combatting forces in the movement, but a rhetorical crisis could also occur inside a single entity (the movement itself, or with the opposing force).

Next, social movements include several important factors. First, one of the most influential factors in social movements is the leadership (Griffin, 1958; Hahn & Gonchar, 1971; Simons, 1970; Zarefsky, 1977). For those overseeing the social movement itself, challenges seemed to be overwhelming. Griffin (1958) presented a multifaceted leadership model used by the anti-masonic movement. This movement used three different types of orators: aggressor speakers, the pulpit orator, and the lecturer. Aggressor speakers were those traditionally construed as activists, the pulpit orator's main duty was to attack secrecy, and the lecturer was to be expository and distribute their message. Simons (1970) agreed that having more than one leader is beneficial to social movements. He articulated that having multiple leaders allows for different types of leaders to balance the movement. To adapt to several audiences, a movement must have various styles of leadership.

Even with multiple leaders, different duties and challenges established a need for highly specific candidates. According to Simons (1970), leaders often are split between the expectations of their role and their actual role definitions. By having multiple leaders, the movement has a greater ability to be centralized, but also has room to grow. Simons (1970) continued by describing not only that a movement needs its members to be

engaged, but also the qualities of an effective social movement leader. He posed a framework of three guidelines. First, the leader must continually ensure that the workers (members) are in an efficient and organized unit. Second, the leader should make sure that their product (movement) was adjoined/connected to a larger established order or structure. Third and finally, a social movement leader reacted to resistance from the aforementioned larger structure. Hahn and Gonchar (1971) noted that because social movements are heavily activity based, a leader must provide an organizational structure for the movement. Considering that Wallace's social media is not uniform and that her homepage is not consistently updated, her message is occasionally difficult to promote or participate in. Further, Hahn and Gonchar (1971) argued that the leader must distinguish what activity the social movement would entail in order to be able to construct a movement. Wallace, unfortunately, does not clearly address when and where individuals can participate outside of a technological means. Second, a leader must collaborate and figure out the extent and the willingness to participate in illegal activities. Finally, a social movement leader must maintain urgency and constantly recruit. Hahn and Gonchar (1971) articulated the importance of shared beliefs in order to demand uniform change.

In regards to who this leader would be, while Simons (1970) believed that social movements developed from the bottom of the social hierarchy upward, other scholars disagreed. Zarefsky (1977) claimed that it was possible for someone in a more powerful role to initiate a movement from the top of the movement down to the followers on the ground. Between Lyndon Johnson, Robert Kennedy, and Mussolini, a member of the establishment could start a social movement. No matter the leader, social movements require an entity with authority.

While having a leader is critical, Simons (1970) and Zaeske (2002) also described the reliance on a higher power or value for social movements. Simons (1970) revealed that effective social movements are those where the use of particular strategies are justified through the concept of higher principles. Zaeske (2002) paralleled this idea using African-American women as a case study. An overarching factor for these women through their fight for human rights was their Christian duty. When fighting to end slavery, members would warn that God would “scourge the nation” (Zaeske, 2002, p. 429), because slavery “corroded the mental health of the public” (Zaeske, 2002, p. 420). This reoccurring theme confronted a balance between aggression and self-restraint.

Another factor for social movements is the implementation of the movement on a respectable scale. Griffin (1958) equated a leader’s failure to that individual spreading their argument too far; the massive audience was too much to take on. Campbell (1973) and Hahn and Gonchar (1971) all enforced the importance of movement size. However, Hahn and Gonchar (1971) also accentuated the need to have a movement be general enough to fit a larger audience. They suggested that having a narrow movement weakens the entire movement’s structure because it is harder to have individuals connect to one another. Thus, a movement should be general enough to incorporate a universal theme for most people, while being condensed enough that the movement can remain organized and efficient. Moreover, because the premise of a movement is participating together in various activities, it is also vital to have a smaller group in order to have everyone actively participate. In short, starting small allows the cohort to be unified; however, the movement must universalize the message in order to reach the largest audience possible to initiate a social change.

Publics and counterpublics. Before delving into women's liberation as a specific social movement, I examine the public and the counterpublic. Habermas (1991) developed the concept of publics. He began by establishing the bourgeois as a public sphere. The bourgeois offered a prime example of the existence of 'natural' entities that you are or are not a part of. Warner (2002) described the public by their invisibility. He articulated that they constantly surround us to the point of seeming natural. The public was created discursively and usually involved repressing the private. Moreover, because the public was dependent on discourse, it was not necessarily a constant. Without attention, the public would disappear because it is not being addressed. A point Warner (2002) stressed, moreover, was the importance of strangers. A public needed to accept strangers as already belonging in order to be successful. Asen (2009) on the other hand, took an ideological approach to publics and, while he acknowledged the importance of the collective, asserted that if one were to take a progressive stance on public sphere theory, they would take a critical approach and seek to free society from oppressive tendencies in public and counterpublic spheres alike.

Halberstam (2005) defined counterpublics as spaces created by subcultures for their own use. Fraser (1990) detailed the complexity of counterpublics as those in subordinated social groups creating counter-discourses while constructing their identities in opposition of a dominating public. Warner (2002) remarked that counterpublics provided "a sense of active belonging that masks or compensates for the real powerlessness of human agents in capitalist society" (p. 113), whereas Brouwer (2005) remarked that the counterpublic is an alternative to the mainstream culture. Overall, counterpublics were defined by their tension with a larger public. In the case of the

Cliteracy campaign, the movement acts as a type of counter public by emphasizing the importance of female sexuality, in response to the dominant public that assumes the primary role of male sexuality and pleasure in U.S. culture.

Women's liberation as a social movement. More specifically, women's liberation is one social movement that Cliteracy is working within. Campbell (1973) detailed the unique qualities of women's liberation and the paradox of women activists. First, she admitted that the common denominator for women's liberation is that it is a state of mind rather than a movement. Yet, a majority of the reason that this is believed is because of the contradictions between the perception of femininity and the accomplishments of women's liberation activists. Campbell (1973) unraveled the qualities of female activists: self-reliance, self-confidence, and independence. These characteristics, and their simple existence as female characteristics attacked "the entire psychosocial reality" (p. 563). Simply by talking, these women were challenging norms of male-centric public discourse. As Lelei (2005) discussed, all too often women are left out of discussions on women's issues, such as debates on gender equality.

In short, these women were violating the foundational social structure by being involved in this type of rhetoric. This means that feminist advocacy was constantly wavering between persuasive rhetoric and non-persuasive rhetoric. Often women's liberation leaders suggested various actions of women; however, because this type of activism was more often consciousness-raising, the women's liberation movement had an absence of group commitment and instead had an emphasis on individual decision making (Zaeske, 2002). In other words, the individual members were asked to make their own personal decisions as to how to best encompass the movement because the goal was

to make their personal choices political. For example, Zaeske (2002) explained that signing petitions was the perfect submissive activism for women to take on in an attempt to outlaw slavery. It required a personal declaration without requesting more action from the people signing the petition. Thus, these women may have found signing petitions to be a suitable action, while simultaneously abiding by submissive social norms.

Furthermore, because of this ongoing perception of women as unassertive and the overall victimization of women, the women's liberation movement included a heavy focus on personal victimization. While Zaeske (2002) examined the first wave of feminism and Campbell (1973) addressed the second wave, both illustrated how women were paralyzed as agents of change through being an Other, and engaged in a perpetual spiral of passivity.

Additionally, Gatua, Patton, and Brown (2006) remarked on women's liberation and media. They argued that women have used the media to further their campaigns on a global and local scale. In fact, women have used media to the point that they also have had influence and access with alternative media on top of traditional media. Simons (1970), on the other hand, noted that "movements have become trapped in their own rhetoric" (p. 52). This quotation clearly reveals one of the main challenges for social movements. Simons admitted that the culture of social movements has created a lot of direct confrontation or discourse with the movement's actual opposition. Instead of productive dialogue between various social movements, there can often be a lot of noise from one movement without much direction toward actual social change. Simons' point illustrated a need for any social movement to be direct and attempt to instigate change from within the entity that has the power to make the change. Movements such as the Tea

Party capitalized on this tactic; operating within the legal system to perpetuate their ideologies.

Justification. Wallace created an artistic social movement with herself as the clear leader, hoping to initiate social change regarding norms surrounding female sexuality and the visibility of the clitoris. Considering that a recurrent issue with social movements is the need of a leader (Griffin, 1958; Hahn & Gonchar, 1971; Simons, 1970; Zarefsky, 2002), Cliteracy offered a unique, current social movement that is counter to mainstream public discourse and social norms regarding the primacy of male sexuality. Wallace used multi-media within the campaign to expand its reach in ways that are not as well-studied in rhetorical studies, given the relatively recent shift to social media in U.S. public discourse and social movements.

Overall Justification and Fit to the Rhetorical Artifact

Rhetorically, this text featured a new type of social movement. Wallace's social-media approach and leadership offered an opportunity to study a unique text in order to reveal new trends in social movement communication. Moreover, how Wallace framed female sexual pleasure as a democratic right solidified a need to study how she constructed the female body as a political agent for change. The communicative tension between feminist counterpublics critiquing Wallace's text made academic study of this piece beneficial to the communication studies discipline. It helped reveal a growing discursive tension amongst the transgendered, transsexual, and feminist communities.

The historical stigmatization of female anatomy through the erasure of clitoral communication clearly illustrates a need to study this artifact through a feminist rhetorical lens. Wallace's attempt to equate the clitoris to the penis demonstrated open

support of equality between females and males. Moreover, the previously mentioned communicative erasure removed the clitoris from societal view; individuals were left without a representation of the physically accurate clitoris. This absence of the clitoris meant that when Wallace introduced the Cliteracy campaign, her text created a representation that had not been witnessed by much of her audience. She constructed a concept into material being for a lay audience. Because Wallace physically manifested the clitoris into a concrete visual and experience for women, materialist theory is another appropriate lens for the rhetorical analysis of this artifact. Finally, considering that Wallace's campaign was a series of actions seeking to spread information and advocate female sexuality while not being institutionalized, Cliteracy can be classified as a social movement. Thus, I use social movement criticism to consider how Cliteracy is operating as a counterpublic within a larger women's movement.

Limitations

The largest limitation of this study is the lack of research on clitoral communication. While we are finally seeing an expansion in this field, the lack of resources remains a challenge in researching about this particular subject, especially in communication studies. Moreover, because of location, I am unable to witness the Cliteracy campaign in person. Wallace's focus on the audience member being engulfed in the presence of the 100 Natural Laws and participation in events such as the Clit Rodeo offer a level of experience that I will not have the opportunity to partake in. This limits my research to the information offered through the Internet – a larger challenge because that means I am only witnessing a media representation of the actual performance art. Thus, I will have a less authentic experience with Wallace's art.

Moreover, Wallace is not done. She continues to create more art, host more events, and spread the word of Cliteracy (Wallace, n.d.m). Although ideally I could continue to analyze public discourse about the event, even now, logistically, I must make a decision to contain the text for analysis to the three parts of the Cliteracy campaign. These feminist, materialist, and social movement theories, however, will offer an opportunity to provide an in-depth analysis of Cliteracy. Using these perspectives, in the next chapter I analyze Wallace's Cliteracy campaign and the rhetorical strategies she uses to enhance public discourse about the clitoris and female sexuality.

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS

Applying Feminist, Materialist, and Social Movement Criticism to the Cliteracy Campaign

Wallace took a term absent from communication and attempted to reclaim female sexuality on a mass scale. Her public discourse through the Cliteracy campaign provided a text rich for rhetorical analysis. In this chapter, I apply three theories to adequately assess Wallace's Cliteracy campaign and her use of persuasion. Feminist, materialist, and social movement criticism each highlight vital components of the rhetorical artifact. I analyze Wallace's communication, as well as highlight the benefits and limitations of these rhetorical choices.

Feminist Analysis

Cliteracy was clearly a feminist campaign. As Foss and Foss (1996) demonstrated, the feminist lens was used to analyze gender communication- specifically how this communication rhetorically constructed a patriarchal hierarchy. A feminist lens was beneficial because of the gender communication in this rhetoric. Wallace (2013a) noted that "Cliteracy addresses a void in a much larger discourse" (para. 3). Moreover, Wallace justified her art when she stated that "in much of the world women do not hold dominion over their own bodies, and even in this country, women are too often acquiescing to sex acts that do not give them pleasure" (Tallman, n.d., para. 4). Wallace had clear, deliberate ties to gender communication, sex, and the oppression of feminized bodies when she examined the massive lack of clitoral knowledge.

Furthermore, Wallace's desire to construct a new language of the clitoris further justified the use of a feminist lens. She claimed that "the clit swag section [of the Natural

Laws] is important because female genitals are almost exclusively spoken of in negative terms” (Tallman, n.d., para. 4). Wallace was re-imagining how we talk about female genitals and the coinciding stigmatization of these genitals. Wallace created a text forming new language rich with god and devil terms. As defined by Weaver (1985) and Burke (1969), god terms are words elevated to a hyper-emphasized positivity and devil terms denoted hyper-negativity- the backbone of Campbell’s (1973) symbolic reversals. Wallace’s compilation of feminist discourse techniques justified further application of the feminist rhetorical lens to Wallace’s Cliteracy campaign. First, I turned to examining Wallace’s use of feminist ideologies; second, I analyzed the use of absent, god, and devil terms; third, I evaluated the use of ideograph in the campaign; and fourth, I critiqued Wallace’s use of the female gaze.



Figure 13. Clit Rodeo Collective. A group of Clit Rodeo audience members line dancing. (Wallace, n.d.d)

Feminist waves. To begin, it is beneficial to align Cliteracy with the feminist ideologies that best encapsulated the movement’s ideals. To do so, I look at second wave feminism, third wave feminism, and how the Cliteracy campaign created a new counterpublic. First, Wallace’s rhetoric echoed the critical ideas of multiple feminist ideologies. While Cliteracy’s goals operated through community and liberal feminism- concepts prominent in second wave feminism- and also simultaneously correlated with

third wave feminism. The importance of community in Cliteracy's Clit Rodeo mirrored the societal force of second wave feminism. The sense of a collective moving towards a common politicized goal was mildly present in the campaign. While the Clit Rodeo was a more privatized experience than a rally, the result of the Clit Rodeo was a cooperative reflective of second wave politics. Participants marched while line dancing- moving with a common purpose (see Figure 13). At this event, Wallace described that the Clit Rodeo "just had this aura about it. It wasn't just women on the clit, it wasn't just the men, everyone was engaged" (Mosbergen, 2013, para. 24). Cliteracy created a unique environment where a collective could work independently. Thus, in a campaign that emphasized sexual pleasure, designed community, and operated with a rhetor who regulated a crowd desiring to publically change a practice, Wallace maximized the projects' opportunities by abiding by a myriad of perspectives.

In addition to community, Wallace featured highlights of liberal feminism- a key component within second wave ideology. Liberal feminism's two main emphases were woman's equality to man and second, woman's "sameness" to men (Tong, 1989). First, Wallace used the Cliteracy campaign to call out the patriarchal dominance of female sexuality; she pointed out that "sex has been constructed to empower the heterosexual penis" (Tallman, n.d., para.8). She clarified that Cliteracy "takes aim at the hubris of this phallic logic and goes further exploring the production of knowledge itself" (Tallman, n.d., para. 2). On top of this, she labeled one of her natural laws as "tell the truth women will never be equal to men so long as they are having bad sex" (Wallace, n.d.a). This culmination of questioning the patriarchy and advocating for equality was highly representative of liberal feminism.



Figure 14. Natural Law No. 38. Wallace reimagined the connotation of the male sexual reference, “blue balls.” (Mosbergen, 2013)

Secondly, liberal feminism took equality to a patriarchal extreme. As with liberal feminism, Cliteracy gained equality through the adaptation of patriarchal norms. As noted above, liberal feminism is comprised of the idea of equality. However, these feminists advanced equality through women becoming more masculine, not necessarily through the acceptance of femininity (Tong, 1989). Similarly, Cliteracy reclaimed female sexuality in masculine terms. Wallace’s hyper-masculine approach used extensive masculine rhetoric (see Figure 14). By equating the clitoris to male genitalia, Wallace framed equality in terms of females obtaining the male standard of sexuality.

However, the emphasis of masculinity did not stop at enactment or tone. Wallace used an inherently patriarchal term as the backbone of her project. Wallace’s politicization through the term “Natural Laws,” while also utilizing a liberal feminist approach, actually furthered her patriarchal rhetoric rather than reclaiming a feminist Natural Law. First, Wallace failed to acknowledge that Natural Law is inherently patriarchal. A term used by philosopher John Locke, “natural law forbids the arbitrary destruction of one’s own or another’s life” (Walsh, 1995, p. 261), yet, this idea also operated through patriarchal norms according to radical feminists (Tong, 1989). Locke defined natural law through the public (political) and private (family) realms: “The private-public distinction in Locke merely serves as a tool for the continuation of

patriarchy. Formal equality for women both masks and legitimates the actual inequality in marriage and the economy” (Walsh, 1995, p. 256). Wallace merely claimed that she used the term because “Natural Laws are inalienable” (Tallman, n.d., para. 4) and neglected to acknowledge the rhetorical history of the terminology. Therefore, though Wallace did not articulate that she desired to reclaim a feminist definition of the “Natural Laws,” the reality was that by using this phrase, she complied with an engrained patriarchal structure. Wallace elevated masculinity and abided by gender norms.

Wallace’s use of patriarchal second wave feminism was simultaneously intertwined with third wave feminism. In fact, the main perspective Wallace used was that of third wave feminism. She discussed how females experience sex and their knowledge of their own bodies: a staple of third wave feminism (Rubin, Nemeroff, & Russo, 2004). Wallace enforced that her multimedia project was about giving people “autonomy over their bodies” (Wallace, 2013a, para. 4) and categorized the clitoris as a metaphor for body sovereignty, citizenship, as well as freedom (‘Cliteracy’ necessary for female empowerment, 2014; Mosbergen, 2013, para. 27). In her *Natural Laws*, Wallace challenged her audiences to view sex as an independent act. By making claims such as “take your virginity” (see Figure 15) and “best practices penetrate yourself before letting anyone else” (see Figure 16), Wallace countered the idea that learning about sexuality and sex was a communal activity. She instead emphasized the ideas of independence and self-knowledge before trusting information from outside sources surrounding audience members. Third wave feminism focused on females “actively seeking new ways of actually inhabiting their own bodies” (Rubin, Nemeroff, & Russo, 2004, p. 35). Wallace repeatedly made this her focus as well.



Figure 15: Left. Take Your Virginity Natural Law. This law promoted females inhabiting their own bodies. (Wallace, n.d.a)

Figure 16: Center. Penetrate Yourself Natural Law. This law promoted sexual self-discovery. (Wallace, n.d.a)

Figure 17: Right. Visual Depictions Natural Law. This law questions the disseminated images of the clitoris. (Wallace, n.d.a)

In fact, she took this idea of self-knowledge a step further to challenge sources outside of the self. First, Wallace combatted the idea of sex education. She claimed that “girls know more about their own sexuality before they attend ‘sex ed’” (see Figure 17). Her quotation marks highlighted the insufficient education for women in the classroom, while also acknowledging that learning about sex often happens outside of a curriculum. Wallace continued by revealing the inadequate depictions females have as informational tools. She noted that “visual depictions of the clit are still inaccurate, comedic, [and] a metaphor for mystery” (see Figure 18), a remark open to visuals in and outside of the classroom. In this Natural Law she highlighted “comedic,” actively framing misinformation as absurd. Throughout her Natural Laws, Wallace clearly demoted the status quo of public learning in favor of individual discovery, operating through third wave activism via individual politicization.



Figure 18. Visual Depictions Natural Law. This law questions the disseminated images of the clitoris. (n.d.a)

While the purpose of the Cliteracy campaign mirrored the priorities of third wave feminism, how Wallace's political rhetoric proposed the need for change was representative of second wave feminism. Wallace's use of these conflicting ideologies challenged established feminist counterpublics. Because of the positivity of gender roles and consumerism in the 1940s and 1950s (Friedan, 1963), later in the century, fighting for women's rights operated in terms of political activism (O'Keefe, 2014). Within the realm of the civil rights movement and Vietnam protests, social inequality was fought through a political, societal force (Baxandall & Gordon, 2000). O'Keefe (2014) described the transition between each of the waves of feminism as growing increasingly independent. She clarified that third-wave and postfeminism positioned themselves "against second-wave feminism by placing emphasis on individuality and freedom of choice" whereas second wave feminism focused more on marches, legislation, and public policy (p. 5). This was influential because of Cliteracy's backdrop discussing pleasure (see Figure 19), while Wallace also featured a political tone to her communication. Wallace noted that "not having access to the pleasure that is your birthright is a deeply political act" (Mosgergen, 2013, para. 32). It was evident that she constructed a political

environment for an individualized experience. She created a space where both second and third wave feminism intersect.



Figure 19. Want to Have Sex Natural Law. Wallace combats the patriarchal idea of sex being about reproduction. (n.d.a)

It is important to quickly note that while third wave feminism mirrored some qualities of postmodern feminism, O’Keefe (2014) reviewed the body positivism overlap between third wave feminism and postmodern feminism. While this could be seen as a postmodern work, the fact that the campaign was labeled as feminist took away that possibility. The emphasis on this campaign as a feminist piece (Gonzo, 2013) insisted that Wallace’s work was not a part of the fourth wave of feminism; the rhetoric was neither void of, nor past feminism.

Symbolic reversals and devil terms. Second, after analyzing a broad area of feminism, it was possible to examine the campaign on a more specific level. Cliteracy featured symbolic reversals and devil terms. Wallace used disjointed rhetoric as she attempted to reverse the negative overtones surrounding female genitals. Wallace analyzed a variety of societal devil terms and called them into question in a highly public setting; however, the vast majority of these terms surrounded the vagina or penetration. She noted that “female or feminized genitals can be observed in common profanity such as ‘pussy’, ‘cunt’, ‘whore’, ‘faggot’, and ‘twat’ among others” (Wallace, 2013a, para. 8).

Wallace also informed her audience that “the term venereal disease as the term for a broad range of sexually transmitted infections, fallaciously insinuates the vagina as the source of STIs” (Wallace, 2013a, para. 10). She also acknowledged the historical negativity concerning the vagina through her statement that “vagina is a Latin word meaning a sheath or scabbard for a sword” (Mosbergen, 2013). These may have been beneficial to combatting the shame surrounding female genitalia. Yet, in combination with Wallace’s prioritization of the clitoris as the primary female sex organ, it perpetuated negative rhetoric regarding the vagina. Having Natural Laws such as “you know you’re having sex with an amateur when they slam into your cervix at full speed, get off in two minutes, and then lose interest” and “you know you’re having sex with an amateur when they try to put their unwashed fingers or penis inside of you” (Wallace, n.d.a) cataloged the vagina as a place of pain or infection. Even laws such as “The world isn’t flat and women don’t orgasm from their vaginas” (Mosbergen, 2013) attempted to capture the naiveté of the uninformed, but instead framed vaginas as a non-source of pleasure. Thus, again, Wallace used the very rhetoric she wanted to overturn. Considering her art was overwhelmingly textual, Wallace’s visuals came from her vivid writing style. Therefore, the major consequence of this choice was that the campaign operated through contradictory interpretations of the vagina; the clitoris was to be elevated to a “god term” while the vagina was simultaneously demoted to an “insensitive” (see Figure 20) non-source of pleasure.



Figure 20: Left. The Vagina Walls Natural Law. Wallace included that the vagina was insensitive. (Wallace, n.d.a)

Figure 21: Center. The Female Spotted Hyena Natural Law. Wallace provided a representation of our patriarchal colonization of the clitoris. (Wallace, n.d.a)

Figure 22: Right. The Clit Rodeo Advertisement. Wallace recruited participants for the Clit Rodeo. (Wallace, n.d.d)

In fact, the only points where Wallace analyzed the negativity of the word “clitoris” were either regarding its absence or through what Wallace called “clit swag.” First, overall, laws such as “Clitoris: say my name” (Wallace, n.d.a) did not focus on negativity, but instead focused on the lack of rhetoric. When looking at the use of the word clitoris, Wallace turned to an example; “the female spotted hyena has a clitoris that extends 7 inches outside her body. Scientists call it a ‘pseudo-penis’” (see Figure 21). This law revealed the patriarchal colonization of the clitoris. Albeit the clitoris of a matriarchal animal, it was the scientists’ branding of the clitoris that was problematic. This title erased the primary female sex organ and replaced it with male genitalia. Furthermore, the terminology remained exclusionary through the use of the phrase “pseudo.” Even when a female entity mirrored the male, this classification assured to label it as close to male, but not the genuine material.

This point becomes vital when analyzing Wallace’s rhetoric because she also defined the clitoris in phallic terms. By using phrases such as “it ain’t gonna ride itself” (see Figure 22), paralleling images of the clitoris and the penis (see Figure 23), and

constantly comparing the female sexual experience to the male experience (see Figure 14), Wallace embedded male, masculine sexuality into the female sexual experience. While aiding to represent assertive female sexuality, the repercussion was that it simultaneously abided to masculine norms of sexuality. Wallace's campaign represented and reinforced a double bind: the desire to be sexual and the need for that sexuality to comply with masculine norms.



Figure 23: Far Left. Whitney Museum Intervention Clitoris Cover Up. A participant covered male genitalia with a minimalistic cut out of a clitoris. (Wallace, n.d.j)

Figure 24: Left Center. If the Clitoris Natural Law. Wallace questioned the absence of the clitoris. (Wallace, n.d.a)

Figure 25: Right Center. There is No Lack Natural Law. Wallace countered the idea of female lack. (Wallace, n.d.a)

Figure 26: Far Right. Sleeping on the Clit Natural Law. Wallace's self-described "clit swag." (Wallace, n.d.a)

The focus of the campaign was to reconstruct the discourse surrounding the clitoris, and therefore Wallace needed to discuss its absence (see Figure 24 and Figure 25). Wallace attempted to accompany this language with "clit swag." She noted that "the clit swag section is important because female genitals are almost exclusively spoken of in negative terms. It is not a coincidence that pussy, cunt and twat are considered some of the lowest insults," and thus incorporated Natural Laws such as "sleeping on the clit? That shit cray" (see Figure 26) to relieve that negativity surrounding female genitalia. This, however, more so constructed a humorous depiction of the clitoris. Because of the Freudian erasure of the clitoris (Stiritz, 2013), there was little language regarding the

clitoris specifically to re-claim its positivity. Thus, the non-use of the word “clitoris” resulted in it being an absent term. Considering that the devil terms Wallace listed were all derogatory terms for the vagina, using satiric language for an organ that did not necessarily have a strictly negative connotation combatting the idea that the clitoris was negative. Wallace focused on the lack of a clitoral representation (see Figure 25)- not on how “clitoris” held intensely negative meaning. Therefore, Wallace established the clitoris as an absent term, while casting the vagina as a devil term. Because an absent term did not have the luxury of prior rhetoric, it was necessary to enhance its positivity. For example, as previously noted Wallace used humor as a means to boost the clitoris as a positive term (see Figure 26). The repercussion of having an absent sexual term rather than a devil sexual term was that the tabooed discourse at least provided rhetoric to change. For an absent term, it was necessary to create meaning.

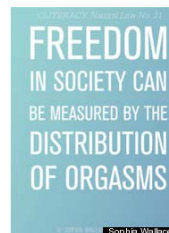


Figure 27. Natural Law No. 31. Wallace correlated freedom to orgasms. (Mosbergen, 2013)

Freedom, orgasms, and success. One of Wallace’s most memorable laws was that “freedom in society can be measured by the distribution of orgasms” (see Figure 27). This law is wrought with overzealous Americanized ideals that force female sexuality into Western norms. Here Wallace is measuring success through a Western, particularly American, ideograph: freedom. Kelly (2014) synthesized the idea of ideographs as “abstract but highly resonate terms with near universal recognition that recur in political discourse. Their invocations comprise a dominant political consciousness and, in doing

so, warrant action, excuse behavior, and garner assent” (p. 457). He continued to explain that “ideographs can emerge in the context of particular controversies, and through repetition, become ‘God terms’ that govern rhetorical participation” (Kelly, 2014, p. 458). Wallace used the idea of <freedom> as a God term to instigate action; it is the representation of success from a Western point of view. By saying that “freedom in society could be measured by the distribution of orgasms” (Mosbergen, 2013), Wallace took a term that resonated with her audience- freedom- and equated it with the success of her campaign. The higher the distribution of orgasms, the more freedom for citizens. Therefore, in a country that particularly embraced the idea of freedom, Wallace promoted activism through the idea that America was supposedly extremely free. Therefore, Wallace used the ideograph as a call to action. Wallace used the ideograph as a technique to increase the positivity of female sexuality. This strategy made discussing the clitoris more favorable and increased the likelihood of Wallace achieving her purpose.

The female gaze. Wallace may metaphorically create the idea of the female gaze with the Whitney Museum Intervention and Cliteracy glasses, however, the lack of strong relationships throughout the campaign limited the ability for Wallace to create a female gaze. Foss et al. (1999) articulated three necessities to ensure the female gaze: 1. Women must have a strong relationship; 2. Relationships amongst members must be equal; 3. Each individual woman must feel like the space is safe. First, in live locations- specifically the Clit Rodeo- members developed clearer, stronger relationships. The Clit Rodeo was described as “just had this aura about it.” (Mosbergen, 2013, para. 21). Moreover, there was a sense of community in that men and women came together “to experience a space free from traditional shame, taboo and silence usually cloaking

conversations around sexuality, particularly female genitals," (Mosbergen, 2013, para. 23). There was a larger sense of community because Wallace created a safe space for communication regarding a taboo subject. The participants were free from shame and able to use the female gaze more comfortably because of a sense of mutual investment.

Yet, the Clit Rodeo was a miniscule representation of a massive collection of participants connected through the internet. Overall there is a lack of connection between members, or even potential members, of the movement. Within the Whitney Museum Intervention, for example, the outlet for participants to record how they partook in the movement was through the Twitter hashtags #CLITglass, #PutAClitOnIT, and #WhiBi2014 (Wallace, n.d.j). Thus, even when involved individuals were in the same geographical sphere, the form of community was supported through an independent experience: taking pictures as an individual and posting them to the internet. Thus, instead of gaining relational traction, Wallace created a disjointed population through her utilization of online "social" media. Wallace wanted to create a viral internet presence as a way to promote her materials on a mass scale, and attempting to create a trending hashtag was an avenue to accomplish this goal. However, instead of growing her audience, she handed her audience a safety blanket: being involved through technology (Kristofferson, White, & Pelozo, 2014). The movement had the opportunity to spread from one form of social media (Twitter) to another; it held the opportunity to connect people in person and electronically simultaneously. Yet, audience members remained in an individualized experience.

That being said, Wallace's use of the internet offered a place for participants to feel safe. Instead of strong relationships, there was a mutual understanding that the

clitoris was not known, and therefore there was little need for judgment. The entire rationale for the Cliteracy campaign was mass illiteracy regarding the female body (Mosbergen, 2013). Wallace wanted to “challenge these misconceptions and to lift the veil on this enduring ignorance about the female body” (para. 9). Wallace herself enacted her lack of information, and she publically claimed that “I also learned about the anatomy for the first time doing this project...all of us are learning about this for the first time.” (Mosbergen, 2013, 1:41). Here she placed herself among her target audience, created a commonality, and expressed equality amongst a massive group. She also articulated that “people are hungry to be able to talk about this...I'm thrilled that it's gone viral and I hope it'll continue to be shared” (Mosbergen, 2013, para. 25). This emphasized Wallace's technological focus; she framed the discussion as going viral and being shared. Wallace's contributions mirrored her members' participation. The protection of a screen offered the aura of anonymity, sharing a link provided an outlet to inform, and yet there was still an opportunity to pass along information, but not necessarily deeply discuss it.

With this in mind, the Cliteracy campaign still operated under a female gaze with internalized reverence for masculinity. Wallace constructed a safe space for females to question, evaluate, and discuss the clitoris, with the potential for community, however, what truly made this art operate through a female lens was its use of perspectives. Through claims such as “penetrate yourself,” “want to have sex more than a handful of times in your life,” and “how many times has a lover left you with the clit blues” (Wallace, n.d.a), the female rhetor is talking directly to others with a clitoris. This hyper-female environment combined with shared illiteracy, and potential community, constructed the necessary atmosphere for a largely female gaze. Yet the continued

patriarchal, masculine power structure routinely enforced through the campaign introduced the idea of a female gaze featuring the internalization of a masculine power structure. Whether riding the clitoris, covering male genitalia, or operating through masculine slang, as previously argued, Wallace defined clitoral activism in masculine terms. Because Wallace utilized the female gaze but still abided by hierarchical gender norms, the campaign redefined the possibilities of the female gaze, and not always in a liberating way in terms of changing rhetorical norms of female sexuality.

Materialist Analysis

It was important to appreciate Wallace's clear articulation that "Cliteracy is not demarcating who can claim which genitals. Rather Cliteracy is a conceptual work of art, not a representational project" (Wallace, 2013a, para. 4). Wallace may claim that this project was not intended to be representational; however, the Cliteracy campaign was a form of materialist rhetoric. Wallace contradicted herself by claiming not to be representational while simultaneously claiming to bring the clitoris back into conversation and everyday communication. According to Wallace, she did not create a representation of the clitoris. She claimed this despite the fact that the entire campaign articulated that the clitoris was undiscussed and unseen, and therefore needed a representation in a mass media campaign (Mosbergen, 2013). Therefore, Wallace's competing discourses suggested that it was not that she did not want to create a representation, it was that she did not seek to create an accurate representation. First and foremost, regardless of Wallace's intention to create a representation, she did. This mass media discourse materialized the clitoris into the mainstream because the organ had been erased from conversation (Stiritz, 2013). Considering that Butler (2007) defined

materialist theory by it positing a new reality (p.521), that it “acts on bodies and on prior discourse” (p. 523), and that it “relocates formal truths as effects of positions of power” (p. 523), it was apparent that, at the very least, Wallace’s creation of a new language rich with female empowerment was a form of materialization. Wallace constructed representations of the clitoris, female genitalia, and female sexuality through her public discourse.

Cliteracy brought an abstract concept into a tangible reality. Yet, how Wallace materialized the clitoris problematized her message. There was a strong tension between who constructed the clitoral representation, what was constructed, and who it was constructed for. Putting an end to the exhausting misinformation surrounding the clitoris was arguably beneficial to a world struggling with how to appreciate female sexuality. In this way, Wallace’s approach came with a variety of consequences. First, Wallace limited participants’ ability to materialize the clitoris for themselves, and secondly, a cisgender, white, Western, privileged perspective limited racial, impoverished, and global investment with Wallace’s conceptualization.



Figure 28: Left. Line Dance. Participants dancing at the Clit Rodeo. (Wallace, n.d.d)

Figure 29: Center. Street Art Graffiti. Individuals spray painting a Cliteracy sign. (Wallace, n.d.k)

Figure 30: Right. WMI Audience. Adults and children partake in the Whitney Museum Intervention. (Wallace, n.d.j)

Participation in creation. Most active participation in the Cliteracy campaign was done quietly. Even when people participated in components such as the Clit Rodeo, street art, or the Whitney Museum Intervention, Wallace controlled the image of participation. While the images Wallace provided pictured involvement for each of these components (see Figure 28, Figure 29, and Figure 30), they were all regulated by Wallace through her social media. For example, Wallace invited those attending the Whitney Museum Intervention to begin a Twitter trend under #CLITglass, #PutAClitOnIT, and #WhiBi2014 (Wallace, n.d.j). This was an opportunity for people to post photographs of themselves placing cut-out clitorises over various pieces of artwork in the museum. The hashtag-trend resulted in a total of 38 posts. Wallace wrote 19 of the posts (50 percent). While she was often reposting a participant's photograph, zero photographs tied to Instagram were viewable. Overall, Wallace appeared to be speaking for her participants instead of letting them create their own rhetoric. This style of leadership resulted in Cliteracy activists to have less of an ability to materialize the clitoris for themselves. Even when they were given the opportunity, their communication was transported through a different messenger. This robbed participants of their ability to participate on their own, as well as reinforced a hierarchy with Wallace as the leader. Because the main rhetor delivered the communication, this relay system silenced the larger movement in favor of a single messenger.

Sex, gender, and trouble. Next, Wallace created a new language of sexuality by excluding a variety of potential participants. While Wallace has relentlessly defended the campaign, articulating that Cliteracy was "not a representational project" (Wallace, 2013a, para. 4), her words are troubling for a feminist, materialist piece of art. Within the

Natural Laws, Wallace used gendered terms for sexual organs. Wallace remarked that “one surgeon in the world repairs the clitoris in women who have undergone genital mutilation” (Wallace, n.d.a). She also noted that “a man would never be expected to get off through sex acts that ignored his primary sexual organ” (Wallace, n.d.a). Each of these comments aligned gender and sex. While Wallace later claimed that this campaign was not a representational project, she also articulated that she wanted to create a “new language for bodies and sexuality” (Mosbergen, 2013, para. 18) and that when sex organs are taboo, they are demonized through language, practice, and silence (Mosbergen, 2013). Using Wallace’s own logic, by remaining silent on the non-binary gender spectrum as well as the non-binary sex spectrum, the Natural Laws have constructed a language that is exclusionary and conceptually erases multiple populations (people who are transgender, transsexual, intersex, etc.).

Wallace’s language defined the clitoris, what it meant to be a body with a clitoris, and how to talk about the clitoris. Wallace used language that utilized the assumption that the audience members were cisgender- that they were born with their sex and gender aligning with societal norms. Featuring laws such as “imagine if boys were taught only about their testicles without reference to the penis” was detrimental to fostering mainstream acknowledgement of the differences between sex and gender, as well as their future communication regarding the subject (Wallace, n.d.a) . Equating boys to male sex organs and women to female sex organs insinuated that distinctions between sex organs and gender performativity were not a priority in a discussion centered on sexual organs, like the clitoris and the penis (Butler, 2004).

It was important to note the Natural Laws featured the claim, “all bodies are entitled to experience the pleasure they are capable of” (Wallace, n.d.a); a generalized claim beneficial to various excluded participants, such as those who identify as transgendered or intersexed. However, the Natural Laws did not include discourse on varying genders and sexes, once again removing these individuals from the new language. Instead, the use of gendered pronouns (she, he) and gender binary labels (woman, girl, man, boy) categorized ambiguous genders as close to male, close to female, third gender, or as deviant- any of which perpetuated societal norms regarding gender and sex identity (Halberstam, 1998). Therefore, while Wallace tried to create a language that demystified genitalia and challenged societal visions of the female sex, she instead reinforced norms, excluded participants, and framed female sexuality as essential for a free state. This problematized Wallace’s credibility, as well as the credibility of the campaign, because the rhetor who was supposedly deconstructing gender norms ended up reinforcing them.

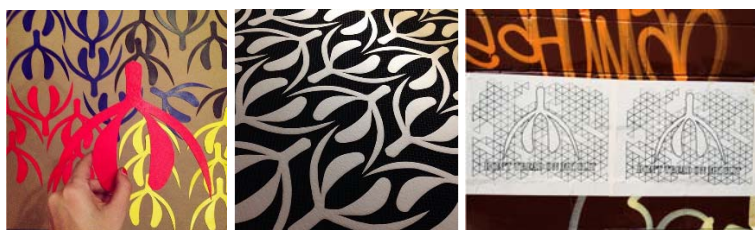


Figure 31: Left. Whitney Museum Intervention Cut Outs. These are various clitoris cut outs used in the intervention. (Wallace, n.d.j)

Figure 32: Center. Cliteracy Design. These are Wallace’s black and white illustrations of the clitoris.(Wallace, n.d.j)

Figure 33: Right. Paper Don’t Tread on my Clit Street Art. This displays one of Cliteracy’s posters. (Wallace, n.d.k)

Privilege, race, and the clitoris. The influence of privilege continued to impact Wallace’s project through race. To begin, Wallace approached the idea of body sovereignty by removing the body. The Clit Rodeo, street art, and the Whitney Museum

Intervention used minimalistic images to emphasize and isolate the clitoris- removing the clitoris from the body. Whether a golden clitoris statue or a bright pink cutout, these images provided a wishbone shaped visual separating the clitoris from the vagina: an entity disconnected from the body (see Figure 8, Figure 31, Figure 32, and Figure 33). By using text and images of a bodily organ that were not associated with a body, Wallace removed the potential distraction of visual body politics.

Especially by using multiple colorings (gold as a default color), Wallace transcended issues of race. She further justified her use of rainbow colored clitorises at the Whitney Museum Intervention by acknowledging that, “I excluded the color white, as the Whitney Museum seems to have white covered” (Wallace, n.d.j, para. 1). Considering that “automatic color preference is intrinsically embedded in automatic racial and advertisement preferences” (Kareklas, Brunel & Coulter, 2014, p. 93), Wallace’s color palette was not without consequence. Wallace’s jab at the excessive Caucasian representation displayed the importance of race in hierarchy.

Yet, despite these efforts, across the internet, the realities of the text, images, and videos alike all featured a highly Westernized, white, privileged depiction of the clitoris (Wallace, n.d.a; Wallace, n.d.c; Wallace, n.d.d; Wallace, n.d.j; Wallace, n.d.k; Wallace, 2013a). The Cliteracy campaign failed to feature females or women of color (see Figure 34, Figure 35, and Figure 36). Even with measurable participation, in Twitter posts to #CLITglass, #PutAClitOnIT, and #WhiBi2014, the members are most commonly Caucasian. Strictly in terms of observation, of the 38 posts relating to Cliteracy in correlation with the Whitney Museum Intervention, 4 came from participants who did not appear Caucasian- one of which was simply a repost done by Wallace. Approximately 90

percent of participants involved in this Twitter participation were white. In short, there is a general lack of multiracial representation within the Cliteracy campaign.



Figure 34: Left. Golden Clitoris Ride. A person who appears Caucasian attends the Clit Rodeo. (Wallace, n.d.d)

Figure 35: Center. Wallace and the Whitney Museum Intervention. Wallace and friend take a photograph together. (Wallace, n.d.j)

Figure 36: Right. After the Street Art. An individual not observably Caucasian appeared as the main focal point of the photo. (Wallace, n.d.k)

One Twitter user, however, thanked Wallace, noting “it’s a great thing you’re doing. Intersectionality doesn’t get addressed enough. I like the #clitglass hehe!” (‘Results for clitglass,’ 2014, para. 8). However, this thankfulness may have been unfounded. Crenshaw’s (1991) idea of intersectionality is absent from this artwork. The images presented were largely of Wallace, and if they were not, they were of various white participants. Only 8 of 36 photographs in Wallace’s Cliteracy webpage collection featured an individual who was, by appearance, not Caucasian (Wallace, n.d.a; Wallace, n.d.d; Wallace, n.d.d; Wallace, n.d.j; Wallace, n.d.k). Yet, even more haunting, that 22 percent is gracious. Those who are not Caucasian were featured in the background, and only once was a prominent figure in the photograph (Wallace, n.d.d; Wallace, n.d.k). By rhetorically placing non-Caucasian individuals on the periphery, Wallace’s project marginalized participants and categorized feminism as a white space. Cliteracy’s prominence of white Western rhetoric and Wallace’s combination of feminist counterpublics took the longstanding issue of white neutrality and put it on a mass media

stage. Wallace did not account for how females of color experience sexualization differently than white females (Wallace, n.d.a). The lack of racial rhetoric with such a massive audience thus established a white, racialized language of female sexuality.

Furthermore, it was evident that Wallace's use of text for the Natural Laws sought to remove issues associated with body image, beauty standards, and racial influence. By using text, the audience's focus was on the information rather than the presentation of a body, in this part of the Cliteracy campaign. However, while the text has the ability to materialize a concept (Wittig, 1983), it removes the tangibility of that body (Slater, 2002). Not having a tangible body erased the complications of race and did not account for stigmatizations beyond word choice. There was no discussion of the implications of a black female clitoris or vagina versus a white individual's genitals; intersectionality was removed from the representation.

More hauntingly, without these bodies, Wallace removed female humanity. Critic Pflug (2013) mourned that "yes, the external clitoris is attached to a large internal apparatus of muscles and nerve endings—it is also attached to an entire human being, a being who, since birth, has been categorized as socially inferior based upon their anatomy" (para. 8). The isolation of the clitoris came at a devastating cost. Pflug (2013) continued by describing the Cliteracy project as "superficial and reductionist" (para. 1) and argued that the patriarchal supremacy did more than rob females of sexual pleasure; it caused trauma. This trauma would not be fixed by sex positivism because it was too deep to be resolved with a climax. Pflug's critique especially resonated considering Wallace's comparison of vaginal rejuvenation and clitoridectomy (see Figure 37). An idealistic parallel, the overarching difference that resulted in a faulty analogy lay with

consent. Vaginal rejuvenation was a costly elective surgery attempting to tighten the vagina. The root of the difference, for some, was the privilege of the individual and the individual choice. Cliteracy's failure to appropriately represent the trauma of genital mutilation- specifically nonconsensual clitoridectomy - confined Cliteracy to a capitalist approach where privileged females chose to alter their bodies. The depth of trauma was different; the problem Wallace addressed was a "first world problem."



Figure 37. Genital Mutilation Natural Law. Wallace classified vaginal rejuvenation as genital mutilation. (Wallace, n.d.a)

When Wallace was critiqued regarding Cliteracy's representation of gender, privilege, and race, Wallace took the remarks as an attack on her identity. Wallace replied to Pflug (Wallace, 2013a) and cited her former work as an indicator that these issues were not a part of the Cliteracy campaign. Wallace (2013a) denied that she was transmisogynist and noted, "I did not attempt to cover all the ground of my politics with regards to gender, race, sexuality, ability and class with Cliteracy. For those interested to learn more about my work, I invite you to look at my practice over the last 13 years" (Wallace, 2013a, para. 4). Wallace's emphasis on her role as rhetor turned the audience's focus off of the materials themselves and instead onto her prior *ethos*. Wallace's artistic career was spent troubling gender. Therefore, when questioned, Wallace's former work featured the material to combat claims of lackluster representations of sex, gender, and sexuality. However, the Natural Laws themselves contain flickers of noteworthy

exclusion- reducing the potential for a new sexual language. Wallace's denial of a critical issue in this artwork's rhetoric reduced the overall credibility of her campaign. By pointing her audience's questions towards a different discussion, Wallace disturbed the safe environment. The comfort of her audiences relied on mutual misinformation and a space committed to being open for discussion. If the expert was accused and accusatory, the audience was then vulnerable to the same questioning. In short, when Wallace was accused, the safety of the conversation was reduced.

On top of the racial, gender, sex, and wealth divide, Wallace's Natural Laws also operated under a Westernized perspective through religion. While Christianity is popular worldwide, Wallace's Natural Law, "who is the Saint of the clitoris?" (see Figure 38) applied Catholicism within an already highly Westernized campaign. While religion did not have a prominent role in this project, its involvement was critical considering the extensive Westernization of Wallace's rhetoric. Christian values had commonly aligned with Western thought, and this fostered a larger concept within Wallace's rhetoric: privilege. Cliteracy was saturated in white, wealthy, Western privilege.



Figure 38: Left. Saint of the Clitoris Natural Law. Wallace created a religious tie to the Natural Laws. (Wallace, n.d.a)

Figure 39: Right. Orgasm as Human Right Natural Law. Wallace connected Cliteracy to human rights issues. (Mosbergen, 2013)

This was epitomized with Cliteracy's environment. More privileged than being provided through the internet and computers, Cliteracy was immersed in art culture. Wallace may have argued that "this work has never meant to be behind the white walls of a gallery. It's really about Cliteracy becoming a meme and creating new language for bodies and sexuality" (Mosbergen, 2013, para. 18). Yet that was exactly where her art work lived: art shows. Furthermore, even those outside of the feasibility of getting to the eastern United States did not necessarily have the resources to experience the Cliteracy campaign. Wallace's mission to inform the misinformed was largely confined to the privileged. Namely, the Cliteracy campaign targeted those who received the complete message, not simply a non-contextualized image. The campaign was restricted to individuals who have access to the internet, can journey across the country, or have access to art galleries. Considering a foundational component of Cliteracy was the idea of genital mutilation (Wallace, n.d.a) and that historically genital mutilation has been most prominent in nations in Africa (World Health Organization, n.d.), Wallace's message did not reach those for whom this information could most benefit. The locations of Wallace's rhetoric fostered communication amongst privileged citizens and reduced the amount of change she could create on a local and global scale. Considering that Wallace considered female sexual satisfaction as a human right (see Figure 39), Cliteracy's privileged framework did not offer worldwide expansion. It did not take into account the magnitude of differences between races or cultures- especially on a worldwide scale. Considering female genital mutilation human rights violations happened more systemically in non-Western countries- especially on the African continent- this privileged lens harmed the campaign more than it helped.

Because of this privilege, however, the ability to maintain the materialization was called into question. According to Greene (1998), a concept was only materialized when it was repeated to the point of normalcy. Cliteracy was nowhere near this point. While it may have gone viral, Wallace maintained that Cliteracy was “a bit of a showstopper” (Mosbergen, 2013, para. 28). Wallace described men involved in the campaign as a “bit of a social experiment” (para. 25). These descriptions cataloged Cliteracy by its shock value rather than demonstrating any sort of normalcy. These claims demonstrated that Cliteracy had not become a habit, had not been institutionalized, and thus had limited potential as a prolonged materialization. By not institutionalizing the change, Wallace failed to normalize her language. Making Cliteracy a habit would naturally enforce Wallace’s new language of female sexuality. It would normalize female pleasure while valuing the clitoris as the female sex organ. Thus, by maintaining attention through cultural shock, Wallace would not normalize her information; she would sensationalize it.

Social Movement Analysis

Despite her sensationalism, Wallace was fighting for human rights. However, while she was fighting for orgasms as a human rights issue, Wallace’s social movement faced an array of challenges. To examine the issues surrounding Cliteracy as a social movement, it is imperative to examine the leadership roles of the rhetor, the disjointed members of the movement, the lack of a rhetorical crisis, and the influential use of victim rhetoric.

Leadership. First, as noted in the materialist section, Wallace is a heavy-handed rhetor. In terms of Griffin’s (1958) leadership model, Wallace is more of a dictator. Griffin (1958) described three different types of orators surrounding the anti-masonic

movement: the aggressor speaker, the pulpit orator, and the lecturer. Aggressor speakers were activists, the pulpit orators attacked secrecy, and the lecturers were expository and distributed their message. Wallace was all of these. First, Wallace was the activist even when her participants were the ones spray painting their school. Riley (2014) focused on Wallace's reaction to the fines for New Mexico students. She spoke for the community activists when she noted that the punishment was more so a reaction to the stigma of female genitalia rather than the cost of cleanup. Furthermore, the design of the street art was Wallace's stenciling (Wallace, n.d.k). Thus, even when participants had the opportunity to create, they used Wallace's rhetoric. No matter the medium, Wallace filtered any Cliteracy activism.

Second, a major purpose of the Cliteracy campaign was to attack secrecy (Mosbergen, 2013). The fact that Wallace was the artist- that she designed each and every component of Cliteracy - highlighted that Wallace also filled the role of the pulpit orator. She demystified the clitoris; she removed decades of silence and misinformation in a single artistic project.

Third and finally, Wallace also explained and distributed the campaign's message. Her variety of interviews (Tallman, n.d.; Mosbergen, 2013; Mogilyanskaya, 2013) and publications (Wallace, 2013a) all allow her to clarify her intent and disseminate a clear message. By creating a movement centered in individual activism, removing secrecy surrounding the clitoris, and distributing the message on a massive scale (Mosbergen, 2013), Wallace took on all oratorical roles.

Wallace was clearly an independent rhetor. Not only did she partake in each role, she was the only individual to do so. Thus, the Cliteracy movement was limited to a

single style of leadership. Simons (1970) established the need for multiple rhetors and multiple leaders. Leadership diversity provided extraordinary benefits to foster a variety of social movements. He articulated that having multiple leaders increased balance in the movement. Instead of one single leadership style, a variety of approaches best suited the needs of a larger group. Each member of the movement was different, and therefore responded to different leadership styles. Moreover, because larger movements had more participants, there were more audiences. Featuring different leaders allowed various audience members to connect with various leaders. In short, to best adapt to several audiences, unique leaders with unique styles are necessary to connect a diverse group. Unfortunately, Wallace did not do this. As a result, the Cliteracy campaign did not adapt as easily because it was entirely reliant on a single individual. Wallace's role of artist (Wallace, n.d.a) and simultaneous roles as activist (Riley, 2013) and movement leader (Mosbergen, 2013), deteriorated the ability for Cliteracy to evolve into a larger force and actually become a successful social movement. Because the very foundation of the campaign was conceptual art, Wallace held ownership over the entire campaign and its future. Giving up control of the Natural Laws, the Clit Rodeo, or the design of Cliteracy's street art would be a removal of the lead artist. Wallace's prioritization with artistic ownership led to the lack of varied leadership and created a movement that would find it difficult to gain continued traction.



Figure 40. Know Thy Body Natural Law. Wallace took a prophetic role. (Wallace, n.d.a)

Furthermore, the emphasis on Wallace as rhetor was so strong that she was rhetorically framed as prophetic. Within the campaign, as mentioned earlier, Christian undertones were evident. However, what placed this piece into a new realm of authority was when the Natural Laws aligned their creator with a commander. Here, Wallace paralleled her laws to the Ten Commandments. Making laws such as “know thy body” (see Figure 40) abided by Biblical rhetoric. Because she was the artist and the mediator of this piece and its information, she was also the prophet of the information. The decisive use of the word “thy” in her laws that are defined as above legislation constructed those participating in the social movement as followers. A community of followers limited the ability for Cliteracy to grow because Wallace focused on her followers’ participation rather than her audience’s investment.

In a social movement, the leader must keep track of the members apart from the campaign. A leader must construct a cohesive, efficient, organized unit with similar goals. Cliteracy, however, was made of a highly dispersed, unclear group of a variety of individuals. The emphasis of the internet hindered the progress of the movement. While it would appear that the internet and social media would be beneficial to recruit membership, it instead created a highly dispersed group of participants; four different rhetorical events without considering internet involvement alone ensured at least four different immediate audiences. By taking it a step further and creating a “meme” (Tallman, n.d.), Wallace separated her participants even further. This led to Cliteracy promoting an idea O’Keefe (2014) called “fast food feminism.” While O’Keefe was discussing larger social movements such as Slut Walks with a larger in-person presence, this commentary was highly applicable to a massive, separate audience. Participants put

“analysis secondary to activism” (p. 15). With a single leader and a variety of outlets, the audiences were left with little direction, and thus the only foreseeable end goal was participation: sharing a Facebook status, having great sex, and so on. This constructed an atmosphere of limited analysis because action was the priority, not necessarily higher level problem solving. According to O’Keefe (2014), the less analysis in a campaign, the less depth to members’ contributions. Not having analysis meant that the members of the Cliteracy campaign had less to disagree with amongst fellow members, and therefore, meaningful conversation was in jeopardy (O’Keefe, 2014).

Confused and dispersed audiences. Without a unified, organized following with clear directions, there instead was a disjointed collective. Considering that there were so many Natural Laws, individuals who were intrigued by the campaign could have felt an attachment for a variety of reasons. Laws covered topics ranging from pornography to influential literature. One of Wallace’s Natural Laws was that “99% of porn is a monocrop of rapid penetration, gratuitous ejaculation, 1% plot, and 0% Cliteracy” (Wallace, n.d.a). This was utilized alongside the quotation, “‘I asked mother one time what that little bump was, and she said she didn’t know.’ -Anne Frank” (Wallace, n.d.a). Featuring a variety of topics meant that Wallace could have diverse goals. Because of the flux of information covered within Cliteracy, those who did follow the campaign did so for a variety of reasons. Therefore, Wallace’s highly independent support base was left unorganized and highly disjointed.

Not only did people participating in the Cliteracy campaign lack clear common goals, there was a lack of any call to action. Wallace constantly added new goals to the campaign: females embracing their sexual pleasure (Wallace, n.d.a), Wallace creating a

new language (Tallman, n.d.), and starting a conversation (Mosbergen, 2013) constituted the three main goals of Cliteracy. However, outside of the idea of talk-about-the-clitoris (Wallace, n.d.a; Mosbersen, 2014), audiences were left not knowing how to further participate in the campaign. There was an overarching absence of any direction. The participants were disorganized, unsure of what exactly they were supposed to want, and did not know what to do next. Because Wallace was rhetorically unclear regarding a larger plan of action, she had a decreased chance for her to achieve her purposes of changing social norms in relation to female sexuality.

Rhetorical crises. Moreover, Wallace's audience did not have the opportunity to bond over a mutual sense of purpose through a rhetorical crisis. While New Mexico saw minor retribution for students who participated in the Cliteracy campaign (Riley, 2014), on a national scale Cliteracy never faced a rhetorical crisis. There was never a moment where participants had to come together to show their support of the campaign. There was never a need to 'save' the campaign. An absence of a rhetorical exigence, or situation marked by urgency (Bitzer, 1968), only furthered the issues of Cliteracy's lack of direction, lack of purpose, and lack of common goals. The timing (*kairos*) of Wallace's piece did not coincide with a highly transformative situation. Though Brown (2012) featured a rhetorical crisis regarding the vagina, the Cliteracy campaign did not actively go viral until 2013. Furthermore, because the focus was on the clitoris and because of a massive uninformed public, this situation would not have necessarily coincided with the rhetorical situation.

Additionally, this campaign featured three major groups within her audience; the in group, the knowledgeable out group, and the uninvolved out group. On a small scale,

Wallace needed a few individuals to help her produce her local artwork (Mosbergen, 2013). Outside of this in group, there was a massive knowledgeable out group. These participants had an understanding, and even potentially an appreciation of Cliteracy (Mogilyanskaya, 2013), but did not know where to go after opening a shared link. Finally, the uninvolved out group consisted of those completely outside of the campaign. While a potential rhetorical crisis could have ignited passion amongst her participants, the overall lack of organization and unbalanced leadership cast those intrigued by a movement from equating sexual satisfaction to a human right, to no more than an ‘informed’ public.

The counterpublic. Wallace may have not had a unifying experience to catch her audience’s attention, but she did utilize a pluralistic feminist approach to her campaign. The combination of feminist counterpublics was extraordinary for a fragmented movement. Instead of focusing on the counter-discourses that separated each ideology, Wallace used the components that feminist counterpublics had in common. Each ideology founded their identity from their opposition to a dominating public (Fraser, 1990). Wallace also clearly defied the dominating phallocentric understanding of sex (Mosbergen, 2013). She used this as a tool to unite, rather than alienate, her audience.

However, in adapting to more feminist perspectives, Wallace presented contradictory representations of Cliteracy’s politics. While she remarked that "not having access to the pleasure that is your birthright is a deeply political act" (Mosbergsen, 2013, para.32), Wallace also articulated that “Cliteracy is about not having one's body controlled or legislated" (Mosbergsen, 2013, para. 32). Wallace again claimed that she “took the role of the clitigator, laying out my case for the clit, law by law,” and that she

“chose to use the language of Natural Law because its authority precedes the mandate of states, countries, and religious bodies” (Tallman, n.d., para. 4). In both cases, Wallace classified her art as law, as politics, and as above law and politics. Wallace constructed a personal-is-political campaign that simultaneously sought to subtract the political. This defined Wallace’s purpose using inconsistent rhetoric that confused any potential plans of action.

Even more than the differing perspectives of participants, the structure of the campaign itself engrained counterpublics in its operation. As discussed in the feminist section, the four different events of Cliteracy - the Natural Laws, the Clit Rodeo, the Whitney Museum Intervention, and the street art - proposed four different groups of participants. While feminist activists are already riddled with counterpublics, Wallace’s campaign was designed to create even more differing groups. By having so many components to the campaign, it naturally split Cliteracy’s activists. Whether a participant was an individual who hung posters or someone who rode the gold clit, the division in the activities resulted in each fostering different goals and approaches to Cliteracy.

Submissive activism. Possibly what hindered the campaign the most, however, was the use of victim rhetoric. Rampant through the Natural Laws in particular was placing females into the role of a victim. Laws such as “Viagra created a new disease: female sexual dysfunction” (Wallace, n.d.a) framed females as suffering due to male sexual pleasure. While Cliteracy’s more urgent audience was the group of copious unsatisfied straight females rather than satisfied homosexual females, this perspective was not only heteronormative but also perpetuated the image of the female victim. Many remarks framed females as not in control of their own sexuality and as victims. Wallace

(n.d.a.) argued, “Mainstream porn incessantly represents sex acts that don’t allow women to orgasm and are often severely painful & intentionally humiliating,” and “girls are taught it’s normal for sex to hurt” (Wallace, n.d.a, para. 1). Females were described as harmed physically and mentally- yet, Wallace did not discuss decades of feminist movements overcoming patriarchal suppression of female sexuality (O’Keefe, 2014). She inhibited her movement because she did not articulate the strength of females, but instead focused on how they were hurt. By not focusing on strength, Wallace framed females as non-actors. Females had occurrences happen to them; they did not do. Thus, by using victim rhetoric, Wallace created a submissive image of female action.

Summary

Feminist, materialist, and social movement rhetoric all contributed to a collective image of the benefits and challenges of Wallace’s campaign. With this knowledge, it is possible to comprehend the problematic balance of masculine priority paired against the essentialism of female sexuality. Between counterpublics and double binds, Wallace combatted a tense environment that featured a variety of alternative perspectives. To further examine the layers of Cliteracy, the next chapter explores the implications of Wallace’s campaign.

DISCUSSION

Implications from Sophia Wallace's Cliteracy Campaign

The Cliteracy campaign was more than a humorous project working to institutionalize female sexual pleasure. It was the attempt to integrate the clitoris into a new sexual language. To do so, however, Wallace faced an array of double binds and limitations constricting her communication. This chapter explores the implications of Wallace's rhetoric in terms of feminist criticism, materialist critique, social movement rhetoric, and rhetorical studies overall. Here, I return to the research questions (RQ) posed in the introduction, answer them, discuss the limitations of the study, and pose potential areas for future research.

Review of Texts and Research Questions

I electronically retrieved the materials for analysis. The texts of this campaign included the following: eight articles debriefing the campaign and/or interviewing Wallace; two video depictions of the events; and Wallace's homepage. On her website, Wallace included various tabs cataloging the components of the campaign. I used the tabs of "100 Natural Laws," "Billboard," "Whitney Museum Intervention," "The Clit Rodeo," and "Street Art" for analysis of this feminist, material, social movement. To analyze the Cliteracy campaign, I posed one overarching RQ and three subordinate RQs. The primary research question (RQ1) asked, "How does Wallace's campaign communicate about the clitoris?" RQ2 was more specific, asking "How does Wallace's emphasis of text regarding a taboo subject materialize the clitoris?" RQ3 followed with "How does Wallace's use of social movement rhetoric represent female sexuality?" Finally, RQ4 asked "How, if at all, do counterpublics develop Cliteracy as a social movement?" These

and Figure 41) was beneficial to increase the masculine participatory presence in the campaign, not actively featuring individuals who were troubling gender reinforced the gendered language in the Natural Laws. Of course, it is impossible to classify the gender of Cliteracy's participants. That being said, Wallace's images of the campaign did not necessarily counter the gender binary. Instead, participants upheld the performance of femininity and masculinity (see Figure 5 and Figure 44). One of the most pivotal examples of the gender performance norms was the Clit Rodeo. People literally rode the primary sex organ (see Figure 5 and Figure 44). The idea that a female is meant to be ridden, meant to be the one receiving the sexual action, is inherently abiding by gender norms. This in combination with the Natural Laws equating sex and gender communicated that the clitoris was a part of a gender binary. Natural laws such as "one surgeon in the world repairs the clitoris in women who have undergone genital mutilation" (Wallace, n.d.a) and "a man would never be expected to get off through sex acts that ignored his primary sexual organ" (Wallace, n.d.a) equated gender to sex. While these concepts were often intertwined, this perception can be detrimental to those outside of the gender performativity binary (Butler, 2004). Thus, Wallace communicated about the clitoris by using a gender binary and equating sex as gender. This feature of the campaign's rhetoric is highly consequential. Considering that Wallace is attempting to create a new language of female sexuality, she used the very terminology that limited communication regarding female sex prior to Wallace's project. Therefore, those who viewed her language as a progressive representation of female sexuality promoted, and potentially spread, an exclusionary discourse. While Wallace attempted to be inclusive in descriptions and responses to critiques, the artwork itself was inherently exclusionary.

Second, Wallace communicated through a lens of privilege. As Pflug (2013) acknowledged, Wallace failed to adequately discuss the trauma of a culture bred through dominant patriarchal sexuality. Wallace remarked on issues rampant in less privileged cultures and attempted to compare them to white, Western, wealthy cultures where participants could afford complex surgeries (see Figure 37). This analogy operated on disproportionate trauma. Furthermore, it communicated a racialized issue through a predominately white perspective. The extensive imagery of white participants implicated that this new language was not global. Instead, female sexuality was described in a privileged context and did not properly account for those most at risk of illiteracy regarding the clitoris continued.

Third and finally, Wallace's communication isolated the clitoris. While she continually used text as her mode of communication, the images she did use were minimalistic images separated from the larger reproductive system. This emphasized the clitoris as its own entity, creating a unique representation that was not merely an afterthought. Because the clitoris was often inaccurately presented without the rest of the female body, the repeated images reimaged the priority of the female sexual experience. The communication separated the clitoris from the vagina, as well as removed the primary-female-sex-organ label from the vagina.

Feminist implications. Further, Wallace utilized the vagina and the clitoris as absent, devil, and god terms. The rhetorical distinction between absent and devil terms is critical when examining how Wallace persuaded her audience. Wallace defined the vagina as a devil term as a means to persuade her audience to view the clitoris as a god term. To examine this persuasive technique, first I examined how Wallace defined the

vagina as a devil term, and secondly, how Wallace created the clitoris as a god term. To begin, Wallace focused on the vagina in her justification for why we need a new language on female genitalia. She established the need to create a new language for the clitoris (absent term) by emphasizing the normative cultural use of devil terms vilifying female genitalia. She established that “female or feminized genitals can be observed in common profanity such as ‘pussy’, ‘cunt’, ‘whore’, ‘faggot’, and ‘twat’ among others” (Wallace, 2013a, para. 8). Her use of words only correlating to the vagina and penetration featured a dichotomy. While combatting the oppression of this sexual communication, Wallace simultaneously upheld the negativity in public discourse surrounding the vagina.



Figure 42: Left. Natural Law 79. Wallace created a pun regarding the prioritization of the vagina. (Mosbergen, 2013)

Figure 43: Right. The Clitoris Rivals the Penis Natural Law. Wallace compared the clitoris to the penis. (Wallace, n.d.a)

What vilified Wallace’s rhetoric about the vagina was her constant removal of pleasure from this female organ. Her justification featured negative vaginal and penetration rhetoric and contributed to a generalized understanding and appreciation for the societal limitations of female sexuality. However, Wallace took her othering a step further. She furthered the description of the vagina as an insensitive organ (see Figure 20) incapable of being the epitome of the female sexual experience. She used puns and quotations to categorize the vagina as needing more (see Figure 42): needing the clitoris.

This placed the clitoris as filling the lack, in a sense, rhetorically taking the place of the phallus.

Especially throughout the *Natural Laws*, Wallace compared the clitoris to the phallus. Her claims such as “the clitoris rivals the penis in size; most of the complex organ is internal” (see Figure 43) aligned the clitoris with the penis. In terms of size, shape (see Figure 23), and experience (see Figure 14), Wallace framed the clitoris phallogentricly. Wallace’s focus on the penis as well as her masculine tone throughout the project resulted in a campaign where the female primary sex organ was glorified as an equal to the penis.

In fact, even when faced with the epitome of the potential devil term- the penis- Wallace did not vilify the penis itself. She may have critiqued the male-centric vision of sex, but she did not demonize the male primary sex organ. In fact, at no point did Wallace label the clitoris itself with any devil terms- despite there being the potential to do so. It is true that historically there have been negative definitions of the clitoris, such as the Medieval Church’s description of the clitoris as “the devil’s teat” (Walker, 1979, p. 442). However, Freud’s (1933) publication that established the vagina as the female center of pleasure erased the clitoris from communication (Stiritz, 2013). Because *clitoris* was emphasized as an absent term, Wallace focused on the multifaceted “lack” regarding the clitoris: the lack of accurate research, the lack of a phallus, and the lack of communication (see Figure 44). She used the extensive absence of clitoral communication to bypass potential devil term communication (and thus negative communication) in order to create a god term for the clitoris. In short, because the clitoris is an absent term, and therefore is a fresh start for a new argument (Perelman &

Olbrechts-Tyeca, 1969), Wallace used this opportunity to elevate the clitoris to a god term while continuing to demonize the vagina.

Wallace took a concept absent from conversation and elevated it to a status of superiority. She did so by first, equating the clitoris to the penis; and second, she used gold to highlight the status of the clitoris. As discussed above, Wallace repeatedly equated the clitoris to the phallus. This technique attempted to persuade her audience by using patriarchal norms. Wallace placed the clitoris as the status quo ideal. Wallace used the opportunity of using the patriarchal hierarchy to abide by the social hierarchy without demolishing the reality structure- a potential repercussion of women's liberation (Campbell, 1973).



Figure 44: Left. Wallace: There is no lack. Wallace wearing one of her Natural Laws. (Cliteracy wearable art by Sophia Wallace, n.d.)

Figure 45: Right. Solid gold clit participant. A partaker of the Cliteracy campaign displays the solid gold clit logo. (Mosbergen, 2013)

Second, Wallace's reoccurring use of gold aligned the clitoris with a positive, successful image (see Figure 45). Her choice of color is influential because of the connotation of gold to winning. Wallace's rhetorical strategy of highlighting the clitoris as the center of attention, basked in gold (see Figure 5), elevated the clitoris to a higher hierarchal standard. She classified it as important enough to be center stage, gold and shimmering. The coloring clearly helped Wallace catalogue the clitoris as a god term.

Rhetorical implications. Wallace created a campaign centered on a concept removed from society. The inclusion of devil terms, absent terms, and god terms in this campaign has critical implications for Burke's (1969) and Weaver's (1979) seminal constructs. These implications include that the rhetorical potency of a god term was reliant on a co-existing devil term, and that the absent term created an opportunity to mass market a new definition to an unknowing audience. First, Wallace's campaign suggested that in order to communicatively create a god term, it is beneficial to intensify a devil term. Considering that a god term is reliant on intense positivity to the point that an individual would feel the need to sacrifice for it (Weaver, 1979), not obtaining the god term would be detrimental to the moral character of an individual. Thus, to establish the clitoris as the female primary sex organ, Wallace tried to elevate the clitoris from an absent term to a god term. To do so, it was necessary to discredit the vagina as the primary female sex organ. In order to dethrone the vagina while insisting that female sexuality is as important as male sexuality, Wallace vilified the common enemy: the vagina. Thus, Wallace's rhetoric suggested that a god term is reliant on the communicative magnitude of the devil term.

Secondly, Burke (1969) and Weaver (1979) may have discussed god and devil terminology, but absent terms featured a different battle all together. Instead of being inherently positive or inherently negative, absent terms have the ability to be an entirely new symbol. As Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) articulated, presence is the "starting point of argument" (p. 115-116). Because of a historic absence, Wallace faced a unique opportunity. Wallace took the massive confusion and curiosity surrounding the clitoris and transformed the campaign into the ideal multi-media platform to spread a

mildly consistent message. Wallace's new language fed a viral audience a mass-media god term. The general lack of clitoral communication prior to the campaign ensured that an absent term could provide the ability to establish a new definition.

Text as material. The lack of clitoral communication also created a space for Wallace to create a new representation. Wallace did so by removing the clitoris from the body. This isolation apart from the female body had larger consequences for the materialization of the clitoris. Turning to RQ2, it asked "how does Wallace's emphasis of text regarding a taboo subject materialize the clitoris?" Wallace's use of text materialized a dehumanized clitoris. Pflug's (2013) haunting comment "yes, the external clitoris is attached to a large internal apparatus of muscles and nerve endings—it is also attached to an entire human being, a being who, since birth, has been categorized as socially inferior based upon their anatomy" (para. 8) iterated the pitfall of Wallace avoiding the distractions that come with bodies: she removed humanity. Bodies communicate differently than text (Butler, 2004).

Materialist implications. While materialists do "not accept a distinction between the textual and the material" (Butler, 2007, p. 521), "the body is that upon which language falters, and the body carries its own signs, its own signifiers, in ways that remain largely unconscious" (Butler, 2004, p. 198). In other words, though text has the potential to materialize concepts, Butler (2004) did not believe that bodies could be reduced to language. Butler's (2004) analysis is crucial to comprehending the major implication of Wallace's text as materialist: it operated on the assumption that text granted objectivity.

Wallace claimed that she would not “use literal images of the female body. I would rather address the subject in a way that was conceptual, monumental, rigorous and free...I wanted viewers to think of female sexuality conceptually, without having a literal body to latch onto” (Tallman, n.d., para. 4). By using language such as “free” and “monumental,” Wallace gave text authority. Wallace elevated text because it was not constrained by the assumptions that came with body image. Therefore, by choosing *free* text, she classified it as objective. Text was free of the repercussions of representation. Wallace insinuated that using actual bodies would be constricting and representational, yet she forgot that language is the gendered, patriarchal landscape that defines every interaction and concept in our Westernized society. Wallace’s text used the very system that confined the clitoris to silence in the first place. There was no objectivity in text. If anything, it was the representation of centuries of patriarchal prevalence.

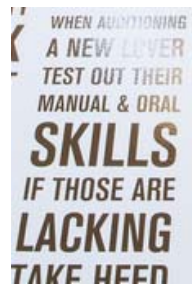


Figure 46. Take Heed Natural Law. Wallace advises critiquing partners’ sexual skills. (Wallace, n.d.a)

Social movements and female sexuality. Not only was the experience isolating the organ from the female body, the campaign also isolated the individual from the larger social movement of feminism. Here, it is necessary to ask RQ3: “how does Wallace’s use of social movement rhetoric represent female sexuality?” Clearly, Cliteracy represented the idea that sexuality was an individual’s responsibility. Wallace urged audience members to critique lovers (see Figure 46) and be in charge of their own sexual pleasure

(see Figure 15). The campaign communicated independent authority on sexual pleasure. Because of the way this campaign was already highly individualized, through technology and personal contributions, this reinforced that the modern social movement was the independent social movement. For example, Wallace's use of the Natural Laws emphasized the individual; each audience member was responsible to abide by each law. Wallace's Lockean lens reinforced that each person contributed to her purpose individually. This is beneficial to comprehend other current social movements; Wallace's individualization moved past the collectivity of former feminist movements. Wallace did not entirely embrace second wave sisterhood as a primary connective force. Instead, Wallace capitalized on the number of people who heard, understood, or shared her campaign- not which participants remained. This reflected that current social media-reliant movements were dependent on mass, rapid, individualized expansion- not necessarily recruiting participants for continued involvement. Wallace's highly individualized process focused her social movement on an independent person's rhetorical and political agency. However, this heightened importance of individual agency resulted in a more passive sense of activism. Wallace did not establish a cohesive, assertive force, and thus participants did not need to be loud proponents of change.

In fact, Cliteracy's political and social movement rhetoric capitalized on the pre-existing oxymoron of women's liberation. Campbell (1973) claimed that women fighting against oppression violated the reality structure of man-as-assertive and woman-as-passive. Aggressive women violated the Western, patriarchal reality structure when they protested. Thus, Wallace's technique of utilizing a more passive form of activism (the *independent* social movement) would ideally operate through enough norms to create

systemic change. However, the myriad of masculine, patriarchal rhetoric Wallace used in her campaign put a double bind on her communication. Wallace did not reclaim female masculinity, but instead upheld the reality structure. As previously documented, Wallace engrained the patriarchy into her movement. This tactic inherently countered the purpose of her campaign.

Counterpublics and cliteracy. Next, RQ 4 delved into counterpublics, asking “how do counterpublics develop Cliteracy as a social movement?” While Cliteracy held the possibility of creating a larger, combined movement, counterpublics ensured that Wallace’s campaign could never actually become a full-fledged social movement. Cliteracy provided the opportunity for multiple waves of feminists to collaborate under similar goals. By intertwining second and third wave feminism, counterpublics that were at odds for decades had the potential to be united. However, Cliteracy featured a fairly independent structure outside of the Clit Rodeo. Collectives were mostly limited to small, immediate, geographically close groups (see Figure 28, Figure 29, and Figure 30). When Cliteracy featured the opportunity to collaborate amongst the masses, by reducing the interactions to on screen or in small groups, Wallace reduced the power of diverse feminists to collaborate. Moreover, with extremely varied participation, and excluded audience members (Pflug, 2013), Wallace did not optimize Cliteracy’s counterpublics.

Social movement implications. The involvement of counterpublics established a social movement with diverse implications regarding social media movements. I focus on three implications: first, the creation of a new counterpublic; second, Cliteracy’s inability to construct a language; and third, individualized leadership in a social media movement. First, Wallace created a new feminist counterpublic. While it is unclear if the participants

identified themselves as feminist, Wallace created an audience of unknowing feminists. The connection between the combatting feminist discourses was the same concept that created a safe environment: they were all connected through the search for clitoral knowledge (Mosbergen, 2013). A mutual lack of understanding prioritized gaining information on this topic rather than on a collection of perspectives potentially misunderstood by a new feminist counterpublic.

This counterpublic held the possibility of linking diverse participants. However, while Wallace garnered attention, she did not establish a language. Cliteracy went viral (Mosbergen, 2013) without retaining momentum. The Cliteracy campaign represented a common rhetorical practice for mass influence: disconnected social media. While of course it is important to note that social media digitally connects more people than humanly possible outside of technology, the experience ended at the screen for a majority of participants. While the number of electronic participants cannot be calculated, the low number of tweets through the Whitney Museum Intervention alone highlighted that the engagement portions of the project did not hold a sizeable audience. Wallace's lack of balance between live engagement and social media involvement suggested that social movement campaigns with inconsistent forms of participation reduce the opportunity for leaders to retain their participants.

Outside of keeping members, leadership was a foundational component of this campaign. Wallace's control of the movement illustrated that a single, prophetic leader limited the productivity of a social media-driven social movement. As the creator of the campaign, Wallace took on a massive responsibility. She led every component of the campaign from interviews (Tallman, n.d.), to speaking, to protesters (Riley, 2013). Her

mass involvement restricted the involvement of others in the campaign. The overall lack of diverse leadership reduced potential participation because it is less likely for a mass collective to all align with Wallace's perspectives.

Limitations of the Study

While these conclusions are beneficial to communication scholars and feminist activists alike, there were three major limitations of this study that may have created an incomplete evaluation of the Cliteracy campaign's rhetoric. First, I witnessed the rhetoric through technology. While Wallace articulated that she hoped the campaign to spread online (Tallman, n.d.; Love the clit! Get your clit on with Sophia Wallace, 2013; Mosbergen, 2013), because of the participatory focus of some components of her campaign, I was unable to be an active member of the campaign. My involvement with the campaign may have been reminiscent of the common Cliteracy audience member, but without the experiential component, this study was limited.

Secondly, the texts for analysis were continually growing. As an ongoing campaign, the material to analyze became difficult to contain as a rhetorical artifact. The backbone of Cliteracy's image- Wallace's homepage- was constantly changing. Delayed additions of various art pieces- for example, the Invisible Sculpture (Wallace, n.d.f)- meant that I could not study the entirety of the movement. I may have decided to focus on the core, foundational components that allowed Cliteracy to spread to the masses, but that by no means assured that this analysis was complete.

Third, being an advocate for those who do not abide by gender norms- being an advocate for those who have undergone serious trauma- was a high priority for me. Yet, there was only so much a cis-gender (person born with their sex and gender aligning)

lesbian could comprehend. It is my personal hope that my critique uncovered necessary issues amongst this new sexual language. I do not claim, and never could claim, that this analysis fully accounted for the levels of exclusion, inclusion, or trauma that some audience members faced. I could never adequately understand all of the issues in the Cliteracy campaign because of my inherent privilege within a Western, feminist community of scholars.

Future Studies

With these limitations in mind, future researchers can take on further studies. First, the expansion of the campaign created a need for further rhetorical analyses. Analyzing Wallace's additions would provide a richer analysis. The Cliteracy project is constantly growing. This growth may assist Wallace in forwarding her message, but the continuous addition of new rhetorical texts did not offer me the opportunity to have a cumulative view of the campaign. Thus, having other rhetorical scholars analyze the full text would be highly beneficial.

Second, various methods could be used to further research on communication surrounding the clitoris. There are several opportunities spanning from mixed methods to feminist ethnography. Even completing an experimental study or survey research to chronicle how humans communicate about the clitoris could be beneficial. Having a host of participants instead of a single rhetor remarking on how the clitoris was talked about would provide clear, representative data of the current language being used about the clitoris. Furthermore, this opens the potential for a more quantitative approach to numerically calculate norms. Featuring mixed methods would represent the current clitoral illiteracy- especially in Western culture- to a more quantifiable degree. It would

also feature varied, diverse analysis. Moreover, a researcher could complete an ethnography of the campaign. Because a major limitation of the campaign was the absence of the rhetor amidst Wallace's participatory rhetoric, an ethnography would solve this issue. I did not have the ability to be a complete participant, but if in a future study, I had the means to be active in the experiential portion of the campaign, I would understand Wallace's work in a different capacity. This study could also examine the interpersonal dialogue that was missing from my study. It was not possible to witness the development of community or the exercise of feminist sisterhood. Therefore, being immersed in the rhetoric would unravel a critical component of the Cliteracy campaign.

Summary

Overall, the Cliteracy campaign formed a disjointed feminist experience. Wallace's mission was beneficial to instigate a more accurate dialogue regarding the clitoris, but labeled female sexuality into god and devil terms, while excluding some genders in the Natural Law's communication. Her project was widely dispersed; however, the participants were limited by time, space, money, race, and privilege. Moreover, the images included in the campaign commonly disconnected female sex from female humanity. Cliteracy may have brought together ideals of combatting feminist waves, but it did not result in unification. Recognizing the limitations of this research project and moving forward with potential new analysis is vital to the topic. With female sexuality as a focus for feminist critique, establishing a rich collection of rhetorical, interpersonal, or health communication research on the clitoris- a topic commonly left undiscussed in the U.S. public sphere- could propel today's research into the next academic revolution.

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