


2017

The Rhetoric of Inmates: Identification Processes in the San Quentin News

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THE RHETORIC OF INMATES: IDENTIFICATION PROCESSES IN THE
SAN QUENTIN NEWS

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Honors in the Major Program in Writing and Rhetoric
in the College of Arts and Humanities
and in The Burnett Honors College
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Spring Term, 2017

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Abstract

The intent of this thesis is to create a new heuristic for processes of identification. Currently, Burke's identification theory only accounts for his definition of successful identification. This thesis explores how Burke's initial identification theory interacts with other theories that contribute to identity formation. Specifically, Fernheimer's identification half-steps, Reynold's ethos as location theory, and Kerschbaum's commodification of difference will be used to build on Burke's theory and develop a new heuristic. The new heuristic will be applied to the San Quentin State Prison's inmate-run newspaper, the *San Quentin News*, to explore how inmates are utilizing rhetorical identification strategies to change the dominant conversations surrounding their identity.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my thesis committee member and professor Dr. Marcy Galbreath for her support and interest on this project, which began in her class. Thank you to Dr. Anthony Grajeda, my thesis committee member, for his support and helpful commentary. A special thank you to my thesis chair and mentor Dr. Stephanie Wheeler for her consistent encouragement and for sharing her vast knowledge on rhetorical theory. Thank you to my father, whose stories during my childhood inspired this project. Finally, thank you to my mother for her never-ending patience and pep talks.

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Chapter 1: Identification Theory, Ethos, and Commodification

From the centers of a Greek polis where community members expressed political opinions to modern rhetorical theories that ask us to hear those opinions, rhetoric has been at the forefront of creating a voice for the public. Rhetorical strategies are used by everyday citizens in all situations when validating our values and opinions to those in power. The everyday citizen aims to be represented by laws that allow them to go about their daily lives and that embody their values, rather than impinge on their activities and sense of self. However, this idea is complicated when the everyday citizen is also a member of a marginalized community. Seeking representation is no longer an easy process in the face of a devalued identity. Within marginalized groups, creating a stable and positive social identity that is readily accepted by a wide audience allows for the recognition of the group as human rather than the “lesser” social class that intrudes on their daily activities. But, how does a marginalized community achieve a higher status and gain a more positive social identity? This thesis will demonstrate the complex process of identity recreation through the repurposing of language and terms that represent a marginalized community.

The intent of this thesis is to create a new heuristic for processes of identity formation. This thesis explores how Burke’s initial identification theory interacts with other theories that contribute to identity formation. Specifically, ethos based on geographical location, rhetorical identity formation, and the commodification of a community’s difference will be used to build on Burke’s theory and develop a new heuristic. The new heuristic will be applied to the San Quentin State Prison’s inmate-run newspaper, the *San Quentin News*, to explore how inmates are utilizing rhetorical identification strategies to change the dominant conversations surrounding

their identity. How do these inmates define their identity? How are they changing the identity they have been given as a “lesser” community? The San Quentin State Prison houses the *San Quentin News*, a public and online prison newspaper that is currently being circulated. This Californian prison is notorious for housing one of the largest death rows in the country, but the inmates and staff have been working together in more recent years to provide inmates with rehabilitation rather than just housing. These efforts have made them known as one of the most progressive prisons in the country. Therefore, I have chosen to look at how these inmates construct and belong to a collective inmate identity created through the newspaper.

In order to discuss the recreation of a “lesser” identity to a positive identity within a disenfranchised population, identity creation as a whole must be understood. In *A Rhetoric of Motives*, Kenneth Burke provides a basic framework for the process of identity creation. Burke defined the idea of identification as using others to create a self or using yourself to create others through the use of a common ground (20). Burke makes an argument to switch the framework of rhetoric from persuasion to identification (20). Burke says that “In pure identification there would be no strife. Likewise, there would be no strife in absolute separateness, since opponents can join battle only through a mediatory ground that makes their communication possible, thus providing the first condition necessary for their interchange of blows” (25). With this, he shows us that we must *begin* at a common ground in order to create any sort of identity or argument. For example, if two people are arguing about whether or not inmates are the monsters of society, they are both agreeing and *identifying* that inmates are part of society. Creating common ground and nothing more does not lead to argument. Thus, identification does not cause strife. The differences outside of this common ground create the disruption. From this common ground as a

reference point, a marginalized community member can then create an argument for their identity.

Janice Fernheimer builds off Burke's ideas on identification to create more specific and inclusive terms, thus furthering the concept. She makes the point that if a community is unsure of its identity and individual members or subgroups have differing ideas on the group's identity, nothing can really be accomplished because there is no stable common ground. She then offers a solution through interruptive invention, which is her theory suggesting that there are half steps to identification. Whereas Burke takes a stance that suggests identification only occurs when an individual is successful in creating an accepted identity, Fernheimer suggests that "failure" to create an accepted identity does not mean that new meaning was not created. She shows that these communities are still doing work towards a change, but lack a wide enough audience to make a difference. Her half steps work together to produce an inventional opportunity, which is created when an argument clears the way for furthering the conversation and allows for a space within the community that acknowledges the issue. These half steps consist of:

- Interruptive identification: "New terms or aspects are associated with an accepted term, idea, or notion but not yet accepted by the group for whom they are new" (57).
- Inventionary identification: "When a new identification is accepted by the larger group" (57).
- Disruptive dissociation: "When the 'connecting links' are broken and a new association is made, but the new association is not (yet) fully accepted into the symbolic structure by a wide enough audience to fully shift the symbolic terms that structure reality" (57).

- Uncomfortable communion: “A process by which a rhetor uses terms familiar to his or her audience but redefines them or reinterprets them in ways that cause the audience to ponder, perhaps uncomfortably, the differences between the interpretations the rhetor offers and those the audience would otherwise tacitly and automatically accept” (58).

While Burke’s identification theory begins our understanding of how identity is created in a rhetorical manner, Fernheimer’s theory shows that smaller arguments than the ones Burke suggests do make an impact in the process of identity recreation. In order to begin processes of reidentification, marginalized communities may need to take these smaller half-steps, which still recognize the change in perception that the community is able to make without considering it a failure.

However, there are other aspects to how societal identities are created. If we acknowledge the redefining of terms as a part of this identification process, what happens then when successful creation/remodeling of an identity is affected by the ethos held by the individual or community trying to achieve uncomfortable communion on a societal scale? Nedra Reynolds discusses how “identity is formed through negotiations with social institutions and through one’s locatedness in various social and cultural ‘spaces’” (326). Deepening ties between location and identity, Nedra Reynolds offers the idea that a space creates our ethos, which affects our rhetorical agency. Thinking of ethos when analyzing a cultural space allows another part of an identity to be depicted that must be taken into consideration – location.

Reynolds situates ethos as something that requires an individual’s or group’s location to be established; for example, being positioned and located as female affects the way knowledge is experienced and constructed (330). She discusses this situated ethos from the perspective of

marginalized groups and the integration of “betweens” (Reynolds 330). These “betweens” are used to mean the spaces in between communities. In other words, to find common ground and help establish ethos within one community, an individual must recognize and use the spaces between communities to communicate (Reynolds 332). She suggests that the “betweens” can construct ethos through the use of writing as a cultural space to claim an identity (Reynolds 333). Reynolds’ theory shows how disenfranchised groups can build their ethos to allow for identification to be implemented on larger scales, leading to a more established movement to recreate the identity of the community.

While the idea of “betweens” allow for ethos construction, what happens when identities are tied to differences that are then commodified? How does the individual or group break from this commodification? Stephanie Kerschbaum interacts with the idea of marking differences and its potential to create the commodification of differences. She introduces the idea of markers of difference, which she defines as ways to “recognize and respond to others self-displays and to purposefully craft oneself within particular social contexts” (Kerschbaum 83). She explains that markers of difference can be non-disclosed (a difference that does not need to be disclosed because it is visible; ex. hearing loss is signaled by the use of a hearing aid) or disclosed (a difference that is not visible and needs to be disclosed for someone else to know; ex. depression). Kerschbaum explains how universities use differences in the form of diversity within their institutions to make themselves seem progressive and appealing to those outside of the community, selling to an unmasked identity. Kerschbaum thus acknowledges that markers of difference can have an affect on an individual’s position with a social/cultural context (i.e. in

Kerschbaum's case, a student of color might hold be positioned as a commodity within a university, changing their identity within this social/cultural context).

In the circumstance of the university, commodifying differences is shown as negative. However, commodities are characterized by their value and usefulness. Thus, the idea of commodifying a difference could temporarily work in favor of a group that is attempting to build ethos for the recreation of an identity. The group's entrance into public conversation would allow for a voice in the public sphere, though would also necessitate the need to separate from this commodification as a sole identity. From this, I conclude that marking the differences of a marginalized group with the intent of entering the "between" of public and disenfranchised realms can create ethos.

Fernheimer's, Reynolds', and Kerschbaum's rhetorical theories seem to point to one another, but exist separately. I argue that Reynold's and Kerschbaum's theories on ethos and difference work with the half-steps that Fernheimer proposes to successfully create or shift the identity of a disenfranchised community. Combining all three of these theories allows a new perspective on identification that is more representative of the work that a marginalized community might have to undergo for disruptive dissociation and uncomfortable communion to reach a societal scale.

Applying Rhetorical Theories to the Marginalized Prison Community

In her article "Ethos as Location: New Sites for Understanding Discursive Authority" Reynolds briefly mentions that prison communities were part of the discussion at the Conference on College Composition and Communication that year, 1993. Despite the time since then, inmates and ex-inmates are still a disenfranchised community that lack a voice within the public

sphere. Given the role of commodification of difference to create a conversation between the public and prison, inmates have a particularly rigid set of circumstances to navigate for this connection to happen. Location affects the inmate population more than it might affect other communities because the institution of prison. Even within the prison among other community members, the specific positioning of an inmate (within a group or a cell block) might change the way an inmate builds ethos. Facing any sort of identification processes becomes difficult with the added layer of a presupposed identity, not only from outside of prison walls, but also within.

The presupposition of the inmate identity comes from an ideological progression that led to the notion of prison and society's associations to it. Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* focuses on this progression and establishes a foundation for the way those outside of the population understand inmate identity. Through a philosophical lens, Foucault discusses the ideologies behind prison as an institution and the development of our system of punishment. He argues that there was a switch in ideology of punishment from the infliction of pain on the body to infliction on the soul. The philosophy that Foucault argues against promotes the idea that "disobedience [is] an act of hostility" (57). At first, the idea expressed that the person who committed an offence was acting against the sovereign power, until this attack was perceived to be on society as a whole. With this, the identity of the inmate is seen as a traitor of society, someone on an opposing side. This traitor identity affects the punishment by associating the severity of the offence to the amount it deviates outside social norms (92). From this ideology, we see the emergence of an inmate identity, as perceived by society: "the criminal designated as the enemy of all, whom it is in the interest of all to track down, falls outside the pact, disqualifies himself as a citizen and emerges, bearing within him as

it were, a wild fragment of nature; he appears as a villain, a monster, a madman, perhaps, a sick and, before long, ‘abnormal’ individual” (Foucault 101).

The result of the iterated “madmen and monsters” notion of inmate identity then takes seed in the inmate himself, until he is bound by it. The inmate believes himself to be the monster society thinks he is, leading to a self-sufficient prison where prisoners exert policing over themselves to transform into a normal, functioning member of society. However, the inmate has a chance at redemption. Foucault suggests that, once they are policing themselves, inmates have the option to transform, which helps the prison staff to maintain order and conformity (Foucault 148). This transformation consists of the normalization of “deviant” inmate perspective to one that is more conforming with societal norms. A common concrete example of this are the drug withdrawals that happen so often within prison walls. Drug addictions, rather than being medically treated and weened off, are completely cutoff in prison to begin the physical transformation of sobriety. After transforming, inmates are “recognized as having made themselves worthy” (182).

In the public sphere of popular culture and perception within the United States, once a person is incarcerated, the individual becomes their crime. The crime is seen as an isolated action, rather than in the context that surrounds it. The morals and soul of the inmate are then blamed for the offense. This inmate community, on a large scale, is dehumanized because of their prior actions. Their issues are held separately from those of the outside world, allowing a lack of agency to permeate the community. It is believed that society should be afraid or ashamed of these criminals. This can be shown from an etymological standpoint as well:

Prisoner (n.) - a person or thing that is deprived of liberty or kept in restraint.

Synonyms: captive, culprit, loser

Inmate (n.) - a person who is confined in a prison, hospital, etc.

Synonyms: prisoner, patient

As per thesaurus.com, the term *prisoner* is synonymous with the word *loser*. “Loser” solidifies the notion that society is ashamed of these individuals and that they should be shunned from general society, which works alongside Foucault’s notion of inmates as traitors of society. The word “prisoner” can be considered a person or a thing, which begins the separation of prisoner and human, confirming their “lesser” status as a marginalized community. The idea of a prisoner as defined by their deprivation of liberty and the need for restraint reaffirms a less than human notion, showing that prisoners should be treated as animals that need restraint or things that do not require freedom. *Inmate* also shows as synonymous to *patient*. The term “patient” is traditionally associated with a person that needs medical attention in order to be “fixed,” which aligns with the idea of a transformation being necessary for inmates to be considered human.

Even today, the notion of an inmate as “lesser” is something that is still subscribed to by the general public. This can be seen through entries on “Urban Dictionary” (a dictionary that highlights cultural definitions and slang and consists of internet user entries) defining elements of inmate life under the #prisoner section, such as:

1. The “Teardrop Tattoo” as “A tattoo that generally means a person is going to be a leach on society forever by wasting our tax dollars rotting in prison” with 194 likes (or people that potentially agree) versus 25 dislikes (MrHobbes69) or

2. A Correction Officer as “An individual that keeps you safe at night. One who watches the criminals locked up so everyone else can sleep safe knowing they’re not going to escape” with 89 likes versus 16 dislikes (sglspd22).

Both of these modern and informal descriptions of perceived inmate identity show inmates as “animalistic” and “lesser.”

Through these societal associations, we have created a stigma, a negative connotation surrounding the identity of a person as an inmate or ex-inmate. But, what happens when the narratives shown to us through media potentially differ from first-hand accounts? Even with a first-hand account, the narrative might change depending on the position of authority (whether the individual’s role is of an inmate or of staff). These varying narratives complicate what society thinks of as the identity of a prisoner. This shows that we as a society are constructing an identity for a community, rather than allowing members to create their own identity. People that have not had the same lived experiences and have not necessarily been inside a prison physically are choosing what it means to be imprisoned. This becomes problematic when looking at the population constructing the identity of the inmate, which is largely composed of those that have never seen the inside of a prison facility outside of what is presented in TV shows and movies.

Even though this community makes up a good portion of the U.S. population (“about 1 in every 37 U.S. adults”), our societal notion of a criminal prescribes to the idea that an inmate’s identity is entirely wrapped within the crime he or she committed (Bonczar 1-2). This allows those outside of prison to feel okay about not giving this community any sort of credibility or voice, even after having left prison. It then becomes hard to be heard when society labels the individual as their crime instead of as a person. Given the negative connotation of being an

inmate, these individuals are stripped of their agency through the loss of their “deviant” voices, which are seen as unworthy of attention. As a disenfranchised community that is viewed as monstrous because they encompass “not only a violation of the laws of society but also a violation of the laws of nature”, those that do have a voice have a responsibility to listen to the group and how this community is creating an identity for itself (Foucault 55 *Abnormal*).

However, the modern inmate community is pushing against the idea that there is something wrong with an inmate and challenging the association between inmate and monster by reclaiming their agency through writing. Prison newspapers (run by inmates) offer an ideal platform for this reclamation through writing.

The History and Role of Prison Newspapers

In his article “Journalism Behind Bars,” James Morris gives a history of prison newspapers in the United States. Through Morris’ article, the purpose, setbacks, and commonalities of prison newspapers are observed throughout history, showing a pattern of shutdowns after a prison newspaper is created. The birth of this genre is credited to William Keteltas for writing *Forlorn Hope* within a debtors prison walls in 1800. He was the sole writer of the newspaper with the purpose of closing debtors prisons after Keteltas realized that petitions were not going to successfully achieve this. After its establishment, Keteltas’ purpose became to voice his concerns on the inhumane treatment that he was going through. However, the newspaper eventually shut down due to lack of sufficient funding. Later came the development of the *Prison Mirror*, a Minnesota-based prison newspaper that began in 1887 and is still in

existence. In its initial years, it was attacked for criticizing a warden of the penitentiary, but was not shut down (Morris 151-6).

Morris states that “Prison journalists over the last hundred years have tried to clarify that perception [the public perception of prison life] and focus attention on what they consider the many injustices of the system” (Morris 161). One example of this focus on injustices occurred in *The Angolite*, a prison newspaper from the Louisiana State Penitentiary, through which the inmate staff was able to help eliminate the use of electric chairs for executions in the state of Louisiana in order to avoid the unnecessary additional suffering of an inmate when things did not go as planned (Morris). It is within this article that we learn that federal prison newspapers are non-existent and that the majority of more recent local prison newspapers have not survived. Is it possible that the voice of this community is being further silenced, or do inmates no longer see purpose in these publications?

With the history of prison newspapers, there is also the history of their deterrence and silencing. In the corrections field, Wilbert Rideau (a co-editor of *The Angolite*) and Linda LaBranche (a correctional officer) give a breakdown of this silencing in their piece “Can a Free Press Flourish Behind Bars?” They discuss the history of several U.S. based prison newspapers, detailing that most of them have been shut down (Rideau and LaBranche). They state that the effects that prison newspapers have had in the past have usually been positive for the inmate (Rideau and LaBranche).

To fully understand the implications of a prison newspaper and how this allows inmates a space to speak, Eleanor Novek’s “Heaven, Hell, and Here: Understanding the Impact of Incarceration through a Prison Newspaper,” analyzes a prison newspaper through a

communications framework and looks at its role within the prison. She depicts the lifespan of a women's prison newspaper – a voice that has been even smaller in quantity – which she helped to establish. Within this article, Novek analyzes the ways in which the making of a prison newspaper affects inmates, what they write, and how this affects their inmate identity. She discusses the ways in which this form of communication has changed the dynamics between inmates.

From heading the newspaper, she found that there were inmates that held animosity towards the journalists among them, feelings as though these inmate journalists were informants (Novek 286). She states that journalists are also under “a constant threat of retribution from custodial officers” when they report on the happenings of their particular institution (Novek 285). Novek also mentions that “Corrections officers who tolerate such publications [prison newspapers] may view them as a way of keeping inmates busy, co-opting criticism, and making their institutions appear progressive to outsiders” (Novek 285). This is what is happening within the walls of prisons. The newspapers are being used as a way to sell the progressiveness and the humane conditions of a prison, much like Kerschbaum discusses a diverse student body being commodified.

However, Novek also notes the unifying sense the newspaper allows the inmates, as well as the outlet that it provides. She states, “the rhetorical vision created by one newspaper, produced at a state prison for women, allows inmates to create or sustain survivor identities and build community with one another under the most oppressive conditions” (Novek 288). Through this analysis, she finds that “inmate newspapers construct a public forum that allows incarcerated people to challenge society's definition of them with oppositional meanings rich in lived

experience, self-expression, and group vision” (Novek 298). The inmates in Novek’s article interact with their difference (that of being an inmate) in a way that opens a conversation within the context of a prison as a cultural space.

This attempted shift in dominant discourses leads to a look at how this conversation changes. How do these inmates define their identity? How are they changing the identity they have been given as a “lesser” community? To further examine these questions, I will be turning to a particular prison community, the community of the San Quentin State Prison in California. The San Quentin State Prison houses the *San Quentin News*, a public and online prison newspaper that is currently being circulated. This Californian prison is notorious for housing one of the largest death rows in the country, but the inmates and staff have been working together in more recent years to provide inmates with rehabilitation rather than just housing. These efforts have made them known as one of the most progressive prisons in the country. Therefore, I have chosen to look at how inmates construct and belong to a collective inmate identity.

The goal of this research is to listen to this community and help create an academic space for the experience of being an inmate in order to compensate for the disparities in perceptions of inmate identity between the inmate population and the general population (i.e. society). This makes prison newspapers ideal data because inmates themselves are writing these papers and rhetorically constructing an identity that they wish to portray outwardly. The purpose of this research is to help bridge the gap in understanding of inmate identity between the inmate and general populations. This brings me to the primary research question: How do the inmates of San Quentin State Prison use identification in writing to change dominant discourses surrounding prisoners?

From this question, I will be listening to the community in order to understand the strategies being employed to shift the conversation away from these dominant discourses. I explore their newspaper writing not only to listen to this conversation, but also to participate in the changing of these hegemonic concepts of inmate identity. These newspapers help remedy the lack of agency present by allowing a space for the inmate voice, which is why it is critical that we listen and share the identity that this often unheard community is creating for itself. Prison newspapers provide a space to practice what Krista Ratcliffe's "Rhetorical Listening: Identification, Gender, Whiteness" calls into question. Ratcliffe introduces the concept of rhetorical listening, in which we are each responsible for listening intently to a conversation even if we are not active contributors (Ratcliffe 204). Whenever culture becomes a part of the discussion, it is important to keep in mind the idea of rhetorical listening that Ratcliffe introduces. This concept shows that our opinions should be informed from rhetorically listening to the conversation surrounding the community, especially if we are not members of said community (205). We should not speak for the group and potentially take away their agency with ill-informed viewpoints.

The *San Quentin News* is trying to change this deficiency in rhetorical listening through the moves employed in their writing. The inmate community is actively constructing an identity, which is being formed within this prison newspaper. Yet, they are still being forced to wear an identity that does not match the one they have created on a societal level, showing exigency for this research. Because of this community's lack of agency, there may be many rhetorical strategies at play.

For the purposes of this research, I will be focusing on the layering of the three strategies that I argue work together to create group identities: (1) Fernheimer's method of identification to analyze the disruptive dissociation that occurs throughout the newspaper, (2) Reynold's concept of attaching geographical location and utilizing the "between" to build ethos, and (3) Kerschbaum's notion of commodifying markers of difference. The *San Quentin News* will thus be a model for the intertwining of these various rhetorical theories to create identification processes. Through my textual analysis of the *San Quentin News*, I will be able to go through and identify the moves taking place to create a better understanding of how this community views themselves.

The following chapters are structured by audiences of the newspaper. I will be focusing on the audience of inmates within San Quentin State Prison, inmates within the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, and the general public. I will also briefly touch upon the prison staff as an audience. I will be exploring the three rhetorical theories outlined above as they are seen throughout the newspaper. Both chapters will focus on close readings of *San Quentin News* issues between the years of 2011 to August 2016. This time range was chosen in order to uncover if there were differences between the *San Quentin News* issues prior to their partnership with UC Berkley versus after the partnership, which took place in the summer of 2012 (UC Berkley Graduate School of Journalism). The last chapter will discuss how each of these components coalesce to form a new identity for inmates.

Chapter 2: Identification Between San Quentin and Other CDCR Prisons

San Quentin State Prison's (SQSP) newspaper *San Quentin News (SQN)* points to communication that promotes the creation of a unified inmate identity within the prison and between prisons. The inmate writers incorporate news from within prison walls, discuss SQSP events, write book and movie reviews through the eyes of an inmate, weave in perspectives from inmates in other prisons, and discuss problems in other prisons. From these articles, people outside of the inmate community can better understand this community through the perspective and experiences of those within it.

Inmate perspectives are not usually shared with the public with the intent of allowing others outside of the community to *understand* the group. Inmate identity, as described by Michel Foucault, is intended to be “the criminal designated as the enemy of all, whom it is in the interest of all to track down, disqualifie[d] as a citizen; he appears as a villain, a monster, a madman, perhaps, a sick and, before long, ‘abnormal’ individual” (101). *San Quentin News* allows this perspective to be shared with not only other inmates within and outside of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), but the general public. This promotes the creation of a unified identity for a community that is supposed to be depersonalized and stripped of identity (i.e. the use of numbers or the term “inmate” in place of names by prison staff). *SQN* exists in an era where society strives to understand villainized perspectives with movies such as *Maleficent* and books like *Atonement*.

This chapter will focus on the communication in the *SQN* that is meant for an inmate audience within SQSP and in other prisons. I will be looking at the communication strategies used by inmate staff writers and inmate responses to the identities placed on the community. This

chapter will also look at the structure of the newspaper articles, as well as how these inmates are building ethos for themselves as SQSP inmates and as inmates in general.

Interpersonal Communication

The articles in the *SQN* that showcase interpersonal communication within the community make up a significant portion of the newspaper. Interpersonal communication here is used to mean writing with an audience that the writer belongs to (that of California inmates both within SQSP and in other CDCR institutions). Incorporating this interpersonal aspect of the articles highlights a divide in the interpersonal audience - one comprised of inmates within SQSP and ones within the general CDCR.

The rhetorical situation affects how this interpersonal communication occurs. The rhetorical situation of the panopticonic prison creates limitations through the monitoring of communication. The panopticonic prisons “as a work of architecture, ...allows a watchman to observe occupants without the occupants knowing whether or not they are being watched” (McMullan). In this context, the panopticon extends out from the physical architecture of the prison and into other methods of surveillance. These include room searches, surveillance cameras, the listening of phone calls, reading of handwritten letters, and the staff reading emails. Because the *San Quentin News* is a publicly distributed newspaper and the prison staff review the newspaper before it goes to print, the main limitation imposed on prisoners here is the reading and self-censoring that the inmates place upon themselves. While they are not directly observed, inmates are aware that others reading this newspaper may not be pleased with the reporting of any bad prison conditions or ideas against the traditional prison system since this may pose the risk of rebellion on behalf of the inmates (be it in SQSP or other prisons). In order

for the panopticonic idea of prison surveillance to function, the inmates must internalize the concept of constant surveillance and thus, monitor themselves to create a self-sufficient system (Foucault 195-228). While this does not mean that staff is imposing these views on the individual prison's structure, it does mean that the way American prisons are conceptualized shapes the dynamics within the prison and is meant to create an internalized idea of surveillance.

Both audiences - inmates within SQSP and those outside SQSP, but in the CDCR - are affected by this internalized system of surveillance. I argue that awareness of this nationally accepted concept of the panopticonic prison is seen in the newspaper through the rhetorical strategies employed by the inmate writing staff.

Ethos in Interpersonal Communication

Regardless of self-censoring, *SQN* has developed a sense of belonging in the larger scheme of the CDCR, gaining the ability to influence the national inmate community because of their growing platform and reputation as one of the most progressive prisons in the country. This newspaper is situated within a larger conversation on the American prison system - one that looks at and critiques current practices, speaking for the inmate population. Politicians, wardens, prison staff, inmates, former inmates, victims, and the families of inmates all weigh in on this conversation, bringing different perspectives to the table. Stakeholders within these populations that place a lack of ethos on the shoulders of inmates (a notion that *SQN* looks to dispel) aim to silence the conversation.

Nevertheless, *SQN* writers have positioned the newspaper in a place where inmate accounts can be told and inmate problems heard. Because the staff and inmates have worked together to create an environment of rehabilitation in SQSP, events and programs such as group

inmate and victim therapy, computer coding classes, and an annual Day of Peace march have led to growth of the idea that SQSP inmates are trying to better themselves and return to the society-driven concept of “normal.” This has created an influx of celebrities and politicians taking notice of SQSP. Because these celebrities and politicians, such as Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg and appellate court judge J. Anthony Kline, have platforms to speak from – in other words, people will listen if they publicly stand by something or someone – they have helped SQSP build a larger platform by standing with SQSP inmates. This newly conceived platform means that SQSP inmates now have the ability to speak out for other prisons, given that other prisons might not have the same level of ethos and a seemingly harmonious co-existence with prison staff. For this reason, the newspaper also invites submissions for publication from writers in other prisons in the CDCR. This creates a network of intrapersonal communication among California prisons.

These outside submissions focus primarily on female institutions, the transgender community, or other California inmates that are ill-represented, including a group of inmates on a hunger strike for their rights at another prison. This affinity towards news stories from the specified groups of inmates aligns with the *SQN*'s explicit moves to let other inmates borrow the ethos that they have only recently gained. I argue that their inclusion criteria for submitted work and the focus on female institutions, transgender inmates, and other non-represented inmates is connected to the lack of ethos specific to these inmate communities. The female inmate community has less ethos than male inmates, particularly because of the lack of female versus male inmates (there are 21 times more male inmates than female just in the CDCR) (Atkinson et al.). The transgender inmate population makes up about 385 inmates out of a total 134,160 California inmates, creating a lack of ethos similar to that of female inmates (Levin).

However, *SQN* writers might highlight the building of ethos for inmates outside SQSP, but it is not prioritized, being that these stories are not usually front page news and tend to be within the middle or even the end of the newspaper. This placement has several possible implications. While *SQN* is not censored by SQSP staff and administrators, other prisons might not be keen to the idea of building community among inmates through a shared newspaper. An example of this was seen when *SQN* staff reported on a New York prison that denied an inmate's request to subscribe to *SQN* (Thomas). Building of community in this context might be seen as a security threat (despite the years that SQSP has run this way without problems) and as lack of control over inmates. A prison newspaper might be perceived as an unwelcomed lack of control to staff because the current control the staff has over inmates stems from the absence of an inmate voice and even more so, a unified voice. Having submitted articles in the middle of the newspaper or towards the end – places where the reader might not pay close attention – allows these submissions to be printed with less controversy, protecting the writers of submitted pieces.

In these ways, *SQN* serves as a platform for inmate concerns to be heard. While some prisons have administration check through the *SQN* issues that arrive in the mail to ensure that they are not dangerous for the inmates to read and possess, others might not check as thoroughly, which is part of why the outside submissions are, I argue, rhetorically placed. In non-progressive prisons that might allow the *SQN* in the mail, the inmate can submit their story to the newspaper, have the support of *SQN*, and have the issue made public. This creates an ideal public forum consisting of other California inmates, prison staff, and prison volunteers for a community that stands in solidarity with inmates as they air out the serious concerns of a community that is often not allowed to speak. This display of solidarity has created change with events such as a hunger

strike that spread to multiple prisons in the CDCR after one prison reported abuse in the solitary confinement unit. Other acts of solidarity include helping another state prison start a newspaper and the Day of Peace march where inmates, staff, and volunteers come together at SQSP.

Theoretical Framework

SQN is making defined moves throughout towards a clear community of CDCR inmates both within SQSP and between California prisons. The larger move of building community to create solidarity is comparable to Eleanor Novek's study that details how a prison newspaper in a female institution allowed for a unified survivor identity to bring inmates together. However, it complicates her idea that the newspaper creates conflict among inmates. She discusses that inmates were afraid to be identified as on the writing staff because the newspaper writers were seen negatively by inmates not on the writing staff. In this way, the prison newspaper that Novek contributes to and examines creates a community, but it is one separate from the inmate population. In comparison, *SQN* writers do not branch off as a group separate from others, but rather use this genre as a platform for rhetorical listening among inmates, inviting others to submit and help define the community they are creating. The newspaper in Novek's study doesn't create solidarity among inmates because it limits the access of the newspaper. Only a certain group are allowed to write, create, and edit.

The divide between the newspaper in Novek's study and *SQN* breaks defined notions of the inmate community by showing that inmates can be a collective community without turning against each other. The breaking of this inmate notion and its replacement with the idea of solidarity among the community lends itself to Fernheimer's theory of identity rhetoric. In her book *Stepping Into Zion*, Fernheimer shows that identity re-creation relies on not only common

ground between the previous identity and the new one, but also the breaking of existing links and the making of new links, much like the breaking and replacing of notions occurring with the moves of solidarity present in *SQN*. The solidarity amongst inmates changes the public perception of “survival of the fittest” behind prison walls, instead drawing a picture of inmates working together towards a goal like creating a newspaper issue. In this way, the building of inmate ethos and solidarity allows SQSP to break notions of inmate identity.

Moving towards a defined community of CDCR inmates leads to the solidarity and organization moves made in *SQN*, which helps increase the ethos of this group. A unified voice is louder than a few solitary ones. We see examples of this throughout the *SQN* such as when SQSP inmates joined the hunger strike mentioned previously. SQ inmates are creating a platform and building ethos for not only themselves, but also the concept of a more “progressive” prison - one with a mission towards rehabilitation instead of just putting people that deviate from societal rules out of the public gaze; a prison that works to recognize inmates as humans that need to function in society and provides inmates with the tools/environment needed to get there. These inmates are organizing into the space of a newspaper that voices their concerns and validates an identity, which creates ethos for both the SQ inmates and those in other prisons.

However, in order to create this ethos for SQSP and for the idea of a progressive prison, *SQN* utilizes Kerschbaum’s theory of the commodification of differences by commodifying their difference as inmates of a progressive prison. They mark their difference of being in a progressive prison through articles that discuss all of their programs and events, such as their group therapy sessions with the families of victims affected by their crimes. This leads to inmates from other prisons requesting to be transferred to SQSP because the prison is perceived

as better. In this way, it has been commodified within the CDCR community as a place that will lead to a better and peaceful future for an inmate, whether that future is behind bars or outside of prison. This commodification has led to the branding of SQSP as a progressive, in-demand prison. Thus, their perceived ethos increases from their demand and the case they make for this model of prison. The knowledge and experience from the SQSP programs becomes a main commodity within the community. Therefore, this exchange of knowledge is highlighted as a commodity within the newspaper in order to create a platform that builds ethos for the prison.

Another move seen within the inter- and intrapersonal communication in the newspaper is that of creating a conversation around experiences. Between prisons, this creates ethos for SQSP inmates by showing commonalities, despite their more progressive nature; however, this also creates ethos for inmates outside SQSP by showing that the experiences of other inmates are similar, thus making their own experiences valid. *SQN* has two purposes in regards to ethos – a) build a platform for prisons in general within the public sphere and b) build a platform/name/identity for themselves in particular throughout CDCR, giving them recognition. Both of these can be done by discussing experiences, showing solidarity, and creating organization.

Newspaper Structure

With *San Quentin News* having such a variety of audiences, the newspaper is rhetorically organized to cater for each of these audiences separately, showing what information is for whom. The pattern I have noted within *SQN* is:

- A first page that describes the happenings in SQSP for a public audience

- A second page that typically features a story about a member of the SQSP community that is not an inmate (i.e. staff, teachers, volunteers, etc.)
- A middle section that describes events in SQSP with an inmate audience (denoted by the use of terms such as “Your” to speak directly to inmates)
- And an ending that starts with at the sports section and includes music events in the prison, showing an audience that includes all three listed above.

Towards the beginning of the newspaper, titles such as “San Quentin Hosts 1st TEDx” and “Victim-Offender Education Focuses on Spanish-Speaking Men” (Feb. 2016 issue) can be found (Haines; Quezada and Haines). These articles focus on an outward appearance and work to deconstruct the publically villainized identity of an inmate, reconstructing it with phrases like “Spanish speaking-men” or “Graduates” instead of “inmates”. These front-page stories also usually feature inmates performing an action not usually attributed to the public notion of an inmate, such as “Victim-Offender Education” course that serves as a therapy group for both inmates and victims of their crimes (Quezada and Haines).

Towards the middle of the newspaper, titles such as “Securus Buys JPay; Prison Industrial Complex Consolidates” and “Time to Reshape Your Narrative” in the November 2015 issue (Sawyer; Haines). These articles focus on the inmate as an individual with a more inmate-centered audience. The “Your” in the title “Time to Reshape Your Narrative” and the direct statement “DeWeaver said that he believes inmates have the power to change how they are seen by the public by telling their story, their way,” both refer to the inmate population they are speaking to (Haines). The “Securus Buys JPay; Prison Industrial Complex Consolidates” title shows information that the public may not be as interested in, given that it focuses on a

detail/issue of everyday inmate life (Sawyer). The audience here is also the inmate population. However, both of these articles focus on inmate issues that do not involve specific institutions, being that reshaping the inmate narrative can be done by inmates outside of SQ and that Securus is a national company serving over 2,200 facilities (Securus Technologies). These articles revolve around the interpersonal communication directed towards all CDCR inmates with issues that would interest and affect the CDCR inmate population as a whole.

Within the middle section, titles such as “*San Quentin News* ‘Moves Forward’” and “*Julius Caesar and Macbeth Entertain 600 Guests*” from the July 2015 issue begin to surface (Garcia; Haines). The articles here revolve around SQSP news in a way that does not necessarily focus on the reconstructing of identity. These articles describe news within the prison in a way that does not expressly focus on the difference between SQSP and other prisons, thus these articles are not written with the intention of commodifying SQSP’s difference for a gain in ethos among other prisons. Because of the focus on SQSP internal news, events, and the sharing of SQ inmate perspectives, the primary audience consists of SQ inmates. This kind of interpersonal communication focuses on the community of this prison in particular and building the kind of solidarity amongst themselves that gives them the platform to help other CDCR inmates outside of SQ build solidarity as well.

Community Formation

The interpersonal communication directed towards SQSP inmates within the newspaper focuses primarily on social conditions within the SQ prison. These social conditions reflect a variety of events happening within the prison. There are several articles throughout the 2011-2016 spread examined that congratulate inmates on graduating from their various programs, such

as SQ's computer coding class or from the Prison University Project programs. There are articles that describe situational events, such as the retiring of a staff member or the suicide of an inmate. Every issue also has a sports section that details the sports events (baseball, basketball, etc.) that took place within the prison that month. There are also mentions of music events (concerts put on by inmates and artists that visit the prison), as well as an arts and entertainment section that features inmate poetry (this includes poetry from general CDCR inmates).

These articles focus on news within SQSP, making SQSP inmates the primary audience, since the articles do not focus on the social conditions of other prisons. The articles share experiences that would matter most to other inmates within SQSP, keeping them informed on the happenings within the prison. This interpersonal communication through articles on SQSP events signals the creation of community. The articles work to praise community members and share their experiences with each other. SQ inmates write their opinions in the articles and newspaper staff work to quote other SQSP inmates that would like to weigh in on the topic. The sharing of these experiences and emotions creates solidarity through shared experiences. Each of these articles focuses on community members and the aspects of their lives associated with the community. The graduates are finishing a *SQSP* program; the staff members are retiring from their work at *SQSP*; sports events are happening with *SQSP* sports teams, and so on. The interpersonal communication directed towards community members focuses on their ties to the location, creating a community around those shared experiences in that particular location. This builds solidarity among inmates, staff members, and volunteers by making the location representative of a community.

This formation of community can be seen as Fernheimer's concept of uncomfortable communion occurring within the CDCR on attitudes towards SQSP, where "the rhetor[s] use terms familiar to his or her audience but redefines them or reinterprets them in ways that cause the audience to ponder" (Fernheimer 59). In this case, the location San Quentin State Prison is being redefined by the *SQ News* as a prison with progressive values. SQSP has gone from being a prison (one notorious for its heavily populated death row) to being a community, one where inmates laud each other for their accomplishments and validate their own and their peer's experiences. This redefinition of SQSP has led to the solidarity seen within the community through their shared programs, cooperation between staff and inmates, and events such as the Annual Day of Peace March (a march for all SQSP members, including staff and volunteers).

Originally, I thought that these newspaper served as a means of mostly interpersonal communication. However, with the moves defined throughout the previous sections, we see clear moves on both the inter- and intrapersonal levels. Moves of recognition for other inmates creates a positive environment that has inmates helping each other. Allowing other inmates to be heard and share in SQ's built ethos shows a move of solidarity that tells inmates that their voices matter, despite the active silencing that happens inside and out of the community. This promotes the idea that these inmates can make it through prison together, rather than having to compete with one another to survive. These moves give more importance and weight to the work they are doing. Their articles show valued practices performed in the group. While having these valued practices shows a group identity, it also leaves room for individuality because the practices can be carried out in individual ways. All of these rhetorical moves add up to the redefining of a community that has never been allowed to truly form, despite the way that inmates are separated

out from society. Non-inmates say phrases like “on the inside,” creating a clear distinction between “us” (non-inmates) and “them” (inmates). The acknowledgement of separation was there, but the allowance of a group identity was not.

Chapter 3: Identification Between San Quentin and the General Public

The *SQN* newspaper opens discussion among those that are not part of the inmate community, giving inmates more control over their place in the public sphere. Because the newspaper is online and has its archives on the website, *SQN* is accessible by the general public. *SQN*'s section on Arts and Entertainment (until recently) featured pictures of people reading the newspaper in varied locations around the world. While some were pictures of familiar faces in the community, such as William Drummond (the UC Berkeley professor that began a relationship between the university and the newspaper), others were not. This suggests that the newspaper not only reaches the public sphere, but is aware of an audience beyond the CDCR, even if this audience is a secondary one.

Rhetorically, this secondary audience of a general public with interests or opinions on inmates in the CDCR or the American prison system as a whole (a similar audience to that of the Netflix documentary *13th*) has implications for how the inmate writers of *SQN* might conceive of the newspaper. As mentioned in the previous section, the newspaper follows the pattern of:

- A first page that describes the happenings in SQSP for a public audience
- A second page that typically features a story about a member of the SQSP community that is not an inmate (i.e. staff, teachers, volunteers, etc.)
- A middle section that describes events in SQSP with an inmate audience (denoted by the use of terms such as “Your” to speak directly to inmates)
- An ending with the arts/entertainment and sports sections, showing an audience that includes all three listed above.

Because the first page is directed towards the general public (given the explanations and definitions for SQSP and inmate lexis), inmate writers seem to change the ways they write the newspaper to have this audience in mind when conceiving their former purpose of “dispel[ling] rumors rampant both inside and outside the prison (via the “grapevine”)” (“About Us”). I argue this purpose is achieved for a public audience through the identification theories also at play towards their inmate peers (i.e. identification, ethos as location, and commodification of difference/knowledge). Burke’s identification theory suggests that with the general public, *SQN* inmate staff is engaging in the acknowledgement of a common ground in order to create identification.

In thinking of the original purpose of *SQN*, there is mention of “outside of prison.” This means the original purpose also viewed the general public as a secondary audience. Taking on Foucault’s definition of an inmate, the most prevalent “grapevine” rumor that the newspaper aims to dispel is the conception of an inmate’s identity. Foucault states that inmates are meant to be seen as traitors to society as a whole, meaning the American inmate identity is meant to break the trust between the public and the inmate. This trust, in rhetorical terms, equates to a lack of ethos. However, the community must first build the trust that this definition an inmate breaks - the bond between inmate and the public. Because of this, *SQN*’s original purpose can be seen as rhetorically aware and working towards building SQSP and inmate ethos.

The building of ethos with the public comes into play with articles such as “Facebook Founder Tours San Quentin” (Haines). In other words, Mark Zuckerberg, who has a platform as a celebrity, physically placed himself within SQSP. Zuckerberg states that “[he] wanted to visit a prison that had really good success and meet some of the folks.” This adds ethos to the physical

location of SQSP because he specifically talks about and decides to see SQSP instead of another prison. Much like the interpersonal communication within *SON* built community and thus, changed the facility's identity, Mark Zuckerberg's ethos, along with other celebrities (M.C. Hammer, Kamau Bell, etc.) and prison education programs (computer coding, Prison University Project, etc.), changes SQSP's (as a physical location) ethos. As per Reynolds theory of ethos as location, SQSP inmates locate themselves as inmates that receive celebrity visits, thus their ethos can build off the ethos of a celebrity.

I argue that the move to put celebrity visits, special programs, and the success of inmates (through graduation, volunteering, etc.) as front page stories is a move to commodify an SQSP inmate's difference. The inmates recognize that their facility is different from others in a public sphere, as it has programs that other prisons do not offer. The inmate writers use this to their advantage when constructing the newspaper. Similar to Kerschbaum's argument on the commodification of diversity within university settings, SQSP commodifies their programs, events, and now their celebrity visits not only to build ethos within the CDCR, but also to build ethos in the public sphere. *SON* writers invoke celebrities rather than knowledge when facing a public audience in order to build ethos with this audience alongside the CDCR audience they also have. Inmates using celebrity ethos alongside discussion of programs in the prison means the public is more likely to think about this particular prison. It then becomes known as the prison that is so progressive, rehabilitative, and humane in comparison to other prisons that even celebrities have to recognize their efforts.

The *SON* inmates make a move to dissociate from Foucault's terms of inmate identity. This is a move towards Fernheimer's concept of disruptive dissociation, in which the

“‘connecting links’ are broken and a new association is made, but the new association is not (yet) fully accepted into the symbolic structure by a wide enough audience to fully shift the symbolic terms that structure reality” (Fernheimer 57). This happens through the gain in trust between the inmates and their public audience, which is increased through the moves made to attach ethos to SQSP. In relation to Fernheimer, the public would be considered (generally speaking) one step behind the SQSP community in the steps of community identity building/understanding.

Limitations With SQN’s General Public Audience

While *SQN* reaches a more public audience than just within prison walls, it does not reach throughout all of the American public. Therefore, the CDCR and American prison community that already have a larger common ground (which, as Burke mentions, is the basis for identification) can already create uncomfortable communion. Among the inmate community, this communion forms by the way of the breaking panopticonic and self-censoring ideas that have been internalized within the American prison system, bringing the autonomy to build an identity as inmates. However, the understanding between the public and *SQN* inmates is still located within a disruptive dissociation because the broken links are not widely enough accepted for an uncomfortable communion yet. This is due to the limited reach of the newspaper, as well as the limited scale of SQSP’s progressive approaches. Because the public audience is larger and more dispersed than the CDCR as an audience, SQSP’s progressive approaches is seen as a positive anomaly within the American prison system, particularly for individuals within the public that are not located in California. *The Economist*’s article “Prison labour is a billion-dollar industry, with uncertain returns for inmates” confirms this by stating (after telling a success story of an SQ inmate) “Such redemptive stories are the model for what the prison system could be.

But they are exceptions—the rule is much drearier” (*The Economist*). This shows that SQSP is viewed as a positive anomaly within a larger, broken system.

Their mainstream media coverage also holds SQSP back from fully forming an uncomfortable communion between the public and the inmate community’s renewed identity by perpetuating the “grapevine” rumors of a Foucauldian inmate identity (i.e. the madman). This is seen from the coverage received when SQSP inmates and staff allowed ABC News and Fox News Networks into SQSP’s infamous death row. When the prison is discussed in the articles reporting on these visits, it is clear that the reporters commodified the inmates, but not to build their ethos – rather to create a spectacle. For example, the ABC News reporter states that “With interest running high on the issue, San Quentin State Prison, home to the state's only death row, opened up and let ABC7 I-Team Reporter Dan Noyes and our cameras in for a rare look inside,” continuing with “To be able to speak to the inmates, Dan Noyes had to wear an anti-stab vest for protection against prison shanks...the prison will not negotiate over hostages, if he were to be taken” (Noyes). This produces another limitation when facing a public audience.

However, despite these limitations, SQSP inmates’ public facing disruptive dissociation moves have become more prominent throughout the years of the *SQN* and are gaining more attention from the public. SQSP inmates have taken to publications outside of their own to gain recognition, to lead more of the public to *SQN*, and to build ethos. Recently, an SQSP inmate described his experiences as the best man at a prison wedding in a *Vice* magazine article (King). This article works to commodify the difference between SQSP and other facilities because inmates are allowed to contribute to outside journalism more freely. It also allows for a much

larger audience and builds the ethos of SQSP by having *Vice*'s known name/brand attached to the article.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

The *San Quentin News* newspaper works to rhetorically create an identity for inmates in SQSP, the CDCR, and the United States as a whole, as noted in the previous chapters. *SQN* brings together several audiences - SQSP inmates, SQSP staff/teachers/volunteers, CDCR inmates, and the general public - and bridges them to build their identity in different ways. It continuously builds a platform for SQSP and then uses that platform to help the CDCR community speak.

Newspaper as Technology

Given my analyses in the previous chapters, the *San Quentin News* is used by the SQSP staff writers to position themselves with several audiences - SQSP inmates, CDCR inmates, the prison staff, and the general public. While the articles that target each of these audiences (or multiple at once) each use different strategies to gain ethos with the audience and create a platform for inmates, the strategy that is seen across all audiences that fulfills *SQN*'s purpose as a newspaper is the use of disruptive dissociation and uncomfortable communion. These theories brought forth by Fernheimer show the breaking of links with former concepts of a community's identity and the reforming of connections to create a new group identity for the community changing the terms/concepts.

Most importantly, San Quentin State Prison inmates have created space for the *San Quentin News* to serve as the common ground needed for identification, a technology that brings together a variety of readers to the same paper. Whereas a traditional newspaper is meant to bring information to the public, *SQN* situates itself as representative of an inmate identity. Because of this unique positioning, the newspaper allows for a growing voice within a

community that was designed to be stripped of its agency within the public sphere. The common ground that *SQN* provides also allows for SQSP inmates to help other inmates within the CDCR recognize and engage with a new identity in order to benefit and progress the community. The variety of audiences that interact with *SQN* gives way to prison staff also engaging with this new identity. Correctional officers, teachers, and volunteers are featured within the newspaper, thus recognizing them as part of the prison community and fostering interaction between the prison workers and the inmates.

I argue that *SQN* writers have been successful in these identification processes through the newspaper as determined by media coverage, expansion of writing programs or other programs that further develop the inmate identity, and increased public attention. SQSP inmates have written and done segments for Vice Magazine and interviewed with CNN. They have been featured on the “Life of the Law” podcast series. Since the beginning of this project, *SQN* has remodeled their website to include individual staff writer bios, as well as bios for partnered advisors and volunteers. SQSP is also beginning a podcast series of its own and is working on launching a magazine. These expansions show that this conversation is ever-present and ever-growing. The inmates of SQSP are reclaiming their space, voice, and identity through the use of identification processes in multiple mediums with a variety of audiences.

Access to Higher Education

The breaking and reforming of the inmate identity links is seen to spike within the *SQN* issues beginning in 2012. While there were pieces that worked towards this in the 2011 sample, 2012 and forward saw the rise of different terms to describe the community. “Graduates,” “Spanish-speaking men,” and most notably “Incarcerated American” are used after 2011. Within

the newspaper's own history, the summer of 2012 is also the same time period that a relationship with UC Berkley was solidified. Following this agreement, Berkley professor William Drummond, along with students in the graduate journalism and MBA programs, began holding classes to discuss journalism techniques with the inmates. I argue that access to higher education as a resource for the newspaper led to a growth in purposeful rhetorical decisions in terminology for the community, as well as design (see Chapter 2 for layout information) and the positioning of the community for a growth in ethos.

While the actual education did seem to further the prevalence of rhetorical strategies seen throughout, the concept of access to higher education itself was commodified throughout the newspaper as well, which helped grow the community's ethos. Had programs such as the Prison University Project, computer coding classes, or other education related programs not have existed within SQSP, the newspaper may not have gained traction. Celebrities cite these innovated education programs as the reason they believe SQSP is progressive and bringing forth new ideas for prisons in the U.S. Therefore, UC Berkley's sponsorship of *SQN* allowed for a growth in ethos necessary to build a platform, elevating the inmate writers' ethos to an elevated status instead of the "lesser" status that comes with being marginalized.

A New Heuristic for Identification

Rhetorical identity theories can be seen throughout the 2011-2016 years of *SQN* - the building of ethos based on physical location, which has led to the formation of a new community identity for SQSP itself, as well as the commodification of both SQSP's difference and the difference of being an inmate while speaking to the general public (that may primarily consist of people that have never been to prison). Within the literature in which these theories are

contained, they have no interaction with each other. While Burke's identification theory is at play in Fernheimer's half-step identification theories, there is no mention of commodification of difference or ethos as location. All three of these theories work in tandem with each other to successfully create a new community identity dictated by the inmates themselves.

As the initial theory for identification, Burke's model was defined by the building of an identity over common ground. This assumes that identity is easily created over this common ground and does not lay out the potential difficulties of reaching a place of identity building for a marginalized community. Burke's model does not address the problems that a marginalized identity may encounter when trying to change their identity on a mass scale. Fernheimer's theory builds on Burke's to allow more space for disenfranchised voices. With this research, I aim to further Fernheimer's theory by bringing in two other theories outside of identification that address concerns on how a marginalized community might rebuild their identity, as well as show how this process is taking place through the lens of the inmate community. I propose a new heuristic for how the field of rhetoric views identity creation or reformation within marginalized contexts. With the presented information and analyses, I have concluded that this structure is a potential representation of identification processes within marginalized communities:

Within the community

1. Ethos needs to be built from a sub-group within the community that can represent the change in identity – this process can happen through commodification of differences between the sub-group and the whole group

2. Disruptive dissociation, uncomfortable communion, and ethos building through physical location need to occur in order for individuals that are part of the physical space of the community, but are in positions of power (i.e. prison staff) to accept the new identity
3. Disruptive dissociation and uncomfortable communion need to occur in order for all members of the community to want to abandon the previous identity or want to create an identity

Towards the public

1. Present their difference as a commodity to create value attached to their voice
2. Commodify specific differences within the community that appeal to the larger ideology associated with the old identity (i.e. using progressive programs as an appeal to ethos because it invokes the idea of transformation that is behind the traditional inmate identity). This will build ethos in the public eye
3. Begin using disruptive dissociation to break old associations between undesired terminology and the old identity (i.e. speaking out against the old identity; using “men” to begin identifying with a less marginalized status). This works to divide the community from the old identity
4. Allow uncomfortable communion to take place by making stronger associations between the desired new identity and new or repurposed terminology (i.e. “Incarcerated American”)

Combined, these three theories create a new way of approaching and thinking of a community’s identity. The building of ethos within a physical location associated with the community allows for a platform in which the community’s difference is known enough for it to

be commodified. This then allows for disruptive dissociation that is heard on a larger scale, which is then followed by uncomfortable communion as the new community identity is widely accepted on a societal scale.

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