

University of Nevada, Reno

**Podcasting and the Rise of the Public Intellectual:
Viewing an Emergent Group of Media Personalities Through
the Prism of Antonio Gramsci's "The Intellectuals"**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Journalism

by

Jim Scripps

Dr. Ezequiel Korin/Thesis Advisor

August, 2020



THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

We recommend that the thesis
prepared under our supervision by

entitled

be accepted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Advisor

Committee Member

Graduate School Representative

David W. Zeh, Ph.D., Dean
Graduate School

Abstract

As podcasting has evolved from a niche technology to a mainstream medium, a diverse group of content creators and show hosts have been elevated by their popularity among listeners. As thought leaders in podcasting, these hosts exhibit attributes that fit into a model of the public intellectual as seen through the prism of the work of Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci. This paper explores how content creators use technological solutions to bypass traditional media gatekeepers, how the access that those solutions enable creates space for expression of ideas that are alternative to the mainstream, and how the interrelated cultural, political, social and economic conditions surrounding podcasting and these individuals fit into Gramsci's hegemonic model. As podcasting's leading figures, these public intellectuals are endowed with prestige within podcasting, and in some cases, beyond. This paper references examples from other media and technologies to show similar interaction between culture and technology in media. This paper concludes by examining how the financial investment that has followed the growth of podcasting may ultimately have the effect of realigning it with a traditional media gatekeeper model.

Contents

I. Introduction.....	1
II. Technology, Portability and the Embrace of Individualism.....	9
III. A Line From Blogging to Social Media to Podcasts.....	13
IV. Rise of Public Intellectuals Via Technology and Access.....	17
V. Podcasting and the ‘Subaltern’.....	19
VI. ‘Audience Power’ and Forces in Podcast Audience Growth.....	23
VII. Podcasting Culture and the Rise of Individualism.....	24
VIII. Technology and Individualism Coalesce in Podcasting.....	28
IX. The Personalities in Podcasting’s ‘Subaltern’.....	31
X. Conclusion.....	35
XI. References.....	38

Introduction

Since 2017, Bari Weiss has been an opinion writer at the New York Times. A controversial figure for her opinions about race, identity and the cultural zeitgeist, Weiss is truly figure of our moment: Bristling against the expectations of many New York Times readers by embracing an emergent cultural force (Weiss, 2018) that's rooted not in newspapers, but in the world of podcasting.

One of the notable exemplars of this emergent culture is podcast personality, stand-up comedian and mixed martial arts commentator Joe Rogan. Rogan is an acerbic, pot-smoking, anti-media establishment media figure. And with the legions who listen to his podcast, episodes of which regularly run more than two hours, Rogan has both ridden the wave of podcast growth and shaped its course along the way, inspiring countless also-rans, helping to pioneer the long-form, conversational model and building a media empire (Weiss, 2020).

While the New York Times continues to assert a lofty place in context of institutional news media hierarchy (Scire, 2020), it is a curious evolution that finds one of its staff columnists sitting across from Rogan, with Rogan conducting the interview. Rogan's popularity is not borne of his academic credentials, or any historical institutional credibility to which he is aligned. He was not thrust into the American public eye by the commercial interests of advertisers, and he did not buy his way into the public conversation. Rogan, like a handful of his contemporary podcast-host personalities, seems to reflect the technological evolution that underpins podcasting while responding to a cultural demand for the product that he produces on his podcast, the Joe Rogan Experience.

The interaction is symbolic of a shift in both the base of the activities that comprise media production and public consumption, as well as the superstructure that comprises institutional models of media (Williams, 1973). Weiss, the journalist-as-interviewee, comes from

a withering model of print journalism (Grieco, 2020), while Rogan, the interviewer, plays the progenitor of his own media empire. Weiss is part of an institution – the New York Times – that, despite strong subscriber numbers, is part of a mainstream media that is increasingly losing esteem with the public (Brenan, 2019), and Rogan is arguably the alpha male of podcasting, one of the most transcendent of the new media (Pew, 2017).

In this paper I will discuss how Rogan is part of a new breed of public intellectual who emanate from the podcast medium, media figures who are part of a process that is disrupting traditional order in media by using the power of the one-to-many, inexpensive publishing that podcasting technology allows to connect with an audience for whom there is a cultural misalignment with traditional media (Brenan, 2019). Rogan, and his podcasting contemporaries, circulate their ideas among a cohort of listeners who appear to gravitate to a model that eschews mainstream/corporate media gatekeepers. In this arrangement, this group of podcasters find an alignment between culture and content. I will discuss how among this group of podcasters the resultant mix of credentialed academics, free-wheeling conspiracists, life-hackers and psychedelic experimenters creates a reordered media ecosystem. In Rogan's world, and the world of his loyal audience, the context is changing around what constitutes the barriers between truthfulness, speculation and falsehood (Bialik, 2018). In this world, there seems to be a realignment of the power structures, where the host acts as a "public intellectual," working in a context with a refreshed open-mindedness about how to apply credibility, and interpret the veracity of information.

This manuscript looks at the popularity of the aforementioned group of emergent media figures through the prism of the work of Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci. In his essay "The Intellectuals," Gramsci (1971) suggests the ideal of the public intellectual as one who extends existing intellectual activity to criticize the status quo, to represent the "subaltern," the excluded groups of society.

In her examination of Thomas Wolfe as a public intellectual, Falls (2011) references Wolfe as the elevated “silenced other,” giving “voice to what would otherwise have gone unsaid” (p. 1). Likewise, in Fontana’s (2005) analysis, the function of the public intellectual as it relates to Gramsci’s “subaltern,” is partially to provide a check against dominant political forces, “...such legitimating activity is balanced and checked by forces and groups opposed and hostile (either actually or potentially) to the dominant group and to its values and beliefs” (p. 115). And while Gramsci’s (1971) public intellectuals offer representation by alternative voices in the dominant culture, those voices are also subject to a hegemonic process where dominant forces exert power by breaking down and subsuming challengers by “partial fulfilment and displacement of its demands” (Roccu, 2017, p. 539).

Gramsci’s (1971) analysis of the rise and establishment of fascism in Italy provides a conceptual approximation of this reincorporation of fringe elements into social normalcy. For Gramsci (1971), in the processes that underly cultural hegemony, mainstream culture is subject to and ultimately incorporative of alternative influences. As alternative cultural elements pass from the fringes of society to its center, they become sanitized and denuded of their power as they are reincorporated into mainstream culture (Gramsci, 1971). In so doing, they are also transforming culture at the margins and in the whole (Gramsci, 1971). This dual dynamic results in a constant reconfiguration of mainstream culture. Williams (1973) sees this process as a central system of practices in society at large.

On the contrary we can only understand an effective and dominant culture if we understand the real social process on which it depends: I mean the process of incorporation. The modes of incorporation are of great social significance, and incidentally in our kind of society have considerable economic significance. The educational institutions are usually the main agencies of the transmission of an effective dominant culture, and this is now a major economic as well as cultural activity; indeed it

is both in the same moment. Moreover, at a philosophical level, at the true level of theory and at the level of the history of various practices, there is a process which I call the *selective tradition*: that which, within the terms of an effective dominant culture, is always passed off as 'the tradition', 'the significant past'. But always the selectivity is the point; the way in which from a whole possible area of past and present, certain meanings and practices are chosen for emphasis, certain other meanings and practices are neglected and excluded. Even more crucially, some of these meanings and practices are reinterpreted, diluted, or put into forms which support or at least do not contradict other elements within the effective dominant culture (p. 9).

In this sense, Gramsci's (1971) notion of cultural hegemony is partially, though not wholly, explanatory of the cultural shift whereby anti-establishment public intellectuals emerge among the ranks of leading podcast personalities. Podcasting, as both a nascent technology and medium, seems to be in a process of developing its place in the media economy and culture. By extension of its economic potential, podcasting appears to be becoming retooled to the benefit of corporate interests, though it still seems relatively egalitarian. As such, those alternative figures who came into prominence during the early period of podcasting have a measure of social currency that may not be available to them in established mainstream media. One of the ways in which this process of cultural hegemony is evidenced in podcasting is in the acquisition by major corporate interests of formerly independently produced shows, such as the purchase of rights to the popular Joe Rogan Experience by streaming service Spotify (Steele, 2020).

Because podcasting is still in its cultural gestation period, the processes that underscore Gramsci's (1971) approach do not appear to be fully operational. For example, as will be discussed later, many of the barriers to entry in gatekeeper-controlled media – capital investment, technical ability, restrictive network distribution – do not appear to be a dominant

feature of podcasting. Like with the content mix in podcasting, it seems these production elements are still relatively democratic and still relatively well distributed among content creators and consumers.

According to Gramsci (1971), the process of hegemony also results in the elevation of public intellectuals whose credentials are inextricably connected to their class. In his writings, he communicated a belief that for the working class to enjoy social power there should be a shift in the types of individuals who compose society's public intellectuals, that the priorities of society's working class should be reflected by them.

The traditional and vulgarised type of the intellectual is given by the man of letters, the philosopher, the artist. Therefore journalists, who claim to be men of letters, philosophers, artists, also regard themselves as the "true" intellectuals. In the modern world, technical education, closely bound to industrial labour even at the most primitive and unqualified level, must form the basis of the new type of intellectual (Gramsci, 1971, p. 141).

However, it appears that those intellectuals who are among the leading voices in the podcasting medium are, at least, a partial realization of Gramsci's ideal. They are chosen by virtue of their popularity among listeners, and not necessarily ordained by an existing social order, although recent years have seen a trend of pop culture stars entering the podcasting space (Moore & Moore, 2019). As podcasting matures, we may see a more traditional order restored by the hegemonic process that is already evident in the corporatization of podcast content and technology.

In a sense, podcasts are also contingent on a technology – a delivery system for recorded audio – and, as such, they represent a compendium of technical solutions and social processes (Williams, 1973). Part of podcasting's arrival as a mainstream medium, it appears, is

a response to a demand for, among other elements, portability, ease of publishing, and audience access (Berry, 2016). But, more importantly, podcasts are a place for an ethos to live, evolve and grow. Williams (1981) articulates the distinction.

...a technology is always, in a full sense, social. It is necessarily in complex and variable connection with other social relations and institutions, although a particular and isolated technical invention can be seen, and temporarily interpreted, as if it were autonomous. As we move into any general social inquiry, we then find that we have always to relate technical inventions to their technologies, in the full sense, and, further, that we are starting from one kind of social state or institution - a technology - and relating it to other kinds of social state and institution rather than to a generalized "society" so pre-defined as to separate or exclude it (p. 227).

The ethos of Rogan and his contemporaries relates to the ethos of the subaltern (Gramsci, 1971), an elevation of individualism, a repudiation of elitism and the politics of collectivism (Hofstede, 2011), and a debasing of the gatekeeper model that, until the rise of the publishing opportunities enabled in the digital age, appeared to be out of reach for many.

For the purpose of applying meaning to the term individualism, Hofstede (2011) offers a model with defining features of individualistic societies. These attributes appear to be associated with the United States, and seem to correlate with the ethos of some of the cohort of "Intellectual Dark Web" I will discuss as podcast hosts and public intellectuals. Hofstede (2011) distinguishes attributes of individualistic societies as they relate to attributes of collectivist societies. He is careful to note that collectivism by these attributes should not be understood to mean the opposite of individualism, but potentially separate features of the same personality (Hofstede, 2011, p. 11). Key among the attributes: "Everyone is supposed to take care of him- or herself and his or her immediate family only," "Right of privacy," "Speaking one's mind is healthy" and "Languages in which the word 'I' is indispensable." For collectivism, conversely,

Hofstede (2011) offers: “People are born into extended families or clans which protect them in exchange for loyalty,” “Stress on belonging,” “Harmony should always be maintained” and “Languages in which the word ‘I’ is avoided” (p. 11).

The expression of the ideas of this group of modern-day public intellectuals, a cohort referred to as the “Intellectual Dark Web,” thrives in this technological milieu (Weiss, 2018). To understand their popularity, we need to understand technology and the practices its uses entail, “or particular and changeable institutions; about a content or about a form” (Williams, 1975, p. 10).

Rogan is self-effacing and is the first to make light of what Weiss (2020) calls “The Rogan effect”. Though his show, the Joe Rogan Experience, started a decade ago as a repository of quacks, crackpots and conspiracy theorists, it has evolved into a first stop for many in the intellectual, corporate and political elite (Warren, 2020). On Jan. 20, 2020, Weiss appeared as a guest on Rogan’s podcast. It was a rare moment when her reach was probably greater than when her words are published in the Times. It was the same episode where Rogan endorsed then-presidential contender and Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders.

During the interview, Weiss waxed poetic about “The Rogan effect,” as it related to an experience she had covering the Andrew Yang campaign for the 2020 Democratic nomination for president. As a virtual unknown when the nomination process started, Yang was a tertiary candidate in the crowded field.

“I spent New Year’s in New Hampshire with Andrew Yang and the ‘Yang Gang,’ because I’m writing about him,” she said during the interview. “And I have to tell you, and I’m really not just saying this, the power of what I’m calling the ‘The Rogan effect,’ it was insane. I went down the line waiting to get into this bar, it was snowing outside, and I just

asked everybody, 'How did you hear about Andrew Yang?' Like 80 percent of them was from your podcast. It was really unbelievable" (Rogan, 2020).

Despite the subsequent name recognition elicited by Yang's appearance on Rogan's podcast back in 2019 – that episode had more than 5 million YouTube views by February of 2020 (Rogan, 2019) – Yang had a disappointing showing in the "First in America" Iowa Caucus, eventually dropping out of the race, but Sanders was ascendant, perhaps helped along by Rogan's endorsement. He had appeared on Rogan's podcast in August of 2019 as a guest when the primary campaign season was heating up, and his candidacy was a topic of discussion in early 2020 between Weiss and Rogan, when the latter offered his endorsement.

Although it is difficult to measure the degree to which Rogan's influence affected the polls in Iowa, Rogan's reach appears to be deep. The podcast episode listener numbers are difficult to obtain because of their proprietary nature, but the YouTube episode (where Rogan simulcasts his podcast) shows that reach: more than 11 million views by February of 2020 (Rogan, 2019). The appearance in August and subsequent endorsement may have helped fuel Sanders's success: He effectively tied with Pete Buttigieg as a top vote-getter in the Iowa Caucus – the primary vote count famously came late, blamed on a technical error with software – and established himself as the leading progressive contender in the early days of the presidential race (Times, 2020). The Iowa Caucus was held February 3, and Sanders secured 26.1% of the vote. It appears Spotify also saw potential value in Rogan's lofty place in podcasting. The streaming service entered into a contract with Rogan in May of 2020 to make his podcast exclusive to its platform, a move for which Rogan is to be compensated more than \$100 million (Steele, 2020).

In their roles as public intellectuals, Rogan and other contemporary podcast personalities operate as the connective tissue for their listeners, curating a variegated community that combines the form and function of podcasting with a disparate assortment of

personalities and ideas. As such, the “Rogan effect” is much more than political. He frequently focuses on health and fitness, such as fads like ketogenic and paleo dieting, and includes a variety of guests who are outsiders from mainstream media. One episode he’ll have a journalist like Rolling Stone writer Matt Taibi, best known for his work covering the misdeeds of Wall Street in the wake of the financial crisis of 2008, and on another he’ll feature an interview with UFO expert Bob Lazar. He hosts comedians, entertainers and musicians, and mixes in a stable of professional cage fighters, the likes of whom fight for UFC, a world where Rogan is a central figure as the leading ringside announcer.

With this in mind, I will discuss the forces that become articulated to elevate certain podcast host personalities; how this new breed of public intellectuals is a symptom as well as the cause of technological, economic, social, cultural and political forces.

Technology, Portability and the Embrace of Individualism

From its nascent days as an obscure technology, a template for the use of podcasting in everyday life has been constructed, and we find ourselves at a point in time that could be viewed as a tech-adoption milestone: According to Edison Research’s Podcast Consumer data (2019), 51% of Americans 12 and older have ever listened to a podcast, with 32% having listened in the past month, and 22% in the past week.

The transformation of podcasting toward what could be considered a mainstream medium and the consequent elevation of its most salient personalities into public intellectuals appears to derive from a confluence of pressures and conditions, including those informed by, while also informing, cultural changes and technical advances. It’s lineage could arguably be traced back as far as early radio – or maybe even the Speaker’s Corner in Hyde Park with its Soapbox Oratory – but there appears to be an interrelatedness from the earliest connected digital technologies to how consumers create and interact with content, and the development of

devices, from the Sony Walkman and the freedom it offered to consumers desiring portability and private listening (du Gay et al, 1997), and later MP3 players and smartphones. Key to the capabilities offered by portable digital devices, were the network and software advances that enabled content interaction to live online (Manovich, 2001). Podcasting is a technology adapted from early advances, like digital bulletin board systems (BBS) that operated as the first online discussion forums (Hodkinson, 2017). Later, blogs emerged along with social media, technical solutions and cultural processes interacting, creating opportunities for expression in new media.

Before the proliferation of the internet, mainstream media sources dominated the media ecosystem. Network and cable TV, daily newspapers, broadcast radio chains and other networks were usually ad-supported and usually deployed at a scale to maximize profitability (Croteau & Hoynes, 2013). The result may have satisfied many consumers, but it also may have lacked dimension, disparate voices or alternative perspectives (Holt, Figenschou, & Frischlich, 2019). Alternative media existed, but floundered as mainstream media, powered financially by advertisers and subscribers, inherently gravitated toward a hegemonic paradigm situated around that reward system (Holt, Figenschou, & Frischlich, 2019).

The information age opened new opportunities as internet access scaled and became more affordable. The development of one-to-one and one-to-many content delivery possibilities was mirrored in the model that would later be developed around podcasting: From the earliest weblogs, to the development and deployment of Real Simple Syndication, to the first social media networks, technologists enabled relatively frictionless publication by individuals.

Individualization in modern culture did not arrive with the information age. Throughout the 1970s-1990s, a salient tendency toward individualism, per Hofstede's (2011) model, could be evidenced in many elements of public life, including art, technology, politics and pop culture. Noting this tendency toward the centrality of the individual, Author Tom Wolfe even coined the 1970s as "The Me Decade," with his 1976 eponymous publication. Reaganism in the U.S. and

Thatcherism in the UK were political responses to and guideposts for the shifting of public sentiment toward individualism (Davis, 2004). At the same time, computers were transitioning into home appliances. The heightened centrality of individualization as a cultural, political and economic maxim extended well into the following decade (Calenda & Meijer, 2011). Apple introduced the iMac in 1998, asserting itself as a beacon of technology as personal expression, allowing users to choose a color combination (not just hardware specifications) based on individual preferences (Edwards, 2008). Although consumers could only select from one of five colors, advertising for the new iMac articulated the individual choice as their central tenet. Although the "i" prefix first used in the iMac and later adopted throughout Apple's various products meant to represent the connectivity to the internet, it also signaled the individual character inherent to their products, as Steve Jobs recognized during iMac's launch event (JoshuaG, 2006). The alignment of the Cupertino company with the changing cultural panorama seemed to yield its fruits throughout the beginning of the next millennium with the successful launch of the iPod first and, later, the iPhone and its connected app store. Given this success, in 2018, Apple surpassed \$1 trillion in market capitalization (Leswing, 2019).

However, the gravitational pull of individualization as a force in internet culture did not take place in a vacuum. It was there all along, but the digital age seems to have articulated new and more legitimized avenues for its expression. For those content creators stymied by the limitations of scale in analog media, digital publishing in its many forms helped to break through barriers to audience (Brake, 2014). Like individualism, self-publishing has a long legacy, and its modern-day practitioners helped to tell its story and curate the culture. In this sense, with the relatively recent emergence of simplified means of self-publishing, like with underground printed zines of the 1970s and 1980s (Bold, 2017), creators used consumer technology for self-expression, pushing innovation and – in the process – upending production processes (Brake, 2014).

However, these transformations eventually became organized into less fringe arrangements, which would lead to their reabsorption into the mainstream, following Gramsci's (1971) theoretical prescription. As such, those hand-paginated zines of the 1980s that included protestations of computerization would, in the short run, come to be produced through desktop publishing (Bold, 2017).

With the growth of the internet, tools of the broadcaster were no longer available only to the elite, and at the same time, as Drezner (2007) points out, a market of consumers disaffected by the limiting format and the gatekeeper business model of traditional media was waiting to consume the media that would elbow into this underserved category. Evolutions in the browser and software-based publication tools made one-to-many web publishing push-button easy, and one of the early network technologies to respond to the content demand was blogging (Drezner, 2007).

One of the first blogging software solutions, The Open Diary, styled itself as a sort of journaling platform, allowing anonymous contributors to publish without the strictures of editorial oversight or editorial standards, picking up on a similar ethos as the alternative voices that powered the pre-internet zine scene (Seminerio, 1998). "The Open Diary isn't the only online diary project, but its founder, Bruce Ableson, believes it is the first to allow contributors to remain completely anonymous while still interacting with readers," journalist Maria Seminerio (1998) wrote for ZD Net. "In a little more than a month since its launch, the site has attracted 800,000 page views and nearly 1,300 diarists, ranging in age from 15 to 79" (Seminerio, 1998).

By today's standards, 1,300 members may not register notice, but in the context of the time, still in the public internet's early days, journalists and the digitized public may have been marking a trend. In his study of how notions of community interact through online communications in the early days of the connected internet, including live blogs, Hodkinson (2017) viewed the energy of live blogs as a space for the expression of ideas and social

interaction that is at the same time increasingly interactive and individualistic. Hodkinson (2017) found that in their online relationships, individuals may operate in a more superficial way with a multiplicity of “partial” communities, but that “rather than reflecting mutual attachment to any particular substantive collective grouping, such ‘strong ties’ are deemed increasingly likely to take the form of networks of individual relationships drawn from a variety of different contexts or networks” (p. 132).

With the market showing itself, this energy further fueled growth in technical solutions that enabled individualized expression. The Open Diary came into the scene alongside several start-ups intent on competing and scaling similar concepts at a time when the dot-com bubble was starting to inflate, powered by venture capital investment (Hodkinson, 2017). In the process, access to the means of content production were being rearranged, presaging the deep transformations yet to come. LiveJournal became a player in blogging, and later Blogger – started by Evan Williams, who would go on to co-found Twitter – exploded onto the scene, drawing the attention of Google, which acquired it in 2003 (McIntosh, 2003). The growth would continue with the advent of WordPress, the ultimate self-publishing platform, which today undergirds more than one-third of websites worldwide (W3Techs, 2020). Although WordPress is now commonly used as a simple website content management system, its origin is that of a blogging platform (WordPress, 2020).

A Line From Blogging to Social Media to Podcasts

These publishing models effectively resulted in a more levelled playing field between publishers and consumers through “self-publishing” (Bold, 2017). This environment created the conditions for a counterculture of “new media” personalities, breaking the gatekeeper model that relied on scale, thus providing unlimited and uncensored platforms for a multitude of voices (Khamis, Ang, & Welling, 2016). Some blogging pioneers during this period include Tim Ferris, Guy Kawasaki, Gary Vaynerchuck and Robert Scoble. This style of publishing was unique in its

stark simplicity: These bloggers made something that resembled journalism, but without an organizational structure to dictate the boundaries of their exercise. They were unencumbered by the need to satisfy large segments of audience or to assuage prickly advertisers. They were citizen journalists and their weblogs could be hosted for very little cost while offering uninterrupted free access to anyone with an internet connection and a web browser. In addition to a simple publishing paradigm, as a practical matter, these individuals, as content creators detached from traditional media institutions, may be unencumbered by practices associated with institutional and professional integrity that traditionally guide how journalists use methods and sources. Into this lacuna, practitioners of this new form of journalism had a license to allow their personalities to interact more loosely with the content. In the way that a traditional newspaper reader might develop a loyalty to and relationship with their local newspaper, in this new alignment, it appears Tim Ferris's fans follow the "Tim Ferris brand," from his blog, to his books and as subscribers to his podcast. This new breed of public intellectuals seem to reflect Gramsci's (1971) sentiment that the conditions of the current mediascape influence the presence of alternative voices in public discourse. In the digital age, the digital media ecosystem seemed to offer fertile ground to those voices and to the ideas behind them.

From this budding culture of digitized citizen journalism, podcasting was born as a new medium, and it was unlike broadcast radio in significant ways. Anybody with the ability to record audio and access to the internet suddenly had the power to be a broadcaster, without huge financial investment, and without the pressure of a corporate structure, or the demands of advertisers or government-sanctioned limits on speech, as administered by the Federal Communications Commission (Funk, 2017). On the consumer side, the proliferation and portability of mp3 players first and smartphones, later, enabled the market to access podcast content on the go (Inside Radio, 2019). In the way that the Sony Walkman made customization

of music listening habits more available via device portability (du Gay et al., 1997), the new digital audio players and streaming devices finally made that a viable reality for podcasts.

In this environment, a first-person model of journalistic storytelling, perhaps at least partially as carryover from blogging, expanded. In this form, the storyteller is integrated into the work, creating a perspective formed by their experience (Edmond, 2014). At a time when trust of media is in decline (Brenan, 2019), the unmediated nature of the one-to-one experience in podcasting, presented without a clear alignment to an established corporate media institution, appears to present the publisher as a voice of truth, uninfluenced by the commercial interests of a gatekeeper.

This focus may not be as much new as it is new to digital media, an extension of the cultural or media narcissism of the type promoted by Wolfe's (1976) "The "Me" Decade and the Third Great Awakening." Wolfe, also one of the pioneers of the "new journalism" style of storytelling mastered by Hunter S. Thompson and practiced by heavyweights including Norman Mailer, Truman Capote, Joan Didion and Gay Talese, chronicled what he believed was a turn in culture that focused on self-gratification, evidenced by a focus on self-improvement, an elevation of the culture of sexual liberation, financial excess and repudiation of the conservatism of previous generations (Wolfe, 1976). In the essay, Wolfe's central character is used to illustrate the narcissistic nature of the culture when, during attendance at an Erhard Seminars Training, or EST, course, she writhes around in what looks like a moaning sexual frenzy, eliciting the accompaniment of her 250 fellow attendees. The performance is made farcical when writhing pain turns out to be hemorrhoids.

Which is not simply her scream any longer ... but the world's! Each soul is concentrated on its own burning item ... my husband! my wife! my homosexuality! my inability to communicate, my self-hatred, self-destruction, craven fears, piling weaknesses, primordial horrors, premature ejaculation, impotence, frigidity, rigidity,

subservience, laziness, alcoholism, major vices, minor vices, grim habits, twisted psyches, tortured souls—and yet each unique item has been raised to a cosmic level and united with every other until there is but one piercing moment of release and liberation at last—a whole world of anguish set free by . . .

My hemorrhoids. (Wolfe, 1976)

Imogen (2007) offers a compelling challenge to the deployment of Freud's theories of narcissism as used by Wolfe and others during the 1970s, positing that "narcissism" in cultural criticism served as a stand-in trope for a "caustic critique of feminist politics" (Imogen, 2007, p. 350). Despite Imogen's (2007) critique, the period seems to be a renaissance period of individualized voices, an awakening of the relationship between the public intellectual - that Turner and Larson (2015) identify as the "network celebrity" - and media consumers. Wolfe's "The Me Decade" brings that cultural shift into focus.

The same spirit that drew Americans in the 1970s into a mode of introspection appears to be playing out through today's media complex via podcasting. The first of the modern public intellectuals to make their name in this space was Tim Ferris, the self-styled lifehacker, who entered the public conversation as a best-selling author of the *4-Hour Workweek* – he has since penned four more New York Times bestsellers. His ascension came when the audience for his podcast, the *Tim Ferris Show*, started growing exponentially, accruing more than 70 million downloads and regularly holding a top spot in Apple's top podcast charts in its first 150 episodes (Ferris, 2016). Ferris's podcast started as a repository for self-experimentation, where he would act as a Guinea pig with experiments in diet, exercise, psychedelics and supplementation, and share the results with his listeners, who seemed to tune in for hacks, ostensibly for furtherance of their own self-improvement. His reach and influence kicked off a self-help renaissance centered around Ferris's ideals of life-hacking (Holiday, 2016). The themes of his later books

include fitness, cooking and entrepreneurship, written thematically around the life-hacking ethos. Although Ferris may lay claim to the most popular blog of the era that preceded the explosion of podcasting as a medium, podcasting elevated him into that rarified cultural space as a household name (Ferris, 2016).

Rise of Public Intellectuals Via Technology and Access

If the turn of the century marked the start of the rise of the use of digital media for consumer-generated content, and a disruption of traditional media business models, podcasting appears to combine many of the attributes of radio (Edmond, 2014), with a growth trajectory in popularity that parallels the “co-evolution” (Cwynar, 2019) of the smartphone, joining the remarkable rise of blogging, photo-sharing and social media. Along the way it has become a cultural mainstay, enabling an industry and providing a platform for content delivered by individuals who could harness the power of the audience network in the way that was only available to scaled news and media operations in the past (Croteau & Hoynes, 2013).

Podcasting as a mainstream cultural phenomenon is contingent on access via various providers, most notably the Apple Podcast and Google Play streaming/download applications, which offer subscription-style syndication through the Apple and Android smartphone ecosystems. Other independent subscription services include streaming service Spotify, which has in the last year invested hundreds of millions of dollars acquiring podcast networks and shows, while building its own catalog. According to TechCrunch (2020), Spotify eclipsed more than 1 million shows in the second quarter of 2020, an increase of triple digits over the prior year, making it a top contender in the space. Similarly, this streaming service boasts nearly 300 million listeners (Perez, 2020). Other network software products that host podcasts include Stitcher, Pandora, Soundcloud, TuneIn and NPR One. Collectively, they offer alternative means to the same end: on-demand episodic audio shows, accessible online and through portable digital media devices, such as smartphones. Once the provenance of broadcast radio, digital

music and terrestrial media such as compact discs and cassettes, the portable nature of podcasts offers users on-demand access in their vehicles, at work and in their pockets (Edmond, 2014). As the business consolidates, providers are jockeying to own exclusive rights to popular shows to grow user numbers and capture new listeners as the medium matures (Steele, 2020). With its popularity and growth, podcasting appears to be realigning with a model that better resembles the gatekeeper models of the not-so-distant past of analog publishing (Perez, 2020).

The “anytime” nature of podcasting creates a natural alignment between content creators and consumers for long-form content, including interview shows, talk shows, serial storytelling, live events and more (Korin & Scripps, Forthcoming). Structurally, podcasting shares user features with blogging that allow for easy and inexpensive one-to-many transmission (Hammersley, 2004). With this accessibility, any podcaster with some basic equipment and an internet connection, has relatively equal access as any other podcaster. Unlike with many traditional media, the barriers to entry – capital, technical knowledge, regulation and bureaucracy – are few (Hammersley, 2004). The simplicity, like that of publishing on blogging platforms, invites the participation of content creators with alternative voices and perspectives, who fall outside of the parameters of the traditional gatekeeper business and content models (Hammersley, 2004). Following a proliferation model that shares some of the earmarks of video on YouTube, podcasting over the last decade has grown as a consumers’ medium as well as a producers’ medium, with thousands of hours of audio content added daily (Sullivan, 2019).

In 2017, “smart speaker” devices started to proliferate in American households (Inside Radio, 2019). Although they are marketed generically as “digital assistants” (Apple Inc., 2020), products like the Amazon Echo, Google Home and Apple Homepod also hold the promise of enlarging the potential for digital audio delivery, of which podcasting may be among the

beneficiaries. According to Edison Research (2018), 18 percent of U.S. survey respondents age 12 and over reported owning a smart speaker, nearly triple the number at the same time the previous year. The same survey found that 83 percent of respondents say they own a smartphone, bringing the total estimated number of smartphone ownership to 233 million in the U.S. while the growth of podcast listenership is continuing in the United States, with 26 percent of respondents claiming they had listened to a podcast within a month of being asked (Edison Research, 2018). However, more relevant is the study's revelation of the growth potential for podcasts, as only six out of 10 respondents were familiar with the term podcasting (Edison Research, 2018). As the digital devices necessary for downloading files or streaming podcast audio are further developed and deployed, it is foreseeable that listener numbers continue to grow. Time will tell if smart speakers become ubiquitous appliances in the vein of home personal computers, but if so, the ramifications for podcasting and other streaming media seem to be great, with the potential to expand and take a greater share of consumers' time beyond the headphone-wearing user or the commuter. For podcast listeners, the experience in a smart speaker environment may have the earmarks of radio in the early 20th century, shared in a public space. Such a move could imply, among others, a refinement of the perception of podcast personalities from Intellectual Dark Web and adjacent cultural figures from the fringes of society closer to the mainstream.

Podcasting, and the 'Subaltern'

From those early days as an upstart technology, podcasting, like blogging before it, has grown into a vibrant collection of voices. In doing so, it has articulated significant economic, cultural, social, and political forces (Edmond, 2014).

While mainstream, corporate and non-profit podcast media enterprises grow in form and influence (Perez, 2020), it is not to the exclusion of independent or alternative voices...yet. Podcasting has become an important destination for those individuals and groups in society

who Gramsci (1971) coined the “subaltern” (the excluded groups). While social media companies like MySpace, Facebook and Twitter promised “democratization” of broadcasting – and may have ultimately stymied its proliferation through self-serving algorithms (Mahaswa, 2017) – podcasting is still a very democratic medium (Cwynar, 2019). As it scales in popularity, use and volume of available content, it is possible that the same forces that influence the evolution of social media – and other media – will influence podcasting. The pursuit of profitable publishing models, as in the case of Spotify’s wooing of the Joe Rogan Experience (Perez, 2020), is attracting billions of dollars in investment to develop and acquire popular podcast franchises.

The rise of a new generation of public intellectuals – a modern-day realization of Gramsci’s (1971) vision of a class of partisans for “popular education” – is arguably enabled by the realization of podcasting as a relatively democratic technology (Cwynar, 2019), available with a low barrier of entry, that allows the capability of a one-to-many broadcast methodology. The accessibility may be part of its attraction to content creators and consumers, but it’s also fundamental to its marketability as a commercial product (Sullivan, 2019). It is to be expected that, as podcasting matures, the forces of commercialization continue to influence the cultural mix of content creators, listeners and investment.

Podcasting started at a formative time in the digital era. In the early 2000s it sprang from the same well source as blogging: Easy-to-produce audio content delivered via Really Simple Syndication (RSS) technology, allowing a one-to-many transmission without the need for a corporate regime to ensure its solvency (Hammersley, 2004). Like with other media that enable self-publishing – zines and blogs included – it checks several boxes to be portrayed and perceived as a democratic medium: Podcasts are simple to produce, low-cost to distribute and easily accessible by consumers (Cwynar, 2019).

Despite podcasting's seeming democratic character (Cwynar, 2019), we may be witnessing an evolution that ultimately moves away from such an inclusive model. In the intervening years since the introduction of podcasting, the large players that have risen in the space with networks and podcast player software products, have streamlined the marketing of shows while creating paradigm structures for their organization – by topic, genre, producer, or newest, for example – in a process that serves to elevate the visibility of popular shows (Adgate, 2019). And while podcasts continue to grow in popularity, audiences should ponder whether their commercialization – a process that has had a stymying effect on legacy media, according to McChesney (1998) – will endanger their democratic character.

Viewing this evolution of podcasting through the prism of the political economy of media as posited by Herman and Chomsky (1988), one can see the structures of the business of podcasting changing to benefit the interests of the corporate mass media, and therefore the agenda of the group in dominance. This is evident in the energy surrounding investment activity: Existing corporate media are working to diversify their portfolios to include podcast media, as in the case of Sirius XM's recent acquisition of the podcast streaming service, content aggregator and content producer Stitcher (Lunden & Ha, 2020). In doing so, they seek to enlarge their holdings of podcast media, as in the case of Spotify in its many acquisitions, including of the Joe Rogan Experience (Steele, 2020).

Herman and Chomsky (1988) offer a theory of a propaganda model wherein mass media “serve to mobilize support for the special interests that dominate the state and private support for the special interests that dominate the state and private activity” (p. 1). As such, mass media is subjugated to be in service to its owners (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). In the case of podcasting, it is foreseeable that consolidating ownership under fewer and wealthier corporate owners, thereafter reducing the extant diversity of voices, will have an inevitable bleed into the content mix of individual shows. One possible outcome of this process is that as

podcasting continues to evolve away from its roots as a mixed bag of homespun shows, it may take on the transmedia characteristics of commercial radio (Edmond, 2014), to extend beyond a focus on satisfying listeners, to satisfying owners.

But while the media ownership may end up benefiting from the spoils of maturation of podcasting as a medium, it is possible for elements of the birth of podcasting from its cultural mix of alternative voices to live on, even as podcasting becomes more corporatized. Which is to say that, despite the hegemonic process, cultural adoption and integration of podcasts may endure. For the time being, upstart, independent shows continue to have relatively easy and inexpensive or free access to distribution channels, like Apple Podcasts and Google Play. While corporatism may press against the independent voices that undergird much of the culture of podcasting, it is possible that those voices will have a life as an element in podcasting as it matures into a mainstream medium.

In his analysis comparing journalistic techniques between radical and mainstream media and how they borrow each other's techniques, Atton (2002) found elements of the adoption of the radical press's methodology in mainstream media. "Whilst the liberal press inevitably produces a very different type of journalism from that of the radical media, there is no denying the platform that on occasion is given to the voices of activists" (Atton, 2002, p. 503). Like with print journalism, as podcasting matures, moves to the mainstream and becomes something that better reflects a model like television or radio, that process may end up being evident in the content mix that comes out the other side. As Atton (2002) notes, both mainstream and radical media use activists to tell their stories. In podcasting, it seems as though a similar interdependence is already evident. Rogan, as an alternative voice in the podcast ecosystem, for example, has curated the audience for which a company like Spotify is willing to pay vast amounts of money. In the arrangement where Spotify controls the exclusivity of distribution of

Rogan's show, it seems it would be counterintuitive to disrupt key elements of Rogan's content mix – even if some of those elements conflict with Spotify's business model.

'Audience Power' and Forces in Podcast Audience Growth

Although podcasting is still relatively new, its growth has moved past a tipping point of cultural adoption (Adgate, 2019), wherein some podcast producers reach a large enough audience to enjoy commercial success. Today, many popular podcasts are supported by advertising revenue, delivering attractive swaths of the public to corporations in the market for audiences (Smythe, 1981). Some podcast producers count income from subscription fees or donations, sometimes through merchant service brokers such as Patreon.

As a form it appears podcasting has begun transitioning from an outlying, niche technology, towards the mainstream. This evolution seems to be part of a social process whereby there is an audience market to be made. In this sense, as podcasts become the commodity of that market, while – following Smythe's (1981) logic – audiences become a commodity of podcasts. If the American media diet can be measured in terms of time spent consuming media, and that time is the potential market for media, the rise of podcasting appears to be a response to the opportunity to take a piece of the market.

According to Smythe (1981), media consumers are a commodity in the media ecosystem, whose principal product in monopoly capitalism he refers to as "audience power." More precisely, Smythe (1981) identifies audience power as the "concrete product which is used to accomplish the economic and political tasks which are the reason for the existence of the commercial mass media" (p. 233).

For a Joe Rogan, or Sam Harris or Jordan Peterson to exist and to grow with so much commercial success, is an indication of an unmet market demand. The result of this interplay articulates the form (portability, ease of use, long and conversational), the content (an

expression of Gramsci's subaltern's voice delivered by compelling personalities), and an evolving set of forces – economic, cultural and technological – that appear to be coalescing in an audience that numbers in the millions (Edison Research, 2018).

So what forces are powering a movement that elevates these alternative voices to a position of prominence? Principal among them is the rise of individualism (Baumeister, 1987) (Meyers, 2000), a repudiation of elitism and denigration of institutional authority, and a process of capital accumulation.

Podcasting Culture and the Rise of Individualism

For Cwynar (2019), the economics of commoditizing soundwork in podcasting can be understood as a sort of bleed on public radio. Many early shows, and pioneers in the podcast space, come from the world of public broadcasting, the most robust environment for the type of skills development that is rewarded in the entrepreneurial framework of podcasting.

Podcasting is expanding in a context where society is “entirely structured by the values and ideologies of the marketplace” (Cwynar, 2019, p. 318). Although the hosts of the podcasts analyzed by Cwynar owe their training to their long experience in public radio, a medium where the format for many of today's most popular podcasts originated, today they are celebrated as entrepreneurs, rather than as members of the public. Their success is predicated on the notion that they are risk-takers, that they are self-made. Despite their success being owed partially to the publicly funded model behind public radio (Cwynar, 2019), podcast hosts appear to be perceived to be part of a group that operates in an almost wholly opposite context: Bootstrapped, funded by venture capital and enriched with sweat equity. These values reflect a connection to the capitalist ethos that celebrates individualism (Weber, 2002; Barker & Carman, 2000), even though at least some of the equity is attributable to the public broadcast model (by

way of the public's investment in public radio). There is a cache associated with the idea that they are self-made, and, as such, they are branded.

The same intuition seems to have helped fuel the popularity of members of the Intellectual Dark Web cohort in the podcast realm. Their ideas are seen as vanguard and bucking the mainstream (Weiss, 2018), in line with Hofstede's (2011) model of individualism, while also exhibiting the virtues of the entrepreneur (Cwynar, 2019). The content they offer elevates individualism, despite many of them being connected to institutions sustained by collective values and, in many cases, public investment. These public intellectuals uphold a philosophical framework where individual achievement is celebrated as the representation of an enlightened way of thinking (Rozner, 2018). This orientation toward individualism can be observed, among others, in the worldviews of these public intellectuals, in their selection of guests and interviewees, in the language they use, and in their interactions with the audience.

Rozner (2018) describes the guideposts of the Intellectual Dark Web's philosophy by noting that “[d]espite its diversity of thought, the IDW has clear unifying principles. An unofficial IDW website lists a few common convictions: freedom of speech; rejection of identity politics and regard for the individual; rationality over emotion; and a commitment to truth. Importantly, the list also includes ‘a willingness to engage in conversations with people who have different beliefs and political viewpoints’” (Rozner, 2018, p. 3).

Academic-turned-podcast personality Jordan Peterson came into the cultural zeitgeist as an outspoken opponent of a Canadian bill (Bill C-16) that would have created new strictures for speech around gender identity (Murphy, 2016). Peterson (2017), speaking as a hearing witness at the Canadian Senate, posited that the bill would have limited expression by categorizing types of speech around gender identity as discrimination. A professor of psychology at the University of Toronto, Peterson cut from many of his colleagues in academia on the issue, further burnishing his image as a thought leader in academic freedom, publishing videos about

the issue on YouTube. The videos garnered hundreds of thousands of views (Peterson, 2017), and Peterson received media publicity that appeared to elevate him in the circles that celebrate a type of anti-liberal, anti-politically correct perspective – as they see it – as an alternative to the mainstream academic and media establishment (Rozner, 2018). He appeared to become an emblem of a brand of philosophical libertarianism, and the cultural currency that he gained may have helped propel his career beyond the confines of his university community and onto the world stage. He appeared as a guest on podcasts like Sam Harris’s “Waking Up,” and “The Joe Rogan Experience,” and wrote a bestselling book, published in 2018, “12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos.”

Peterson’s book reads like a manifesto, a sort of organizing principal and operating system to maximize the individual’s effectiveness in a chaotic world. In its pages he chronicles 42 rules that comprise the author’s answer to the question, “What are the most valuable things everyone should know?” Central to Peterson’s thesis is that success in controlling the chaos in one’s environment is first to operate with self-control, self-awareness, reaching for your personal potential.

Don’t underestimate the power of vision and direction. These are irresistible forces, able to transform what might appear to be unconquerable obstacles into traversable pathways and expanding opportunities. Strengthen the individual. Start with yourself. Take care with yourself. Define who you are. Refine your personality. Choose your destination and articulate your Being. As the great nineteenth-century German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche so brilliantly noted, “He whose life has a why can bear almost any how” (Peterson, 2018, p. 63).

Another member of the IDW, Sam Harris, shows an orientation towards individualism through his critique of organized religion, arguing it is a collectivism that is socially regressive. Much of Harris’s work derives from a philosopher’s worldview, most notably as a leading voice

in “new atheism” (Science, 2009), a philosophical framework developed by the so-called “Four Horsemen of Atheism,” Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, the late Christopher Hitchens, and Harris. The “Four Horseman” name derives from a roundtable discussion in which they participated (Science, 2009). The wide-ranging discussion included criticism of political correctness and conventional wisdom as it relates to religion and the orientation of much of religion in its rejection of science. Although the four deride religiosity as a sort of good fiction gone bad, Harris applies a particularly strong invective to organized religion, blaming it for a social order that inhibits progress, not just in science, but also in gender, sexual and racial equality, and in a perpetuation of seemingly endless violence (Maher, 2014). In the wake of 9/11 and subsequent U.S. military involvement in the Middle East and Afghanistan, he targeted his vitriol at Islam, and became one of the religion’s prominent public critics (Maher, 2014). That criticism crossed into the mainstream during a 2014 appearance on the HBO show Real Time, when he engaged in a debate with movie star Ben Affleck, an exchange in which he termed Islam as “the motherlode of bad ideas” (Maher, 2014, 2:17). Harris’s repudiation of organized religion syncs up well with moral vision that he previously espoused in “The Moral Landscape” (Harris, 2010), where he elevates individualism based on his characterization of the potential pitfalls of collectivism.

Some people worry that a commitment to maximizing a society’s welfare could lead us to sacrifice the rights and liberties of the few wherever these losses would be offset by the greater gains of the many. Why not have a society in which a few slaves are continually worked to death for the pleasure of the rest? The worry is that a focus on collective welfare does not seem to respect people as ends in themselves. And whose welfare should we care about? The pleasure that a racist takes in abusing some minority group, for instance, seems on all fours with the pleasure a saint takes in risking his life to help a stranger. If there are more racists than saints, it seems the racists will win, and we

will be obliged to build a society that maximizes the pleasure of unjust men (Harris, 2010, p. 79).

As with other public intellectuals, Harris's influence resides in the audience reach he enjoys as a podcaster, but also in a multiplicity of channels, including as a public speaker and bestselling author (Harris, 2020). If customer reviews on Apple Podcasts is a measure of audience preference, Harris's "Waking Up" podcast is well received, obtaining an average of 4.7 stars out of five with 21,300 reviews as of July of 2020 (Podcasts, 2020). Another channel, this time YouTube, shows Harris's channel had approximately 380,000 subscribers as of March 2020 (Harris, 2020). However, understanding of Harris's reach is further complicated, as he employs a freemium model (Spinelli & Dann, 2019) in which paying subscribers receive full episodes of the podcast while those who don't pay only have access to partial episodes. His podcast is presented in an interview style, most of the time, with leading public figures, academics and occasional celebrities as guests.

These public intellectuals (Gramsci, 1971) operate interdependently with the technical milieu. While their audiences have an experience that is relayed partially through technology, and they're ideas are also informed by this interaction.

Technology and Individualism Coalesce in Podcasting

The tension between individualism and collectivism may not be a function of the technological revolution, but technology, as noted by Williams (1981), is inherently social. Taken as such, technology englobes not only the technical apparatuses, but – more importantly – the practices that become articulated around them and the knowledge through which they come to be and upon which they act (Williams, 1981). In this sense, it is notable that, at least among many in this group of modern-day public intellectuals, podcasting technology is curated to serve

individualism, as posited by Hofstede (2011). This is a trend that is traceable back to one of the most transformative portable electronic devices – the Sony Walkman.

The significance of the Sony Walkman lies beyond the mere technical aspects of providing a personal audio player, as it emerged as an articulation of specific cultural, economic, and societal transformations and moments (du Gay et al., 1997). As an example, Chen (1998) concluded that “narcissism best describes the experiences fostered by the expressive bias and the privatization of the Walkman” (p. 255).

The evocative bias and the privatization of the Walkman characterize the experiences of the Walkman listeners. The evocative bias of the Walkman is evident in the fact it is mainly used for music listening. Also, as students listen to the music, they pay the most attention to the rhythm and beat rather than lyrics. The experience generated from listening to the evocative rhythm and beat produces the visceral sensations which are then transformed into emotional energy flowing within the individual. (Chen, 1998, p. 272).

We see perhaps another iteration and extension of the behavior observed by Chen (1998) in how podcast listeners interact with the content they consume today with their smartphones. Like with the Walkman, the smartphone offers its users an individualized experience, a cocoon in which the content only has to satisfy the individual user. From the millions of voices that avail themselves to the podcast consumer, they are able to choose the ones that speak to their individual needs. As such, individuality is an inherent feature of the experience, and in the top echelon of podcasting’s personalities, individualism is a feature of the content mix. In this sense, Chen (1998) writes:

The Walkman not only allows for construction of a private environment where one indulges oneself. Putting on a headset allows one to buildup invisible musical walls

segregating oneself from others. Not only is the enveloping musical environment a legitimate reason to ignore others, the impairment of hearing makes intrusion from others difficult.

Narcissism, as the term is used by theorists of psychoanalysis and developmental psychology, best describes the experiences fostered by the evocative bias and the privatization of the Walkman. The use of the Walkman generates the kind of self-absorption described by Freud in his analysis of narcissism. The experience elicited from listening to a Walkman is a withdraw of emotional energy from external environment and a release of the emotional energy within the self. The use of the Walkman thus fosters the emergence of a narcissistic self (p. 273).

Paul du Gay et al. (1997) analyzed the Sony Walkman using Hall's (1980) model for the circuit of culture. In doing so, the authors offer its use as a laboratory example of the interconnected processes of cultural transformation and technical innovation that elevated individualism around a relevant technology.

...to study the Walkman culturally one should at least explore how it is represented, what social identities are associated with it, how it is produced and consumed, and what mechanisms regulate its distribution and use (du Gay et al, 1997, p. 3).

du Gay et al. (1997) emphasize the embrace the Walkman offers the individual, both as a cultural artifact of modernity and as a tool of expression of individuality in the modern world.

The Walkman is not only an essential part of this young person's survival kit; it is a testimony to the high value which the culture of late-modernity places on mobility. This mobility is both real and symbolic. The Walkman fits a world in which people are literally moving about more. But is also designed for a world in which the social mobility of the

individual with respect to his or her social group has also increased. The Walkman maximizes individual choice and flexibility (du Gay et al, 1997, p. 24).

A contemporary version of the phenomena observed by du Gay et al (1997) is visible, even remarkable, in the ubiquity of users' interactivity with their smartphones and lack of interaction with their environment and others (Turkle, 2016). Go to any college campus, gym or city street today, and the white wireless headphones that have become the calling card for the Apple iPhone ecosystem – and an outward expression of du Gay et al.'s (1997) discussion about the connection between portability of media and social mobility – have become the latest indication of consumers effectively operating in two worlds simultaneously: The terrestrial world of their everyday existence, and the world of sounds and ideas curated for them and by them as a reflection of their self-perception.

The individualized experience (du Gay et al, 1997) reflected in the interaction between consumers with modern day technological devices is also reflected in the content they are consuming, through the personalities and ideas of the group of public intellectuals (Gramsci, 1971) who occupy a place of prominence among podcasting leading personalities.

The Personalities in Podcasting's 'Subaltern'

In the 1990s, talk radio personality Howard Stern declared himself "The king of all media" (Robins, 2015), a position that, arguably, now may belong to Joe Rogan. Rogan shares his ethic, and much of his audience, with the clique referred to as the "Intellectual Dark Web," a term Weiss (2018) popularized in a New York Times opinion column. The group, named by one of its members, Eric Weinstein (Rozner, 2018), includes: Weinstein and his brother and sister-in-law, evolutionary biologists Bret Weinstein and Heather Heying; neuroscientist and philosopher Sam Harris; Jordan Peterson, the academic, author and psychologist; conservative

commentators Ben Shapiro and Douglas Murray; Maajid Nawaz, Islamist turned anti-extremist activist; and Ayaan Hirsi Ali and Christina Hoff Sommers.

In his essay “The Intellectuals,” Gramsci (1971) noted that the ideal of the public intellectual is one who extends existing intellectual activity to criticize the status quo, to represent the “subaltern,” the excluded groups of society. The popularity of the Intellectual Dark Web (Weiss, 2018), is evidence of a demand for an intellectual dialogue that challenges mainstream thought. And while this group may qualify as “media” in a traditional sense, it appears to be “media” without the perceived institutional affiliation, devoid of its constraints and commercial interests. The streak of independent ideas, celebration of individuality and repudiation of identity politics represented by the IDW adherents (and their adjacent contemporaries) seems to be embodied in the individual personalities of the show hosts (Weiss, 2018). Although they bring different ideologies and worldviews to their shows, the common thread is that they operate as independent arbiters (Rozner, 2018), seemingly unbound by institutionalized norms. Some might offer unconventional ideas, make claims without any factual basis, and give crackpots and liars a platform to spread misinformation, but the format seems to insulate them from the sort of accountability that institutionally recognized journalism must navigate. The public seems to trust them because they operate outside of the norms of institutional traditional journalism where trust is in decline (Brenan, 2019), not despite that fact. Because of that distinction, consumers may have a loosened expectation about truth and accuracy as it relates to these personalities, as opposed to their expectations of the institutions traditionally associated with journalism (Brenan, 2019). The personalities that constitute this belief system enter the media ecosystem while institutionalized traditional media is crumbling (Pew, 2017). At a time when perceived credibility of the media is the lowest it’s been in generations (Brenan, 2019), it seems as though, for many consumers, the community of personalities surrounding the IDW have stepped into its place.

Joe Rogan sits squarely at the center of this orbit of podcasting public intellectuals. The comedian and UFC fight commentator's show, "The Joe Rogan Experience," ranked 7th in popularity among American podcasts (by audience) in March 2018 (PodTrac, 2018). At the time, Rogan's show was downloaded approximately 30 million times per month (Rozner, 2018). Potential revenue for the Joe Rogan Experience is estimated to be between \$2.25 and \$5 million per month, or \$30-\$60 million per year (Pinsker, 2015). Rogan also publishes his broadcasts on YouTube, where he garners millions of views per month (PowerfulJRE, 2020), another multimillion-dollar source of revenue for content that has the added benefit of having a long tail. As of March 2020, Rogan can expect to further increase his revenue with a deal with Spotify (Spotify, 2020). As a nine-figure payday, this puts Rogan on a plain with audio heavyweights Stern and Limbaugh, who share transcendent audience power from within mainstream media.

However, unlike Stern and Limbaugh, Rogan has amassed his prominent position in the podcasting realm as an independent host and producer (Shapiro, 2020). In the spirit of independent, online production pioneered by other personalities such as Tom Green, who hosted "Tom Green's House Tonight" as an early streaming talk show from 2006-2011, Rogan started his show out of his garage nearly a decade ago (Shapiro, 2020). Given low production costs for the one-on-one long-form conversation format he produces, his ceiling in the world of podcasting seemed to be as high as his ability to garner an attractive audience. Following the deal that will pay Rogan at least \$100 million to move exclusively onto the Spotify platform, Weiss (2020) noted this as an indication of an audience hungry for the type of content they cannot find anywhere else.

While GQ puts Pharrell gowned in a yellow sleeping bag on the cover of its "new masculinity" issue (introduced by the editor explaining that the men's magazine "isn't really trying to be exclusively for or about men at all"), Joe Rogan swings kettlebells and

bow-hunts elk. Men are hungry. He's serving steak, rare. Condé Nast, GQ's publisher, has laid off some 100 employees since the pandemic began. Meantime, "The Joe Rogan Experience" has 190 million downloads a month.

His success signals a profound shift, or several of them — a shift in what people want to talk about, how they want to hear it, and who they want to hear it from" (Weiss, 2020).

Weiss's intuition about Rogan's place in the popular culture is reflective of Gramsci's (1971) typology of the public intellectual, particularly when one considers the format of his show: a person-to-person, free-ranging conversation, which lasts for hours. In a context where conventional wisdom seems to expect technology and increasing choices to push people toward brief, highly engaging content, Rogan and his podcast cohort aren't so much breaking the rules as rewriting them (Korin & Scripps, Forthcoming). Further, Rogan frequently releases as many as four episodes a week, and his listeners are engaged and willing to invest hours per week on Rogan's brand (PowerfulJRE, 2020).

Part of the attraction, and part of the realization of his position as a public intellectual, may relate to his uber-masculine identity, which Hofstede (2011) found, frequently correlates with perceptions of individualism: He is a martial artist, hunter, meat-eater, hot rod car collector and occasional conspiracy theorist, and 91% of his guests are men, according to Media Matters (2019). He is a vocal critic of political correctness, and is willing to risk his reputation as part of his public dialogue on what many other public figures would consider a third rail. For example, in March of 2018 when the comedian and television actress Rosanne Barr was publicly castigated for making what was perceived to be a racist tweet – after which the successful reboot of the series "Roseanne" was quickly canceled by ABC/Disney – Rogan invited the publicly shamed star onto his show (Clair, 2019), giving her a platform despite her damaged public image (Joe

Rogan Experience, 2019). In this and other decisions, Rogan is emblematic of a culture that rejects politically correctness, pejoratively referring to it as “wokeness.” Rogan, as public intellectual (Gramsci, 1971) appears to resonate as a podcasting figure in his perceived masculinity, perceived unvarnished truth-telling, his rejection of mainstream values and of elevation of the individual.

Conclusion

As a medium, podcasting is on a growth trajectory that has moved it from an outlying curiosity of hobbyist broadcasters and niche listeners, toward a mainstream form in the vein of print newspapers, broadcast television, radio or even social media. The same formulation of conditions that align to elevate podcasting technologically, is also evident in the culture of its content and the public it serves. In this process, voices emerge and are thrust into the public sphere, and reside in a cultural space that rejects traditional media gatekeeper models, both by the deployment of self-publishing technology, and in the type and variety of content produced.

These changes have been accompanied and aided by the transformation in society’s perception of institutions. This breakdown is visible in traditional order in everything from politics, to education, to media. But recency bias tends to distort the underlying conditions by, through and against which we perceive cultural changes. Just like the Sony Walkman is a technology born of and influential of the growth of a culture of individualism (du Gay, 1997), podcasting is a technology that responds to and sows the seeds of similar cultural impulses. As with any new technical solution, it feels disruptive of existing technology, but the elements evidenced by the growth of podcasting exist before and after its rise. Just like analog and digital media that preceded it, podcasting is simultaneously a medium that is changed by culture pressing into it, while it presses against and changes culture.

Into this culture, and into podcasting as a medium, a group of emergent media figures is representative of Gramsci's (1971) ideal of the public intellectual as one who extends existing intellectual activity to criticize the status quo and, in the process, upends established industries. Although there is an abundance of podcasting content choices available, there are foundational attributes that serve this cohort of public intellectuals particularly well, such as: Easy and inexpensive production, a low technological barrier to entry, one-to-many publishing, and nearly ubiquitous access through free or inexpensive services such as Apple Podcasts, Stitcher or Spotify.

Those attributes enable the processes that elevate alternative voices, who use the technology to coalesce an audience disaffected to mainstream media, and who are simultaneously shaped by and transforming the technology itself. For Joe Rogan, the members of the so-called Intellectual Dark Web, and other of their contemporary podcast personalities, the form of podcasting has allowed them to sidestep the barriers inherent in the models of traditional media gatekeepers, like publishing costs and profit motive, to tap into an audience that perceives them as independent and entrepreneurial, at a time when traditional media institutions are in decline, both in terms of their social esteem and, thereafter, their balance sheets.

The seemingly democratic nature of podcasting – the access for creators and audience, the plethora of content choices – is also driving a process of corporatization that may ultimately unmake the very qualities that gave it cache as a place for alternative voices in the first place. As podcasting has matured, a flurry of acquisition activity has followed. The previously referenced licensure of Rogan's podcast by Spotify is but one example. And beyond Rogan, Spotify has spent hundreds of millions of dollars acquiring and building a podcast catalog that has surpassed one million titles (Perez, 2020), on par with Apple, the legacy provider in that space. Spotify is not alone. Podcast networks are racing to establish a foothold in what

promises to be a highly profitable industry, attractive for its potential for advertising delivery, subscriber revenue and data acquisition. As these changes assert pressure on creators to deliver return on investment, time will tell if alternative voices will continue to be a dominant cultural force within podcasting or if it will be washed over by competing forces of the mainstream.

References

- Adgate, B. (2019, November 18). *Podcasting is Going Mainstream*. Retrieved from Forbes: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/bradadgate/2019/11/18/podcasting-is-going-mainstream/#39842cd21699>
- Apple Inc. (n.d.). *HomePod*. Retrieved from Apple.com: <https://www.apple.com/homepod/>
- Atton, C. (2002). News Cultures and New Social Movements: radical journalism and the mainstream media. *Journalism Studies*, 491-505.
- Barker, D. C., & Carman, C. J. (2000). The Spirit of Capitalism? Religious Doctrine, Values, and Economic Attitude Constructs. *Political Behavior*, 1-27.
- Baumeister, R. (1987). How the Self Became a Problem. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 163-176.
- Berry, R. (2016). Part of the establishment: Reflecting on 10 years of podcasting as an audio medium. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 661-671.
- Bialik, K. (2018, August 15). *14% of Americans have changed their mind about an issue because of something they saw on social media*. Retrieved from Pew Research Center: <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/08/15/14-of-americans-have-changed-their-mind-about-an-issue-because-of-something-they-saw-on-social-media/>
- Bold, M. R. (2017). Why Diverse Zines Matter: A Case Study of the People of Color Zines Project. *Publishing Research Quarterly*, 215-228.
- Brake, D. R. (2014). Towards a Radically Open Society. In D. R. Brake, *Sharing Our Lives Online : Risks and Exposure in Social Media* (pp. 131-148). UK: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

- Brenan, M. (2019, September 26). *Americans' Trust in Mass Media Edges Down to 41%*. Retrieved from Gallup: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/267047/americans-trust-mass-media-edges-down.aspx>
- Calenda, D., & Meijer, A. (2011). Political Individualization: New media as an escape from family control over political behavior. *Information, Communication & Society*, 660-683.
- Center, P. R. (2017, June 16). *Audio and Podcasting Fact Sheet*. Retrieved from Pew Research Center: https://www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2018/07/State-of-the-News-Media_2017-Archive.pdf
- Chen, S.-I. S. (1998). Electronic Narcissism: College Students' Experiences of Walkman Listening. *Qualitative Sociology*, 255-276.
- Clair, J. S. (2019, October 3). *Roseanne Barr Says Comics Didn't Stick Up for Her Because She's 'Just an Old B*tch'*. Retrieved from Men's Health: <https://www.menshealth.com/entertainment/a29351503/roseanne-barr-joe-rogan-experience/>
- Croteau, D., & Hoynes, W. (2013). *Media/Society: Industries, Images, and Audiences*. Los Angeles: Sage Publishing.
- Cwynar, C. (2019). Self-service media: Public radio personalities, reality podcasting, and entrepreneurial culture. *Popular Communication*, 317-332.
- Dann, M. S. (2019). *Podcasting: The Audio Media Revolution*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Davis, H. (2004). *Understanding Stuart Hall*. SAGE.
- Drezner, H. F. (2007). The power and politics of blogs. *Public Choice*, 15-331.

- Edison Research. (2018, March 8). *The Infinite Dial, 2018*. Retrieved from Edison Research:
<http://www.edisonresearch.com/infinite-dial-2018/>
- Edmond, M. (2014). All platforms considered: Contemporary radio and transmedia engagement. *New Media & Society*, 1566-1582.
- Edwards, B. (2008, September 15). *10 Years of Cuddly, Friendly iMacs*. Retrieved from Wired:
<https://www.wired.com/2008/09/gallery-imac-anniversary/>
- Experience, J. R. (2019, October 2). *Joe Rogan Experience #1359 - Roseanne Barr*. Retrieved from YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R0ufbsXbsEM&feature=youtu.be>
- Falls, S. (2011). Thomas Wolfe as Public Intellectual. *The Thomas Wolfe Review*, 65-75.
- Ferris, T. (2016, April 11). *How I Built a #1-Ranked Podcast With 60M+ Downloads*. Retrieved from The Tim Ferriss Show: <https://tim.blog/2016/04/11/tim-ferriss-podcast-business/>
- Fontana, B. (2005). The Democratic Philosopher: Rhetoric as Hegemony in Gramsci. *Italian Culture*, 97-124.
- Funk, M. (2017, April 11). *Decoding the Podaissance: Identifying Community Journalism Practices in Newsroom and Avocational Podcasts*. Retrieved from Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas: <https://isoj.org/research/decoding-the-podaissance-identifying-community-journalism-practices-in-newsroom-and-avocational-podcasts/>
- Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. International Publishers (reprint).
- Grieco, E. (2020, February 14). *Fast facts about the newspaper industry's financial struggles as McClatchy files for bankruptcy*. Retrieved from Pew Research Center:
<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/02/14/fast-facts-about-the-newspaper-industrys-financial-struggles/>

- Hall, S. (1980). In D. H. Stuart Hall, *Culture, Media, Language* (pp. 117-127). London: Hutchinson.
- Hammersley, B. (2004, February 11). *Audible revolution* . Retrieved from The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2004/feb/12/broadcasting.digitalmedia>
- Harris, S. (2010). *The Moral Landscape*. New York, New York, USA: Free Press.
- Harris, S. (2020). *About*. Retrieved from SamHarris.org: <https://samharris.org/about/>
- Harris, S. (2020, March). *Sam Harris* . Retrieved from YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/samharrisorg>
- Herman, E. S., & Chomsky, N. (1988). *Manufacturing Consent*. Pantheon Books.
- Hodkinson, P. (2017). Interactive online journals and individualization. *New Media & Society*, 625-650.
- Hofstede, G. (2011). Dimensionalizing Cultures: The Hofstede Model in Context. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, 1-26.
- Holiday, R. (2016, May 3). How Tim Ferriss Became the 'Oprah of Audio'—Behind the Podcast With 70M-Plus Downloads. *Observer*.
- Holt, K., Figenschou, T. U., & Frischlich, L. (2019). Key Dimensions of Alternative News Media. *Digital Journalism*, 860-869.
- Imogen, T. (2007). From 'The ME Decade' to 'The ME Millennium' The Cultural History of Narcissism. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 343-362.
- Inside Radio. (2019, 30 May). *Smartphones Still Dominate For Podcast Listening*. Retrieved from Inside Radio: http://www.insideradio.com/podcastnewsdaily/smartphones-still-dominate-for-podcast-listening/article_86163d48-82f7-11e9-a897-fb1ae4f18d37.html

- Joe Rogan Experience. (2017, May 9). *JRE Episode #958*. Retrieved from YouTube:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=USg3NR76XpQ>
- JoshuaG. (2006, January 30). *The First iMac Introduction*. Retrieved from YouTube:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0BHPtoTctDY>
- Khamis, S., Ang, L., & Welling, R. (2016). Self-branding, 'micro-celebrity' and the rise of Social Media Influencers. *Celebrity Studies*, 191-208.
- Korin, E., & Scripps, J. (Forthcoming). Long form in short times: Podcast's success as an outlier in an era of shorter media products.
- Leswing, K. (2019, September 11). *Apple reaches \$1 trillion market cap again after iPhone launch*. Retrieved from CNBC: <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/09/11/apple-touches-1-trillion-market-cap-again-after-iphone-launch.html>
- Lopez, C. (2019, April 14). *The Joe Rogan Experience disproportionately hosts men*. Retrieved from Media Matters for America: <https://www.mediamatters.org/legacy/joe-rogan-experience-disproportionately-hosts-men>
- Lunden, I., & Ha, A. (2020, July 13). *SiriusXM buys Stitcher for \$325 million, steps up its march into podcasts*. Retrieved from TechCrunch: <https://techcrunch.com/2020/07/13/siriusxm-buys-stitcher-for-325-million-steps-up-its-march-into-podcasts/>
- Mahaswa, R. K. (2017). The Democratization of Social Media: A Critical Perspective in Technology. *International Conference on Religion and the Challenge of Democracy in Indonesia "Democracy and Social Media" 2017*.
- Maher, R. T. (2014, October 6). *YouTube*. Retrieved from YouTube:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vIn9D81eO60>
- Manovich, L. (2001). *The Language of New Media*. Boston: MIT Press.

- Marcus, A. (2019, April 17). *How to use challenge to grow stronger with Joe Rogan*. Retrieved from YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a8u84wonj5g>
- McChesney, R. (1998, Summer). Making Media Democratic. *Boston Review*.
- McIntosh, N. (2003, February 18). *Google buys Blogger web service*. Retrieved from The Guardian (US):
<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2003/feb/18/digitalmedia.citynews>
- Meyers, D. (2000). *The American Paradox: Spiritual Hunger in the Age of Plenty*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Moore, J., & Moore, O. (2019, August 21). *After a breakout year, looking ahead to the future of podcasting*. Retrieved from TechCrunch: <https://techcrunch.com/2019/08/21/after-a-breakout-year-looking-ahead-to-the-future-of-podcasting/>
- Murphy, J. (2016, November 4). *Toronto professor Jordan Peterson takes on gender-neutral pronouns*. Retrieved from BBC: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-37875695>
- du Gay, P. et al. (1997). *Doing Cultural Studies: The Story of the Sony Walkman*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Perez, S. (2020, April 20). *Spotify's catalog tops a million podcasts, consumption increases by 'triple digits' over last year*. Retrieved from Techcrunch:
<https://techcrunch.com/2020/04/29/spotify-catalog-tops-a-million-podcasts-consumption-increased-by-triple-digits-over-last-year/>
- Peterson, J. B. (2017, May 18). *2017/05/17: Senate hearing on Bill C16*. Retrieved from YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KnIAAkSntqo>
- Peterson, J. B. (2018). *12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos*. Random House Canada.

- Pinsker, J. (2015, May 12). *Why So Many Podcasts Are Brought to You by Squarespace*. Retrieved from The Atlantic Monthly:
<https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/05/why-so-many-podcasts-are-brought-to-you-by-squarespace/392840/>
- Podcasts, A. (2020, July 15). *Apple Podcasts Preview*. Retrieved from Apple Podcasts Preview:
<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/making-sense-with-sam-harris/id733163012>
- PodTrac. (2018, March). *Podcast Industry Rankings*. Retrieved from PodTrac:
<http://analytics.podtrac.com/podcast-rankings>
- PowerfulJRE. (2020, August). *PowerfulJRE*. Retrieved from YouTube:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzQUP1qoWDoEbmsQxvdjxgQ>
- Research, E. (2019, April 15). *The podcast consumer 2019*. Retrieved from Edison Research:
<https://www.edisonresearch.com/the-podcast-consumer-2019/>
- Robins, J. M. (2015, June 17). *How Howard Stern Became 'King of All Media'*. Retrieved from MediaPost: <https://www.mediapost.com/publications/article/252188/how-howard-stern-became-king-of-all-media.html>
- Roccu, R. (2017). Passive revolution revisited: From the Prison Notebooks to our 'great and terrible world'. *Capital & Class*, 537-559.
- Rogan, J. (2019, February 12). *Joe Rogan Experience JRE Episode #1245*. Retrieved from Joe Rogan Experience: <http://podcasts.joerogan.net/podcasts/andrew-yang>
- Rogan, J. (2020, January 20). *JRE #1415 - Bari Weiss*. Retrieved from <http://podcasts.joerogan.net/podcasts/bari-weiss-2>
- Rozner, G. (2018, October). Inside the Intellectual Dark Web. *IPA Review*, pp. 6-11.

Science, R. D. (2009, February 22). *The Four Horsemen HD: Hour 1 of 2 - Discussions with*

Richard Dawkins, Ep 1. Retrieved from YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9DKhc1pcDFM>

Scire, S. (2020, February 6). *Readers reign supreme, and other takeaways from The New York*

Times end-of-year earnings report. Retrieved from Nieman Lab:

<https://www.niemanlab.org/2020/02/readers-reign-supreme-and-other-takeaways-from-the-new-york-times-end-of-year-earnings-report/>

Seminario, M. (1998, December 1). *The Open Diary takes off*. Retrieved from ZD Net:

<https://www.zdnet.com/article/the-open-diary-takes-off/>

Shapiro, A. (2020, May 19). *The New Howard Stern: Podcast Giant Joe Rogan Inks Exclusive*

Deal With Spotify. Retrieved from Forbes:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/arielshapiro/2020/05/19/the-new-howard-stern-podcast-giant-joe-rogan-inks-exclusive-deal-with-spotify/#517df9b260c7>

Smythe, D. W. (1981). *On the audience commodity and its work*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Spotify. (2020, May 19). *For The Record*. Retrieved from Spotify.com:

<https://newsroom.spotify.com/2020-05-19/the-joe-rogan-experience-launches-exclusive-partnership-with-spotify/>

Steele, A. (2020, May 19). *Spotify Strikes Podcast Deal With Joe Rogan Worth More Than \$100*

Million. Retrieved from Wall Street Journal: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/spotify-strikes-exclusive-podcast-deal-with-joe-rogan-11589913814>

Sullivan, J. L. (2019). The Platforms of Podcasting: Past and Present. *Social Media + Society*,

1-12.

- Times, N. Y. (2020, February 29). *Iowa Caucus Results*. Retrieved from New York Times: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/02/04/us/elections/results-iowa-caucus.html>
- Turkle, S. (2016). *Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in a Digital Age*. New York: Penguin.
- Turner, F., & Larson, C. (2015, January 1). Network Celebrity: Entrepreneurship and the New Public Intellectuals. *Public Culture*, pp. 53-84.
- W3Techs. (2020, May 25). *W3Techs - World Wide Web Technology Surveys*. Retrieved from W3Techs: <https://w3techs.com/>
- Warren, K. (2020, May 22). *Here's how comedian and UFC commentator Joe Rogan became the world's highest-paid podcaster*. Retrieved from Business Insider: <https://www.businessinsider.com/joe-rogan-podcast-spotify-net-worth-career-ufc-comedy-2020-5>
- Weber, M. (2002). *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. New York: Penguin.
- Weiss, B. (2018, May 8). *Meet the Renegades of the Intellectual Dark Web*. Retrieved from New York Times: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/08/opinion/intellectual-dark-web.html>
- Weiss, B. (2020, May 25). *Joe Rogan Is the New Mainstream Media*. Retrieved from New York Times: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/25/opinion/joe-rogan-spotify-podcast.html#click=https://t.co/RmwsjksfmK>
- Williams, R. (1973). Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory. *New Left Review*, 3-16.
- Williams, R. (1975). *Television: Technology and Cultural Form*. New York: Schocken Books.
- Williams, R. (1981). *Sociology of Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wolfe, T. (1976, August 23). The "Me" Decade and the Third Great Awakening. *New York Magazine*.

WordPress. (2020). *About Wordpress*. Retrieved from WordPress: <https://wordpress.org/about/>