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Bridge 6

Final Draft

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Judgement Is Okay on some levels

A woman is walking down the streets of Paris, getting her coffee from her regular local vendor, almost walking like an angel, not slow, but on her toes, looking around, hopping when she steps down the pavements with her hair bouncing along. Her pace isn't uniform. Tiny hops replace bigger steps. And her walk feels like a choreography, but it isn't. She walks further down a street, makes a right, goes in an alley and smokes. What do you imagine this woman wearing?

A woman wearing a flowy silk dress, who has a strong personality, does not necessarily resonate with her being powerful because throughout history, dresses or skirt have been worn by women, which have majorly been associated with femininity, where femininity does not associate with a characteristic of power and strength but includes more of a characteristic of sensitivity and gentleness. We live in a world where judging people is inevitable even if there have been recent flooding of twitter and Instagram posts with a #dontjudge. We judge. Constantly, on an unconscious level. Only when our attention is drawn towards a certain piece of clothing, then it is when we realize consciously, that we judge. Whether it's a new teacher or a roommate, who you have talked to a little bit, your mind picks up on cues that make up other people's traits, and then we assume or predict how they would act in certain situations. And it is all done unconsciously.

But how could the judgements that we make while looking at a person associate with how the person really is? What if our judgements are in fact totally correct? Imagine this: you are looking at this gorgeous shirt while you are shopping. You want to try it on. You imagine yourself wearing it. And while you are in the changing room and have the shirt on, does it look as good as you thought it would? If it does, then why? If it doesn't why not?

Around less than a year ago, a channel on YouTube called Cut, which is a company known for its unscripted storytelling-based videos, made videos like "Bartenders Guess Who is Underage,"¹ "People Guess the Sexual Orientation of Strangers,"² "Guess Who's Muslim,"³ "Guess Who Has a Criminal Record"⁴ and multiple others relating to identities and lifestyles. The description boxes of all these videos say, "A who's who of awkward assumptions and judgements." In the video there is no immediate decision put forward by the people who are judging; some questions about lifestyles are asked, looks are judged and then a decision is made; people give more thought to their unconscious judgments and these judgements are naturally converted to conscious judgements. Let's take the example of the video about people guessing who's Muslim. One of the guys, who was guessing, asked one of the girls in question what line of hair products she uses, and she replied with Shea moisture. The guy then,

¹ Watchcut. "Guess My Gender | Lineup | Cut." YouTube. April 22, 2018. Accessed April 20, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W86CyDBrDjE>.

² Watchcut. "People Guess the Sexual Orientation of Strangers | Lineup | Cut." YouTube. July 17, 2017. Accessed April 20, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B2g0lhAuSAw>.

³ Watchcut. "Guess Who's Muslim | Lineup | Cut." YouTube. December 26, 2017. Accessed April 21, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sJF8qGCGavM>.

⁴ Watchcut. "Guess Who Has a Criminal Record | Lineup | Cut." YouTube. January 23, 2018. Accessed April 21, 2018. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0UE_Z00vFLI.

judging from the answer, says “She’s black and not Muslim.” Hearing this the man behind the camera says, “It’s really interesting how you keep relating the religion to race.” And he replies, “I think every religion is kind of related to race, though. You are not going to see a red head girl with blue eyes being a Southern Baptist; that’s a very black religion.” It is very important to take in all the factual evidence and then converting them into judgments and these judgements can always be justified. Geography and demographics are all factors that come into play when you are judging a person. There is no logic in saying that a person who is from India, and specifically from Jammu and Kashmir would not be a Muslim because according to the Census⁵ of India in 2011, people from that particular state are Muslims; although, if we know better, we would judge better. Our minds divert towards obvious things even though it may be straightforward. India is ranked third as the country where Muslim population is the highest,⁶ so I wouldn’t be upset if someone assumed or judged that I was a Muslim because there is reasoning behind such an assumption. Feelings only creep in when a person’s character is judged based upon that person’s identity facts, and that sort of judgement happens when we make generalizations. On a more personal note, the photographs of men that I see on Instagram’s explore page, which have their facial hair extremely and distinctly sharply groomed, have always been related to Arab men. There are hashtags and captions on the pictures relating to Arab men. So, when I do see a man with sharp facial hair, I do think that he might be Arab. And this judgement only

⁵ Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India. "C-1 Population By Religious Community." Census of India Website: Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India. December 29, 2017. Accessed April 23, 2018. <http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/C-01.html>.

⁶ Liu, Joseph. "Mapping the Global Muslim Population." Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project. October 07, 2009. Accessed April 23, 2018. <http://www.pewforum.org/2009/10/07/mapping-the-global-muslim-population/>.

comes from my previous knowledge of pictures on Instagram showing that sharp beards and Arab men are related; it's like touching the flame of a candle and pulling your hand back, it is like a reflex. Obviously, I would be open-minded that this person may not be Arab and that it's just part of his style, but this judgement would not be called irrational. Even though the Instagram posts may have been falsely advertising and even though I was aware about false advertising, the continuous exposure to something can build up an unconscious bias in anyone's mind.

Towards the end of 12th grade or my senior year in high school, when I had my final exams to graduate, I got really interested in reading articles and watching videos about feminism. I would go to Tumblr pages where all these images with feminist quotes and rhetorical questions would be blogged. And I was totally into it. It made sense. I would think in so many ways that the quotes were true. But, luckily, I came across some pages that were purely supporting misandry. And fourth-wave feminism,⁷ although surfaced to focus on justice for women and opposition to sexual harassment, includes so many people, who the internet likes to call "SJW's" or "Social Justice Warriors,"⁸ as a satire, who focus on the complete opposite of feminism. Fast enough I understood that there is a loop within fourth wave feminism. In this time, as the word "feminism" pops in angry violent women come into mind because much of today's feminism is filled with people like that. But even if there is injustice and a woman handles it with a little assertion and boldness, she becomes "bossy." It is true, according to a study conducted

⁷ The Political Studies Association. "Feminism: A Fourth Wave?" Feminism: A Fourth Wave? | The Political Studies Association (PSA). Accessed April 20, 2018. <https://www.psa.ac.uk/insight-plus/feminism-fourth-wave>.

⁸ Stephens, Chase. "Watch SJW Woman Berate Lyft Driver Over His Dashboard Hoola Girl Until He Kicks Her Out." Daily Wire. August 29, 2016. Accessed April 20, 2018. <https://www.dailywire.com/news/8719/watch-sjw-woman-berate-lyft-driver-over-his-chase-stephens>.

by Joseph Grenny and David Maxfield, New York Times best-selling authors, that women's perceived competency falls by 35% and their worth falls by thousands of dollars when they are being judged as forceful.⁹ Basically, this is just a small part of how our society has made or still makes small tensions leading to big knots in important social issues. I never really got to talk about societal issues and human psychology that affects it. The judgements we make, our opinions and beliefs that are affected by our past can all be the reason why society is the way it is; why there seem to be knots in it.

If a new movie seems similar to a cliché I do judge if it will end up like one. And in the genre of Romantic Comedies, most of them do have a very cliché ending. Going to the other side of "most," there have also been so many movies that have not ended up just like the clichés. And this comparison gives just a little general perspective of how people can turn out to be different from expectations. Or maybe just the same. The time period plays a role here because the time when movies with radical different endings started to appear, I became more aware of how things could be different. As time progresses, development of different ideas leads into development of how a society judges; the ending could just be the cliché: where the guy gets the girl or maybe something different: where the guy and girl are separated

According to Huffington Post, a study suggested that, men's brains, on average, have a rational approach than women's.¹⁰ Women take on a more emotion based or intuitive approach to things. So, for a short part of this essay, let's put all our emotions

⁹ Caprino, Kathy. "Gender Bias Is Real: Women's Perceived Competency Drops Significantly When Judged As Being Forceful." Forbes. February 13, 2016. Accessed April 13, 2018. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kathycaprino/2015/08/25/gender-bias-is-real-womens-perceived-competency-drops-significantly-when-judged-as-being-forceful/#7c2e212d85a3>.

¹⁰ Shambaugh, Rebecca. "Different Brains, Different Behaviors: Why Women Lead Differently Than Men." The Huffington Post. March 17, 2017. Accessed April 14, 2018. https://www.huffingtonpost.com/rebecca-shambaugh/different-brains-differen_b_9480952.html.

aside. Maybe some things suit guys more and some things suit girls more, even there is a notion that there are no differences between both the sexes and that anyone can do anything they want, because maybe that is the truth. Girls will maybe always lean towards something more than guys because of the fact that they are in fact girls and have different brain connections. And yes, we judge, and create assumptions but it should be counted fair on the fact that we are only using someone's appearance for that judgement. And I don't even think the problem lies in judging someone on their appearance. From what I have read through in multiple researches and studies, it seems like judging someone based on that person's actions and personality, which go out of an average statistic for that person's race, ethnicity, religion, sex, gender, age etc., is what is complicating things. In the study conducted by Grenny and Maxfield,¹¹ a woman being strong, or a leader in traditionally men's jobs, according to more studies,¹² wasn't historically common. According to a paper released by the U.S. Department of Labor in 2009,¹³ women, on average, had jobs that were less competitive, earned less money, and required less strength and leadership qualities than men's. And so, it does come as a bit of a difference when women have characteristics like that. Little characteristics of someone's personality that sync with a different sex than their own for example, men being emotional, shouldn't be totally judged differently. Both the sexes

¹¹ Caprino, Kathy. "Gender Bias Is Real: Women's Perceived Competency Drops Significantly When Judged As Being Forceful." Forbes. February 13, 2016. Accessed April 13, 2018. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kathycaprino/2015/08/25/gender-bias-is-real-womens-perceived-competency-drops-significantly-when-judged-as-being-forceful/#7c2e212d85a3>.

¹² Bailey, Sebastian. "Who Makes A Better Leader: A Man Or A Woman?" Forbes. July 23, 2014. Accessed April 14, 2018. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/sebastianbailey/2014/07/23/who-makes-a-better-leader-a-man-or-a-woman/#8a1e4ae1260d>.

¹³ U.S. Department of Labor (2009). Highlights of Women's Earnings in 2009. Report 1025. [online] Bureau of Labor Statistics, pp. 1, 2, 4, 89, 90. Available at: https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/womens-earnings/archive/womensearnings_2009.pdf. Accessed 19 Apr. 2018.

have their brains linked differently, but there have also been similar connections so many times. And now, knowing more and going through so many different societal issues, just like I argued with the movie clichés, it's ok to be more familiar with these differences. Why does race, ethnicity, religion, sex, gender, age even matter with what a person is doing as their true self and goodness? In the end it just comes down to who was humble to learn and indifferent to these things to be a better person.

We judge appearances, clothes, people's obvious characteristics and connect all of these aspects into one person, and how they stand contextually and socially. Research shows that judgements based on people's features/appearances are clearer and more correct than based on people's clothes. And when it comes to judging people on their small actions and characteristics like how they are talking a certain way or moving a certain way, our judgement is more complex and intertwined with many social generalization factors. We do have to take in the fact that judgements always come through. Saying don't judge does not actually make us not judge. We already do that in our minds. But it is our job to maybe say open up to different possibilities and make no generalizations when making characteristic based judgements, because it is much more complex. Men are rational and have a logical way of thinking. Women are emotional, and it is intertwined within them. We are obviously talking on an average over here. There are women who are much stronger than the average. There are men who are more emotional than the others. There are obviously, mathematically speaking, extrapolations. And so, after our unconscious judgements, we can consciously be open-minded and leave the idea of judging someone's character.

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