

Prompt 1: Relationship between Technology and Consciousness

- Consider a meme, video, or article you've seen recently that expressed certain expectations or beliefs about personal behavior in responding to systemic racism. Try to choose something that gave rise to a strong emotional reaction in you.
 - What stated values and/or expectations are being communicated by the post? How did the mode of the technology impact this communication?
 - What hidden values are being communicated by the mode of technology used? What patterns do you see emerging in comment threads, reposting, etc. that imply unspoken social conventions or expectations of behavior?
 - How can social media support the work of anti-racism? How might it impede this work? What larger cultural impacts do you see that are specifically a result of social media with respect to anti-racist work?

A recent video that I viewed was “How George Floyd Was Killed in Police Custody | Visual Investigations” by the New York Times. The video uses all available video footage and audio recordings of the timeline of events that lead to the death of George Floyd to create a comprehensive explanation of exactly what happened. Although the video does have some minor gaps due to the lack of content, and the verbal analysis of the events seems to be slightly biased, this video helped me clearly understand exactly what happened during the death of George Floyd beyond the bystander video that went viral. The footage and analysis presented by the New York times left me emotional and speechless.

The video indirectly shows that even with 16 complaints, officer Derek Chauvin is still working unchecked. This small fact alone demonstrates to me the poor integrity of the Minneapolis police department, and hints at the greater issue of unchecked law enforcement throughout the United States. Throughout the video, we can see the lack of respect Derek Chauvin has for Floyd, and a few key moments show how Chauvin abuses the hard power permitted by his position. At one point, (while Floyd is being restrained) Chauvin says “get up and get in the car man” and Floyd responds “I will.” As we know, despite Floyd’s compliance with Chauvin’s request, Chauvin continues to restrain Floyd until he goes into cardiac arrest. In my opinion, this is a key moment when a clear human rights abuse¹ turns into second degree murder². These are just two facts presented by the informational video that exhibit the values upheld by the current system of law enforcement. The events that lead to the death of George Floyd provide support for the statement “All cops are bastards” or ACAB. Although not every individual who works in law enforcement is a bad person, the support for the current system of law enforcement makes them bastards. The case of George Floyd presents direct evidence that when officers who have received numerous past complaints remain working unchecked, the

¹ (“No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment” -UN Declaration of Human rights, article 5)

²Second degree murder: Any intentional murder with malice aforethought, but is not premeditated or planned in advance.

likelihood of said officer using unnecessary force and violence grows as they seem to be above the law.

The mode of technology used by the New York Times Visual Investigations series fosters understanding without bias, allowing for the viewer to interpret the events in their own way. I find this fascinating and very empowering as the purpose of the video is to give the viewer a holistic understanding of an event; not to sway a viewer's opinion in a certain direction. I often find that viral news videos create a strong emotional response unconsciously allowing viewers to form opinions without a complete understanding of the event. Although this isn't necessarily the result of bad intentions, a lack of understanding can lead to undesirable misinformation. The way the events are depicted make it clear that this is a cruel act, and most of the comments/viewers are supporters of Floyd, outraged by the events depicted in the video.

The comment section represents the general anarchy of social media. The ability to speak freely without having your physical identity tied to your words is something fascinating and unique about the internet. Throughout social rights movements such as the recent black lives matter actions those who oppose the movement can also speak openly against the movement, oftentimes stating horrific things, with impunity. The internet gives everyone a place to gather and organize, and makes it easy for those of similar ideologies to connect. It was fascinating to me to find so many deniers of systematic racism throughout many pockets of the internet throughout recent events. Albeit, at least on my feed the support for the movement was overwhelming. Social media is an amazing tool for spreading information, and I believe it is an amazing way to help organize actions for such a large movement. Social media has become a crucial tool for community organizers, however, I don't think that the wealth of information and proof on the internet is enough to sway opinions by itself. We each find our self within our own niche pockets of the internet, the content we view is curated to hold our attention above anything else. For example, I very rarely see anything on my timeline that puts Trump's politics in a positive light, and someone who is against the BLM movement is likely to only see posts that support their own ideologies. Overall, I think social media and the internet in general is an important tool to educate those on board with an ideology, but constructive conversations and debates are better had live or in person.