Our Creative Articles

Origins of English Language
Romantic Comedy
Future of English
Modern Magic's Nature of Electricity

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Preface

This book is one of three produced by semesters 3/4 and 5/6 students of IULI over the course of one year (2019-2020). The idea came from students. The normal English syllabus covers writing and presentation skills, in particular, but a number of students were already proficient in those skills and ready for a real challenge. An experiment with one student in early 2019 proved to be successful so a number of students took up the challenge of producing either a fiction or non-fiction paper or story.

To be honest, the results were beyond my wildest dreams. Of course, some of these students had been successful in competitions, such as UI and Binus, and I had seen their written work but the sheer quality blew me away. As I result. I have not been able to pick out just 4 or 5 pieces for printing but 16 pieces spread over 3 books.

I have standardized the texts to Calibri and, mostly, font 12 and have made some grammar corrections but the body of the papers or stories is entirely the students' work. Using American or British English is also entirely up to the students.

So, read and enjoy.

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The Origins, Development, and Cultural Effects of The English Language

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Introduction

People of all walks of life, from every corner of the globe, use language as a way to interact and socialise with others and as a way to convey their emotions, ideas, and opinions. Language is an art form, a source of education, and it serves to inspire, unite, and motivate. Language is what sets us apart from other living things. Language allows us to relate to each other and allow others to understand us. Even those with limitations and disabilities have their own language as a way to interact and communicate with the non-disabled world; sign languages, in all its iterations (e.g., American Sign Language, Indonesian Sign Language), are legitimate languages that both disabled and non-disabled people are able to communicate through.

The linguistic history of any language is tied to the social and cultural background of the changing times. It is impossible to talk about the history of a language without also discussing the history of those who spoke the language. The story of the English language is the story of the people, the places, and the events which transformed the language from an Indo-European language spoken in Eastern Europe about four thousand years ago into the closest thing we have to a modern international language. Today, English is undoubtedly the most learned language in the world, with millions all over the world adopting it as an additional language. It is estimated that around 1.5 billion people, 20% of the human population, speak English today, and it is estimated that there are around 3 times

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as many non-native speakers as there are native speakers. People all over the globe have a desire to learn the English language. English is routinely used as the de facto international language, a common medium of communication amongst speakers of other languages. When German businessmen established a Volkswagen plant in China, the Germans and their Chinese counterparts used English to converse, despite the fact that it is not the native language of either country. A Russian airline pilot landing in Rome will communicate with the Italian traffic controller in English, not Russian nor Italian, because English is the international language of aviation.

The idea that English is the international language may seem obvious to most people. 'Of course, English is a global language', they would say. You hear English on television spoken by politicians from all over the world. Wherever you travel, you see English signs and advertisements. Whenever you enter a hotel or restaurant in a foreign city, they will probably understand English, and there will be an English menu. But what does it mean for English to be the international language? Why is English the language which is usually cited in this connection? How did the situation arise? And could it change? Or is it the case that, once a language becomes a global language, it is there forever?

What is a Global Language?

A language achieves a global status when it is given a 'special role' in numerous countries around the world. To become a global language, we are not only looking at countries where a large majority of the population speak the language as a first language- in the case of English, this would mean the United States, Canada, Britain, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and other commonwealth countries - but we must look at the role or place that it has in communities and countries even though they may have few, or no, mother-tongue speakers. Because no language has ever been spoken by a majority in more than

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a few countries, it is important to look at the usage of a language as a largely foreign language and how much value it holds internationally.

The global and international status of the English language becomes clearer when you consider the fact that English holds value even in countries where the United Kingdom - and the British Empire - has, historically, had little influence. The English language is learnt as the principal foreign language in plenty of schools in Western Europe and it is also part of some educational curricula in countries such as Japan and South Korea as well as becoming increasingly desirable for millions of speakers in China (Crystal, 2003).

There are two main ways in which a language can achieve a 'special role' within a country. One is through the official recognition of the language as the primary or official language of a country, to be used as a medium of communication in the government, the courts of law, the media, and academia despite the fact that it may not be the associated language with the region or the local people. To get on in these societies, it is essential to master the official language as early in life as possible. Such a language is often described as a 'second language', because it is seen as a complement to a person's mother tongue, or 'first language'. The role of an official language is today best illustrated by English, which now has some kind of special status in over seventy countries, for example Ghana, Nigeria, India, and Malaysia. Though French, German, Spanish, Russian, and Arabic are languages that have developed official use in other countries no other language is as widespread as the English language (Crystal, 2003; Howson, 2013)

A language could also attain a 'special role' when it is made a priority in a country's foreign-language teaching, even though this language has no official status in the country. It becomes the language children are most likely to be taught when they arrive in school and the one most available - and desirable - to adults who never learned it in their early educational years. English is now the language most widely taught as a foreign language – in over 100 countries, such as China,

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Russia, Germany, Spain, Egypt and Brazil – and in most of these countries it is emerging as the chief foreign language to be encountered in schools, often displacing another language in the process. In 1996, for example, English replaced French as the chief foreign language in schools in Algeria - a former French colony (Crystal, 2003).

What Makes a Global Language?

A language does not reach global status simply because of the number of speakers it has. In fact, why a language becomes a global language has little to do with the number of people who speak it. It is much more to do with who those speakers are. Latin did not become an international language throughout the Roman Empire because the Romans outnumbered the people they subjugated. They were simply more powerful. And later, when Roman military power declined, Latin remained for a millennium as the international language of education, thanks to the power - a different kind of power - of Roman Catholicism (Crystal, 2003).

The relationship between the dominance of a particular language and the economic and cultural power of its speakers is seen throughout history. And as we discuss the history of the English language, how it developed and changed throughout history and how it became the de facto international language, the connection will become increasingly clearer. Without a strong power-base, of whatever kind, no language can make progress as an international medium of communication. Language has no independent existence, living separately from the people who speak it. Language exists only in the brains and mouths and ears and hands and eyes of its users. When they succeed, on the international stage, their language succeeds and when they fail, their language fails. A language does not become a global language because of its syntax and grammar, or because of the size of its vocabulary, or because it has been a vehicle of a great literature in the past, or because it was once associated with a great culture or religion. These

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are all factors which can motivate someone to learn a language, of course, but none of them alone, or in combination, can ensure a language's world spread (Crystal, 2003).

A language has more often than not become an international language through the power of its speakers - most commonly their political and military power. This is seen again and again throughout history. Greek did not become a language of international communication in the Middle East 2,000 years ago because of the intellectual prowess of Plato and Aristotle, but because of the armies of Alexander the Great. Latin was used throughout Europe because of the Roman Empire. Arabic came to be spoken widely across northern Africa and the Middle East through the spread of Islam by the Moorish armies in the eighth century. Spanish, Portuguese, and French find their way into the Americas, Africa and Asia through their colonial policies and the way these policies were implemented by armies and navies. The history of an international language can be traced through the travels of its speakers and the power that they have and the English language is no exception with the British Empire and the United States political and economic reach and influence in their respective periods (Crystal, 2003).

But international language dominance is not solely the result of military power. It may take a militarily powerful nation to establish a language, but it takes an economically powerful one to maintain and expand it. This has always been the case, but it became a particularly critical factor in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with economic developments beginning to operate on a global scale, supported by the new communication technologies - telegraph, telephone, radio - and the emergence of massive businesses that are able to operate internationally. The growth of competitive industry and business brought an explosion of international marketing and advertising. The power of the press reached unprecedented levels, which were then surpassed by broadcasting media, with their ability to cross national boundaries with ease. Further technological

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advancements and expansion, chiefly in the form of movies and records, fuelled new mass entertainment industries which had a worldwide impact (Crystal, 2003).

This idea that a language gains power from a combination of military, economic, and technological power describes the rise of English in the nineteenth and twentieth century. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, Britain had become the world's leading industrial and trading country. By the end of the century, the population of the United States was larger than that of any of the countries of Western Europe, and its economy was the most productive and the fastest growing in the world. British political imperialism had sent English around the globe, during the nineteenth century and, in the twentieth century, this world presence was maintained and promoted almost single-handedly through the economic supremacy of the new American superpower. Economics replaced politics as the chief driving force. And the language behind the US dollar was English (Crystal, 2003).

Positives of an International Language

Having an international language is positive for many reasons. It allows people of all backgrounds to communicate with each other, breaking down the barriers between people that language can build. Translation has played a central role in human interaction for thousands of years. When monarchs or ambassadors met on the international stage, there would invariably be interpreters present. But there are limits to what can be done in this way. The more a community is linguistically mixed, the less it can rely on individuals to ensure communication between different groups. In communities where only two or three languages are in contact, bilingualism (or trilingualism) is a possible solution. Most young children can acquire more than one language easier than adults but in countries where there are many languages in contact, as in much of Africa and Southeast Asia, that option appears unfeasible (Crystal, 2003).

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The barrier of language has often been solved through the usage of a lingua franca, or a 'common language'. Sometimes, when communities begin to trade with each other communication is done through the adoption of a simplified language, known as a pidgin, which combines elements of the various respective languages. The geographical reach of a lingua franca and the extent to which it can be used is entirely dictated by political factors. A great deal of lingua francas extend to a relatively small domain - used between a few ethnic groups in one particular country or as a link between the trading populations of a few countries. A lingua franca would also be used in several countries through its shared political or historical links. During the domination of the Roman Empire, Latin was a lingua franca in their various territories for government and administration purposes with very few of the subjugated population speaking much Latin in their day-to-day life. And in modern times Arabic, Spanish, French, Portuguese and several other languages have developed a major international role as a lingua franca due to their political history (Crystal, 2003).

The idea of a global language is the idea of having a lingua franca for every country on Earth, allowing people from every corner of the globe to communicate with each other. International organisations, such as the United Nations and the World Bank - which were both established in 1945, started establishing themselves as a way of international communication between countries, whether it was politically, socially, or economically. Never before have so many countries (around 190, in the case of some UN bodies) been represented in a single meeting to discuss topics with each other. The pressure to adopt a single lingua franca, to facilitate communication in such contexts, was considerable, the alternative being expensive and impracticable multi-way translation facilities (Crystal, 2003).

The need for a global language is also appreciated by the international academic and business communities, and it is here that the adoption of a single lingua franca is most commonly seen, having a common language is important for the transfer of information. A conversation between academic physicists in

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Sweden, Italy, and India is at present practicable only if a common language is available. A situation where a Japanese company director arranges to meet German and Saudi Arabian contacts in a Singapore hotel to plan a multi-national deal would not be impossible, if each plugged in to a 3-way translation support system, but it would be far more complicated than the alternative, which is for each to make use of the same language.

Having a global language could also act as an empowering force, allowing for the sharing of cultural information between cultures rather than for the elimination of individual cultural identities. The usage of a shared language allows us to understand each other and open up our perception and comprehension of others. A global language does not indicate that we are eliminating our own traditions and cultural identity but that we are sharing our identity with those who might not be aware of it (Plonski, A Teferra, & Brady, 2013).

Negatives of an International Language

However, there are negatives to a global language. Having one powerful international language, English in this case, can have negative impacts and implications. It can lead to cultural colonisation, overpowering linguistic power, linguistic complacency, and the death of indigenous languages (Crystal, 2003).

A global language could accelerate the disappearance of minority languages, or make all other languages obsolete. A global language threatens a country's cultural identity. As discussed, a language is inherently connected to its speakers and as the language spreads, so does the culture and identity of its speakers. Language is a form of cultural identity that shapes one's perceptions and beliefs. If it is more beneficial for you to communicate and research in a particular language, you are probably going to be more inclined to learn that language than another. English threatens not only to make those who speak it more alike, but to mould them in the culturally specific Western - mainly

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American and British - image that it carries (Crystal, 2003; Plonski, A Teferra, & Brady, 2013).

A global language also creates a hierarchy where people who are able to talk like a 'native' appear smarter and above those who cannot. It creates division and class divides on language abilities. It is also a little problematic that the one global language that we have, has been able to receive that status through a long history of colonisation and exploitation and all other options, be it Spanish or French, are also tainted with the same history. The language of colonisers carries with it the history of colonial language policies in order to perpetuate their own political power over the majority of citizens who are less proficient in those languages (Crystal, 2003; Plonski, A Teferra, & Brady, 2013)

Having one singular global language also creates the issue of disproportionate linguistic power - those who speak the global language as their mother tongue will automatically be in a position of power in comparison to those who don't speak it as their mother-tongue. It is a possibility that academics who write their research in languages other than English will have their work ignored by the international community. It is possible that senior managers who do not have English as a mother tongue could find themselves at a disadvantage compared with their mother-tongue colleagues, especially when meetings involve the use of informal speech. One global language overpowering the value of local languages creates a divide and cuts off the elite from the population and that by not understanding the language, the ordinary people can neither identify themselves with the state nor acquire even the most basic information about public affairs. Those who are unable to learn the language would then be relegated to being stuck in their social position.

There is also the question of whether a global language will eliminate the motivation for adults to learn other languages. The common archetype of British and American tourists who travel the world assuming that everyone speaks English - and that it is somehow the fault of the local people if they do not - shows

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that linguistic complacency is common among English speakers. Linguistic complacency is dangerous as it creates a precedent where people expect others to accommodate for their own personal limitations. This also allows those who speak one particular language to have a higher social standing than those who would have to learn it as an additional language, which, when considered on a global scale, creates a problem where the countries that uses the language as an official or first language would have more power than those who does not (Crystal, 2003).

In addition, the emergence of a global language could also lead to the disappearance of minority languages and cause widespread language death. The processes of language domination and loss have been known throughout linguistic history, and exist independently of the emergence of a global language. Historically, the death of languages around the world has been a result of an ethnic group coming to be assimilated within a more dominant society, and adopting its language. The situation continues today though the matter is being discussed with increasing urgency because of the unprecedented rate at which indigenous languages are being lost, especially in North America, Brazil, Australia, Indonesia and parts of Africa. When a language dies, it is not only the language that dies but it is also the identity of those who spoke it. Especially in languages which have never been written down, or which have been written down only recently, language is the voice of the history of a community. Oral testimony, in the form of sagas, folktales, songs, rituals, proverbs, and many other practices, provides us with a unique view of our world and a diverse canon of literature. It is their legacy to the rest of humanity. Once lost, it can never be recaptured (Crystal, 2003).

It should also be noted that throughout history, all over the world, the use of a single language by a community does not equal social harmony or mutual understanding; not with the Americans during the American Civil War, not with the Vietnamese during the Vietnam War, not with the Irish during the Irish War for Independence, and not with the Sri Lankans during their Civil War. Language does not dissolve differences but language does not always create barriers

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between communities, the presence of more than one language within a community does not equal infighting and conflict, as seen in several successful examples of peaceful multilingual coexistence such as Singapore and Switzerland (Crystal, 2003).

The History of the English Language

The history of the English language and its eventual rise to become the international language of the world is fascinatingly intertwined, with the events that altered the English language throughout history mirroring the events that spread the language later. The history of the English language is the history of economic, military, and cultural power altering the language throughout its history. It is the story of technological advancement and education that allows language to become standardised and become constant in its usage but also the story of migration and how people adapt aspects of a language to their own culture and identity.

Generally speaking, linguists divide the evolution of the English language into three eras: The Old English Era, the Middle English Era, and the Modern English era. Linguists generalise that a language would enter a new era every thousand years or so, marked by the idea that a speaker at the beginning of that period would not be able to speak with a speaker at the end of that period due to the natural language change.

The Old English Era

The written history of the English language and its origin is often marked by the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons in the fifth century. Emigrating from northern Europe, the Anglo-Saxons settled in England in the fifth and sixth centuries and developed what we now know as Old English. Initially comprising many small groups and divided into a number of kingdoms, the Anglo-Saxons were finally joined into a single political realm – the kingdom of England – during the reign

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of King Æthelstan, the first king of England, in 924 C.E (Chamonikolasova, 2014).

During this period, two events were vital to the creation of what is now known as Old English. One event was the Christianisation of England and the influence of the Latin language, which persisted for centuries beyond the Old English Era. Whilst the Romans have previously conquered the land in 43 C.E. - before the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons - it was not until the conversion mission of St. Augustine in 597 C.E. that the Romans' Latin language had an impact on the language of the people of the British Isles.

The introduction of Roman Christianity, which differs from the Irish Christianity that was present in the Island prior to St. Augustine's arrival, meant the building of churches and monasteries as well as schools. Latin, the language of the clergy and of ecclesiastical learning, was introduced to and was used habitually by the local Anglo-Saxons. Latin words gradually made their way into Old English and thus, the English language. Understandably, the words that were introduced at this time were tied to Christianity and its external organisation. Words relating to religion were borrowed at this time of Christian evolution. Words with origins from this era, which has remained in the modern English vocabulary albeit in a slightly different form includes: *'abbot', 'altar', 'angel', 'anthem', 'candle', 'chalice', 'cleric', 'cowl', 'deacon', 'disciple', 'hymn', 'martyr', 'mass', 'minster', 'noon', 'nun', 'offer', 'organ', 'palm', 'pope', 'priest', 'psalm', 'relic', 'rule', 'shrine', 'stole', 'temple',* and *'tunic'* (Dima, 2019).

The other major vehicle for linguistic change during the Anglo-Saxon period came about as a result of the Norse migration into the British Isles beginning in the eighth century when King Canute, King of Denmark, united England and Denmark into a single kingdom. Many Danes and Norwegians settled in England following the unification and quickly integrated with the Anglo-Saxons. Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse were spoken in congruence between

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700 and 900 C.E., resulting in the merging of the two languages (Durkin, 2019; Smith & Reade , 1991).

The prolonged contact and mixing with Old Norse had two vital effects on the language of the Anglo-Saxons in Britain: the expansion of their vocabulary and a grammatical simplification of the language. Old Norse gave the Anglo-Saxons synonyms to pre-existing words, seen in Table 1, as well as new words from the different phonetics of the language, exemplified in Table 2. Along with new words, Old Norse also sped up the process of losing inflectional morphemes (suffixes added to a word which changes the grammatical property of the word) until eventually, the English language in its current iteration only has 8 inflectional morphemes: *plural* (s), *possessive* ('s), *comparative* (er), *superlative* (est), *present* (s), *past* (ed), *past participle* (en), and *present participle* (ing) (Western Washington University, 2019)

The Norse arrived in the British Isles with an already simplified system of endings and it influenced the way the Anglo-Saxon language was structured. Many Anglo-Saxon and Old English plurals were lost and regularized as 'es' and plurals for Old English words such as 'nama' (namen), 'scip' (scipu), 'sunu' (suna). Currently, there are only a handful of words with irregular plurals such as 'ox' (oxen) and 'foot' (feet).

Table 1. Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse Doublets

Anglo-Saxon	Old Norse
Rear	Raise
Carve	Cut
Craft	Skill
Hide	Skin
From	Fro
No	Nay

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Table 2. Words from Old Norse "SK"

Anglo-Saxon "sh"	Old Norse "sk"
Shin	Skin
Shirt	Skirt
Shatter	Scatter
Ship	Skipper

As well as altering and expanding the language, the Norse also had an impact on the naming of places all over Britain. The Norse controlled an area known as the Danelaw which covered most of England north and east of a line from Liverpool to the Thames. Places bearing the mark of a Norse place names includes those ending with - by (Appleby, Ashby), -both/-booth (,-thorp/-thorpe (Donisthorpe), -toft (Lowestoft, Langtoft), -keld (Threkeld), and -kirk (Ormskirk) (Harbeck, 2016; Jorvik Viking Centre, 2019)

The impact of the Norse culture and language on English is immortalised in perhaps the most famous well-known work from the Old English period, the epic poem "*Beowulf*." Consisting of 3,182 lines and written in the alliterative verse style, "*Beowulf*" tells the story of Beowulf -a hero of the North Germanic tribe of Geats- as he fights a series of monsters and rule as King for approximately 50 years. Considered one of the oldest surviving poems in the English language, the poem covers different parts of Scandinavia and Norse culture over the course of the sixth Century.

Over 1,000 years has passed since the writing of the poem and the legacy of "*Beowulf*" is seen in the world of literature and entertainment. The core story of a hero battling fierce monsters and defending his country with the central theme of bravery, mortality, and social hierarchy is seen in stories of all sorts, from J.R.R. Tolkien's *"Lord of the Rings"* trilogy to the table top fantasy role-playing game *"Dungeons & Dragons."* The story of Beowulf has also been reprinted,

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reimagined, and adapted again and again. Tolkien - a professor of Anglo-Saxon English - completed his own translation of *"Beowulf"* in 1926, Irish poet Seamus Heaney's 1999 translation became a best-seller, and children's author Michael Morpurgo retold the story for young readers (Fiorentino, 2017).

In the Old English Era, the language and those who spoke it interacted with two cultures and languages with different backgrounds and origins that altered the language into something more familiar to us in the modern day. The North Germanic Old Norse and the Italic Latin exemplifies, through two different methods, how a language could be altered and adopted by the presence of a culturally and socially powerful group. The mass migration of Old Norse speakers eventually led to the assimilation of the language into Old English and the cultural influence of the Latin language of Roman Christianity transformed the English language. It shows how the language of another culture, regardless of how many people speak it in a particular area, has the power to change the structure of a language.

The Middle English Era

The Middle English Era is signified by the arrival of the Normans in 1066. Led by William of Normandy, known as William the Conqueror and eventually, William I of England, the Normans invaded the island of Britain from their homeland in northern France and settled in positions of power in Britain. The arrival of the Normans changed almost everything in England socially, economically, culturally, legally, and - of course - linguistically. The defeated Anglo-Saxons earls were removed from power and were replaced by Norman French earls and knights who fought alongside William. For the next three centuries, French - or the Norman dialect of French called Norman French or Anglo-Norman - became the language of the courts, the aristocracy, and the ruling class. It was not until the 1300s, around the beginning of the Wars of the Roses, that English was spoken exclusively by an English monarch (Mastin, 2011).

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The conquering Normans - themselves descendants of Vikings with the name 'Norman' itself coming from the name 'Norseman'- spoke a rural dialect of French with considerable Germanic influence, which differed from the standard French of Paris of the period known as Francien. As the Normans ruled England for 300 years, Anglo-Norman French became the language of the kings and nobility of England. It was not until Henry IV, who ascended to the throne in 1399, which the monarch was to have English as his mother tongue. Whilst Anglo-Norman was the language of the court, administration, and aristocracy, those in the lower class - which describes the vast majority of the English population at the time - continued to speak Old English. Considered by the Norman elites to be a low-class, vulgar language, English continued to develop in parallel with the development of Anglo-Norman, only gradually merging as Normans and Anglo-Saxons began to intermarry. It is this mixture of Old English and Anglo-Norman that is usually referred to as Middle English.

During these Norman-ruled centuries in which English as a language had no official status and no regulation, English became the third language in its own country. It was largely a spoken rather than written language, and effectively sank to the level of a patois or creole. The main dialect regions during this time are usually referred to as Northern, Midlands, Southern and Kentish, although they were really just natural developments from the Northumbrian, Mercian, West Saxon and Kentish dialects of Old English.

The Normans changed the English language greatly, expanding the vocabulary of the language by over 10,000 words - of which 75% are still in use today. Words ending with suffixes '-age', '-ance/-ence', '-ant/-ent', '-ment', '-ity' and '-tion', or starting with the prefixes 'con-', 'de-', 'ex-', 'trans-' and 'pre-' all came from the Normans. Many of the words that came from this period were related to high-class and luxury such as the monarchy, government, and fashion. Below is the list of words that has been given by the Normans, categorised by the group that they represent:

Crown and Nobility - 'crown', 'castle', 'prince', 'count', 'duke', 'viscount', 'baron', 'noble', 'sovereign', 'heraldry'

Government - 'parliament', *'government', 'governor', 'city'*

Court and Law - 'court', 'judge', 'justice', 'accuse', 'arrest', 'sentence', 'appeal', 'condemn', 'plaintiff', 'bailiff', 'jury', 'felony', 'verdict', 'traitor', 'contract', 'damage', 'prison'

War and Military - 'army', 'armour', 'archer', 'battle', 'soldier', 'guard', 'courage', 'peace', 'enemy', 'destroy'

Fashion and Lifestyle - 'mansion', 'money', 'gown', 'boot', 'beauty', 'mirror', 'jewel', 'appetite', 'banquet', 'herb', 'spice', 'sauce', 'roast', 'biscuit'

Art and Literature - 'art', 'colour', 'language', 'literature', 'poet', 'chapter', 'question'

While humble, lower class occupations - such as 'baker', 'miller', 'shoemaker' - retained their Anglo-Saxon names, more skilled and upper-class occupations - such as 'painter', 'tailor', 'merchant' - adopted French names. Animals in the field generally kept their English names but, once cooked and served, their names became French. Examples of this transformation can be seen in the following table.

Table 3. Animals and Food - English vs Norman-French

Old English (Animals)	Norman-French (Food)
Sheep	Mutton
Cow	Beef
Calf	Veal
Deer	Venison
Swine	Pork, Bacon

Sometimes, a Norman word would replace an Old English word - words such as *'crime'*, *'people'*, *'beautiful'*, and *'uncle'* replaced their Old English

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counterparts. Sometimes Norman and Old English components would merge to form new words - the word *'gentleman'*, for example, is a combination of the Norman word *'gentle'* and Germanic/Old English word *'man'*. And other times, both English and Norman words survived with different connotations - the Old English *'house'* and the Norman-French *'mansion'*, for example. It should be noted that, as a Romance language, many French words, and thus Anglo-Norman words, derived from Latin (Mastin, 2011).

Rather than erasing existing words in the English language, different words with roughly the same meaning stayed and a whole host of new, French-based synonyms entered the English language. Over time, many near synonyms acquired subtle differences in meaning - with the Norman-French alternative suggesting a higher level of refinement than the Old English - which expanded the English vocabulary, adding nuances and complexities to the language. Even today, phrases combining Anglo-Saxon and Norman doublets are still in common use; phrases such as "*law and order*", "*lord and master*", "*love and cherish*" (Mastin, 2011).

French writing changed the common Old English letter pattern "hw" to "wh", largely out of a desire for consistency with "ch" and "th", and despite the actual pronunciation, so that *'hwaer'* became *'where'*, *'hwaenne'* became *'when'* and *'hwil'* became *'while'*.

During the reign of the Norman king Henry II and his queen Eleanor of Aquitaine in the second half of the twelfth Century, many more Francien words from central France were imported in addition to their Norman counterparts - the Francien *'chase'* and the Norman *'catch'*; *'royal'* and *'real'*; *'regard'* and *'reward'*; *'gauge'* and *'wage'*; *'guile'* and *'wile'*; *'guardian'* and *'warden'*; *'guarantee'* and *'warrant'*. Regarded as the most cultured woman in Europe, Eleanor also championed many terms of romance and chivalry such as *'romance'*, *'courtesy'*, *'honour'*, *'damsel'*, *'virtue'*, *'music'*, *'desire'*, *'passion'*.

Following the Norman Conquest in the eleventh Century, England became more integrated and involved in the culture of mainland Europe with its Latin and Roman influence. The English Church was reformed according to Roman ideas: local assembly was revived, celibacy of the clergy was required, and the canon law of Western Europe was introduced in England. During this period, Anglo-Norman was the verbal language of the court, administration and culture and Latin was often used as the written language, especially by the Church and in official records. For example, the "Domesday Book", in which William the Conqueror took stock of his new kingdom, was written in Latin to emphasize its legal authority.

Many Latin-derived words came into use during this period, largely connected with religion, law, medicine and literature, including *'scripture'*, *'collect'*, *'meditation'*, *'immortal'*, *'oriental'*, *'client'*, *'adjacent'*, *'combine'*, *'expedition'*, *'moderate'*, *'nervous'*, *'private'*, *'popular'*, *'picture'*, *'legal'*, *'legitimate'*, *'testimony'*, *'prosecute'*, *'pauper'*, *'contradiction'*, *'history'*, *'library'*, *'comet'*, *'solar'*, *'recipe'*, *'scribe'*, *'scripture'*, *'tolerance'*, *'imaginary'*, *'infinite'*, *'index'*, *'intellect'*, *'magnify'* and *'genius'*.

Whilst Christianity - and the Roman variation of it - had been a part of English life, William I's devotion to the Church led to the integration of religion with the government and the monarchy. When William of Normandy conquered England, he believed that it was important for the churches to come under Norman control, and for priests to take a lead in transforming the country into an Anglo-Norman territory. This interrelation between the monarchy and religion remained long after the Norman Conquest, which ultimately led to the establishment of the Church of England in 1534.

Anglo-Saxon churches were usually small wooden buildings in the villages of England, and only a few have remained. The Normans wanted to show that they had an authority in religion that would match their military authority, so stone churches were built as well as stone castles. The Normans built larger stone

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churches, and constructed basilicas - a Roman Catholic Church used for ceremonial purposes - in major towns, like London, Durham and York, which could hold hundreds of people worshipping at one time. One key feature of these large Norman basilicas was the rounded arch, and they would have been painted inside with religious art. This gave a clear message about the power of the church in people's lives, and the leaders of the church were usually Norman. Along with churches, the Normans also built monasteries. The monasteries played a vital role in the limited amount of education that was available for people in England. Latin was the written language of both Church and State, so boys who wanted to become priests or government clerks had to learn Latin - and they were taught this in Anglo-Norman, not in English. Once the Normans settled fully in England, they established their Anglo-Norman language as the spoken language of everyday life (BBC B. , 2019).

In 1384, John Wycliffe produced his translation of "The Bible" in vernacular English. This challenge to Latin as the language of God was considered a revolutionary act at that time, and the translation was banned by the Church. Wycliffe's "Bible" was nevertheless a landmark in the English language. Over 1,000 English words were first recorded in it, most of them Latin-based, often via French, including *'barbarian', 'birthday', 'canopy', 'child-bearing', 'communication', 'cradle', 'crime', 'dishonour', 'emperor', 'envy', 'godly', 'graven', 'humanity', 'glory', 'injury', 'justice', 'madness', 'multitude', 'novelty', 'oppressor', 'pollute', 'profession', 'puberty', 'suddenly', 'unfaithful', 'visitor', 'zeal'*, as well as phrases like an "eye for an eye" and "woe is me".

Texts in Middle English, as opposed to French or Latin, began to emerge in the thirteenth century, with works such as the debate poem "The Owl and the Nightingale" and the long historical poem known as Layamon's "Brut". But it was not until the latter part of the fourteenth century that the English language gained literary legitimacy. Geoffrey Chaucer began writing his famous "Canterbury Tales" in the early 1380s, and crucially he chose to write it in English. Other

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important works written in English around the same time, if not earlier, includes William Langland's "Piers Plowman" and the anonymous "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight". But the "Canterbury Tales" is usually considered the first great work of English literature, and the first demonstration of the artistic legitimacy of vernacular Middle English, as opposed to French or Latin. Whilst he included words of Norman-French origin in his work, when Chaucer portrayed the earthy working man of England - such as the Miller - he deliberately used much more Old English vocabulary. Chaucer also reintroduced many old words that had fallen out of favour, such as *'friendly', 'learning', 'loving', 'restless', 'wifely'*, and *'willingly'* (Mastin, 2011).

The Middle English period ended in the sixteenth century, often marked by the arrival of printing in Britain and by the cultural, social, and economic domination of the British Empire as it made its way around the world.

The Modern English Era

The Modern English Era saw less dramatic change in the English language. Whereas the Middle and Old era of the English language saw the English language go from a Germanic dialect into a pseudo-French language, the modern era sees less drastic changes as the language disperse all over the world and subtle, gradual changes in the language. The Early Modern English era saw the publishing of several major works as well as the first English dictionary. The widespread use of literature, through novels and other writings, is directly related to the invention of the printing press in 1440. The invention of the printing press saw the works of William Shakespeare and Jonathan Swift, among other authors, become available to the general public. Perhaps the most notable work in the days of early, modern English was the King James Bible which saw the introduction of many phrases and idioms that have become congruous with everyday speech. The modern English period also saw the spread of the English language and patriotism due to the British Empire's colonisation and power over a majority of the world. This

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period of the English language had less to do with the way that the English language changed but more with the way the English language was used, the way it spread, and the way it was perceived. Whereas it was classified as a lowly, vulgar language under the Normans, English – with the British Empire behind it – was now the language of the most powerful military force on Earth.

During this period came the printing press, which standardised the language and helped spread literacy. Printing has existed for decades prior to the printing press but the most significant breakthrough came when German printer Johannes Gutenberg developed a new model of moveable type printing press and used it to print the Christian Bible on an unprecedented scale in the 1450s. Gutenberg's press allowed for the first truly mass-scale publishing. The printing press arrived in England through English merchant and translator, William Caxton. With an interest in literature, Caxton was in France when he was introduced to the printing press. This was a much easier way for him to copy the books that he had been translating and re-writing by hand. Caxton bought his own printing press in Brugge and published the first printed book in the English language there in 1475, *"Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye"*. A year later, in 1476, William Caxton returned to England and set up Britain's first printing press at Westminster (Muscato, 2018).

The First English Dictionary

The early period of modern English was an era of growth and spread for the language. According to the Oxford English Dictionary's record, the number of words 'available' to speakers of English more than doubled between 1500 and 1650. Many of the new words were borrowed into English from the Latin or Greek of the Renaissance or from foreign countries visited by travellers and traders, and must have seemed hard to understand to many of the population. At the same time, there were significant demographic shifts in Britain towards an urbanized culture based in the big cities, such as London where the population increased eightfold

over these years. The growing availability of books and other printed matter as the period developed as well as the emergence of the grammar school as a focus for education (especially for boys) which allowed the English dictionary to thrive (Simpson, 2012).

The first English dictionary was published in 1604, titled *"Robert Cawdrey's Table Alphabetical"* it listed approximately 3000 words with a definition and a brief description of each word. Robert Cawdrey was a schoolmaster and former Church of England clergyman. At this time the English language was expanding - influenced by trade, travel and new innovations in the fields of arts and sciences. The 'Table Alphabetical' was an attempt to explain words that are unfamiliar to the general public.

In the preface to the dictionary Cawdrey criticised the poor standard of English spoken by people at the time: while some simplified their speech 'so that the most ignorant may well understand them', others decorated their sentences with fancy phrases and complicated words, 'forgetting altogether their mothers' language, so that if some of their mothers were alive, they were not able to tell or understand what they say.' He writes of how 'far journied gentlemen' collect words on their travels and, coming home, 'pouder their talked with over-sea language.' Cawdrey wanted the English language to be better organised and felt his book might help the reader to understand challenging words (Melieste, 2012; The British Library Board, 2019)

The King James Bible

During the Modern English period, the King James Bible was released. Introducing phrases and idioms that have been congruous with everyday speech, the King James Bible was published in 1611 during the reign of King James I. The King James Bible, written by 54 scholars - all of whom were members of the Church of England - were separated into 6 committees with each committee working on different sections of the Bible. Phrases such as *"turned the world*

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upside down," "*God forbid*," "*wheels within wheels*," "*the blind leading the blind*," "*by the skin of one's teeth*," "*from strength to strength*," and many others were all introduced by the King James Bible (Petruzzello, 2017; McCrum, 2010; Dutta, 2019).

Prior to the King James Bible, many English versions of the bible were released - most notably William Tyndale's translation of the New Testament and the Pentateuch or the Torah. Translated from the original Hebrew, Tyndale's New Testament - printed in Worms, Germany and smuggled into England - displeased the Church of England and Bishop Tunstall, the bishop of London at the time, resulting in the burning of the work. Tyndale continued to revise and publish his New Testament from its first run in 1526 until 1535, when he was executed for heresy (Page, 2003).

Following the execution of Tyndale, King Henry VIII authorised the first official English Bible in 1539. Dubbed the Great Bible, this version gained some popularity but its successive editions contained several inconsistencies. The Bishops' Bible, released in 1568, was well regarded by the clergy but failed to gain acceptance by the general public or the official authorisation of Elizabeth I.

Before the publication of the King James Bible, the Geneva Bible - written by English Protestants living in exile in 1576 - was the most commonly used English Bible. With its anti-royalist content, the popularity of the Geneva Bible amongst his people forced James I to sanction his own, pro-monarchy translation.

Alister McGrath, professor of theology, ministry and education at King's College in London, and the author of "*In the Beginning: The Story of the King James Bible and How it Changed a Nation, a Language, and a Culture*", said that the Bible was "a very public text, it would have been read aloud in churches very, very extensively, which would have imprinted it on people's minds." An aspect of the King James Bible's impact on the English language is the somewhat lacklustre translation. McGrath wrote that "The translators seem to have taken the view that the best translation was a literal one, so instead of adapting Hebrew and Greek to

English forms of speaking they simply translated it literally. The result wouldn't have made all that much sense to readers, but they got used to it, and so these fundamentally foreign ways of expressing yourself became accepted as normal English through the influence of this major public text." This led to the creation and usage of many English idioms such as *"by the skin of one's teeth", "the land of the living"* and *"from strength to strength"*, which are directly translated from Hebrew idioms. This also exemplifies the way English adapts and incorporates from other languages, now Norse, French, Latin, and Hebrew have a hand in the development and broadening of the English language (BBC N. , 2017; Hedges, 2011)

The story of the King James Bible and all the variations of an English Bible that preceded it is important in understanding the English language as it is today. The prose, idioms, and language used in the book is vital to the spread of the language in England and in the way sentences are structured. For example, the Bible has introduced superlatives, in the manner of the Hebrew language, into English.

Many authors, linguists, and academics have noted that, regardless of the contents and the religious nature of the work, the Bible is noteworthy for its usage of the English language. In a Guardian article, Richard Dawkins, former professor for public understanding of science at Oxford University and noted atheist, argued for the teaching of the King James Bible for its literary merits. He wrote "The whole King James Bible is littered with literary allusions, almost as many as Shakespeare," noting that the impact of the writing should be studied similarly to the examination of other great literary works. Dawkins also noted in the article that in his book *"The God Delusion"*, that argues vehemently against the existence of God, the discussion around the idea of "religious education as a part of literary culture" had him listing 129 phrases directly lifted from the Bible which would be instantly recognised and used by any cultivated English speaker despite not knowing their origins. Phrases mentioned by Dawkins in his book and in the

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article includes *"the salt of the earth," "go the extra mile," "I wash my hands of it," "wolf in sheep's clothing,"* and *"how are the mighty fallen"* (Dawkins, 2012).

The British Empire and the Legacy of the English Language Worldwide

Since it arrived in England from northern Europe, in the fifth century, the English language has always been spreading around the British Isles. It entered parts of Wales, Cornwall, Cumbria and southern Scotland, where Celtic languages resided. Following the Norman invasion in 1066 during the Middle English period, many nobles from England fled north to Scotland, where they were made welcome, and eventually the language (in a distinctive Scots variety) spread throughout the Scottish Lowlands. From the twelfth century, Anglo-Norman knights were sent across the Irish Sea, and Ireland gradually fell under English rule. But it was not until towards the end of the sixteenth Century, with the rise of the British Empire, that English made its way to every corner of the world. Between the end of the reign of Elizabeth I, in 1603, and the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth II, in 1952, the number of native English speakers, those who spoke it as their mother-tongue, went from 7 million - with almost all of them living in the British Isles - to 250 million with the majority living outside the islands (Crystal, 2003).

Great Britain made its first tentative efforts to establish overseas settlements in the sixteenth century. Maritime expansion, driven by commercial ambitions and by competition with France, accelerated in the seventeenth century and resulted in the establishment of settlements in North America and the West Indies. By 1670 there were British American colonies in New England, Virginia, and Maryland and settlements in the Bermuda, Honduras, Antigua, Barbados, and Nova Scotia. Jamaica was obtained by conquest in 1655, and the Hudson's Bay Company established itself in what became north-western Canada from the 1670s

on. The East India Company began establishing trading posts in India in 1600, and the Straits Settlements (Penang, Singapore, Malacca, and Labuan) became British through an extension of that company's activities. The first permanent British settlement on the African continent was made at James Island in the Gambia River in 1661. Slave trading had begun earlier in Sierra Leone, but that region did not become a British possession until 1787. Britain acquired the Cape of Good Hope (now in South Africa) in 1806, and the South African interior was opened up by Boer and British pioneers under British control. Early settlements - those established before the seventeenth century - were established by companies and organisations rather than the monarchy (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019)

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the crown exercised control over its colonies chiefly in the areas of trade and shipping. In accordance with the mercantilist philosophy of the time, the colonies were regarded as a source of necessary raw materials for England and were granted monopolies for their products, such as tobacco and sugar, in the British market. In return, they were expected to conduct all their trade by means of English ships and to serve as markets for British manufactured goods. The Navigation Act of 1651 and subsequent acts set up a closed economy between Britain and its colonies; all colonial exports had to be shipped on English ships to the British market, and all colonial imports had to come by way of England. This arrangement lasted until the combined effects of the Scottish economist Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations (1776), the loss of the American colonies, and the growth of a free-trade movement in Britain slowly brought it to an end in the first half of the nineteenth century (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019).

During this time, the English language was the language of power - and it could be argued that that power still exists today although in a different, less forceful way. Colonialism, by definition, is the establishment, maintenance, acquisition and expansion of colonies in one territory by people from another territory. It means the expansion of a nation's sovereignty over foreign territories

through forcible occupation. As a result, the social structure, government and economy of the colony are changed by the colonizers. The colonisers exploit the resources of colonies and impose their culture and language on these colonies. Colonialism impacts education, government, economy, and social status. With English, the British Empire promoted the use of the language as the language of administration and social power; introducing it into education curriculums and pushing the language onto the locals whilst diminishing the validity, and value, of their own native language (Sehkar, 2012)

As English teaching spreads, the English language is no longer the sole possession of the English - and it has not been since it started spreading since before the British Empire. When even the largest English-speaking nation, the United States, turns out to have only around 20% of the world's English speakers, it is evident that no one has ownership over the language - its history, development, and legacy spread throughout the world. This shows just how global the English language is, that its usage is not restricted by countries or by governing bodies anymore. An inevitable consequence of these developments is that the language will become vulnerable to linguistic change in unpredictable ways. The spread of English around the world resulted in the emergence of new varieties of English in the different territories where the language has taken root. The different variances of British and American English provide the most familiar example. When Noah Webster published his "*An American Dictionary of the English Language*" in 1828, he authorised and officialised the new American dialect, changing the spellings, introducing new words, and altering pronunciations. Today, there are thousands of differences between British and American English. When Webster published his first dictionary, he documented American vocabulary such as *'skunk'*, *'hickory'*, and *'chowder'* as well as altering the spelling of many words in the English language to become simpler and much easier to learn. He changed the "–ce" in words like *'defence'*, *'offence'*, and *'pretence'* to "–se"; abandoned the second, silent "l" in verbs such as *'travel'* and

'cancel' when forming the past tense; and dropped the "u" from words such as *'humour'* and *'colour'* (Merriam Webster, 2019)

Many distinctive forms also identify the Englishness of the other countries: Australian English, New Zealand English, Canadian English, South African English, Caribbean English, and, within Britain, Irish, Scots, and Welsh English. Among the countries, several varieties have also grown in distinctiveness in recent decades, South Asian English - spoken in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka - Singaporean English (Singlish, as it is colloquially known) and Englishness in West and East Africa. With its own colloquialism, vocabulary, and pronunciation, each one of these Englishness has its own, unique identity.

Each variation, of course, has its own pronunciation/phonology - with each region having its own categorised, regional dialects and phonologies. In the United States, for example, accents are divided into several, general regional accents: Southern, Western, Northern, and Midlands. There are further minor varieties of English in America - most notably the African-American Vernacular English (AAVE). Although it has been a point of debate, the origins of the AAVE probably started with the Slave Trade; some argue that it is a dialect that stems from African slaves acquiring English from their British owners on Southern plantations and others say that it is a creole language spoken on Southern plantations before the Civil War. A creole is a full language that develops from a pidgin, a super simple language created between two groups who need to communicate but don't have a language in common. Linguists of this view say AAVE arose from a creole in West Africa that slaves already spoke before coming to the United States. Other ethnic, minor varieties of American English include Gullah, a remnant of a Negro creole spoken by small numbers on islands off the coast of South Carolina and Georgia. French existed up to this century in Louisiana, derived from former Louisiana French Creole. Various forms of Mexican Spanish have been spoken in those states adjoining to Mexico, above all

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in California. Chicano English is a term used for the type of English spoken by native speakers of Spanish in the south-west of the United States.

Through this expansion of the English language, the English vocabulary expanded as well. As the English language reaches new places, words and vocabulary are needed to describe new objects, floras, faunas, and cultures that are found in these places that the British would not have encountered before. In Australia, native Aboriginal words such as *'koala'* and *'kangaroo'* were integrated into the English language to describe the native faunas. From the South Asian subcontinent, the English language took Dravidian - which encompasses languages such as Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Telugu - words such as *'mango', 'curry', 'peacock', 'ginger',* and *'bamboo'*; as well as Hindi words such as *'cheetah', 'jungle', 'karma', 'shampoo',* and *'khaki'.* Native American languages gave English words such as *'tomato', 'skunk',* and *'moose'* and from the Caribbean - via the Spanish colonists - the English language added words such as *'tobacco', 'hurricane', 'potato',* and *'canoe'* to its vocabulary. In Africa, words such as *'zombie', 'zebra', 'safari', 'jazz',* and *'bongo'* were incorporated into English from their West African roots.

During the British Empire occupation, the English language could be seen as a tool of oppression during the domination of the British Empire. In colonial India, English became the medium of administration and education throughout the subcontinent and in 1835, The English Education Act was enacted. Reallocating funds from the East India Company to be spent on education and literature in India, the legislation supports establishments teaching a Western curriculum with English as the language of instruction. The British Raj did not support the traditions of Muslim and Hindu education and the publication of literature in the native learned tongues - Sanskrit and Persian. Together with other measures promoting English as the language of administration and of the higher law courts, this led eventually to English becoming one of the languages of India, rather than simply the native tongue of its foreign rulers. When the universities of

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Bombay, Calcutta and Madras were established in 1857, English became the primary medium of instruction, thereby guaranteeing its status and continuous usage in the country even after India gained independence a century later. During this period of British sovereignty, the English language was used as a colonial instrument designed to oppress the Indian population. Those who did not speak English were deemed to be low-class and uneducated and thus, were unable to reach high standings within society (Crystal, 2003).

Throughout the colonies, the British used English as the language of the administration and governance. It was used by the most powerful and the elites in society with the native languages being relegated to languages that were spoken by the locals with no influence. Local languages no longer had authority and value in their own country. In order for the locals to have any power, they would have to learn English and the only people who could afford to learn English were those with money. The British Empire - and all imperial/colonial powers - saw the continents and the population as extensions of the mother country, both politically and culturally. The colonial state was simply an extension of the imperialist empire, responsible for the administration and exploitation of the colonies. Hence, they see it as an obligation to pass their culture, and thus, their language, on to the colonies. But the colonists never saw themselves in the colonised people. They saw the locals as people in need of culture, education, and authority and all their efforts to "improve" these countries were only to benefit the colonists (Lester, 2016).

Moreover, the British Empire was responsible for numerous deaths in their colonies. British colonists in North America and in Australia were responsible for a decline in the native populations due to disease and violence in the course of establishing itself as authority figures in the region. In densely populated countries, in the Indian subcontinent, Egypt, and South Africa, as well as the island of Barbados, the countries were ruled by colonial administrators and colonial government that redirected the local economies to exploitation

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management to supply the motherland with food, spices, raw materials, and some finished goods, depriving the locals of their own source of sustenance. In Kenya, the British Empire created detention camps where natives involved with the Mau Mau rebellion were tortured, starved, and brutalised by colonial officers (Olusoga, 2016; Cobain, 2012)

It is difficult to separate the global spread of the English language from the exploitation of the British Empire. The English language would have never reached its influential and powerful status without bloodshed and institutional oppression. It is hard to disconnect the status of English as an official in India today to the British Empire-induced famine of 1876-1879 and 1896-1902 in which 12 to 30 million Indians starved to death. The institution that imposed English to become the language of the ruling class and the educated was also responsible for the deaths and ill treatment of the local population (McQuade, 2017).

Conclusion

Language is incredibly fluid and universally available. An increase in the number of people choosing to learn a language opens up the possibility that it will change. As more people begin to adopt a language, the syntax, grammar, and vocabulary are influenced by the different speakers and their own cultural background. The learner may add to it, modify it, create in it, and ignore bits of it, as they please. The learning of a language also depends, almost entirely, on the educator – those who learnt from someone who speaks it as their second or foreign language would have a different experience and understanding of the language to those who learnt it from someone who speaks it as a mother-tongue.

It is impossible to predict where English will be in a century. Most would find it fairly obvious to assume that the English language will remain a global language. With billions of speakers worldwide how could it possibly die out? But linguistic history shows us repeatedly that it is wise to be cautious, when making predictions about the future of a language. In the Middle Ages, it would have been

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unfathomable to predict that Latin would be a dead language and that it would no longer be the language of education. Linguistic history depends solely on its speakers. With the United States and United Kingdom experiencing political instability, finding themselves having less political and economic influence than before, there is no certainty to the longevity of the English language as the global language.

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Romantic Comedy in Film: The History and Future of Romantic Comedies

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Introduction

Richard Curtis' 1999 smash hit romantic comedy "Notting Hill" told the story of an awkward, British bookstore owner falling in love with a famous American actress. The plot of *"Notting Hill"* unfolds like a typical cinematic romantic comedy; the two characters meet under unusual circumstances - here Anna Scott, played by Julia Roberts, happens to go into the bookshop owned by Will Thacker, played by Hugh Grant, before they meet again in the street - the two characters live wildly different lives, with one an ordinary, everyday person, while the other holds some sort of fame, and they struggle with maintaining this relationship before finally declaring their love for one another and living happily ever after. The film was highly successful, well-received by critics, won a BAFTA awards, and grossed over $300 million worldwide becoming the highest grossing British film in 1999. But what made it so successful? Numerous movies prior to 1999 have unfolded exactly the same way, there was no suspense for the audience regarding whether or not the two characters will reunite because they know that they will. Why did audiences, all over the world, choose to watch something where they know exactly what was going to happen? And why do they continue to watch these movies over and over again?

In one of the final, and perhaps most well-known, scenes of the movie, Roberts' Anna Scott proclaimed "I'm also just a girl, standing in front of a boy,

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asking him to love her." Though the circumstances and the situations that the audience have watched unfold throughout the movie could only happen in fiction, the sentiment of that famous line explains the appeal and relatability of the romantic comedies. The innate desire for love is universal. The heightened reality and the improbability of the plotlines of the film does not detract the characters' relatability. The characters and who they are matter less than the feeling that they portray. The universal feeling of love is what drew these two unlikely characters together and it is what drew the audience to the story.

Romantic comedies are often dismissed from academic and highbrow discussion on film. They are criticised for their idealistic and frivolous plots and the illusive world that they create. Critics often assert that these films are trite, predictable, and populated by stereotypes with plotlines that bear no resemblance to the realities of human courtship. Whilst it is hard to argue with any of that, romantic comedies are no less realistic than any horror movies or action movies starring Tom Cruise. Life is not like a romantic comedy but life is not like any movie of any genre. Movies are by their very nature a form of escapism; a chance to experience a well-structured, perfectly-plotted story despite the fact that no life has ever gone through the narrative three act structure of a film; there is no setup, confrontation, or resolution in life. The predictability and familiarity of the narrative through line of romantic comedies are perhaps both strengths and weaknesses. The romantic comedy genre is not a genre that needs to be exciting; movie goers do not watch a romantic comedy in order to watch something inventive. Romantic comedies are comfort films. The familiarity is essential.

The world of entertainment and media, movies especially, holds a very special and interesting space in society. The interconnectivity between culture and the media, the way that it both portrays reality and influences it, informs us a far richer and complex understanding of the role entertainment has in society. Films need to toe the line between telling a story that is both realistic and idealistic. To entertain, movies need audiences to be invested in the story and its characters thus,

more often than not, movies are injected with aspects of reality to accentuate the emotional beats of the fictional narrative. This interplay between reality and fiction allows films to both be aspirational and relatable informing audiences of what they know and what they want. The romantic comedy genre represents a variety of concepts and values in society. At its core, romantic comedies depict the basic human needs of mutual connection and understanding. And yet through its portrayals of relationships, romantic comedies have informed the way audiences view gender and romance.

Romantic Comedy in Literature

To discuss the history of romantic comedies, one should define what even a romantic comedy is. Generally speaking, a romantic comedy (or rom com) is defined as "a movie or play which deals with love in a light, humorous way." Whilst not outwardly described as the romantic comedy's audiences know today, romantic comedies have been a part of the world of literature for centuries far prior to film and Hollywood.

William Shakespeare's classic plays such as *Much Ado About Nothing* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* have the genre conventions that serve as the cornerstone for early and modern romantic comedies; the basic setup of early (and many modern) romantic comedies: Two people meet, have a conflict in their way, and reunite to live happily ever after. The story of would-be lovers who must overcome obstacles and misunderstandings before being united in a harmonious union is something that has been told and enjoyed spanning centuries and generations. The essence of a romantic comedy especially the Shakespearean kind lies primarily in the explorations of the depths of the lover's hearts, their emotions, their feelings, their joyous outbursts and their momentary agonies. Shakespeare' stage plays incorporated humour into the typical old "boy-meets-girl" story, both through the characters' dialogue and the zany situations in which they find themselves. Shakespeare's *As You Like It* features mistaken identities and the

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leading man's female lover disguised as a male while *Much Ado About Nothing* presents two lovers' "merry war" of words that requires friends' convincing to see that they're made for each other. In *the Merchant of Venice*, three separate relationship plotlines formed the central plot all infused with theatrical comedy, such as female love interests disguised as men and subsequently revealed to be the objects of desire.

Another noteworthy author of the genre is Jane Austen. Known for her witty and light writing, Jane Austen wrote many of the conventions and narrative plot points that have remained centuries beyond her. From *Emma* to *Pride and Prejudice* to *Sense and Sensibility*, modern audiences will recognise various obstacles throughout Austen novels that are quintessential to the romantic comedy genres; the prior commitments, the meddling of a know-it-all, the initial hostilities between the two protagonists, the misjudgements and falsehood of a second option, and the manipulations of the hero's rival could all be found in Jane Austen novels. When you see a romantic comedy where one of the protagonists is in a relationship or where the two protagonists hate each other in the beginning or where one of the protagonists briefly chose a more attractive yet boring or duplicitous lover, these plot points are all a part of the Jane Austen oeuvre.

Jane Austen used romance as a tool to explore and satirise the period and society she was in. While she often depicts the conflicted romance of flawed women and the flawed men they fall in love with and the happy ending of finding love, Austen more often than not depicted, and even criticised, the social system of the Regency period that made it so that marriage and money were interlinked, limiting the possibilities of what upper class women could do; they couldn't work and they couldn't inherent property thus, becoming dependent on marrying into wealth for their economic future. So, while *Pride and Prejudice* is a heartfelt romance about a woman overcoming her hasty judgements to find love, it is also a story of a family of women who will be left impoverished and homeless if they aren't able to find and marry wealthy husbands. In an article exploring the 1990s

adaptation of *Sense and Sensibility*, cultural writer Caroline Siede describes Jane Austen as "the godmother of the genre." She wrote in her piece "Though Jane Austen did not invent the romantic comedy (she's building on, among other things, the works of William Shakespeare), she brought to rom-coms a keen understanding of the interior lives of women. Austen's canon is full of the kinds of complex female protagonists the genre could certainly use a lot more of. While modern rom-coms too often return to the well of neurotic or clumsy traits for their leading ladies, Austen's heroines have complicated internal flaws that are balanced by their intelligence and dignity. They're relatable, not because they're written as broad every woman, but because they're written with such specificity" (Siede C. , 2018 B,).

A History of Romantic Comedy in Film

Romantic comedies, or rom-coms, are light-hearted comedies whose main focus is on the relationship of a couple. Because of this simple and broad definition, many of the early silent films, including those of Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, and their contemporaries, are technically examples of the prevalence of this genre. To identify the first *actual* romantic comedy in film is rather complicated. Released in 1924, Buster Keaton's silent classic *Sherlock Jr. (1924)* and *Girl Shy (1924)* technically follow the basic premise of a romantic comedy but as they were silent films, the dialogue was delivered through title cards that appeared between each scene of actions which sometimes minimises the comedy in the characters' dialogue. It wasn't until talkies came into theatres in 1927 and became the standard in the 1930s that the romantic comedy genre.

These early romantic-comedies such as Charlie Chaplin's *City Lights (1931)* and Clarke Gable's *It Happened One Night (1934)* often told the unlikely love story between two people from the opposite social status. Produced in the midst of the Great Depression, audiences were looking to escape the gloomy reality of their lives, audiences craved stories that were light-hearted and hopeful

in tone. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt said of Shirley Temple, "When the spirit of the people is lower than at any other time during this Depression, it is a splendid thing that for just fifteen cents an American can go to a movie and look at the smiling face of a baby and forget his troubles." The release of *It Happened One Night (1934)* ushered in a new era of romantic comedies, later dubbed, screwball comedies. Screwballs are characterised by their quirky plots, strong female lead, slapstick, fast-talking banter, and a central romance based on a "battle of the sexes." Films such as *My Man Godfrey (1936)*, *Bringing Up Baby (1938)*, *The Philadelphia Story (1940)* and *His Girl Friday (1940)* starred some of the most famous studio actors, movie stars like Katharine Hepburn and Cary Grant (Roskelley, 2016; Yehlen, 2016).

The most common element common to these films is the inversion of normalcy. In *It Happened One Night* Claudette Colbert's Ellie Andrews is no longer living the sheltered, rich life of her youth, and in *A Philadelphia Story (1940)* Katherine Hephburn's Tracy Lord's wedding is crashed by Spy Magazine reporters. Throwing caution to the wind or living on the edge inspires both the male and female protagonists to imagine a world different from their own. This leads to a kind of vulnerability, and, because they are both uncomfortable and unfamiliar with their circumstances, they find comfort and familiarity with each other. By the end of these films, the often-stuffy male has learned to loosen up while the screwball female has accepted that an equal marriage is what she's been missing. The agreement that both are better off together, in a traditional family unit, re-establishes the patriarchal order that had been flipped upside-down at the film's start. Produced in the era following the women's suffrage movement, the screwball comedy embraced the changing cultural and social role of women in society. As women gained independence and liberated, as the American public at large struggled with traditional notions of marriage and a growing divorce rate, the female protagonists of the screwball were youthful, fun, crass, smart, and opinionated. They stood on equal footing with their male leads, often challenging

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their male counterpart verbally and intellectually. Screwball comedies equalised the role of women in relationships, they become more active within the narrative. These women were no longer simply objects intended to be won by the male lead. The fast-talking, witty, sharp female leads of the screwball would deliver lines loaded with sexual innuendo and implied sexual desire and they would match the wit of Cary Grant and William Powell who represented the modern man. The screwball is able to be progressive in its portrayal of women and relationship while reinforcing traditional marriage and relationship (Thornton IV, 2014).

The popularity of screwball comedies is also largely attributed to the Hays Code, a set of guidelines that films at this time must follow. Instead of using physical touch or explicit dialogue, characters would exhibit sexual tension through seemingly insignificant, though thinly veiled, subtext and innuendos. Screwball comedies are riddled with insults and violence, or at least the threat of it, which are used to create sexual tension between the two protagonists. American philosopher Stanley Cavell, in a series of academic articles which later became a book titled "Pursuits of Happiness: The Hollywood Comedy of Remarriage", dubbed these films as "comedies of remarriage." As a result of the Production Code ban on any explicit references to or attempts to justify adultery and illicit sex, by having the two protagonists be a divorced couple, so that they are able to flirt with strangers and rekindle their love without risking the wrath of the sensors. Films such as the aforementioned *It Happened One Night (1934), Bringing Up Baby (1938), His Girl Friday (1940), The Philadelphia Story (1940)* as well as The Cary Grant and Irene Dunne vehicle *The Awful Truth (1937),* Alfred Hitchcock's *Mr. and Mrs. Smith (1941),* as well as *Love Crazy (1941)* are some examples of this particular narrative use (Roskelley, 2016; Siede C. , 2018 A).

With the outbreak of World War 2, however, the popularity of light-hearted films plummeted. Scripts that were written and filmed before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour did not address war, and with war now an all-consuming

presence in the average American's life, the topic of war was inescapable. American audiences were looking for films that address the war directly.

The romantic comedy genre then re-emerged and expanded in the 1950s and the 1960s. Stars such as Doris Day, Cary Grant, Audrey Hepburn, Jane Fonda, Rock Hudson, and Robert Redford found great success during this time.

The film industry and the United States at large was facing a transitional time. Up to this point, the film industry had been constricted by the studio system and the Motion Picture Production Code, widely known as The Hays Code. Films released up to this era were heavily controlled by producers and allowed for very little creative freedom. A self-imposed censorship, the Hays Code was created as a response to the increase of public complaints about the lewd content of movies and the scandalous behaviour of Hollywood movie stars. The public outcry against the increasingly liberal content of films in the 1920s and the media frenzy surrounding the scandals of movie stars was so great that the federal government were seriously considering the establishment of a national censorship board and the code was conceptualised in order to prevent an outsider to have control over the industry. The Hays Code censorship rules were formulated in 1929, presented in 1930 and were rigidly enforced by 1934. It wasn't until 1965 that the code was officially abandoned in favour of the MPAA rating system, which segregates films based on age range that is still in use today.

Co-written by a Catholic priest and the Catholic publisher of the Motion Picture Herald, The Hays Code dictated what is, and more importantly what isn't, allowed to be portrayed on screen. Among other restrictions, nudity, suggestive dances, discussions of sexual perversity, lustful kissing, scenes of passion, and most notably miscegenation was prohibited. These restrictions informed every movie that were made at the time. Created in 1934, the Production Code Administration (PCA) was established to ensure that Hollywood would follow the rules. The PCA fell under the umbrella of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA), a large industry group that counted all major

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studio players as members. MPPDA producers had to submit story ideas and scripts to the PCA for review, as well as the final prints of their films. If a film passed, it received a seal of approval, which ran in the opening credits. If the PCA rejected a film, it was effectively barred from wide release, since all MPPDA members agreed "not to produce or distribute any pictures which did not bear the PCA Seal." While not technically legally mandatory, the Code was mandatory for filmmakers who wanted to see their films produced and distributed. At this time, Hollywood was dictated by the "Studio System" which saw 8, and later 5, studios in charge of the entire film industry from production to distribution. At this time, large motion picture studios produced movies primarily on their own filmmaking lots with creative personnel, from actors to directors to screenwriters, under often long-term contract, and dominated showing through, the ownership or effective control of distributors and exhibition, guaranteeing additional sales of films through manipulative booking techniques such as block booking. It was under this studio system that stars became synonymous with certain types of films, producers have the final say over who stars in what. This is how Judy Garland starred in so many MGM musicals and why certain stars acted in films for decades and others came and went within a few years. The studio system determined which stars were stars (Hunt, 2018).

The 1950s and the 1960s marked the ending of the studio system as well as the abolition of the Hays Code, bringing newfound creative freedom into the industry. At the same time, the United States was going through a cultural shift as major political movements began to take shape. Romantic comedies of the 1960s were lighter and much more explicit with their discussion on the conflicting masculine and feminine roles; put simply, the man wanted sex without string and the woman wanted financial security. This was the prevailing theme in some of the most well-regarded films in the genre such films as Audrey Hephburn's *Breakfast at Tiffany's (1961),* Cary Grant and Doris Day's *That Touch of Mink (1962),* and a plethora of Marilyn Monroe films including *How to Marry a*

Millionaire (1953), *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes (1953), The Seven Year Itch (1955)*. Many romantic comedies during this period focused on the differences between men and women, pitting the two characters, who are often two professional rivals, against each other until they fall in love. Films such as Rock Hudson and Doris Day's *Lover Come Back (1961)*, Robert Redford and Jane Fonda's *Barefoot in the Park (1967)* had a much more playful tone than previous romantic comedies, the conflict between the two protagonists were no longer outside influences but internal motivation and personality conflict. The women in these films were much more independent than their predecessors.

The decades following the 1960s presented something even more radical to the film industry. Throughout the 1960s and up to the 1980s, the United States faced massive cultural and political changes that resulted in major counterculture movements and political protests. Against the backdrop of the Vietnam War, the women's liberation movement, the civil rights movement, as well as the sexual revolution of the 1960s, the film industry and, subsequently the romantic comedy genre, was heavily affected and influenced by the current issues of the time. Filmmakers wanted to make political and social commentary with the films they made and had more creative freedom than they had during the era of the studio system. The sexual revolution of the 1960s created more modern, liberal, and radical romantic comedies. People no longer approached romantic comedies, and romance in general, the same way they had done in the past. There was a more open dialogue surrounding sex and the complicated nature of romance, acknowledging the difficulties in the mundane. These movies were more cynical, straightforward, and existential in nature; they asked the validity of true love and the happily ever after that was promised from romance. These movies didn't end with marriage or happiness. The Woody Allen classic *Annie Hall (1977)* told romantic-comedy adjacent narratives but had much more to say about relationship, rebellion, and what it means to be happy than it did about how love

conquers all. In the end, a happily ever after isn't guaranteed the same it had been in decades prior (Yehlen, 2016).

The romantic-comedy genre then saw a dip in release in the 1970s and 1980s. The Vietnam War, Watergate, and the Reagan administration saw the rise of hyper-masculinity in the film industry. The popularity of action, adventure, and science fiction films influenced the characterisation of masculinity on film. The suave and refined Fred Astaire and Cary Grant types were no longer desirable by audiences at the time.

The 20-year period between the 1990s and the 2000s was a glorious time for the rom com genre, producing an abundance of hit movies starring some of the biggest and most famous movie stars of the time. Romantic comedies of this period is wide ranging, including various box office hits starring Julia Roberts, Sandra Bullock, Renee Zellweger, Drew Barrymore, and Cameron Diaz; From *Pretty Woman (1990)* to *My Best Friend's Wedding (1997), While You Were Sleeping (1995), Two Weeks' Notice (2002), Miss Congeniality (2000), The Wedding Singer (1998), 50 First Dates* (2004), *There's Something About Mary (1998), Bridget Jones's Diary (2001), and Jerry Maguire (1996)* as well as unexpected hits such as My Big Fat Greek Wedding (2002) and critically acclaimed, Academy Awards nominated movies such as *Four Weddings and a Funeral (1994), Jerry Maguire (1996), Shakespeare in Love (1999).* Romantic comedies filled cinema seats throughout the period. Many of the movies during this time period remain classics and well-regarded but as more and more rom-coms were made within these 20 years the tropes became more prevalent, the formula became tired, and the stories no longer interested the public. The repetition of the narrative plot made the genre extremely clichéd-the meet-cutes, the grand gestures, the love triangle, the quirky characters, the gay best friend, the happily ever after. Between 1995 and 2005, over 80 movies categorised as "romantic comedies" were released in the United States box offices. The 2000s saw the release of many financially successful yet critically derided romantic

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comedies. Katherine Heigl and Gerard Butler's *The Ugly Truth (2009)*, Matthew McConaughey and Kate Hudson's *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days (2003),* Sandra Bullock and Ryan Reynold's *The Proposal (2009),* Reese Witherspoon's *Sweet Home Alabama (2002)* all made substantial money in the box office yet are largely dismissed by critics and forgotten by the general public today (Chaney, 2017).

After a massive gap, the release of *When Harry Met Sally* (1989) is often marked as the beginning of modern romantic comedies and kick started the romantic comedy boom of the 90s and early 2000s. Written by Nora Ephron, it is the first of many Nora Ephron romantic comedies released in the 90s to have a significant impact on pop culture and become quintessential of the genre, *When Harry Met Sally* reintroduced the genre to movie-going audiences and welcomed a new age of romantic comedies. A love story based on the question of whether men and women can be nothing more than platonic friends, *When Harry Met Sally* follows the two main characters, played by Meg Ryan and Billy Crystal, as they try to find out where they ultimately fall in love and live happily ever after. *Sleepless in Seattle* (1993) and *You've Got Mail* (1998), both directed by Nora Ephron and starring Meg Ryan and Tom Hanks, were highly regarded upon release. Ephron reinvigorated the genre with her characters. The female leads of the Ephron romantic comedies are more human and grounded than they have ever been. Ephron wrote female characters who were ambitious, finicky, brash, and sexually open — but who were recognizably human, unlike the one-dimensional characters that audiences were accustomed to. Marc Webb, director of the indie darling *500 Days of Summer (2009)*, said of Ephron "[she] was identifying a modern situation and analysing it, breaking it down, and creating an uncynical understanding of how people behaved in a really beautiful way when she was doing When Harry Met Sally…What [she was] doing was incredibly progressive and really thoughtful."

Another prominent name in the romantic comedy genre is Nancy Meyers. Writer and director of various romantic comedies in the 2000s, Nancy Meyers'

romantic comedies are as well known for their meticulous production design as they are for their plot. A Nancy Meyers romantic comedy is recognisable in the outlandish situations that her characters often find themselves in. In *Something's Gotta Give (2003)*, Diane Keaton stars as Erica Barry, a writer who falls in love with her daughter's boyfriend, the womanizing Harry Sanborn, played by Jack Nicholson. After a series of poorly-timed events, a heart attack leaves Harry recovering at Erica's Hamptons beach house and a love triangle forms when Harry's doctor, Keanu Reeves, began to pursue Erica; In *The Holiday (2006),* Kate Winslet and Cameron Diaz plays two women in the middle of their own life crises who decide to exchange houses over the holidays to escape their homes where they found their own versions of love and romance with Jack Black and Jude Law, respectively; In *It's Complicated (2009)*, Jane, played by Meryl Streep, has an unexpected affair with her ex-husband Jake, played by Alec Baldwin, who got remarried. Amid this relationship relapse, Steve Martin's Adam, a divorced architect who is remodelling Jane's kitchen began to fall for her. Perhaps the three most recognisable romantic comedies in her oeuvre, the films highlight the quirky nature she favours in her narrative, choosing to focus on low-stakes situations which allow for her to inject more fun and into her stories. Her films are light, breezy and easy for audiences to enjoy, consistently grossing around $200 million each.

The 1990s and early 2000s also saw the rise of British romantic comedies which paved the way for the popularity of Hugh Grant as a romantic leading man in films such as the aforementioned *Notting Hill (1999)* and *Four Weddings and a Funeral (1994)* as well as starring in other financially lucrative British romantic comedies *Bridget Jones' Diary (2001)* and Richard Curtis' Christmas-themed romantic comedy anthology film *Love, Actually (2003).*

However, In the 2010s, rom-com fatigue finally hit audiences. In the 2010s, romantic comedies, again, became few and far between. There are many reasons for the genre's decline. A post-recession focus on international audiences,

franchises and superheroes have pushed rom-coms off the priority list for studios. Additionally, after a long and fruitful run in the late '80s through the 2000s, enthusiasm started to wane. "They didn't reflect the way that society was changing. They were all about white, straight couples. They fell back on the conventions that define the genre," said Erin Carlson, author of the book *"I'll Have What She's Having: How Nora Ephron's Three Iconic Films Saved the Romantic Comedy"* and an upcoming book about the films of Meryl Streep. "People just got tired of them." To understand the state of the Hollywood romantic comedy, consider director Nancy Meyers. Despite her stellar credentials in the genre (What Women Want, Something's Gotta Give and It's Complicated), The Hollywood Reporter reported in September 2013 that her attempt to make a royal wedding rom-com at Sony had ended. Even with a script by red-hot (500) Days of Summer writers Michael H. Weber and Scott Neustadter, Meyers couldn't settle on the right cast. And sources say Sony, like many studios, was having doubts about laying a big bet in the budget range to which Meyers is accustomed. Producer of such hits as *Sleepless in Seattle* and *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days* Lynda Obst said in 2013, "I don't see any appetite for rom-coms from the studios." As studios increasingly focus on films that could be squealed and played in overseas markets, the singular, dialogue-dependent rom-coms are a difficult sell. In addition, the decreasing appeal of young movie stars is translating into less demand for romantic pairings built around their star power (Bahr, 2018 ; Siegel, 2018).

The Modernisation of Romantic Comedy

Recently, in the age of streaming and an abundance of available entertainment, there has been a resurgence of romantic comedies. As our culture changes, so does the entertainment. Over the past decade, rom-coms have advanced their premises, the stories they tell, and the message they send. From Netflix's parodic romantic-comedy *Isn't it Romantic? (2019)* to Amazon Studios'

Academy Awards nominated *The Big Sick (2017)*, the romantic comedy has seen its tropes and conventions broadened and expanded beyond the norms of early romantic comedies. The characters are crasser, realistic, and balanced and the plot is more nuanced than before.

Crazy Rich Asians (2018) and Diversity in Romantic Comedies

The release and eventual box-office success of *Crazy Rich Asians (2018)* was remarkable in more ways than one. A film adaptation of Kevin Kwan's 2013 novel of the same name, Crazy *Rich Asians (2018)* follows a Chinese-American professor as she travels to Singapore with her boyfriend to attend his best friend's wedding, only to discover he comes from one of Asia's wealthiest, prominent families. The story of an average woman who meets Prince Charming in disguise and then must endure a fraught first encounter with his family which is as basic a romantic comedy premise as you can get. Inspired by both fairy tales and classic literature, it's a beguiling trope that has fundamentally shaped our cultural understanding of romance. Grossing over $170 million in the United States and Canada, with a worldwide box office of $239 million, Crazy *Rich Asians (2018)* became the highest-grossing romantic comedy in the past 10 years, the 6th highest grossing over all, and one of the biggest movies of the year in the United States.

The films' critical and financial success signalled various things for Hollywood and movies as a whole. *Crazy Rich Asians (2018)* won for its genre. The last romantic comedy to score $20 million or more in its opening weekend was Amy Schumer's *Trainwreck (2015)*, which hauled in close to $31 million. Crazy Rich Asians' success could be seen as a vote of confidence in a genre that Hollywood has largely ignored in the past decade or so.

Perhaps more notable, the film also represented the untapped potential of embracing diversity and representation, something that has eluded Hollywood until quite recently. Released the same year as Marvel's first black-led film *Black*

Panther, the film carried the unjust burden of proving that American audiences are willing to go invest in a film comprised entirely of Asian characters the same way *Black Panthe*r had to prove the same for black characters on a global scale. The success of the film became one of the biggest pop culture stories of the year distributed by Warner Bros. It was the first film with an all-Asian cast and an Asian-American lead in 25 years. The film starred two unfamiliar faces for movie-goers: Constance Wu, most recognizable for her role in the ABC sitcom series Fresh Off the Boat, and Henry Golding, a widely-unknown who last worked as a travel host for the BBC. It was a cultural milestone. It gave Hollywood the opportunity to improve its track record of institutional racism (Buckley, 2018).

The history of films and Hollywood has always been intrinsically related to the cultural and historical events that are happening in the zeitgeist. Movies are made as a reflection of society and the ones made in Hollywood, especially those made during the studio system, told the stories that were deemed acceptable by the mainstream. For most of early Hollywood, films were restricted by the aforementioned Motion Picture Production Code, colloquially known as the Hays Codes after then-Motion Picture Producers and Distributor Association President Will H. Hays. Among various other restrictions, the code denied mixed-race relationships or "Miscegenation sex relationships between the white and black races" from being depicted in movies. As the majority of stars at the time were white, this particular restriction made it practically impossible for actors, and especially actresses, of colours to gain any kind of notoriety at the time. To restrict the depiction of a mixed-race couple is to erase opportunity for people of colour as most films, even those not strictly in the romance genre, depicted a romantic relationship between a man and a woman. It wasn't until 1956 that anti-miscegenation was removed from the Code that it became possible for African-American, Asian, and Latin actors to star in more films, although 3 decades of anonymity and not being allowed to be in starring roles meant that many actors were deemed unbendable and seemed less profitable than their white

contemporaries. The decades following weren't much better for representation of racial diversity in Hollywood, especially with its portrayal of interracial relationships. The majority of romantic comedies star two white leads. In 2005, Will Smith said that Eva Mendes was cast in Hitch to avoid pairing him with either a black or a white actress: *"There's an accepted myth that if you have two black actors in a romantic comedy, people around the world don't want to see it. … So, the idea of a black actor and a white actress comes up — that'll work around the world, but it's a problem in the U.S"* (Sun, 2016).

Hollywood's reluctance to depict racial diversity in its romantic stories are troubling to say the least. The romantic comedies have had a long and fruitful production throughout the history of film. At its best, romantic comedies capture the tenderness as well as the comedic pitfalls of falling in love and yet, for a significant majority of its portrayal these stories seemed to be reserved solely for white people. For most films, the race of characters played by actors of colour are a fundamental part of their characteristics, they become plot points and they are integral to the story whereas films with white protagonists rarely have their ethnic and cultural heritage come into play. One of the earliest examples of an African-American romantic comedy lead was Sidney Poitier in *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner (1967)*, Stanley Kramer's ground breaking exploration of an interracial relationship is often remembered as an issue film rather than a genre staple. It took Hollywood almost 20 years to produce another romantic comedy film featuring a person of colour with Spike Lee's 1986 film *She's Gotta Have It*. As is so often the case, romantic comedies are either relegated to remain independent, smaller affairs or they have not been as widely lauded or culturally celebrated the same way that romantic comedies starring white people have been. They are often remarked as films that are only enjoyed or made specifically for the community instead of the general movie going audience (Staples, 2019).

A growing public consciousness especially among millennials and young movie going audiences on social media have led to an increase in diverse

representation in films and the media at large. South American, Black and Asian writers, producers, and directors are gaining more prominence in the industry bringing their stories to the forefront in refreshing ways alongside their white peers. If nothing else, the success of *Crazy Rich Asians* indicates that, as is so often the case, critical and commercial success may be the most compelling motivators of progress.

500 Days of Summer (2009) and the Self-Aware Romantic Comedies

A breakout indie classic, Marc Webb's romantic comedy-drama *500 Days of Summer* (2009) is perhaps one of the most well-known deconstructions of the romantic comedy film, often described as a postmodern romance. The film is known for its unusual narrative structure, which jumps around, forwards and backwards, through the timeline of the relationship in order to simulate the way memories are remembered, analysing the way things were and the way things came to be. The way the film unfolds perfectly captures and emulates the real memories of a man whose life has been shattered by a breakup, searching for meaning.

The movie begins with an omnipresent narrator saying the line "This is a story of boy meets girl but this is not a love story." Joseph Gordon-Levitt's Tom Hansen, a writer at a greeting card company, is a hopeless romantic who believes in all the conventions and ideals of romantic love that is often seen in movies and especially romantic comedies whilst Zooey Deschanel's Summer Finn is jaded and realistic. The plot of the film hinges on the idea that the portrayal of romance in pop culture and romantic comedies has warped Tom's perception of his relationship with Summer, seeing it through rose-tinted glasses unable to see it for what it really was. Despite conveying that she's not looking for anything serious and showing her lack of interest in pursuing a romantic relationship with Tom throughout the film, he still saw the relationship as a grand romantic story.

Throughout the movie, Summer repeatedly tells Tom that she's not interested in a long-term relationship. But rather than take her at her word, he sees this as a challenge, and persists in his delusional belief that he'll be the one to win her over. Writer Sarah Welch-Larson described the film as such "It's a commentary on the unfair expectations we bring to relationships, the way we expect rom-com sunshine from our significant others, and the way our expectations come crashing down when reality kicks in and our partners turn out to be not who we thought they were, but their own people all along" (Ehlrich, 2019).

One of the main themes of *(500) Days of Summer*, as well as one of the main ways it deconstructs the romantic comedy, is the use of reality opposing the traditional dramatized, over the top situations that are often found in romantic comedies. It lacks the no diegetic music that most romantic comedies make use of to influence the audience's emotional response, allowing the audience to absorb the awkward silences and increase the reality of the situation. About halfway through the film, Tom breaks out in a perfectly choreographed flash mob to "You Make My Dreams," completely contrasting the realism that has taken place throughout the majority of the film and mocking the extravagance of the typical romantic comedy. Perhaps the film's most well-known sequence, and what Entertainment Weekly dubbed "the film's three-and-a-half-minute thesis statement," the expectations versus reality scene, illustrated in the figure below. The scene juxtaposes Tom's expectations of a romantic evening that will rekindle his romantic relationship with Summer only to be met with the reality of Summer not only no longer seeing him as a romantic partner, but engaged to another man.

Throughout the film, it is clear to the audience that the two leads are incompatible, that their goal and ultimate desire in the relationship differs significantly. Whereas Tom saw Summer as "the one" and sees all their interactions through a grand, typical romantic comedy filter; Summer perceived the relationship as something casual and non-committed. Director Marc Webb explains, "[Tom] wasn't observing the inner life of the Summer character. He

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projected on her, and I think that was something that is a very natural impulse for all of us, and that's often masqueraded — we think of that as romantic, but really it's just intellectual laziness" (Sollosi, 2019).

As movie going audiences, when we invest in a story about a relationship, about two people in love, we are expecting it to conclude with the two of them together, living their happily ever after, and finding happiness no longer burdened with the tribulations of life. With the release of *(500) Days of Summer*, the hardship that often plagues a relationship and the sting of a failed one is fully realised. The idea is that "the one" is merely a concept and that, while falling in love feels incredible, the navigation of a relationship is difficult and sometimes, it all just ends, slowly deteriorating or abruptly ending without much reason.

Since the release of *(500) Days of Summer* in 2009, more rom-coms have taken a more realistic and less idealistic approach. The first season of the Netflix series *Master of None* ends with the two leads, Dev and Rachel played by Aziz Ansari and Noel Wells, breaking up. The FX R-rated comedy series *You're the Worst* told the story of a relationship between two people who don't believe in love with a major plotline regarding the male lead ditching the female lead mere moments after proposing to her. This removal of the happy ending is reminiscent of the Academy Award-nominated romantic comedy, *Annie Hall (1977)* which ends with Woody Allen's Alvy Singer and Diane Keaton's Annie Hall unable to reconcile their differences and part their own separate ways. The film concludes with a voiceover, with Allen's Alvy telling an old joke about a guy who refuses

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to get help from his brother who thinks he's a chicken, explaining "I need the eggs. I guess that's how I feel about relationships, they're totally crazy, irrational, and absurd, but we keep going through it. Because we need the eggs." This bittersweet sentiment and nuanced portrayal of romance and relationship has prevailed in today's romantic comedies, giving audiences a more rounded dimensional narrative on romance because after all, despite the fact that romantic comedies no longer fill the pop culture zeitgeist like it once did, the romantic comedies will never truly leave us because too many of us needs the eggs (Chaney, 2017).

Isn't it Romantic? (2019) and Romantic Comedy Parodies

Isn't It Romantic (2019) is a satirical fantasy romantic comedy film directed by Todd Strauss-Schulson and written by Erin Cardillo, Dana Fox, and Katie Silberman. The film stars Rebel Wilson as Natalie, a New York architect, who finds herself in a world where everything around her plays out like a stereotypical romantic comedy. Natalie has to confront the over-the-top romances that come along with the genre when she finds herself trapped in a PG-13 romantic comedy after she hits her head during an encounter with a thief. The movie also stars Liam Hemsworth, Adam DeVine, and Priyanka Chopra. Hemsworth plays a handsome stranger who comes into Natalie's life, while DeVine plays her best friend, who she's in love with, and Chopra stars as the yoga ambassador he has a crush on. Director Strauss-Shulson described the film as "a romantic comedy about falling in love with yourself. And it's a romantic comedy about romantic comedies and the romantic stories we tell ourselves" (Bowman, 2018).

Isn't It Romantic is like a crash course in romantic comedy tropes and conventions. It references everything from *Pretty Woman (1990)* to *13 Going On 30 (2004)*. The juxtaposition between the two realities help to highlight and emphasise the differences between the two, the gloomy city streets become pastel havens, a cramped apartment becomes a chic studio and the drab architect offices

becomes something out of a Silicon Valley fantasy. *Isn't It Romantic* isn't the first parody of a romantic comedy. Movies such as *Not Another Teen Movie* (2001), *They Came Together* (2014), as well as Amy Schumer's 2015 film *Trainwreck* and *I Feel Pretty (2018)* have satirised the genre and its conventions before, but the meta-narrative of *Isn't It Romantic* have put the tropes on full display and directly call out contrivances the of these rom com tropes throughout the film.

Parody films are important because they pinpoint tropes and clichés of a genre. They often criticise the status quo and standards of popular culture through the use of comedy and light-heartedness. Parodies allow us to see the norms that audiences are used to seeing and contextualise it in a more comedic tone. The romantic comedy and the predictability of its narrative flow is often cited as one of its deterring characteristics. The basic plot of a romantic comedy is that two characters meet, part ways due to complicated circumstances, which ranges from a disapproving parent, class differences, an existing relationship, before ultimately realizing their love for one another and reuniting. The narrative plot of romantic comedies and the tropes of the genre have long been documented and discussed. Often cited as clichéd, predictable, and formulaic, the tropes of romantic comedies have gone largely unchanged and remained the same for most of cinematic history. In concept, parodies are meant to imitate, stress, and draw attention to certain features, characters, or plot points of a certain genre or film that are weak, silly, strange, or subject to criticism. If nothing else, parodies inform filmmakers that audiences are aware of the clichés and incite creativity in the sense that it is hard to repeat the same narrative beat and character archetypes once a peer has made fun of it.

Netflix and the Future of Romantic Comedies

While the box-office success of *Crazy Rich Asians (2018)* showed potential in high-profile romantic comedies in the United States, for the genre to receive the kind of treatment and range in depiction the way it did in the past, the reality

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is studios just are not as invested in making as many romantic comedies as they did. In a world where the big-budget superhero movies, action flicks, and franchises consistently earn up to billions of dollars and have the promise of sequels to continue its financial success, there is little incentive for the big studios to invest in a genre that while profitable is just not as financially lucrative in the same way. Instead, the genre is seeing its resurgence happening elsewhere on streaming platforms and television (Rodriguez A. , 2018b).

As Hollywood releases fewer romantic comedies, Netflix reported that more than 80 million, or about two-thirds of its global subscriber base, watched a romance film on the platform between 2017 and 2018. As the platform begins to invest more and more in producing and acquiring their own original films and series, one genre it has embraced is romantic comedies. In a self-proclaimed "Summer of Love," Netflix released a total of 11 romantic comedies in the summer of 2018 including the big social media sensation *To All the Boys I've Loved Before (2018)*. The Netflix model has allowed the romantic comedy to remerge. As a platform, Netflix doesn't rely entirely on ticket sales and movie attendance the same way traditional studios do. While studios need to have an existing audience and garner interest prior to a film's release, Netflix have the ability to release films without much fan-fare and have the comfort of knowing that there is always a user waiting for new content. By having one viewer of one romantic comedy, the platform essentially already has a viewer of another. In her review of the Netflix original comedy with romance *Ibiza (2018)*, Film Inquiry writer Adriana Gomez-Weston writes "Perhaps it's a good thing that it was released on Netflix. If you're stuck at home and need something to watch, maybe Ibiza might be for you if you want to escape reality for a little while" (Gomez-Weston, 2018). This sentiment is something that I believe many audiences can relate to; while they may not go to the movie theatre to watch these romantic comedies, they might stumble upon it while scrolling through the platform on a Sunday evening (Rodriguez A. , 2018a)

Variety reports that, according to Netflix's quarterly earnings report, more than 80 million subscribers watched one of the 11 rom-coms on the Summer of Love slate (Roettgers, 2018). The relatively low-budget of these Netflix original romantic comedies allows for a more varied plot and gives fresher versions of a somewhat tired genre. While a part of the Summer of Love slate that Netflix announced films such as the Kristen Bell comedy *Like Father (2018)* and the previously mentioned *Ibiza (2018)* have less to do with the typical romance aspect of romantic comedies and focus on the relationship the female protagonist has with her estranged father and friends respectively and uses the outlandish plot that would be used in a rom-com; in *Like Father* for example, Kristen Bell's character is a young executive who is left at the altar and ends up going on a Caribbean honeymoon cruise with her estranged father. Similarly, both *Ibiza (2018)* and *Someone Great (2019)*, both officially categorised as romantic comedies, explore the friendship between the female lead and her group of friends than about the romance that kick started the film's plot. The films on Netflix's Summer of Love slate were diverse in tone, plot, cast; but they have one commonality: love; love in all of its different forms. The romantic comedies of Netflix managed to toe the line between modernising the romantic comedy and embracing the tropes and structure familiar to audiences who love the genre. The films unabashedly keep and evoke the over-the-top, cheesiness of romantic comedies of the past but they all managed to bring more complexity and dimension to its characters, they feel more lived in and real; the films weren't about actors or magazine writers, the leads didn't look like movie stars, and the characters had interests other than love and relationships. They were stories about love but they felt like stories that everyone could see themselves in (Rosa, 2018).

Beyond the Summer of Love slate, Netflix have produced and distributed other romantic comedies. *Happy Anniversary* (2018) is a romantic comedy about a couple's deliberation about whether to stay together or break up on their three-year anniversary. It is a romantic comedy about what happens after the meet-cute

and the ensuing honeymoon phase capturing the restlessness that comes when external forces are putting pressure on a relationship. *Ali's Wedding (2018)* told the story of the son of a Muslim cleric in Australia struggling to make the right life choices after a lie about his academic achievements sets off a series of events with the central plot hinging on his decision between being with the girl he loves or following through on an arranged marriage his father has promised him to. It tells a story of romantic misadventure set in motion by a young man desperate to live up to his father's expectations but it also explores the blend of Middle Eastern and Australian culture and tells an amusing, family-driven tale that could be universally appreciated and celebrated, regardless of their background.

The Netflix model is incredibly successful. According to Netflix, one in three people who watched *The Kissing Booth* (2018) streamed it a second time, which is 30 percent higher than Netflix's average re watch rate. Furthermore, the cast members' social media followings have also grown exponentially as a direct result of the film. Before the release of the movie, Joey King had 600,000 followers on Instagram and she now has 4.8 million. Similarly, Jacob Elordi had 15,000 and now has 4.4 million. These figures show that romantic comedies aren't dead. Romantic comedies are still resonating with audiences providing light, positive, and optimistic entertainment. Lindsey Beer, the writer of *Sierra Burgess Is a Loser* (2018), said "We're in such dark times right now. People want movies that feel good." A sentiment shared by Susan Johnson, director of *To All the Boys I've Loved Before* (2018), who said "I think the last few years have been all about the negative side of growing up: bullying, how tough it is, acceptance, gender issues, and sexual orientation issues. Sometimes it's nice just to drop into something that makes you happy."

Beyond all the fluff, superfluous, and cheesiness, the romantic comedy offers audiences an escape, giving an optimistic world in which love will prevail. In the modern age, filmmakers have discovered that romantic comedies, like every other genre, are adaptable and could tell stories beyond the constraints that

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audiences are familiar with. They didn't just have to tell the story of a relationship from its initial meeting point, the one conflict, and then the reconciliation. Lindsey Beer expressed, "I hope [the rom-com genre] continues to promote messages of love being important and love being OK and for both men and women to want love—I feel like we've started to shy away from that but also encourages themes of independence and loving yourself and not loving somebody else at [the] expense of yourself. There's a lot of positive messages that can be communicated through rom coms, and I hope the genre continues to move the needle forward."

The romantic comedy might never be as abundantly made nor as widely celebrated in the cultural zeitgeist the same way that it was in the 90s and early 2000s. The future of the genre might lie in streaming platforms and creating a social media moment before resorting back to be a part of the Netflix catalogue to be scrolled through. The genre might not have as much of an influence as it did, certainly, there wouldn't be as many writers writing about the cultural impact of *Set it Up* (2018) in 30 years the same way writers discuss *Pretty Woman* (1990) or *When Harry Met Sally* (1989). The sentiment will remain. The appeal of the romantic comedy will never truly go away and audiences will keep coming back to these stories and the comfort they represent.

Men and Women: The Depiction of Gender in Romantic Comedies

The majority of romantic comedies depict, almost entirely, heterosexual couples with a set of characteristics and personality traits that seems almost exclusive to the genre. The two characters will often be opposites of each other; whether it's characteristically, socially, financially, the couple will come from different worlds. Incompatible and unlikely on the surface, these fundamental character differences are often what drive the conflict in these movies.

The likability and relatability of the two leads are the key to the success of a romantic comedy. The character grounds and humanises the unlikely

occurrences that unfolds throughout the film. The likability of the lead characters is essential as it gives the audience the opportunity to care about the characters and feel invested in the ups and downs of their relationship. The characters, and the charisma of the actors portraying them, are often the most memorable and noteworthy aspect of romantic comedy films. Such is why the casting of the lead plays such a vital role in the success and memorability of a romantic comedy. It is also why the same actors and actresses often star in these movies. There's a level of familiarity and likability to them and the audience feel as if they already have a built-in relationship with them. Actresses such as Julia Roberts, Reese Witherspoon, Drew Barrymore, Meg Ryan, Sandra Bullock all established their names in this genre and actors such as Hugh Grant, Matthew McConaughey, Tom Hanks were prominent, often co-starring in different films with the same female lead. Every actor offers different characteristics and personality traits; audiences expect a certain character to be portrayed when they watch Meg Ryan and it will differ from the character they expect Julia Roberts to play. The repeated pairing also highlights two vital components of casting; individual likability and chemistry. Audiences not only like individual characters but they also want to root for the relationship which is why it is important that the two leads are played by actors who have the characteristic and romantic connection that is worth cheering for.

The role of gender and traditional feminine and masculine characteristics play a crucial part in the characterisation of the leads in the romantic comedy genre. Due to the focus on the relationship, the performance and individuality of each character's gender becomes a significant narrative point. Societal expectations of personality traits, dating behaviour, and roles within a family often become points of contentions or connection between the two protagonists and as these expectations change, so does the writing and portrayal of these characters. Broadly speaking, the two leads of a romantic comedy give us a glimpse not only of society's views of gender as it pertains to relationships at the time but it also

previews the ideals and standards of what it means to be a man and what it means to be a woman in society.

Romantic comedies consistently feature women as the protagonist. It is one of the few genres to feature women in equal footing as their male counterparts. In the heydays of modern romantic comedy films, the leading ladies of these films, from Anne Hathaway to Kate Hudson to Julia Roberts to Sandra Bullock, are ambitious, independent, and allow to star and be the protagonist of their films instead of the supporting character to a male protagonist. As the role of women in society changes, so do the way female protagonists are written, especially in romantic comedies.

The resulting social and cultural change following the feminist and women's liberation movement affects the type of women seen in film. The female lead in film needs to reflect the reality for women at the time in order to remain relevant to audiences of the day. As the sheer number of working and autonomous women increased, more and more women are being depicted as independent and career-oriented. However, this depiction is frequently contradictory with the underlying theme and message that these films present. The career woman is a recurrent character that modern romantic comedies have used to reflect the reality that is true for many women in the real world. The female protagonists of mainstream, studio produced romantic comedies in the 2000s are often depicted as successful and extremely accomplished in their line of work be it as a business owner, a journalist, a lawyer, etc. They are independent and strong, non-superficial and beautiful, confident and down-to-earth but they are unlucky in love; these characters were so focused and dedicated to their work that they have left her love life behind. The primary female characters in a lot of romantic movies are presented to have it all, except for a relationship. In an excerpt from her autobiography *Is Everyone Hanging Out Without Me? (And Other Concerns)* and published as an article in The New Yorker, writer and actress Mindy Kaling comedic ally calls out and highlights the archetypes of romantic comedies in a

piece subtitled Types of Women in Romantic Comedies Who Are Not Real, one of which is the "The Woman Who is Obsessed with Her Career and is No Fun at All." Kaling writes "I am slightly offended by the way busy working women my age is presented in film. I didn't completely forget how to be nice or feminine because I have a career." She then goes on to call attention to the ridiculousness of the popular archetype, writing "often this uptight woman has to "re-learn" how to seduce a man because her oestrogen leaked out of her from leading so many board meetings, and she has to do all sorts of crazy, unnecessary crap, like eat a hot dog in a libidinous way or something. Having a challenging job in movies means the compassionate, warm, or sexy side of your brain has fallen out" (Kaling, 2011). In both *Sleepless in Seattle* and *When Harry Met Sally*, Meg Ryan portrays an unhappy career woman whose happiness and fulfilment could not be realised without the existence of a relationship. In *The Proposal*, Sandra Bullock plays a tough, demanding, difficult boss whose rough edges were softened following the typical rom-com hijinks arising from a scheme to avoid deportation by proposing to her playful assistant played by Ryan Reynolds. In *Hitch* (2005), Eva Mendes plays a hardened gossip columnist whose career is the most important thing in her life to the point that her boss publicly derides her for not vacationing enough.

There is a certain level of perfection to the female protagonists of romantic comedies. They are smart, successful, likable, charismatic, down-to-earth, confident and, of course, extremely beautiful but rarely care about her appearance. Their most common flaws are that sometimes she is unkempt, sometimes she's brash or crass, sometimes she's clumsy, and she wears frumpy clothes. These non-flaws are what keep her from getting a relationship and by the time the films end non-existent. The majority of romantic comedies rely on the charm of an unrefined woman-a woman who is flawed enough to seem relatable to the general public but not have actual real flaws that would make her unlikable or real. Modern romantic comedies often star tough, independent women who find their

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match who reveal a vulnerable and sensitive persona underneath it all even if she doesn't know that that's what she needed all along. By its nature, the female leads of modern romantic comedies reflect a combination of traditional gender roles and modern feminist ideals. They reinforce feminine standards while portraying the life and tribulations of an independent working woman: that despite this independence, she is unfulfilled and incomplete and she wouldn't ever be happy until she finds herself in a stable relationship with a man. The modern could have it all — a career, beauty, great friends, a beautiful apartment but unless she finds true love, none of it matters.

Just as important as the female lead, the male lead in contemporary romantic comedies also reveals aspects of the male ideals that women are supposed to want. The male lead, much like their female counterpart, also reflects the changing social and cultural landscape of the real world. To generalise the male lead of a romantic comedy falls into two categories: the playboy, arrogant guy who challenges the female lead who learns how to care about women's feelings and the sensitive nice guy who is able to support the female lead. In both instances, emotional vulnerability and the ability to understand the female lead is integral to their charm. The male lead sees something about the female protagonist that others can't. As a genre that typically caters to female audiences, the male leads of romantic comedies are much more representative of what they provide for the women than anything else. These characteristics are meant to appeal to the female desire and to represent everything that a relationship could bring into the lives of modern women.

For the sensitive archetype, the male leads are often emotionally vulnerable in the way that the female lead couldn't be. They are soft, gentle, and kind. They show certain tenderness and a concern for others that the woman finds endearing. They are single fathers, writers, artists and musicians. They are shown to be supportive and encouraging of the female lead's pursuits and are able to reveal certain characteristics of the female lead that they may have suppressed. More

often than not, the sensitive male lead appears invisible to their female counterpart. Their quiet, shyness, and humility loses out to the female lead's pursuits of romance with other men. Frequently, the sensitive man is a close friend that the woman has taken for granted or shown as an antithesis to the female lead's current relationship. As mentioned, the female lead in romantic comedies has become more career-driven; they are executives and working professionals. The soft, sensitive, domestic, artistic man is meant to counter the independent working woman. Romantic comedies have always thrived on the differences between men and women. And as women are taking on a less traditionally feminine role in society, having no interest in emotional relationships and entirely motivated by their career, the men become soft, sensitive, and accommodating.

For the playboy, the male leads challenge the female lead and changes her worldview. The female leads are often tough and independent and the playboy, with his arrogant confidence, challenges her by being crasser and brash. Unlike the sensitive archetype, the playboy will change throughout the film. Whereas it required the woman to have a moment of epiphany to establish a relationship with the sensitive man, movies featuring a playboy will require both leads to change. The female lead reveals the sensitivity that was within him all along and in contrast, the male lead will reveal the fun and adventurous characteristics of the female protagonist. The film frequently begins with the two leads in direct contention with one another but the events of the movie will show the complexity within both characters that will make them endearing to one another. Often a point of conflict will arise between the two leads, be it the reveal of a secret bet or a lie or an inexplicable mistake or misunderstanding, and the relationship will stall or end. During this time apart, the playboy will realise all the ways that the female lead has changed him or vice versa and their love and affection will reveal themselves culminating in the grand gesture. The sudden realisation that they cannot be without the other will lead to a permanent internal change within the two characters.

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In both instances, the male lead shows the female lead the benefit of traditional feminine roles. The man will demonstrate the idea that a woman needs the emotional support of a man to be fulfilled. Throughout the course of the film, the woman will embrace femininity as she becomes more dependent on the male lead and what their relationship is meant to represent for her a break from the tiring life of an independent woman. Typically, romantic comedies are thought to reveal insecurities and weaknesses in the female mind and the male lead represents an object of change for women. That being in a relationship with the right person will make everything else seem irrelevant.

Romantic Comedies, Pop Culture, and Society

The romantic comedies, much like the majority of the entertainment industry, have an interwoven relationship with the social and cultural world. Human interaction, reality, and the entertainment industry mutually informs one another about the way people are supposed to feel, act, and react to things that are happening both in real life and in movies. Much have been said on the unrealistic expectations of romantic relationships that have been perpetuated by the rom-coms. Popular culture is intrinsically connected to and informed by the current society and insights can be drawn from this material. If a certain artefact is particularly popular, the content therein could alter and cultivate behaviours, beliefs, and attitudes. Certainly, at its peak, romantic comedies had a significant role in pop culture, ingraining its plot, characters, and dialogues into the lives of everyday people. The goal of studio produced Hollywood movies is, first and foremost, to entertain their target audiences; to create a story that is both resonant and entertaining. Filmmakers want audiences to love the story and invest a part of themselves in the characters and their journey. In order to entertain viewers, more often than not realistic plots and characters are side lined to create a satisfying and entertaining story. However, that doesn't mean that audiences are immune to

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becoming entranced and influenced by it in fact, the opposite could be said. Foss, Foss & Trapp suggest that "A basic function of the media is the creation of representation or simulations–reproduced versions of reality." For romantic comedies, audiences often leave the movie theatre wanting a love similar to the one they saw on screen (Green, 2013).

Audiences are aware of the artificiality of cinema, they do not watch a movie expecting it to be entirely realistic and to tell a story that will reflect their everyday lives, however, the impact of movies, and especially romantic comedies, on audiences' perception of love and life have been a point of discussion among general audiences, pop culture writers, and scholars alike. The belief that the popularity of film and television informs the way one behaves in society and the ability of the media to shape social interaction among individuals have led to various theories on how mass media affects individuals, both behaviourally and psychologically. Two versions of this idea have emerged: social cognitive theory and cultivation theory.

At its original conception, the social cognitive theory by Albert Bandura describes the way in which individuals learn behaviours through a social context and the reciprocal interactions between individuals and their environment, emphasizing the influence of an individual's social and cultural surroundings on his/her behaviour. The social cognitive theory highlights that an individual's behaviour is developed by observing the behaviours others and the expected outcome of said behaviour. Essentially, the theory states that people will memorise and adopt behaviours they have observed especially if they are performed by someone who is perceived as attractive and if the result from the behaviour prove to be beneficial. In the context of media and entertainment, the theory suggests that individuals actively observe characters' behaviours and the portrayal of their situation in order to gain insight that will be beneficial to their lives. If, for example, a male viewer wants to seem "cooler", they will watch a

movie that is widely accepted and lauded as "cool" and observe and adopt the behaviour of the lead character. This is the social cognitive theory.

Whereas social cognitive theory suggests that audiences are actively observing media in search of model behaviour, cultivation theory suggests that the effect of media occurs more passively and happens subconsciously. The cultivation theory, initially conceptualised as the long-term effect of television on individuals, hypothesise that the more people watch television, the more they will come to adopt its underlying messages. Essentially, the theory states that an individual will retain and hold certain beliefs and perceptions based on what they consistently see portrayed on television. This theory has since been broadened to include the media and entertainment at large; proposing that repeated exposure to characters, events, situations that carries similar sentiments will instinctively inform people's perceptions of reality. Research further highlights that it is not simply general media content but rather more genre specific viewing that creates a more lasting influence on audiences (Johnson & Holmes, 2009).

In both theories, the media, whether consciously or subconsciously, actively informs and affects both physical and psychological human behaviour. In the case of romantic comedies, these two theories actualise in the extent to which the genre shapes people's expectations about both romance and marriage, shifting their perceptions about what love is like, and how to show it. Individually, romantic comedies affect the way individuals perceive relationships, on a larger scale, romantic comedies affect the way society upholds relationships. The social cognitive theory suggests that individuals may choose to observe media portrayals of romantic relationships in romantic comedies in order to gain insight about their own relationships and the cultivation theory suggest that through multiple of exposure to rom-coms, audiences will hold certain beliefs about how a relationship should be and how one should behave in a relationship due to the characters, tropes, and narrative beats that are repeatedly portrayed in romantic comedies. Normalcy and perception change due to what is being depicted on

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screen. What we see informs what we know and the more we see something, the more normal it becomes. If the viewer consistently watches romantic comedies, they will perceive these on-screen relationships as accurate depictions of realistic romantic relationships because the viewer repeatedly receives the same message.

Due to the nature of the genre, romantic comedies often focus on relationships as they begin — often ending when the couple begin their relationship or have overcome their initial point of conflict. More often than not, if the movie has a wedding it will come at the end; marking the end of their problems, the peak and endpoint of their relationship rather than the start of a new phase of the ongoing relationship. There is a certain finality to relationships as they are portrayed in romantic comedies; once you are in a relationship, once you are married, that's it. Of course, a film could not show relationships in its entirety, the beginning, the struggles, marriage, and everything that happens throughout the course of a relationship. That's not what the genre is about and that's not how movies work. There is a finality to the depiction of a relationship because the movie needs to end and ending it with the couple together provides a narratively satisfying conclusion to the story being told. However, the sheer number of romantic comedies, and films in general, depicting the beginning of a relationship as opposed to those depicting a pre-existing one creates an imbalance in the media portrayal of relationships, creating a disproportionate representation for ongoing relationships that audiences see. By limiting the kind of stories being told about relationships, movies essentially tell audiences that once you are in a relationship with the right person, there is nothing else to worry about despite the fact that there is a lot more conflict to be found in an ongoing relationship than there is in the beginning of one (Marostica, 2012). Furthermore, in giving the audience a satisfactory conclusion, a neat, happy ending bow to wrap up the story, romantic comedies, be it intentional or not, create a fantasy of perpetual bliss. Presenting audiences, a high degree of perfection that could never be achieved, leaving people dissatisfied with themselves and the relationships they have. The escapism

nature of films inherently means that producers and studios are going to favour more optimistic and entertaining stories and narratives, which certainly deviates from the mundane reality of everyday life.

Another concept that is often portrayed within romantic comedies involves the notion of a soulmate, that the two characters are destined for each other, that they are perfect for one another. In essence, there is a sort of external, unexplainable force that makes couples in a romantic comedy. Audiences may start to fantasise about a "one of a kind" relationship, an extraordinary relationship that is unlike anyone else's. This creates an unrealistic belief about the reality of love and romance in real life where constant communication, periods of boredom and complacency is normal. Romantic comedies often focus primarily on relationships during the early stages and culminates with the two characters realising they belong together. These early stages of a relationship are exciting. This is true for relationships both in movies and real life. It is not completely out of the realm of reality to say that there is a high that one feels during a new relationship, an air of happiness, enthusiasm, and excitement permeating all facets of life. However, the extent of affection and excitement that is demonstrated by these characters diverges from what we know to be true of relationships in real life. The characters' actions and behaviours often suggested deeper feelings and high levels of trust that would be more in common with more long-term relationships. By associating all these positive emotions to the early stages of a relationship, viewers get the impression that this is how a relationship should be all the time. A new relationship is certainly exciting, but it is simply unrealistic to think that this excitement will sustain and remain the same throughout a relationship. It is also not unusual that romantic comedies depict one character having a "love epiphany" where they came to a sudden realisation about their true feelings and the depth of their love for the other person. Hollywood presents the idea that feelings of love and affection come suddenly and strongly and become immediately consuming. All of these combinations of tropes and narrative beats

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create a series of high expectations for viewers of their relationships that often leads to dissatisfaction with one's own love life (Green, 2013).

Romantic comedies do not simply influence one's view and ideals of relationships but also of single life. In many romantic comedies, these films often depict single life negatively. Single people are lonely, miserable, consumed by work, boring, frustrated, and insecure. This is especially true of its depiction of career women. Despite her success, the career woman is incomplete without a fulfilling relationship. She is too rigid, too focused on work; she needs a partner to show her how to have fun, how to let loose - how to be happy. Hollywood's portrayal of single women in romantic comedies perpetuates the idea that a woman will only be complete once she has found that one perfect relationship. This is true of even films where the main character began the film seemingly content with their single life. That the perfect relationship is just simply going to change your life for the better.

Perhaps more than their influence, romantic comedies also have the ability to bolster and uphold pre-existing beliefs. Essentially, romantic comedies promote the belief that disagreement is destructive. A point of conflict between two people indicates a problem rather than an opportunity for communication. Through the way, the romantic comedy narrative unfolds, audiences are conditioned to believe that a happy couple is one without dissensions, without arguments. This inability to acknowledge and engage with points of disagreements leaves negative emotions to fester often leads to an unhealthy relationship. A related facet in rom-coms is the frequency of big romantic gestures and gift giving, perpetuating the idea that these actions are the norm. This indicates a larger issue within the romantic comedy portrayal of relationships which is the propagation of the misconception that if a couple is meant to be, they will be able to read each other's mind and know what they want. Films perpetuates the idea that one's significant other should intuitively understand their needs without the need to communicate with one another.

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Though it may seem over the top to suggest that every underlying issue, hang up, ideal, and belief people have of relationships is solely caused by romantic comedy films, the continual depictions of the same narrative, the same trope, over and over again does signify a larger societal belief about relationships. Hollywood dictates the types of films that are being made, studios get to decide these commonalities and through lines in their portrayal of relationships on screen. Audiences are limited in the stories they are seeing by the stories that Hollywood decides it wants to tell. Films choose to focus on the heightened romance and the heightened conflicts of the courtship process, rarely acknowledging the foundations that serve as the root core of intimacy and relationships. Filmmakers, producers, and studios have the power to influence culture and society at large. Movies and entertainment have the unique ability to both reflect society and affect it. They allow audiences to observe the mundanity of normal human emotions and interactions in a heightened reality. Films are made for entertainment purposes but it is hard to ignore the theories of mass media and communication psychology linking films with certain behaviour and beliefs. Continually watching films that portray unrealistic versions of reality warps our understanding of life in the sense that our minds begin to encourage the notion that what is portrayed on-screen is real and attainable rather than an improbable, implausible piece of fiction. The culture and infatuation that surrounds celebrities have transformed them into an influential figure that allows them to increase their influence on the masses. Celebrities are idolised, they are a representative of the Hollywood fantasy, representing everything that the general public want to attain. This larger-than-life adulation of celebrities creates a sense that their characters, much like them, are meant to represent us and our beliefs; allowing the notions and underlying characteristics of these films to permeate what we know about life and relationships (Peel, 2011). A growing consciousness among filmmakers and audiences alike has allowed us to criticise media and to consume it in a much healthier way. As viewers, it is important that romantic comedies are appreciated

and viewed for what they really are, an escapist depiction of an idealistic romance: extremely entertaining and entirely fictional.

The Past, The Present and The Future of English

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Introduction

Language-why it is relevant. Throughout history, thousands of languages have existed, and thousands have died out. The term "dead language" comes to mind when we think about ancient languages since there are no more native speakers. Linguists and historians have discovered the records, poems, letters, and other writings of these languages preserved through time. Through them, they can find out how culture, society, and life developed throughout their speakers' history. Historians discover how ancient civilizations came and went from their records and their stories that have been passed down through generations.

Not only is language something that preserves information, but it is also an identity. As *Emil Cioran*, a Romanian philosopher, said, "*It is no nation we inhabit, but a language. Make no mistake; our native tongue is our true fatherland.*" Every language shapes how a person identifies him or herself. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis claims that the structure of a language influences its speakers' world views or cognition. Therefore, people's perceptions are relative to their spoken language. The first thing that a person must learn in their lives is a language. It is ingrained in their psyche because, when they perceive reality, they will think in one, to shape and label terms, and define the things they see throughout their lives. In turn, it influences how they observe reality, how they interpret what they see.

Languages are a vital asset to cultural integrity. If a language dies out, so will its speaker's perspective, ways, and culture. Why do some people dedicate themselves to protecting their mother tongue; some even to an extreme and radical extent? The reason is to preserve their culture, their identity, and their perspective. Unfortunately, perhaps, Native Americans integrated themselves into European/Western American society, discarding the culture and traditions of their ancestors, effectively killing their identity as Native Americans. Indonesians, on the other hand, often speak Indonesian, but they also speak Sundanese, Javanese, and other regional languages to preserve their culture, traditions, sense of history, community, and cultural identity. Some Chinese descents in Indonesia use Cantonese, Mandarin, and other languages for the same reason. However, with the dominance of English across the globe, there will be languages replaced by English for more accessible communication, interactions, and trade, sacrificing the historical, cultural, and traditional identity.

What language is

There are more than 7000 languages spoken by the human race. Among all of these, English is the one language that one can hear all around the globe. It has the most speakers as a second or, even, third language throughout the world. How did it become what it is today? Why is it so prevalent, being spoken by millions all around the world? This essay will discuss the history of English, where it came from, who spoke it first, how it developed, and how many changes it has experienced. It will also discuss its development and how it may affect other languages.

The Development of English-origins

According to *Ethnologies*, there are 141 different language families consisting of 7111 living human languages. A "living" language means that a collective still uses it as the primary form of communication. There are also

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"dead" languages, those that have no native speakers living, or "extinct languages," which means they have no native speakers and no descendant languages.

From the 7111 known languages currently spoken in the world, the Germanic languages form a tiny subset. Languages descended from the Proto-World, a hypothetical ancestor of all the world's languages, became the source of other languages. These surviving languages constitute the central node of a - *Macro-Family*. Nostratic, Dene-Caucasian, Amerind, and Austric were examples of the *Macro-Family*. Nostratic was the language spoken about 15,000 years ago in the regions between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. Nostratic consisted of currently living and dead language families: Indo-European, Afro-Asiatic, Uralo-Altaic, Kartvelian, Dravidian, and Eskimo-Aleut. Most European and Asian languages came from the same language family, the Indo-European. Indo-European was made up of subfamilies: Indo-Iranian, Hellenic, Armenian, Balto-Slavic, Albanian, Celtic, Italic, Germanic, Anatolian, and Tocharian (Fajardo-Acosta, 2018). The Germanic subfamily consisted of East Germanic, North Germanic, West Germanic. East Germanic, with Gothic as its most prominent member; members of North Germanic language are Icelandic, Faroese, Norwegian, Danish, Swedish and West Germanic (sometimes called 'South Germanic') with German, Yiddish, Pennsylvania German, Dutch, Afrikaans, Frisian, and English as its members (Konig & Auwera, 1994).

This linguistic evolution seems to have begun in the southern Baltic region (northern Germany, in the Danish Isle, south Scandinavia). According to research, the area was settled by speakers of Indo-European around 1000 B.C. and encountered speakers of non-Indo-European origin. The speakers slowly changed their Proto-Indo-European language into Proto-Germanic. They spread beyond their original homeland to settle the region from the North Sea to the River Vistula in Poland by 500 B.C. The spoken language during this period has been verified indirectly; in foreign words, usually proper names, used by Greek and Latin

authors, and it borrowed from different neighbouring and co-territorial languages, especially Finno-Ugric and Baltic. The first known direct records are Scandinavian runic inscriptions from the beginning of the 3ʳᵈ century. At the end of the Pre-Christian Era, Germanic tribes, including the Vandals, Burgundians, and Goths left the Common Germanic regions. The Goths, who were the only ones who left any significant linguistics records, moved to the Baltic shores east of the Oder; some moved on to the Balkans around 200 A.D., and from there, they went westward to Italy, France, and Spain. The East orientation of the Goths' migration, 'East Germanic,' is the term for the Goths' language. Because it is generally agreed to have separated from Common Germanic, it is a branch and on the same level as West and North Germanic. During the Viking Age (800 – 1050 A.D.) speakers of North Germanic settled in Iceland, Greenland, the Faroes, the Shetlands, the Hebrides, and the Orkney Islands, parts of Ireland, Scotland, England, the Isle of Man and Normandy, along the shores of Finland and Estonia, and even in Novgorod, Kyiv and Constantinople. Only in the case of Iceland and the Faroes did these languages lead to a separated development and progressions because of the isolated regions they resided in (Ekkehard & Van der Auwera, 1994).

In the fifth and the sixth centuries A.D., people from northern continental Europe brought their native languages to the British Isles. These migrants came from different places throughout the continent, and in their new home, they spoke a range of dialects. They would interact with speakers of different languages and with numerous dialects. These migrants were who we now call the Anglo-Saxons. Their language began to develop in distinctive ways and became a new one, and the indigenous Celtic languages and Latin influenced its developments. Though they were on an island separated from the continent, they were not truly isolated, and trade, migrants, and other activities would keep them in contact with people across the channel and the North Sea (Mugglestone, et al., The Oxford history of English, 2013). The language the Anglo-Saxons brought to the British Isles was

shared with others who remained on the continent. At that time, these people had not yet acquired the skill of writing their language, other than runes. As a result, historians today cannot find any recorded evidence of most forms of the spoken language. By the time the Anglo-Saxons created written English, they had already divided their language. The separation of the early versions of English and the Anglo-Saxons' language had already happened and, by similar processes, so did the initial stages of German and Dutch, and the Scandinavian languages Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian. Linguists believe that it is possible to reconstruct a sufficient amount of history of these languages before they took a written form (Mugglestone, et al., The Oxford history of English, 2013).

In summary, English is an old language, with as rich a history as any other Indo-European language. English history has spanned roughly 1500 years: from the arrival of Anglo-Saxons to the British Isles in 449 A.D. to the present. Significant Historical Periods of the English language are the Old English Period (449 A.D. – 1066 A.D.), Middle English Period (1066 – 1509), Early Modern English (1509 – 1755), and Present-Day English Period or the Modern English Period (1755 – present) (Fajardo-Acosta, 2018). Today, English is the official or co-official language of about 94 countries and territories around the world. It is also regarded unofficially as the *lingua franca* of the world – its international language. Because of this, it had now absorbed words from other languages, such as Latin, French, and Greek.

Old English

Old English or Anglo Saxon is imported dialects brought by immigrants from the 4th until the 6th century. They drove the Romano-Celtic natives back to Cornwall, Wales, and Scotland (Konig & Auwera, 1994). Four main dialects can be distinguished; the Northumbrian, Mercian, West Saxon, and Kentish. It was used by the Germanic Tribes (Angles, Saxons, and Jutes) until the Norman Invasion of England in 1066 A.D.
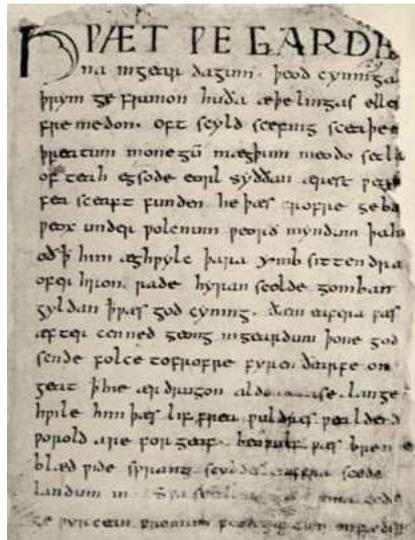
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Figure 1. Old English

Unlike Present- Day, English, Old English had grammatical gender (masculine, feminine, neuter), singular and plural number, and the inflectional endings that determine "strong" or "weak" classification of the words. These classifications called for specific inflectional endings in each of the cases used, nominative, accusative, genitive, and dative. Old English initially used the Futhark or Runic alphabet, but the 6th century Christianization of England led to the use of the alphabet. Irish scribes influenced the handwriting of early Old English manuscripts. The form is known as the Insular Hand (Fajardo-Acosta, 2018).

Middle English

The transition of Old English to Middle English was caused by the Norman invasion and rule in England, which was led by the Duke of Normandy. This invasion caused the death of many Anglo-Saxon nobles, eliminating the oldest English speakers from the upper-class. The Normans were the descendants of Danes, living in northern France and spoke a French that was influenced by Scandinavian. As such, French became the prominent language in England, spoken by the upper-class from 1066 until the late 14th century. English became

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the language of the lower-class but was heavily influenced by French in vocabulary, prosody, and spelling. English became a language without prestige; French was the language of the court, and Latin became the written language of the Church, secular documents and manuscripts. However, Scandinavian was still spoken in the Danelaw, which lay in the northern and eastern parts of England, and the Celtic languages were still prominent in Wales and Scotland. With two languages spoken in these regions, bilingualism was common among the Norman officials and supervisors. Marriages between English and French people also resulted in some bilingual children (Fajardo-Acosta, 2018).

This period in the history of English further proves that dialects and other languages that integrated themselves into a community with a local language will influence the form of the *lingua franca* spoken in that region. Different regions may or may not incorporate properties of the migrating language; in this case, the Scandinavian in Danelaw and the Celtic languages in Wales and Scotland.

The rise of English into prominence was influenced by the Hundred Years' War, which lasted from 1337 to 1453. French remained the official language of England until the second half of the 14th century, and then English returned to prominence in the years 1362 to 1509. In 1362 English became the official language for legal proceedings; previously, it was used only for communicating instructions. The growth of English as a common language also affected the main style for legal documents and writings. The populace of England spoke English by the end of the century, replacing the French, Norse, and Celtic languages in England. By the 15th century, most, if not all, legal documents were written in English rather than French or Latin. With the decline of these other languages, dialects became smoother and more generalized. Crusades and pilgrimages contributed to the increase in communication and formation of a standard dialect and, therefore, a common language. London also became the center of commercial trade with its seaport and its proximity to the Westminster court. The London or East Midland dialect emerged as a standard spoken and written

language across England. Middle English was based on this London dialect. The Black Death also contributed in the development of Middle English. The death of one-third of the English population led to social chaos, labor shortages, the emancipation of peasants, wage increases, and the rise in prestige of English as the language of the working classes. The introduction of the printing press in England in 1476 was the beginning of increased literacy all across England. Based on this evidence, Modern or Early Modern English descended from the Middle English London dialect, and was not a direct descendant of West Saxon (Fajardo-Acosta, 2018).
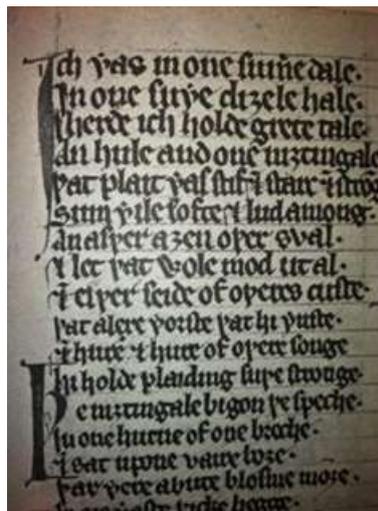
Figure 2. The Owl and the Nightingale

Middle English had a division of five dialects: Northern, East Midlands, West Midlands, Kentish, and Southern. Here are examples of few prominent texts are from the areas where the main dialects were spoken: The Northern dialect had the 13th century *Cursor Mundi*; the East Midlands/London dialect had the *Peterborough Chronicle,* the *Ormulum,* and *Havelok,* roughly from the same date; The West Midlands had the *Katherine group, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight,* and *Piers the Plowman.* The Kentish area had the *Kentish Sermons* and Dan Michel's *Ayenbite of Inwit* from the 14th century. From the literature of Middle English, linguists discovered that the English language underwent several significant changes in phonology, morphology, vocabulary, and syntax in its

transition from the Old English to Middle English. These changes have often been attributed to the French influence due to the Norman Conquest of England. It is uncertain that this is correct because there is little evidence that French influence penetrated the language much deeper than the top of society. The changes in the phonology (diction) of unaccented syllables (reduction of unstressed vowels to schwa), which eventually affected the morphology (arrangement) by reducing case endings, resulted in a domino effect. It was already on its way towards the north of England in the Old English period, long before the French influence took effect. Recent research on this subject hypothesizes that it is the Viking conquest of the north and east of England in the 9th and the 10th century had more influence, as it resulted in settlement and assimilation of the invading and native population (Konig & Auwera, 1994). Therefore, not only French influenced the development of English in the Middle English period but the Scandinavian also played a significant role. English also changed in other aspects, such as the loss of inflections, less freedom in word order, loss of grammatical gender, and all final –e sounds pronounced, as well as all consonants (Fajardo-Acosta, 2018).

The transition and changes of the Old English into Middle English created a division of social class between English and French speakers, not only because of the invasion from the Normans, but the transition also caused by separate usage of English and French within society. French is the language used by the higher class, while the lower-class was using English in day-to-day conversation. This segregation creates a very distinct division of the French and English speakers and resentment between them that lasted for years. The effect of this segregation was the exposure of different social interactions of different social classes. For example, since the lower-class used English, slang, the bastardization of pronouncement, and other appropriations from French, many French words were adapted into English. On the other hand, French speakers would often use the different pronunciation of English words (for communication with the lower-

class), creating different spellings and other differences, changing the language even further.

Modern English

The transition of Middle English to Early Modern English began with the loss of French in England. The gradual absence of French or the "Death of the language" in England removed the traditional linguistic distinction between the lower and higher classes of society, nobles and peasants. There was no Standard English for the nobles and other upper-class citizens to use yet, and thus French was still used, albeit begrudgingly. Augmentation and modification of the original English were then developed to replace them, creating a distinction between the English for the rulers, and English for the ruled (Mugglestone, et al., The Oxford history of English, 2013).

Early Modern English is a paradoxical period for the English language. In this period, many properties of Modern English were established and consolidated. It is a period that bridges between the dialectical diversity, which is widely prominent in Middle English, and the push to an ordered, structured, and regulated language, which is often seen as the characteristics of the 18th-century grammarians. Even though this was the era of transition from the localized dialectic to the more structured and regulated English, it is also a period of significant systemic and structural change for the language (Mugglestone, et al., The Oxford history of English, 2013).

The Renaissance of English happened in this period. Many loanwords from different regions were established. The increased interest in classical learning spurred more attempts at improving English according to the vocabulary and grammar style of classical languages, such as Greek and Latin. New vocabulary was also developed, mostly for technical and scientific works; some are also related to exploration, discovery, and colonialism. In the Early Modern English period, many linguists and others introduced reformation to the language. Thus,

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there were many effects on other aspects of citizenry and life in general in England. On the economic side, the education of the middle class in the "correct" or established language usage had been implemented. As such, there were many authoritarian grammar handbooks produced and distributed to the citizens. Also, the dilution of dialectical differences through the increase of urbanization in urban centres and the rise of the middle class in status and economy through the wool and cotton industry contributed to the rise of the people's literacy (Fajardo-Acosta, 2018).

The invention of the printing press in the 14th century gave the English people a means to increase literacy in their midst. This invention helped the middle-class to be more literate and, therefore, created an interest in classical works because those are what they read. This increase in literacy created an artistic renaissance that produced many famous artists and poets: William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, Edmund Spenser, and Philip Sidney, to name a few.
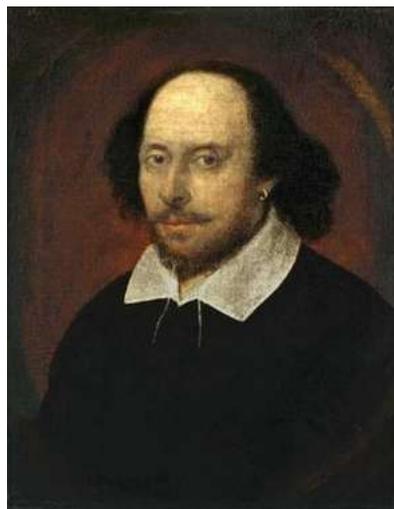
Figure 3. William Shakespeare

The advance of exploration, colonialism, and the expansion of the British Empire (from the defeat of Spanish Armada in 1588) also created many loanwords from the languages of colonies used to designate exotic objects, products, plants, and animals. The age of exploration also spread English around the world. The

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expansion of the British Empire in the Americas also created some significant developments and eventually segregations of the English language. The American Revolution began the separation of American English speakers and British English speakers, the beginning of the multiple national English varieties from numerous regions. However, literacy of Englishmen decreased significantly in the years of the Industrial Revolution, due to extensive child labour. Instead, in that period, technical vocabulary developed, which had Latin and Greek as its roots (Fajardo-Acosta, 2018).

Regional developments of localized English dialects correspond with the previous characteristics of new languages that were introduced into a new environment or to a non-speaker community. Dialectical, phonology and word deviations were expected, as the natives in said land would have to accommodate the 'invading' language. English integrated some indigenous concepts into it, to define different and new terms. The pattern can be seen throughout the ages, from the Old English period to the Modern English. The 'migrating' language would either dominate the local region, creating different dialects or regional differences of the language while upholding the core characteristics of the language barring any significant upheavals or social reformation. The Anglo-Saxons, the French/Normans, and the British Empire have much in common, which is the integration of their languages inside their conquered or colonized regions. The Anglo-Saxons brought their language into the British Isles, integrating Celtics and Scandinavian languages and eventually assimilated them into Old English. The Normans invading and conquering England, brought French with them, and created social segregation via different spoken languages for separate social class. This division also created a conjunction effort between languages, resulting in loan words and appropriated concepts.

As time went by, so did the development of English continue. English colonists in the Northern Americas would create their communities with different integrated languages, as not only the British went there. Spanish, French, and

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other colonists would live there and integrate their words further, and, because of the distance and isolation from Europe, this created more deviated developments in English. More and more loanwords, dialects, and other characteristics were combined and assimilated, creating what is known today as American English. This development was further influenced by the independence of America from the British Empire, supported by the French and the American Civil War
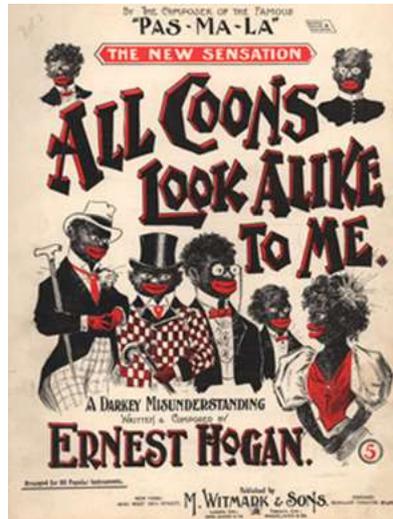

Figure 4. Racist Caricature

Figure 5. World War 2 Propaganda

Most conflicts, social upheavals, and development of technology, entertainment, and media outlets experienced by English speakers influenced English. Racial slurs (*niggers, coons, krauts, chinks, japs*), insults, and slangs (*Gams(legs), the bee's knees(excellent), skivvies (male underwear), boo-boo (a*

mistake; a wound)) were sometimes adopted and integrated into English, creating new words and further increasing the vocabulary, while others were abandoned because of social criticism, irrelevancy, or simply forgotten. We can also see that different locations will affect the accents, vocabulary, and soundings.

In the USA, for example, we can hear different accents of American English because of different locations. Citizens of New York have different dialects from citizens of Texas; it also applies to other countries and languages as well. In Eastern Germany, citizens that live there have different accents, usage of words, and some vocabulary in their language compared to those who live in Western Germany because of their proximity to various countries. Indonesians are another example; many interpretations of Indonesian exist because of the numerous islands, tribes, cultures, and traditions. East and West Java have different accents, and some have even more variations of dialects because of immigrants from the previous generations, integrating other languages to the natives of that region.

Influencing factors

The factors of linguistic divergence are based on the differences created from numerous causes. Cognitive and cultural roots are the most prominent ones, as they are the causes of forming different perspectives for any language speaker. This article uses the term "cognitive factors" in a more limited fashion: "as the factors that influence the acquisition of the linguistic system that conveys information on the states of affairs – on what is being said rather than the manner or style of expression.", wrote William Labov in his book, Principles of Linguistic Change - Volume 3. The study of cognitive effects of sound change requires the listeners' measure of abilities to identify the phonemes in the stream of speech and so to retrieve the meaning of words intended by the speaker, such as the age differences in cognitive processing, irreversible mergers of terms caused by identical phonetic changes, and other causes. Cognition is, of course, not limited

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to the content of what is said but is sensitive to systematic variation in the way in which the conveyed message, yielding the information on the speakers' social characteristics and relations to the listener or audience. Different social status, demographic, and cultural characteristics of the speaking or listening individual influence the context conveyed or received (Labov, 2010).

The Future of English

Like other developing languages, English develops over time; about 15 new words are introduced into the language every day. The development of English is factored by:

1. Borrowing and assimilating other languages' words.
2. New terms created spontaneously by combining or modifying existing words.
3. Shortening, contracting, and abbreviating words and grammatical forms.
4. Discarding unusual or irregular forms and adopting new ones.
5. Extensive use of idioms.
6. Science and discovery creating an opportunity for English to develop its vocabulary and grammar further.

As long as English speakers are alive, English will develop continuously. Their cognition and perspective of objects that are real or imaginary, abstract or concrete, will always change over time, and influence their definition and terms, the meanings of the object they say or think. As long as humans continue to innovate and discover new things, languages will continue to develop and evolve, and the speakers determine how the languages develop. Conflicts and social changes also create significant divergences and developments. Technological developments, social upheavals, racism, tolerance, hatred, war, and other components will influence the perception of the speakers, which, in turn, influence how the language develops.

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Understanding Modern Magic: Obscure Edition "An Attempt to Explain the Basic Nature of Electricity in A Cohesive and Coherent Manner"

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Introduction

When I first gave birth to the marrow of this project, they called me a madman. The very idea of filling the entire tens of pages or so with a bunch of technical electricity nonsense scared them, and undoubtedly myself as well. But then again, every great story starts and ends with the protagonist braving and conquering their fears, and I just realized that I should just write this 'book' about a subject I know little of. Alas, it is not a characteristic of a productive human to float on the sea of regrets, and thus, it is time to start the proper introduction of what this book is all about.

The fragile continuity of mankind as a civilized whole is currently hanging 4000 meters above ground level by the single magic thread of a concept known as electricity. This very fundamental lifeline of our civilized lives acts as the base on which every significant modern breakthrough has been made, applied, and maintained by the few lifting the quality of life of the most until the point we currently are at today. That point keeps rising as more and more people start to replace their conventional living apparatus with something much more convenient and faster, which is what electronics is all about. From there the demand to modernize everything skyrockets; hence, begins the new age of a 'gold rush' that will place our wellbeing at a height we have never seen before. It is all beautiful

and convenient for the most people until we realize that the number of people able to tend to the magic wire or, at the very least understand what makes it work, is insultingly dwarf-like. There is no one to blame. The journey of understanding the nature of electricity is unforgiving and costly for the most people, such as myself. That is the prime reason behind the inscription of this 'book'. I hope that you do not expect anything revolutionary from reading this, since all that I am doing here is merely taking the cesspool of knowledge that the internet is and filtering it, in the hope of finding the most basic of concepts and their explanation, dumbing it down through many attempts, and finally typing that struggle down in what I hope is something intelligible.

As it is a good rule of thumb to expect nothing but the worst, I do certainly hope that the worst that will happen to people after reading this 'book' is a single person more will understand how the world around them works. It is no longer all roots and leaves nor is it hunting and gathering; now is the age of micro-circuitry, and unless some fictional apocalypse of the end of time is going to befall humanity for not believing or 'having ironclad faith' anytime soon, then the era of modern electricity will only get bigger until humanity finds another source of power far superior to what we already have.

Let's Start

When people are asked, "what is electricity?", most people will confidently tell you that electricity is electrons, thunder, lightning, and it is what powers TVs, smartphones, computers, or anything vaguely close to them, without actually knowing what makes it very deadly, while also being responsible for everything good in life. I mean why would we need to know anything about it? Life's been good for most of us all this time without any legit knowledge about electricity, there are people who handle these 'complicated and intricate' things for us and we have more important, less risk of dying stuff to think about. This toxic attitude has been bred out of ignorance amplified by fear of this poor phenomenon that

has changed the world in ways we couldn't possibly imagine several hundred years ago. That very posture has been going for an extended period of time, and it has invested a lot of neighbouring subjects of interest. One great example would be the practice of "hacking". Hacking is a lot like electricity if we see how it is perceived by audiences around the world- a bunch of over exaggerations delivered by movies. Even news media display a lot of misconceptions of said practice to billions of people, regardless of age. Humans are indeed intellectual yet the number of individuals that take their bachelor's degree Computer Science lessons from movies and TV series are mind-boggling plenty. These peculiar flocks of individuals are the main contributors to the world-wide spread of misinformation about cyber security, or any other subject which the media often offers without testing its integrity of truth.

That being said, before we start this shaky quest of knowledge let us purge ourselves of everything we know about electromagnetism. After all this is not exactly the kind of book a sane person with proper proficiency in energized matter would open let alone read to this point. Thus, in order to make sure that we are on the same clean page we all must cleanse ourselves of random electronic "facts" such as the "it is better to keep the light on than switching it off and then on again" nonsense that we got from random people in the internet or group chats, even if they claim to have seven doctorate titles before their name and ten after.

<div align="center">Done?</div>

<div align="center">Great, let's get started for real.</div>

A Is for Atom

Everything that exists in our perceivable universe is made of atoms. Atoms are the building blocks of every solid, liquid, gaseous, and even *plasmatic[1]* matter that includes everything from a single mole of hydrogen to electromagnetism;

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[1] Little known state of matter, ionized gas with temperature so high it become incandescent as its primary attribute.

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[90]

thus, to understand electricity we must first do a bit of skinny dipping into Quantum town. Atoms have been wearing the title as the smallest components that exist as the bricks of everything in the eyes of common people for decades, and to say this is true is to be hugely ignorant. Figure 5 depicts Ernest Rutherford's visual model of atom. The better and more realistic models exist but this will help us visualize what we are talking about just fine. *Protons*, *Electrons*, and *Neutrons* of the *subatomic particle* band are technically the true smallest base, that through combined effort they form the false king of itsy-bitsy-teenie-weenie-bikini, aka the atom.
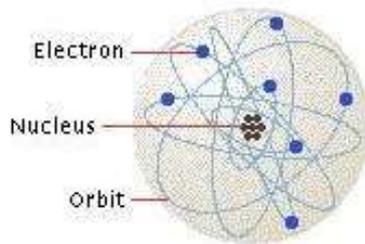
Figure 6. Ernest Rutherford's Visual Model of Atom

To put it simply, everything we have seen is made of atoms and every atom is cantered by a nucleus and every nucleus is made of a set of protons and neutrons while a bunch of electrons orbits around those nuclei. While it is obvious that an electron is the main member of the cast of this topic due to the Merriam-Webster definition of electricity; *"the movement and interaction of electrons",* one might wonder what part protons and neutrons get to play. Well one must remember that for any form of electricity to take place a *medium, any* worldly material which electricity can travel on regardless of how efficient it is in doing so, is very much required. Matter as we know it is made of atoms which as fore mentioned are circled by electrons and for us to know which kinds of material are capable of electricity, we must see the "clingy-ness" of the orbiting electrons to their original atom. Glass, wool, wood, and air are some great examples of having rather glued electrons. This is an antipode termed *Electrical Insulator* to what electricity is;

namely, movement of electrons. Thus, most metals such as aluminium, silver, and copper are classified as *Electrical Conductors* due to the tendencies of electrons in their atomic structure to move around and detach from their parent atom. This proficiency of electron flow is called *Conductivity*. This is what allows electricity to happen.

One thing to clear up here. A Subatomic Particle is actually not the absolute base building fragment of this universe. The crown belongs to what is called an *Elementary Particle*. While an electron *is* one of the many, protons and neutrons all belong to the category of *Composite Particle*; that is, made up of various elementary particles. This knowledge is as essential to *just know* as it is not an obligation to understand. This is just an extra step I take, just so you can run off your mouth after reading this book with marginalized science myth outbreak risk.

If you are truly wondering why some materials have clingy electrons while the others have electrons that are ready to move around do yourself a favour and google "Covalent Bonds". This book will not elaborate about said topic further in the later chapters just because that is more of a chemistry topic than electrical which I am even more unqualified to talk about, and I believe we will do just fine throughout this electrifying sojourn without grasping that tedious concept.

Now we may be wondering how these subatomic particles (NOT elementary particles, they instead use what is called *Gluon* to stick with each other creating subatomic particles Trifling yet perplexing science stuff, don't even bother to google it) clump up together in such fashion that they are able to form atoms en masse without having any active movement actuator such as legs on mammals, flagellum on eukaryotic cells, or fins on fish. Well, they don't need one. Just as fire is inherently hot and ice is naturally cold, electrons and protons each have attributes that are innately the exact opposite of each other. For the sake of simplicity and robust universal science liaison just like the SI units, our forefathers of science decided to label the innate movement force of these subatomic particle as *Charges* (SI unit; *"Coulomb"),* with electrons dubbed with having *negative*

charges and protons having *positive charges.* This *negative positive* polarity is an arbitrary display to show their contrasting nature; thus, the important part is not their nature but their interaction.

Lo and behold, the *Law of Charges.* This law consists of three statements that is; like charges repel, unlike charges attract and charged objects can be attracted to neutral objects. Based on these three axioms, it is clear that atoms are formed in accordance to fundamental laws of the universe. If you do not happen to have a multi-million U.S dollar particle accelerator/collider casually lying around to vaguely observe the nature of these ever so tiny particles, then we can see the Law of Charges at work in an actionable scale through a demonstration with two magnets. Stumbling upon this information, we might get confused between good old magnetism and the law of charges, since they both suggest practically the same thing. Well that is because they are the same, just with a different name and different variables in its elaboration in effort to make it appropiate and relevant with the field of subject it is used in. Here we can see where law of charges states this; "*like* **charges** *repel, unlike* **charges** *attract and* **charged** *objects can be attracted to neutral objects".* The law of magnetism states this; *"like* **poles** *repel, unlike* **poles** *attract and those magnetized objects can be attracted to non-magnetic objects".* Not a lot of difference for sure, but without those small divergence the axiom does not provide as much intuitiveness and clarity as it does with this diversity.

It is a good idea to remember that electric current (which we will explain later) always generates what is called a magnetic field; that is, the area around the magnet itself where magnetic force (pulling/pushing) is present. Thus, correlations will be present to a certain degree. Now that we have been introduced to the existence of a charge that is present in particles, it is time to clear things up regarding what makes electrons so special and why there is electricity and no "proton city" where the flow of positive charged particles that are solely protons are the basic principle of energy generation. Well first of all, a proton in normal

circumstances does not move due to its mass being bigger than electrons; hence, they stay in a fixed place. The energy bonds of protons are extremely strong. It is so much stronger than those of orbiting electrons that it requires a nuclear reaction to change the number of protons. And even after that the substance becomes an entirely different substance due to the changed atomic number (number of protons) that makes aluminium (atomic number: 13) aluminium and not silicon (atomic number: 14) or magnesium (atomic number:12). Figure 6 is a periodic table, a compendium in which all elements exist to man displayed along with their meager attributes. This extreme hassle required to exploit the flow of protons is what stops us using them to power our everyday needs, not to mention that we have not discovered how to use them more effectively than electricity.

Figure 7. The Periodic Table

Teamwork Makes the Dream Works

Voltage, Current, Resistance (Load) are the triumvirate of all things electrical. They rule over our ever so sparking world. On their own, they do basically nothing at all. Imagine the clockwork parts inside of Big Ben but each gear, frame, belt, and spring does not touch each other at all; that is basically what voltage, current, and load components are capable of forming each on its own: nothing. What makes Big Ben work is that each mechanical part inside her is *connected* (in this

case, surface contact) to other parts which together form a very intricate clockwork *mechanism* that runs on mechanical/kinetic energy transferred through thousands of moving parts from the very first part, that we all have grown too accustomed to. Or if the clockwork analogy doesnt work, think of a road. A road provides traction that allows vehicles to actually move around. Putting this into electrical terms, in order to make something run on electricity we also require connection between the components. This *road* created from interconnecting the electrical components is what we call a *circuit.* And very much like a road in real life, the traction makes it harder to move but it is necessary to move. In practice, circuits are usually represented by conductive wires such as copper wire.

To get things *flowing*, let's start off with current first. Current (represented by "I", SI unit; *"Ampere"*) as the designation suggests is the rate of electrical charge moving through a point. An ampere connotes that *a **single coulomb of charge is going through per second***. Charge (Q) might be the movement force of any non-neutral subatomic particles, but electrons as elementary particles have a pre-set/fixed amount of charge (because of nature, that's why); namely, *Elementary Charge.* This fundamental nominal value is $1.602\ 176\ 634 \times 10^{-19}$ C. It is enormously small and arbitrary (for most people that is) that I wager none of us even read the full numbers. Therefore, the word "1 ampere" means that approximately six hundred Sextillion (6×10^{20}) electrons cross a cross section of a circuit per second, because that is the amount of required electrons for their charges to sum up into 1 C (Coulomb). Please bear in mind that the direction of current is always the exact opposite of the direction an electron is moving. Thus, in its simplest form we can think of current as the number of electrons (in amperes) going through a cross-sectional area of a conductive circuit per second.

To avoid confusion, particles that have more positive charge flow from positive to negative, while negatively charged particles flow from negative to positive; that much is intuitive. Albeit this does not matter at all, electricity is both of them (see law of charges). It is our choice from which perspective we want to

analyse the circuit-on the positively charged or negatively charged side. Conventionally the flow of current in a circuit diagram should represent the flow of positively charged particles.

$$V = I.R$$

"The holy grail of our electric world"

Voltage (represented by "V", SI unit; *"Volt"*) in its simplest sense is the magnitude of *push/pressure* on the charged particles in the circuit. Let me first introduce the foundation on which voltage, current, and load correlate with each other. Behold Ohm's law; as the illustration above is, it does not completely portray Ohm's law due to its lack of representation of "R" (representation of "resistance", SI unit; *"Ohm"*) in the system. Ergo, here is the updated illustration for our learning convenience.

What this formula tells us is that the bigger current and/or load we have, the greater the acting/required *push* (voltage) in the circuit is. To make this a bit easier to digest, we can think of current as a flow of water instead of electrons.
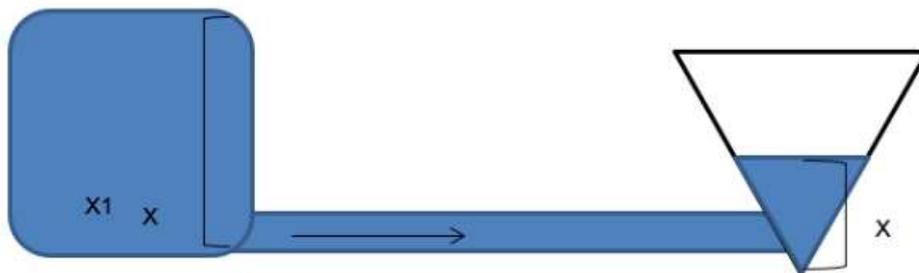

Imagine there are two containers filled with different amounts of water connected with a pipe. Water will always flow from the container with higher pressure (X1) into the container with lower pressure (X2) until their pressure become equal. The acting force that pushes water to flow from the rectangular container into the triangle container is called voltage. The term "potential difference" (represented by "ΔV") and "voltage" are often used interchangeably

due to its congruent representation of potential "strength" to push/power electrical current to flow (the "pushing" force that is provided by a voltage source itself is called *electric field*). This voltage will diminish as the pressure difference between the two containers lessens and eventually becomes equal which results in no water flowing between them at all.

V

I
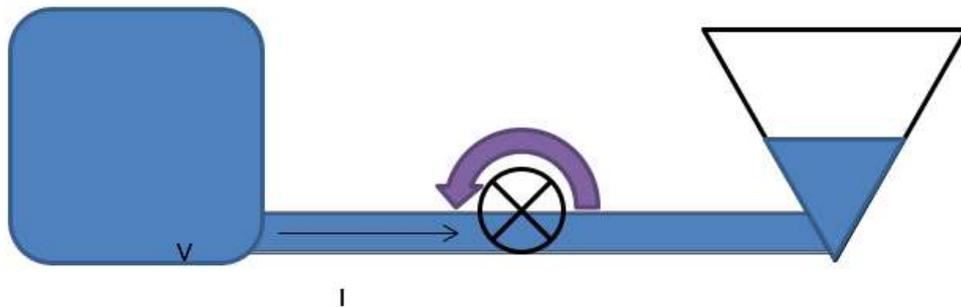
The newly-added circle serves as the legend, for a water wheel halfway submerged in the connection pipe. Once there is enough pressure water will flow and the water wheel will continuously turn until the pressure and the current "run out" or, in this case, there is no pressure difference. Understanding this sketch should adequately allow us to correlate and understand what is going on in this simple electrical circuit.

R

light
bulb

I

V

+   —
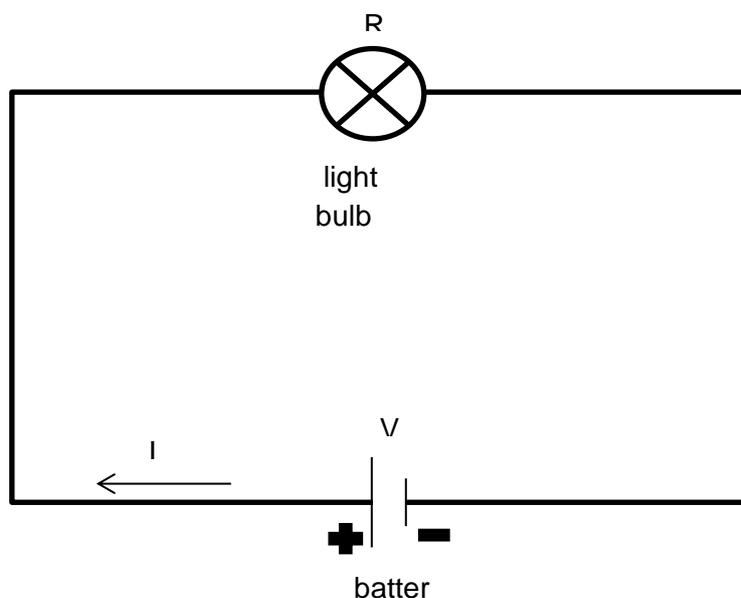
batter

No matter how different this circuit sketch looks from the previous water container system sketch, they are the exact same in the sense of technicalities. The pipe depicts the copper wire connecting the entire circuit on which current runs,

the water represents charged particles present in the wires, and the water flow depicts electrical current. The pressure difference of the two containers denote how voltage/potential difference are exerted from between the *cathode* (+) and *anode* (-) side of a battery pushing the electrons of the wire (remember that wire is made up of atoms that have orbiting electrons), and lastly the water wheel symbolizes (conveniently) a resistance inside of light bulb that only turns on after there is enough "electrical power" (represented by "P", SI unit; *"Watt"*), which is the combination of voltage and current (P = V . I). Much like a water wheel that turns slower and slower with less current and pressure acting, any electrical component (load) such as a light bulb and motor or any electronics will perform proportionally better if provided with higher electrical power input, although provide too much of it and the components/equipment will break rather violently and permanently.

Before we move on further, should there happen to be confuseion about the "hierarchy" relationship of these 3 core elements, it is best to think of current as the product of the two already determined values of voltage and resistance. This because we cannot directly change the "quantity" of current by itself but, through voltage, we let it in to the circuit and the amount of resistance we decide to put on, which are a LOT more easily determined. Current will automatically adjust its value to fulfil Ohms law (I = V/R), therefore a circuit with 1,5-volt battery and 100 ohms will have the same amount of current going through as a circuit with 9-volt battery with 600 ohms of resistance. Unfortunately, if we connect both sides of a 9 -volt battery with a very thick and short wire to produce resistance as small as 0,1 ohms, we will never acquire 90 amps as the current due to the physical limitation endowed by the "*internal resistance*" inside commerical batteries that gets worse as the battery gets used/discharges.

Lastly, seeing the formula of Ohm's law, it is implied by that voltage that goes through a circuit linearly increases with the value of resistance. This is absolutely wrong. You cannot get 380000 Volts from just simply adding a ton of resistors in

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whatever form to achieve this ultra-high -enough to power the entire country of Switzerland. Instead, it is best to think of "R" as the current-limiter for safe manipulation of electricity.

Human Body and Electricity

Common people are often restlessly ignorant about things that are a potential threat to themselves. We go as far as labelling everything associated with electricity as dangerous. Thankfully, with the knowledge provided by the ohm law equation, we can now be fairly certain about what is safe to mess around with and what is lethal. Dry human skin generally has a resistance value of up to 100 kilo ohms. This number alone imply that no current significant enough can run through our body causing harm without an extremely high voltage source. But drenching our skin in water can cut our bodily resistance to only 10% of its dry state. This makes us highly susceptible to be harmed by a moderate voltage source. In order for us to calculate the total resistance of our body, we need to add the resistance of the body part locations where current comes and exits (as if we are a lamp) and our internal organs resistance. This is why we have to be mindful where we are touching as we will do more damage if we place a wire on one of our fingers and the other on our wet tongue than if we put the other one on our adjacent dry finger. If we put two and two together, in theory we are going to be able to handle about 4,000 volts with dried body surface before breaching the mortally dangerous current rating of above 20 mill amperes. Sadly, in practice our organic protective epidermis goes through what is called skin breakdown if the incoming voltage is greater than 500 volts. This lowers our body's resistance greatly so that the result is an increase in the amount of current that flows with any more voltage increase. For that reason, an electric chair that were used as an execution means utilizes voltage above 1,000 volts to go through the executer's body for an extended period to ensure death. As much as I hate to say this, even relatively low voltages can be extremely dangerous. The level of risk increases

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with the duration the body in a running circuit. So always remember to be touch-disciplined and decently insulated when dealing with bare circuits to avoid a silly demise.

Heat by Electricity: A Blessing in Disguise?

We might have wondered why electronics feel a bit warm after being turned on for some time. This heat-up is present in every component, including the wire itself, of any electrical circuit so long as an electrical current and lack (or small amount) of resistance is present. The reason for this phenomenon is relatively simple. Increase in temperature as we know it is the result of molecules (chemically bonded atoms) moving around in an increasingly faster fashion. For electricity to flow, negatively charged particles must push through the circuit, inevitably and continuously bump into the molecules of circuit components from steady state into meandering condition (Newton's first law of motion. I am sure that we have all heard of this before) which results in a steady increase in temperature in the atomic scale that eventually grows and radiates the entire segment of wire/component as more and more power (with it, current) is used. This process is also known as power dissipation (electrical energy being converted into thermal), and it does not come to a halt when electricity stops flowing, giving space for the molecule to slow down into its natural speed; and hence, cooling down. Putting it in layman's terms, imagine a mountain river with a lot of curves along its way to the sea level. The curves meant that some momentum energies are lost due to bumping into the riverside. This creates erosions on the riverside lands while the potential kinetic energies are lost from the water. This is the kind of unwanted energy conversion that happens.

Solar panels are a great example of us exploiting the problem of electricity unwantedly turned into heat. Instead of depleting electricity to create heat, we use the heat accumulated from the sun itself instead to produce a potential difference. This is done by using photovoltaic cells (solar panels) that are capable of "*the*

Photovoltaic effect''.

Alternate Way of Doing Stuff

The essence of electricity is a bunch of tiny and energetic particles that move on a path creating usable energy; that much we are sure of. So far we have been introduced to a type of electricity that only moves in one direction forever (+ to - or - to +). This is also known as Direct Current. Until 1832, it was unknown to man that there existed another way in which electricity can effectively and efficiently flow and produce precious and useful energy for us to value. After years of research and struggle against a fear-mongering monopolist[2], it now commonly goes by the name "Alternating Current".

Alternating current works by gradually yet bafflingly rapid reversing the direction it is flowing multiple times every second. The amount of flow direction changes/cycles that happens per second in AC is called *frequency* (represented by "f", SI unit; "*hertz*"). Most of the world electrical grids are segregated between 2 technically-favored options: 50 hertz and 60 hertz.
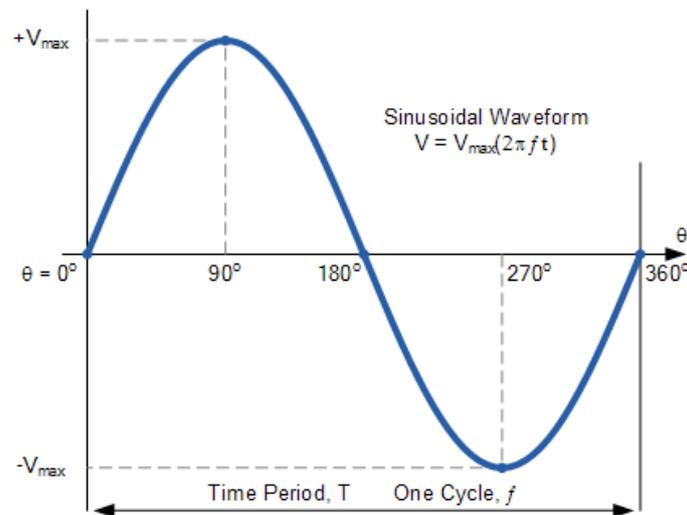

Figure 8. Input Voltage Graph

The Figure 8. Input Voltage Graph shows the value of voltage an AC circuit

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[2] *"War of the Currents"*

produces in one cycle. The minus value indicates that the current produced by the voltage source (not the battery) is going in the opposite direction half of the time instead of consuming voltage.

To see how AC performs, let's say that there is a light bulb connected to an AC voltage source. Bear in mind that this is what *should* happen to a light bulb that is powered by an AC power source, constantly flipping on and off. Fortunately, this happens in mile-seconds, so, if the frequency of this power supply is 50 hertz, the light bulb would be experiencing 3 times 0 power input and 2 times maximum power input (1 cycle) every 20 milliseconds.
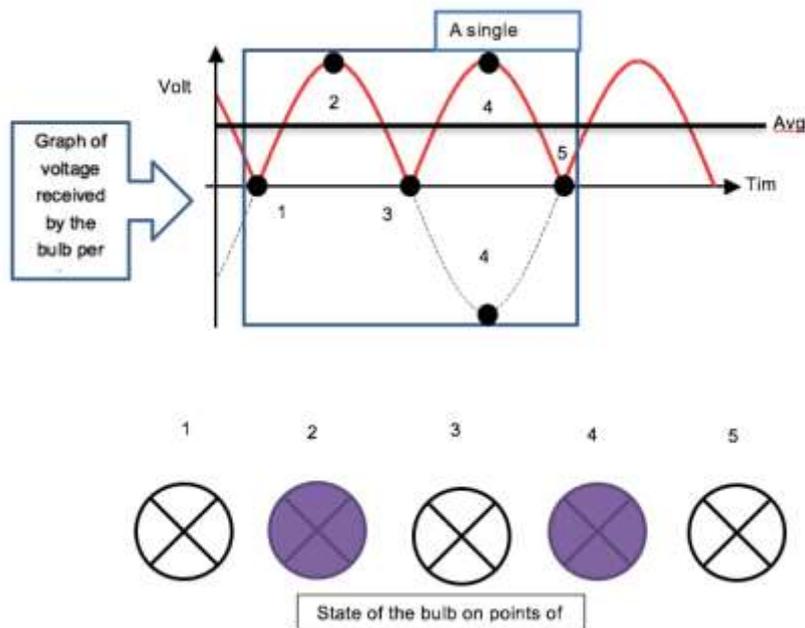
But if that is the case, why is our light bulb not blinking like crazy right now. We should be giving thanks to a component called a *capacitor* (represented by "C", SI unit; "*farad*"). Capacitors act as a buffer or a very small rechargeable battery for smooth transition in case of fluctuating power levels. They store charged particles when adequate power input is available and running in the circuit. Once a deficit in input voltage (power) is detected, the stored power in capacitor is reactively put to work (discharges) until it is used up or the incoming power level returns to a sufficient level that it starts to recharge again. This way, it prevents the light bulb from turning off upon reaching the 0-power input point

of AC power supply. Capacitors also stores excess voltage from sudden voltage surge preventing over-voltage from damaging the rest of the circuit components. This compensating functionality of capacitor makes it a valuable component to be included in many electronics for a stable power input.
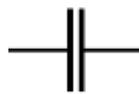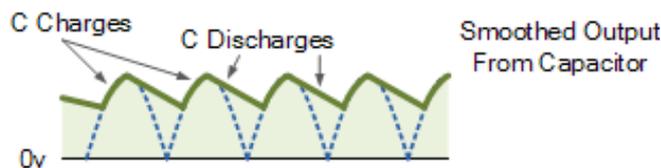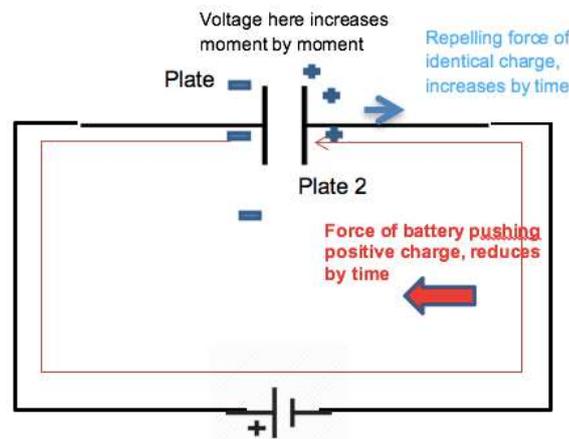

Symbol for Capacitor

A capacitor at its core is just 2 parallel plates separated by an electrical insulating material called *dielectric material* (the dielectric material/insulating layer between the plates can take form in air gap, paper, or any material with low electrical conductivity), hence the symbol of a capacitor is the way it is. A capacitor is used widely in AC power circuits because it allows AC to flow. Unfortunately, this is not going to happen in DC based circuits. Capacitors in an AC system are equivalent to a normal conductive path (*short circuit*) just like wires with additional storage for charged particles. But in a DC system capacitor act as if they are empty air with infinite resistance called "*open circuit*" instead of conductive wire/component after being fully charged.

It is evident that an open circuit cannot flow electricity at all because it requires a closed system (as seen in AC) and open air even if its a thin area makes a very bad circuit due to its practically-infinite resistance attribute. This makes the value of current flow basically zero (ohms law). So, what's all this segregated treatment by capacitors all about? Well, how a capacitor works is what makes capacitor better suited to be used in certain technology.

DC   AC

equivalent
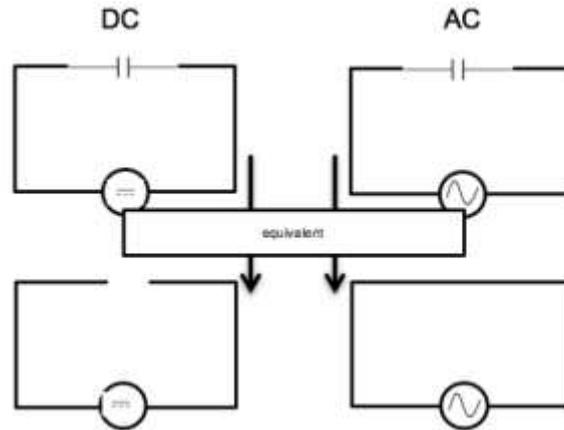
A capacitor by itself is neutrally charged, meaning each plate has an equal amount of negative and positive charges on its own, but, once there is a voltage source connected, it is going to start charging and creating a potential difference between the plates until the voltage is equal to the original voltage source and it begins to stop allowing current to pass.

Voltage here increases moment by moment

Repelling force of identical charge, increases by time

Plate

Plate 2

Force of battery pushing positive charge, reduces by time

As we have learnt before, negative charges travel the opposite way of positive charges in a DC configuration. As soon as a DC voltage source is connected, it starts to push electrons from plate 1 into plate 2 through the wire, not the gap. Doing this will result in plate 1 having more positive charge (net charge is positive) and plate 2 having more negative charge (net charge is negative), as well as increasing repel/attract force between the charges in the plates trying to maintain charge neutrality. The picture is shown on figure 17. Thankfully the

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insulating material between the plates ensures that no charged particles may travel directly between the plates. This takes time until the potential difference that is created by the two oppositely charged plates is equal to the voltage source. What happens next is the "strength" of the battery can no longer push additional positive charges from plate 1 to plate 2 due to the increased repelling force of accumulated identical positive charges in plate 2. Once the maximum voltage is achieved, we can say that the capacitor is *charged* and no current is able to flow through the capacitor due to dielectric material in a capacitor not providing any potent particle transfer path and our voltage source not having what it needs to keep pushing the flow of charges. Hence, this is why the capacitor in DC circuit is synonymous with the state of *open circuit* as it becomes fully charged.

Quite a contrast happens to AC[3]. Alternating current voltage source as mentioned before works like a DC battery being flipped every millisecond. This very short duration allows the capacitor to never get the opportunity to become fully charged as the energy stored is always sufficiently used whenever AC voltage source starts to reach the 0-power point as shown on the graph above. This endless charge and discharge cycle, caused by how AC works, ensuring that the capacitor will never fully block a path in a circuit.

Series of Parallel Reaction

In electrical circuitry, we have 2 ways to categorize how a circuit is connected, as it affects how voltage and current distribution will behave. Both classifications work by providing a closed-loop wiring for electrical current to flow. A circuit is called a *series* if every single component is connected in a single path. This way a single broken component will compromise the entirety of the circuit. When

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[3] The exact process of how we produce DC and AC is a tad bit too technical (not to mention confusing) for a book that explains things in a highly simplified manner by an equally questionable writer. But this is not to imply that I don't support people who want to learn. That being said, here lies a path I am about to give you, from which you may begin your bewildering and eerie quest for dorkish knowledge. https://tinyurl.com/rdhtnho . *Off you go now.*

connected in series, components will have shared the voltage available among themselves. That is the reason why the total voltage running through these three identical lightbulbs, in the example circuit below, will be equal to the initial voltage input. Figure 7 is series configuration of light bulbs. A broken bulb (open) will render the entire circuit useless if not replaced by new bulb or a plain wire.
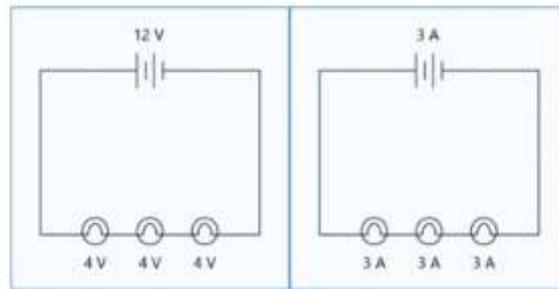

Figure 9. Example of Light Bulbs Connected in Series Configuration

The opposite condition applies to the level of current flowing through. The value of current flowing through each bulb will remain the same as it was when it had just exited the battery. This is because the electrons only have one path to flow in the entire circuit with no viable junction present to go through. Adding additional identical bulb in a series circuit will cause the entire bulbs' reduction of brightness due to them having to share the same power input with additional load, just like sharing a slice of bread among 10 people instead of 2 people.
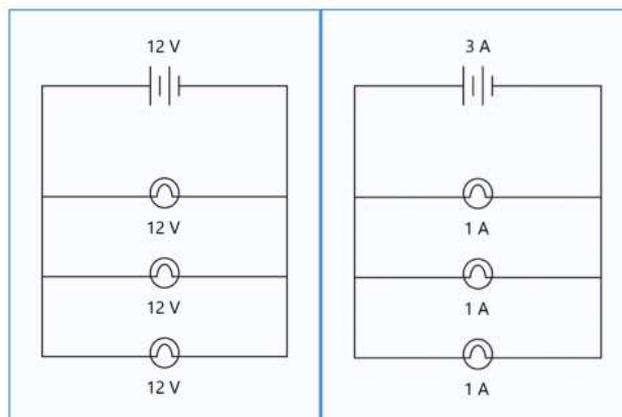

Figure 10. Example of Light Bulbs Connected in Parallel

When electrical components have their own direct connection to the voltage source as in the illustration, they are called *Parallel*. This direct connection to the power source available to each component allows them to not have to split the usable voltage exerted by the power source.

A single broken bulb will not affect the rest of the bulbs in any way other than improving battery lifetime. The current going through each bulb is going to be smaller than it is going to be if we configure this into a series setup. This is due to the junctions' present. The electrons have multiple places to go and thus they have to split in order to fill each path even if that means a lesser number of electrons going through the available paths, just like our regular vehicle traffic. Adding more identical bulbs will not result in dimming bulbs. They will maintain their brightness, but the batteries will be drained quicker due to them having to draw more current with each added parallel junction. This is why batteries are rated in ampere-hours. A 3V battery with capacity of 1Amp-hour will have the power capacity of a 3Watt-hour, which in theory means we can maintain 1 amp of current output for one hour, or 100mA for 10 hours, or 10mA output for straight 100 hours. If we look back at the water container analogue that was used to explain voltage, current, and resistance, the more time passes the more volume of water have moved from the initial container to the second container, until the point where both containers contain equal amount of water. This means there exists pressure difference and no more current. Even the water wheel will stop rotating. This is what happens when batteries are dead; there is no more chemical reaction that creates potential differences needed to power anything.

This limited variety of connection structuring and the peculiar behaviour each produces also applies to not only the non-generating peripherals, but also to the equally crucial counterpart that is the source. Loading up multiple same-voltage batteries in a series (cathodes connecting to anodes) allows the batteries to act as a single large source with combined voltage but still retains the power capacity of

a single battery. Paralleling identical batteries on the other hand also gives us a single large source but in terms of power capacity which is the combined capacity of the batteries, although this means that the amount of voltage that gets pushed in to the circuit is equal to only that of a single battery that makes up this homogenous battery.

Combining a battery, although very cost effective and useful, is ideally not recommended. This practice is even more unfavorable in terms of safety and reliability when batteries of different age, manufacturer, and voltage are used in unison as one. So do be mindful when considering tinkering with and using mass-produced batteries for your needs.

Closing

While I am certainly honoured that you have reached this article, be it with more confusion than when you just started, I do not expect any one to become an expert in electrical engineering after finishing this problematic article of mine or even remotely close to it because that is not what this publication is all about. This is but a double-edged sword that has given me a proud chance to realize and embrace my morbidly limited understanding and capabilities in this subject as well as the grand opportunity of improving them. Make no mistake; electrical engineering is a complex subject for most people. Even an experienced electrical engineer requires a constant back and forth of knowledge refreshment. So, this is by no means the end of our education journey, as to continue living is to continue learning. So, go now, and continue to become better bbecause, when you finally are able to firmly grasp the entire concept of electricity, we will have the power to do anything, *literally.*

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