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FOMO, Liquid Courage, and the Intoxicated Self

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by

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Introduction

You are standing at the front door of your dorm building. It is your third week of school, you have no phone, and it is six am. Your pants are wet and you're just hoping it's not pee...I mean, you've never pissed your pants before. Unsure of what happened, you attempt to put the pieces together by asking anyone you remember being around about your whereabouts. The banality of the responses leaves you confronted with the stark reality that this is not an unusual Sunday morning for most. As a freshman, you quickly learn that everyone on campus gets absolutely trashed almost every Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. There is rarely a time when the bathrooms are free from vomit, and this is not because they are not cleaned regularly. Mornings after a night out you arise to find every exit sign torn down, every trash can knocked over, the mirrors punched in, and the paper towel dispensers thrown out of the windows. Within the first few days, you hear about students being transported to the hospital and we all await the news of which person in your dorm will be the first. However, so many people are getting transported that no one notices who was first; everyone is simply attempting to avoid it themselves.

It's nine o'clock on a Saturday night; female students are filling three-quarters of a water bottle with vodka and the rest with some type of juice or soda. The male students finish a case of beer and polish off a handle of some brown liquor. Even if it is strong or they already feel a slight buzz they deal with it, as everyone feels they could always use more "liquid courage". At Trinity, the use of alcohol as "liquid courage", accompanied by an everyday culture of alienation, reveals students' fear of the presentation or exploration of self that is temporarily suspended within fraternity spaces or designated party spaces. The creation of this idiom reveals

the significant and profound social and emotional barriers, in our everyday life, to presenting the self, or even experimenting with that self. There are numerous rationalization strategies that support the use of alcohol to enable the presentation of this self, avoiding reflection on and alteration of the social structures that impede such demonstration or exploration.

As I'm leaving Psi U, I see two brothers guarding the door from the inside, two or three more guarding the stairs and door from the outside, and three girls about to leave. The girls are halted in their attempt to exit the fraternity, as the men simply say "no" and block the door. The girls laugh, as most people thinking this is just a quip would; it is hard to conceive that once you enter the fraternity houses you are not allowed out, especially without authorization via some terms of agreement prior to entrance. The men continue to block the door, yet aren't making much conversation. They are standing there, seeming to enjoy something about this interaction…maybe it is the control they feel from not letting the girls leave and from watching the girls' anxiety increase as they quickly recognize the austerity of the mens' body language.

The frat brothers ask the girls to tell them a joke and laugh, leaving me and the girls to question whether it really was all a joke. So the girls laugh along, in an attempt to reassert themselves while hoping that success will mean they were truly able to leave the whole time. In a cloud of panic and amplified fear of sexual assault (or generally being held against their will), I watch the girls take their time in responding, as they want to come up with a punch line that satisfies the comedic appetite of these fraternity brothers. With stern faces, the men demand another joke, imposing upon the girls another five minutes of humiliation. A white female student articulated her concerns and rage about situations like this stating, "women can't be in control of their own environment and their own space and in their own drinking condition...and it really pisses me off...and I am planning my open letter for when I graduate because it's fucked up

like….I hate it." Fraternity men are in control of nightlife at Trinity, and therefore the structure and function of the spaces and the interactions within. This grants them a lot of power, especially as students are under conditions of heightened vulnerability with nightlife presenting as the only time for students to interact and explore and express the self.

A Black male student gets a call at three in the morning from an exasperated, exhausted and confused friend asking for advice. The friend was just shoved and called the n-word by three white students while attempting to enter a party with some of his friends. The student retaliated verbally, averse to physically fighting back as he knew that would only lead to his punishment and not the punishment of the white supremacist students who had just used a racial slur and physical violence against him. The student that received the call explained that almost anything that this mistreated student could have done in response to these white students, whether that was reporting them to Trinity or verbally or physically assaulting them, would not stop this behavior from happening again. He further expanded on this student's reaction to the situation, extrapolating from his knowledge that this student predominantly grew up as a Black kid in a white neighborhood and that he was used to being accepted by his friends or groups of white people. So, for him to not be accepted by this group of white people at Trinity is confusing to him and he didn't know how to handle that. Based on this premise, the student encouraged his friend to use this experience to "better navigate this and how to even better connect...or how to better understand how 'the other' sees you...and how certain people see you as 'the other'". He further revealed to his friend the uncharacteristic nature of racial aggression and transgression at the "private school pipeline" that is Trinity College, where every space and interaction is imbued with a culture of white wealth. Although college drinking has evolved into a ubiquitous engagement, individuals' experience with alcohol is constructed along raced, gendered, and

classed lines; additional social controls are exerted on marginalized persons in an effort to regulate their consumption patterns and interactions (Vander Ven 2011).

Trinity students intentionally avoid Friday classes so they can party hard on Thursday night. It is rare to see a student that has never skipped a class or turned in an assignment significantly late or just not at all. Many students claim that at Trinity, an "elite" liberal arts college, we "work hard, play hard". However, I would question how much work Trinity students are actually doing as they ceaselessly advertise that "C's get degrees." It appears as though it is easier to claim that the almost non-existent social interaction throughout the week (in sober world) is simply the product of students feeling overextended, rather than the reality of alienation and resultant fear of or obstacles to connection. Trinity students are not binge-drinking because we work so hard during the week and must let off so much steam...Trinity students are binge-drinking because they are so deprived of connection in the sober world that their desire to enter the drunk world manifests in excess and often destruction.

I'm looking down at the clipboard of questions you customarily fill out prior to health appointments, and I stumble upon a question I have never encountered before, "How many times have you blacked out in the last month?". My eyes widened and eyebrows lifted...the corners of my mouth widened, but not exactly into a smile...I knew there was no one else near me yet I still looked around like, "Is anyone else seeing this...like they know?!" It feels as though your parents not only know you're having sex, but they just asked you how many times in the last month. They could have asked the commonplace, "How many drinks?" but they did not. I wondered whether this question is posed by most student health centers or if this is unique to Trinity. For this to be a standard question, the administration or health center staff must believe that a

significant number of students explicitly appear to be blacking out or coming to the health center for relevant resources.

Awaiting my name to be called, I read the pamphlet on binge-drinking that sits in the waiting room, finding it at times both concerning and comical. "If you're a man, consuming 5 or more drinks in a row one or more times in a 2 week period" and "if you're a woman, 4 or more drinks in a row one or more times in a 2 week period", is what the health center offers as a definition for binge-drinking. What are students who are going out 4 times a week and therefore drinking eight times this amount to do with that definition? And how do they recommend we stop "binge-drinking", you may ask? The pamphlet offers four suggestions: "Avoid drinking games", "slow down", "eat first" and "consider the consequences". "Consider the consequences" is at the forefront of campus efforts to abate binge-drinking, yet this approach significantly disregards the fact that the consequences are not only considered but lived and breathed.

The health center exam room walls were covered in educational posters on cocaine. This decor made more sense to me when I heard the awe emanating from the nurse practitioner after I told her I do not do cocaine. She also revealed that the question on blacking out is, in fact, Trinity specific. It was now undeniably clear that Trinity (or at least the health center) not only knew more about the pervasive blackout and cocaine culture than I had imagined, but that we can better tackle issues of binge-drinking and drug use through a more comprehensive understanding and focus on alcohol and drugs as social products used by students to perform social functions.

Are most students 8 times worse than the average "problem" drinker or does this definition instead reflect the students' collective definition of normal use? Research on substance

use has been limited to "problem" behavior, with little research published on normal use. The "5/4 rule", heavily employed by college campuses, was produced under a problem-oriented approach to substance use that often individualizes the collective experience of binge-drinking through a strictly physiological lens. This definition and its engendered concerns will likely prove remote or extraneous to students when situated within their own lives (in the college setting, and more specifically, Trinity College), ultimately leading students to discount them and continue working within the collective definitions of substance use that their culture actively produces and reproduces.

Discussions on binge-drinking must work both outside and through the associated risks of "binge-drinking", acknowledging students' use of positive reframing and reflected appraisals to actively and collectively confirm these costs to be worthwhile for the emotional or social benefits. "Binge-drinking" cannot simply be recognized as a feature of campus culture, but as the product of a profoundly alienating one, made strikingly evident by our creation of a separate world ("drunk world"). We have created a small world of impossible possibles that exists in the corners of the actual; a separate world, in which the imagining of the self, other, and the world, is not only permissible but promoted. At the heart of college students' "partying hard" is a longing, hope, and dogged determination that the liberating and unifying aspects of this world can overwhelm the actual...and in the meantime we are just glad it helps us endure it.

Literature Review

The scholarship on substance use focuses on 'problem' use under problem-oriented approaches, with college campus efforts at addressing and preventing binge-drinking (and drug) culture centered upon presenting and drilling into students the 'negative' consequences of

"destructive behavior". Thomas Vander Ven and Barrett Seaman assert these frameworks to be incomprehensive as they focus mostly on physical and physiological consequences. Highlighting the social nature of college party culture, they root their work in the examination of the active role students take in its production, demonstrated through a profound ability to positively reframe adverse experiences. Thomas VanderVen identifies college binge-drinking not simply through students' blood alcohol content (BAC), but the entirety of events; starting from students' first thought of drinking, he reveals many latent social aspects of the entire intoxication process (Vander Ven 2011). Barrett Seaman highlights the significant role of the environment in producing the culture of alcohol. He asserts it is not the alcohol in our blood but the social character of these spaces that is the primary source of this "culture of mayhem" (Seaman 2005).

This research uses a symbolic interactionist lens to examine how drinking and drug culture are produced and function at Trinity College, specifically in relation to student identity formation. Collective engagement is a critical component in identity exploration and creation; we must inquire into the kind of identities that are formed when the opportunities for collective engagement are limited to three days centered on binge-drinking and black out-culture. The ability to express one's ideal self (with the idea of alcohol as liquid courage) is relegated to that drunk-world, and therefore, so is the opportunity for identity exploration and creation. Erving Goffman defines impression management as a means of controlling one's presentation of self through a ceaseless process of self-regulation (Goffman 1956). Trinity students possess and wear many masks in an attempt to obscure stigmatizing features, demonstrated through the "work hard, play hard" mentality. This study researches normative substance use and its social nature on the Trinity College campus. Grounded in theoretical analysis, I hope this research leads to the

construction of a more productive approach to addressing and abating college drinking culture and therefore sexual predation.

Methodology

Utilizing a qualitative approach, ethnographic research and secondary scholarly sources act as the basis for this research. I conducted a total of ten in-depth, one on one interviews with Trinity students of varying races, sexualities, and affiliations with organizations. Participants were recruited via word of mouth and snowball sampling, and students were encouraged to stop and ask questions if they were unclear or uncomfortable. I conducted around 75 hours of field observation, in which I attended various types of social events and observed the interactions. I analyzed data from the interviews and field observation theoretically and thematically.

To get a general conception of Trinity culture beyond that of current students, I used various college search websites including *Niche*, *The New York Times*, and *DataUSA*. Secondary scholarly sources were used to examine prior research on the topics of substance use, including problem-oriented and non-problem oriented approaches. I set out to answer four main research questions: (1) Are students creating a distinct drunk world and "intoxicated self" through binge-drinking (and drug) culture at Trinity College? (2) Does the drunk world/self translate to the sober world/self or do these worlds remain independent? (3) Does sense of belonging (as defined by opportunities for collective engagement and attitude towards overall Trinity Culture) affect participation in binge-drinking and drug culture? (4) Is the creation of a distinct, separate "intoxicated self" developed on raced, classed, and gendered lines, and how is this affected by various school policies and cultural norms at Trinity College?

1. A Pervasive Party Culture: Getting Ready, Getting In, Going Out

Trinity College is known as the NESCAC "party school". Established as a "Little Ivy", Trinity is still regarded as a "safety school" for many private or boarding school students who were not accepted by other "elite" schools, such as the Ivy league and higher ranked NESCAC schools. If Trinity did not represent their most "elite" option, students want it to be the most "something" to assuage egos shaken by rejection letters. Bootsy, a straight white male first-year, explains, "people come here because they probably didn't have the best transcripts... either you're going to shoot for like Williams or like Tufts or wherever else…or you're gonna go for Trinity and have a good time and get those connections". The culture of Trinity College has historically been defined in relation to the other "elite" schools, shaped significantly by these students who embody the concession that although they may not be the most "elite", they party the hardest and are the most "fun"; the most "elite" schools are then rendered the most "boring".

As students embark on the college-decision process, they often use websites with information about the college or university provided not only by the school's administrators but by anyone that wants to comment. According to *Niche,* 42% (n=38) reported that at Trinity you will "definitely feel a little awkward if you don't drink" and 35% (n=54) reported that there are "tons of raging parties almost any night of the week". In contrast, 17% (n=18) reported similar feelings of peer pressure at Amherst while 44% (n=18) responded "you can have a great social life without alcohol", compared to 11% (n=38) at Trinity (Niche 2020). For students to "party the hardest" there must not only be access to substances and spaces, but there must be a collective decision to establish this as "common sense" or the "thing to do". Sheila, a straight white first-year female student, describes engagement in party culture as a "whole group consensus...not like peer pressure, but just like it was a group activity". Through processes of

meaning making and maintenance, Trinity's reputation/value as the NESCAC "party school" must be entered into the discourse that defines the college experience at Trinity.

"Coming onto campus my first-year, it was almost like an assault...having drugs so much in front of you", describes Lynn, a straight white senior sorority member at Trinity College. The ubiquitous and offhand nature of substance use is facilitated by the overwhelming access, taking little effort for students who are highly unlikely to face repercussions. Students expressed that it is virtually impossible to go out and not see or be offered alcohol or drugs (especially cocaine), even if they are not expecting, looking for, or wanting them. Alex, a gay sophomore Afro Latinx male, explains, "people here forget how accessible everything is...like coke isn't like me going to this scary guy, it's like me talking to 'Brad' in my econ class." Engaging in substance use at Trinity appears to be significantly more secure for many students than at their homes. Like Alex, they feel there is less risk and fear of punishment, "Coming from New York City...being at home and being in that culture, I get very afraid of the police and getting caught and getting arrested...but when I'm at Trinity, like, I'm not scared at all...I honestly feel very safe here to just, like, do drugs… like, your rooms are literally a trap house, like, you can have as much shit as you want out and know at the end of the day, no one can go into your room unless it's to check...and they tell you."

Of course, not everyone at Trinity College is going to the "the tons of raging parties almost any night of the week", throwing up, blacking out, and drinking until they cannot function, but according to George, a straight white male first-year student, it represents the 'extreme' and there are definitely a lot of people that take part in that 'extreme'. Those that are not in this 'extreme' are still highly engaged in the drinking culture, just in spaces other than the frats where they may not feel as welcome. If you sit in Mather (the dining hall) on a Sunday

morning, it will be easy to see how prevalent party culture is on campus; it is almost rare to hear a conversation that doesn't start with "I blacked out last night" and entail how drunk someone was, how many drugs they did, or who they hooked up with. The heavy drinking culture is "not taboo" at Trinity, says a bisexual Black and/or AfroLatina senior. "Taboo" describes products or practices that deviate from culturally defined normality, whether in excess or dearth, that go unpermitted or undiscussed. If the heavy drinking culture of Trinity is expressed with pride and little shame, or is "not taboo", it signifies that it is either not a deviation from normality or something that we do not associate as aberrant.

"My mom went here, so I always kind of knew, even historically, it has been a big drinking and drugs place...my mom doesn't drink anymore and she attributes that to Trinity and how she basically just became, like, an alcoholic", explains Dawn, a straight white senior sorority member. This fifty to sixty year old mother is still regulating her life around her experience at Trinity, demonstrating that these four years hold the potential to shape your interaction with self, other, and the world in profound ways. Students have expressed significant feelings of shame or regret experienced by themselves and their friends regarding their engagement in party culture; this seems to be suppressed or sublimated, as these discussions are short-lived and/or kept behind closed doors. Do we relegate these feelings of guilt or confusion to private spheres in order to preserve the collective definitions we use to navigate the public sphere? A sociological approach defines drunkenness as an interactional accomplishment and the college drinking experience as a socially acquired taste (Vander Ven 2011). Individuals work together to establish and uphold what is drunk and what is sober; both participants and observers engage in a process of meaning maintenance to preserve the meaning ascribed to alcohol and college-drinking (Vander Ven 2011). Individuals work through networks of collective

understandings that allow us to navigate a social world of our own collaborative construction. What does this world look like and just how pervasive and toxic is our engagement within?

"You Don't Consider Going to Parties Without the Pregame": Getting Ready

The pregame is one of the most significant aspects of the going out experience, not only acting as the impetus for a night of "heavy" drinking but that with whom, how, and where one pregames conveys a lot about one's engagement in party culture, both at Trinity and at large (Gottlieb 1957). Why do we pregame? All participants declared pregaming to be self-evident, embedded into the expectations and demands of the 'going out' experience… "ingrained into my idea of a Trinity weekend night," explains Lynn. Jeanette asserts "you don't consider going to parties without the pregame...when you know you're going to a party, that's just a given, like, the question is, like, 'whose pregame are we going to?'."

This is an important question, as the culture of drugs and alcohol at the pregame highly reflects one's engagement within the larger party scene; those that are doing cocaine at the pregames are likely to be doing cocaine while out. Jeanette describes, "who you pregame with is who you're going to go out and party with, but a lot of times...I know I'm not going to see such a person because we in different social groups, right?...for example, one of my close friends...she's very different from us in terms of social class and experiences, so she also hangs out with other Trinity students that represent that same social class...so, I love her and I want to hangout with her all the time, but we can never party together because when I go to her house for pregames….the people that are in those pregames...we are just not compatible."

Although almost all participants reported being at pregames where they or their friends were not drinking, yet when entering fraternity spaces it was unheard of to see someone without a drink. Gordon illustrates, "you can have someone drink for you and you're generally around

friends, so it's not necessarily a bad thing for you not to drink...but for parties, you would have to be extremely outgoing because that's generally how everybody is". At the pregame, students are not only consumed in games like beer pong, flip cup, slap cup, or king, but conversation. Dawn points out some gendered aspects of the pregame experience, declaring that "the boys always like toss for actually hours to pregame, and like we don't do that...we would literally play like *Cards Against Humanity* or like this new game *For the Girls."* Ruth defines a pregame as "more just like an intimate part...we still have music, but there's just more conversation going on with a smaller group...I feel like frat spaces, it's hard to kind of, like, talk cause it's, like, loud and like, crazy...in the pregame you're typically with closer friends so you're talking about a wide variety of things".

The decision to drink doesn't exactly occur at the pregame, as the interactions are often more intimate and therefore present fewer social barriers that necessitate alcohol to suspend. The pregame demonstrates that we don't exactly need to drink to have fun, but yet it is reportedly where most of the drinking occurs. Why is that? Why is it that students often "get shitfaced before they even leave the pregame," like Jeanette, or like Bootsy, get "mangled within, like, the first hour...I had to get walked home and I went to sleep at, like, ten o'clock."?

The pregame provides the opportunity to ensure adequate 'social lubrication' and facilitate connections, even with those considered close friends, as students are permitted temporary removal from "work mode". Gordon states, "everybody could be alone in their rooms doing homework or napping…but the general consensus is it's much more fun to be together bonding...and then alcohol is a means through which to loosen nerves…lower inhibitions...and that leads to generally fun times." Alcohol is used as a tool to precipitate interaction and exploration through an alteration of environments in which we collectively attribute different

meaning, and therefore a different set of expectations and rules of engagement to these spaces and interactions. Gordon explained, that although he did not drink at the pregame, his friends did as "they needed that social confidence and then you know, they go out and they feel like if they are buzzed they'll have a better time."

Students drink to achieve a level of drunkenness contingent on the anticipated anxiety, expectations, and demands of the forthcoming social events or groups (McAndrew & Edgerton 1969). Jeanette describes, "It depends on the event...there's the moments where I have gotten tipsy when I didn't want to...like, for example, I was drinking with my boss in New York...she's always telling me, like, "when we're out, I'm not your boss...I want you to be comfortable"...and I'd still rather, like, not...I'd like to be as sober as possible, so when I am feeling a little tipsy, I'm, like, embarrassed a little bit...cause I know I can't, like, speak straight so I'm, like, trying to be professional...or not like my college self...or a little more composed". Lynn expresses that at "Psi U it was all, like, dancing and not, like, really talking or anything." If there is less conversation, one is more likely to place significant weight in their every movement or gesture. Phelps proclaims, "to have a good time I'd probably got to be some kind of messed up (laughs)...I got to be a little drunk…so that's really why I drank...just because I was going out on our campus, which I don't appreciate the social scene enough to go out there sober and have a good time.". Both Bootsy and Gordon feel similarly stating, "you gotta already be under the influence by the time you're there...you just, like, figure out excuses to drink more...at the end of the day, you don't want to be by yourself…" and that "I personally wouldn't have a good time if I was fully sober and anxious."

Not only the amount students drink, but what they drink, changes depending on the type of social event they are attending, demonstrating the different expectations and demands

embedded in each space and event. Dawn illustrates, "if I was, like, knowing that I was going out...or let's say it was, like, an AD (Alpha Delta Phi) night, like, I have a friend where we specifically get, like, a chaser and vodka and, like, try to take shots for a little bit and then, like, move on to, like, a *White Claw* or a *Spiked Seltzer* of some sort...but sometimes it will just be like, let's start the night with some wine just to see where the night takes us...it's what everyone always says (laughs), like, I'm just going to ease into it...during a darty, I feel like people get, like, those, like, *Fisher's Islands* or, like, a thing of, like, *Coronas* and then also take shots...people definitely mix alcohol".

Students determine their needed level of intoxication based on their fear of critical evaluation, incited by anticipated events, consuming what they feel is required to "manage" or have a "good time" within the fraternity party scene. Do we really like to "binge-drink" or are there aspects of the Trinity party culture that we are enduring rather than enjoying? If the night started with and ended with the pregame would the result likely be less destructive? After hearing students describe the intimacy and connection experienced in the pregame spaces, you begin to wonder why they ever leave.

Although the pregames have been explicitly stated to be more intimate and fulfilling, they unfortunately prove to be more exclusive than the fraternity scene, mostly due to spatial restrictions. In addition to the fact that dorm rooms or Crescent houses cannot hold a comparable amount of students to fraternities, the idea embedded into our notions that pregaming is only for close friends acts as an obstacle to establishing new connections. Jeanette expresses that "they're definitely divided by class, social status...like, who you are friends with or whether or not you're an athlete...so those don't always feel very welcoming...they're definitely, like, invite only type shit, which, like, I get cause you're in someone's house but also, like, you also feel unwanted in

certain spaces". This implies that students decide to leave the pregames in an attempt to expand connections beyond their close friends; entrance into the party culture provides a bigger stage and a new audience with which to present and explore the self.

"Who's at the Door?": Getting In

You turn the corner after a brisk ten to fifteen minute speed walk against the crisp winds that welcome December. You learned after the first couple of weeks not to wear your favorite shoes and to dress for inside, or you will end up a ball of sweat with wet hair and pit stains or with lost items of clothing you had to jettison to avoid heat exhaustion. You also learn this walk is easier to tolerate with your "drunk blanket" on full force, the point when you have achieved a level of drunkenness that preserves the surge of warmth often felt with the first sip of alcohol. There is a comfort in this warmth, not only physically but emotionally, as you can feel the "liquid courage" coursing through your veins, acting as both shield and weapon against the imminent social barriers.

You are actively hoping that you know one of the brothers working the door, and that they are not one of the new pledges who you probably don't know and will likely give you a hard time. You and your friends look over the crowd of people and speculate about who is at the door. You all begin to think through any encounters you have had with them and start preparing names of brothers you may know. You hope they don't ask any of you to call one of them, because not only do you not have their number but you know that never works, because they are not looking at their phones nor expecting your call. If you know the brothers guarding the door, you'll go directly to the front and immediately be welcomed inside. If you don't, you have to bear the cold and the potential for humiliation that awaits you at the front of the line as the brothers taunt you with access to the fraternity. The only reason you decide to bite the bullet is

because there is no other means to justify to yourself why you would wait in the cold for twenty minutes. "Do you know a brother?", asks the haughty yet shaky pledge. You don't, but you didn't bring any of your guy friends and you decided to show off "the girls" tonight, so they tell your tits, and then you and your friends, that you can go inside. You are...floored?

Who gets in and who does not? What does it take to get in? What are the benefits of getting in? What are the costs of not getting in? The process of "getting in" at fraternities is a critical opportunity for the demonstration, employment, and acquisition of social and cultural capital, occurring on raced, classed, and gendered lines. Social capital, defined by knowing who and knowing how, is represented by the possession of expansive social networks (connections) and social logics acquired through experience that facilitate one's navigation within the social world. George describes, "it was just kind of the same thing of course...kids are like, "who do you know" to get in...so of course, you say people...it's kind of funny, like, you just, like, name names and they're like "okay yeah, you're good". Alex readily demonstrates his possession and employment of social capital, stating, "I feel like I always have an easy time getting into Pike just because I know people...just because I made friends in there." Both the knowledge that one would need a brother's name or phone number, and then to actually possess that information, are forms of social capital.

Cultural capital is defined by the presentation of cultural products or practices that assert one's membership or acceptance in a particular group. One acquires cultural capital when not only possessing, but presenting, hegemonic ways of being and knowing (white cis hetero wealth). 'Getting in' at Trinity is highly dependent on one's cultural fluency and possession of capital; at times, reflected in one's ability to present a bag of cocaine to the bouncer like George describes, "I remember, like, they give you a really hard time to get in, right, and I literally saw

someone give one of the bouncers outside, like, cocaine in a bag...so I kinda just figured, like, that's how you're gonna get into places" or as a "cute little white girl with their blonde hair" as Alex explains. He further illustrates his experience with the process and the capital it requires as he expounds,

> "I won't get into Psi U unless I have, like, a bunch of girls around me...or even if I do have a bunch of girls around me, like, if it's a bunch of Black girls, like, it would definitely just be a group of us, like, just kinda standing there waiting and then you know obviously, like, you know the cute little white girls with their blonde hair they'll skip to the front of the line and they'll just easily just get in and the guys will say, "it's full...it's at its capacity...no one gets out...no one's leaving", but they keep letting people in and then by that point we take the hint and we kind of just leave...so, like, sometimes we don't get into Psi U and it's just, like, it's expected of Psi U almost...but some days we just get in….so it's, like, who's at the door or something like that...maybe I'm supposed to think of it like that, whatever."

The fraternities and sororities are dominated by white students, due to either a lack of applicants or acceptance of Black students and students of other marginalized identities. Dawn, a sorority member, affirms, "they're not a very diverse population so I feel like it's easy to, like, not feel welcome if you're not, like, a white, heterosexual, like, pretty well-off person". A sense of belonging or "feeling welcome" at the fraternity spaces is based on one's ability to 'get in' and who is inside, presenting a greater difficulty for those of marginalized identities. Articulating his frustrations with the party culture at Trinity, Phelps states, "going from Crow to Psi U it's downhill for me anyway...only because I'm less welcome in Psi U, on the grand scale, by the people that just generally go there...especially because I haven't been going there since I was a freshman...the company was not as welcoming to me, like, that's why I was there the shortest amount of time...like, I just don't feel welcome there...I really don't...not just in Psi U but in other frats as well."

As sororities hold little power to throw parties on the campus, it leaves the fraternities in significant control of the campus party culture. Women, specifically first-years, are reported to have the easiest time getting in (besides sorority members) at any fraternity, which leaves everyone a bit curious about how the brothers always seem to know which students those are. Dawn explains her experience with this process, "as a freshman, like, I did not feel welcome...I was, like, scared I wasn't gonna get in all the time and, like, my friends are so pretty, they're gonna get in and I'm not. Like, I was literally, like, I'm not in the Facebook group and they are, like, what do I do? (laughs)...but, like, as a girl you're allowed in at Greek life for sure and as a freshman girl you're almost, like, always allowed in." It is unlikely that these fraternity brothers simply want to welcome these first-year women to campus and show them around, but rather that it is in their favor to have them under a roof of their control.

With men in control of the party spaces, 'getting in' is primarily determined by whether or not you are the currently 'working the door' fraternity brother's type. If you are a male student who is not in a fraternity, 'getting in' may present as a real task, a struggle to preserve one's dignity as the fraternity brothers make ceaseless attempts to emasculate and exclude them. Dawn states, "it's especially imperative for guys to be in Greek life if they want to get in and have, like, a night life in Greek life, kind of, otherwise you're going to have a harder time, like, getting your foot in the door and therefore making friends and making connections within...being able to get in whenever and having someone's number to text if there's, like, a line". Joining a fraternity or sorority proves to be vital for men and extremely helpful for women who are no longer first-years.

Membership in Greek life organizations provides one with sufficient means to attain cultural and social capital, ensuring a night life through guaranteed access to party scenes and

forms of friendship that are less accessible in Trinity's "sober world". Dawn describes, "after

joining Ivy I did not feel that way at all…like, I felt like I've said before, like...the Hall gates,

like, swung open once I was in Ivy (laughs) and I was, like, what hell…like, that is, like, so

insane cause before I was, like, begging...you know what I mean, like, in the line and shit

(laughs)...and I feel like it's, like, if you're in Greek life you're kind of allowed in". She further

highlights that although Greek life can provide access to a night life for male students, it often

only provides access to the fraternity they decide to join, "a lot of the time it's, like, the single

fact that someone is in AD or the Hall means that they can't, like, go inside of Psi U. It's weird,

like, it eliminates a lot of people from nightlife."

"What's the move?": Going Out

Fraternities are the production of a culture of cis hetero masculine white wealth, with

one's position in that culture likely to determine the level and shape of their engagement.

Jeanette explains that "definitely being part of Greek life and, like, a sports team, um...changes

the way you party...and I think that's where the party scene is facilitated". Alex characterizes the

general fraternity scene as a "popularity contest...based on how pretty you are and who you

know". Jeanette describes her experience as a bisexual Black and/or AfroLatina,

> "my experience has always been really awkward cause, like, people don't really engage
> with me at the frats or at The Tap...I feel like white men or frat brothers specifically, even
> if you're not white, are intimidated by, like, the city Black women here…whether it's my
> hair, it's the way I dress, or the way that I carry myself that is, like, different...they're not
> used to seeing our kind of women...so they don't know how to socialize with us and so,
> like, the way that they would try to get with us at that party...I'm, like, 'oh no, no way'."

The upstairs of the fraternities have been collectively defined as the permissible locations to do

drugs, especially harder drugs like cocaine. Lynn, a sorority member, describes "if people are

smoking weed, they're not smoking weed, like, at Greek life parties...it's more like a relax or

after party drug...like, just chillin in your dorm room, not trying to rage or "rip it"...people will tell you that they're on acid...molly...shrooms...all sorts of drugs". Possessing knowledge of, and access to, the upstairs, often guarded by a visibly worn down pledge, are additional forms of social and cultural capital.

None of the fraternities at Trinity are immune to this culture of white wealth, as those within work collectively to define their culture through a resistance to or an embodiment of it, rendering each of these spaces culturally unique. Alex supports this idea as he asserts, "I feel like it is a different vibe at all these places". This is affirmed by Ruth's observation, "from, like, what I've seen, Psi U, AD, and Hall, are, like, similar...and then Pike, only cause I've been there a few times, I feel was just, like, a completely different type of crowd, like, the people I see there, I never see, like, at the Hall...I'm sure there are some." The Hall is the coed fraternity. Beyond their castle-like structures, eating club, and Ogilby (the residence where many of the members live), Hall members are most well known for being a "source of a lot of wealth", Alex proclaims, and this is represented within these structures and those that inhabit them. When the Hall is open, students wait behind a large iron gate to be permitted access to the fortress. This gate is a physical manifestation of the barrier that disconnects these two worlds. It acts as the arbiter to a world we have collectively defined as "freeing", yet as we enter we are flooded with antithetical feelings of gratitude and derision. We extend our thank yous, while we are simultaneously struck with a desire to spit at the gatekeepers and to hit ourselves; this act of permittance, while granting access, recalls the initial prohibition. Psi U, as stated earlier, is known for letting in a predominance of first-year women rendering the dominant energy to be "a lot of frat brothers trying to, like, fuck, like, a lot of people in there so, like, it definitely feels like that" Jeanette explains.

Pike and Crow are characterized as the "friendlier" frats, described as spaces in which students report feeling more welcome and less threatened (regarding both getting in and when inside). Alex states, "I don't feel like there is, like, any pervasive type of energy there". They are also the fraternities with the most Black and Brown members, with Crow (known as the "football frat") having the greatest number. It does not strike as a coincidence that the more rapey and racist fraternities are the more white; or that the more welcoming fraternities are the least white, as they are further removed from the dominant culture of white wealth and/or are making more of an effort to resist it. It does not strike as a coincidence that the least white are also the most controlled and heavily sanctioned, not only by Trinity College Campus Safety but also the Hartford Police, as reflected in my conversation with George,

> George: "The first thing we did, we went to Crow...there were police outside so no one was going in…"
> Me: "How often does that happen?"
> George: "Almost every time cause, like, Crow is off campus, right...so cops are always there...always there…"
> Me: "Right, but other places are also off campus."
> George: "Oh, really? I don't know why Crow is...well isn't Pike kind of like on campus and Psi U?"
> Me: "They might still be technically off campus housing...but also, isn't, like, Kappa Sig on the same street?"
> George: "Yeah, they're on Allen...that's true...that's true...so I don't know, it's weird, but Crow is always having issues...which sucks, because Crow, I think, is one of the best fraternities...they're all great guys and never you see a guy trying to pull anything over on a girl, or something like that."

Overall discussions on college-drinking and my research reveal an intense persistence in engagement in the party culture among college students, even after repeated encounters with alcohol that have been embarrassing, violent, or dangerous in nature (Vander Ven 2011). Students have asserted that concerns or deviations from the enjoyment ascribed to alcohol are often left in the private realm and dismissed in the public. When expressed, individuals are often

met with positive reflected appraisals like "no, you were fine" or " not at all, you were hilarious",

and enabled by a lack of consequences or negative appraisals (Vander Ven 2011). As their

concerns repeatedly go unvalidated or unaffirmed, individuals ultimately assume the aloof

disposition emanating from those around them as they begin to question and undermine their

instinctive response. The suppression and transformation of concerns may be a strategy used to

maintain the existence and function of "drunk world"; the guilt or shame experienced or

witnessed during a night out are produced as worthwhile when no other means for expression or

exploration of self, other, and world is possessed.

Therefore, the tenacity of engagement cannot be solely characterized as a denial but also

a redefinition, understood through significant processes of meaning making and maintenance that

are demonstrated in the use of positive reflected appraisals. Positive reflected appraisals function

to positively reframe cultural products or practices that are normatively defined negatively

(Vander Ven 2011). Not only does this further promote the idea that the emotional, physical,

and social costs incurred are worthwhile, but it redefines these costs as benefits. As a senior and

member of a sorority, Lynn reflects, "I've aimed to stop binge-drinking specifically this year and

I don't think a lot of students that I'm around aim to slow down...I don't think people see it as an

issue and it might not be an issue for them, but I definitely see it causing issues in my friends

lives even if they don't". Phelps affirms Lynn's concerns as he describes, "you sleep all day and

miss classes...like, you talk like you care but literally can't bring yourself to do it and like, you

really have issues...I'm close with these people to the point I know what they're doing, it's not

like any other actions are impeding on their success besides this...like me waking up at three

o'clock in the morning to a common room full of people doing coke...is like what...y'all should

be asleep right now, like, come on...like, for real?...some people are really having issues and

don't want to blame it on the drugs they're doing all the time...like, they're really struggling and don't know why...people just need to self reflect." An individual's engagement with cultural products or practices formerly identified as ill-advised are rationalized through collective engagement. Establishing a ubiquitous nature of engagement that distances the products or practices from normative notions of deviance, Dawn expresses, "I still think that people get here and are like "no I'm not going to do that" and as you get older it's like "I'm doing that"...it's like I won't get it myself or it's like if I share, like, these drugs with someone it's, like, fine and then it's, like, eventually you're, like, alright I'm getting it myself" (Cavan 1966).

Howard Becker is a radical constructivist from the Chicago tradition of sociological thought. Through a dissociation from the morality ascribed to social practices, he centers his work upon an analysis and assertion of the collective production of social rules, "deviance", and social phenomena (Becker 1963). Becker stresses the crucial nature of the removal of judgement in the understanding and evaluation of social practices, as he investigates who makes the social rules and definitions, and how, when, and why they are enforced. He highlights the collective nature of society through which individuals undergo ceaseless processes of self-regulation as they enter "worlds" of collaborative meaning making and maintenance. The meanings ascribed to cultural products and practices normatively conceived as inherently "bad" prove to be arbitrary and unstable as they take on completely distinct meanings and values under varying contexts (Becker 1963). This demonstrates cultural practices and products to be defined by the culture of the spaces (and the individuals within), with social rules working through and not over us.

The meanings assigned to these cultural products or practices (representing ways of knowing and being) are redefined within party culture, no longer characterized as unthinkable,

impractical and immoral (Cavan 1966). Under this redefinition, cultural practices and products that are normatively recognized as embarrassing, shameful, and private are not exactly attributed meanings of positivity, but permissibility into the public sphere (Cavan 1966). Although "*wetting the bed*" was a problem most no longer have to face after the age of 4, under the context of Trinity party culture it is not only accepted and understood, but a frequent occurrence likely correlated with the blackout culture. Bootsy describes, "another friend got really blacked...it turns out he, like, peed in the middle of the hallway or something and the RA found him and now there's a whole can of worms he's gotta deal with...I don't know...probably slap him with some housing probation or what not and send him on his way" and Dawn adds, "I have friends who have blacked out...and I know guys black out a lot, because a lot of them I know, like, pee the beds, like...a lot...like, I've never experienced that personally or having had a guy do that in my bed or something, but I know a lot of my friends have had that...and in the recent past too, so it's still happening." Vomiting is usually a very private act, with some individuals even uncomfortable throwing up in front of their close friends or loved ones, yet under the context of party culture this act is turned public and becomes a cause for support.

Students report increased occurrences of verbal or physical fights, self-inflicted injury, damage to property often met with bills from residential life, missed classes, and other actions one most likely would not have experienced in the everyday context of the "sober world" (Cavan 1966). Gordon observes, "there have been a few minor injuries...I would say that's relatively normal......I've seen one random girl get transported off the porch before...that's the ambulance comes...picks her up...I've seen some people that probably should've been transported, that haven't been...but I've really only had one friend who's been in a situation like that...other than that it's just like minor bruises...scratches". Lynn describes the impact of frequent engagement

on her fellow students, "it definitely affects how you feel, being hungover all the time, and I've seen it affect my friends, like, mental health...just, like, being out until six am drinking and then waking up the next morning and just feeling awful and just the way their next week starts...also sexual assault...you blackout and like bad things can happen and I've seen that on campus...like, little destructive behavior like saying things you don't mean to people...you see, like, people getting in fights and shit getting closed down".

The drinking behavior of students is regulated around the anticipated and accepted consequences, as Lynn explains, "I planned, like, in terms of my hangover for what I had to do the next day" and Jeanette states, "I'm strategic about when I decide to drink a certain amount, what it's going to cause me, like, am I going to be, like, hungover?... cause that will keep me in bed until 12". This is also demonstrated in the established avoidance of Friday classes as Thursday proves to be a popular night for partying, decreasing the potential for risk. It is also common to see students mixing their alcohol with Pedialyte or Gatorade, in order to proactively replenish their electrolytes and avert the anticipated hangover.

The destructive nature of the party scene is the main focus of school efforts at combating "binge-drinking". The "collateral damage" or the emotional, physical, and social consequences that "come with the territory" (the prevalence of blacking out and cocaine use), are products of a party culture dominated by white hetero masculine white wealth (Alexander 2008). Sheila, quickly learned, as a first-year, "if you're not blacking out you're not having fun" and sophomore fraternity member Gordon asserts, "common views on blacking out are "it happens"...usually it's not great for most people because it results in quite a bit of vomiting...fortunately, I can say that's not the same for me...but generally it's seen as very normal". Ruth affirms this as she describes, "it's always like "ahh, I blacked out last night!" or

like, "ahh let's black tonight"...like, afterwards when someone blacks out they're like, "ugh,

what did I do?"...like, some people kind of freak out about it and some people are like, ehh "it

happens"...but I feel like it's incredibly common. like, when people go out."

Phelps, a junior, has blacked out a few times during his Trinity experience, which seems

relatively low among his peers. He finds that "people do it just to see who can do it...like, see

who could get the most messed up by the end of the night without blacking out and everyone

winds up blacking out…really just go hard for it, like, do more than the usual...consciously...but

it becomes, like, habit...easy to do." Never having been drunk and therefore blackout, George

shares his opinion on what he perceives the function of blacking out to be on Trinity's campus

explaining, "they use it as an excuse for actions they did the night before, like "oh I don't know

bro, I was blacked out"...or someone will say, like, "oh you got with the ugly girl or whatever"

and they'll be like "oh I was blacked out, give me a break"...or, like, you got in a fight with this

person, "oh l blacked out"...like, it doesn't matter". Gordon reports blacking out around once

every week to once every two weeks, and as of "more recently...been trying not to". He depicts

his first experience with blacking out at Trinity,

> "The first time it happened, I was, like, really worried I had, like, done something bad...I
> started texting friends, "oh, do you have any pictures of me?", "what did I do last
> night?"...um, but...both fortunately and unfortunately, as it started to happen more and
> more last year, I got more accustomed to it…so I started trusting my blackout self...in
> that I knew that I wouldn't do anything bad, because I still...from experience, I knew that
> I would still hold my morals true despite not being able to remember anything...and
> eventually, after a couple times, I was just kind of like, "okay, this happened...I'm pretty
> sure I had fun, so I guess I had fun".

This demonstrates the explicit manifestation and rationalization of the separate, "intoxicated

self". Gordon describes the production, detachment, understanding, and trust associated with a

drunk alter ego, the construction of which has become so normalized that naming one's is

expected (mine is Lonnie). There is a confidence in this drunk alter ego, as it is recognized to be

a freer or more genuine self than that presented in the 'sober world' intensified through experience. There is a relationship developed with one's blackout self, as an internal trust is established through experiences of reassurance that one acted in accordance with the rules of the "drunk world" and/or morals of the sober self. This process of rationalization mitigates the potential for repercussions upon reentrance into "sober world".

Not all students find blacking out to be encouraged or accepted within their friend groups, which highlights the significant raced, classed, and gendered aspects of this experience. Bootsy claims " I've never met someone that's blacked out and was like, "man that was sick, I want to do that again"...they're always remorseful about it." He describes his friend who vocalized his concerns after an adverse experience, "one of my friends blacked out and walked around Hartford without his shoes on and he came back, like, 'I need to stop doing this so much'...he was, like, a perfect example of someone who realizes what they're doing is unsustainable and they wanna nip it in the bud". Dawn, a senior sorority member, highlights some gendered aspects of going out, as she asserts,

> "I think it is, like, very prevalent for the guys, like, I think guys are blacking out almost every time they go out...I think it's pretty, like, normalized for them and also I feel like on Sundays, they literally, like, just take a bar if they are anxious and just, like, melt away that day...I've never heard of one of my guy friends having a panic attack on a Sunday because of their behavior they found out about the night before...whereas, at least the girls I surround myself with, like, we recall what happened during the night and if someone doesn't they're, like, not okay the next morning and are, like, crying about it because, like, it's that rare...and it's obviously anxiety provoking, especially if you, like, got with someone or something and don't remember anything...if a girl finds out they did something, like, bizarre the night before, it's, like, not something that's funny to them...it's, like, "oh my god, I'm not okay with that information".

Students report feelings of regret after blacking out, yet these are often fleetingly expressed as the experience is highly encouraged by other students that act as "co-conspirators" through the use of positive reflected appraisals (Vander Ven 2011). Sheila describes, "in terms of

frequency...pretty frequent, probably, like, twice a week and in relation to, like, my peers that's pretty average, at least in the first-year class...I usually don't regret it, but I also do wish I could remember, like, I immediately...like, the party probably would've been more fun if I could think about these memories." Blacking out should not be considered an individual struggle but a collective one, as blacking out is encouraged and sustained through processes of normalization and rationalization that have been embedded into the expectations and demands of Trinity party culture.

The Hall holds the renowned "coke room"; although students quickly learn of its presence, they discover that access to it requires a certain amount of social and cultural capital. The prevalence of cocaine use is one of the most significant raced and classed aspects of the party culture at Trinity. Dawn illustrates the historical and eminent nature of cocaine use, stating, "before I even got here I knew that, like, cocaine was a big thing here... literally on *Niche.com* it's, like, "list four words to describe Trinity"...and it's, like, "cocaine"...I have, like, one friend who swears she has never done coke before and that's, like, it, at Trinity...I know that the guys do a lot more than the girls do, just because I think there's also kind of, like, a masculinity situation going on (laughs)...and, like, especially now that the frats aren't open it's less, like, speed and more, like, Xanax". This implies cocaine use is imbued within the expectations and demands of fraternity spaces. Alex states, "it's not even like "what the fuck, I just saw coke?" but, like, yep I just saw coke…" There is an association of different drugs with different environments, reflected in the heightened use of Xanax after the recent closures of the fraternities .

It is common to hear Trinity students that do cocaine reporting they feel virtually no effect. So, why is cocaine so prevalent in Trinity's party scene? Cocaine use has been defined not

only as a strategy to mitigate blacking out (in hopes that it will counter the depressant effects of alcohol), but as a tool for both connection ("a conversation piece") and the demonstration of status or membership. Individuals are made to express their status or membership non-verbally in this increasingly alienated community. Cocaine is a "conversation piece" for a very particular group (the white and wealthy) attempting to express something specific (white wealth). This type of engagement in Trinity party culture is a form of *expression*, attempting to give the *impression* of a certain level of status associated with particular identities (Goffman 1956). Phelps, a Jamaican and Afro Cuban student, describes the students he considers most engaged with cocaine use at Trinity College, "it wasn't necessarily the people who have experiences like me that were doing the coke...you know, the people that fit into that scene of, like, the Psi U and places like that...those were the people that were doing the coke...that's not a thing I would ever even try, but I am around that 24/7, being that I'm associated with such people." Alex further illustrates the explicit raced, classed, and gendered aspects of cocaine use at Trinity College, explaining,

> "I come into a certain vision of coke, like, for me coke is like a white drug...automatically in my head I'm, like, "I'm never doing coke" and that's, like, the exact thought amongst, like, everyone in, like, the Black community...well here at Trinity anyway ,that I'm friends with, like, we all are just, like, 'ew, we would never do coke'...it's almost very taboo for us to, like, do coke and be of color...I almost don't want to do it, not I don't even want to try it, but, it's just, like, the fact is that whenever I am at those pregames it's a certain type of individual...it's, like, you know someone that is usually, like, white...usually I see more guys here do coke than girls, but I've definitely seen girls here do coke. But, like, you know, it's definitely, like, a certain culture and a certain vibe that I don't think I'm in tune with…because, like, coke is expensive too, like, I don't got time to, like, buy coke. So it's just, like, yeah, like, it's definitely, like, a certain type of culture, it's definitely, like, a fratty type of guy so it's, like, I just kind of avoid it and, like, hence those people are avoided with it, so yeah…I just wish more people understood, like, how racial it is, like, coke is so white and, like, crack...crack is the same thing...it's literally crack. But, it's like, you know, crack

> is so racial and, like, even when I say it, like, I think, like, a whole crack epidemic, like, I think of, like, Black communities...so it's, like, you know it's such a racialized thing so, like, for me it's, like, a lot of these people don't even see how they would have stigmatized their own selves in the whole process".

Dominated by this culture of white wealth, Black students and students of marginalized identities are more likely to limit their engagement within these fraternity spaces, often finding or creating alternative nightlife options in which the interactions, music, dancing, and substance use behavior are further removed from this culture. Phelps often does not attend the fraternity parties at Trinity or leaves early. He explains, "every place I went to, I was in the minority being Black...the music wasn't necessarily the music I'm accustomed to or appreciate like that...and even the party atmosphere was that of just standing around drinking or people asking you to go do drugs somewhere else...it's just that all of the time...I get tired of it fast…I'm not surprised to go out and have a bad time...I'll go to the party above Mather, which was more my scene cause they welcome other schools". Jeanette illustrates her experiences strategically navigating the Trinity party scene,

> "the parties that we...when I say we, again, I mean like Black and AfroLatina and Caribbean students from, like, New York City or even some from Mass., like, those large cities...we are familiar with parties from where we are from and those are, like, Caribbean music...hip hop...that's a huge part of our party culture and that influences the way that we dance, so...we know that and we know our parties have DJs and we know that DJ plays that kind of music...we will then only go to particular events...if there's an off campus party and, like, DJ Trouble Kidd is playing...and particular events the CSA (Caribbean Students' Association) and TCBWO (Trinity College Black Women's Organization) or these multicultural orgs. will throw parties....so we make very specific decisions throughout the semester...like, we know that these days, that these are the kind of parties we are going to...if it's off campus, I never drink and I'm, like, completely sober...also cause, like, the type of culture...dancing culture it is, I don't feel the need to be drunk...it's just hard to dance Caribbean music when you're drunk...you have no balance...we don't necessarily talk at our parties but the music is different, so you don't need to talk...and we are laughing".

Maybe the excess or the 'collateral damage' is a product of the alienation and deprivation of the "sober world" (Alexander 2008). Maybe Black and Brown students, or those of other marginalized identities, have established more genuine relationships or networks of solidarity in the face of this alienation and deprivation. Maybe they are therefore less likely to develop a unique "intoxicated self", rendering the self they desire to present and that which they do present to be more aligned. Maybe there is less of a desire or need to enter a separate world, especially one dominated by white wealth, in which they are more vulnerable to the sanctions established under school policies regarding various aspects of party culture. Maybe these students have concluded that the costs of engagement outweigh the benefits, unlike many of the white students whose cost-benefit analysis still leaves them finding it to be worth the "endurance". Alex expresses,

> "People who come to Trinity who have access and privilege, who are allowed to just get fucked up, like, they take this as, like, their crash course of just, like, 'well I'm free, like, these are my college years...these are my years to, like, you know get fucked up...and, like, for me to talk about it to my kids'...but for me, like, this is me going to college for the first time...like, yeah I can get fucked up to a certain extent, but also, like, in the back of my mind I also have to think about a lot of the responsibilities I have...but, like, a lot of these kids, like, they know their parents did coke and they're just, like, fuck it if my fucking dad did coke for four years and went crazy and now he's a super serious business man who works on Wall Street, like, it's...it is a thing...it's a very racial thing and I only see it as a racial thing...for me, like, there are only certain communities that do certain things".

2. The Long Walk of Alienation: Why We Need to Create and Enter a "Drunk World"

Although our engagement within this party culture principally appears enthusiastic, students have actually expressed a significant level of endurement. We endure constant

confrontations with difficult mornings as we weather through headaches, churning stomachs, soiled sheets, bruised bodies, blackouts, and payments due from not only residential life but the hospital. We are swarmed and clouded with confusion and regret...with a contrition demonstrated to only be appropriate in the private realm and lacking permittance in the public. Feelings of shame remain, dispersed to the corners of your mind or suffocated within short-lived interactions, ultimately suppressed or surrendered to silence or the positive reflected appraisals of your peers. We "endure" even though we express a cultivation of a separate self and world, ceaselessly navigating the two (or more) produced. We "endure" even though one is clearly permitted an unparalleled freedom of movement within self, other, and the world. The notion that we "endure" implies that although these interactions are most definitely meaningful (in the signifying sense), they may be less fulfilling than they are informative. Recognition of the party culture as the only option fails to recognize our own agency in the meaning making of interaction within Trinity at large.

What drives the creation of this other world and self? The appeal of college-drinking resides in the suspension of social barriers and a freedom from critical evaluation that allows for the opportunity for identity exploration and collective social interaction and social support that is often inaccessible in an increasingly individualized society. "Modern culture promotes heavy drinking not only to alleviate the worry and tension that the culture itself generates, but also because the culture lacks alternative resources to help individuals handle these emotions" (Freed 2010:4). This is especially characteristic of places like Trinity that are highly concentrated in white wealth, as Alex states, "people know it's not good for you, like, people know it's dangerous for you but, like, these are things people fought for because, like, it just took their mind off the everyday bullshit". The "drunk world" is a product of the alienation and

disconnection of the "sober world", feeling one is "*in* the society and not *of* it" (Merton 1939:677). Substance use acts as a "substitute for membership and personal meaning in a "globalizing free market society" that prizes productivity, competition, and status (Freed 2010:4). Sociologist Seldon Bacon highlights normative substance as a product of the alienation experienced under individualism, competition, and stratification. He asserts societal conditions as a primary agent in the structuring of social interaction and therefore substance use, which is overlooked by problem-oriented approaches that often individualize this collective experience (Bacon 1943).

The "intoxicated self" is not immune to the social world, as it is produced and reproduced through normalized expectations for drinking. Discourses of deviance create bodies of knowledge that construct our conception of who and what is pathologic or immoral, regulating our behavior around such definition. Vander Ven examines the production of the "intoxicated self" through discourses of college drinking. Institutions act as legitimizing mechanisms, in which discourses bring subjects (like the "intoxicated self") into existence through an alignment of ideas and practices upheld under regimes of truth contingent on time and space. Although one may feel more liberation of the self when interacting with alcohol, there is still an established social logic of drunkenness that one must navigate to achieve interactional accomplishment. The dominant response when someone is asked why they drink is that "it is fun." It is important that we object to claims that "fun" is intrinsic to the consumption of alcohol. Alcohol needs to be understood as a cultural or social product, with college-drinking and its associated pleasurable effects as a collaborative and socially learned process (Becker 1954). College-drinking requires everyone to produce and reproduce the meaning, or the "fun," it has been ascribed under a defined set of rules, with a collective understanding necessary for this meaning to manifest in the

material and social world. "To say that college drinking with friends is fun, then, does not quite do justice to the constellation of rewards that college alcohol users experience" (Vander Ven 2011:6).

Individuals try to understand and redefine their interactions with drinking through shared bodies of knowledge produced under Trinity College culture. They attempt to view their experiences through a favorable lens so as to align the events with the culturally learned pleasurable effects of alcohol (Becker 1954). "Inexperienced users would not continue to use marijuana did they did not learn to reframe some of the unpleasant aspects of the marijuana high in favorable ways" (Vander Ven 2011:7). Individuals must understand the social rules surrounding alcohol and party culture in order to navigate and regulate their interactions within it. Similarly to Becker's "Becoming a Marihuana User", these social rules will generate a body of knowledge around the college drinking process, including the technique (what and how much to drink), the effects to associate with the activity (loudness, sociality, courage, power), and the pleasure or enjoyment from these effects ("fun", freeing).

Individuals observe others' interactions with this cultural product or practice, ascertaining what is meant to be felt or done when using x amount of a substance and calculating their ensuing actions around it. These social rules shape one's experience with alcohol and the construction of one's "intoxicated" self will be applied on raced, classed, and gendered lines. Discussions on substance use are predominantly limited to how the substance works through the body physiologically rather than socially, rarely examining aspects of engagement with products or practices as culturally specific. This often applies a definition of substance use created for and by a different (or specific) group, leading it to lose relevance in our actual experience and therefore efficacy in shaping it. "Social learning, social setting, and alienation, then are as

relevant to the problem drinking and problem drug use as biological vulnerability" (Freed 2010:9).

Experimentation and Expression of the Self

The use of alcohol as "liquid courage" reveals a fear of the presentation or experimentation of self, functioning to suspend social barriers engendered by an everyday culture of alienation (Goffman 1956). Trinity students "partying hard" is a reflection of the level of alienation and disconnection experienced in the "sober world". Why have we failed to ask what barriers are present in everyday life that impede this expression and exploration? There are insecurities produced and reproduced in our interactions with self, other, and world, that we attempt to diminish through the consumption of alcohol. Bootsy details his experience with alcohol and weed, "you feel less inhibited and that's something that really is probably the best thing about it...like everyone has insecurities and sometimes it's good to just be, like, "fuck it, I don't really care" and it's hard to just say "fuck it", so sometimes you need assistance with that..."I think I started burning before I started drinking...just because I feel like I'm in more control that way...with drinking, I feel like I make way more mistakes". Many students reported that drinking significantly reduces their social anxiety, like Gordan who states, " it feels kind of….not like freedom, but like it's a freeing feeling...it feels like I can do more things without constantly worrying about my self-image or what I'm doing exactly. "

Conceptually embedded into the college experience, alcohol functions as a gateway for communication and experimentation, naturalized as a rite of passage or cultural mandate; "substance use is woven into the very fabrics of society" (Marshall 1979:3). George states, "you need to have a drink to be considered social...or else people will literally look at you like an outcast or that you're trying to be better than them...it's almost like people are forced into

drinking just to be considered normal in today's society". Bootsy, a white male first-year, describes heightened means and modes for experimentation imbued into the party culture of college, "coming to college it's, like, you're in a more sustained environment...kids come here and they're, like, 'oh, I don't have to be around parents, so I can just do whatever I want now' and that kind of bites people in the ass, but it also enables a lot of people so they want to experiment more...in some ways it's bad because you could become reliant on these things, and in other ways it's like you could figure out that you don't like this, and it's a good way to knock it out and just have that perspective and just be like 'yeah it's not for me'."

The meanings ascribed to alcohol and college drinking transform social relations that produce or permit the presentation of a less disciplined and demanding self, free from anxieties and expectations (Seaman 2005). George, who doesn't drink very much or very often in relation to his peers explains, "for most people it's freeing in a way...because they almost aren't in control and responsible for their actions, so it's like they're unleashing their true self". Dawn, a white senior sorority member, supports this notion of feeling 'unleashed' stating "when you're drunk it's like you're just more able to be your full self, I guess...in front of people you wouldn't necessarily feel comfortable doing so being sober...it kind of makes you, like, more energetic in a way, like, for a period of time...obviously it's a depressant so it does make you fade off eventually, but I think at the beginning it sort of instills, like, an excitement and makes people very jumpy and talkative… just wanting to have a good time and, like, louder than I would be."

Sheila, Ruth, and Lynn each affirm that drinking drives them be louder, more outgoing, and more talkative in a way that helps them to connect in social groups, with Ruth saying "it makes everything like laid back cause there is so much going on, it's kind of, like, overwhelming". Additionally, students reported the use of alcohol as a tool to escape the

everyday stresses of sober world, with Phelps explaining, "it just relieves any anxiety or stress or, like, anything that the atmosphere of Trinity could bring your way" and Dawn declaring "to take the edge off...even if there isn't an edge".

Alcohol creates a separate and unique world, the "drunk world", in which one deploys a separate and unique self, the "intoxicated self" (Vander Ven 2011). "They see in the substance the ability to accomplish what they need or want but can't do on their own", that which presents as unachievable or unknowable in the sober world and self (Peele 1989:158). Jeanette illustrates alcohol's role in lowering fears of critical evaluation stating, "I love drunk conversations...those are the best when you're just like...you don't feel judged and everyone is so...like, I'm already very open, so I love that this drink is allowing the other person to be just as open as I am...and I'm like, damn, you're sharing a lot with me right now, like, this is fire.." Common sayings like "the drunk you is the real you" and "drunk words are sober truths," acknowledge a level of authenticity in "drunk world" that is inaccessible in "sober world". Statements like these, reflect the construction and conception of distinct selves produced through the college-drinking experience. College drinkers report temporarily transforming into a different kind of person, one they identify as a more genuine presentation of the self as they are permitted to behave more freely (Vander Ven 2011).

Goffman defines dramaturgy as the way one presents themselves to others (the audience) and works to manage this presentation and its impression through processes of self-regulation(Goffman 1956). We want to gather information about an individual to better define the situation in which we find ourselves. But why do we need to define the situation? Why do we need to anticipate the performance? Is it an attempt to perfect the performance as a means to avoid discomfort or embarrassment? Why do we want to experience life through the anticipation

and performance of desired responses? If we continue down this path our world will become so predictable and static, our movement within will cease. One's purpose will be centered around the successful completion of the desired expectations of others, in which one's livelihood or agency is reduced to pulling from a set of rehearsed lines.

One could argue that knowing the set list of choices (expectations for behavior) and deciding how to navigate it is a form of agency, yet this dismisses the fact that the choices are preset. They are not really choices, as one lacks access to alternative ways of being and knowing. The truthhood we embed into the ideas that we use to appraise a situation and gather information on the individual is almost what maintains our need to define it. If there were nothing telling us who one is and what to do, we would not be as inclined to presumptively define each situation. "The drunken - less inhibited- self is less vigilant about controlling impulses in order to manage its conduct in public" (Vander Ven 2011:55). If one spends less time and energy absorbing and interpreting the information received from the environment and those within, they may be likely to do less performing and more living, moving in a way they were never able to before.

As the opportunity to engage in collaborative social processes continues to diminish with technological advancements and ideologies that promote individualism, one is more inclined to engage in collective social drinking (Seaman 2005). There is a general desire to engage in activities collectively, and we have structured a social world in which drinking is one of the few opportunities at our immediate disposal (at least conceptually). There is a heightened fear of missing out ('FOMO') on these collective social events regardless of their frequency. "Missing out" could mean missing out on vital information, about who and how to be, that could be used to promote a sense of belonging in the "sober world".

Bootsy illustrates his feelings of 'FOMO' and alienation explaining, "you're usually like "hey, what's the move tonight"....you wanna know what's going on...usually by around eight o'clock you're like, where are my friends at?. let's figure out what to do cause I don't want to be myself, cause no one wants to be by themselves...feeling alone can feel like you're by yourself somewhere even when you're around people". Jeanette adds, " I wouldn't necessarily say there is a pressure to do it like...some people may feel like there is a pressure cause they feel like left out but I think there is enough people that don't engage in that particular form of socializing that if you don't like to party, you can still find your group and you can still find fun ways to like enjoy yourself here".

Is this "intoxicated self" a totally separate and unique self, or is it simply an exposed or "freer" self that is customarily cloaked by the normative standards established in everyday life? This begs the question of what self is being presented in everyday interaction? Does this unfettered self only exist in "drunk world" or is that just the only place we find it to be accessible? Actions of the "drunk world" are expressions of the culture in which they were produced, appearing as the breath or space between words of the "sober" world. "Drunk world" signifies an entrance into a world in which words (and the self they represent) previously left unspoken in "sober world", are not only given a language but the ability to move in an unrestricted manner.

I question whether the "intoxicated self" is as free a self as we believe, or if it is simply another mask we pull from our infinite collection and don for a particular interaction. Does alcohol allow others and even ourselves access to our backstage, rendering our backstage to be the performance? Or are we stepping upon a less frequented and more exclusive stage in front of a slightly less demanding audience? Although alcohol leads to feelings of liberation in one's

movement within self, other, and world, it is still produced and presented through a set of normative expectations and anxieties specific to the culture, in this case the college-drinking experience at Trinity.

Individuals are still dependent on others to navigate and regulate their interactions with alcohol, constantly evaluating their own drunken performance in relation to others and the discourse on college-drinking. "Self, then, is a mechanism of social control because it 'struggles endlessly to come off positively within the dramatic situations that make up life'" (Vander Ven 2011:55). Jeanette illustrates, "If I'm drunk off liquor and I'm, like, in public and we're, like, outside on the party scene now, like, traveling to wherever we're going, I try to look more composed because I know I'm drunk and I don't want that to be the perception of me by, like, sober people...which is weird, cause it was my decision but...there are people who judge me, like, so much on how I look...they assume I'm that girl that just wants to, like, display that they're drunk so I'm thinking a lot in my head and I'm trying to control how I move." She continues to highlight her insights on the "intoxicated self", gained through her experiences,

> Jeanette: "just, like, personal preference and experience...just analyzing the way I socialize...like, I pride myself on being very mindful and, like, reflective so...I don't like to be vulnerable...I don't think anyone does, but I'm mindful about what it looks like on me to be vulnerable".
> Me: "It's interesting what you said about vulnerability because most people use alcohol as, like, a tool to feel, like, less vulnerable but you're almost trying to, like, embrace that vulnerability you feel on the daily interactions with that sober self...and sort of trying to embrace that vulnerability rather than trying to mask it with, like, another kind of vulnerability, cause being drunk is a state of vulnerability too"
> Jeanette: "Yeah, it makes you super social and I get it cause I was definitely that person before, like, I would be more flirtatious when I'm drunk and, like, brave as fuck and I'm sober and, like, a completely different person, I don't like that feeling...there are not a lot of people that think like this and that's okay because of the way that the collective moves, like, it makes sense, I was part of that group... and just me having a desire to be in more control of my mind put me this way, so now I'm, like, if I'm drunk, I intended for it to be that way so it's not a bad thing."

Dawn also demonstrates a shift in the role of alcohol throughout her experience at Trinity explaining, "I don't feel like I need to drink that much to have a good time, whereas in freshman year and stuff, you were, like, nervous so you were, like, 'I'm gonna drink more and have a good time!'....and now it's like I'm actually friends with these people that I'm, like, surrounded by while out, so I'm not, like, chugging to be able to be there". Maybe through various strategies and experiences at Trinity, there is a realignment of the selves fostered by a development of deeper connections and a fearlessness in the exploration and presentation of self, other and world.

Disconnection and the Digital Age

At Trinity, there is a general culture of isolation and disconnection on undesignated drinking days and nights, reflected in the intensity of students' engagement in "drunk world" (Alexander 2008). Since students do not interact collectively at nearly any other time, place, or manner, they jump at the opportunity for community in whatever form it may take; in this case it is predominantly fraternity spaces. Sheila, a white female first-year voices her concerns about the alienating culture at Trinity asserting, "I'm not that pleased with it... I don't think there is that much of a social scene outside of the weekends...I probably want to see people just, like, hanging out with each other more outside of the weekends...I even have difficulty finding people to go to the library with me...so I guess just a more casual social scene, like, just hangout...I feel like a lot of people isolate themselves...that's fine, like, I do that too but like it seems like it's the norm Monday through Friday." As Lynn describes, "on the weekends, it's completely centered around partying...I don't see there's much going on the weekends besides that, especially during the day".

Although a substantial amount of students may be following each other on Instagram, they are still unlikely to say hello to each other on the Long Walk unless they are in immediate social circles. Jeanette describes the alienation she faces, and observes,

"I work downstairs, so I engage with people that I normally wouldn't engage with just because of where we live on campus or just, like, majors...with that being said, though, and it being that it's a small school, I recognize people very quickly and, like, hoping people recognize me...I mean, I'm the only Brown person working...so I think it's really easy to recognize me...but if we're not working...if I'm not there...like, if I see them when I am not on shift and I recognize them and, like, we've had conversation at, like, the desk, like, they won't say hi to me...like, that's so common here...like, it's so common to, like, not recognize someone when you're not in that space where you're, like, used to engaging with them".

It is often that the digital self proves to be a more courageous self, feeling as though we have less to lose in virtual reality and something to gain, as this may be the only form of interaction we get with our peers outside of "drunk world". Sociologist, Boyd Macrory describes a function of taverns that is similar to that of fraternities, as they "provide social-psychological satisfactions which are necessary to personality development and well-being as food and clothing are to physical existence and comfort" (Macrory 1953:636). Sociologist, Christopher Freed further comments on Macrory's work stating, "places such as community taverns that offer solace from modern culture might tacitly encourage problem drinking" (Freed 2010:9).

With connection established as vital to our existence, we participate in party culture in various ways to attain it. People 'just drink'; they often do not question why they need to let off so much steam or why this is the only space and form in which to do so. This establishes a dependence on the tavern or fraternity space that often does not adequately satisfy our needs and wants, as their roots go overlooked (Freed 2010). If a sense of community is accessible outside of the tavern or the fraternity spaces, they may decrease in popularity as they are no longer the 'only option'(Macrory 1953). Dawn, a white sorority member asserts "Trinity does pride itself

on its Greek life and it markets its Greek life as it's, like, night life and social scene...as it's one of the only types of social gathering places". Gordon supports this notion, illustrating that "Trinity is really good for people who do drink, and I don't think it's good for people who don't drink...because activities on the weekends are pretty limited and I would say the majority of the population is out drinking". Phelps notes that it is uncommon to interact with anyone besides your roommates unless at the party scene, explaining "being that they don't live with me, that's just...that's just really why I don't see them that much more."

In the virtual world and "drunk world" connections are deemed permissible, but as individuals reenter "sober world" these relationships not only do not translate but seem to be forgotten. Ruth describes, "I had so much fun and just, like, meeting different people and it was, like, refreshing and different and I like seeing people I never see...but I thought it was just so crazy to see the difference, just to see that amount of people I had never seen before, like, that's so weird...not a lot overlapped". This highlights the importance of alcohol as a "tool to manufacture relations", functioning to suspend social barriers to connection (Vander Ven 2011:). The fraternity spaces are embedded with meanings of community and support that are characteristics of Trinity culture that often ring loud in "drunk world", yet hollow in "sober world" (Bales 1946).

The collective nature of the "drunk world" permits opportunities for social support that are inaccessible in the "sober world", often instigated by the 'collateral damage' or drinking crises of party culture (Bales 1946). In the "drunk world", you are helped home after a rough night of drinking, your hair is held back while you vomit, you are brought a Gatorade by a friend to alleviate your hangover, a collective effort is made to help avoid one's being transported or written up by CAMPO; these are all forms of social support. George describes, "there've been

nights where I've seen people passed out on the floor when I go back to North...just literally in the middle of the hall...you have to call someone or something or get their roommate and wake them up and just make sure they're alive".

There are likely to be more opportunities to need others or have others need you (social support) in a way that isn't really possible in a world of limited interaction. Bootsy depicts the social support he has provided under Trinity party culture, stating, "I've never really like...been, like, the blacked out friend, I'm usually the one that has to help people out". Those who assist you do not have to be your friends, they can be strangers. Within these spaces, in this world, the rules of engagement have shifted and a level of support received and delivered is moved from the unthinkable to the thinkable. Alex details the social support he has both given and received, describing, "we've run into girls where they're, like, drunk and, like, their friends are nowhere in sight and it's, like, what we end up doing is, like, almost adopting them" and "I'm friends with a lot of football players on the team and they carried me back to my room".

Students who otherwise never go to Mather, attempt to cure their hangovers with a Sunday breakfast there, and is not solely the food that acts as an incentive for this Sunday morning ritual. These mornings present as rare opportunities to socialize collectively outside of the designated drinking days, and with juice in their hands rather than vodka. Many mornings, students gather in their rooms to discuss the events of the prior night out: how drunk they got, what drugs they did (the more risk taken, the more support or enthusiasm given), and who they hooked up with. However, this conversation is not unique to the mornings after nights of partying, but constitutes the entirety of almost every discussion. This further reflects a campus culture that lacks connection. Connection is relegated to party spaces and interactions with

alcohol, with Alex describing that "a lot of the times I first meet people is, like, probably through smoking with them or, like, drinking with them".

An environment constantly overwhelmed with technology acts as a distraction to the alienation and disconnection of everyday life, with social media and material consumption becoming the dominant means for connection with others and a demonstration of self. "Communications technology is now deeply embedded in campus culture as a way of extending and sometimes replacing the concept of community" (Vander Ven 2011:29). We use technology as a safety net, protecting us from the vulnerability that accompanies ceaseless confrontations with alienation and disconnection. We use it to avoid transforming our own "sober worlds". Petrified by a fear of the unknown, we cultivate two worlds and fail to see how similarly we are stifled by our existence within each.

"You Know Everyone Thinks We're Fucking Right?"

I thought college is where the barriers to adulthood are torn down and you are free to explore, interact, and become. But it seems as though our worlds became smaller. You hear the confusion and bewilderment in the endless murmurings of your female peers , "I had way more guy friends in high school". The nature of interactions between genders has been contained, established as sexual and transactional, with the only options being to either resist or surrender to their redefinition as we shift between the "sober world" and the "drunk world". Resisting can be lonely and surrender demeaning, so again we are forced to strategically navigate two worlds, both of which we seem to endure.

There is a lack of platonic interaction between students of different genders rendering us to view the other gender almost entirely as sex objects, shaping every interaction in the sober and drunk world through this lens. The sexualization of every interaction acts as a deterrent from

forming friendships, as one is always fearful of requiring an explanation and maybe not having the opportunity to present one. Desires are therefore dismissed to private realms unless they align with the expectations and demands embedded within that space and time (Foucault 1990).

The discourse around sexuality at Trinity leads individuals to regulate their behavior around a defined set of expectations and demands, such as interactions that occur after midnight, require alcohol, or take place on the weekends (or a determined drinking weeknight). Fraternity parties create an environment that promotes this discourse by offering tools for engagement (the people, and alcohol). Jeanette describes how students will almost avoid love interests until under the appropriate contexts, as she states, "they become a whole new person...they're more bold...they're like, this the weekend I'm going to try to get with the guy or that girl who I see on Wednesdays and never talk to...this is the time where I can, like, tell that person I like them...or not tell them but show them...and, like, not care that I'm walking out of the party with this person and I don't care who sees it...and then the sun comes up and they're, like, 'I don't know what you're talking about'...it's like people think they're in a different fucking world when a Saturday night happens". These party spaces are embedded with a transactional and sexual "hookup culture", in which it is deemed embarrassing or unknowable to have a romantic relationship at all or a sexual relationship that lasts longer than a month. Jeanette describes the strategies taken to conceal hookups and the difficulties in attempting platonic relationships with different genders,

> "This was something that was really hard to transition to freshman year...what I've gathered now, people are just kind of just looking for the next person to fuck...it's always about who's messing with who at this moment, and so people will navigate it by making sure they're not sitting next to that person in Mather or making sure they aren't seen with that person in regular settings unless they were already friends, and then that's normal. I've seen very little, like, PDA on campus...unless people know that they're dating, like they're holding hands or something, like, that, like, they're officially dating…people kind

of pick up on social groups and they'll question…they'll see the opposite sex hanging out and they'll immediately question if they're having sex...I was literally having this conversation yesterday with my friend, I was like, "you know people think we are fucking right?"...and it's just because you're hanging out all the time...if you are messing with someone, we try to keep it secret because of, like, there's a lot of drama and, like, hidingness that goes into it and, like, people just treating people poorly, like, lying about sleeping with just them...I'm, like, that's just unsafe...chill...it's not even about my feelings, like, that is unsafe, I need to know...I don't care that you don't want to date me, I need you to put a fucking condom on...so yeah, these are just, like, the conversations that happen...and again, it's just, like, these weird symbolic transactions...it's, like, it's obvious but it's not".

As genders rarely interact with one another outside of these party or fraternity spaces it leads to the interpretation of almost every exchange to be flirtatious, or an "invitation to have sex" (Vander Ven 2011:41). The compulsory nature of alcohol in hookups likely lies in their transactional character, imbued in the "hookup culture" produced on campus and expressed in these spaces. There are likely to be more social and emotional barriers (fear) between complete strangers that require alcohol to suspend. If we were to build stronger foundations of friendship on campus these engagements may be less likely to need alcohol. George describes that many act like "the goal of tonight is either just to go out and, like, have sex or get fucked up...as they'll say...so I mean those are kinda their only two objectives...if they do end up having sex from that night...they'll, like, just never end up talking after because they haven't built anything up forward from that".

This "transactional nature" can be described as "business like", not centered around fun or intimacy, but the completion of a conquest. Whose conquest? If one night stands often don't include any acknowledgment of your pleasure, was it your conquest? Trinity has a very heteronormative male-centered hookup culture facilitated by a social scene almost solely under the control of men (of white wealth). It is uncommon to see sororities throw parties at Trinity beyond formals, Dawn, a white senior sorority member, explains why that is, "Kappa, they have,

like, nationals and stuff and there's rules that regulate their whole thing, like, across the country and Ivy doesn't have that so, like, while the school hasn't been, like, 'you're allowed to open like the frats'...we are allowed to open, but I don't think they, like, make it easy for us to know that though". Kappa Kappa Gamma is under more regulation as they are directed by a national chapter, an external body that is even more out of touch with students than the school is. It may be better for the school to have more control over policy regulations regarding Greek life chapters that are part of national organizations. In addition, it would be interesting to see if there would be a shift in the party culture if more aspects were under the control of women.

A woman's engagement in hookup culture leaves her vulnerable to the imposition of the subjectivity of 'the slut'. Yet, disengagement leaves her susceptible to the subjectivity of 'the prude', characterized as a classic emotional, relationship seeking, woman. "Hooking up" is an intentionally ambiguous term in definition and employment. This functions to allow one room to evaluate the expectations of the environment and adapt a response or story accordingly. Alex and Jeanette describe their difficulties as queer Black and Brown students under a white heteronormative 'hookup culture' at Trinity, with Alex explaining, "I'm gay, so like there's really not a lot of prospects here, so it's just kind of me and my own world." Jeanette describes,

> "I can't speak for, like, transgender students on campus but, like, I can only imagine how much more complicated that is, like, trying to understand how to, like...what it is like to party and see people hooking up and, like, what you're allowed or not allowed to do...just, like, being bisexual it's really hard, like, that's only a new thing that's a conversation on campus...this campus can be very homophobic and, like, obviously it's easier, unfortunately, for women than men but even with women it's hard to understand, like, who is okay with having a gay friend and who's not...it's also hard to, like, know how to socialize that realm cause at night cause you don't know who's comfortable with their sexuality...I'm not going to make someone uncomfortable by, like, openly flirting with them...you don't know what the pools are...it is like very different by group...with, like, racial groups, class and, like, not just class but region, like where you come from and how you were socialized in those spaces...so, like, New York City kids, in particular the kids I was speaking about earlier who go to like the Caribbean parties, for example,

the way that the dating scene works there...very judgmental, which I'm sure is the same in, like, most groups too but it's like...because we mostly date within our group, like, by race...like region, class, and stuff like...it's so small, so kinda we find out we're dating the same person, or fuck with the same person, or you like the same person so...it's very much catty and a lot of drama".

You decide to go out, as it's only the second weekend of your first-year. You never get very drunk and it is not in your gamebook to have sex with people you are unfamiliar with. As the night progresses you meet a Sophomore and you both go back to his quad. You're new. You don't know yet that going to his room means he thinks you are going to have sex. You did not come prepared with an evacuation plan. He has a quad, not a single, so hopefully this means you do not need a plan. You're starting to get tired and want to leave, but you are met with, "you know I'm a nice guy...most guys would've ripped your pants off whether you liked it or not". You say nothing and proceed towards the door, which is now being blocked by his hand and he states, "you better leave before I change your mind". Two years later, you are told by another piece of shit "I could've raped you if I had wanted to". This exemplifies a prevalent culture at Trinity that not only dehumanizes women, but ensures that those who treat them inhumanely are granted impunity. Dawn inquires, "wasn't Psi U, like, under suspension for, like, a bunch of suspected rape cases...they were suspended for, like, a month and, like, couldn't have a keg for like a month and now it's like someone's headlights got cracked and the whole thing gets shut down, but what about when people were, like, raped like what?".

There is significantly heightened risk of sexual predation under both a blackout and hookup culture. Failure to acknowledge this when discussing sexual violence prevention leads to unproductive approaches that lack a comprehensive understanding of the culture in which it is produced and reproduced. "This is surprising given the sexual assault rates on campus but, like, I've never felt uncomfortable walking to my room drunk", Jeanette highlights. One is less likely

to experience sexual violence from someone following them home than from the person they brought home. This deviates from the explicit and predatory instances of sexual violence people tend to conceptualize, instead demonstrating elements of rape culture and the potential for sexual violence within normative hookup culture.

Sexual violence prevention has been reduced to "don't have sex if any party is drunk", which is no more effective than is preaching abstinence as the solution to teen pregnancy. This perspective demonstrates a removed understanding of the hookup culture at Trinity College (or at many other college campuses), resulting in a failure to address the intersectionality of college drinking and hookup culture. To decrease sexual predation and violence, we must aim to understand the rape culture that is facilitated by white hetero masculine wealth and look to remove alcohol from the hookup script. We must begin to problematize the meanings we produce and maintain around alcohol and evaluate it as a social process.

Efforts like Green Dot or the Clery Act are still too focused on how to not get assaulted and what to do after the fact, rather than the deconstruction of the culture that produces sexual predation. Although it is good to promote the voices of those who have been assaulted and provide a space for comfort and protection, the impact and effectiveness are undermined when nothing is done to address the culture in which this behavior is produced. It feels as though the main reason for these efforts is to protect the school from liability, as reflected in the highly frustrating and bureaucratic Title IX process. Alex describes his frustrations with the process experienced by some of his friends after they were assaulted,

> "imagine in a system where you report something to a T9 officer... it's not even an officer...you report it to a T9 person and they contact the other person and he tells his side of the story...he explains it like, "oh yeah she wanted it blah blah blah"...then it's like, he's innocent until proven guilty and then it's like, an accusation and it has to be framed as an accusation...and let's take a couple months to, like, figure out this whole process while you're probably sitting in a class with this person and you're still going out to

> parties and you see this person every time and you see this person doing it to other
> girls...like, I could not understand how infuriating that process is…"

Beyond addressing larger issues of rape culture, the campus culture may benefit from more coed housing options, especially after the first-year when it becomes easier to remain in concentrated and established groups. Coed housing could lead to more platonic interaction that would reduce the likelihood of seeing one another solely as sex objects.

3. **"The Private School Pipeline": Why We Are So Alienated**

Colleges were founded/established around the 1700s and attended by white wealthy men who prioritized social pleasure over academic rigor. As education was unnecessary to achieve the material success they already possessed (Vander Ven 2011), the "collegiate subculture" was shaped by these students who constructed a college experience around frequent and potentially harmful drinking. Around the 1880s, the normative standards around college drinking were established by a culture of white wealth at schools like Harvard, Yale, and Princeton. The explicit, frequent, and heavy consumption of alcohol by the attending men was a display of one's status and wealth.

Colleges historically rooted in cultures of white cis male hetero wealth have significantly shaped the culture of many "elite" liberal arts colleges. This is especially true of places like Trinity, which demonstrate a desire to mimic the structures and functions of schools like Harvard through establishment as a "Little Ivy". These aspirations to "be Harvard" are likely rooted in an appeal for status, as the origin, function, and purpose of Harvard and similar elite schools is status. However, these cultures of white wealth are rooted in an alienation and disconnection that ensure its preservation. As private education is institutionally valued more highly than public school education, with students' attendance at prep schools or private high schools presenting as

a financial statement and therefore a ticket of entrance into "elite" liberal art colleges like
Trinity.

The status of "private" gives those students a layer of credibility for admission
inaccessible to those who attended public school, veiled under the notion that private education
is objectively "better" education and "better" prepares students for college. This leads an
education at Trinity to be a financial privilege, not only because of admissions through a "private
school pipeline" (as Alex coined it), but also the price of tuition. Alex describes the explicit and
abounding culture of white wealth at Trinity as a Black and/or AfroLatinx student,

> "I can only speak for the Black experience, but looking at it from, like, someone
> that just came into it and experiencing the overwhelming amount of wealth here at
> all at once, it was pretty daunting...like, I didn't realize that people here had
> vacation homes and they're on boats and they're going to all these fancy places
> and going to the Cape…I was friends with someone who went to Deerfield
> Academy...I didn't know what the fuck this school was, but when she mentioned
> her school everyone of my friends was like, 'woah you went to Deerfield'...and
> me doing my own research of the place, like, it's more expensive to go to
> Deerfield Academy than it is to go to Trinity".

The private or boarding school backgrounds of many students at Trinity renders many
students to already be socialized under the cultures of white wealth rooted in these institutions of
primary education. Throughout their attendance at a private or boarding school, students acquire
social and cultural capital that allows for a more effortless navigation and heightened sense of
belonging than for those that attended public school, or those that attended private schools but
are not white and wealthy. Bootsy emphasizes the cultural capital many acquired in boarding or
prep school as he states, "it's also much more typical in this environment where you have the
boarding school kids that kind of already had this, so they're already like, 'yeah we know what
we're doing here'...I didn't go to private school, I went to public school, so for me it was like,

'ohhh okay, so you you already know what the low down is....you already know how to conceal all these things'".

Sheila, a white first-year female, illustrates the abundance of private, prep, or boarding school students and its impact on sense of belonging, as she explains, "it seems kind of private school or like boarding school base...like, I've been kind of hard pressed to find people that went to public school...like, they all know each other or, like, know kids from their schools who have gone here so, like, it seems like they're...like, the groups are very clearly defined here". The overwhelming prep school culture often renders students alienated in interaction, as many of the opportunities for collective engagement are about resume building or are competitive in nature. In addition, the rigid rule culture facilitates a need to escape through the creation of a world where these rules are suspended ("drunk world"), which mirrors the culture at Trinity.

Trinity College matriculates 2,300 students, 67% are white, 14% are Black and Brown (6% Black, 8% brown), and 12% are international students (DataUSA 2017). The median family income of a Trinity student is $257,000 (NY Times 2017), with 75% of students in the top 20%, 26% in the top 1%, and 6% in the top 0.1%. This means Trinity enrolls the same amount of Black students as they do those with an income in the top 0.1%. Dawn, a white senior sorority member, explains, "they kinda, like, pride themselves on diversity and inclusivity but it doesn't actually feel like that...like no, they are just not inclusive". Trinity has limited their promotion of "diversity" through targeted admission of international students. This allows Trinity to appear more "diverse" than they actually are, leaving their admissions pool to remain heavily weighted toward white private school students and neglecting many Black and Brown students from America, especially those who did not attend private schools. Trinity likely adopted this strategy

for admissions to maximize income, as international students pay full tuition and meet the "diversity" quota, without significantly altering the culture of white wealth.

"Given the level of achievement needed to get into these schools in the first place, you would expect that students would feel more pressure to succeed and might be more constrained in their behavior" (Seaman 2005:14). This represents the misguided yet dominant conceptions of "elite" institutions, as this is often not an achievement but the possession and employment of various forms of capital. There is a lack of constraint, as for many their "achievement" was not earned but bought, requiring less personal responsibility and engendering an entitlement often associated with these private "top-tier" schools. Attempts to emphasize the "elite" nature of these colleges, and the students who attend, appears to be a means to sanitize, uphold, or differentiate their behavior; as if students "of such caliber" should be making more "rational" decisions. Maybe these students are not an exclusively remarkable bunch making irrational decisions, but a remarkably exclusive bunch making rational decisions under a culture of white wealth.

Students define a prominent "work hard, play hard" culture and its intersection with the culture of white wealth, as Alex explains, "the whole thing is, by day everyone is this, like, workaholic...they go 100% in the day with their work, so then by the night time it's all about going out…even then some here don't give a fuck at all...they just stroll through life...like, it's very easy here to just stroll and have an easy ass time so, like, this is definitely, like, a cesspool of just, like, rich ass kids honestly...it's about getting fucking plastered...it's about going out to these frats...it's about doing drugs...it's about getting high". If students are not drinking, they are studying, as Gordon explains "it's a very kind of "work hard, play hard" environment...during the day there's a lot of people in the library studying...at night, especially I would say uhh...Thursday and Saturday everyone is out and usually Tuesday and Friday people are doing

stuff too that involves drinking at night...other than that it's a lot of studying". George, a white male first-year, demonstrates how this "work hard, play hard" mentality produces this intense party culture, explaining, "during the week, it's everyone's just kind of like business robots right...with schoolwork or some kids don't...but no one really socializes during the week from what I've seen...frats just hang with frats or teams just hang with teams...and then on the weekend it's like everyone just kinda explodes and kinda needs to socialize as much as they can and cram it into that window... and it's not even in the right scenarios like they'll just be drinking or using drugs just to kind of fill that void maybe".

The creation of distinct worlds and selves through college drinking/party culture is highly impacted by one's sense of belonging. This is reduced by involvement in different clubs, teams, and organizations, which allow students to combat the alienation embedded into everyday spaces and interactions. The cliqueness and uniformity at Trinity are products of this culture of private school white wealth. The general culture of disconnection is extremely evident if you take a stroll down the Long Walk, as students demonstrate extreme difficulty in even saying "hello" to one another. It is as if students are almost embarrassed to make or present connections, as this does not align with the discourse established in the "sober world". As one student passes another, they are often either wondering "do they know who I am?", "are they worthy?" before even thinking of offering a "hello".

Maybe saying "hello" opens a door for communication and connection that cannot be fully enjoyed under social structures that do not support it; maybe saying "hello" would be a tease, a carrot of connection dangling in front of our faces. In addition, as much of our communication is non-verbal (demonstrated through an engagement with cultural products or practices), a verbal form of communication like "hello" would present as a bigger risk and

engender more fear as it makes one more vulnerable to critical evaluation. Jeanette explains her experience under this culture as a Black and/or AfroLatina,

> "now I am not saying you have to say hi to someone like 15 times a day...it's a small campus, you're going to see people multiple times, but it's not just about not acknowledging them...it's kind of about acting like you don't know each other, and it's really uncomfortable sometimes...I think I notice that more so with, like...you're familiar with somebody who is in different social groups, then you won't engage with them when you're not in that common space…but then on the flipside, in the groups that I am a part of, our everyday comings and goings, like passing by each other...like, even just now before I got here, there is so much love and solidarity and it's like hugging...and "omg you look great today"...a lot of compliments...like making sure the other person feels good so when you're in...at least in the small group I'm part of or like familiar with, there is a lot of love and you would actually be called out if you don't say hi to someone who you know...so it's definitely interesting, like, in comparison".

Students indicate significant racial, athletic, and Greek life divisions, which could all be explained by Trinity's prioritization of profit (whiteness) over the well-being of their students. Jeanette, a Black and/or AfroLatina explains the various social groups and their impact on sense of belonging, as she states, "there's cliques and groups based off being part of sports teams, people knew each other because of private schools and boarding schools, and then of course by region...so I think that's how many groups are formed, but then of course there are race and class groups...people are even more confined that way". The racial divisions of Trinity were mostly identified by Black or Brown students, while most of the white students highlighted the athletic and Greek life divisions.

With the promotion of a culture of white wealth and therefore a more white student body, the more funding or profit is accrued for Trinity and the more racial divisions are produced. Phelps, a male Jamaican and AfroCuban junior describes, "I think there is a big divide between races at Trinity College...there are still divides between people for no real apparent reason besides, like, what seems to be people's personal feelings...you know what I mean, so their own

judgements are influencing culture on campus and that fuels that divide." The heightened

promotion of athletics (in which the athletes are predominantly white), the more funding or profit

is accrued and the more athletic divisions are produced. Ruth, a junior student-athlete expresses,

"I feel as though it's super cliquey, like when I came as a freshman I was shocked cause people

on teams were already, like, in their little groups...being on the team is huge "in" socially. The

heightened promotion of Greek life (in which the members are predominantly white), the more

funding or profit is accrued for Trinity and more Greek life divisions are produced. School

policies on housing impacts these divisions as Lynn describes the frustrations and complexities

of having her sorority 'on campus' rather than on Allen Place,

> "Trinity is for the most part pretty cliquey...I perceive people to find their friend groups and kind of stick to them...it definitely is divided between Greek life and non-Greek life on the weekends...I would say the sorority is pretty cliquey, both within the sorority and as it integrates into the school...we don't have a presence on campus...Trinity has tried to work with us a little bit like Katherine Wojack is amazing and she tries to work with us about like getting a house on campus...but, like, there is no point because we can't host events and if we had house on campus, our organization would mandate that we have, like, a "live in woman" living with us like a mom".

If Trinity would like a student body that does not "party so hard" then they must aim to reduce

the alienation and disconnection through shifting purpose away from the promotion of profit and

therefore whiteness.

4. **If It's Our Creation, Must It Be Something We Endure?**

Prior Research

Commonly conducted through a large-scale collection of surveys, research around

college drinking gathers demographic information (age, race, sex, class) and individuals'

personal history with alcohol. The Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study

(CAS) made widely known and highly significant contributions to the discussions of college-

drinking that generated a better understanding of the distribution (who is drinking and where), but not the function of college-binge-drinking (Weschler 2002). Sociologist Seldon Bacon asserts the dominance of problem-oriented approaches to drug and alcohol use, like CAS, often individualize the collective experience of college drinking and produce a narrative centered around pathology (Bacon 1943). This means of analysis removes college-drinking from its socio-historical origins and fails to acknowledge college drinking as a social production, with motivations for engagement created and sustained through campus culture. The examination of substance use solely under notions of deviance focuses use almost entirely as a desire for the physiological experience of intoxication (Bacon 1943).

"Drug use cannot be understood or tackled except as being situated in wider understandings of people and society" (Hammersley 2005:201). We do not experience engagement with substances solely physically or physiologically, through an identification with reduced motor functions and 'impaired judgement'. We also experience it socially, through a recognition of what alcohol allows us to do; its ability to bring cultural products and practices into the thinkable or permissible. What even is 'impaired judgement'? Maybe there is no impairment, but an evolution; a shift in judgement that works under new understandings of reason and order.

We cannot effectively examine binge-drinking and drug culture as a problem without first understanding and examining it as a social phenomenon. We must understand the pleasure that may be associated with marihuana or alcohol use as the ability to experience the world differently. Through an enhancement or deficiency of sense or deviations or alterations of normative order and reason, self, other, and the world are open to struggle and transformation as they are able to take on new meanings. There is a sense that this world of transformation is

always there waiting. That these doors, although rarely propped wide open, are never locked; yet, we still only appear on the permitted days with keys in hand (alcohol).

Limitations

The limitations of my research include a small sample size within a single institution. I interviewed ten students, of which few were not affiliated with clubs, organizations, or sports teams and none of which did not drink alcohol at all. Students with no club, organization, or sports team affiliations may have had less exposure to environments that foster a sense of belonging. Research involving a single institution does not allow for much comparative analysis; a multi-institutional study might have revealed aspects of Trinity party culture that are similar or distinguish it from other college campuses. Due to recent fraternity closures of The Hall and AD, my field observations over the past year were limited to the other fraternities on campus, yet historical accounts of students and myself were used.

Future Directions

In an attempt to mitigate binge-drinking and drug culture, institutional sanctions and policies are put in place that recognize aspects of substance use as deviant, defined under medical and scientific discourses. When removed from comprehensive understandings of the substance use behavior of students, these efforts (keg bans, open alcohol restrictions for students over 21) do not lead to its abatement, but rather its privatization. There is a resulting shift into more private realms with less resources and more spite that proves to be counterproductive. Almost every student interviewed (those in and out of Greek life), asserted that the removal of kegs to reduce the alcohol intake within frats would lead to an increase in binge-drinking behavior among students and shift the focus onto hard liquor. Not only have the students expressed that the frats are not the place they do a majority of their drinking, but when they do

drink there, it is soft alcohol. Students note that they are doing most of their drinking at the pregames, and proclaim that no more kegs just means filling 3/4 a water bottle with vodka and bringing that with them to the fraternities.

The enforcement of regulations by Campus Safety are virtually all for show, as students have developed strategies ("shut down drills") to circumscribe them that Campus Safety is fully aware of. Dawn describes, "literally I've seen CAMPO standing on the bar, like, "get out", like screaming...and then it's, like, you literally, like, shove into the back and it just goes on...we all are, like, hiding in closets and then we, like, all emerge" Then who or what are these policies and sanctions for? In practice, they act as additional means of social control for Black and Brown students (as well as students of other marginalized identities), regulating their patterns of consumption and interactions (Courtwright 2011). This is demonstrated through the transgressions committed by white and wealthy students that are rendered invisible, and when made visible are treated with impunity. Especially within fraternity spaces, defining substance use as "problem" use in a world where it is not recognized as such, is not only ineffective but dangerous. Therefore, campus policies must be shaped in consideration of how they impact their students, especially those of marginalized identities.

Thus far, substance use studies have been dominated by medical and scientific institutions whose primary purpose is not to understand normal use, but rather to understand the biochemical aspects of use and treat substance use as a pathology (Page & Jellinek 1997). Doctors and scientists are not visiting the bars and frat houses in order to conduct studies on the interactions between people and substances...instead, they are treating the individuals that enter rehabilitation or those that require hospital treatment. This begs the question of why we rely on discourses of medicine and science when it comes to student discussions and school efforts

regarding binge-drinking and drug culture? Are we hoping to have students understand substance use as a pathology to better determine their ideal treatment? Reliance on this framework leaves school efforts and discussions incomplete and ineffective, as we must first understand the behavior of substance use as a production of college campus culture, in general or campus-specific, before we can effectively mitigate it as a problem.

Rather than inserting themselves in situations that promote security and opportunities for connection and a freer presentation of the self, students choose to drink more. We must not reduce our agency within this culture to our level of consumption, but our cultural construction. One must recognize party culture not as a mindless individual engagement but as an active and collective social process. An individualized conception of college-drinking removes it from its socio-historic origins, and veils our agency in the construction of the environment in which it is produced. This approach fails to see the college-drinking scene as a rare opportunity for a unique interaction with the self, other and the world, one that is only permitted existence in public realms of the "drunk world" and private realms of the "sober world". These exclusive social supports and benefits of the "drunk world" gained through the participation in the college-drinking culture incentivize and reinforce behavior, even when proven dangerous.

Maybe the severity of social, physical, and emotional risks taken is a reflection of the suppression of expression experienced in "sober world". Maybe the ceaseless engagement of college-students is less about a desire to "party hard" and reaping the pleasures of "drunk world" through an escape from "sober world", but a dogged determination to fuse these two worlds. Students enter and reenter "drunk world", embracing the lamentable and favorable experiences in hopes that one time it will leave traces in the "sober worlds", the actual, or at least make it more bearable...in hopes that some part of you or someone else, a part of some conversation or

connection...that some part of that world will carry over. They relentlessly persist in hopes that the fearlessness the "drunk world" possesses, and we possess in it, will enter our skin and we can taint the "sober worlds"...taint the actual in a way that forever fuses the two.

When AD and The Hall were suspended, people were annoyed as they were unsure how to fill that social space. They wondered if other forms of socializing were going to come to existence, rather than acknowledging their own agency in their creation. There was a reclamation of students' agency demonstrated the week before spring break, at the start of global pandemic (a point of rupture). Everything was able to take on new meanings, as the current meanings of our worlds were being rewritten. The abrupt end to the school year revealed contradictions our culture is produced under, or made them too personal to ignore. We gathered with our classmates on Crescent Street for what was going to be the last time, but even more striking, it was the first time. "Why haven't we been doing this the whole time?", you heard endlessly throughout the week. This behavior may have appeared as mayhem to the administration, as it was unregulated and may have not been the wisest because of the Coronavirus, but this week and the interactions created were so culturally significant. It proved we could; it proved we can. That we didn't need times of day or spaces to tell us when we could connect and how to do so (or who to be). We felt the power of and for connection at our fingertips; its strength demonstrated in the determination of students to connect in the face of (most likely warranted) backlash from administration.

I truly do not think it was just an enjoyment derived from comfort in a time of panic and turmoil, but the feeling of being together in a way we had yet to experience on this campus. It was not another weekend of being surrounded by people, but instead being amongst them. We finally met our neighbors and introduced ourselves to people we had not spoken to before, rather than staying in our usual circles of comfort. We gathered in the parking lot rather than the frats.

We engaged in conversation, double-dutch jump roping, and egg tosses. It did not seem to matter if you had a drink in your hand, but just that you were talking or laughing, or simply enjoying watching others talk and laugh. The focus of the party had shifted; no one was trying to prove anything. No one was trying to party "like Trinity students" or perform. We all just wanted to be. In a time of panic, what else is there to do?

There needs to be more research conducted on normative use rather than 'problem' use of drugs and alcohol as "research on the normal use of alcohol and other drugs would uncover and clarify positive functions of substance use - from personal pleasure and temporary reprieve, or "time out," to the development of group consciousness, community, and social solidarity and equality" (Freed 2010:11). College campuses must implement new approaches for tackling college 'binge-drinking' and drug culture that centralize its social nature, therefore situating the methods closer to the everyday lives of students. These efforts must promote and develop better understandings of the interaction of campus culture, 'binge-drinking' culture, and hookup culture and their implications on sexual violence. Most importantly, if the college really wants to tackle issues of 'binge-drinking' and drug culture, then we need to place a focus on addressing a general campus culture that is deprived of connection and sense of belonging. We need to establish a culture at Trinity that acknowledges its students as social beings. This must happen, not through a culture of solitude but solidarity, which will not be attained if we continue to be a campus defined by whiteness and as a "private school pipeline".

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