



Review

Commercializing the Practice of Voyeurism: How Organizations Leverage Authenticity and Transgression to Create Value

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Abstract:	<p>Voyeurism violates dominant moral codes in many societies. Yet, for a number of businesses, including erotic webcam, reality television, slum tourism, and mixed martial arts, voyeurism is an important part of value creation. The success of such businesses that violate dominant moral codes raises questions about value creation that existing theory in management cannot adequately answer. To help advance our understanding, we theorize how businesses commercializing voyeurism create value for audiences. Conceptualizing voyeurism as a social practice, we identify two dimensions of voyeurism—authenticity and transgression—that help create value by generating desirable emotional responses that facilitate a distinctive experience for audiences. However, we further argue that these same dimensions can also hinder value creation by generating undesirable emotional responses that may lead audiences to disengage from the practice. Accordingly, we contend that businesses' ability to deliver value to audiences hinges on effective emotional optimization—efforts to reduce undesirable emotional responses by dampening the authenticity or transgression in the voyeuristic practice, while reinforcing the associated desirable emotional responses. We contribute to the literature by advancing a novel theory of the commercialization of voyeuristic practice. In doing so, we also enrich our understanding of both authenticity and transgression.</p>

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3 **Commercializing the Practice of Voyeurism: How Organizations Leverage Authenticity**
4 **and Transgression to Create Value**
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ABSTRACT

Voyeurism violates dominant moral codes in many societies. Yet, for a number of businesses, including erotic webcam, reality television, slum tourism, and mixed martial arts, voyeurism is an important part of value creation. The success of such businesses that violate dominant moral codes raises questions about value creation that existing theory in management cannot adequately answer. To help advance our understanding, we theorize how businesses commercializing voyeurism create value for audiences. Conceptualizing voyeurism as a social practice, we identify two dimensions of voyeurism—authenticity and transgression—that help create value by generating desirable emotional responses that facilitate a distinctive experience for audiences. However, we further argue that these same dimensions can also hinder value creation by generating undesirable emotional responses that may lead audiences to disengage from the practice. Accordingly, we contend that businesses' ability to deliver value to audiences hinges on effective emotional optimization—efforts to reduce undesirable emotional responses by dampening the authenticity or transgression in the voyeuristic practice, while reinforcing the associated desirable emotional responses. We contribute to the literature by advancing a novel theory of the commercialization of voyeuristic practice. In doing so, we also enrich our understanding of both authenticity and transgression.

Keywords: voyeurism, stigma, transgression, authenticity, emotions, practice

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3 Millions of visitors were driven by the possibility of witnessing something authentic, but
4 shamed by the voyeurism required to gaze upon “the real” (Lisle, 2004: 17).
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6 Voyeurism is a one-way glimpse into the private life of another (Calvert, 2004),
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8 grounded in “the desire to look upon something that is forbidden” (Lisle, 2004: 16). Though
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10 voyeurism violates dominant moral codes in many societies by making public aspects of
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12 people’s lives that are supposed to be kept private, an increasing number of businesses across a
13
14 wide range of industries have commercialized voyeurism in various ways despite ethical
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16 concerns. For example, erotic webcam offers an unfettered glimpse into the “real” sexual
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18 behavior of another; slum tourism offers immersion into the lived experience of extreme poverty;
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20 mixed martial arts (MMA) offers an up-close look at the intense violence of a no-holds-barred
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22 fight. More broadly, Reality TV shows like Survivor, Big Brother, and Love Island have become
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24 a staple television genre by presenting intimate scenes of “real life” through hidden cameras
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26 (Baruh, 2010; Calvert, 2004); horror films based on “found footage” create the illusion of
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28 witnessing real violent attacks (Heller-Nicholas, 2014); news media has a long history of selling
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30 voyeuristic glimpses into the private lives of politicians and celebrities (Linkof, 2018); and social
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32 media influencers allow audiences to see into their lives in order to sell products (Kharmis, Ang,
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34 & Welling, 2017).
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41 Even though the success of these commercialized forms of voyeurism is well
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43 documented¹, extant theory can offer few insights into this phenomenon and how businesses
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45 create value for audiences by utilizing voyeuristic practice. While prior research outside
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51 ¹ Slum tourism is one of the fastest-growing tourism segments in the world (Frenzel, 2016; Privitera, 2015) and
52 erotic webcam has become “the engine of the porn industry” (Los Angeles Times, 2016), estimated to be worth
53 more than US\$2 billion annually (Newsweek, 2016). On cable and broadcast television, reality television shows
54 account for 50% of programming, generating \$6 US billion annually (Washington Post, 2019); and MMA
55 championships have increasingly gone mainstream (Helms & Patterson, 2014), and are a big draw for both live
56 event promoters and pay-per-view channels.
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3 management has studied specific businesses that rely on voyeurism, such as erotic webcam
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5 (Henze, 2013), reality television (Calvert, 2004), disaster tourism (Lisle, 2004), and tabloid news
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7 (Glynn, 2000), voyeurism itself has remained a poorly defined and amorphous concept. We
8
9 argue that for scholars to understand the social and commercial importance of voyeurism, it
10
11 should be conceptualized as a social practice that can be commercialized by businesses and
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13 incorporated into the value proposition. As such, the practice of voyeurism (or voyeuristic
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15 practice) is a social practice that consists of patterns of activities used to construct a public
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17 performance of reality that is supposed to be private. Further, we argue that the practice of
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19 voyeurism involves two dimensions—authenticity and transgression. The authenticity emerges
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21 from seeing the putatively “real” life of another (Lisle, 2004) and the transgression emerges from
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23 viewing the forbidden (Calvert, 2004). These two dimensions work in conjunction to generate a
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25 distinctive experience for audiences.
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31 Part of the challenge of understanding the commercialization of voyeurism relates to the
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33 roles of authenticity and transgression in value creation. Existing research has largely considered
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35 authenticity to be beneficial for value creation, as it is a desirable social good (Avolio &
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37 Gardner, 2005; Hatch & Schultz, 2017; Kovács, Carroll, & Lehman, 2014). Transgression, on
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39 the other hand, has been largely conceptualized as a social ill and thus detrimental for value
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41 creation, since audiences risk social disapproval and stigmatization for partaking in an activity
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43 that violates dominant moral codes (Barlow, Verhaal, & Hoskins, 2018; Devers, Dewitt, Mishina
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45 & Belsito, 2009; Hudson & Okhuysen, 2009; Michelson & Miller, 2019; Pollack, Lashley,
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47 Rindova, & Han, 2019). In voyeuristic practice, however, the extreme authenticity can
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49 potentially repel audiences, if the experience feels “too real” (e.g., Calvert, 2004), while the
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51 transgressiveness may appeal to audiences seeking an experience that is taboo (e.g., Helms &
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3 Patterson, 2014; Roulet, 2020). Thus, the authenticity and transgression of voyeurism may both
4 attract *and* repel audiences. In this way, the practice of voyeurism challenges existing
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6 assumptions in management theory, and as a result, the literature cannot adequately explain how
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8 and when authenticity and transgression support or hinder value creation.
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12 We address the disconnect between existing theory and this widespread practice by
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14 articulating how businesses utilize the practice of voyeurism to create value for audiences. Our
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16 conceptualization of voyeuristic practice advances our understanding of the role of authenticity
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18 and transgression in value creation processes by emphasizing that it is not authenticity nor
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20 transgression themselves that determine whether value is created or not, but rather audience's
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22 emotional responses to these dimensions. The authenticity and transgression of voyeuristic
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24 practice generate emotional responses in audiences that can both support and hinder value
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26 creation. Accordingly, the ability to deliver value to audiences hinges on what we refer to
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28 as *emotional optimization* by businesses utilizing the practice. Emotional optimization
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30 involves efforts to reduce undesirable emotional responses by dampening the authenticity or
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32 transgression in the voyeuristic practice while reinforcing the associated desirable emotional
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34 responses. We describe four mechanisms of emotional optimization that aim to ensure that value
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36 is delivered to audiences.
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42 In theorizing the commercialization of voyeurism, our paper makes several important
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44 contributions. Conceptualizing voyeurism as a social practice allows us to identify and
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46 dimensionalize the common elements of a widespread and longstanding practice used across a
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48 broad range of businesses and industries. By articulating the dimensions and how they operate to
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50 create or hinder value for audiences, we develop a stronger foundation for examining the role of
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52 voyeuristic practice in society and in business. Understanding how voyeurism is used to create
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3 value is a central issue that cannot be ignored, regardless of one's views about the ethics
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5 underlying the practice. Instead of broad arguments about whether an activity based on
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7 voyeurism is ethical or not (e.g., Calvert, 2004; Lisle, 2004; Whyte, Selinger, & Outterson, 2011;
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9 Williams, 2008), we can begin to explore the boundaries and limitations of voyeuristic practice,
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11 based on the challenges associated with creating value for audiences. We can then begin to ask
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13 more specific questions about businesses' responsibility to audiences, performers, and society,
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15 thereby enhancing understanding of the practice's value.
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19 We also enrich our understanding of authenticity by highlighting both the need for, and
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21 potential downside, of authenticity in value creation. We explicate the potential undesirable
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23 emotions associated with an authentic performance, which, left unchecked, may lead to
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25 disengagement from the practice. This is distinct from a focus on the emotional labor required by
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27 performers (e.g., Ashforth & Tomiuk, 2000; Grazian, 2010; Hochschild, 1979; Voronov &
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29 Weber, 2016). Because of the risks involved in participating in a practice that violates moral
30
31 codes, we argue that managing emotions is also very important for audiences. We draw attention
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33 to emotional optimization strategies that can be deployed by organizations to help audiences
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35 manage their emotional responses in order to provide a safe, yet authentic experience.
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40 Finally, we advance theory on transgression and stigma by extending the nascent body of
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42 work that has shown there are beneficial implications of violating moral codes (Helms &
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44 Patterson, 2014; Roulet, 2020; Ruebottom & Toubiana, in press; Tracey & Phillips, 2016). We
45
46 challenge the implicit assumption in the literature that audiences' moral evaluations are the core
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48 determinants of whether transgression appeals to audience members. Instead, we suggest that
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50 value creation from transgression is contingent on audiences' emotional responses. Importantly,
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52 these emotional responses may or may not align with audience members' moral evaluations, and
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3 businesses may therefore be able to manage emotional responses to reach an audience that would
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5 otherwise avoid a transgressive practice they deem immoral.
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10 **THE PRACTICE OF VOYEURISM**

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12 Businesses in a variety of industries have sought to commercialize voyeuristic practice
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14 and to incorporate it – to varying degrees – into their business models. To understand how value
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16 is created through the commercialization of the practice, we first need to unpack voyeurism as a
17
18 social practice. A practice involves “patterns of activities that are given thematic coherence by
19
20 shared meanings and understandings” (Smets, Morris, & Greenwood, 2012: 879). These patterns
21
22 of activities include action, talk and artifacts (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011; Nicolini, 2011,
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24 2012). In the context of voyeurism, this lens directs our attention to the activities that enable the
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26 public performance of a normally-private reality.
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31 A practice lens allows us to acknowledge that some businesses employ the practice
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33 sparingly, while others may center most of their activities on what is voyeuristic. For example,
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35 reality TV varies quite extensively in its perceived degree of voyeurism. Some shows focus
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37 explicitly on what many would consider to be intimate and private affairs (e.g., Love Island, The
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39 Bachelor/Bachelorette, Big Brother); others do so to a much lesser extent, instead focusing more
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41 on other aspects, such as competition (e.g., The Amazing Race, RuPaul’s Drag Race, American
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43 Idol). In this sense, when audience members feel that a reality shows focuses almost entirely on
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45 viewing that which is supposed to be private, it is deemed to be more heavily voyeuristic, while
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47 shows that are perceived to focus primarily on competition are often only partly deemed
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49 voyeuristic. Overall, it is this variance in the emphasis on voyeuristic practice across a wide
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51 range of businesses and industries that makes conceptualizing voyeurism as a social practice so
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3 fruitful for our theorizing – enabling us to explain the utility and the associated challenges as
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5 businesses seek to appropriate the practice to create value.
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8 What is deemed voyeuristic is determined by broad societal moral codes – codes with
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10 which audience members may agree or disagree, uphold or violate – about what is private and
11
12 forbidden to gaze upon (Calvert, 2004; Mulvey, 1975). However, it is important to note that even
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14 within a particular societal context, audience members may have different perceptions of
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16 whether something is or is not voyeuristic. While some audience members watching Love Island
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18 may feel that many scenes reveal real and intimate interactions that are not supposed to be
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20 viewed and therefore cross the public/private boundary, other audience members may see the
21
22 same scenes and feel that they are socially acceptable public moments. Therefore, particular
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24 manifestations of voyeuristic practice will still require interpretation by audience members.
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31 **Voyeurism and Value**

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33 We propose the value created by the practice of voyeurism is a *distinctive experience*
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35 (Michelson & Miller, 2019), which is both entertaining and revelatory (Ravasi, Rindova, &
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37 Dalpiaz, 2012). While there are a variety of approaches to understanding value creation in the
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39 literature (Priem, 2007), we adopt a consumer perspective, whereby value is a socially-
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41 constructed evaluation of worth by the consumer (Holbrook, 1999), or audience member². From
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43 this perspective, “value resides *not* in the product purchased, *not* in the brand chosen, *not* in the
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45 object possessed, but *rather* in the *consumption experience*” (Holbrook, 1999: 6). This is
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47 particularly relevant for products and services that provide pleasure, rather than fulfilling
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53 ² The term “audience” implies a more active engagement than “consumer”. Because we conceptualize voyeurism as
54 a social practice, which is necessarily relational (Bourdieu, 1990), we use the terms “performers” and “audiences” to
55 succinctly capture the two equally important and necessarily interdependent sides of the practice. Accordingly, we
56 use the terms “audience” (collective) and “audience member” (individual) – rather than consumer – throughout.
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3 utilitarian functions (Karpik, 2010). Such experiences are co-produced by multiple constituents,
4 including audience members themselves (Turner, Merle & Gotteland, 2020), leading to value
5 that is both cognitive and affective in nature (Gallarza, Gil-Saura & Holbrook, 2011).
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10 The experience generated by the practice of voyeurism is distinctive in that it meets the
11 needs or desires of audiences in ways that are not met through other experiences (Holbrook,
12 1999). For example, erotic webcam evolved out of perceived failure of scripted pornography to
13 cater to audiences' desire for an experience that exposes "real" sexuality; and MMA filled the
14 gap created by the belief that existing martial arts and boxing tournaments were too highly
15 controlled and failed to approximate the experience of a "real" fight (Helms & Patterson, 2014).
16
17 What makes a distinctive experience for audiences is the unique mix of entertainment and
18 revelation (Ravasi, Rindova, & Dalpiaz, 2012). Activities that allow people to glimpse into the
19 lives of others do so with "hedonistic aims of diversion, entertainment, and other visual
20 pleasures" (Calvert, 2004: 16). Voyeuristic practice also reveals aspects of private life to the
21 audience members, allowing them to experience a social reality that is not their own (Calvert,
22 2004). For example, in contrast to other types of tourism that explore an empty castle to show the
23 lives of those who used to live there, slum tourism is about the people going about their day, not
24 an empty slum (Frenzel, 2016). Thus, the value created by the practice of voyeurism is a
25 distinctive experience that is both entertaining and revelatory.
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47 **The Authenticity and Transgression of Voyeurism**

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49 We argue that the distinctive experience is created from two key dimensions of the
50 practice of voyeurism: (1) authenticity, a high degree of perceived genuineness and realness; and
51 (2) transgression, the violation of moral codes. Though they are both interwoven and
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3 interdependent, we separate authenticity and transgression for analytical purposes to articulate
4 the distinctive role that each play in the practice. In addition, both authenticity and transgression
5 have two facets – one related to performers and the other related to audiences (see Table 1 for an
6 overview of these two dimensions and each facet).
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12 [Insert Table 1 about here]
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14 **Authenticity.** Authenticity refers to “audience members’ subjective perceptions of an
15 organization’s [or a performer’s] external expressions as genuinely representing its identity”
16 (Demetry, 2019: 937), its perceived “realness” (Grazian, 2010). Studies have shown that for
17 experiential goods, such as music, dining, and dance, authenticity is a key aspect that enhances
18 the commercial appeal of the product or service (Glynn & Lounsbury, 2005; Kovács et al., 2014;
19 Lu & Fine, 1995). Partaking in voyeuristic practice offers audiences an opportunity to experience
20 something that feels like a genuine performance. For example, erotic webcam models engage in
21 sexual activities, while interacting with a live audience through the mediating architecture of the
22 computer website. By engaging in these activities, the performer “gives the promise to its
23 audience not to show ‘fake’ porn but to finally disclose every secret of sexuality kept within
24 private or intimate spheres” (Henze, 2013: 56).
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40 We adopt a cultural perspective on authenticity, which suggests that authenticity does not
41 inhere in people or things but is a social accomplishment (Alexander, 2004). As such, people and
42 objects are neither objectively authentic nor inauthentic. Appearing authentic requires effort and
43 technique (Peterson, 1997, 2005) to construct a symbolic and associational experience deemed
44 “real” by audiences (Lehman, Kovács, & Carroll, 2014; Weber, Heinze, & DeSoucey, 2008).
45 Thus, it is a social performance, and the objects have to be authenticated by relevant audiences
46 (Alexander, 2004; Demetry, 2019; Johnston & Baumann, 2007), based on emotional resonance,
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3 rather than cognitive assessment (Alexander, 2004; Giorgi, 2017; Massa, Helms, Voronov, &
4 Wang, 2017).
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8 Authenticity is therefore co-fabricated (Peterson, 1997) through a collective process of
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10 willing collaboration between performers and audiences (Alexander, 2004), as a “collective
11 illusion” (Demetry, 2019); and “authenticity itself can never be authentic, but must always be
12 performed, staged, fabricated, crafted, or otherwise imagined” (Grazian, 2010: 192). From this
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14 point of view, it is the search for experiences that feel authentic to audience members, and
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16 organizations’ efforts to deliver such experiences that are the primary concern (Hahl, Kim, &
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18 Zuckerman Sivan, 2018; Peterson, 2005; Steiner & Reisinger, 2006). This conceptualization of
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20 authenticity is important for theorizing the commercialization of voyeuristic practice, because it
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22 directs our attention to the social interaction between performers and audiences through which
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24 the appearance of authenticity is accomplished, as well as to the possibility of breakdowns of this
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26 accomplishment. Two facets of authenticity are especially important for our theorizing, and they
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28 both rely heavily on the intricate performer-audience co-production.
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35 The first facet, which we term *performer-role authenticity*, captures the relationship
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37 between the performers and the roles they seek to enact. It captures the degree to which a
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39 performer appears to inhabit their ascribed role in a manner that is deemed by audiences as fluid
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41 and natural (Voronov & Weber, 2016), such that the performers appear to “be themselves” and
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43 act in an unscripted manner, rather than performing a role, or “acting”. As Alexander (2004: 548)
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45 explained, “an authentic person seems to act without artifice, without self-consciousness, without
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47 reference to some laboriously thought-out plan or text, without concern for manipulating the
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49 context of her actions, and without worries about that action’s audience or its effects.” Even if
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51 the audience members know that the performance has been created for their benefit, performer-
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3 role authenticity lies in the performers' putatively unscripted and spontaneous responses to the
4 unfolding action and interactions that appear "real" (Ashforth & Tomiuk, 2000; Hochschild,
5 1979). In this sense, an authentic performance in the practice of voyeurism is a simulacra, a
6 simulated reality that aims to obscure its simulatedness (Eco, 1986). We argue that this
7 performer-role authenticity is fundamental to the success of voyeuristic practice, whereby
8 audiences seek glimpses of the performers' genuine selves and the sense that the performers are
9 "being themselves."
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19 The other facet of authenticity that is important for our theorizing is *audience-*
20 *performance authenticity*, which is the degree to which audiences are immersed in the
21 performance due to the visceral and minimally mediated nature of the experience. This facet of
22 authenticity is relevant to many experience goods, ranging from live music performances (Glynn
23 & Lounsbury, 2005) to pop-up restaurants (Demetry, 2019), where audiences are offered a
24 uniquely immersive live experience. The performance attempts to construct a "full-scale
25 authentic copy" that immerses the audience into the scene (Eco, 1986: 6). We expect audience-
26 performance authenticity to be an important facet of voyeuristic practice since it offers audiences
27 a sense of having an unvarnished and intimate look at the real lived experiences of performers,
28 "such that the members of the audience project themselves into the characters they see onstage"
29 (Alexander, 2004: 531). For example, slum tourism might purport to offer audience-performance
30 authenticity by transporting audience members directly to the slum and enabling them to
31 experience the physical, aural, and even olfactory aspects of the "performance". Further, this
32 facet of authenticity might be enhanced by incorporating interactive components that increase the
33 feeling of unscriptedness. For example, interacting with webcam models helps audience
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3 members feel immersed in the performance by co-creating what happens next. In this sense, the
4 audience-performance authenticity can increase the sense of a genuine performance.
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8 Voyeuristic practice is likely to create more value when it offers high levels of both
9 facets of authenticity; that is, when the audience is highly immersed in a performance that
10 appears to be genuine and unscripted. However, both facets are not always possible to generate.
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12 It is not always viable to transport audience members into these settings, and so audience-
13 performance authenticity is not present in all forms of voyeuristic practice. But even when there
14 is little audience-performance authenticity, voyeuristic practice can create value through
15 performer-role authenticity, since it is the unscriptedness of the performance that generates the
16 perception of “reality” for audiences. Overall, authenticity is fundamental to the distinctive
17 experience created by the practice of voyeurism, as viewing private worlds is predicated on the
18 realness of what is presented to the audience.
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31 **Transgression.** The second dimension of the practice of voyeurism is transgression.
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33 Transgression is a deviant behavior or a taboo that violates the established moral codes of a
34 given community (Douglas, 1966; Sabri, Manceau & Pras, 2010), activities that “defy norms of
35 civility” and create a “blemish on one’s ‘character’” (Ashforth & Kreiner, 2014: 83, 84). The
36 particular violation may not be illegal, but rather may be disapproved of and socially sanctioned.
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38 Yet in either case, breaching the boundary is a violation that “pollutes” or disturbs the moral
39 order (Douglas, 1966; Durkheim, 1973) and organizations often face severe repercussions for
40 engaging in such behaviors (Devers et al., 2009; Durand & Vergne, 2015; Hampel & Tracey,
41 2017). While the majority of the literature focuses on the detrimental implications of
42 transgressing (e.g., Barlow et al., 2018; Elsbach & Sutton, 1992; Hudson & Okhuysen, 2009;
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3 Michelson & Miller, 2019; Pollack et al., 2019), transgression is an important part of creating the
4 distinctive experience for audiences engaging in the practice of voyeurism.
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8 We argue that transgression can be part of the appeal since it helps generate a distinctive
9 experience not found in other commercial exchanges (Helms & Patterson, 2014; Tyler, 2011).
10 For example, rules in many societies prohibit the sale of goods related to life, death or sexuality
11 (Anteby, 2010; Fiske & Tetlock, 1997; Sabri et al., 2010), yet producers of popular culture can
12 violate this moral boundary to show glimpses into these realms in order to grab attention and
13 “titillate the imagination” (Stone & Sharpley, 2013: 4; see also Sabri, Manceau & Pras, 2010).
14 The practice of voyeurism, specifically, generates a distinctive experience by violating the
15 public-private boundary that demarcates what is acceptable public behavior and what is only
16 acceptable in private spheres, not for public viewing (Calvert, 2004; Mulvey, 1975). The private
17 nature of what is being viewed means that it is often inaccessible in other commercial exchanges.
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31 Two facets of transgression are important in voyeuristic practice. The first facet is
32 transgression in *viewing the act*, which is the degree to which the audience violates moral codes
33 by purposefully witnessing that which should be private (Calvert, 2004; Mulvey, 1975).
34 Watching aspects of others’ lives is becoming increasingly acceptable, and people vary in their
35 interpretations of whether an activity violates moral codes. Yet “there are some forms of
36 ‘looking’ or ‘watching’ that are not appropriate and that fall outside the boundary of acceptable
37 conduct” (Calvert, 2004: 51-52). We argue that this transgression in viewing the act is
38 fundamental to the experience of voyeurism. It is not just watching any aspect of someone else’s
39 life, but watching activities that are supposed to be private, which carries at least some degree of
40 transgression.
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3 The other facet that is important for our theorizing is transgression in the *nature of the*
4 *act*, which is the degree to which the performer or performance being conducted violates moral
5 codes. In voyeurism, the performer is providing “exhibitionism-in-service-of-voyeurism”
6 (Calvert, 2004). For example, MMA has been condemned by many audiences because it is
7 viewed by some to be “human cockfighting” (Helms & Patterson, 2014: 1457). The extreme
8 nature of the performance violates moral codes about acceptable forms and levels of violence. In
9 voyeurism, the actual performance being watched can vary greatly in the degree of transgression.
10 For example, erotic webcam is generally perceived to be more transgressive than slum tourism,
11 since the public display of sexuality in erotic webcam more strongly violates public/private
12 boundaries. Yet, even when the nature of the act is not perceived as highly transgressive, the
13 practice of voyeurism remains transgressive, due to the moral code violations associated with
14 viewing the private lives of others – the act of viewing those in the slum is still perceived to be
15 transgressive by many, even though the nature of the act, people going about their daily lives, is
16 not.

17 Thus, the value created by commercializing the practice of voyeurism is rooted in
18 engaging audience members in a transgressive performance not normally available to them, a
19 performance of private life that is inherently forbidden. Both audiences (by transgressing in
20 viewing the act) and performers (by engaging in a potentially transgressive act) are involved in
21 the production of transgression. Though audience members vary in their individual perceptions
22 of both types of transgression, these aspects of voyeuristic practice are classified as transgressive
23 to the extent that they violate dominant societal moral codes.

The Challenge of Creating Value through Authenticity and Transgression

We have suggested that the authenticity and transgression of voyeuristic practice facilitate value creation by generating a distinctive experience for audiences. However, these same dimensions can also repel audiences. The violation of societal moral codes has been found to hinder value creation in a number of instances, particularly when the activities generate negative social evaluations (Barlow et al., 2018; Bitektine, 2011; Bundy & Pfarrer, 2015; Devers et al., 2009; Durand & Vergne, 2015; Pollack, et al., 2019). Businesses or industries that cannot change their behavior are expected to hide or downplay their stigmatizing attributes (Elsbach & Sutton, 1992; Slade Shantz et al., 2019; Vergne, 2012). Importantly, core audiences might avoid partaking in a transgressive practice offered by organizations for fear of being stigmatized (Barlow et al., 2018; Hudson & Okhuysen, 2009).

Additionally, the extreme authenticity of voyeuristic practice can also repel audiences. Though most management literature has focused on the positive implications of authenticity (e.g., Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Carroll & Wheaton, 2009; Hatch & Schultz, 2017; Kovács, Carroll, & Lehman, 2014; Massa et al., 2017), cultural sociology has acknowledged that authenticity can also have a dark side (e.g., Hahl et al., 2018). Knowing a horror film is fake can allow people to watch incredibly gruesome acts, whereas, the reality of “snuff” films—which show putatively real acts of violence and murder—is too real for most audiences (Jones, 2011); the rules of boxing and wrestling assure people that it is acceptable to watch, in contrast to the unrestrained “no holds barred” fighting in MMA deemed too real by many audience members (Helms & Patterson, 2014).

Given that the same dimensions that attract audiences can also repel them, existing theories cannot fully explain how businesses utilizing the practice of voyeurism create value for

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3 audiences. We argue that the ability of businesses utilizing voyeuristic practice to create and
4
5 deliver value to audiences hinges on managing the emotional responses of audiences.
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10 **EMOTIONS AND VOYEURISTIC PRACTICE**

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12 The consumer perspective on value creation highlights the centrality of emotions as a
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14 mode of consumers' engagement with the value-creating experience (e.g., Gallarza, Gil-Saura &
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16 Holbrook, 2011; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Oliver, 1999). In particular, both dimensions
17
18 constituting the voyeuristic practice – authenticity and transgression – typically provoke
19
20 emotional reactions from audiences (Alexander, 2004; Grazian, 2010; Pollock et al., 2019).
21
22 Accordingly, the distinctive experience that comes from the practice of voyeurism is one that
23
24 must be *felt* by audiences and not merely cognitively deduced, and the emotional responses of
25
26 audience members are critically important to value creation for businesses utilizing voyeuristic
27
28 practice. We argue that audience members' emotional responses to the authentic and
29
30 transgressive performance can be either desirable, supporting value creation; or undesirable,
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32 hindering value creation.
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40 **Desirable Emotional Responses**

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42 Generating an emotional response allows audience members to feel the distinctive
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44 experience (Gallarza, Gil-Saura & Holbrook, 2011; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Oliver, 1999).
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46 The audience is engaged in an entertaining experience when they feel, for example, excitement,
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48 or thrill; the audience is engaged in a revelatory experience when they feel, for example, awe or
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50 connectedness.
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3 It is also important to acknowledge that the types of emotions that enable the distinctive
4 experience to be felt by audience members are not only those considered to be positive emotions.
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6 While the literature has found that most people desire experiences that elicit positive emotions
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8 and avoid those that lead to negative emotions (Bloor, Jose, & Roseman, 2020; Loonen &
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10 Ivanova, 2018), experiences and emotional responses can be much more complex (Rothman,
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12 Pratt, Rees, & Vogus, 2017), and people may desire not only positive but also negative
13
14 emotional experiences (Lindebaum & Gabriel, 2016; Stein, 2001). In fact, positive emotions can
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16 help to buffer the adverse impacts of negative emotions, and can together lead to stronger
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18 engagement than either positive or negative alone (e.g., Wijaya, Toubiana & Heugens, 2018).
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20 Participating in voyeuristic practice may trigger negative emotions alongside the positive ones,
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22 and it is this mix of positive and negative emotions that generates the desirable emotional
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24 response essential to feeling the distinctive experience.
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31 Indeed, a survey of slum tourists reported mixed emotional responses, such as being
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33 intrigued, happy, impressed, overwhelmed, upset, and uncomfortable (Ma, 2010), and these
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35 emotional responses – while clearly including negative and positive emotions – are desirable in
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37 this context as manifestations of having an entertaining and revelatory experience. The risk of
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39 being in the “danger zone” (Douglas, 1966; Sabri et al., 2010), making contact with those who
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41 are on the margins of society, increases the excitement and curiosity, and also the shock, fear,
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43 anxiety, and other emotions typically considered negative in other contexts. Thus, the distinctive
44
45 experience that voyeuristic practice can provide relies on a mix of emotions from both the
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47 authenticity and transgression inherent in the experience, thereby attracting the audience.
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Undesirable Emotional Responses

The authenticity and transgression of voyeuristic practice, however, can also trigger undesirable emotional responses that lead audience members to disengage from, rather than feel, the distinctive experience. We argue that an emotional response is undesirable when, negative emotions and/or moral emotions triggered from the practice lead to evaluative processes. The evaluative responses hinder the value associated with voyeuristic practice by directing audience members' attention away from the entertaining and revelatory experience and toward the self or others.

First, negative emotions become part of an undesirable emotional response when they trigger threat evaluations. For example, anxiety has been found to shift a person's attention away from the experience they are engaged in and toward whether they are capable of managing the threat (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002). Fear can also potentially disrupt audience engagement in the experience, as the audience members shift their attention to issues of safety to reduce this negative affect threat (Wu & Liang, 2011; Wurff, Stringer, & Timmer, 1988). Thus we argue that negative emotions, such as feeling repulsed by an act in a reality TV show, become undesirable if they trigger threat evaluations that disengage the audience member from the experience. In such instances, the audience member then attends to the issue associated with the negative emotions, instead of being engaged or "swept away" in an entertaining and revelatory experience. Accordingly, in the context of voyeuristic practice, negative emotions such as shock, revulsion, fear and anxiety can be a value-enhancing part of the mix of emotions. However, when negative emotions trigger threat evaluations, they are likely to lead some audience members to disengage from the distinctive experience, thereby hindering value.

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3 Second, the moral emotions associated with authenticity and transgressiveness of
4 voyeuristic practice can also hinder value creation. Moral emotions such as shame, guilt,
5
6 empathy, and contempt serve as “sign-posts for evaluating people’s behavior and can provide
7
8 instantaneous feedback as to how greatly the act either supports or breaks the strictures of moral
9
10 systems” (Harkness & Hitlin, 2014: 452). As such, audience members attending to moral
11
12 emotions can be undesirable, if the focus shifts from enjoyment to an evaluative process that
13
14 involves moral deliberation (Stets & Turner, 2006; Tangney, Stuewig, & Mashek, 2007). For
15
16 example, if audience members attend to shame or guilt due to the awareness that they are
17
18 engaging in behavior that some may view as transgressive, these self-evaluations (Creed,
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20 Hudson, Okhuysen & Smith-Crowe, 2014; Scheff, 1988) are likely to shift attention away from
21
22 the entertaining and revelatory experience at hand. Instead of feeling engaged in the experience,
23
24 audience members may, for instance, feel they are doing wrong, leading them to distance
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26 themselves or attempt to right the wrong (Haidt, 2003; Wright, Zammuto, & Liesch, 2017).
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33 Even positive moral emotions, such as empathy, can hinder value creation if they trigger
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35 evaluations that disrupt engagement in the entertaining and revelatory experience. Some
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37 audience members may empathize with performers due to the authenticity of the social
38
39 interaction. When they attend to this emotion, audience members turn their attention to concern
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41 for the performers and their own participation in the practice, thereby disrupting enjoyment of
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43 the spectacle. For instance, empathizing with slum residents living in deprived conditions can
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45 lead to moral evaluations of self and others, instead of feeling engaged in the entertaining and
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47 revelatory experience (Frenzel, 2016). To be sure, we are not suggesting that moral emotions
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49 always lead to undesirable emotional responses. However, these emotions do so when they
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3 trigger evaluations of self and/or others that disengage the audience members from the
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5 experience.
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8 Disengaging from the practice might mean that audience members passively disengage
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10 and simply discontinue participation. Alternatively, disengagement might mean audience
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12 members are motivated to take action to resolve the emotional dissonance that can result from
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14 emotional responses that threaten one's identity (Jansz & Timmers, 2002). This more active
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16 disengagement may involve vocal opposition to the practice, as we have seen with MMA (Helms
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18 & Patterson, 2014) and other stigmatized practices (e.g., Coslor, Crawford, & Brents, 2020;
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20 Hampel & Tracey, 2017; Tracey & Phillips, 2016; Vergne, 2012). The particular response is
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22 likely dependent on the undesirable response triggered. If fear is so salient that it disengages the
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24 audience member, they may simply stop the practice to reduce the fear (Wurff, Stringer, &
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26 Timmer, 1988). If, however, the undesirable response is empathy, guilt or even moral anger,
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28 individuals might be driven not only to stop engaging in the practice, but to take action to reduce
29
30 the feeling (Haidt, 2003; Wright et al., 2017). This could involve efforts, for example, to help
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32 those in poverty or it could be to punish and condemn businesses for what they feel is exploiting
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34 those in poverty for financial gain (Frenzel, 2016).
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40 In sum, the authenticity and transgression of the performance is likely to generate
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42 emotional responses that are both desirable and undesirable for the purposes of value creation.
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44 As such, a central role for businesses utilizing the practice of voyeurism is to manage the
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46 emotional responses elicited by the authenticity and transgression of the performance in order to
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48 ensure value is delivered to audiences and not hindered. However, doing so poses a number of
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50 challenges, since actions that reduce undesirable emotional responses are likely to also threaten
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52 emotions that are desirable for value creation. This balancing act becomes challenging for
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3 businesses seeking to attract and retain larger and more diverse audiences. In the following
4
5 section, we theorize how businesses managing these challenges work to ensure value is delivered
6
7 through what we refer to as *emotional optimization*.
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10 11 12 **EMOTIONAL OPTIMIZATION**

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14 We define emotional optimization as efforts to reduce undesirable emotional responses
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16 by dampening the authenticity or transgression in the practice, while reinforcing the associated
17
18 desirable emotional responses. While there is no exact combination of these mechanisms that
19
20 will optimize the emotional responses of all audience members, emotional optimization is
21
22 particularly relevant when businesses aim to deliver value to large and diverse audiences. See
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24 Table 2 for an overview of each of the mechanisms of emotional optimization, including the aim,
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26 activities used, potential threats to the desirable emotional response, and compensatory activities
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28 used to minimize the threats.
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32 [Insert Table 2 about here]
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37 **Optimizing Emotional Responses by Dampening Authenticity**

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39 Left unchecked, the impression of authenticity inherent in voyeuristic practice can
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41 generate an undesirable emotional response that may disengage audience members from the
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43 experience and thereby hinder value creation. We describe two mechanisms through which
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45 businesses attempt to optimize the emotions associated with authenticity: shielding audiences
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47 and depersonalizing performers.
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51 **Shielding audiences.** Shielding audiences involves taking steps to protect audience
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53 safety to manage potential undesirable emotional responses. Shielding audiences is most relevant
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55 when the voyeuristic practice is deemed to have a high degree of audience-performance
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3 authenticity, where the audience is deeply immersed in the performance, and moderation may be
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5 required. This is most likely to occur when engaging in voyeuristic practice that carries
6
7 significant danger for the audience, such as the risk of physical or psychological harm. For
8
9 example, walking around a slum or being too close to a fight may lead to overwhelming feelings
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11 of fear for one's safety. Shielding audiences is intended to prevent the negative emotions
12
13 generated in the voyeuristic practice from disengaging audience members.
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17 To shield audiences, businesses highlight how their intermediary activities keep the
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19 audience safe while in the "danger zone" (Douglas, 1966), providing "safe ways to gaze" (Baruh,
20
21 2010: 2004). In some cases, this involves activities that showcase the safety measures that have
22
23 been put in place. For example, using buses for slum tours and highlighting that the tour guide
24
25 knows safe routes, or showcasing privacy measures in erotic webcam to assure the audiences that
26
27 they are safely accessing the voyeuristic practice through a business intermediary. While the
28
29 performance aims to offer an experience that feels "real", shielding audiences is key to offering a
30
31 safer, albeit less authentic, alternative to illicit activities. In this way, the simulatedness of this
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33 reality can offers benefits that real life cannot (Borgmann, 1992), such as immersion in a context
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35 that is otherwise inaccessible, thereby attracting a broader audience to businesses
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37 commercializing voyeuristic practice.
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42 While shielding audiences is meant to minimize undesirable emotional responses, it can
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44 also threaten the desirable responses that enable audience members to feel the distinctive
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46 experience. This is because the desirable emotions elicited from authenticity, such as awe or joy,
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48 are likely to also be reduced. Thus, businesses use audience-shielding measures prudently and
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50 may even engage in compensatory activities to bolster audience-performance authenticity in
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52 other ways, thereby reinforcing desirable emotional reactions. When possible, businesses can
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3 shield audiences by limiting “unsafe” immersion, but also set up specific sites of more
4
5 unrestrained interaction. For example, slum tour guides bring the audience into the home of one
6
7 resident where live and unscripted interaction is possible and encouraged. By interacting with the
8
9 resident, the audience is deeply immersed and able to co-produce the performance to maintain
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11 the sense of audience-performance authenticity, but in a contained context that is safely managed
12
13 by the business to reduce undesirable emotional responses.
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16
17 Shielding audiences can also threaten the emotional responses associated with
18
19 transgression, particularly in regard to the nature of the act. This is because reducing the
20
21 authenticity to make it safer is likely to make the overall performance seem less illicit. As a
22
23 result of the reduction in audience-performance authenticity, we expect businesses to use
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25 compensatory activities to bolster the sense of transgressiveness. Businesses may highlight the
26
27 inherent danger of the context to reinforce the audience members’ desirable emotions, such as
28
29 excitement. In fact, businesses might showcase how their own activities keep the audience safe –
30
31 the businesses’ own knowledge and access to the context that implicates the business as a
32
33 necessary intermediary. For example, tour guides clearly articulate the various elements of
34
35 danger that exist due to crime or unsafe environments, while explaining the precautions that keep
36
37 the audience “safe” (Frenzel, 2016). Emphasizing the safety efforts may help to exaggerate the
38
39 transgressiveness of the act. For instance, the use of cages in MMA, as opposed to less
40
41 constraining barriers used in boxing or the lack of barriers in traditional martial arts
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43 competitions, increases the sense that MMA fights are more violent and dangerous, while
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45 simultaneously shielding audiences.
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51 **Depersonalizing performers.** Depersonalizing performers focuses on reducing potential
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53 undesirable emotional responses in audiences that are associated with performer-role authenticity
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3 – the degree to which performers appear to inhabit their ascribed role in a manner that is deemed
4 by audiences as unscripted and “real”. It involves divesting personal characteristics from
5 performers to prevent the audience from over-identifying with them, thereby reducing the
6 potential for moral emotions (e.g., empathy) that may be activated by the performer-role
7 authenticity to disrupt the experience. This mechanism is employed to ensure that performer-role
8 authenticity does not cause audience members to over-identify with the performers as complete
9 human beings, but instead reaffirms them as simulated hyper-realistic characters that are part of
10 the experience (Borgmann, 1992; Eco, 1986). Depersonalizing performers therefore is meant to
11 manage moral emotions related to the audience members’ feeling of connectedness with
12 performers’ “real” selves, so that these emotions do not trigger evaluative processes that
13 disengage audience members. For example, feeling a strong sense of empathy for MMA fighters
14 can prevent audience members from viewing the fights as a source of entertainment, instead
15 shifting attention to critiquing oneself for participating when a fighter is injured.
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33 Depersonalizing performers is facilitated by activities that create symbolic or material
34 boundaries between performers and audiences. Businesses may set up parameters that clearly
35 limit how much “extra-role” information performers disclose – allowing only information
36 directly related to the performance to be revealed while restricting other personal details. For
37 example, webcam models might be discouraged from talking about their lives outside of webcam
38 in order to prevent audience members from developing empathy or compassion for the models,
39 instead presenting a “bounded authenticity” to the audience (Bernstein, 2007: 6). In other cases,
40 depersonalization is accomplished through material boundaries: MMA fighters are in a cage and
41 audiences in slum tourism walk around the slum as more passive viewers. The effect of this
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3 separation can lead to an “exoticizing” of performers, as they are clearly demarcated as the
4
5 “other” (Small, 2015).
6

7
8 Depersonalizing performers, while necessary to manage undesirable emotional responses,
9
10 requires a careful balance, as it can threaten desirable emotional responses related to authenticity.
11
12 When limiting the scope of performer-role authenticity, businesses are likely to engage in
13
14 compensatory activities that reinforce desirable emotional reactions by amplifying specific
15
16 elements of performer-role authenticity. While certain topics are discouraged in the performance,
17
18 heightened personalization of acceptable topics may be encouraged to compensate for the
19
20 depersonalization. This might involve mining performers’ biographies for material that is
21
22 especially relevant to the voyeuristic practice. Erotic webcam performers, for example, may
23
24 strongly reveal personal aspects related to their sexuality, while keeping other aspects of their
25
26 family lives much more hidden.
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33 **Optimizing Emotions by Dampening Transgression**

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36 The transgressiveness of voyeuristic practice also can generate undesirable emotional
37
38 responses for many audience members, which can lead the audience members to disengage from
39
40 the distinctive experience and thereby hinder value. We describe two mechanisms through which
41
42 businesses attempt to optimize the emotional responses associated with transgression:
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44 moderating the act and granting permission.
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47 **Moderating the Act.** Moderating the act focuses on reducing undesirable emotional
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49 responses that can result from the transgressive nature of the act. Specifically, it involves
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51 regulating the nature of the performance so that negative emotions such as revulsion, dislike, or
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53 even sadness, which can accompany witnessing a transgressive act, do not disengage audience
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3 members from the distinctive experience. This form of emotional optimization is most relevant
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5 when the nature of the act is deemed to be highly transgressive (e.g., the public displays of
6
7 sexuality in erotic webcam).
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10 Moderating the act involves reducing the extremity of the performance, by directly
11
12 restricting what can be done, or indirectly editing what is presented. For example, businesses
13
14 may moderate the act by prohibiting certain types of activities. For instance, webcamming
15
16 platforms often set rules that forbid performers from engaging in certain acts that could be
17
18 deemed “repulsive” (e.g., “degrading dialog,” extreme or violent sexual activities). While some
19
20 of these rules may substantively reduce the risk of harm, we argue that a key function of these
21
22 rules is to ensure the performance does not get so extreme that the negative emotions (e.g.,
23
24 revulsion) lead audience members to disengage from the distinctive experience.
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28 As with the other mechanisms, moderating the act can also threaten desirable emotional
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30 responses, particularly those associated with the perceived transgressiveness of the act, as well as
31
32 with the performer-role authenticity. If audience members can feel that the performance is rule-
33
34 bound or edited, this can reduce the sense of its “realness” (i.e., authenticity), and/or the shock or
35
36 excitement from the extreme transgressiveness. For instance, the rules and regulations in boxing
37
38 and other martial arts competitions lead to the desire for something more akin to street fighting
39
40 (Helms & Patterson, 2014), which was seen as real and more transgressive for its violence. As
41
42 such, businesses tend to moderate transgression as subtly as possible. They might make the rules
43
44 unspoken or try to make edits unnoticeable, so that the performance does not lose the feeling of
45
46 being real and transgressive. In reality television, editors modify how the story plays out by
47
48 curating and editing the content to manage the audience’s emotional responses. For example,
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50 editors discuss cutting extreme scenes to reduce the potential for overpowering negative
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3 emotions; however, they also emphasize curating to keep the content personal (see Premium
4 Beat, 2015). In doing so, these editors aim to dampen the transgression while maintaining the
5
6 sense of performer-role authenticity, reinforcing the desirable emotional responses.
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10 **Granting permission.** Granting permission is intended to reduce undesirable emotional
11 responses stemming from the audience members' transgression in viewing the act. It involves
12 creating the impression that performers are consenting or willing participants in the voyeuristic
13 practice. In doing so, it aims to manage the potential for moral emotions, such as shame or guilt,
14 from disengaging audience members from the distinctive experience. By casting the performer as
15 a "willing exhibitionist" (Baruh, 2010: 204), businesses dampen the transgressiveness of
16 viewing. Granting permission aims to prevent moral emotions from triggering an evaluative
17 process where audience members' attention shifts to critiquing themselves for their own
18 transgression in viewing. Therefore, granting permission is most relevant when viewing is
19 perceived to be most transgressive.
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33 One way to grant permission is by emphasizing the transactional nature of the performer-
34 audience relationship. The performers appear to give consent through the commodification of the
35 practice. Even in slum tourism, where most of the residents are not compensated, consent is
36 emphasized by calling attention to the fact that the tour guide and a resident who cooks the lunch
37 for visitors are themselves slum residents who earn income from and consent to the transaction.
38
39 In addition, permission can be granted to audiences through the introduction of a "counter-
40 narrative" (e.g., Hardy & Maguire, 2010) that complements the dominant narrative about the
41 performer. Counter-narratives use storytelling to create an alternative representation of
42 performers. For example, in slum tourism, guides often introduce a "slums of hope" narrative
43 that emphasizes the entrepreneurialness of the slum residents and provides a counter to the
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3 dominant “slums of despair” narrative (Nuisssl & Heinrichs, 2013); slum residents are
4 entrepreneurial and are not living in despair (Frenzel, 2016). Similarly, in erotic webcam, a
5 counter-narrative of empowered sex workers is often highlighted to provide a counter to the
6 dominant narrative of webcam models as exploited victims (Ozgun, 2015). The presence of this
7 counter-narrative makes it appear less transgressive and more acceptable for audience members
8 to view such entrepreneurial and empowered performances.
9

10
11 Like the other forms of emotional optimization, granting permission can pose a threat to
12 the desirable emotional responses. For instance, the introduction of a counter-narrative is likely
13 to reduce the perceived transgressiveness of the act, threatening desirable emotions, such as
14 shock, thrill, or pity. Accordingly, businesses seek to actively balance the new counter-narrative
15 with the dominant cultural narrative, reinforcing the desirable emotional responses. For example,
16 in slum tourism, instead of replacing the dominant narrative, the counter-narrative of hope exists
17 in parallel with the narrative of despair, as vicariously experiencing the despair is often part of
18 what audiences’ seek (Ma, 2010). Therefore, the counter-narrative is designed to reduce the
19 undesirable emotional responses (e.g., certain moral emotions), while the presence of the
20 dominant narrative is intended to reinforce the desirable emotional responses.
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23
24 **Summary.** In sum, we argue that emotional optimization is used by businesses to
25 manage the emotional responses from voyeuristic practice, in order to help audiences feel the
26 entertaining and revelatory experience. While individual audience members vary, emotional
27 optimization allows businesses utilizing voyeuristic practice to deliver value to large and diverse
28 audiences.
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31 Both the degree and types of emotional optimization that businesses engage in are likely
32 to be driven by the type of voyeuristic practice and the degree of authenticity and transgression
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3 that audiences associate with the performance. As we suggest above, moderating the act is likely
4 to be particularly important when the nature of the act is viewed as especially transgressive. This
5 is perhaps why detailed codes of conduct exist for webcam models and was an important part of
6 the early success of MMA (Helms & Patterson, 2014). Shielding audiences, on the other hand, is
7 particularly important when an especially high degree of audience-performance authenticity is
8 likely to elicit overwhelming negative emotions. For example, because slums have a reputation
9 for being unsafe and unwelcoming to outsiders, it is important for businesses to emphasize their
10 efforts to protect the audience while they are deeply immersed in the context; webcam audiences,
11 in contrast, are protected by the technological mediation, and therefore shielding efforts are
12 likely less important. Thus, it is the degree of authenticity and transgression of the performance
13 that dictates both the type and extent of emotional optimization used to deliver value to
14 audiences.

15
16
17 Further, given that audiences are not homogeneous, and businesses face a mix of
18 audience members in any given performance, ensuring the ideal balance of emotional
19 optimization is a highly complex and uncertain task. Accordingly, we would expect businesses to
20 vary in their use of these mechanisms, as they attempt to balance the competing attraction and
21 repulsion created by the authenticity and transgression of the practice, and deliver value to their
22 targeted audiences.

23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 **DISCUSSION**

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49 The social practice of voyeurism is widespread in society and has been increasingly
50 commercialized across multiple industries. While the practice is seen as central to value creation
51 in some industries, like erotic webcam, slum tourism, MMA, and reality television, businesses in

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3 other industries, from the news media to social media influencers, also utilize the practice to
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5 some extent. However, despite its prevalence, existing management research has not adequately
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7 explained the commercialization of voyeurism, since the practice challenges existing
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9 assumptions about the impact of authenticity and transgression on value creation. Our paper
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11 conceptualizes voyeurism as a social practice and explicates how businesses utilizing the practice
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13 aim to create value for audiences.
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19 **The Practice of Voyeurism and Value Creation**

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21 We provide a means to identify and dimensionalize the commercial utility of voyeuristic
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23 practice. Specifically, we identify the common characteristics of the practice that manifest across
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25 widely diverse businesses and industries. Though slum tourism, reality television, erotic
26
27 webcam, and MMA are very different from one another, they are united by their utilization of
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29 voyeuristic practice. Further, the practice lens allows us to acknowledge intra-industry variation
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31 in the extent to which voyeurism is drawn upon. For example, where some forms of news media
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33 are seen as utilizing voyeuristic practice sparingly and less overtly (e.g., 24-hour news
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35 networks), others are perceived to heavily and blatantly incorporate the practice (e.g., celebrity
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37 lifestyle news programs; Linkof, 2018). Thus, conceptualizing voyeurism as a social practice
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39 helps create the connective tissue that links a wide range of different industries that are united by
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41 their utilization of a common practice.
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47 Our conceptualization of voyeurism as a practice enables us to develop a novel theory of
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49 the commercialization of voyeurism that unpacks how businesses utilize the practice in their
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51 efforts to create and deliver value to audiences (see Figure 1). As we have explained, voyeuristic
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53 practice first involves bringing performers and audiences together for what feels like an authentic
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3 and transgressive performance. In slum tourism, it is the tour guides that bring performers and
4 audiences together (Frenzel & Blakemann, 2015). In MMA, this role is taken on by the
5 promoters, producers, and television networks that create the stage for the fights (Helms &
6 Patterson, 2014). In erotic webcam, it is the online platforms, such as www.chaturbate.com and
7 www.myfreecams.com, which facilitate the interaction (Henze, 2013). Although these are very
8 different entities, they each work to connect performers with audiences for the authentic and
9 transgressive performance.
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19 [Insert Figure 1 about here]
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21 Our model outlines two pathways related to the value of voyeuristic practice that are
22 rooted in the emotional responses of audiences. The value creation pathway involves desirable
23 emotional responses that enable audience members to feel the distinctive experience. For
24 example, emotional responses that include excitement, thrill, and shock, are desirable in that they
25 allow the audience to feel that they are having an entertaining and revelatory experience. The
26 value destruction pathway involves undesirable emotional responses in which negative emotions
27 (e.g., fear or anxiety) or moral emotions (e.g., shame, guilt or empathy) trigger evaluative
28 processes that disengage audience members from the distinctive experience. For example, left
29 unchecked, reality TV could easily move beyond being a “guilty pleasure” toward something
30 that makes audience members feel too guilty to watch (Baruh, 2010).
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44 Indeed, the very notion of a guilty pleasure indicates a complex mix of what are
45 considered to be positive and negative emotions. We show how some emotions widely
46 considered to be negative, such as pity or disgust (Bloor, Jose, Roseman, 2020; Loonen &
47 Ivanova, 2018), can be desirable for value creation, whereas moral emotions often considered to
48 be beneficial, such as empathy (Rumble, Van Lang, & Parks, 2010), can be undesirable for the
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3 purposes of value creation. In our theorizing, thus, the desirability of an emotional response is
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5 dependent on whether they engage or disengage audience members from the distinctive
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7 experience. For businesses utilizing voyeuristic practice, it is often a much more diverse mix of
8
9 emotions involved in value creation than existing research has accounted for. Our explication of
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11 emotional optimization in the context of voyeuristic practice responds to the call to better
12
13 understand how emotions manifest and connect people to different forms of social practice
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15 (Zietsma, Toubiana, Voronov, & Roberts, 2019). In doing so, we advance research that
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17 highlights the role of emotions, and especially mixed emotions, in organizational and
18
19 institutional processes more broadly (e.g., Hochschild, 1979; Moisander et al., 2015; Ruebottom
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21 & Auster, 2018).

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26 The value creation and destruction pathways associated with voyeuristic practice that we
27
28 identify present a duality that must be managed by businesses. While most research in
29
30 management has focused its attention on how authenticity is unproblematically beneficial (e.g.,
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32 Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Hatch & Schultz, 2017; Kovács, Carroll, & Lehman, 2014) and
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34 transgression is detrimental to businesses (e.g., Barlow et al., 2018; Devers et al., 2009; Durand
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36 & Vergne, 2015; Elsbach & Sutton, 1992; Hampel & Tracey, 2017; Pollack, et al., 2019), these
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38 assumptions do not hold for the commercialization of voyeuristic practice where the same
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40 sources that create value for audiences – authenticity and transgression – also have the potential
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42 to destroy it. In order to create and deliver value, businesses utilizing the practice aim to
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44 manipulate the perceived authenticity and/or transgressiveness of the performance as a means of
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46 reducing undesirable emotional responses while reinforcing desirable responses.

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51 In identifying and dimensionalizing the social practice of voyeurism, we develop a
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53 stronger foundation for a more nuanced examination of the role of voyeuristic practice in society
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3 and in business, including ethical considerations surrounding the practice (e.g., Calvert, 2004;
4 Lisle, 2004; Whyte et al., 2011; Williams, 2008). Existing ethical critiques of voyeuristic
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6 practice either argue in favor of a particular activity due to the potential for political action
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8 (Frenzel, 2016), or against the voyeurism inherent in the activity due to the exoticizing and
9
10 distancing that occurs in creating a “spectacle” (Calvert, 2004). For example, critics have argued
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12 that commercial slum tourism offers nothing more than a “dark and voyeuristic gaze that dwells
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14 on the enjoyment of horror and suffering” (Frenzel, 2016: 34). Similarly, MMA has been argued
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16 to engage in deliberate production of carceral violence as popular entertainment (Salter &
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18 Tomsen, 2011).
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24 Proponents of voyeuristic practice note that it can have a positive effect by humanizing
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26 performers through close and intimate interaction with audiences (Calvert, 2004). Yet our
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28 theorizing offers insights on the limits of humanizing through voyeurism. For example, reality
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30 television shows like RuPaul’s Drag race or slum tours are simultaneously exoticizing
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32 marginalized communities while normalizing them. Over time, normalization could decrease the
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34 transgressiveness, and thus the stigma experienced by the people who are the “performers”, as
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36 shown by the increasing acceptance of MMA (Helms & Patterson, 2014). However, the value of
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38 these experiences lies in entertainment, and so we expect most businesses to stop short of fully
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40 humanizing the performers. As we have argued, businesses are likely to engage in emotional
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42 optimization that dampens authenticity to reduce emotions such as empathy, thereby preventing
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44 the full social benefit that could occur from “normalizing” those who are marginalized.
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49 Having unpacked the practice of voyeurism and the value it creates for audiences, we can
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51 begin to ask more precise ethical questions. If businesses continue to use the practice despite
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53 ethical concerns, we can shift the focus to ask questions about business’ responsibility to
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3 audiences and to performers when facilitating a practice that violates societal moral codes. The
4
5 question then becomes, if the practice is commercialized, whether and how should businesses
6
7 make it safe for audiences and performers? We argue that the debate about voyeurism in society
8
9 is inevitably limited without a thorough understanding of the ways voyeurism has been
10
11 successfully commercialized by numerous businesses in a wide range of industries. Regardless
12
13 of one's views about the ethics of commercialization of voyeurism, understanding how
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15 voyeurism becomes utilized to create value is a central issue that cannot be ignored – the value
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17 creation potential of voyeuristic practice is what makes it such an important force for good or ill.
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22 Overall, our study suggests that for businesses operating in areas that involve the
23
24 violation of dominant societal moral codes, value creation hinges on the ability to effectively
25
26 manage the emotional responses of audiences. In doing so, our study offers implications for the
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28 study of authenticity as well as transgression and stigma.
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31 32 33 **Implications for the Study of Authenticity**

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35 Our theory of the value created through the practice of voyeurism has implications for
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37 research on authenticity. The practice of voyeurism responds to society's increasing desire for
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39 authenticity (Bucher, Fieseler, Fleck, & Lutz, 2017; Grazian, 2010; Kovács, Carroll, & Lehman,
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41 2014; Lu & Fine, 1995) by offering an extreme form to audiences. We build on the cultural
42
43 perspective of authenticity (Alexander, 2004), which conceptualizes authenticity as a “collective
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45 illusion” rather than something that can be objectively verified or discovered (Demetry, 2019;
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47 DeSoucey, Elliott & Schmutz, 2019; Gaytan, 2019; Peterson, 2005; Sagiv, Simons, & Drori, in
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49 press). Instead, the focus is on “elaborate strategies of impression management, social
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51 interaction, and emotional control” (Grazian, 2010: 192). In theorizing authenticity's role in the
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3 practice of voyeurism, we challenge the overly positive view of authenticity that characterizes
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5 much of the management literature, instead presenting a more mixed and complex
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7 conceptualization.
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10 Both research and popular culture have tended to equate authenticity with perceptions of
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12 moral goodness in its connection to what is “genuine” and “true” (Gino, Kouchaki, & Galinsky,
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14 2015; Taylor, 1991), in contrast with calculated economic motives (Carroll & Wheaton, 2009;
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16 DeSoucey & Demetry, 2016; Hahl, 2016). Authenticity has also been associated with primarily
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18 positive emotional experiences (Grayson & Martinec, 2004; Howard-Grenville, Metzger, &
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20 Meyer, 2013; Massa et al., 2017). We highlight, instead, that in seeking out voyeuristic practice,
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22 audience members may be looking for an authentic experience that simultaneously transgresses
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24 the dominant moral codes of a society. In other words, audiences may pursue authenticity not
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26 only as a moral imperative to feel and be connected to that which is “good,” but also to
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28 transgress and feel “bad.”
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33 Importantly, this alternative understanding of authenticity in voyeuristic practice is one
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35 that can both attract and repel audiences, depending on the audience’s emotional responses. Prior
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37 research has recognized the importance of triggering emotional resonance with audiences
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39 (Giorgi, 2017; Massa, et al., 2017; Piazzoni, 2018; Serazio, 2015), but there has not been
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41 sufficient attention given to whether this resonance is always desirable. Research has instead
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43 assumed authenticity and the associated emotional responses to be unconditionally beneficial for
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45 value creation (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Verhaal, Hoskins, & Lundmark, 2017). In the
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47 practice of voyeurism, the audience’s emotional response to the extreme authenticity can be both
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49 desirable and undesirable.
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3 By recognizing the complex emotional responses that underpin both the search for and
4 experience of authenticity, we have uncovered an additional type of work that is required for
5 products or services to be safely experienced as authentic. Research has focused on the role of
6 emotional control by performers, as they seek to construct plausibly authentic performances
7 (Grazian, 2010). This has been addressed under the rubric of emotional labor (e.g., Ashforth &
8 Tomiuk, 2000; Hochschild, 1979). However, because of the risks involved in participating in a
9 practice that violates moral codes, managing emotions is also very important *for audiences*.
10 While there are of course physical and other risks in voyeuristic practice, the management of
11 authenticity for value creation may be primarily about optimizing emotional responses for
12 audiences. For example, to manage the complex mix of positive and negative emotions that may
13 emerge from an authentic (and transgressive) experience, businesses often need to dampen the
14 degree of authenticity to protect the very value created by authenticity. Thus, the need to provide
15 a safe and relatively predictable experience for audiences can compete with the need to create
16 value through authenticity, and businesses must balance these competing requirements.
17 Explicating the emotional complexity of authenticity judgements becomes particularly important
18 when authenticity is based on violating societal moral codes.

19 Thus, commercializing voyeuristic practice enables businesses to offer audiences
20 something that is very “real,” yet normally unavailable to audiences because of the challenges of
21 violating societal moral codes. While the premise of most authenticity literature is that
22 authenticity attempts to reflect reality as closely as possible, the simulated reality of voyeuristic
23 practice suggests that what organizations seek to present, and what audiences desire, may
24 actually be a simulated version of reality that does not have the same limitations as the social
25 reality they experience on a daily basis. With the appearance of being as real as real life (Eco,
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3 1986), but without the same limitations, these simulated realities can offer an experience that
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5 would otherwise be inaccessible, making it even more desirable than the real thing (Borgman,
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7 1992). The emphasis on a simulated reality that aims to be both genuine and controlled, authentic
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9 and inauthentic, extends the view of authenticity as the co-production of an immersive
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11 experience that feels real to the audience (Demetry, 2019; DeSoucey, Elliott & Schmutz, 2019;
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13 Gaytan, 2019; Peterson, 2005; Sagiv, Simons, & Drori, in press). In essence, the practice of
14
15 voyeurism attempts to construct a simulated reality, which aims to obscure its own simulatedness
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17 (Eco, 1986) and yet, the mechanisms of emotional optimization that are controlled (and are thus,
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19 inauthentic) can allow businesses to deliver an experience deemed superior to reality (Borgmann,
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21 1992).
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26 Understanding the complexity of emotional responses to authenticity allows us to further
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28 unpack the processes by which audiences deem something authentic or not, complementing prior
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30 research on authenticity. Researchers have found that generating the experience of authenticity
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32 requires that performers appear to be properly representative of a category (Grazian, 2003;
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34 Radoynovska & King, 2019; Peterson, 1997), and therefore genuine representation may be
35
36 sacrificed to align with audience's expectations of the category (Kovács, et al., 2013). For
37
38 example, "ethnic" restaurants have been found to present an "exoticism" that is also familiar for
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40 audiences (Lu & Fine, 2005; Veresiu & Giesler, 2018). However, this research focuses on
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42 cognitive categorization and does not unpack the *emotional underpinnings* of factors such as
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44 exoticism and familiarity. It is likely that an entirely "exotic" experience increases negative
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46 emotions, such as discomfort, and these emotions might disengage the audience, while an overly
47
48 familiar experience dampens the excitement and curiosity. Both emotional reactions are likely to
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50 hinder the value created by the authenticity. Thus, this simulated reality likely requires emotional
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3 optimization that either dampens the feeling of authenticity to avoid overwhelming audiences
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5 with exoticism, or alternatively amplifying exoticism to enhance desirable emotional responses.
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7 The representativeness that underlies authenticity judgements then should be seen as an
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9 emotionally complex process that involves extensive emotional management by organizations in
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11 order to ensure that value is delivered.
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17 **Implications for the Study of Transgression and Stigma**

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19 Transgression is a deviant behavior that violates societal moral codes (Douglas, 1966;
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21 Durkheim, 1973). Existing literatures exploring transgression have repeatedly discovered that
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23 organizations are often penalized for purposefully engaging in that which is perceived to be
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25 taboo or deviant, facing stigmatization in the form of severe sanctions and moral outrage (e.g.,
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27 Barlow et al., 2018; Devers et al., 2009; Durand & Vergne, 2015; Goffman, 1963; Hampel &
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29 Tracey, 2017; Michelson & Miller, 2019). As such, organizations are expected to avoid or hide
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31 involvement in transgressive and deviant activities (Elsbach & Sutton, 1992; Hudson &
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33 Okhuysen, 2009; Vergne, 2012). Recently, however, studies have suggested that there is a
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35 beneficial side to such transgressions and the resulting stigmatization (Helms & Patterson, 2014;
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37 Roulet, 2020; Ruebottom & Toubiana, in press; Tracey & Phillips, 2016). We extend this nascent
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39 body of work by explaining how transgression can be used strategically to create value for
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41 audiences. In fact, by theorizing the value creation made possible through the use of
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43 transgression, we help explain how and why some organizations can garner attention and/or
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45 social acceptance *because of*, rather than in spite of, transgression.
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51 In doing so, we challenge the idea that transgression itself is either beneficial or
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53 detrimental for organizations. Instead, we argue that value creation is contingent on audiences'
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3 emotional responses to the transgressiveness of the practice. We suspect that the absence of
4 audiences in much of the literature has led to assumptions of transgression as inherently “good”
5 or “bad” for business. Recent literature has called for more attention to audiences (e.g., Phung,
6 Buchanan, Toubiana, Ruebottom, & Turckik-Hakak, 2020; Helms, Patterson, & Hudson, 2019;
7 Michelson & Miller, 2019; Roulet, 2020), yet this research has focused on audiences’ moral
8 evaluations of transgression. In contrast, our theorizing suggests tuning into audiences’
9 emotional responses, not merely moral evaluations. Our theorizing suggests that emotional
10 responses may be what triggers the moral evaluations that lead many to avoid a transgressive
11 practice; and moral evaluations and emotional responses may conflict. In fact, audiences might
12 engage in practices they deem immoral because of the desirable emotional responses that the
13 practice triggers.

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29 Our theorizing indicates that emotional optimization may allow businesses to reach an
30 audience that would otherwise avoid transgressive practices. While the literature has
31 acknowledged that transgression appeals to some (Helms & Patterson, 2014; Helms, Patterson,
32 & Hudson, 2019), we explain how businesses can create value even for a large mainstream
33 audience by managing emotional responses. Businesses can use emotional optimization to reduce
34 the moral emotions that may lead audiences to disengage from the practice, while simultaneously
35 reinforcing the desirable mix of emotions that enable value. To do so, businesses may need to
36 dampen the very transgression that enables value, yet this contradictory form of optimization is
37 critical for attracting and reinforcing a wider audience. Emotional optimization, thus, reveals that
38 while societal moral codes do not change easily (Douglas, 1966; Durkheim, 1973), emotional
39 responses to violations of these moral codes may be more successfully manipulated. When
40 transgression is valuable, stigma management becomes less about hiding or changing the
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3 meaning of what is transgressive (e.g., Helms & Patterson, 2014; Lashley & Pollack, 2019;
4 Tracey & Phillips, 2016), and instead becomes about optimizing the emotional response to the
5 transgression in order to deliver value to a wide audience.
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10 We also reveal two facets of transgression that have relevance for audiences and the
11 management of their emotional responses. Research has argued that it is important to develop a
12 typology of transgression in order to understand how it should be managed (Roulet, 2020), and
13 we begin to outline elements of such a typology. Specifically, we distinguish transgression in the
14 nature of the act from the transgression in viewing. In the practice of voyeurism, transgression in
15 the nature of the act refers to the behavior of the performer. More generally, it refers to a
16 behavior that is perceived to violate societal moral codes, conducted by performers or
17 organizations, such as when an organization builds and sells weapons (Vergne, 2012) or engages
18 in violent protest (Elsbach & Sutton, 1992). Transgression in viewing is a related but distinct
19 form of transgression associated with the audience's role. It is the perceived transgressiveness of
20 watching the transgressive act.
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35 The distinction between the “doing” and the “viewing” of the transgressive act is relevant
36 as each requires different considerations when being managed. The “doing” requires potentially
37 moderating the transgression associated with the nature of the act, whereas the “viewing” may
38 require efforts to grant permission to watch, so audiences feel less judged for their viewing.
39 Depending on the type of practice and potential audiences, businesses may need to moderate one
40 facet of transgression more than the other. Alternatively, businesses may be able to trade off
41 transgressions (e.g., Fiske & Tetlock, 1997), moderating one facet while creating more value
42 from the other. For example, reducing the transgression in viewing may suffice in some cases
43 and for some audiences; these audiences may then feel comfortable watching a highly
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3 transgressive act. Outlining these two facets of transgression, thus, helps enrich our
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5 understanding of transgression in the practice and its management by organizations.
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8 9 10 **An Agenda for Future Research**

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12 Our paper is the first effort to theorize the value created by voyeuristic practice, and how
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14 businesses aim to deliver this value to audiences. In doing so, we open several avenues for future
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16 research.
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19 First, our model of voyeuristic practice implicates the complex role of audiences in the
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21 processes of value creation. However, empirical research is needed to explore differences within
22
23 and across audiences. We have argued that the same emotions that can attract a person to the
24
25 practice (e.g., repulsion, pity, etc.) may also cause the person to disengage. Yet, employing
26
27 emotional optimization to manage emotional responses and prevent disengagement is
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29 challenging because, for example, there is no specific threshold for when a negative or moral
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31 emotion might lead to evaluative processes and thus trigger disengagement. It would therefore be
32
33 valuable to explore when and how such thresholds are reached. Future research could explore
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35 both individual differences among audience members and the range of market segments that
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37 exist based on these differences. Successful emotional optimization requires businesses to be
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39 mindful of such segments.
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44 Appealing to the largest audience possible may also be supported by managing the
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46 emotional responses within the performance over time. We have suggested that if negative or
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48 moral emotions trigger evaluative process, audiences are likely to disengage. However, the
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50 impact of these emotions – whether they are desirable or undesirable – may vary depending on
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52 when they are elicited in the performance. For example, would it create a safer environment for
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3 audience members if the performance first elicits positive emotions such as excitement, joy and
4 awe, and then allows for negative emotions such as fear or anger to emerge, or would it be better
5 to trigger negative emotions and then have positive emerge to buffer the negative? Relatedly, the
6 need for various emotional optimization mechanisms would then change over the course of the
7 performance. As such, future research could explore the temporal element of emotional
8 responses that businesses can manage to ensure as much value is delivered to as many people as
9 possible.
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19 Another implication related to appealing to differing audiences is the need to explore the
20 changes in audience responses to the practice over the long term. Specifically, we expect that the
21 outcome of audiences engaging with the practice (e.g., a distinctive experience or
22 disengagement) can impact perceptions of the practice. We have theorized that when undesirable
23 emotional responses are particularly high, value is hindered, and audience members are likely to
24 disengage. However, we argue that some may passively disengage, simply discontinuing
25 participation; others may launch into active opposition to reduce the emotional dissonance (Jansz
26 & Timmer, 2002), as we have seen with MMA (Helms & Patterson, 2014) and other stigmatized
27 practices (e.g., Coslor, et al., 2020; Hampel & Tracey, 2017; Tracey & Phillips, 2016; Vergne,
28 2012). This active opposition may then heighten the perceived transgression associated with the
29 practice, increasing the appeal to some audiences and repelling others. The opposite is also
30 possible. When desirable emotional responses are high and audiences have a distinctive
31 experience, audience members may quietly continue their engagement with the practice or may
32 become active public evangelists (e.g., Massa, Helms, Voronov, & Wang, 2017). These
33 evangelists are likely to make it easier for a wider audience to feel comfortable participating in
34 the practice but may repel audiences looking for a highly transgressive practice. Thus, research
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3 could explore how the outcomes that we theorize drive ongoing dynamics of opposition and
4 support that likely feed back into perceptions of the practice over time.
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8 Further, we have focused on the work involved in protecting audiences from the extreme
9 authenticity and transgression of the performances. However, performers are also impacted by
10 their participation in voyeuristic practice. As research has found, there are profound impacts on
11 those working in stigmatized industries (Ashforth & Kreiner, 2014; Phung et al., 2020), and
12 popular media has documented the human toll associated with participation in reality shows,
13 including instances of abuse and suicide (e.g., The Guardian, 2020). Thus, human resource
14 management for businesses utilizing voyeuristic practice likely requires unique considerations
15 that might not be faced by other businesses. Health and safety considerations are particularly
16 challenging because the practice commercializes private aspects of performers' selves, raising
17 concerns about workers' rights, their ability to decline participation, and the degree of
18 protections required. It is important to understand the measures that businesses take (or do not
19 take) to support the performers' safety and ensure their continued participation. Considerations
20 of these measures pertain not only to ethics but also to the long-term value creation of a business
21 commercializing voyeuristic practice. Future research could examine these measures, and the
22 potential tension between protecting performers and offering an experience to audiences that
23 feels authentic and transgressive.
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44 Another rich area for future research is the intersection between voyeuristic practice and
45 social change. While we have focused on the commercial value of voyeurism, the practice can
46 also be political. Partaking in voyeuristic practice may involve more than just entertainment – it
47 can be intentionally used for its transformative capacity. For example, Frenzel (2016)
48 distinguished between commercial slum tourism and non-profit slum tourism that had a social
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3 change agenda. Elsewhere, Taibbi (2019) documents how 24-hour news networks deploy
4 voyeuristic practice to incite anger and outrage among audience members by exposing alleged
5 wrongdoings of political opponents. Additionally, some audience members may engage in the
6 practice because they perceive the societal moral codes as flawed or broken (Grazian, 2010; Hahl
7 et al, 2018). In other words, they may find voyeuristic practice to be not only a form of guilty
8 pleasure or entertainment, but instead, a form of resistance to societal oppression. Importantly,
9 emotional optimization is still likely to play an important role managing the audience's
10 emotional responses in this situation, ensuring that it is safe to participate, even when the goal is
11 ultimately to challenge or change societal moral codes.
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24 Societal moral codes may also shift over time, potentially rendering the practice less
25 transgressive (Douglas, 1966; Sabri, Manceau & Pras, 2010). This could happen as people
26 expose more and more of their private lives on social media or as attitudes about moral behavior
27 in a given society change more broadly. For example, social influencers and “mommy bloggers”
28 (Song, 2016) derive their appeal from high levels of authenticity, as they expose a great deal of
29 their private lives to their followers and fans, and yet, this behavior is not seen as being highly
30 transgressive. The growth of this practice may influence the more transgressive practices of
31 voyeurism that cross the public-private boundary. Additionally, the global COVID-19 pandemic
32 has shifted many work interactions into people's homes, and we are increasingly exposed to their
33 private lives. Musicians and celebrities have been performing from their living rooms, and co-
34 workers are having work meetings while their families operate (often visibly) in the background.
35 This shift in the public-private boundary may erode the transgressiveness associated with
36 viewing the private lives of others.
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3 Given that this would likely pose a threat to the value created from voyeuristic practice, it
4 would be helpful to explore how businesses respond to such changes. We consider MMA when it
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6 was first emerging and was deemed highly transgressive. However, as we have seen, MMA is
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8 now mainstream (Helms & Patterson, 2014), with even children's mixed martial arts classes
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10 offered in many cities. While increasing social acceptance opens the practice to new audiences
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12 that had previously avoided the practice, early audiences may feel that the experience is no
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14 longer revelatory or entertaining. These audiences may look elsewhere for such distinctive
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16 experiences, such as to street fighting websites and platforms. It is important to examine such
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18 shifts and how businesses respond to these changes, especially, when they are in part a by-
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20 product of their own success.
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28 CONCLUSION

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31 In closing, the commercialization of voyeuristic practice is growing in both magnitude
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33 and societal relevance. Yet, this contradictory social practice challenges fundamental
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35 assumptions about the nature of value creation. For this reason, we believe that turning our
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37 attention to this authentic and transgressive practice will push theorizing further and direct our
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39 attention to new avenues in many streams of management. We also hope this article will prompt
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41 further inquiry into value creation in authentic and transgressive contexts that defy existing
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43 explanations.
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Figure 1. A Model of Value Creation in Voyeuristic Practice

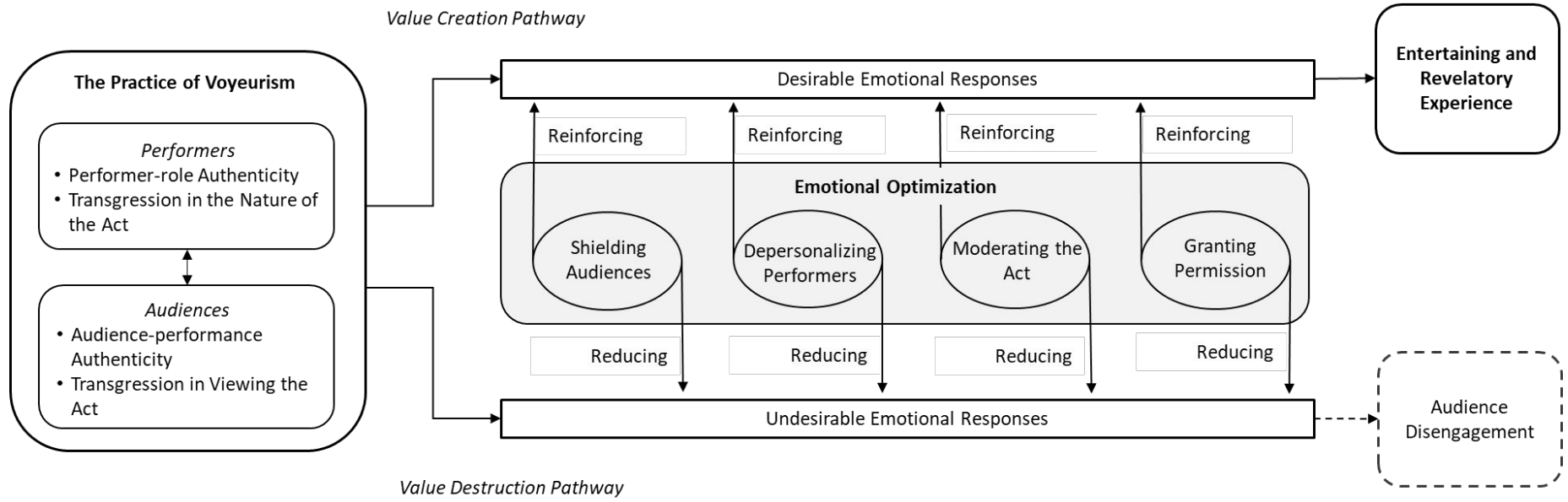


Table 1. Authenticity and Transgression in Voyeuristic Practice

	Performer	Audience
Authenticity: The perceived realness	<i>Performer-role authenticity:</i> Performers appear to inhabit their ascribed role in a manner that is deemed by audiences as fluid, natural and unscripted	<i>Audience-performance authenticity:</i> Audiences feel immersed in the performance
Transgression: The violation of moral codes	<i>The nature of the act:</i> Performer or performance being conducted violates moral codes	<i>Viewing the act:</i> The audience violates moral codes by purposefully witnessing that which should be private

Table 2. Mechanisms of Emotional Optimization

	Shielding Audiences	Depersonalizing Performers	Moderating the Act	Granting Permission
<i>Description</i>	Keeping the audience safe while in the “danger zone”	Divesting performers of personal characteristics to prevent over-identifying	Reducing the extremity of the performance	Creating a willing exhibitionist who consents to being viewed
<i>Aims</i>	Reducing negative emotions that hinder value creation (e.g., fear, anxiety, worry) by dampening audience-performance authenticity	Reducing moral emotions that hinder value creation (e.g., empathy) by dampening performer-role authenticity	Reducing negative emotions that hinder value creation (e.g., disgust, dislike, sadness) by dampening transgression in the nature of the act	Reducing moral emotions that hinder value creation (e.g., shame, guilt) by dampening transgression in viewing the act
<i>Activities</i>	Employing safety measures for accessing the site	Limiting extra-role information, othering and exoticizing	Codes of conduct, curating and editing	Counter-narratives, highlighting the transactional nature of the practice
<i>Compensatory Activities</i>	Setting up sites of interaction, highlighting danger in the context	Heightened role-related personalization	Avoiding rules during performances, reinforcing personas	Maintaining dominant cultural narratives of performers in parallel

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