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*Scientia et Humanitas:
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We accept articles from every academic discipline offered by MTSU: the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities. Eligible contributors are all MTSU students and recent graduates, either as independent authors or with a faculty member. Articles should be 10 to 30 typed double-spaced pages and may include revisions of papers presented for classes, conferences, Scholars Week, or the Social Science Symposium. Articles adapted from Honors or M.A. theses are especially encouraged. Papers should include a brief abstract of no more than 250 words stating the purpose, methods, results, and conclusion. For submission guidelines and additional information, e-mail the editor at scientia@mtsu.edu or visit <http://libjournals.mtsu.edu/index.php/scientia/index>.

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR IN CHIEF

When undergraduate, graduate, and recently graduated scholars scour calls for papers, pursuing broader audiences for their work, they are often met with the requirement that their work fit a particular theme. Themes can unite people with shared concerns, in turn connecting scholars who can collaborate on future research and reassuring individual scholars that their work is a part of a larger conversation. While theming has its benefits, some researchers find the most fitting forums for their research are unconstrained by themes.

Scientia et Humanitas conventionally forgoes theming its volumes, a choice that increases the possibility of amplifying vastly diverse concerns. This choice also allows our submitters, students and recent graduates who often have arsenals full of interesting projects that have not yet wandered far from campus, relative freedom to choose the work they submit. Volume 13 exemplifies how, when those with the power to uplift scholarly voices designate thematically-unconstrained spaces, both those voices and their audiences are benefited by a collection of impressive, timely work.

I have had the honor of spending nearly a year assembling and managing editorial staff, corresponding with submitters, copyediting the manuscript, and arranging the layout of this volume. To the scholars who offered our team twenty-nine intriguing submissions, thanks are certainly in order. While we are proud to present the twelve that we have selected for publication, we also hope that our feedback supports the works we have not selected in reaching future audiences.

This volume is roughly organized by discipline, and we start with two articles in the area of natural sciences. In “Deconstructing the Moral Animal Stigma,” Sav Buist invites other scientists to re-evaluate their frameworks for understanding non-human animals’ capacity for empathy and emotion. Next, Elizabeth Kowalczyk tests a potential treatment for a common viral infection in “Investigating the Inhibition of Herpes Simplex Virus-1 by Ginsenoside 20(S)-Rg3.”

Six articles based in the humanities come next. Kat Kolby’s “Discovering Nothing to Create Anything” demonstrates that the philosopher Gorgias’s framework of *logos* can be more fully appreciated and understood when examined in concert with game studies. Then, through close reading of Homer’s *Iliad*, Hayley Rhodes Wittenberg invites readers to acknowledge a romantic dimension of the relationship between Achilles and Patroclus in “He Whom I Loved as Dearly as My Own Life.” Additionally, in her article “Everybody you tell will be haunted too,” Harley Mercadal highlights the melding of Gothic and Modernist tropes in the work of American author Mildred Haun. Those interested in popular culture or children’s media might take interest in the next three articles. Caroline LaPlue investigates an incongruent reception of the novel and film versions of *The Princess and the Goblin* in “Seldom Like Yesterday.” I am pleased to share my own article, “*Sagwa, the Chinese*

Siamese Cat and *Dora the Explorer* Teach the Value of Non-English Language,” in which I examine language use in the premier episodes of two animated programs from the beginning of the twenty-first century. Sarah Hicks, in “Representation in *Raya and the Last Dragon*,” considers this 2021 film in the context of Disney’s complicated track-record with representing genders, sexualities, and races.

The volume ends with four articles that apply historical or social scientific lenses to highlight important people or cultural phenomena. First, in “Subversive Habits,” Sarah E. Wolfe calls for an understanding of medieval and early modern nuns as complex individuals who transcend stereotypes. Next, Lis Sodl’s “Integration and Education” uncovers ways that literature including Constance Fenimore Woolson’s “Rodman the Keeper” and W.E.B. DuBois’s *The Souls of Black Folk* exemplify shifts in American identity after the Civil War. Inspired by conversations regarding COVID-19 restrictions in the early 2020s, Carol A. Stuart revisits documented responses to an earlier pandemic in “Closures, Masks, and Quarantines.” Finally, Parvez Rahaman synthesizes his own primary research—interviews with those who encountered Mahatma Gandhi—with secondary research on Gandhi and conceptions of memory in “The Retrieving Memories of Gandhi’s Peace-mission.”

For the opportunity to facilitate the publication process for these articles, I extend thanks to several faculty mentors at Middle Tennessee State University. I first have Dr. Stephen Severn, Chair of the English Department, to thank for recommending me for the Editor in Chief position before I had even imagined myself in the role. Immense thanks are also due to Dr. Philip E. Phillips, Associate Dean of the MTSU Honors College, and Ms. Marsha Powers, retired Coordinator of Special Projects and Publications. I am grateful for the immense agency these two mentors have entrusted in me, for their time and attention when questions arose, and for the opportunity to meet and work with Ms. Powers during her final semester in the role. During the copy editing phase, Honors College Dean John R. Vile and Strategic Communication Specialist Ms. Robin E. Lee have also offered invaluable advice.

My editorial staff members also deserve abundant thanks for their close reading, thoughtful feedback, and intentional recommendations regarding which work should be featured this year. Samira Grayson, Lis Sodl, Angela Benninghoff, Kat Kolby, Parvez Rahaman, Elizabeth Polson, and Emaa Elrayah offered their own specialized knowledge and demonstrated flexibility to evaluate pieces beyond the fields that typically constitute their scholarly homes. We are grateful for Dr. Matt Elrod-Erickson, who graciously offered his support as a guest reviewer at a time when we sought expert advice in the field of genetics. I have developed as an editor by encountering my collaborators’ varied approaches to scrutinizing and supporting the work of our submitters.

Thank you all for the chance to play a role in sharing twelve insightful works of

scholarship with a broader audience. I invite you, while enjoying this volume, to celebrate and support unthemed spaces like this one, as they invite unexpected, important work.

Aubrey Keller

Editor in Chief

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Deconstructing the Moral Animal Stigma: A Study of the Scholarly Conversation on Biological Altruism*

Sav Buist

ABSTRACT

Forms of altruism such as kin selection, reciprocity, and group-selection altruism exist in a biological sense—but the question of whether “real” altruism, based on good intentions, exists in a measurable manner and is a human-exclusive trait, remains to be seen. Based on observations of primitive empathetical contagion behavior in mice, nonreciprocal interspecies altruism in cetaceans, and theory of mind behavior in Eurasian blue jays, certain nonhuman animals could be capable of complex empathetical acts that do not fall under the “standard” biological umbrella alongside kin selection, reciprocity, and group-selection. In reviewing these phenomena, this paper seeks to change the general societal understanding of empathetical cognition and emotional capacity in nonhuman animals, and to redefine the conceptual parameters of biological altruism.

*Winner of the Deans’ Distinguished Essay Award

Tempting as it may be to interpret the behavior of other animals in terms of human mental processes, it's perhaps even more tempting to reject the possibility of kinship.

—Jennifer Ackerman, *The Genius of Birds*, 2017

Introduction

“Let me tell you of life-saving ‘eels’ in vinegar,” writes scientist J.H. Elgie (1910) in his article, “Altruism in Animal Life,” from the journal *Nature* (p. 489). The date is June 23, 1910, nearly a month after the passing of beloved Nobel Prize winner, German physician, and well-known founder of bacteriology, Robert Koch (Stevenson, 2021). Many scientists like Elgie are eager to further the threshold of bacterial knowledge. Under his watchful gaze, one of the “eels” Elgie is studying becomes stranded in a smaller vinegar drop. To Elgie’s amazement, a few of the other bacteria cross the gap into the smaller vinegar droplet and push their comrade to the safety of the larger vinegar droplet. Elgie reports this as “the most singular thing it has ever been my lot to witness in the world of minute life” (p. 489).

There is a long track record of scientific speculation and observation of complex forms of potential empathetical animal behavior, with interpretations ranging widely. In *The Descent of Man*, Charles Darwin (1871) contested the idea that human beings are the only creatures on earth capable of conscience. “All [animals],” he noted, “have the same senses, intuitions, and sensations . . . they feel wonder and curiosity; they possess the same faculties of imitation, attention, memory, imagination, and reason, though in very different degrees” (Darwin, 1871, p. 48). Descartes, on the other hand, famously believed that animals are like “machines,” lacking “feeling or awareness of any kind” (Cottingham, 1978, p. 1). Although it is all too easy to assign human qualities onto animals—something known as “anthropomorphism” in the scientific field—it seems equally harmful for scientific discovery to suffer under the yoke of what primatologist Frans de Waal calls *anthropodenial*, or the denial that humans and animals can also share qualities such as empathy and altruism (de Waal, 1999). If altruism can evolve and complexify in human beings, it could also potentially evolve and complexify in nonhuman animals. In exploring Mogil et al.’s (2006) experiment with empathy in mice, Pitman et al.’s (2016) observation of seemingly altruistic humpback whale behavior, and Ostojíc et al.’s (2013) experiment with theory of mind in Eurasian blue jays, one may find plausible evidence that some nonhuman animals have the capacity to employ altruism from an empathetical basis, redefining the scientific perception of biological altruism.

Biological altruism, defined by University of Bristol Philosophy of Science professor Dr. Samir Okasha (2013), is when an organism behaves in a way that benefits

others at a cost to itself—that cost being *reproductive fitness*, or an animal's ability to reproduce and extend the limbs of its genetic lineage, furthering the reach of its family tree. Okasha believes that although there are plenty of examples of altruism in animals, and plenty of examples of humans behaving in ways that are biologically altruistic, human beings are the only kind that can defy the constraints of reproductive fitness and perform real altruism—altruistic actions based on conscious intent (Okasha, 2013).

A Stanford-published article of 2013, revised over the years as scientific discovery unravels nature's most tangled secrets, Okasha's "Biological Altruism" is an excellent short review of the evolution of altruism with its many facets and subgenres. However, it is an *anthropocentric*, or human-centered, article that leaves out the many documented examples of animals behaving in ways that are not so easily placed into neat altruistic subgenres. Furthermore, altruism itself is potentially a product of an evolved neurological reward system that is, inherently, a biological process for humans and nonhuman animals alike. The fact that this reward system still exists today may highlight the importance of altruism and its steadfast role in evolution. If altruism can bud on nearly every branch of the phylogenetic tree, it seems implausible that only human beings could adapt it in specific form.

A Scaffolding of Altruistic Terminology

According to Kendra Cherry of *Verywell Mind* (2021), psychologists have defined at least four fundamental types of altruism—*genetic* (acts that benefit family), *reciprocal* (acts based on mutual give-and-take), *group-selected* (acts based on group affiliation), and *pure* (acts involving some risk but no reward) (Cherry, 2021). *Mutualism* is another form of altruism existing in nature and, like reciprocity, involves both parties benefiting from the relationship, as in the case of remora fish, who pick parasites from the skins of sharks and in turn are protected from predators and not predated on by the sharks (Okasha, 2013). According to Okasha, all except for *pure* altruism are shaded beneath the umbrella of biological altruism, in which humans and nonhumans alike reside (Okasha, 2013).

It is important to note that in Okasha's hypothesis, the idea of *conscious intent* remains undefined, leading to the question of what it means to have "conscious intentions" behind an altruistic act. One interpretation of *conscious, pure, or real* altruism is that it is reliant on whether or not nonhuman animals have the capacity for empathy.

A Potential Baseline for Altruism—Empathy in Nonhuman Animals

In *The Genius of Birds*, Jennifer Ackerman (2017) proposes that empathy is "transforming another person's misfortune into one's own feeling of distress" (p.

134). An interesting example of possible empathy in animals lies in the case of the male Eurasian jay. An experiment conducted by Ljerka Ostojić (2013) and her team involved placing male and female jays in glass boxes facing each other. The female jays were fed one of two special treats: wax worms or mealworms. (In this example, wax worms can be imagined as the “dark chocolate equivalent” to jays, and mealworms can be imagined as the “fruit equivalent” in terms of the *specific satiety effect*—the feeling of eating too much of one food and choosing to switch to another.) The male jays observed which treat their female mates indulged in, and when reunited, chose to offer the treat their mates had not been eating—possibly intuiting the specific satiety effect (Ackerman, 2017). This intuition could be an example of what is called *theory of mind*—the capacity to imagine perspectives different from one’s own (Ostojić et al., 2013).

Another empathetical example cited in *The Genius of Birds* (Ackerman, 2017) lies in the geese of the Konrad Lorenz Research Station in Austria. By measuring the heart rates of geese exposed to different stimuli such as thunder, passing vehicles, and the departing or landing of flocks, researchers were able to ascertain that “familial social conflict”—seeing or engaging a familiar goose in a social conflict—elicited the highest heart rate (Ackerman, 2017, p. 130). For scientists at Konrad Lorenz, this was enough to evidence “emotional involvement, possibly even empathy” (Ackerman, 2017, p. 130).

In one empirical conclusion, a study by Plotnik et al. (2014) found that Asian elephants touch each other’s faces with their trunks to console each other. Consolation is of special interest to Ackerman (2017), who notes that it “implies a cognitively demanding degree of empathy” (p. 131).

Primitive forms of empathy have also been observed in some mice. In a study conducted by Jeffrey Mogil at McGill University, it was ascertained that mice are “more sensitive to pain” when they see a familiar mouse in pain (Miller, 2006, p. 1860). This, to the team, was evidence of what is called *emotional contagion*—a somewhat primitive form of empathy. These researchers see emotional contagion as a “steppingstone” towards the kind of complex empathy that evolved in human beings (Miller, 2006, p. 1861). It is possible that empathy has evolved, to some extent, in other animals beyond human beings, as neurobiologist Peggy Mason concedes. “To imagine that empathy just started de novo in primates,” she notes, “seems biologically implausible” (Miller, 2006, p. 1860).

Altruism in Nonhuman Animals

If animals can feel empathetically, it is perhaps feasible to ask whether or not

they can act altruistically outside of Okasha's biological definition. Ackerman (2017) reports that tits of different species "great, blue, and marsh" share among each other the latest gossip of food in the area (p. 111). Even chickadees, with brains only slightly larger than the seeds they eat, use a complex rolodex of songs to convey locations of predators and food, not only to their own species but to other birds who have picked up on their warnings (Ackerman, 2017).

It is tempting to argue, as Okasha does, that while it is not immediately apparent that this altruistic act is good for the reproductive fitness of the individual chickadee (as it is a great risk for a chickadee to vocally alert its presence to a predator), this is a form of *group-selection* altruism, which ensures the reproductive fitness and survival of the *group* as a whole (Okasha, 2013). However, group-selection altruism typically refers to altruistic actions within a group of animals of their own species, as in the case of Vervet monkeys, which, like the chickadee, use alarm calls to warn the rest of their group of an approaching predator (Okasha, 2013). In Ackerman's great, blue, and marsh tits, we find that those of different species, who in normal biological circumstances might be in competition, instead share valuable information, undermining the idea that biological "cost and benefit" altruism is the only form of altruism practiced by nonhuman animals (Ackerman, 2017).

In cetaceans (dolphins and whales), there are several compelling examples of nonreciprocal interspecies altruism, in which animals from different species altogether perform altruistic acts, despite there being no kin-based relationship between them and no obvious reward. A 2022 study on white-beaked dolphins had Kastelein et al. witnessing dolphins cooperating "on [their] own initiative" to herd a harbor porpoise towards a veterinary treatment area in their pool enclosure, as well as assisting newly arrived harbor porpoises in swimming (Kastelein et al., 2022). In this case, the animals acted on their own volition without the prospect of reward, an act that was independent of genetic relationships and of other easily packaged forms of biological altruism.

Another example of cetaceans potentially performing acts of nonreciprocal interspecies altruism was observed by Pitman et al. (2016), who studied 115 recorded interactions in which humpback whales harassed killer whales attacking various seals (Pitman et al., 2016). The team concluded that there was "no apparent benefit" for the humpbacks to interfere with the attacks, as the humpbacks often traveled hundreds of miles from their natural breeding and feeding grounds, and often did so with their young, which are natural prey for killer whales (Pitman et al., 2016, para. 1). Since it endangers the young, the act represents a risk to the reproductive fitness of the

humpbacks and has no apparent benefit or reward. From this, the team determined that “interspecific altruism, even if unintentional . . . could not be ruled out” (Pitman et al., 2016, para. 1).

The Controversy of Empathy and Altruism in Nonhuman Animals

As the untangling of nature’s empathetical and altruistic secrets is still a relatively new process, skepticism from those in tangential scientific fields is to be expected and is understandable. “We can explain behavior separate from the way humans think,” argues anthropologist Holly Dunsworth in an interview with *The Guardian* concerning anthropomorphism in the modern age (Milman, 2016, para. 6). Psychologist Patricia Ganea agrees that while anthropomorphism is a natural way of explaining animal behaviors, the effects can lead to an inaccurate understanding of nature that can cause someone to misinterpret the actions of a wild animal (Milman, 2016).

Conversely, aforementioned primatologist Frans de Waal believes that anthropodenial is an attempt to “build a brick wall” to “separate humans from the rest of the animal kingdom” (Ackerman, 2017, p. 23). Dr. Mark Bekoff (2008) notes in his book *The Emotional Lives of Animals* that we as scientists must continue to reassess our relationship with animals, asking difficult questions and changing our behavior to match what is true rather than what is believed. “Humanocentrism is what plagues the study of emotional arguments, and it’s also a large reason why animals are treated by such varying standards,” he argues. “Why are we so special?” (Bekoff, 2008, p. 43).

In some ways, de Waal’s “brick wall” serves a valuable purpose in protecting science from misinformation; however, sometimes a brick wall—inaccessible, structurally immovable—should instead be a door or a window through which scientists can look. In this sense, the wall between biological and “real” altruism obstructs the view that “real” altruism is measured only in philosophical standards, and all altruism is inherently biological. Even conscious, intentioned acts of altruism have a biological source and benefit—that of neurological reward response. In an article published by the *Journal of Social and Biological Structures* on altruism and the internal reward system, biologist James Danielli surmises that the mechanisms of the internal reward system include “the release of mood-controlling substances in the brain. . . such as the opioid peptides” (Danielli, 1980). In other words, performing altruistic acts releases a response similar to the euphoria of opioids. S.G. Post (2005) also postulated in his article “Altruism, Happiness, and Health” that there is a strong association between altruism and longevity in terms of health and wellness (p. 66). In short, even “real” or “pure” altruism has a biological benefit that influences reproductive

fitness in human beings, negating any “real” difference between real and biological altruism.

Although behavior can certainly be explained separately from human thought, as anthropologists like Dunsworth maintain, some behaviors could also be explained *similarly* to human thought. It may be a mistake to overlook the specific acts of altruism in animals, especially in a nonreciprocal, interspecies sense, in which there is no genetic or relationship basis nor a conceivable basis for reward. With this in consideration, acts of altruism in humans and nonhumans could be multifaceted—based on acts of cost-benefit *and* acts of conscious intention, as in the case of the male Eurasian blue jays employing altruistic acts both from a standpoint of conscious intention (intuiting a female’s specific desires) and of reproductive fitness (doing so to ensure genetic lineage) (Ostojic et al., 2013).

The idea that altruism could complexify in nonhuman animals is not rooted in mere speculation. Other forms of complex cognition, such as *vocal learning*, *spatial awareness*, *theory of mind*, and even *deceptive caching*, have evolved convergently across the taxa (Krupenye et al., 2019). In a review published in *Cognitive Science*, Krupenye et al. (2019) attested with their social intelligence hypothesis that some nonhuman animals, including corvids like the Eurasian blue jay, share foundational social cognitive mechanisms with humans, and that social cognition evolved in response to the demands of social living. If these complex cognitive behaviors could evolve in distantly related animals via convergent evolution, it is conceivable that in the right environmental or social context (such as gregariousness, as in whales, primates, and birds), altruism could continue to evolve in nonhuman animals in a way that surpasses normal “biological” parameters and crosses over into more complex forms, such as nonreciprocal and interspecies.

A New Frontier – Further Experimentation with Altruism

One novel methodology that could perhaps answer some questions about the neurological reward system and what complex behavior such as *theory of mind* and *emotional contagion* look like in the mind of a nonhuman animal, particularly in the case of monitorable nonhuman laboratory animals such as mice and Eurasian blue jays, is by monitoring radioactivity in the brain using Positron Emission Tomography, or PET scans (Pendergraft et al., 2021). In this process, which has already been utilized by Pendergraft et al. (2021) for experiments pertaining to different neurological processes in corvids, the radiotracer 17F-fluorodeoxyglucose (FDG), a chemical analogous to the glucose brains typically use as fuel, is injected into the body. When regions of the brain increase in activity, they “eat” or consume more FDG, which leaves behind a

trace of its radioactivity on those regions. The PET scan harmlessly measures the levels of radioactivity in the brain region, showing where parts of the brain “lit up” during the engagement of an activity or when exposed to certain stimuli (Pendergraft et al., 2021). This methodology could ethically and harmlessly measure the neural activity in the brain when Eurasian blue jays engage in theory of mind or when mice engage in emotional contagion, effectively mapping out the regions of the brain responsible for complex empathy and perhaps even conscious intent in an altruistic action.

Conclusion

Altruism has a clear, fundamental, biological basis and importance, persisting in its various forms despite a long evolutionary history in which it could have been discarded. It has been observed from whales in the ocean to tiny microorganisms swimming in droplets of vinegar. It is worth speculating whether it is an adaptation that under the right constraints can grow more complex in nonhuman animals, as it has in human beings. Do nonhuman animals such as wild cetaceans receive a neurological benefit when they perform acts of nonreciprocal interspecies altruism? If so, is that reward system a convergently evolved trait? What were the environmental or social constraints to elicit such an adaptation? Are they the same environmental and social constraints that allowed human beings to adapt complex forms of cognition? To notate empathetical acts as what separates us from nonhuman animals echoes the distant Cartian hypotheses of the 1600s and, perhaps more importantly, could be like building a brick wall between the human past and the human present where there could instead be a window for scientists to peer through and garner a better understanding of our history.

Philosopher Thomas Kuhn observed that scientists sometimes get stuck viewing topics a certain way, even as they test and speculate with hypotheses. This makes the deconstruction of one paradigm and the rebuilding of another “a messy and uncertain process” (Wilson, 2015, p. 35). Unraveling the biological basis of empathy and altruism is a massive undertaking, and developing classification systems, such as terminology and differentiation, is a necessary part of it. However, it is important to continue to explore the line between what scientists understand about altruism and what still remains to be seen. Although it is necessary for some studies to classify separations between nonhumans and humans, caution should be taken in taking those classifications as law. There are clearly exceptions to the rule, and evolutionary adaptations continually add more bends to the rules with each generation of life. To truly practice science is to forget what we think we know and find out what is true—to escape from potential biases and explore what might be missing. In doing so, we may

learn more about ourselves, and the creatures we live alongside.

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Investigating the Inhibition of Herpes Simplex Virus-1 by Ginsenoside 20(S)-Rg3

ELIZABETH KOWALCZYK

ABSTRACT

Herpes simplex virus, type 1, (HSV-1) is a common viral pathogen. The majority of infections occur during childhood. People who exhibit symptoms from HSV-1 infection can experience genital/oral ulcers (cold sores), latency in sensory neurons, and necrotizing encephalitis, and once HSV has infected the host organism, the individual may be infected for life. This study investigated inhibition of the herpes simplex viruses, type 1 by Ginsenoside 20(S)-Rg3 (Rg3), since this ginsenoside has been reported to inhibit HSV. Mice were dosed with specific amounts of Rg3 and infected with HSV-1. Tissues including brain, spleen, liver, and serum were collected and analyzed for the presence of HSV-1 by the polymerase chain reaction. Although Rg3 treatment appeared to be successful *in vitro*, it was not successful in inhibiting the virus in the living mice.

Introduction

Herpes simplex virus, type 1 (HSV-1), is a widespread pathogen that attaches to a host's cell, where it can enter, spread into other host cells, and replicate in epithelial cells to establish the infection (Amin et al., 2011). Herpes simplex virus type-1 can spread from one host cell to another utilizing viral glycoprotein and host receptors (Amin et al., 2011). The infection may remain in the host organism for life, typically in its latent infectious state (Amin et al., 2011).

Herpes simplex virus type-1 impacts a large portion of the population, having a 67% global prevalence rate (Looker et al., 2015). In the United States, most adults are infected with HSV-1 with the number increasing linearly with age (McQuillan et al., 2018). A larger percentage of females have been reported to be infected than males (McQuillan et al., 2018). The prevalence of HSV was greatest in the Mexican American population and lowest among non-Hispanic white persons (McQuillan et al., 2018).

Most of the population that has contracted HSV-1 will remain asymptomatic throughout their lifetime (McQuillan et al., 2018). People who exhibit symptoms of HSV-1 infection can experience genital/oral ulcers (cold sores), latency in sensory neurons, and necrotizing encephalitis (Ives and Bertke, 2017). Once HSV has infected the host organism, the individual may be infected for life; they will have the potential for severe complications throughout life (Ives and Bertke, 2017). Unfortunately, there is a high infant mortality rate associated with HSV during delivery when the infant contracts the virus at birth from the mother's infection (Ives and Bertke, 2017). The viral infection is particularly dangerous for at-risk populations including immune-compromised individuals, infants, and the elderly (Ives and Bertke, 2017).

Research into HSV-1 is vital to understand the infection and creating more effective treatment options. No vaccine yet exists to prevent the disease (Carter, 2019). Drugs, including acyclovir and penciclovir, are used for the treatment of HSV-1 and HSV-2 symptoms (Piret and Boivin, 2011). Acyclovir and penciclovir are considered the first line of treatment once the symptoms have occurred. As drugs are more widely used and distributed, a large portion of the HSV population has become resistant, creating a need for new drugs or a potential vaccine (Piret and Boivin, 2011).

Time, effort, and money have been dedicated to producing a vaccine for HSV-1, and yet none has been successful (Carter, 2019). A major issue for developers is that the HSV-1 infection can lie dormant in host cells for years before presenting symptoms (Carter, 2019). All these factors make it difficult for developers to create a vaccine that is effective against the infection. Alternative preventive strategies are being investigated.

One way researchers approach finding cures for ailments is by turning to the past. Panax ginseng (*P. ginseng*) is a root widely used for thousands of years in China for a variety of illnesses, typically consumed as tea (Coleman et al., 2003). Prior to the modern era, it was widely held that if a person had a cold sore (HSV) they could drink the tea and make the cold sore disappear (Coleman et al., 2003). Ginsenosides are bioactive compounds that are used in a variety of ways. Researchers have established a scientific basis back in 2003 for the healing qualities of *P. ginseng*. The root contains 50 ginsenosides, each with the potential for medical benefits (Coleman et al., 2003). Early results show a correlation between *P. ginseng* and quality of life (assessment of an individual's overall well-being), although more research needs to be conducted to further understand ginseng's full potential (Coleman et al., 2003).

Ginsenosides are naturally produced glycoside steroids and triterpene saponins that have been shown to have anti-viral properties and immune-boosting abilities (Im et al., 2016). Ginsenoside 20(S)-Rg3, when added to HSV-1 in cell culture significantly inhibited the virus from infection (Wright and Altman, 2020). Additional research and studies in more complex organisms must be completed to better understand the Rg3 virus relationship.

Besides Ginsenoside 20(S)-Rg3, there are several other ginsenosides with promising results including extracts from Korean red ginseng (KRG). Korean red ginseng has various benefits including a link to immune modulation in mice (Cho et al., 2013). Mice were given variable amounts of KRG extract and were then infected vaginally with HSV. It was found that KRG lowered the severity of the HSV infection, increased resistance, and accelerated clearance of the virus (Cho et al., 2013). It also showed an increase in mRNA expression of several mouse genes, which indicates that KRG increases local natural killer cells, stimulating resistance to not just vaginal HSV but other similar infections (Cho et al., 2013).

The work that was conducted builds on previous studies and resources, which have been approved by Middle Tennessee State University's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, protocol ID 17-3015. Mice were injected with HSV-1 and specific amounts of Rg3 (10 mg/kg, 3 mg/kg, 1 mg/kg, and 0 mg/kg Rg3). Controls did not receive either HSV-1 or Rg3). Serum, spleen, liver, and brain tissues were collected and evaluated for the presence of infectious HSV-1 by cell culture plaque assay. Plaque assays are a widely utilized tool in virology. They are considered the single best way to ensure recombinant viruses can be isolated as a plaque (Leland and Ginocchino, 2007). While cell culture has long been considered the gold standard for virus detection (Leland and Ginocchino, 2007), others have reported better sensitivity

for the detection of HSV-1 by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) (Wald et al., 2003). The study evaluated samples from mice for the presence of HSV-1 using this more sensitive method. A commonly used method involves the use of a gel electrophoresis, a technique used to separate molecules based on their size and electrical charge (Wald et al., 2003).

Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) has become a staple in biotechnology, forensic science, and research laboratories across the world (Zhu et al., 2020). Polymerase chain reaction amplifies DNA sequences in vitro. Primers are used to amplify desired regions of DNA (Zhu et al., 2020). The success and failure of a PCR test largely depends on the quality of the nucleic acids (Zhu et al., 2020).

A polymerase chain reaction is initiated by denaturing a DNA double helix into two separate single-stranded DNA segments (Zhu et al., 2020). The enzyme Taq polymerase uses the 3' OH of the primer bound to a SS DNA template to build a complementary strand (Zhu et al., 2020). The result is two identical strands of DNA are repeatedly copied in subsequential rounds of amplification. The process continues exponentially until it is stopped (Zhu et al., 2020).

Polymerase chain reaction drove modern-day forensic science. With PCR scientists can swab areas with suspected bodily fluids and then run the samples through PCR, which then are compared to a DNA database or potential suspects (Gasiorowski-Denis, 2016). In recent years, PCR has become sensitive enough for touch DNA; when individuals touch surfaces, they leave behind trace amounts of DNA which can be swabbed and amplified using PCR (Gasiorowski-Denis, 2016).

A good example of how sensitive touch DNA and PCR can be is evident in the story of the Phantom of Heilbronn. The suspect seemingly had committed over 40 crimes in Austria, France, and Germany (Gasiorowski-Denis, 2016). Following the murder of a police officer where the Phantom's DNA was discovered, researchers took a closer look at the source (Gasiorowski-Denis, 2016). They discovered that the swabs that were being used at the various crime scenes had been contaminated with an employee's DNA (Gasiorowski-Denis, 2016). The employee's contaminated DNA, while seemingly insignificant, when amplified using PCR, created the nonexistent serial killer known as the "Phantom of Heilbronn," (Gasiorowski-Denis, 2016). This illustrates the importance of precautions that need to be implemented to prevent contamination in the lab where the smallest traces can be devastating.

Extreme care was taken to ensure the samples amplified in this experiment were not contaminated by unwanted DNA. Negative controls were run with each sample to ensure no contamination occurred during processing and procedures.

Present Study

The objective of this research was to determine the impact of Ginsenoside 20(S)-Rg3 on the replication of HSV-1 in mice determined by a polymerase chain reaction (and gel electrophoresis) analysis.

Materials and Methods

Samples

Mouse organs were previously collected from mice infected with HSV-1, not infected with HSV-1, or infected with HSV-1 and treated with different amounts of ginsenoside Rg3 (Table 1 & Figure 1) for days 1-3. The tissues collected included the spleen, liver, brain, and serum. A total of 100 samples were evaluated. The experiment was blind to eliminate any bias on part of the researcher. The virus used to infect the mice were HSV-1, the MacIntyre strain, (American Type Culture Collection, Rockville, MD). Each mouse receiving the virus was injected intraperitoneally with 500,000 HSV-1. Two samples were pooled for all HSV and Rg3 samples, while a single sample was used for all others.

Sample Identity	Treatment
No HSV	No treatment
HSV, 6 hour	Infected HSV-1; no Rg3
HSV, 12 hour	Infected HSV-1; no Rg3
10 Rg3: Day 1, 2, 3	Infected HSV-1; 10 mg/kg Rg3
3 Rg3: Day 1, 2, 3	Infected HSV-1; 3 mg/kg Rg3
1 Rg3: Day 1, 2, 3	Infected HSV-1; 1 mg/kg Rg3
0 Rg3: Day 1, 2, 3	Infected HSV-1; 0 mg/kg Rg3

Table 1: 20(S)-Rg3 Treatment Received by Various Groups. The sample's identity and their corresponding treatment are depicted. 0 hours received no treatment, 6-hour infected HSV-1 received no Rg3, 12-hour infected HSV-1 received no Rg3, Day 1, 2, 3: Group 1 infected HSV-1 received 10 mg/kg Rg3, Day 1, 2, 3: Group 2 infected HSV-1 received 3 mg/kg Rg3, Day 1, 2, 3: Group 3 infected HSV-1 received 1 mg/kg Rg3, and Day 1, 2, 3: Group 4 infected HSV-1 received 0 mg/kg Rg3.

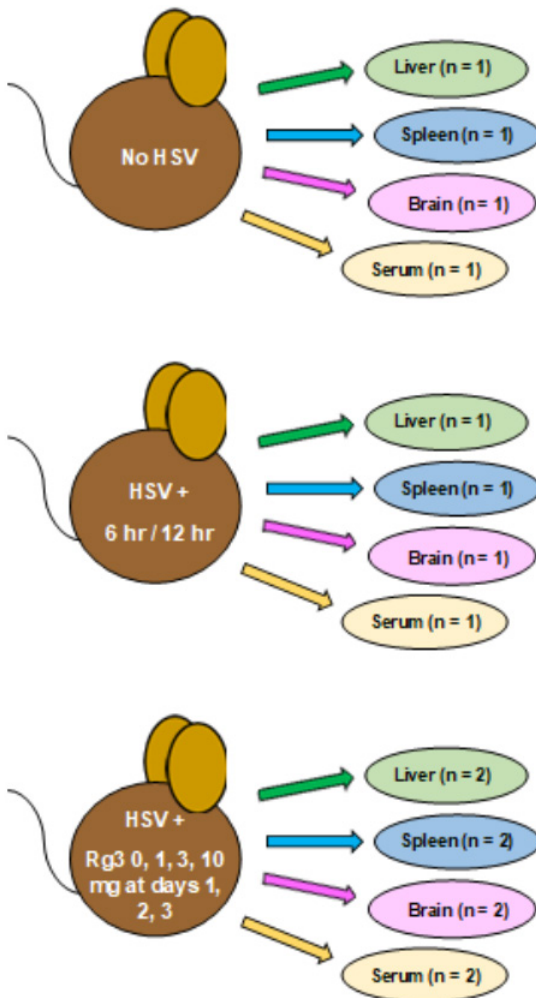


Figure 1: Mouse Treatment: Brain, Serum, Spleen, and Liver. The figure depicts the various treatment each mouse group received. From each mouse, brain (pink), serum (yellow), spleen (blue), and liver (green) were collected from each treatment group. The treatment groups were no HSV, HSV at 6- and 12-hours post-injection, and HSV plus specific Rg3 amounts (0 mg, 1 mg, 3 mg, and 10 mg). “n” represents the number of pooled mice samples.

Sample Extraction

Purified DNA was extracted from previously harvested mice organs stored at -20oC. The extraction process was completed using the IBI Genomic DNA Mini Kit (IBI Scientific, Peosta, IA). All samples of the same type were pooled. From each mouse’s sample, 100 µl were pipetted into a 1.5 ml microfuge tube and 30 µl Proteinase K (10mg/ml; Promega, Madison, WI). The microfuge tubes were incubated at 60oC for

15 minutes. Of the GB buffer, 200 μ l from the IBI Genomic DNA Mini Kit were added to the microfuge tube and vortexed for 10 seconds. The microfuge tubes were incubated at 70oC for 15 minutes (every couple of minutes the tubes were inverted to ensure good mixing). From ice-cold absolute ethanol (Thermo Fisher, Suwanee, GA) 200 μ l were added to the microfuge tube and then vortexed for 10 seconds. The entire volume from the microfuge tube was pipetted into a GD column (IBI Genomic DNA Mini Kit) that had been placed in a 2 ml collection tube and spun at 13,000 rpm for 5 minutes. The flowthrough from the collection tube was discarded. The GD column was placed back into a collection tube. From W1 Buffer 400 μ l was added to the GD column and spun for 30 seconds. The flowthrough was discarded, and the GD column was placed into an empty collection tube. From the wash buffer containing ethanol (Thermo Fisher), 600 μ l were added to the GD column and spun for 30 seconds. The flowthrough was discarded, and the GD column was placed in the empty collection tube and spun for 3 minutes to dry the column. The GD column was placed into a clean 1.5 ml tube. 50 μ l of elution buffer was heated to 70oC. The 50 μ l of elution buffer was then added to the GD column and allowed to absorb into the column matrix for 3 minutes. The GD column was spun for 30 seconds, and purified DNA was present in the elution buffer. The samples were stored at -20oC until amplification.

PCR

The DNA was amplified using previously verified PCR primers for HSV-1 (Johnson et al., 2000). Primers were manufactured by Eurofins Genomics, Louisville, KY. Positive control samples were used in a PCR reaction to ensure the reaction produced the expected fragment size for this primer pair, which was 518 base pairs. All reagents were thawed, vortexed, and spun for 5 seconds. The tubes were then kept on ice. In a 0.5 ml tube, 32.5 μ l sterile dH₂O, 37.5 μ l of Promega Master Mix (containing recommended concentrations of buffer, dNTPs, and Taq polymerase), 0.5 μ l forward primer, 0.5 μ l reverse primer, and 4 μ l DNA template were pipetted into the tube. After all the reagents were added, tubes were spun for 5 seconds and kept on ice until tubes were placed in the thermocycler and the cycling began (Table 4).

Tube Number	Tube 1	Tube 2
Sequence Name	HSVfor	HSVrev
Sequence 5' to 3'	GACTTTGCCAGCCTGTACC C	GAGTCCGTGTCCCCGTAGAT
% GC Content	60	60
Tm	64.5	64.5

Table 2: Eurofins Genomics: Oligonucleotide Data Table. The table depicts Oligonucleotide information for the HSV-1 primers including sequence name, sequence 5' to 3', % GC Content, and Tm.

Step	Temperature (°C)	Time
One	93°	2 min
Two	93°	30 sec
Three	50°	45 sec
Four	72°	1 min
Five	Go to step two, ten times	
Six	93°	30 sec
Seven	52°	45 sec
Eight	72°	1 min
Nine	Go to step six, twenty times	
Ten	72°	5 min
Eleven	4°	forever

Table 3: Thermocycler Program. The table depicts the thermocycler program for the PCR samples including the steps, the temperature in Celsius, and the amount of time in each round with a total of eleven steps (thirty-two cycles).

Agarose Gel Electrophoresis

The samples were evaluated by agarose gel electrophoresis to visualize the presence or absence of HSV-1. A positive result for HSV-1 is an amplicon of 518 bp (Johnson et al., 2000). From NuSieve agarose (FMC Bioproducts, Rockville, ME). A 1.25% gel was prepared using 0.5g NuSieve and 40 ml 1 X TAE buffer (40 mM Tris-acetate, 1 mM EDTA) was added to a 250 ml Erlenmeyer flask. The mixture was heated for approximately 30-40 seconds, swirling every 10 seconds to prevent a boil-over. The solution was cooled until it was warm to the touch. The gel tray was taped on both ends and sealed with melted agarose using a Pasteur pipette. The melted agarose was then poured into the tray with an 8-well comb in place. The gel solidified after 20 minutes, the tape and comb were removed, and the gel was placed into the gel box. 1 X TAE containing approximately 80 µl ethidium bromide (10mg/ml; Sigma, St.Louis, MO) was added until it covered the gel. Samples were prepared by combining 1.5 µl blue 6 X gel loading dye (BioVentures, Murfreesboro, TN) and 8.5 µl sample PCR product into a new 1.5 ml tube. For the standard ladder, 1.5 µl blue sample buffer and 8.5 µl Biomarker Low (BioVentures) were prepared. All samples were spun down for 10 seconds. The total volume of the ladder, a positive control, a negative control, and samples were all loaded into appropriate lanes of the gel. The gel was run for 1 hour and 15 minutes at 75 volts. Bands were visualized using a UV transilluminator. Fragments located at 518 base pairs were marked as positive for HSV-1.

Results

These studies were undertaken to investigate the ability of various concentrations of Rg3 to inhibit HSV in mice. In addition to evaluating different mouse tissues for HSV following infection, our analysis considered tracking the presence of HSV over 3 days. An example of how these analyses were interpreted is shown in Figure 2.

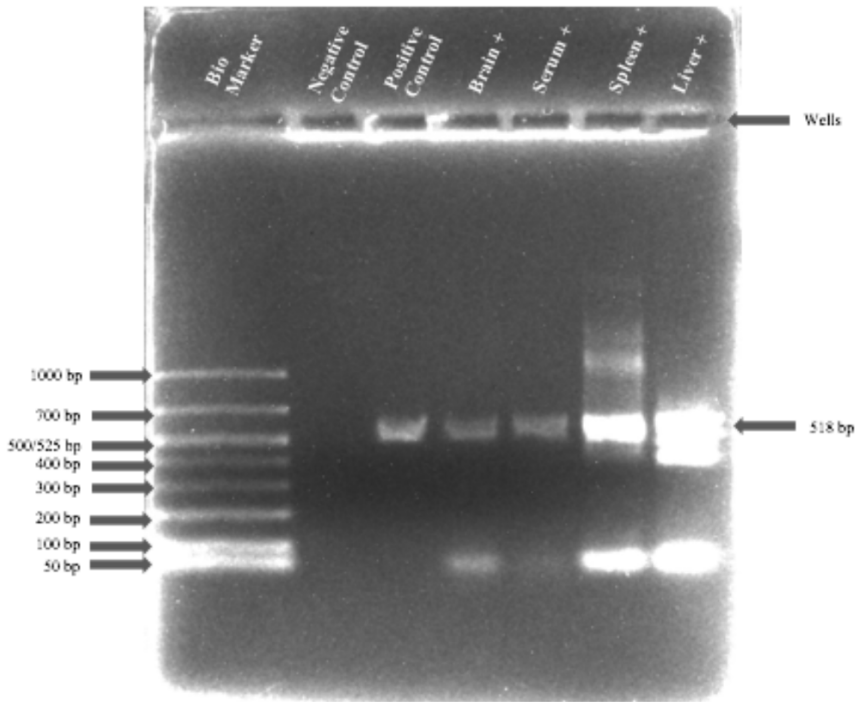


Figure 2: Gel Electrophoresis. Starting on the left, Biomarker Low depicts a ladder with known fragment sizes (fragment sizes: 1000, 700, 500/525, 400, 300, 200, 100, and 50 bp), Negative Control with no bands present, Positive Control with one band at 518 bp, followed by the four tissue types depicting positive results. An arrow points out the wells, the ladder, and where 518 base pairs appear which indicates a positive result.

Table 4 illustrates how the HSV infection takes hold within mice over a specific course of time (6 and 12 hours). This enables a baseline for all treatment groups to be compared. Positive and negative results in both cell culture and PCR were collected for all treatment groups.

Samples	PCR Results	Cell Culture
6 Hour Serum	+	-
6 Hour Brain	+	-
6 Hour Liver	+	-
6 Hour Spleen	-	-
12 Hour Serum	+	-
12 Hour Brain	+	-
12 Hour Liver	+	+
12 Hour Spleen	+	+

Table 4: HSV Only Post 6- and 12-Hours Post Injection. Samples included all tissue types (serum, brain, liver, and spleen) post 6 hours or post 12 hours from the initial injection of HSV. The results were interpreted using gel electrophoresis, a positive example of each positive tissue type is depicted in figure 2.

In total, 100 samples were collected and processed throughout the course of the experiment. All treatment groups, tissues, and days are depicted in the appendix. The data was compiled into noticeable trend lines depicted in Figures 3, 4, 5, and 6. The goal was to illustrate any trends that were present or absent within the data set as a whole.

Figure 3 looks at any trends between the percent positive of each tissue type in comparison to the treatment day. Over the course of three days, the brain shows a steady increase in percent positive. The brain starts with the lowest percent positive at 25% on day 1 but quickly climbs to 87.5% positive on day 2, where it remains consistent through day 3 at 87.5% positive. The liver shows a decrease in percent positive over the three days. On day 1 liver is 100% positive, falls to 87.5% on day 2, and finally ends on day 3 at 25% positive. Serum remains consistent over the course of two days at 87.5% positive; however, no information is available for serum on day 3. Spleen demonstrates a slower decreasing trend over the three days. For the spleen on day 1 and day 2, there is no difference with the percent positive being 100%, and then decreases on day 3 to 87.5% positive. It is important to note that the liver and spleen both decreased in percentage positive over time, while never increasing. Brain increased in percent positive, but never decreased. The serum remained the same.

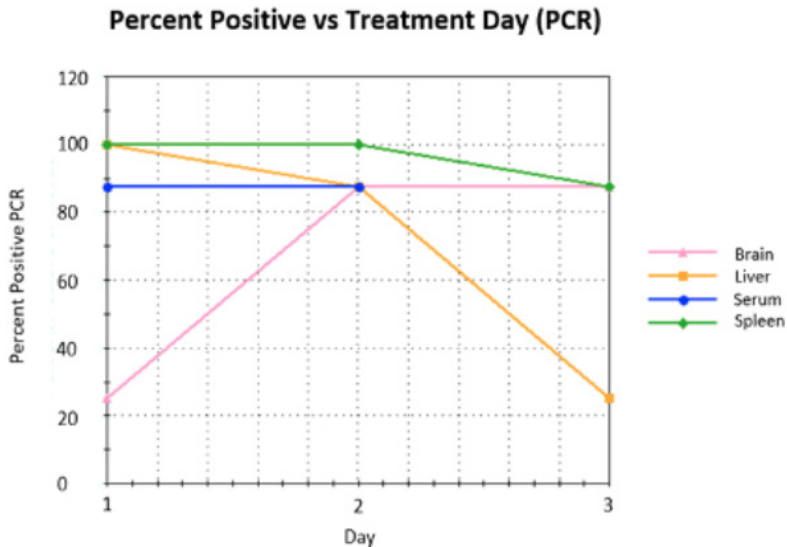


Figure 3: Percent Positive vs Treatment Day (PCR). The figure depicts percent positive results in PCR directly compared to days 1, 2, and 3. A separate line illustrates the four tissue types with the brain being pink, the liver being yellow, the serum being blue, and the spleen being green. No serum samples were available for day 3 of serum.

Figure 4 further demonstrates the trends depicted in figure 3. With all the tissues combined, PCR overall increased from day 1 to day 2, before decreasing overall on day 3. PCR started with a percent positive of 78.13 % on day 1, increasing to 90.63 % positive, and finally decreasing to 66.67 % positive. Cell culture overall decreased from day 1 to day 2, before increasing slightly on day 3. Cell culture started with a percent positive of 43.75%, decreased to 0%, before increasing to 8.33% positive. Not only does the figure illustrate the trends over the course of all three days as a whole, but it also depicts how sensitive PCR is in comparison to Cell Culture.

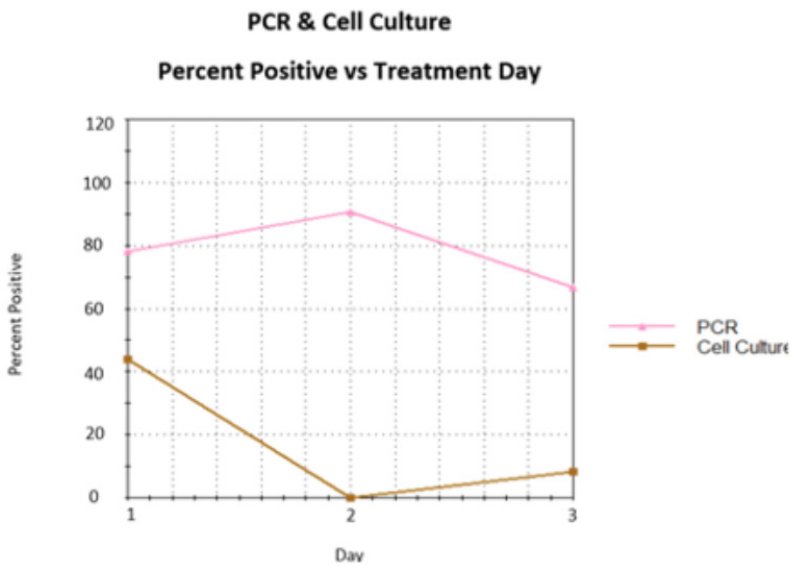


Figure 4: PCR and Cell Culture Percent Positive vs Treatment Day. PCR is represented by a pink line and cell culture is represented by a brown line. Percent positive of all tissue types were directly compared to their corresponding days.

Figure 5 illustrates the relation between Rg3 treatment on various days in comparison to percent positive. As the treatment increased, the percent positive would decrease. Both 0 mg/kg Rg3 and 1 mg/kg Rg3 show an increase from day 1 to day 2, before decreasing on day 3. On day 1 both were 75% positive, increasing to 100% positive, before decreasing to 66.67% positive. Rg3 treatment of 3 mg/kg slowly decreased over the three days. Rg3 of 3 mg/kg started at 87.5 % positive, staying consistent over day 2 at 87.5 % positive, and decreasing to 66.67% on day 3. For Rg3 treatment at 10 mg/kg, it slowly decreased over the three days. On day 1 10 mg/kg of Rg3 was 75 % positive, staying consistent over day 2 at 75% positive, before decreasing to 66.67% positive. The 0 mg/kg and 1 mg/kg acted identically to one another, increasing before decreasing, whereas 3 mg/kg and 10 mg/kg remained consistent between day 1 and day 2, before decreasing slightly. Additionally, all 4 groups ended at 66.67 % on day 3.

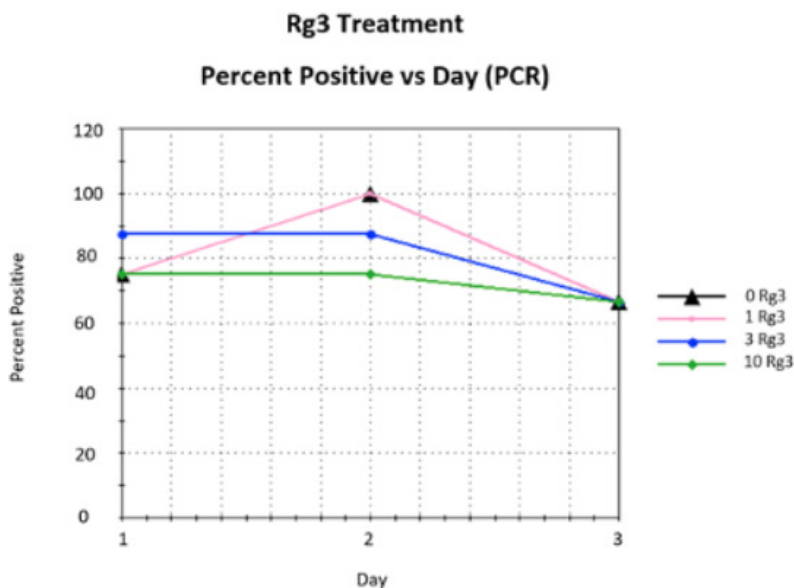


Figure 5: Rg3 Treatment Percent Positive vs Day (PCR). The figure depicts the percent positive on each day concerning specific Rg3 treatments. Rg3 treatment of 0 mg/kg is depicted by a black line, however, it perfectly lines up with 1 mg/kg making it difficult to visualize. Rg3 1 mg/kg is depicted as pink, 3 mg/kg Rg3 is blue, and 10 mg/kg Rg3 is green.

Figure 6 demonstrates the overall trend of all tissue types in comparison to Rg3 treatment and percent positivity. Overall PCR gradually decreased over the specific treatment groups. At Rg3 treatments of 0, 1, and 3 mg/kg in PCR had a percent positive of 81.82%, which decreased to 72.73%. Overall cell culture increased before decreasing slightly. At Rg3 treatment of 0 and 1 mg/kg, the percent positive was 13.64%, increasing to 27.27% at 3 mg/kg Rg3, and decreasing to 18.18% positive at 10 mg/kg. PCR, which once again is far more sensitive than cell culture, remained the same over three days, before slightly decreasing. In cell culture, there was a slight jump before decreasing slightly.

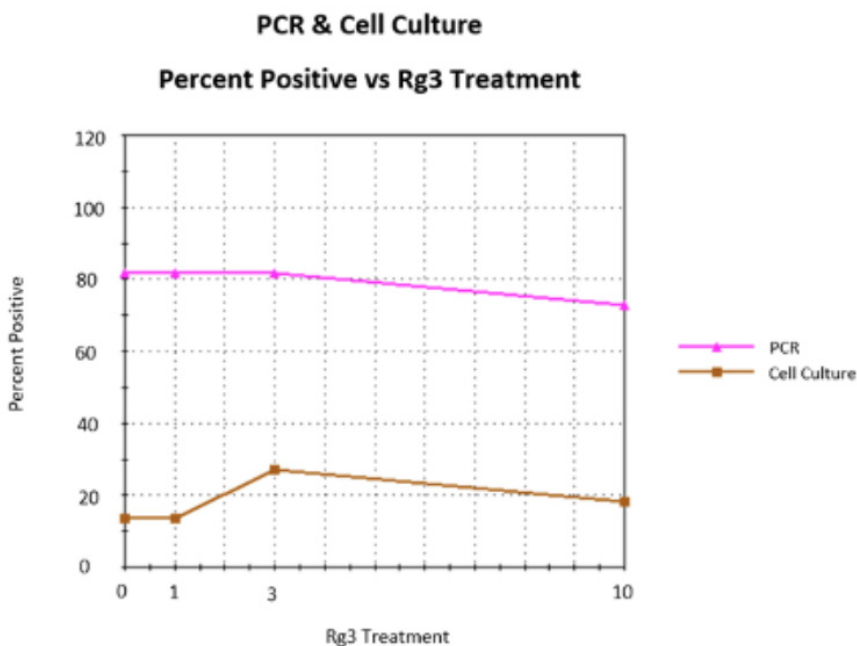


Figure 6: PCR and Cell Culture Percent Positive vs Rg3 Treatment. The figure depicts the trends of all tissue types over the course of increasing amounts of Rg3 in comparison to percent positive. PCR (pink) shows a subtle decline in percent positive as the Rg3 treatment amounts increased. Cell Culture increased in percent positive before decreasing overall.

Discussion

The objective of this study was to evaluate the inhibition of herpes simplex virus type 1 by Ginsenosides 20(S)-Rg3. The four tissue types (spleen, liver, brain, and serum) and three concentrations of Rg3 were accessed using PCR and gel electrophoresis analysis (Wright and Altman, 2020). After all the tissue samples had been analyzed for the presence of HSV, they were compared with the plaque assay

results from the cell cultures. Following the documentation of the specimens, the treatment groups were revealed (blind study). It is vital in understanding that when using PCR, only viral sequences are detected; not necessarily infectious viruses (Wald et al., 2003).

Upon analysis of all the samples, some were unusual. PCR is far more sensitive, able to detect minute details more so than cell cultures (Schrimpf et al., 2020). Therefore, if a cell culture were negative and the PCR were positive, it is not surprising given the sensitivity of PCR (Schrimpf et al., 2020). However, if PCR were negative and cell culture contradicted with a positive result, those samples needed reevaluation. Day 1 liver samples 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, and 15-16 needed retesting due to the contradicting reports. The PCR product in these samples needed re-amplification using the same protocol (except instead of a 4 μ l DNA template, 1 μ l of PCR product was used). After re-amplification, the specimens were determined to be positive.

All samples' PCR and cell culture results are shown in the appendix. The groups were then organized in figures 3, 4, 5, and 6. Figure 3 examined the relationship between the tissue types over the course of three days compared to percent positive. Serum remained the same, spleen and liver decreased, with liver decreasing the most, and brain increased in percent positive over the course of three days. These results were not unusual; Eeckout's research showed similar patterns for infected mice's organs over the course of several days (Eeckout et al., 1994). Like this project's research, the spleen and liver cleared out their infection relatively fast (Eeckout et al., 1994). In their project serum cleared the infection similarly to the spleen and liver, while in this project's experiment it was not witnessed, this can be explained by the lack of serum on day 3 (Eeckout et al., 1994). The brain, in both studies, showed the brain takes far longer for the infection to set in, and then to clear out the infection (Eeckout et al., 1994).

Once the specific tissue types were illustrated in figure 3, the overall trend of all the tissue types over the course of the three days is depicted in figure 4 for both PCR and cell culture. In PCR, there was an increase in percent positive from day 1 to day 2, before decreasing on day 3. It illustrates the infection taking hold within the organs between day 1 and day 2. By day 3, the tissues were starting to clear out the infection. PCR in comparison to cell culture was far more sensitive, which is nicely depicted in figure 4. Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the overall trends of the infection over the course of three days, to establish the expected clearance rates for each day. This study's focus was on how specific concentrations of Rg3 impacted the infection.

It was anticipated that as the amount of Rg3 increased, so would the number

of negative results. To demonstrate this, the specific amounts of Rg3 treatment over the course of three days were directly compared to the percent positivity in figure 5. Rg3 at 0 mg/kg and 1 mg/kg both increased from day 1 to day 2, before decreasing on day 3. This is exactly what was illustrated in figure 4, an increase on day 2 before starting to clear the virus on day 3. Rg3 at 3 mg/kg and 10 mg/kg, where it would be anticipated to see the greatest amount of change, showed very little difference. Both remained the same from day 1 to day 2, before decreasing slightly. Interestingly, all treatment groups ended with the same percent positive on day 3. Demonstrating Rg3 did not impact clearance of the virus, rather the variation is due to the days.

The sample groups did not follow any trend that would lead to a correlation between treatment and infection. Other research experiments showed varying amounts of success.

Researcher Cho evaluated the effects of Korean red ginseng (KRG) on mice and found KRG was able to render mice more resistant to HSV vaginal infection, along with other viruses (Cho et al., 2013). Another study found that KRG and its ginsenosides were able to reduce diarrhea in mice who were infected with rotavirus (Yang et al., 2018). Both of these studies did not use cell culture, but they did use live animals (mice). This indicates that KRG is successful in mice for a certain virus, however, there is no direct correlation made between cell culture and the live mice. Although both treatments were successful in mice, these results cannot be translated to cell culture. Conversely, Song conducted research and reported activity against coxsackie virus, enterovirus, and rhinovirus (Song et al., 2014). The researcher only used cell cultures, and never did live animal studies (Song et al., 2014). This illustrates the importance of testing in both arenas. Our study showed promising results in cell culture, much like Song (Song et al., 2014) did, however, the extra step was taken to test in animals. Thus, while Rg3 was successful in cell culture, the same protection was not evident in live animals, which are far more complex with more factors involved.

Appendix

Samples	PCR Results	Cell Culture
Day 1 Serum	+	-
Day 1 Serum	+	-
Day 1 Brain	-	-
Day 1 Brain	-	-
Day 1 Liver	+	+
Day 1 Liver	+	+
Day 1 Spleen	+	-
Day 1 Spleen	+	+
Day 2 Serum	+	-
Day 2 Serum	+	-
Day 2 Brain	+	-
Day 2 Brain	+	-
Day 2 Liver	+	-
Day 2 Liver	+	-
Day 2 Spleen	+	-
Day 2 Spleen	+	-
Day 3 Brain	+	-
Day 3 Brain	+	-
Day 3 Liver	-	-
Day 3 Liver	-	-
Day 3 Spleen	+	-
Day 3 Spleen	+	-

Table 5: 0 mg Rg3 (Virus Only). Table depicts all samples' PCR and cell culture results for tissues that received 0 mg Rg3. Light gray with a "+" represents a positive sample and dark gray with a "-" represents a negative result.

Samples	PCR Results	Cell Culture
Day 1 Serum	+	-
Day 1 Serum	+	-
Day 1 Brain	-	-
Day 1 Brain	-	-
Day 1 Liver	+	+
Day 1 Liver	+	+
Day 1 Spleen	+	-
Day 1 Spleen	+	-
Day 2 Serum	+	-
Day 2 Serum	+	-
Day 2 Brain	+	-
Day 2 Brain	+	-
Day 2 Liver	+	-
Day 2 Liver	+	-
Day 2 Spleen	+	-
Day 2 Spleen	+	-
Day 3 Brain	+	-
Day 3 Brain	-	-
Day 3 Liver	+	-
Day 3 Liver	-	-
Day 3 Spleen	+	-
Day 3 Spleen	+	+

Table 6: Treatment 1 mg Rg3. Table depicts all samples' PCR and cell culture results for tissues that received 1 mg Rg3. Light gray with a "+" represents a positive sample and dark gray with a "-" represents a negative result.

Samples	PCR Results	Cell Culture
Day 1 Serum	-	-
Day 1 Serum	+	+
Day 1 Brain	+	-
Day 1 Brain	+	-
Day 1 Liver	+	+
Day 1 Liver	+	+
Day 1 Spleen	+	+
Day 1 Spleen	+	+
Day 2 Serum	+	-
Day 2 Serum	-	-
Day 2 Brain	+	-
Day 2 Brain	+	-
Day 2 Liver	+	-
Day 2 Liver	+	-
Day 2 Spleen	+	-
Day 2 Spleen	+	-
Day 3 Brain	+	-
Day 3 Brain	+	-
Day 3 Liver	-	-
Day 3 Liver	+	-
Day 3 Spleen	-	-
Day 3 Spleen	+	+

Table 7: Treatment: 3 mg Rg3. Table depicts all samples' PCR and cell culture results for tissues that received 3 mg Rg3. Light gray with a "+" represents a positive sample and dark gray with a "-" represents a negative result.

Samples	PCR Results	Cell Culture
Day 1 Serum	+	-
Day 1 Serum	+	-
Day 1 Brain	-	-
Day 1 Brain	-	-
Day 1 Liver	+	+
Day 1 Liver	+	+
Day 1 Spleen	+	+
Day 1 Spleen	+	+
Day 2 Serum	+	-
Day 2 Serum	+	-
Day 2 Brain	-	-
Day 2 Brain	+	-
Day 2 Liver	-	-
Day 2 Liver	+	-
Day 2 Spleen	+	-
Day 2 Spleen	+	-
Day 3 Brain	+	-
Day 3 Brain	+	-
Day 3 Liver	-	-
Day 3 Liver	-	-
Day 3 Spleen	+	-
Day 3 Spleen	+	-

Table 8: Treatment: 10 mg Rg3. Table depicts all sample's PCR and cell culture results for tissues that received 10 mg Rg3. Light gray with a "+" represents a positive sample and dark gray with a "-" represents a negative result.

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Discovering Nothing to Create Anything: Gorgias's *On the Nonexistent* and the World- Building Power of *Logos*

Kat Kolby

ABSTRACT

This paper begins by tracing instances throughout history wherein the fields of rhetoric and philosophy have quarreled, focusing primarily on how they define their own studies as well as language and its connection to, or lack of, an objective reality. With a close examination of the theoretical framework and definition for *logos* as presented in Gorgias's *On the Nonexistent* or *On Nature*, it is possible to flesh out a better understanding of the connections between any medium of communication and the process of creating and conveying both perceptual and virtual realities. Gorgias, in the context of this paper, refers to the sophist and rhetorician, 483 to 375 BC, and is not to be confused with the character in Plato's *Gorgias* meant to discount sophistry. In my argument, backed by game studies scholars such as Ian Bogost and James J. Brown Jr., the rhetorical impact of video games as it is relayed through the authorship of code can serve as an alternative medium that parallels rhetorical impact of speech through the authorship of *logos*. Viewing video games as examples of virtually constructed worlds within an outer world can also help demonstrate how Platonic suggestions that *logos* has any direct connection to objective substantiality are inherently flawed. This dismissal of the primacy of *logos* as truth-revealing suggests that rhetoric is an inherent part of all forms of composition and, thus, communication necessarily precedes the ability to convey any philosophical ideas. Looking through the interpretive act for both the communicator and the audience, *logos* can be seen as its own kind of substance with a power far superior to mere persuasion or influence.

The significance of rhetorical input for all communication is amplified, not by the formalistic guidebooks from the likes of Cicero and Aristotle, but rather through Gorgias's profound conclusions regarding *logos*, its limitations, and the resulting profundity of rhetorical choices. Gorgias's *On the Nonexistent*, despite its placement in time, provides an excellent overview of one of the fundamental disagreements between the studies of philosophy and rhetoric—that of the link between *logos* and the dissemination of truth. Ironically, some of the more modern focal points of philosophical scholarship return to the very arguments in *On the Nonexistent*, making Gorgias's seemingly deranged, yet honestly simple stance more sensible. With a close examination of this piece, it is possible to flesh out a better understanding of the connections between speech and the process of creating and conveying both perceptual and virtual realities. There is, however, the long-standing war between style and substance that has held the exploration of this relationship at bay. Although it is understandable to condemn convincing others from ignorance or for selfish gains, the issue here lies with the assumption that truth is simultaneously something that exists outside of the self, can be directly ascertained, and shared with others through an idealized, sterile dialectic method. This concept remained central for much of philosophy's recorded history.

As part of the canonical Ancient Greek texts, Plato's *Phaedrus* is one of the better-known dialogues that bashes sophistry as a misguided, deceitful act akin to selling snake-oil. Socrates gives an absolutely absurd number of speeches, all of which employ metaphorical, flowery language, and convinces young Phaedrus of the importance of using *logos* to reveal truths rather than persuade others with falsehoods. He asks Phaedrus if one must know the truth of what is being discussed prior to speaking (Plato 46). The dire consequences of persuasion without knowledge, based on opinions of the intended audience, or with a focus on probability over actuality are exaggerated. This adds emphasis to what is at stake if we separate speech from adherence to Socrates's theory of what constitutes the good and the true. Much of the argumentation in *Phaedrus* is devoted to analogies that cast the worst light on orators and their craft while upholding dialectic as the quintessential method to gain wisdom.

Despite a rich history of figures attempting to rescue rhetoric from complete dismissal, Peter Ramus, almost two thousand years later in the sixteenth century, reinforces the belittling of sophistry found in Plato's *Phaedrus*. Though he gave some credit to the importance of eloquence, he also reattributed most rhetorical acts to dialectic, leaving only style and delivery for the orator (Bizzell and Herzberg 676).

With his treatment of rhetoric as closer to jewelry for one's language than to the art of speech-making, Ramus set back the study itself for quite some time. Even in 2007, Donald Phillip Verene begins his article, "Philosophical Rhetoric," with a confession to having bought into this animosity. He admits that until Henry Johnstone "introduced [him] to the importance of rhetoric... [He] had the usual prejudice of philosophers" and even cites the harsh criticism and derision of rhetoricians from Descartes, Locke, and Kant (Verene 27). This anti-rhetoric sentiment in philosophical academia is so deep-rooted that it requires him to address it prior to suggesting the mere possibility of blending the two fields.

Early texts from Gorgias examined issues of experience and phenomena far before these were considered pillars of focus within popular philosophical schools of thought—though the pre-Socratics have plenty of examples prior to the domination of dialectic. Due to more recent conceptualizations of these, it may be tempting, while reading Gorgias's *On the Nonexistent*, to fall down the rabbit hole of metaphysical dualism. By this, I am referring to a notion that there is both an internal and external world, separated by a veil of perception. The veil, in this case, introduces a very tricky issue concerning our ability to peek behind it and ever confirm or deny anyone's sense data or experience. Conceptually, this is then spun out into the crux of epistemological quandaries concerning how we can justify knowledge and what can be proven (Poston). Thus, arguments arise between different kinds of philosophical realism, or the view that things exist outside of our perception of them, and idealism or phenomenalism, wherein the former insists that only our perceptions exist and the latter that unperceived objects can exist because of the "continued *possibility* of experience" (O'Brien).

One can see how messy this becomes once we start considering the questionable nature of "accounting for phenomenological features of perception," or the individual nature of each of our experiences (O'Brien). What is more befuddling is the contemplation of philosophies of the mind, Cartesian hangovers, intentionalism, cognitive externalism, disjunctivism, and an incredibly long list of other "isms" to contend with. The initial reference to a rabbit hole is quite apt when staring at the interconnected jumble of ideals presented here. Keep in mind that Plato's focus on Truth insists that "there is a realm of necessarily existing abstract objects comprising a framework of reality beyond the material world" (Carder). The idea that we could ever access such a meta-reality, given all the nebulous-yet-dense content concerning only the veil and its implications, is improbable—even if it does exist. Let us now return to Gorgias and, as I originally suggested, sidestep these discussions with one of

my favorite stances to take: that of a pragmatic avoidance of absolute certainty and acknowledgment that the answers, to me, are moot. Gorgias does not make hard-and-fast truth claims about the existent or non-existent, and I do not intend to, either.

Instead, Gorgias is playing with *logos* to prove its necessary disconnect from objectivity or Truth. If this is so, then philosophers' insistence that we must use *logos* to uncover said Truth is in vain, and the "stylistic" uses for *logos* are far more crucial than originally assumed. Gorgias lays out his argument by creating a set of syllogisms, in a way beating philosophers at their own game, to set forth a three-part, rather snarky, treatise: "first and foremost, that nothing exists; second, that even if it exists it is inapprehensible to man; third, that even if it is apprehensible, still it is without a doubt incapable of being expressed or explained to the next man" (Gorgias 43). In the first and most extensive argument, Gorgias explores the seemingly basic premise that "if <anything> exists, either the existent exists or the nonexistent or both the existent exists and the nonexistent" (43). Based upon their definitions and the inclusion of *being* as part of their referents (i.e., the nonexistent referring to all that *is not* and the existent referring to all that *is*), Gorgias points out the constant contradictions that unfold.

For if the nonexistent exists, or *is*, then this would mean that all that *is not* is part of all that *is*, thus rendering both nonsensical and proving, through syllogistic opposition, that the existent does not exist. This is preposterous because that "is not, in fact, true," as we would be collapsing both categories into one and proving that everything does not exist in any sense (Gorgias 43). He makes further arguments based upon other interconnected pairs, each with mutually exclusive words, such as: generated or eternal, contained or unlimited, and one or many (43-4). It follows, in applying each word's meaning to *all that is*, that the existent cannot exist if it has the qualities of any of these terms as each would unravel how we define *all that is*. Gorgias spends half of this treatise using wordplay to make perceptually false, yet logically valid deductions, and ultimately contends that "if neither the existent exists nor the nonexistent nor both, and if no additional possibility is conceivable, nothing exists" (45). Gorgias uses referents and their necessary traits to flesh out how certainty through logical syllogism cannot be based upon words, which often have amorphous, situational meanings.

If this seems chaotic, that is because it purposefully is. This becomes clearer with his second argument: "if anything exists, it is unknowable and incomprehensible to man" (Gorgias 45). Note that Gorgias is beginning with the assumption that the conclusion to his previous argument is obviously flawed, which was cleanly and

completely gleaned through one of philosophy's favorite methods—that of syllogistic argument. He is not sticking to the assertion that nothing can exist. Instead, he immediately concedes that something obviously exists, and in doing so, he exemplifies the break between logical soundness and validity. To clarify, validity concerns true/false judgments that are entirely based on the rules of formal logic. An argument is considered sound, however, "if it is both valid, and all of its premises are *actually true*" (Anonymous, IEP). Although Gorgias's arguments are valid, the conclusion is clearly false, and the preferred means for possibly testing their soundness were the very ones that led to a paradoxical conclusion. The only other means of verification is through escaping the veil. In his second argumentative portion, he considers the underlying differences between external content and our internal perception, thoughts, and sensations that make objective thought impossible.

Looking back to Verene's "Philosophical Rhetoric," we can see this same flaw of logical argumentation crop up as the focal point of the piece. The fundamental division between validity and verifiable soundness serves as the set-up towards an exploration of philosophy's inability to resolve disagreements, as Johnstone put it, "when...formally valid arguments can be produced by both sides" (Verene 28). Herein lies that very paradox presented through an ancient Gorgias, echoing in this twenty-first-century text; "in philosophical dispute...the nature of the thing appealed to is itself" (28). Johnstone posits using rhetoric as a necessary complement to a Hegelian dialectic, which is based on "opposites in the life of the self or spirit" (31). Logical argumentation "is the means to conduct the critical evaluation of ideas," yet this stance conveniently ignores the initial process of composing sound propositions (31). Verene turns to Ernesto Grassi to approach this new problem that "logic cannot provide its own starting points" (32).

As he explores the process of creating ideas, Verene follows Grassi's notion that rhetorical speech-acts are crucial to formulating concepts, then looks to Cassier's point that the synthesis and becoming of the self are also necessarily connected to this. In arriving at self-creation being inherently tied to narrative structure, Verene embarks on his own quest to convince readers that all great philosophical works "are likely stories, which originate in the philosopher's own autobiography and are attempts to move from this...to formulate the narrative of human existence in the world and to speak of things human and divine" (34). This storytelling is obviously rhetorical, and, thus, Verene posits a new philosophical rhetoric that explains how the best of philosophy does not only "gain their authority...from what they say, but from how they say it" (35). This is beautifully put and undermines the very foundation and

history of Plato's Socratic dialectic as the originating means to arrive at objective truth. This challenge and Gorgias's rhetoric are emphasized not only here but also in some of the biggest names in German philosophy, again thousands of years after *On the Nonexistent*.

Michael MacDonald's "Encomium of Hegel" rather quickly points out Hegel's dancing around sophistry to try both to give credit to the likes of Gorgias while maintaining that, maybe, he was just an early "subjectivist" philosopher (22). This, much like Ramus, tries to reappropriate rhetoric to philosophy. Hegel did face backlash for being sympathetic to rhetoric and has been accused by many of being a sophist himself (23). However, Hegel is one of the founding minds of modern philosophy, and it is ironic to me that some of his "most famous chapters," as MacDonald points out, "take up and elaborate the arguments advanced by Gorgias in *On Not Being*" (24). Hegel is known for, among other things, idealism, fierce skepticism, and attempting to bridge the gap between objectivity and subjectivity with a direct view that the very perception of anything is its foundation, or that "appearance is the essence of being" (37). In this vein, he makes the "claim that early Greek skepticism—the free thought that 'annihilates the being of the world'—reaches its most 'profound depth' in Gorgias's *On Not Being or On Nature*" (30).

The complexity of consideration within *On the Nonexistent* reveals that Gorgias was way ahead of his time. In yet another clear example of brilliance, the final argument of Gorgias's piece rationally guides us down the confusing path from fantasies in the mind being existent in a separate way from sensation and perception to the content of the mind being incapable of having any similar substance to something outside of the self (45). In short, he posits that "the existent is not an object of consideration and is not apprehended" (46). Following this profound conclusion, he again continues based upon the refutation of his previous logic: "even if it should be apprehended, it would be incapable of being conveyed to another" (46). After having explored the possibility of nonexistence for an external reality, then the impossibility of directly accessing it through perception or thought, his final argument now consists of the evident flaw in thinking that words are direct representations of objective substantiality (46). Gorgias's culminating point is that *logos*, having its own kind of substance separate from sensations and perceptions themselves, "does not, therefore, manifest the majority of substances, just as they do not manifest the nature of each other" (46). The implication here is that words, or *logos*, exist uniquely and cannot have direct ties to other kinds of substances—be they internal or external.

Even with limitations, acknowledging that words are one of the few tools,

cumbersome and complex as they may be, with which we can communicate returns us to a view of *logos* as sacred. This is exemplified in Hegel's much later examination, wherein he first points out "how words, not just concepts, mediate our consciousness of the world" (MacDonald 37). It is speech, then, that allows us one possible way to construct and influence another's perception of what we experience. Later, and far more profoundly, MacDonald shows that "the dynastic power of language creates a world, and in this case, Hegel fuses the philosophic and religious senses of the *logos*; it is the speech of man, to be sure, but it is also the creative word of God" (39). The lingering issue, however, is in Hegel's insistence that Gorgias was not a rhetorician but a philosopher. There is a fundamental difference between the two disciplines that lies directly in the act of composition, and it distinctly separates Gorgias from philosophy proper—despite his engagement with the latter. I think that it is with the almost-traditional prejudice against the sophistic profession that those like Hegel are so hesitant to be associated with thoughts under the "rhetoric" umbrella. As MacDonald concludes, "the history of philosophy shows us that exorcising the sophist from the order of truth and reason is never a simple gesture" (40).

Similarly, Heidegger explores the line between the necessity of speech without direct connection to referents and internal philosophical endeavors. Though I have my own issues with Heidegger and his possible solipsism, it is poignant that he, too, concedes that there are phenomena beyond our conceptual abilities that cannot be directly addressed with language. Susan Zickmund points to ways in which Heidegger's philosophy allows for rhetoric's use to have a deliberative discourse concerning those that "resist being 'taken apart'" (411). Further, it is also through rhetoric that we can lead others to be most receptive "to the call of their own conscience," which is paramount to Heidegger's philosophy of being (414). Reliance on asserting the existence of realities separate from the self is still peppered throughout, but these works cannot help but admit the obvious chasm between the object and the explanation of it. Though we still see a strong resistance to admitting the use of rhetorical strategy, the works of MacDonald and Zickmund reveal philosophy's inability to ignore the fundamental, culminating notion in Gorgias's *On the Nonexistent*: that *logos* cannot, by definition and nature, have a direct connection to disseminating objective truth. Thus, verbal communication will always boil down to rhetorical word choices, and this renders the philosophical practice of using language alone to discover transcendent essences unproductive at best and fundamentally absurd at worst.

Building upon all previous examples of the generative power of *logos*, I posit

that while philosophy concerns how we formulate and reflect on ideas internally, rhetoric is the necessary discipline to choose how best to express said ideas and create the closest thing to facsimiles of them within others' minds. Though there is always going to be a semblance of interpretation involved on the part of the audience, this merely enhances the importance of rhetorical strategy and anticipation of the reception of one's attempted world-building. James J. Brown Jr. describes this relationship well: "the act of literary interpretation need not be cut off from the concerns of writing or rhetorical analysis...it will also require rhetoricians to theorize the relation between production and interpretation" (29). He explores the necessity of rhetorical choices prior to communication as it is exemplified throughout the creation and consumption of software-based virtual realities.

James J. Brown Jr. makes the very compelling argument that "computer programs are...are *compositions* and sometimes even arguments...that new media technologies have opened up new modes of expression" (29). While the focus of his piece is on interdisciplinary study, he makes the crucial observations that "any interpretive effort is an *authoring effort*...to make sense of an object" and there is "no interpretation without production; no production without interpretation" (30). Under this cyclical, constantly folding in upon itself notion, the process of honing communications to better connect with audiences and explicate experience as best as the medium allows sheds light on the relationship between *logos* and the existent as being inherently separate entities. The tethering of an author's translating the internal to audience and their interactivity with the composition as required to create meaning is very well exemplified through video games.

As Ian Bogost points out in "Procedural Rhetoric," the first chapter of his book related to this concept, the interlocked relationship between composer and consumer is foundational to his whole analysis of the persuasive power of video games:

Rhetoric thus also came to refer to *effective expression*, that is, writing, speech, or art that both accomplishes the goals of the author and absorbs the reader or viewer...rhetoric "provides ways of emphasizing ideas or making them vivid." Success means effective expression, not necessarily effective influence. (19-20)

Bifurcating influence from expression defines rhetoric as far more powerful, despite the ominous warnings from Plato's *Phaedrus* of all the severe consequences of nefarious persuasion. This would entail that in all mediums for communicating anything to others, one must consult rhetorical strategy to effectively express ideas. In terms of games, any rules that govern that virtual reality "are authored in code,

through the practice of programming" (29). What makes this medium an ideal example of Gorgias's relationship between *logos* and objective reality as opposed to Platonic forms lies in the parallel connections shown through code and the player.

Much as we experience reality, gameplay is an exploration of "the possibility space its rules afford by manipulating the game's controls" (Bogost 43). We, too, when walking the world, are interacting with and manipulating our bodies within reality to observe and record both our experience of it and its limitations or parameters. Further, a game and its "complex rules that simulate real or imagined physical space and cultural processes...[and] rely on user interaction as a mediator...earn[s] the second spot on the continuum, directly under actual experience" (35). One does not have to write or even understand code to see or play the game, similar to Gorgias's notion that "when external reality is involved, it would not become our *logos*" (Gorgias 46). However, if one understands the code of a game, one could find ways to warp the game's reality. As James J. Brown Jr. realizes when he reveals a hidden table embedded in HTML code, he can bypass the program's required interactions from the user and "just cheat" by filling out the table itself (Brown Jr. 27).

In the first years of the twenty-first century, when I constantly played *American McGee's Alice*, a first-person horror-adventure game, I would pull up the command prompt, type in cheat codes, and reshape the game's parameters. For the sake of clarification, pressing the '~' key for the command prompt is accessible only in the original PC or Mac version as it was removed in the later edition that came bundled with the game's sequel, *Alice: Madness Returns*. As many gamers may be familiar, I was able to use shortcut, key-phrases of code, also commonly referred to as cheat codes, to bypass perceived limitations and rules of the game's narrative and environment. No longer held by the parameters of what one could call a basic experience of the game's reality, my avatar of Alice could become invincible, have unlimited resources, access all weapons in the game without "unlocking them," hop around check points or levels of the game as I chose, and a whole host of other boons offered only through the game's authored code. This is akin to how Gorgias uses syllogisms based upon specific definitions of words to make the valid but seemingly impossible argument that nothing exists. The perceptible rules of both our and a game's reality should not allow these bypasses, yet for the rhetorician, *logos*' world-building and altering power reigns supreme.

My favorite cheat code to type into that little command prompt had to have been "noclip." With this, I was able to ignore all "clipping," or the simulation of physical rules regarding collision of objects in a game. Essentially, I could run through walls,

sink through the ground to subterranean “floors” of a level, hover or fly in the air, and generally move about any given map’s space as I pleased. Considering his use of *logos* to build a conception of a world wherein nothing exists, Gorgias seems to be interacting within the defined parameters of a composed reality in the same way that I was when I played that game. If Gorgias were to be a gamer, he would find loopholes and exploitations within code to bend reality to his will and achieve the goals he sets out for himself. He could be a speed runner, running through walls and proving that the reality we construct, rather than directly access, using *logos* is as malleable as collision detection in the original *Alice* game.

It is possible to counter the parallels between code/*logos* and virtual/perceptual reality with the idea that code represents, not language defining a reality, but the very peeking behind the veil of the game’s playable space to view the objective reality within. While this may seem enticing on the surface, it inherently ignores the authorship required behind code—both with complex algorithms or self-sustaining rules and with more basic “chunks” of code that represent specific qualities, textures, shapes, functions etc. Although there is a more direct relationship between what is written and what we experience, necessitating a connection that Gorgias argues cannot exist between objectivity and *logos*, this is not because code is the same as some divine intentions behind reality, representative of forms. Rather, code is something that was carefully constructed for a purpose that involves rhetorical decisions regarding what kind of reality to construct. The specificity of kind here and the sheer number of different game realities available point directly to the lack of formalism in code. It is moldable to communicate *this* reality for *this* rhetorical reason, just as Gorgias chooses specific words with specific meanings to convey specific ideas to others. It is the same when we try to share ideas with one another, regardless of medium. Our experience of gameplay, much like our interpretation of *logos*, is subjective.

It becomes obvious that an attempt to discuss some semblance of objectivity or “forms” in reference to a digital world either devolves into discussions of categories and definitions or completely removes us from the specificity of the game at hand. Attempts to categorize and define aspects of any given game would ultimately dissolve back into the initial interaction between experience and precision of language instead of ever directly accessing the reality in question—or “that by which we reveal *logos*, but *logos* is not substances and existing things” (Gorgias 46). The very act of communication will always be rhetorical as it will always require strategies involving how best to represent ideas. As represented through video games, what we perceive

and how we interact with reality is separated from the Platonic transcendental realm. As Gorgias admits, even with direct perception and comprehension, we would still be barred from using any form of language to convey the totality of our experience to another.

Further, the idea that we could use code to grasp a reality beyond the game is meaningless, as “*logos* arises from external things impinging upon us, that is, from perceptible things” (Gorgias 46). Anyone familiar enough with programming can manipulate code until it matches a desired effective expression via a digital reality. This world, built by *logos*, is exactly like the speech acts that try to communicate our internal sense data, ideas, and even, as Gorgias entertains for argument’s sake, glimpses of transcendent forms. Gorgias suggests that “*logos* is not evocative of the external, but the external becomes the revealer of *logos*” (Gorgias 46). By attempting to express our experiences of whatever we may have access to regarding the external, we are constantly using rhetoric and *logos* to build perceptual realities for others in the hopes of passing our interpretation on to them. What of the meta-experience involved in a person viewing a game’s reality from the outside? For digital worlds, the conclusion that *logos* is incapable of revealing objectivity remains the same *even though* we know beyond any doubt that there is an “external reality” that exists with regards to inside the parameters of the game versus an outside observer.

To me, this is far more profound specifically because the world within a world example here mirrors the idea of perceptual reality within a transcendent reality of forms. Even though I exist within the outside reality of a game, I am still woefully incapable of accessing any Truths about the game at hand, no matter how fluent in its code I may be. This suggests, too, that the philosophical endeavor to connect with anything beyond perception is necessarily flawed no matter how many realities we manage to escape. No matter how different the outside of the cave is, we’re still going to be using the same faculties to interact with and describe it. Without the ability to compare *logos* with referents in a direct, confirmable way, our rhetorical choices constitute variants in the reception of any reality that we wish to communicate to others. Rhetoric is responsible for influencing an audience’s sense of the world that we are trying to convey to—or build in—their mind. Thus, any expression, through any medium of language, will always result in a new conceptual, phenomenal, virtual, etc. world, and the composition of such expression is necessarily a rhetorical process. The likes of Ramus and Plato were sorely mistaken for dismissing the sophistic in favor of the dialectic method—which is secondary to rhetoric.

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He Whom I Loved as Dearly as My Own Life: An Analysis of the Relationship Between Achilles and Patroclus

Hayley Rhodes Wittenberg

ABSTRACT

Homer's *Iliad* has been a pillar in Western literature for centuries. Following the story of the Trojan War, the epic introduces us to Achilles, the greatest warrior of Greece. Although in most of the epic Achilles has abstained from fighting, he rejoins after the death of his dearest companion, Patroclus. Achilles's relationship with Patroclus has been heavily debated since antiquity, with the likes of Plato arguing their status as lovers. Recently, there has been a shift in the accepted dogma, with more historians accepting the fact that Achilles and Patroclus's relationship was more than simply platonic. This analysis lays out the evidence to support this claim and adds to the scholarship on queer interpretations of the *Iliad*. This article compiles direct material from the *Iliad*, information from other scholars, and works from historical figures such as Plato. There are several pieces of evidence that show that Achilles and Patroclus enjoyed a very close, very intimate relationship with each other. It would be inaccurate and a disservice to the works of Homer to assert that there were no romantic attachments between the two.

"Rage—Goddess, sing the rage of Peleus' son, Achilles" (Iliad 1.1). The opening lines to Homer's famous epic, the *Iliad*, start the reader on a journey of rage. Achilles, the fearsome warrior, is known for his godlike fury and prowess in battle. He was the person who defeated armies, bested gods, and almost single handedly caused the fall of Troy. Achilles's famous rage, however, was fueled by grief. This grief was caused by the death of Patroclus: his dearest friend, closest companion, and arguably, his lover. Historians have often branded Achilles and Patroclus as merely close friends, but it is a disservice to the pair to strip their relationship of such an important aspect. Now historians have begun to change their opinions, such as Edith Hall, saying that the *Iliad*, "offered ancient Greek men a model of idealized love between men in the relationship between Achilles and Patroclus" (62).

Assigning sexualities to historical figures is always a point of contention, because in many ways modern terms and classifications hardly capture the variety of ways sexuality was expressed in ancient times. This is largely due to the fact that, as Halperin states, "no single category of discourse or experience existed in the premodern and non-Western worlds that comprehended exactly the same range of same-sex sexual behaviors, desires, psychologies, and socialities, as well as the various forms of gender deviance, that now fall within the capacious definitional boundaries of homosexuality" (89). It would be inaccurate to compare the relationship of Achilles and Patroclus to modern homosexual relationships, or to say they were exclusively gay men. These terms hold very specific cultural meanings and have changed through time in various ways around the world. Having a homosexual/gay label meant something different in London in the nineteenth century, in the United States in the 1980s, and in Greece during the Bronze Age. Being aware of this, using modern terminology offers clarity and is a convenient way to explain the nature of their relationship. However, these labels are not perfect and are not a base evaluation.

Who Were Achilles and Patroclus?

It is important to paint a portrait of who these heroes were individually before analyzing their relationship with each other. Achilles is one of the only heroes whose life is documented quite literally from the cradle to the grave, and he is also such a larger-than-life character in Homer's *Iliad*. Achilles was the son of King Peleus, who ruled over the kingdom of Phthia, and Thetis, an immortal sea nymph (Alexander 29). Within the *Iliad*, much of what is told about Achilles is his fury, and his refusal to rejoin the war effort at Troy. He is sometimes portrayed as extremely egotistical and only worried about his fame and glory, which was promised to him for his participation in the Trojan War (Iliad 9.151). He is extremely strong-willed and obstinate, which is

exceedingly evident in the famous quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon at the opening of the *Iliad*.

Their argument, which sets the trajectory of the entire epic, was over the return of the daughter of Chryses, a priest of Apollo. Because Agamemnon had disrespected the god Apollo by taking his priest's daughter as a war prize, Apollo had sent a plague upon the Greeks. Illness and death would remain until father and daughter were reunited. Angered by having to return Chryseis, Agamemnon threatened to take Achilles's war prize, Briseis. Faced with being dishonored in such a public way, at that moment Achilles swore he would withdraw from the fight if Briseis is taken away from him. Achilles states, "I am returning to Phthia, since it is much better to go home again [...], I am minded no longer to stay here dishonored" (Alexander 18-21). Achilles's quick temper is not only evidenced in the *Iliad* but seems to be a popular trend in epic tradition. Summaries of lost Trojan Cycle poems indicate that Achilles was often quarreling with allied heroes. In *Cypria*, Achilles argues with Agamemnon over a late invitation to a feast, and in *Aethiopis*, Achilles kills Thersites after being insulted by him. The *Odyssey* also mentions a quarrel between Achilles and Odysseus (Alexander 19).

Stubborn, quick to anger, quick to kill, but above all, great. Repeatedly, Achilles is spoken of in terms of his godlike abilities. His mother, Thetis, had been given the prophecy that she was to bear a son greater than his father, a mortal who would be the best of the Greeks (Alexander 29). However, that greatness would cost his life; another prophecy entailed that if he were to sail to Troy he would be famous, but he also would never return (*Iliad* 9.151). These points played into his anger towards Agamemnon; Achilles had willingly given his life for promised honor, yet by being dishonored he had lost both. Achilles is a complex character in this regard; he is already renowned as the best fighter of the Greeks yet is willing to push that boundary by bargaining his life for fame. He desires it more than anything, but it is also something that brings him immense sorrow. Achilles weeps to Thetis after Briseis is taken from him, and in his sorrow begs his mother to go to Zeus and ask him to make the Achaeans pay deeply for the wrong they have done to him. It is a murderous request; asking for Zeus to "help the Trojans and pin the Achaeans back against the ships and the water" (Alexander 26). He asks for them to pay with their lives, because in a sense, Achilles had done the same.

Patroclus, despite being a key pillar in the *Iliad's* plot, and the driving force behind Achilles's actions, is a side character within the epic. He does not speak until Book 11, when the Trojans have pushed back the Greeks and attacked their ships.

Patroclus's first words ask Achilles what he needs of him, and relatedly, Patroclus's last words are Achilles's name (Clarke 390). His entire existence is within Achilles's orbit, including his death. However, he is undoubtedly one of the most important characters in the *Iliad*, because his death is a direct cause of the climax of the story. If not for the death of Patroclus, Achilles would have never returned to war. He would not have sought to kill Hector so ferociously, and the tides would not have turned in the Greek's favor. The proof of this can be seen in Book 9, when the embassy is sent to try and convince Achilles to rejoin the fight. Instead of naming a price or compromise to make him fight again, Achilles listens to the pleas of Odysseus, and then simply tells Odysseus that he plans to sail back home to Phthia the next day. Achilles states plainly, "Since I have no desire to battle glorious Hector, tomorrow at daybreak [...] you will see my squadron sail at dawn" (*Iliad* 9:434-438). From that moment, Achilles had no interest in war, and only wanted to go home.

Known for being gentle and kind, Patroclus is seemingly an unlikely choice for Achilles's *therapon*, his closest companion (Alexander 147). He is older than Achilles and was told by his father to be good counsel to Achilles as they went to war (Clarke 388). Achilles calls him *illustrious*; it is shown that he is well-liked among the men of their Myrmidon camp and the rest of the Greek encampment (Alexander 131). Patroclus's gentle nature is evident in Book 16, when the Trojans are attacking the Greek encampment. Patroclus is sent by Achilles to gather information from Nestor, yet along the way he stops to help wounded soldiers (*Iliad* 16.193-194). When he returns, he is so overcome by seeing the wounded and dead Greeks that he weeps as he speaks to Achilles (Clarke 391). Throughout the epic, Achilles only speaks of Patroclus as an equal to him (Clarke 192). Though Patroclus is known for being kind, he is also an amazing warrior; since he is the companion of Achilles, that fact is not surprising. Homer even goes so far as to describe Patroclus as looking "like Mars [Ares] himself," the god of war (*Iliad* 11.188, clarification added).

In many ways, Achilles and Patroclus are opposites. Achilles is strong-willed and ill tempered, while Patroclus is cool-headed and affable. But it seems that it is a kind of perfect balance; Patroclus is the only person who can scold Achilles without Achilles lashing out, and Patroclus is calm enough on Achilles's behalf to give him level-headed advice. Achilles and Patroclus often stayed separate from the others in order to converse with each other; when speaking to Patroclus's ghost in Book 23, Achilles tells Patroclus that he misses their private counsel away from the rest of the soldiers (*Iliad* 23). They have a very interesting dynamic; Achilles is brash and bold, but Patroclus is able to steady him, while Achilles is able to bolster Patroclus, who is

content to stay cool and collected. This dynamic works well within the boundaries of companionship, but even more so within the boundaries of lovers.

Achilles and Patroclus: Classical Views

The *Iliad* has been popular since its fruition and has been discussed for centuries among philosophers and literary scholars alike. Among the most popular discussions is that of Achilles and Patroclus, with the nature of their relationship being a matter of contention: was it homosexual or simply friendship? And, if it was indeed homosexual, was it pederastic? Invariably, ancient scholars saw their relationship through the lens of *pederasty*. *Pederasty* in Ancient Greece was a form of socially accepted homosexuality, wherein older men (the *erastes*) shared a romantic and sexual relationship with younger boys (the *eromenos*) (Mariscal and Morales 292). Interestingly enough, much of the debate was on who was the *erastes*, the lover, and who was the *eromenos*, the beloved. This label was used by ancient scholars as a means to explain the relationship Achilles and Patroclus shared but fell apart for many reasons.

Plato, through the mouth of Phaedrus in his *Symposium*, speaks of Achilles and Patroclus as undeniable lovers (Jowett 153). Not only does Plato explicitly call them lovers, but he also assigns Achilles the role of *eromenos* and Patroclus the role of *erastes*. He states, "the notion that Patroclus was the beloved one is a foolish error [...], for Achilles was surely the fairer of the two, [...] he was still beardless, and younger far" (Jowett 153). Plato also stated that Achilles's willingness to die to avenge Patroclus's death shows how much Achilles revered his *erastes*. He goes on to say that they were true lovers and were divinely approved because the gods honor the virtue of love. Plato also alludes to Aeschylus' tragedy *Myrmidons* in his *Symposium*. Aeschylus assigned Achilles and Patroclus opposite of Plato, for which Plato called him "foolish". It is very interesting for Plato to categorize them as he did, because it would put Patroclus in a position of power over Achilles instead of the contrary; Achilles, as a prince of higher status and renowned warrior, seems to be the obvious choice as *erastes* (Jowett 153).

Though ancient scholars were willing to openly claim that Achilles and Patroclus shared an intimate relationship, it is not entirely accurate to place them within the confines of ritual *pederasty*. Firstly, Achilles and Patroclus were close in age, which went against the basis of pederasty, as it was meant to be shared between an older man and a younger boy. Also, as was just previously mentioned, Patroclus is technically of lower status than Achilles, which would make his being the *erastes* unlikely. Most importantly, however, is that pederasty was not practiced during the

time period of the *Iliad*; the epic was set within the Greek Bronze Age (1750 to 1050 BC), and *pederasty* was not practiced until the end of the Archaic Period (around the fifth century BC) (Chadwick 37; Mariscal and Morales 292). It should also be added that *pederasty* was not a permanent situation, and most relationships ended once the younger of the two was of marrying age. Achilles and Patroclus were well past marrying age, yet neither of them had taken wives, despite Achilles being the only son and heir of Phthia, and no doubt having plenty of options to choose from for his bride.

Achilles and Patroclus in Love

Much of what there is to be seen about the nature of Achilles and Patroclus's relationship occurs after Patroclus's death. However, there are still examples that show their love for one another in their interactions from when Patroclus is still alive. The best example is from Book 16, when Patroclus comes to Achilles weeping, telling him of the destruction that has befallen the Greeks. Achilles is moved by Patroclus's words and tears, which is the first time since he withdrew from fighting that he has cared about the fate of his compatriots (*Iliad* 16.261). Patroclus convinces Achilles to let him go and fight in his armor, as a way to trick the Trojans into thinking Achilles has rejoined the fight. The following passage shows in simple terms the exclusive intimacy that the pair share; after instructing Patroclus, Achilles tells him wistfully, "let them all perish [...] all the Trojans and yes all the Achaeans too, except *we two*; and may *we two, alone*, then share the ultimate glory of taking Troy" (qtd. in Clarke 385, emphasis added). This passage also shows how highly Achilles holds Patroclus; his ruthlessness and egotism yields only to Patroclus, and not only that, Achilles yields it to him readily and naturally (Clarke 385).

The only parallel we see of such a connection in the poem is that of Meleager, in a parable told by Phoenix. Speaking to Achilles during the embassy to him in Book 9, Phoenix tells the story of a great warrior, Meleager, who withdraws from a war with his wife, Cleopatra, after feeling disrespected (Clarke 394). No one can convince him to rejoin the cause, and in the end, Meleager only yields to his wife, who tearfully begs him to take up arms again to save their city. Achilles, in a rage at Agamemnon, withdraws from the fight with Patroclus. No one, not Achilles's friends or other companions, or Agamemnon or Odysseus, can convince Achilles to rejoin the fight. Only Patroclus's tearful appeal makes Achilles yield, much like Meleager and his wife. It can be said that the implication of comparing Achilles and Patroclus to Meleager and Cleopatra was purposeful on the part of Homer. In plain words, it shows the strength of their bond and the weight of Patroclus's words to Achilles, not unlike that of a wife to a husband.

Throughout the epic, Achilles states repeatedly that he honors Patroclus above all his other companions, equal only to himself. No other hero makes such a statement about another, and again shows the exclusive intimacy of their relationship. Achilles speaks as if they are one person, which is something that other characters of the *Iliad* also recognize. Besides Patroclus, no other character is related to in terms of their relationship to another person, nor are they referred to as someone's "dearest companion" so often. Though that name does not exactly express a deep relationship, the frequency that it and other terms are used shows the importance of such an emphasis. After Patroclus leaves for battle, Achilles goes and prays to Zeus to bring Patroclus back to him unharmed, which is another unique and unparalleled action in the *Iliad* (*Iliad* 16.267). In an analysis of the men's relationship with one another, Clarke states, "The strength of Achilles's feelings for Patroclus is crucial to the climax of the *Iliad*, [...] for only Patroclus living can persuade Achilles to forgo his determination to keep his men from the fight" (394).

Of course, the best examples overall of the intimacy and closeness of the two are shown through Achilles's grief. When Antilochus comes to Achilles and tells him what has happened to Patroclus—that he was struck down by the Trojan prince Hector—Achilles reacts violently and immediately. Though Achilles is known for a short temper, this outpouring of emotion is pure anguish. When Briseis was taken away from him, Achilles was angry enough to almost kill Agamemnon. In this instance, Achilles is so distraught that the people around him worry he would kill *himself*. After hearing the news Achilles falls to his knees, pours dirt over his head and rips out his hair; wailing so loudly that his mother Thetis hears him in the depths of the sea. Achilles has to be held down as he screams and cries, out of fear that he will slit his own throat. Achilles's mother appears then and asks him what has happened. Groaning, Achilles tells her, "My dear comrade Patroclus has fallen – he whom I valued more than all others, and loved as dearly as my own life" (*Iliad* 18.304). Shortly after, he vows to slaughter Hector, saying, "I will not live nor go about mankind unless Hector fall by my spear, and thus pay me for having slain Patroclus son of Menoetius [...] whom I loved so dearly" (*Iliad* 18.304). Achilles also expresses his consuming guilt, saying that he would rather "die here and now, in that I could not save my comrade. He has fallen far from home, and in his hour of need my hand was not there to help him" (*Iliad* 18.304). Achilles blames himself for not being able to save Patroclus, which only adds to his grief.

There is a fight over Patroclus's body on the battlefield, and it is only because of Achilles that the Greeks are actually able to retrieve Patroclus's body from the

Trojans; being blessed by the goddess Athena, Achilles screams loud enough to scare the Trojans, and send them on retreat. When they bring Patroclus's body back, Achilles washes it and wraps it in cloth. He refuses to eat or drink, and keeps Patroclus's body in their shared tent, where he weeps and does not sleep (*Iliad* 18.310). Achilles describes the grief of losing Patroclus being worse than losing his father Peleus as well as his son, Neoptolemus. Achilles states, "I'm sick with longing for you! There is no more shattering a blow that I could suffer. Not even if I should learn of my own father's death, [...] or the death of my dear son" (*Iliad* 19.382-388). Achilles had prepared for his own death and accepted it, since he was aware of the prophecies surrounding his life, but never had he imagined that he would live, and Patroclus would die. He states as much in Book 19, "Till now I made sure that I alone was to fall here at Troy away from Argos, while you [Patroclus] were to return to Phthia, bring back my son with you [...] and show him the greatness of my house" (19.325, clarification added). Achilles had planned for Patroclus to raise his son, and to live a long life at his father's house in Phthia even if Achilles would die in Troy.

Achilles's most overt act of grief is the brutal killing and abuse of Hector. His grief-fueled rage brings him back to battle, where he kills twelve Trojan princes as he hunts down Hector. Achilles fights the River Scamander in order to reach Hector, and eventually kills Hector by throwing a spear into his neck (*Iliad* 21, 22). Achilles is violent and brutal, and his seething anger is evident as he berates Hector as he lay dying. Achilles says, "the Achaeans shall give him [Patroclus] all due funeral rites, while dogs and vultures shall work their will upon yourself" (*Iliad* 22.365, clarification added). Hector begs Achilles not to let dogs devour his body, and for Achilles to let his family bury him properly. To this, Achilles replies, "Dog, talk not to me neither of knees nor parents; would that I could be as sure of being able to cut your flesh into pieces and eat it raw, for the ill you have done me" (*Iliad* 22.365). The shift in tone within this passage is stark compared to how Achilles addressed Hector in Book 9, when he had no interest in fighting the "glorious" Hector. The rage and bloodlust Achilles now possesses stems from the untimely death of his mate. Though Achilles has guilt because he had not been there to protect Patroclus in his final moments, Hector is the reason why, and so that blame fuels Achilles's punishing vengeance.

Although it has been made clear that if Achilles were to kill Hector he would also die, Achilles kills him without a second thought to self-preservation. Achilles is immediately at peace with that fact; after Hector has died, Achilles tells his corpse, "Die; for my part I will accept my fate whensoever Jove [Zeus] and the other gods see fit to send it" (*Iliad* 22.366, clarification added). Achilles then proceeds to desecrate

Hector's body by tying it to his chariot, with a rope that was strung through the sinews of Hector's ankles. He drags Hector's body around the battlefield while Hector's father Priam looks on helplessly, distraught and mortified. Back at the camp, Achilles still has not buried Patroclus. Achilles has refused to bathe, even though his body is sullied from battle, and states he will not do so until he has properly buried Patroclus (Clarke 393). He also says he will shave his head as a public act of mourning, "for so long as I live no such second sorrow shall ever draw nigh me" (*Iliad* 23.372). As stated before, Patroclus's demise has struck Achilles worse than if his father and son had both died, a type of despair that is deeper than anything else he has ever felt or could ever feel.

What is striking about Achilles's violent grief is how it is contrasted by the tenderness in which he handles Patroclus's body, and his allusions to their shared past intimacy. The closeness shared by Achilles and Patroclus is unique among the heroes of the epic; the only similar acts of physicality we see between other men are in rare situations, such as the hand holding between Agamemnon and his brother Menelaus when Menelaus was wounded (*Iliad* 4.71). Also, the other companions closest to Achilles outside of Patroclus, Automedon and Antilochus, are not evidenced to share this same form of intimacy. When Thetis comes to Achilles in his tent, he is embracing Patroclus; he lays his hands on Patroclus's breast; he holds Patroclus's head (Clarke 393). Patroclus, in ghostly form, also speaks of familiar intimacy between them: "you were not uncaring of me"; "hold my hand, I am grieving"; and, in simple words, "a last request – grant it, please. Never bury my bones away from yours, Achilles, let them lie together" (Clarke 391). Of all the unparalleled moments in the *Iliad*, Patroclus's request of Achilles is the most poignant, and implies that they were so closely bonded in life that even in death they cannot be separated. Achilles, in reply, tells Patroclus he will do everything he asks, and says, "Draw closer to me, let us once more throw our arms around one another, and find sad comfort in the sharing of our sorrows" (*Iliad* 23.373). Achilles then opens his arms to embrace Patroclus, but Patroclus's ghost disappears. He spends the rest of the night weeping. This level of loyalty and devotion between brothers in arms is unique within the *Iliad* and Greek culture. It is not paralleled until centuries later with the Spartans, but they too are seen as unique, isolated incidents within the composite culture of classical Greece (Hall 170).

When the time finally comes to bury Patroclus, Achilles cuts off a lock of his hair and places it in Patroclus's hands. This lock of hair is significant, not only because it is another unparalleled action on Achilles's part within the *Iliad*, but because it is the lock that Achilles had promised to his father Peleus (*Iliad* 23.374). Achilles was only supposed to cut this lock of hair when he returned home from war so that he could

offer it to the river Spercheius, one of the main rivers that fed Phthia. Achilles seems to sacrifice this piece of himself to Patroclus instead, because Patroclus's death is now the main force driving Achilles's actions, not the promise of going home and living a comfortable life. He states, "now, therefore, that I shall see my home no more, I give this lock as a keepsake to the hero Patroclus" (*Iliad* 23.374). Achilles, resigned, is ready to die.

Conclusion

Ancient scholars were correct in believing that Patroclus and Achilles were more than just companions. While one cannot discredit the importance of platonic relationships, it is quite clear from the source material that Patroclus and Achilles were lovers. Divinely approved, and equally matched as half of the other. Achilles's emotions, his love and grief, drive the story of the *Iliad*. Patroclus lived his entire life within the life of Achilles, and in turn he is the only person more important to Achilles than himself, his own life, his ego, and honor. As Aeschines stated, any "educated man" can clearly see what Homer meant by the relationship of Achilles and Patroclus, even though it is never explicitly stated within the *Iliad* (Clark 396). After looking at ample evidence, it is safe to assume that they enjoyed a relationship that transcended friendship, that they loved each other in life with promises to continue to do so even after death. Achilles and Patroclus live on in a memory that is fitting for them; one cannot be separated from the other, and they will continue to remain together, just as their ashes and bones were laid together, in the underworld and beyond.

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“Everybody you tell will be haunted too”: Examining the Melding of Gothic and Modernist Literature in Mildred Haun’s *The Hawk’s Done Gone*

Harley Mercadal

ABSTRACT

This essay examines how Mildred Haun uses Appalachian themes and settings to bridge the melding of Gothic and Modernist fiction through her short story collection, *The Hawk’s Done Gone*. By examining this melding of two polar genres, I seek to bring attention to an underappreciated author’s work and further expand the canon of Taryn Norman’s concept of “Gothic Modernism” into the rural literature space and beyond. I use cross-references to aid my literary analysis of several stories in Haun’s collection to showcase her usage of “Gothic Modernism.”

The Hawk’s Done Gone is a collection of stories that merges superstition, folklore, and modern realism with dark themes of witchcraft, infanticide, and incest to create a series of darkly-themed snapshots of Appalachian life ranging from the Civil War era to the 1940s. Despite the haunting threads connecting these stories, Haun deftly injects Appalachian songs, dialect, and culture into her writing to lend an Appalachian spin on the expected conventions of Modernism’s cityscapes or Gothic literature’s rural, wealthy plantations. Haun’s skillful blending creates a new, liminal space of terror, where readers feel tension from the characters, situations, and landscapes. In this essay, I show how this text combines its Modernist timeliness, using Ezra Pound’s idea of “make it new,” while also bringing in classic Gothic literature tropes (fearful weather, blood curses, and prophecy) to deepen the text’s complexity and showcase Modernist concerns, fears, and horrors.

The history of Gothic literature "usually begin[s] in 1764 with the publication of Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*."¹ Gothic literature is generally discussed as a means of reaction to the Enlightenment period of literature that came before it. Interestingly, many tropes from this classic era of Gothic literature—such as a "fascination with dreams and ghosts, guilt and shame, dismemberment and death"² as well as the more sensational aspects, like "the unconscious and subconscious, the influence of unseen agencies, and trespass, abjection, sacrifice, and extinction"—still permeate the genre to this day.³ Literature later moved into an age of modernity from the late-nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries—where a focus on the internal workings of the mind, emotion, and mental deliberation often trumped the overall Romanticized aspects of human life. Modernist writers were particularly interested in how individuals moved through society's challenges, such as socially-acceptable behavior. However, Gothic characteristics of earlier literature returned during the Modernism Movement as a technique for writers to amp up the personal horrors and anxieties that living in Modernity often brings.

Ezra Pound famously named one of his books after a phrase he often said, *Make It New* (1934). This book, combined with Sigmund Freud's ground-breaking work on both the mind and dreams, had Modernist writers taking the idea of making something new to heart by combining elements of multiple genres in their texts. This kind of experimentation was common—and indeed encouraged—in Modernist writing. Much of Mildred Haun's work reflects this combination of genres to make something new. For example, Haun's short story "Melungeon-Colored" employs techniques where Gothic elements (fearful weather, blood curses, and prophecy) and characters meet Modern senses of internalization. Haun then creates what Taryn Norman identifies as a "Gothic Modernism," which is "a strain of Modernism that makes use of the well-established language and conventions of the Gothic terms to express recognizably Modernist concerns about the nature of subjectivity, temporality, language, and knowledge"⁴ to make her work new.

The Hawk's Done Gone is a collection of ballads and stories primarily linked by its narrator Mary Dorthula White Kanipe. The collection merges superstition, folklore, and modern realism with dark themes of witchcraft, infanticide, and incest

1. Nick Groom, *The Gothic: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), xiii.

2. Groom, *The Gothic*, xiii.

3. *Ibid.*, xv.

4. Taryn Louise Norman, "Gothic Modernism: Revising and Representing the Narratives of History and Romance" (PhD diss., University of Tennessee, 2012), 2.

to create a series of snapshots of Appalachian life ranging from the Civil War era to the 1940s. Despite the haunting threads connecting these stories, Haun deftly injects Appalachian songs, dialect, and culture into her writing to bring mountaineer life to the surface of those blackened waters. Her writing also manages to weave Gothic tropes into ecologically horrifying settings, where readers feel tension from the characters and situation at hand and the very landscape. After Haun's death, editor and literary executor Herschel Gower edited and republished the original collection of *The Hawk's Done Gone* in 1968 with ten added stories to flesh out Haun's works even further in *The Hawk's Done Gone and Other Stories*.⁵

One impactful and complex story from Mildred Haun's *The Hawk's Done Gone* collection is "Melungeon-Colored," a dark tale of secrets, murder, prophecies, and bad weather. The narrator, Mary Dorthula White Kanipe, is unnamed in this particular story; however, in the introduction to the collection by Mildred Haun, she is listed as the primary narrator for many of the first-person narrated stories. "Melungeon-Colored" begins with a Gothic-style prophecy after one of the main characters, the young Cordia, runs off and marries Mos Arwood. The narrator, Mary, reveals: "Of course, Cordia didn't know but what me and Ad were her real pa and ma. I give Effena [Cordia's mother and the narrator's daughter] a death-bed oath that I would never tell. You know, if you tell something a dying person asks you not to tell you will be haunted by that person the rest of your life. Everybody you tell will be haunted too."⁶ The idea of a haunting or ghostly presence is what Nick Groom calls a psychological Gothic trope since the assumption is that ghosts cannot physically harm a person; ghosts can only haunt a mind by appearing as a physical manifestation.⁷

Effena, Cordia's mother, is white, while Cordia's unnamed father is later revealed to be a darker-skinned mixed-race, which Mary identifies as Melungeon. Thus, the narrator is held by an oath that she will never reveal Cordia's true parentage to anyone, especially not to Cordia herself. Unfortunately, Effena dies soon after the promise is made, hence the "death-bed oath" the narrator mentions.⁸ The narrator raises Cordia as her child; while it is not explicitly said, it is implied in the story that Cordia has white or light skin like her grandparents, Mary and Ad Kanipe. This section of the

5. Herschel Gower, "Introduction: Mildred Haun, Storyteller," in *The Hawk's Done Gone and Other Stories* by Mildred Haun, ed. Herschel Gower (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1968), ix.

6. Mildred Haun, "Melungeon-Colored," in *The Hawk's Done Gone and Other Stories*, ed. Herschel Gower (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1968), 97.

7. Groom, 78.

8. Haun, "Melungeon-Colored," 98.

story acts as both the revealing of a secret as well as a Gothic prophecy, predicting the narrator's difficult choice between telling Cordia the truth of her mixed-race parentage and the narrator being haunted for the rest of her life or the decision to let Cordia's future baby come and deal with the situation then. Cordia's real father, readers shortly learn after this prophecy, is a man identified as "Melungeon," a name for a person of mixed races, most commonly of Caucasian, Hispanic or Native American, and African-American descent.

In previous stories in *The Hawk's Done Gone*, Melungeons are respected and are treated as somewhat mysteriously attractive. The Appalachians in this collection believe that Melungeon people "are an old race of folks, and how they were started somewhere on a ship. They had some kind of trouble on the ship and ended up here."⁹ However, the common knowledge within the story's society changes when it is revealed that Melungeons have "Negro blood in them." It is implied within the story that having a different kind of darker skin and heritage, such as Hispanic or indigenous blood, was acceptable to this society, but being Black was not. Racist ideology resurfaced in the community after this rumor was started, and therefore, "some folks were getting so they held it against a body for being a Melungeon" since people now thought of them as partially black.¹⁰ Effena, Cordia's mother, probably requested that the narrator never tell Cordia the truth because Cordia might have faced racist comments and actions against her if anyone knew. While Cordia is presented in the story as light-skinned enough to pass as a white woman, she still can pass down "Melungeon" features to her children, such as a darker skin color or eye color. In addition, the narrator exhibits both her medical knowledge of genetics and past experiences as a granny woman when she says, "I knowed if Cordia ever had any boy youngons they would be Melungeon-colored and her man might not understand."¹¹ Presumably, a "Melungeon-colored" child would greatly upset a white father due to the aforementioned hostile nature toward Melungeons in this story.

Rather than focus on the individuality that a mixed-race character who does not know it could bring as other Gothic novels do, Mildred Haun chooses in the quotation mentioned above to focus on the Gothic aspects of family secrets, fear, and strange storms, which reflect emotional turmoil, and death. Haun simultaneously gives the readers a look into the narrator's, Mary Dorthula White Kanipe, stream-of-consciousness from the beginning of "Melungeon-Colored," which becomes a

9. Mildred Haun, "The New Jerusalem," in *The Hawk's Done Gone and Other Stories*, ed. Herschel Gower (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1968), 81.

10. Haun, "Melungeon-Colored," 98.

11. Haun, 98-9.

favorite technique of authors in Modernism. The stream-of-consciousness tool is very effective in this story because the reader can peek into the mind of Mary and see her anxiety and fear; this helps build the reader's tension as the story unfolds. The narrator warns Cordia "to come right to [the narrator] and let [her] know at the first sign" of pregnancy, intending to give Cordia a Pennyroyal tea, even though the narrator claims, "I never have give anybody a thing to knock a youngon."¹² The Pennyroyal, or *Mentha pulegium*, tea, made from either the dried leaves or the flower itself, will supposedly induce menstruation and cause Cordia to have an abortion, so the mixed-race nature of her heritage will remain a secret. Due to the forethought of these actions, a plan for violence is set into motion before Cordia even becomes pregnant.

However, the narrator begins to see more signs of a prophecy that Cordia is pregnant as she does the daily chores on the farm, and Mary realizes that there is nothing she can do to prevent the truth of Cordia's mixed-race ethnicity from unearthing. Omens, portents, and visions are an often-used trope in Gothic fiction, presumably because the idea that someone can tell or see the future—especially when their predictions come true—is unsettling but also uncanny.¹³ The narrator leans heavily on her superstitions as she tells us, "[e]verything I saw made me think of a baby being born, of a ma trying to save a youngon."¹⁴ A second prophecy comes into the narrator's thoughts as she muses, "then I told myself again that any ma that loved her youngon wouldn't let harm come to it."¹⁵ After Cordia announces that she is indeed pregnant, the prophecy deepens as the narrator thinks in fear, "I begun saying to myself that I wished Cordia would die before it was born."¹⁶ While Cordia passes as a white woman, the narrator fears the skin color of Cordia's child will prove dark. This assumption comes from the narrator's experiences as a Granny-woman; in her experience, male babies typically had darker skin, and female babies had lighter complexions. However, the narrator also remembers that Mos "had a Melungeon boy . . . staying over there" at Cordia and Mos' home, which the narrator "seed that [the Melungeon boy] would make things worse"¹⁷ if or when the baby is born with dark skin.

The narrator has another Gothic-style prophecy the day Cordia goes into

12. Ibid, 99.

13. Robert Harris, "Elements of the Gothic Novel," Spring Grove Area School District, accessed November 5, 2021, <https://www.sgasd.org/cms/lib/PA01001732/Centricity/Domain/553/Franken%20Gothic%20and%20Romantic%20Notes.pdf>.

14. Haun, "Melungeon-Colored," 100-1.

15. Haun, 102.

16. Ibid, 103.

17. Ibid.

labor: "I had a feeling it would have to happen that night, that night it did happen."¹⁸ Instead of referring directly to the birth, the narrator chooses to call the birthing event "it," a sign that the narrator was full of dread and fear about the outcome of the birth. The narrator recalls similar ominous luck signs throughout the day: dreams of green snakes, death bells tolling in her ears, and the inability to sleep the night before.¹⁹ The sense of gloom and foreboding continues as Haun uses a great Gothic-style storm to reflect the narrator's internal emotional battery the night Cordia goes into labor. Groom identifies this tempest-like storm as a Meteorological Gothic trope.²⁰ The narrator comments, "It was the worst storm I ever saw," and "There wasn't any air—not enough for a body to breathe. I thought I was going to smother."²¹ This description of the figuratively suffocating storm with the narrator trapped inside the house foreshadows Cordia's baby's actual suffocation in a coffin when Mos buries it alive because of its dark skin. Robert Harris calls this trope of the Gothic-style storm "the metonymy of gloom and horror" because the storm is a metaphor for the narrator's complicated emotional state, warring between saving herself and saving Cordia and the child.²²

Cordia's husband, Mos, comes to fetch the narrator because, in classic Gothic-Romantic fashion, Cordia goes into labor as the aforementioned great storm comes to change the world as the characters know it. Mos and the narrator fight the storm's pounding rain and brisk wind, a flooded river, lightning strikes, and endless mud to try and get to Cordia and help her give birth safely. The idea of the environment fighting against the characters themselves to prevent them from a goal is what Groom identifies as a Topographical Gothic trope.²³ However, the labor is over when the two characters arrive back at Cordia's home. The narrator throws back the quilt to cut the umbilical cord, and as she sees the baby, she speaks the words which doom Cordia to her premature death: "Its skin! A Melungeon! I knowed it."²⁴ Mos sees the darker skin of the baby and is enraged by the apparent infidelity between his wife and the Melungeon boy they had staying at the house. Mos kills Cordia with a stick of firewood rather than face society's shame; thus, he creates another familial secret—this time violently—to add to the story's Gothic sensibilities.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid, 103-4.

20. Groom, 77.

21. Haun, 104.

22. Harris, "Gothic Novel," 2.

23. Groom, 77.

24. Haun, "Melungeon-Colored," 108.

Mos' actions show the violence-driven Gothic reaction toward an object of fear and the Modernist anxieties about life or living with a soiled reputation. The narrator blurting out Cordia's unknown secret and being too shocked to act exhibit two more tropes of Gothic fiction: high, even overwrought emotion and women in distress.²⁵ Mos looms over the narrator and makes her fear that he will kill her next if she does not help him both build the coffin and carry it up the hill to be buried,²⁶ another trope of Gothic fiction that shows a woman threatened by a powerful, impulsive, or tyrannical male figure.²⁷ The narrator and Mos build a coffin for Cordia, working through the night, then "break[ing] her knees to get her legs to go down."²⁸ Mos, disgusted by the hungry, still-screaming, and not-white baby, "just picked it up and put it on in" the coffin with Cordia before he and the narrator nailed the lid to the coffin shut.²⁹ While Mos digs the grave for his murdered wife and suffocating child, the supernatural elements creep in again when a cat begins clawing at the door and sounds "like a woman's screaming" outside, signifying what Cordia herself can no longer do.³⁰ Mos and the narrator eventually start to haul the coffin up the hill behind the house, where Mos dug the grave mentioned above. A previously ordinary piece of land becomes Cordia's burial site in what Groom notes is an Architectural Gothic trope, where a space becomes haunted due to the actions of Gothic characters.³¹ Finally, the cat follows the pair, jumps onto the coffin, and meows, warning of the horrible deed Mos and the narrator have committed. This technique, too, is Gothic: the cat represents Cordia's spirit in a supernatural element as a type of warning or begging to save the child in an echo of Edgar Allan Poe's similarly guilt-ridden tale, "The Black Cat." The narrator reflects darkly that she "could hear the baby smothering" the entire time inside the coffin.³²

The ending of this tale merges the Gothic sensibility of a violent prophecy ending with Cordia's and the baby's death, where the secret of Cordia's mixed-race blood no longer matters, to the Modernist technique of showing the narrator's emptiness. The narrator numbly tunes out her granddaughter's funeral seven months later and thinks through her emotional justification for her actions. Similarly, Mos, Cordia's former husband and killer, comes to the funeral with "his new woman," and

25. Harris, "Gothic Novel," 1.

26. Haun, "Melungeon-Colored," 108-9.

27. Harris, "Gothic Novel," 1-2.

28. Haun, "Melungeon-Colored," 109.

29. Haun, 109.

30. *Ibid.*

31. Groom, 77.

32. Haun, 110.

the narrator notes that Mos "hadn't waited till the dirt settled on Cordia's grave" before he found a different lover.³³ The idea of Mos, a husband who should have been grieving, bringing his new love interest to the funeral of his recently-deceased wife, Cordia, would be offensive and frankly taboo to people even today. This small detail reflects Haun's bringing in her Modernist writing tropes to the story; since Modernity is concerned primarily with the individual and how said individual navigates society and its pressures, Haun shows us here that Mos goes against the accepted social tradition of at least waiting until the first spouse is buried to marry again.

The narrator ends the tale with "Darkness, fire and pain. They were what I had been through. But God said he understood," and thus, she absolves herself of all guilt, noting, "I felt peaceful as a kitten."³⁴ The narrator, perhaps selfishly, sees the violent end of Cordia and the baby as a better fate than betraying the deathbed promise made to her daughter, Effena. Since the secret is kept, the narrator feels no one is returning to haunt her, despite her part in the violent acts committed against Cordia and her baby. The narrator effectively sheds her guilt when she believes God understands and forgives her participation in the violence that ended Cordia's life. This strange religious-working-through of the narrator's hand in murder reflects the spiritual Gothic, bending religious belief into a justification for an action.³⁵

Of course, "Melungeon-Colored" is not the only one of Mildred Haun's stories full of Gothic literature tropes mixed up with Modernist literature techniques. Haun's story "The Pit of Death" still features Mary Dorthula White Kanipe as the narrator; however, this story focuses on Mary's first child, a bastard named Joe. Of course, Modernism is very concerned with the individual and how one navigates society and societal expectations. Joe grew up playing with a neighbor's little girl, Tiny; Tiny comes over before dawn to see Joe one day because she had a nightmare about Joe getting thrown into a hole inside a cave like a rock. This seemingly disturbing but likely innocent dream ends up being a Gothic-style prophecy combined with Appalachian folklore; the narrator, Mary, notes that she "didn't ask Tiny if she eat breakfast before she left home. I wondered if Sadie [Tiny's mother] had ever told her not to tell a dream before breakfast if she didn't want it to come true."³⁶

The reader gets the narrator's stream-of-consciousness story-telling as Joe and Tiny grow up; this stream-of-consciousness technique was new to Modernist

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid, 111.

35. Groom, 78.

36. Mildred Haun, "The Pit of Death," in *The Hawk's Done Gone and Other Stories*, ed. Herschel Gower (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1968), 11.

literature, but it is very effective in Haun's writing as a mode of time passing quickly. Eventually, Joe wants to marry Tiny; however, her father says no, but Tiny and Joe do not stay away from each other. Tiny becomes pregnant, and Joe again tries to marry her, but Tiny's father refuses again. Joe goes after Tiny and his unborn child to try and rescue them, and he plans to bring them back to his ancestral home so his mother can help take care of the child. Unfortunately, Tiny's childhood nightmare comes true: Tiny's father and Joe's stepfather kill Joe and hide his body in a cave.³⁷ The cave becomes an unvisited, inaccessible, and haunted space—a mode of both topographical and architectural Gothic³⁸—to Mary as she “feared to pass that cave” because of the violence committed and hidden there.³⁹

“A Wasp Sting” begins with Mary reflecting on the unspoken accusation that a couple she went to heal, Elzie and Froney, made against her. Elzie, the husband, retrieves Mary under the presumption that Froney is sick, and once they arrive at Elzie and Froney's house, Mary discovers a broom lying across the doorway. One commonly held belief in Appalachia and outside of it was that “if you placed a broom over or across your front door, a witch would have to either pick-up said broom or count the bristles upon entering,” which would alert the homeowners that the guest was a witch so they could protect themselves from evil.⁴⁰ Of course, Mary steps over the broom with no issue, and immediately the couple is embarrassed since they are so sure that Mary is a witch that had cursed them. Eliza and Froney's cow had begun bleeding into the milk, and they decided their cow, “Old Heif[,] was bewitched,” so they needed to find someone to blame.⁴¹

Another superstition about witches held by the Appalachians is that they could “perform curses, evoke pain or death in another person, or destroy [the] property and livestock,” which was associated with black, or evil, magic.⁴² Since the only healer in the area is Mary, she was naturally the first target; this example showcases both a spiritual and a textual trope in Gothic fiction because the rumors and folk beliefs of the society meet with concerns of evil or witchcraft to create a nuanced and, to the

37. *Ibid.*, 11-24.

38. Groom, 77.

39. Haun, 24.

40. Mildred Haun, “A Wasp Sting,” in *The Hawk's Done Gone and Other Stories*, ed. Herschel Gower (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1968), 265.

41. *Ibid.*, 267.

42. J. Tyler Chadwell and Tiffany D. Martin, “Mountain Mystics: Magic Practitioners in Appalachian Witchlore.” *Philology and Cultural Studies* 9, no. 1 (2016): 54.

Appalachian people in the story at least, a believable problem to be solved.⁴³

Fronney's sister, Mallie, comes to visit the next day while Mary is still there, and Mallie stops at the doorway and picks up the broom before she starts asking to borrow anything she can see. However, "it was often said that if you give a witch an item from your house, even a drink of water, he or she could put a spell or curse on you,"⁴⁴ and since she had already picked up the broom, everyone was suspicious of her. So, no one let Mallie borrow anything from the house. Later that night, after Mallie supposedly left, a commotion in the chicken coop brings everyone out of the house to find a fox; Elzie, being prepared for any witches that might visit, shoots the fox with a silver bullet. There is a superstition that a silver bullet is the only thing that can kill a witch and that a witch could "shed her skin, and in some occasions, even take the form of an animal."⁴⁵ So, of course, if a shape-shifted witch was hit with a silver bullet, they would die; the fox runs off, injured, but the following day, the news comes that Mallie is dead from a supposed wasp sting. However, Mary notes as she looks at the body that the hole was "big enough, it looked like, for me to stick my little finger into;" it is, of course, then decided as truth that Mallie was the witch that cursed the family instead of Mary.⁴⁶ The horrifying realization that one's own family caused harm is a classically Gothic-style convention because the harm is personal and, therefore, very unsettling because that harm could come from any person.

Mildred Haun's short stories in *The Hawk's Done Gone* are multi-faceted collections representing folklore, superstition, and darkness via Gothic Modernism in an Appalachian setting. Several stories contain Gothic manifestations of familial sin, fear, and supernatural anxieties. The text also shares numerous facets of Modernism—such as the social and societal anxieties of race, focus on internalizing emotion, and real-life monsters—manifesting within the text. Several characteristics of the classic Gothic tropes also appear in this text, including prophecies, familial sins/blood curses, and supernatural elements such as ghosts and weather, which reflect the characters' internal struggles. The Gothic elements, such as the tempest-style storm before the murder of Cordia Arwood, are deliberate in showing intense emotion and anxiety in a time of Modernity. This text also indicates its Modernist timeliness while bringing classic Gothic literature tropes to deepen its complexity and showcase modern concerns, fears, and horrors. This idea of Modernist texts being both timely and complex reflects Octavio Paz's view where "Modernity [like the Gothic] . . . is

43. Groom, 77.

44. Chadwell and Martin, 54.

45. Chadwell and Martin, 55.

46. Haun, "A Wasp Sting," 270.

always [concerned with] the other. The modern is characterized not only by novelty but by otherness."⁴⁷ Haun took inspiration from other Modernist creators around her as they strived to experiment and create something new. Haun then created a text of Gothic Modernism, which Taryn Norman identifies as "a strain of Modernism that makes use of the well-established language and conventions of the Gothic terms to express recognizably Modernist concerns about the nature of subjectivity, temporality, language, and knowledge"⁴⁸ to make her work complex and new as Modernist audiences demanded.

47. Octavio Paz, *Children of the Mire: Modern Poetry from Romanticism to the Avant-Garde* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 14.

48. Norman, "Gothic Modernism," 2.

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“Seldom Like Yesterday”: Situating the Novel and Film Adaptation of *The Princess and the Goblin**

Caroline LaPlue

ABSTRACT

While much Victorian literature has been adapted into films that carry an appeal for a modern audience, the 1994 adaptation of George MacDonald’s 1872 novel *The Princess and the Goblin* cannot claim the same popular triumph as other successful Victorian children’s adaptations over the past century such as *Alice in Wonderland*, *Black Beauty*, or *Treasure Island*. Though interest in MacDonald’s work fell off dramatically after his death in 1905 and his writing has received criticism for being long-winded and didactic (though he is certainly not the only Victorian to share those characteristics), many of his stories contain delightful elements found regularly in popular children’s stories: princesses, goblins, absent fathers, magic, heroism, family, and a transferrable moral or lesson. Here, I look at József Gémes’s film alongside MacDonald’s original novel and use comparative methodology to explain why it did not live up to its potential. I argue that MacDonald’s imaginative world retains potential for success in a new, well-funded and well-produced film adaptation, given the necessary time, money, and motivation.

*Winner of the Deans’ Distinguished Essay Award

Introduction

Despite being largely forgotten by the general populace and ignored by critics after his death in 1905, Victorian author George MacDonald's literary contributions helped to lay groundwork for much of the development of both literary fantasy and children's literature. The Scottish poet was an important part of the "Golden Age" of children's literature, publishing alongside such authors Lewis Carroll and Robert Louis Stevenson. His more artistic, fantastic publications left a much longer-lasting footprint on the literary community in his influence on authors who would come to far outstrip his renown, such as J.M. Barrie and C.S. Lewis, as well as more recent authors such as Madeline L'Engle and Neil Gaiman. Much Victorian literature has been adapted into successful films that carry an appeal for a modern audience, but MacDonald's work has been cinematically neglected, with few recorded adaptations attempts, and those adaptations that exist restricted by limited resources. Perhaps one of MacDonald's most naturally adaptable novels, though, is *The Princess and the Goblin* (1872), and in the early 1990s, Jozsef Gemes set out to do just that.

The Princess and the Goblin tells the story of a princess named Irene who lives in a castle with a magical invisible grandmother and a loving (if pre-occupied) widower father, the king. As the tale develops, young Irene must join forces with a local miner boy, Curdie, to save the kingdom from the encroaching forces of small-minded goblins who live in the depths of the earth and want nothing more than to be rid of the "sun people." Warding off the goblin invasion and saving the people from a torrential flood caused by the machinations of the scheming goblins, Irene and Curdie (with assistance from her grandmother's magic) ultimately protect the kingdom, and the goblins are finally vanquished by their own folly.

Princesses, goblins, and magic are all fantastic and imagination-friendly elements that are common to children's stories and suggest potential for a smashing box office success for a film adaptation. Potential for success notwithstanding, the 1994 animated film adaptation was a spectacular financial failure. My goal is to analyze József Gémes's film alongside MacDonald's original novel using comparative methodology in order to understand why it did not live up to expectations.

The Novel and Its Reception

From 1870-1872, George MacDonald served as editor for the new children's magazine *Good Words for the Young*, and there he first released *The Princess and the Goblin* in serial form (MacDonald, Greville 377). By all accounts, the story was met with enthusiasm in both the United Kingdom and the United States, with reviewers calling the story "genius" and "charmingly told" alongside claims "that all the little folks are

going wild over” it (“Periodicals, &c.,” “Christmas Gift Books,” “New Magazines”). In 1874, after the novel’s complete publication, the Sheffield and Rotherham Independent newspaper even included a letter to the editor from a parent who described his child’s distress upon receiving an edition of *Good Words for the Young*: “Oh, the naughty man,” the girl purportedly exclaimed, “There is nothing about The Princess and the Goblin and he promised it. Papa, I wish you would write and tell him [Alexander Strahan] to put in The Princess and the Goblin” (“Spectator in Hallamshire”). *Godey’s Lady’s Book* wrote in 1872 that “this book would be sufficient to gain [Mr. MacDonald more] popularity as a writer” and that it was “a book young and old will read with equal delight” (“Literary Notices” 383). The novel was successful and, coming on the heels of *At the Back of the North Wind*—which had also been serialized in the magazine—only served to more firmly establish MacDonald’s name and influence in Victorian children’s literature.

MacDonald’s novel does indeed have a tone that “charms old and young by his delicate yet penetrating touch,” and his writing style—while certainly outdated or even antiquated by modern standards—demonstrates his effort to connect with his child-audience in an appealing manner and his care for their wellbeing, occasionally manifested in tips for how to live well while *mostly* avoiding outright condescension (“Periodicals, &c.”).

As was the custom with much Victorian literature, narration plays a significant part in MacDonald’s novels, and *The Princess and the Goblin* is no exception. This story stands out, however, as MacDonald writes not only *for* a child audience, but also directly *to* a child audience. In the beginning, the end, and occasionally throughout the rest of the text, there are short “discussion” breaks from the particular storyline, written as dialogic conversations with a child, as in the following excerpt from the first chapter:

“But please, Mr. Author, why do you always write about princesses?”

“Because every little girl is a princess.”

“You will make them vain if you tell them that.”

“Not if they understand what I mean.”

“What do you mean by a princess?”(1)

These moments—italicized in the text to set them apart from the narrative—illustrate MacDonald’s apparent attempt to connect with children and engage directly with the questions and concerns—perhaps even voiced by his own children—that he anticipates his audience to have throughout the story. They also provide an opportunity for him to explain his creative choices and considerations in a

manageable, child-friendly manner that does not require dry academic criticism or interruptive footnotes.

MacDonald continues a similar trend throughout the rest of the novel, sprinkling comments throughout the text where his narrator speaks directly to the audience or acknowledges his position as narrator. Occasionally, MacDonald includes rhetorical storytelling techniques more commonly associated with oral storytelling, such as, "What do you think she saw?" and "I wish I could describe the king, so that you could see him in your mind" (11, 83). At other times, he uses commentary that is characteristic of omniscient narrators, such as "as you shall hear" and "as we shall see by and by" (12, 5). Still other times, MacDonald's narrator conveys the opposite, indicating that he is working within a data set nearly as limited as his audience's. These instances are often accompanied by narrative speculation about what may be the case, as in, "The princess ran through passage after passage, and could not find the stair of the tower. My own suspicion is that she had not gone up high enough, and was searching on the second instead of the third floor," or, similarly, "I can't tell you how he came to know. [. . .] Someone about the palace must have seen them, after all" (30, 87). The tone MacDonald uses for his narrator throughout the story suggests a concerted effort on his part to connect with and appeal to his child audience, and the reviews and stories following its publication indicate that his efforts were met with success.

Since its inception, much of children's literature (arguably, much of literature in general) and Victorian children's literature in particular has featured didactic elements, designed to edify as well as entertain its audience, and MacDonald most obviously follows this trend with periodic moralistic commentary on the events in the story and his characters' responding behaviors. MacDonald sets his story apart from many of his contemporaries, though, by conferring a sense of royalty on his audience, describing his characters—both the paupers and the affluent—as "princes" and "princesses" rather than mere "good children."¹ Remarks like "for a real princess cannot tell a lie," and "for a real princess is never rude—even if she does well to be offended" appear frequently throughout the story (24). The concept of a royalty that reflects morality, kindness, and good behavior rather than high birth is articulated the most dramatically when MacDonald extends his definition of royalty beyond the person of Princess Irene to Curdie, the kind-hearted miner boy who befriends her:

Here I should like to remark, for the sake of princes and princesses in general, that it is a low and contemptible thing to refuse to confess a fault, or even an

1. A similar idea is later evoked by C.S. Lewis with the Pevensie children in *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

error. If a true princess has done wrong, she is always uneasy until she has had an opportunity of throwing the wrongness away from her by saying: 'I did it; and I wish I had not; and I am sorry for having done it.' So you see there is some ground for supposing that Curdie was not a miner only, but a prince as well. Many such instances have been known in the world's history. (219)

In this passage, MacDonald does not describe Curdie as an exception for being a prince, but by referring to the "[m]any instances [. . .] in the world's history," he implies that such royalty transcends socioeconomic status or bloodline and is attainable by anyone. This rhetoric used by MacDonald exemplifies the manner of didacticism that he employs throughout his work, but which, during his life, did not appear to dramatically put off his substantial audience.

The Princess and the Goblin has been well-loved. In its own day, Princess Irene and Curdie's heroic adventures with the goblins captivated children's attention and the story fit well among its imaginative contemporaries, such as Edward Lear's nonsense poems and Lewis Carroll's other-worldly adventures. The novel has also been reprinted and republished repeatedly around the world by distinguished publishers like Random House, Puffin Classics, and Everyman's Library, attesting to its continued appeal to modern audiences. In 1967, poet W.H. Auden even stated that "George MacDonald's most extraordinary, and precious, gift is his ability, in all his stories, to create an atmosphere of goodness about which there is nothing phony [*sic*] or moralistic. Nothing is rarer in literature"—especially, I would argue, literature designed with children in mind (347). The team tackling the film adaptation and promotion, with substantial promising material, nonetheless failed to achieve its potential through an unfortunate series of stylistic and budgetary choices.

The Film and Its Reception

Produced with a substantial \$10 million budget in Wales with a largely Hungarian and Welsh production team and directed by József Gémes, the international endeavor first aired in 1991 on Welsh television station S4C (*The Princess and the Goblin* [IMDb]). In 1994, the Hemdale Film Corporation attempted to capitalize on the film's favorable qualities and picked it up for distribution in North America. At first glance, the components necessary for success appeared to be present: \$10 million is not a shabby budget, it was released to 795 cinemas across the country (barely 200 fewer than *The Little Mermaid's* 994), and the captivating story seems to fit within the genre of popular children's film of the day ("The Princess and the Goblin (1994)," "The Little Mermaid (1989)"). But after its early summer release, it grossed a mere \$2.1 million—thoroughly and effectively "bombing" (*The Princess and the Goblin* [IMDb]).

The failure of the film was repeatedly explained (and likely exacerbated) by critics who labeled it as "mildly diverting children's fare" and called attention to its "uninvolving story" and "substandard animation" (Holden; Rodriguez). One review described child viewers of the film as "victims" while another predicted that elementary-aged children would likely "make a big display of letting you know it was a little young for them" (Rodriguez; McCormick). The comments about the limited age range and or that "[p]arents will be bored" contrast noticeably with nineteenth century reviews that reference the book's appeal to audiences of every age, but the brief critical reviews still do not plumb the depths of the artistic and stylistic difficulties with the film (Rodriguez; "Literary notices"). From the sound design and the animation to the characterization and failure to adapt the more antiquated Victorian elements for a twentieth-century audience, *The Princess and the Goblin* falls short again and again.

Perhaps the earliest noticeable—and one of the most egregious—weaknesses in the film is its animation. A *New York Times* reviewer observed the most obvious aspects of the "disappointing" animation, saying that, "[e]ven to the unpracticed eye, there appear to be missing pieces in the action, especially as the characters walk or run. And mouths don't always move in sync with the words" (McCormick). These inconsistencies are not only noticeable but distracting and negatively affect the viewing experience. The animation of Curdie, an important supporting character who carries much of the plot, is just one indicator that effective character modeling precision was lacking during production. As one critic put it, the "look and coloring are solid, but coin-saving lack of detail and of inbetweening [see below] results in jerky motion" (Elley). Not only do Curdie's spoken lines crudely correspond to his mouth movements, but his facial expression remains largely vapid and unemotive throughout the film. Further, his face has an inconsistent structure (Fig. 1) and, though difficult to observe in still frames, any movement by his character has awkwardly contorting effects on his body (Fig. 2), sometimes causing him to look like a marionette and sometimes as though he has no bones.



Figure 1



Figure 2

Part of the awkwardness of the animation can be attributed to the fact that the film is animated on twos and fours. Slowing down the film frame-by-frame reveals that the animation does not change much within a given shot and there is very little inbetweening (a filmmaker's term for the purposefully blurry frames that suggest motion between character positions). Most films, including animation, have twenty-four frames per second (fps). Animated films, either as an artistic choice or to save money, will often only animate alternating frames, and sometimes only one in four frames (hence the name "twos and fours"). These animation choices lead to stilted, unnatural movement, which is on display throughout *The Princess and the Goblin*.

All of this awkwardness is compounded by the use of xerography (Gémes). Xerography is the animation technique of copying static backgrounds so that intentional movement is the only aspect of a new frame that needs to be repeatedly drawn, rather than entire scenes drawn again and again with vivid and dynamic

backgrounds. Disney's notorious use of xerography throughout the '60s, '70s, and '80s in films like *Oliver and Company*, *The Aristocats*, and *One Hundred and One Dalmatians* contributed to what has been termed Disney's "Dark Age"—a time when the Disney animation studio twice nearly shut down altogether, prior to the "Disney Renaissance" ("What Made the Disney Renaissance Era so Special? Part 1"). Xerography saved countless hours of animation, and therefore massive amounts of time and money, but caused animated films to feel rather more like flannelgraphs than living stories, and *The Princess and the Goblin* is no different.

The sound in the film similarly reflects poor design and budget constraints, from the stilted dialogue, to the unconvincing foley work, to the spare musical score. Curdie is introduced to viewers when he marches through the forest wielding a lantern and chasing the goblin's pets back into their holes with his edifying song "A Spark Inside Us:"

There's a spark inside us that we cannot ignite,
and all that's dark inside us will flicker into light.

There's a power in every breath.

[. . .]

And when it sails up through the air,
more beautiful than any prayer,
this power can right all wrong, (5:15)

the lyrics of which prompted one critic to describe it, "as aggressively uplifting as it is humorless" (Holden). The only lyrical song in the film, it is repeated frequently throughout the story because, as Curdie explains, "If there's one thing [the goblins] can't stand, it's a song. They hate music," illustrating one critic's critique, that the "characters are not sharply focused visually or verbally" (7:08; Holden). Additional medieval-sounding music is occasionally piped in during the 82-minute film, but there are long stretches, especially during conversations and active conflict with the goblins, where the noticeable lack of music leads to a flat, non-immersive experience. Given the role of music in the story as a defensive weapon with the power to rout the goblins, the argument could be made that scenes of conflict between the humans and the goblins are purposefully non-musical when the goblins are gaining the upper hand, which would be a valid and thoughtful approach. Artistic choice or not, it nonetheless results in a strangely empty sounding film.

Foley artistry ("in-scene" sounds included to give more realistic direct sound to the events on the screen) is equally sparse, with some events perplexingly quiet, such as Curdie's muted tumble down a cave rock face (40:06). Other actions are

accompanied by disconcertingly hollow sounds that should have had resounding and echoing thuds and bangs, such as Curdie's staving off the goblins and their stone shields with his solid stone club (40:53).

The characters in *The Princess and the Goblin* are more dynamic and varied than the music and animation, but only to a limited degree. The most interesting characters in terms of both personality and animation are the queen and crown prince of the goblin kingdom. While the king of the goblins exhibits common character tropes of being weak (characterized by regular snuffles and debilitating sneezes), indecisive (he passively follows along with all the queen's ideas), and dominated and victimized by his wife, it is the goblin queen who develops a spiteful plan for destroying the sun-people and insists on wearing sharp stone shoes to bed despite the king's pathetic appeal on behalf of his sensitive feet (23:16; 50:00).

While the goblins in general have been criticized for not being "really scary villains" and "ineffectual and unmenacing even when they are on the warpath," the queen and her son, Prince Froglip, are no less interesting for all that, especially when compared to other animated villains of the early '90s (Elley; Holden). MacDonald's only description of his written goblins is that they were "absolutely hideous," "misshapen," and "not so far removed from the human" form, so from an authorial perspective, the designers had almost full rein to create goblins of their choosing, and their creative choices situated their villains neatly within other animated villains of the time (4). Prince Froglip and the queen stand out among the goblins, including the king, for a number of reasons: they demonstrate the strongest resentment towards the sun-people for instigating the goblins' removal to the caves so long ago; they both demonstrate strong capabilities for deriving sadistic joy in causing pain and destruction; and they both generally look and behave effeminately, ultimately conforming to the negative representation of queer-coded characters that was prevalent at the time.

Queer coding—the act in art of borrowing characteristics stereotypically associated with the queer community—has happened both intentionally and inadvertently in film and television for decades, with both positive and negative queer representations. A major manifestation of queer coding is the use of stereotypically queer characteristics on villainous characters to connote immorality and emphasize a sense of "otherness;" and this happened particularly noticeably throughout Disney's "Renaissance" period at the end of the '80s and throughout the '90s. From Jafar's (*Aladdin*, 1992) heavy makeup and effeminate mannerisms to John Ratcliffe's (*Pocahontas*, 1995) pink clothes, bows, and sissy dog, animated villains—particularly

Disney animated villains—marked a clear association of queerness with evil and disruption. In *The Princess and the Goblin*, Prince Froglip and his mother are not only the evilest of the characters in the film, but they also demonstrate by far the most characteristics associated with queerness: they both have long, sharp, painted fingernails; they dress far “nicer” (for goblins) and use accessories (bracelets and brooches), while most of the goblin horde wears simple tunics or loincloths in shades of brown and gray.



Figure 3

The goblin queen’s appearance specifically appears directly inspired by conventions of drag, and her dress, body, and attitude all suggest that she would make a convincing drag queen—a quintessentially queer association. She shares many physical characteristics with Ursula (*The Little Mermaid*, 1989), who was the most recent Disney pop villain when Gémes’s film was in production in 1990 and, furthermore, who was modeled directly after the popular drag queen Divine (Sells 182). In the film, the goblin queen’s buxom bosom is particularly highlighted with her strapless, fur-lined dress featuring a large ambiguous green splatter on each breast (Fig. 3). She and Prince Froglip both regularly use limp wrists to gesture, and Prince Froglip speaks with a lisp, spits a lot, and exhibits petulant, whiny behavior, all of which are common queer stereotypes (Fig. 3). Dion Sheridan McLeod points out that, when filmmakers follow this “queer as evil” stereotype, one result is that they (and this is the case with *The Princess and the Goblin*) “perpetuate heterosexism because of the alignment of villainy with queerness and the narrative elimination of the [queer villain],” referencing the death or destruction of the queer-coded characters as “happily ever after” conclusions to these children’s films (McLeod 2). By subtly associating queer characteristics with evil and celebrating their ultimate demise, *The Princess and the Goblin* thematically fit in right alongside Disney’s animated summer blockbusters by perpetuating the same harmful stereotypes found throughout films of the Disney Renaissance.

Outside of queer coding, though, the rest of the more “natural-looking” cast of characters has limited characteristics worth remembering once the film is over. Criticized for her “little girl voice” and for “crying ‘oooh’ and sobbing ‘We’ll never find our way out of here’ in a trembly voice,” Princess Irene shows very little dynamism or development throughout the film (Holden, McCormick). Her greatest demonstration of gained confidence comes when she rescues Curdie from the goblins and confidently leads him through the maze of underground tunnels to safety despite his doubt and arguments, but the rest of her choices and reactions demonstrate little character beyond that of an obedient princess—“not someone with whom children today will readily identify” (51:45; Holden). In MacDonald’s novel, though still no Katniss Everdeen, Irene experiences observable growth and an increase of her own agency that directly results from her experiences under the mentorship of her grandmother and her challenges with the goblins, which gives her the courage to speak confidently to the adult castle servants about things that need to be done (MacDonald 215).

Other supporting characters add interest to the adaptation of MacDonald’s story, but few except for Irene’s magical great-grandmother have much effect on her life and choices. Irene’s father the King provides a voice-over at the beginning and end of the tale, suggesting that he is important in the events of the story, or perhaps emphasizing his effect on his daughter, or even implying that he saved the kingdom, but when none of that plays out, it is left unclear why he was given the honor of introducing and concluding the story instead of someone who was at least around for the action. Irene’s great grandmother, however, is a different story: when the princess, missing both of her parents, is surrounded by short-sighted guards and servants, she still has the resource of a grandmother who spins spiderwebs into invisible guiding thread, creates rose petal fires out of nothing, and can heal wounds with her white hair. Irene’s grandmother successfully improves the film by adding an air of mystery to the events,

But Curdie functions as merely a pawn in the film—a main character who moves almost robotically from place to place, and whose unique personality is only expressed in the rare sigh and one brief, “Typical,” when compelled to guide Irene back home at the beginning of the story (7:30). In the novel, Curdie’s character exhibits much more dynamism, personality, and growth. He writes his own nonsense poems to deter the goblins, rather than relying on “the syrupy, half-baked tripe [song] over and over again,” and regularly engages in thoughtful conversations with his parents (only peripheral characters in the film) who gently encourage him to live generously and give the benefit of the doubt when he is skeptical of Irene’s truthfulness (Rodriguez;

MacDonald 45-46; 203-07). With those elements missing, Curdie's character is less sympathetic and fails to provide a sense of relatability that children can appreciate and connect with as they watch the film.

It is interesting to note that the film cast has a variety of unsurprising British accents: Irene uses a polished, RP (received pronunciation) accent, while Lootie the nurse's accent hints of Yorkshire, as would make sense for a domestic servant. Curdie and his parents, however, all use American accents. While the fairy tale does not have an explicit location, thus there can be no true critique of "right" or "wrong" accents, using a Yorkshire accent for house help is an unsurprising choice that can be seen reflected in many other television adaptations (*Downton Abbey* comes to mind). The use of American accents for the mining family seems to set them even farther apart from the residents of the castle, and arguably positions them even lower than the servant, depicting them and the goblins as "other." With these stylistic choices, Gemes is consistent with the book in emphasizing the thematic challenge of socioeconomic divisions.

Conclusion

In his article "Conservative Austen, radical Austen: *Sense and Sensibility* from text to screen," Julian North explores theories of film adaptation within the specific context of nineteenth-century values. Using the 1995 film adaptation of *Sense and Sensibility* and comparing it to Austen's 1811 novel of the same title, North points out the areas where the ideology of Austen's novel would have been entirely appropriate for her nineteenth-century audience, but would not work as well with a twenty-first-century crowd. Nonetheless, adaptations of Austen novels continue to be made and remade, with each new adaptation bringing a slightly new take, appreciation, or (as Linda Cahir insightfully labels an adaptation) a new *translation* (33). Linda Hutcheon similarly defines adaptation as "repetition without replication" (149). Both theorists capitalize on the idea that effective film adaptations are more than carbon copies of books, saying that it is an essential role of directors and producers to update old novels in a way that can connect with a new audience.

George MacDonald's novels—sprinkled throughout with didactic moralizing and narrative commentary on living well—have not been represented well on the silver screen, and while it may be tempting to blame the story or the author's Victorian storytelling, the countless adaptations of novels by Austen, Dickens, Tolstoy, Carroll (and the list continues) makes it clear that nineteenth-century values are definitively translatable for a contemporary audience. MacDonald's imaginative world of goblins, princesses, absentee fathers, and magical grandmothers has the potential for great

success in a new, well-funded and well-produced adaptation. We just need to find someone to do it.

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Sagwa, the Chinese Siamese Cat and *Dora the Explorer* Teach the Value of Non-English Language

Aubrey Keller

ABSTRACT

Sagwa, the Chinese Siamese Cat premiered in 2001, featuring both Mandarin Chinese and English. A year prior, *Dora the Explorer* introduced a group of linguistically diverse characters in a multilingual English-Spanish program. Over twenty years later, American children continue to develop relationships with non-English languages in multilingual communities. Since the languages besides English that many speak face the threats of attrition and stigma, children's television shows that highlight the value of non-English languages are timely and applicable.

I respond to this current need by engaging in rhetorical analysis of language use in the first episode of *Sagwa* and of *Dora* as well as promotional material for each series. This analysis focuses on two features of language use that I call *form* and *delivery*, with *form* referring to whether the language is written or spoken, and *delivery* referring to which characters are using which language. I find that while *Sagwa* highlights how those with written Mandarin proficiency can preserve cultural values and enact community impact, *Dora* frames spoken Spanish fluency and multilinguality as applicable assets to everyday social situations and problem-solving. Although pointing to different benefits, both cartoons express to their child audiences that non-English languages are valuable.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, two bilingual cartoon heroines made successful television debuts. Under the creative direction of Amy Tan and based on a picture book she authored, *Sagwa, the Chinese Siamese Cat (Sagwa)* first aired on PBS in September of 2001. Set in the late Qing dynasty, the show follows a family of cats who are scribes to a human magistrate and incorporates Mandarin Chinese.¹ In the first episode, audiences learn that several of Sagwa's family members value calligraphic writing in Mandarin and use their writing to make a difference in their community (Tan). One year prior, *Dora the Explorer (Dora)* featured its first adventure in which Dora uses her combined fluency in English and Spanish to overcome obstacles and meet a new friend (Wiener). Both shows received Daytime Emmys, were broadcast in both America and abroad, and, in their English versions, include phrases in a second language.² Each show's first episode incorporates language differently in terms of two features that I call *form* and *delivery*. By *form*, I mean the choice to present language in writing or speech, while *delivery* refers to which characters are using which language. Despite their differences in *form* and *delivery*, both shows demonstrate the value of non-English language to young audiences.

Publicists and reviewers of *Sagwa* describe the program not as a show for language acquisition, but as a show introducing children to elements of Chinese culture and strategies for navigating social situations. In their initial press release before the show's premier, PBS Publicity claims the series will empower children to make decisions and increase their cultural awareness. While the statement does not mention that the show features Mandarin, in the premier episode, language is a key component of characters' ability to exercise agency and practice cultural traditions. Lu Fang claims that the show's inclusion of cultural practices, including the art of calligraphy, are especially important given that many diasporic Chinese families struggle to impart Chinese values on their children (Fang 101-3). Again, though not specifically naming Mandarin as a language, Fang highlights calligraphy as an art, and I perceive the program using characters' discussions of the cultural importance of calligraphy to highlight the value of Mandarin writing proficiency. *Sensical*, a streaming service that hosts the full series, does mention Mandarin directly by listing "use of Chinese vocabulary" as a positive element of the show, but, in line with these

1. To avoid conflation with Chinese as an ethnic or cultural identity and since Mandarin is the dialect *Sagwa* features, I will refer to Mandarin Chinese as Mandarin for the remainder of this article.

2. For more on awards, see "Dora the Explorer (2000-2019) Awards" and page 102 of Fang. For more on international viewership, see pages 36-7 of Artze and pages 100-1 of Fang.

other characterizations of the show, the webpage more prominently boasts “positive messages” and “social studies” as the educational values imparted by the show. Though not advertising the series as a bilingual or language-learning program, these sources celebrate features that the show achieves through its presentation of Mandarin.

In contrast, responses to *Dora* from shortly after its release frequently reference the show’s bilingualism. Comments like “this pint-sized Latina heroine will have American families saying ‘gracias’ instead of ‘thank you’ in no time” and “it’s very empowering for kids to walk around the house saying ‘amigo’” express a belief that the show facilitates Spanish language acquisition for its viewers (Artze 37; Navarro C1). These comments, like those regarding *Sagwa*, have roots in the way the program presents language. In *Dora*, both English and Spanish are treated as target languages, the audience invited to repeat and use vocabulary from both languages in context. Frequent mentions of an increasing Spanish-speaking population in the United States also characterize initial responses to *Dora*. Writing for *Billboard*, Catherine Cella suggests that Paramount introduced the series as a business strategy to “capitalize” on an increased market for ethnically diverse programs (76). Her analysis shifts attention away from the educational and to the financial implications of the show, but also points to the program’s profitability caused by the willingness of English-speaking audiences to watch bilingual programs. Recognized as “the top-rated show for preschoolers, aged 2 to 5, in commercial television,” *Dora* attests to the viability of a show featuring a language besides English on television (Navarro C1).

Before analyzing the first episode of each program, I wondered whether it was useful to view these shows as language-learning resources. Recent scholarship on language acquisition through television is scarce, with a glaring lack of studies on the target age for both series: preschoolers. Majuddin et al. found that the use of subtitles and repetition increased adults’ retention of phrases in a target language (1001-2). Ina Lekkaï’s study of children aged nine to twelve found that participants did acquire phrases both with and without subtitles and that repeatedly encountering the phrases paired with relevant context and visuals made acquisition more likely (85-6). Neither researcher investigated Mandarin or Spanish as target languages. To determine whether *Sagwa* and *Dora* support language acquisition, research involving preschoolers and statistics on subtitle usage should be gathered. However, after examining the shows’ rhetorical use of language, I find that though these shows might or might not support children’s acquisition of target languages, these programs do beneficially communicate that proficiency in languages besides English is valuable.

Viewers watching the English version of the shows encounter non-English

language within the first thirty seconds of each premier. While in *Sagwa* this initial exposure is written, in *Dora* it is spoken, following the primary form the respective languages tend to appear in each series's first episode. "How Sagwa Got Her Colors" begins with a preview that shows Sagwa's parents using their tails to write Mandarin characters (0:03-5). They are recording a proclamation from the magistrate to ban singing, and the scene uses color to communicate meaning. One word on the proclamation, "禁," or "jin," a word commonly used on Mandarin signage to mean "ban" or "prohibit," appears in red while the other words are black. Here the show uses the visual element of color to communicate the meaning of the word to a non-Mandarin-speaking audience, which is important for understanding the episode since this is the word Sagwa later blots from the manuscript. Three seconds in, the visual rhetoric signals that written Mandarin will play an important role in the show.

Dora's first use of Spanish, on the other hand, is heard rather than seen. The theme song introduces its protagonists as "Boots and super cool exploradora" (0:19-23). Instead of referring to Dora by her name as was done with Boots, the line characterizes her as an "*exploradora*," or explorer ("*Explorador, ra*"). The syllable count of the Spanish term allows this line to match the ten-syllable line that came before, which would not have been possible with the name "Dora" alone. Including the term clues in a first-time audience that spoken Spanish will play a role in the cartoon. A further auditory message sent by the term comes from the similar sound between "*exploradora*," "*explorer*," and "Dora." Because the Spanish word sounds so similar to the other two terms that are more likely understood by an English-speaking audience, the term suggests a proximity between Spanish and English. As a result, this introduction of Spanish in an easily understandable, spoken *form* signals to the audience that they are about to hear Spanish and works to demystify the challenge of understanding Spanish for English speakers.

An early challenge Sagwa and her siblings face is understanding and articulating the value of written Mandarin, with a conversation about calligraphy first establishing that the ability to write in Mandarin has intergenerational, cultural value. Following the theme of cultural inheritance between parent and child that overarches Amy Tan's oeuvre, when Sagwa's older brother, Dongwa, questions why their parents would be "proud" of their practicing calligraphy, Sagwa reminds him of their "family tradition. We've always been calligraphers" (5:13-33). The idea of parental pride and family tradition is attached to calligraphy for Sagwa and her family because, as the parents later explain, their role as the magistrate's scribes is what allows them the privilege of living in a palace (8:01-50). Sagwa's respect for calligraphy further links her

to her parents when, after insisting that the family has “always” performed the role, Dongwa complains that she “sound[s] just like [their] father” (5:48-52). Besides being of value specifically to Sagwa’s family, engaging in Mandarin through calligraphy is also established as a cultural art. Dongwa says that he would prefer to practice “gungfu,” an English transliteration that sounds closer to the Mandarin “功夫” or “gōngfū” than the one more commonly used in America, “kung fu.” Although protesting writing, his stated preference juxtaposes gōngfū with calligraphy as two culturally important activities.

After first establishing Mandarin writing proficiency as important for family and culture, the episode conveys that this proficiency also grants power to and requires responsibility from individuals. Sagwa’s mother expresses displeasure about the unfairness of the law they transcribed, which bans singing. Her reaction raises the question of whether individuals, even when they have the capability to use written language to write or oral language to sing, actually have agency to use these skills as desired. When Sagwa falls in ink and accidentally marks out “jìn,” the Chinese people sing the magistrate’s praises, leading him to change his heart and extend resources to the dynasty’s cats. These circumstances affirm her belief that “we’re not helpless just because we’re cats. We can change the world!” (14:29-35). Engagement with writing in Mandarin allows Sagwa to make a change as an individual, but once Sagwa realizes this power, she must also exercise caution. Even though her altering of the manuscript had positive results, her mother clarifies that Sagwa “did something she shouldn’t have” but that sometimes “mistakes” can be useful learning opportunities (23:32-47). The inclusion of this clarification adds nuance to a message otherwise suggesting that if children use their voice to stand up for what is right, there necessarily will be positive results. Sagwa’s interference with someone else’s written message was risky, painting children the realistic picture that while command of language can facilitate change, writers cannot dictate how other people respond to their writing.

While language also has visual importance in *Dora*, that importance comes from the connection between images and spoken words rather than from written words. In fact, aside from when the series title is shown on-screen during the theme song, there are no written words in English or Spanish throughout the episode. The choice not to include text is particularly striking when Dora says that a book “is in Spanish,” but, when she shows the book on-screen, it includes pictures and no words (3:00-10). Because she references the book’s written language in her dialogue, but the book apparently has no text, the exclusion reads as a rhetorical choice to foreground spoken rather than written language. Throughout the episode, Dora implores viewers

to say English and Spanish words aloud to help her and Boots on their quest. These invitations to speak are often imperative commands like “you have to say ‘map,’” “we need your help to stop Swiper. You have to say ‘Swiper no swiping.’ Say it with us,” and “remember, you have to tell Señor Tucán which piece will fill in the hole in the bridge... *grande* for big, *piqueño* for little” (5:00-2; 8:45-52; 11:48-12:16). The repeated “have to” suggests an importance that the child speaks, and these commands are often paired with visuals indicative of the word’s meaning. For example, Dora gestures with arms wide to support understanding of the spoken word “grande” and narrows her arms to pantomime “piqueño” (11:58-12:06). While *Sagwa* suggests that written language can solve problems, *Dora* suggests the same of spoken language. Similar to *Sagwa*, *Dora* supports the spoken words’ meanings with visuals.

In addition to differing in the *form* in which they present the non-English language, these two shows also differ in their *delivery* of non-English lines, namely in which characters speak which language(s). *Sagwa* features a fully bilingual English-Mandarin cast of characters or at least includes no indication in the first episode that any of the characters are monolingual. In each scene where characters speak both English and Mandarin, no characters express confusion or ask for translations. Notably, “gungfu,” “māmā,” and “bàba” are the only Mandarin words spoken by the young cats, with longer and more complicated phrases reserved to the bat Fu-Fu and the adult human characters. *Sagwa* and the show’s audience are then placed in a position of listening to Mandarin but not necessarily speaking it back. Mandarin phrases are often accompanied by English phrases that either translate or explain meaning. A human character invites *Sagwa*’s parents to come forward in order to act as scribes by saying “Nǐ guòlái. Come here” (11:56-9). These two sentences have the same meaning, the former in Mandarin and latter in English. Although this *delivery* presents the audience with both languages, in each situation where the two languages are used to express the same meaning, there is never an overt statement that the one phrase means the same as the other. All of the spoken and many of the written phrases in the episode should be understood by someone with intermediate Mandarin proficiency, meaning that the inclusion of both could give language learners and children already exposed to Mandarin at home representation of a familiar language on-screen. Those unfamiliar with Mandarin likely will understand that another language is being paired with English, but the show is not explicit that lines in Mandarin are being directly translated into English.

In *Dora*, the process of translation is articulated overtly, made possible in part by the linguistic diversity among characters. Dora speaks both English and Spanish,

Boots can understand very little Spanish and otherwise speaks English, and some of the protagonists' peers are monolingual while others are bilingual. As a result of this variety of language proficiency, while, in *Sagwa*, the same character often delivers a line in both languages, in *Dora*, one character usually delivers a line in one language and another character in the other. For example, directed at the audience, Boots says "let's go" before Dora says "vamos" (7:10-3). Another time, Dora says "gracias" before Boots says "thanks" (2:46-9). Notable about these two examples is that they reverse the order of speaking. If English were always to come after Spanish, the *delivery* would act as a translation of Spanish favoring a non-Spanish-speaking audience. However, because the order of *delivery* varies, no language is prejudiced over the other in these moments. That is not to say that both languages are used equally throughout the episode, as English is used for a larger proportion of the dialogue. However, Boots is not presented in a position of power as the English-speaker by translating for Dora.

Actually, Boots understands little Spanish, making Dora's bilingualism a practical asset and causing the interaction between characters to capture situations children are likely to encounter in linguistically diverse environments. While *Sagwa* does convey that there are people who speak non-English languages, *Dora* carries that idea further, suggesting that preschoolers might meet people in their daily life who speak different languages. The protagonists' interaction with Señor Tucán dramatizes, through Boots's experience, meeting someone who speaks a different language, and, through Dora's, serving as a translator in the resulting conversation. Señor Tucán speaks Spanish, Boots speaks English, and Dora speaks both. Boots wants to ask for Señor Tucán's help fixing a bridge, since the character can fly to retrieve planks of wood from the river (11:15-33). Because the characters must cross the bridge to continue exploring, the ability to have a conversation is crucial. Although this particular scenario is fantastical, the reality of meeting someone who speaks a different language is likely for children in multilingual communities, and the show sends the positive message that bilingualism allows for collaboration and problem-solving. The realism of the scenario follows Nickelodeon Animation Studios' goal "to reflect the world children lived in" (Navarro C1). In contrast, *Sagwa* aims to depict for children "an enchanting world of customs and traditions," phrasing that indicates an intention to demonstrate that some people have different experiences rather than to represent an experience that viewers are likely to have (Publicity PBS).

Dora further illustrates bilingualism as an asset by resisting deficit terminology; rather than saying that a character does not speak a language, the dialogue addresses what language(s) that character does speak and presents that

language proficiency as a capability. When Boots experiences a language barrier with Señor Tucán, rather than saying that the bird *does not* speak English, Dora says “Señor Tucán speaks Spanish” (11:12-26). By stating the language he speaks rather than the language he does not speak, Dora models for children the behavior of highlighting language capability rather than deficiency, since speaking in terms of what language someone else does not know can be both presumptuous and hurtful. Words like “can” paired with fluency further the theme of language as capability. When showing Boots her book, Dora tells him “the book is in Spanish, but I can tell you what it says” (3:00-4). Her intonation, placing emphasis on “I,” confidently expresses to bilingual children that they have a skill that not all their peers have. Alisaari et al. found, in a study of teachers in Finland, that while most participants viewed multilingualism positively, not all of them viewed it as an asset for learning (48, 57). Dora does frame non-English language as an asset, defending the preservation of Spanish as a native language among American children who too often experience first-language attrition.

To be clear, *Dora's* exploration of bilingualism to navigate social situations does not make the program more useful than *Sagwa*. Rather, these episodes each highlight different aspects of the value of language. While *Dora* focuses on the communicative power of non-English spoken language, *Sagwa* highlights the cultural importance and community impact of written Mandarin proficiency. Both shows call the viewer to situate themselves in the narrative, ensuring that they are not passive. After the adventure, Dora asks the audience “what was your favorite part of the trip?” waits for a response, then validates it with “I liked that too” (22:50-23:03). Similarly conversational, in a segment after the main storyline, Fu-Fu and Sagwa tell the audience “No matter what type of neighborhood, people all over the world live in great places. What about you?” (26:25-32). By inviting children to articulate how they relate to the episode using spoken words, both shows encourage viewers to make meaning using language.

Researchers should continue examining how children's programs communicate the value of non-English languages. Audiovisual media involves rhetorically shaped messages that contribute to a child's early understanding of the world. With the current shift in popularity from network television to streaming and video-sharing platforms comes much new material worth analysis. Some people who watched *Sagwa* and *Dora* as children are currently or about to become young educators, myself included. It is important to be conscientious when representing languages to children, as these portrayals send a message about how the child should view their own and others' skills. *Sagwa* and *Dora* remain useful for their indication

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that linguistic diversity is not only a reality, but that non-English proficiency is a powerful skill.

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Representation in *Raya and the Last Dragon*: Examining the Progression of Gender, Sexuality, and Race in the Disney Princess Franchise

Sarah Hicks

ABSTRACT

The Disney animated film *Raya and the Last Dragon* was released in March 2021 to great acclaim, becoming the third-highest streamed movie of 2021 (Hayes). The Disney Princess franchise has long been criticized for cultural appropriation and privileging traditional gender and heterosexual norms. If *Raya* is canonized into the Disney Princess franchise, she will be the second Asian Princess and the first Southeast Asian Princess.¹ In contrast to historical Disney Princess films, *Raya* has garnered praise for the film's pro-feminist ideals, nuanced homosexuality, and careful representation of Southeast Asian culture. This essay analyzes the representations of race, gender, and sexuality in *Raya and the Last Dragon* in relationship to other Disney Princess animated feature films, especially the 1998 animated film *Mulan*. *Raya* reflects an almost one-hundred-year progression in the franchise and represents a significant advancement by Disney in terms of feminist and racial representation, but, at the same time, falls short in the area of queer representation.

1. At the time of this article's composition (November 2021), no plans had been announced to "coronate" *Raya* into the Disney Princess franchise.

Introduction

The Disney animated film *Raya and the Last Dragon* was released in March 2021 to great acclaim, becoming the third-highest streamed movie of 2021 (Hayes). While the character Raya has not officially been inducted as a member of the Disney Princess franchise, her photo appears on the Disney Princess website, and merchandise from the movie has been promoted alongside other official Disney Princess merchandise. If Raya is eventually canonized into the franchise, she will be the second Asian Princess and the first Southeast Asian Princess. The Disney Princess franchise has long been criticized for cultural appropriation and privileging traditional gender and heterosexual norms. Conversely, *Raya* has garnered praise for the film's careful representation of Southeast Asian culture, pro-feminist ideals, and nuanced homosexuality.

This essay analyzes the representations of race, gender, and sexuality in *Raya and the Last Dragon* in relationship to other Disney Princess animated feature films and, in particular, the 1998 animated film *Mulan*, which also features a female Asian lead. *Raya* reflects an almost one-hundred-year progression in the franchise and can be used to evaluate the company's advancement—or lack thereof—toward imbuing their films with more progressive representations and ideologies. As this essay will demonstrate, *Raya* represents a significant advancement by Disney in terms of feminist and racial representation, but, at the same time, falls short in the area of queer representation.

1. Establishing the Franchise

It is important to understand how Disney has addressed the issue of representation historically in the Disney Princess franchise. The beginning of the franchise can be traced back to 1937 with the release of Walt Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*—the first full-length, animated feature film. The character of Snow White would subsequently become one of the eight original Disney Princesses included in the establishment of the franchise in 2001. The other canonized princesses included Cinderella, Aurora, Ariel, Belle, Jasmine, Mulan, and Pocahontas. Tiana, Merida, Rapunzel, Anna, Elsa, and Moana were also “coronated” into the franchise following the release of their films. Over the past twenty years, the Disney Princess line has grown to represent a multi-billion-dollar industry within the Walt Disney Corporation (Orenstein). Even amidst the popularity of the line, the franchise has often come under scrutiny for “promoting harmful, unrealistic body types and the narrow ideal of marriage as the happiest of endings for young women” (Stover 1), applied most vehemently to the earlier films in the franchise. Consumers have shown a

desire for Disney to pivot from these outdated depictions and instead adopt a more progressive attitude toward gender norms, sexuality, and racial representation.

2.1 Representation of Gender

Several articles have addressed the representation of the traditional gender norms built into the films represented by the franchise. These criticisms have been especially applied to the early films from this franchise, including *Snow White*, *Cinderella* (1950), and *Sleeping Beauty* (1959). These films were produced before the beginning of the women's liberation movement in the 1960s, during a time when society largely desired for women to fulfill domestic duties while men reassumed their positions within the workforce. *Sleeping Beauty* was the last film of this era and was considered a "critical and popular failure," signifying a shift in the viewer's reception to these "voiceless beauties" (Stover 2, 3). *The Little Mermaid*, released in 1989, marked a significant turn in the Disney Princess film, "which transformed the damsel into a heroine of sorts, with both a voice and desire for adventure" (Stover 3). In and after this film, Disney adopted a type of "soft feminism" to meet the current demand for female characters with stronger agency, where female protagonists transcend patriarchal expectations, reject domestication, appropriate masculine attributes and roles, and reframe the true meaning of love (Schiele et al. 663-667). Yet, even with this shift, there have still been instances of misogynistic messaging that have pervaded some of these films.

2.2 Gender Representation in *Mulan*

Mulan is one example of a film that seems to present strong feminist ideals but retains chauvinistic undertones. *Mulan* exists in a strongly patriarchal society, where she is expected to bring honor to her family by marrying a man of status. She ultimately transcends this expectation by rejecting domestication and choosing to go to war rather than placating her family and the matchmaker (666). When *Mulan* joins the army, she assumes a male identity and takes on traditionally masculine attributes.² She cuts her hair (18:52), adopts a deeper voice (27:01), and then develops strength, coordination, and stamina through the training process (38:04-41:03). *Mulan* is eventually revered as a hero by her male peers.

The surface-level message to the audience, who knows that *Mulan* is a woman, is that women can be strong, courageous, athletic, etc. Nonetheless, it is problematic that *Mulan* is only able to accomplish her brave deeds as a male. As soon

2. Throughout this paper, I will be making references to generally agreed upon yet vague separations of what consists of traditionally male of female attributes and characteristics in America.

as Mulan's female identity is revealed, she loses her status and is rejected by those who once revered her. Furthermore, near the end of the film, she must appeal to and rejoin her male team to successfully save the emperor (Dundes et al. 4). It is only under the direct influence of the emperor that Mulan is re-established as a hero when existing in her feminine form. This implies that Mulan is only able to be successful and seen as a hero when she is presenting herself as a male, or with the permission of a male in power. The message of *Mulan* indicates that it is acceptable for females to exhibit traditionally masculine attributes such as leadership and heroism, as long as it is approved by a male in authority.

2.3 Gender Representation in *Raya*

Raya and the Last Dragon represents a significant progression in Disney's representation of feminist ideals in their films. Like *Mulan*, the main character is a female of Asian descent who leaves her home and engages in combat. Significant portions of each movie focus on the protagonist's adventures and battles. A noteworthy difference between the films is that *Raya* includes three females in lead roles (and multiple more females in supporting roles), a first for any of the princess films. Fawn Veerasunthorn, the Head of Story for the film, stated:

... we [don't] have just one female character who has to carry all the burdens of being the one female character. We have so many that at one point we'd be calling a character 'she' and I didn't know which 'she' we were talking about because we were between three people—Sisu, Namaari, and Raya. (Frederick)

Because the film is led by a cast of women, the plot is dependent on their actions and decisions. This signifies a marked development in female representation in the franchise, as while many of the films feature a least one female lead, the plot is still driven by the actions or decisions of a male character.

Virana, one of the films supporting characters as the matriarchal leader of the Fang tribe, serves as a foil for Sisu. She is positioned as the power-hungry villain whose selfish actions led to the destruction of Kumandra. Virana's primary concern is for the people of her village, which can be seen by her careful architectural decisions that separate her people from the Drunn (52:34). But Virana's position of leadership leads to a lust for power and control, which causes her to make decisions that seem brash and cutthroat. She enlists the help of her daughter to obtain Sisu's gem as a way to usurp the supposed control of the Heart Tribe (21:56). Once she obtains a piece of the gem, she embeds it into her staff to ensure she has possession of the gem at all times (51:55). Virana has a very isolationist leadership style as a means to keep her village safe, and this is displayed in the traditionally masculine traits of hunger power

and control, cunning, leadership, and intelligence.³ In contrast, Sisu believes that the only way to defeat the Druun is through teamwork and cooperation. Agreeableness is typically seen as a negative, passive, feminine quality. The climax and resolution of the film demonstrate that the isolationist strategy (masculine) is inferior to the strategy centered on collaboration and trust (feminine). Women are not just the stars of this film; feminine qualities are also celebrated which lends to the feminist messaging of the film.

3.1 LGBTQ+ Representation

Representations of queer⁴ individuals have been extremely limited in all of Disney's animated films, including the princess franchise.⁵ An analysis by Towbin et.al discovered that many of the villains from the Disney Princess films were coded as queer by their appearance and behavior, including Jafar from *Aladdin* (1992) and John Ratcliffe from *Pocahontas* (1995) (Towbin et al. 34). Anna Putnam also suggests that other villains such as Ursula from *The Little Mermaid* and Lady Tremaine from *Cinderella* exhibit transgendered characteristics, with the former modeled after a drag queen (Putnam 152-155). This frequent association between stereotypically queer attributes with evil, immoral characters can have tremendously negative effects on the viewer by implying that queer people are evil and deserve to be treated that way—a message that is reinforced by the scarcity of any other positive queer representation.

3.2

Although there has been some discussion of queer messaging in *Mulan*, it is this author's opinion that the claims are not substantially supported enough to be considered seriously. Mulan dresses and acts as a means to conceal her female identity in order to gain admittance to the army; at no time does she express a sense of gender dysphoria. Some have read into the relationship between Mulan and Shang and concluded that Shang must be either homosexual or bisexual due to his attraction toward Mulan while she was presenting as a male. But it could be just as easily argued

3. I would offer that these traits should not be exclusively ascribed to the male gender as women are just as capable of displaying cunning, leadership, intelligence, and a desire for power and control.

4. In this paper, "queer" is used as a general and inclusive statement to encapsulate the multiple identities and orientations represented in the LGBTQIA+ community. While each of these identities and orientations are unique and deserve to be treated as such, the term "queer" is helpful for describing the LGBTQIA+ community as a whole.

5. At the time of this revision, only four characters from Walt Disney Animation Studios have been confirmed as queer: Bucky and Pronx Oryx-Antlerson from *Zootopia* (2016) and Ethan Clade and Diazo from *Strange World* (2022).

that Shang was not exhibiting sexual attraction and instead admiration for the development of Mulan's strength and abilities as a soldier throughout her training. Shang might even be feeling a sense of pride in himself for his ability to transform Mulan, the weakest of the soldiers, into a formidable opponent. In any case, there is not sufficient evidence to claim queer themes or undertones in *Mulan*.

3.3 LGBTQ+ Representation in *Raya*

While none of the producers, directors, or writers for *Raya* have commented on the lead character's sexuality, Kelly Marie Tran, the voice actor behind *Raya*, has publicly stated that she thinks that *Raya* is gay and voiced her as such. The statement came from an interview with *Vanity Fair*, in which Tran explained that she decided there were "some romantic feelings going on there," between *Raya* and *Raya's* friend-turned-nemesis, Namaari (Robinson, "Kelly Marie Tran"). This is especially significant because, as the voice actor, Tran was responsible for bringing this character to life. Even if *Raya* was not written as a gay character, Tran brought that quality to her characterization. Even before Tran's interview, viewers began speculating about *Raya's* sexuality, similarly to the way they speculated about Elsa's sexuality in *Frozen* (2013). However, there is one major difference in *Raya* that is not present in *Frozen*: there are no other female characters that Elsa could display romantic attraction toward in the original film. The inclusion of Namaari's character in *Raya* creates an opportunity for *Raya* to express her same-sex attraction, whereas the other films have not included a character who could fulfill this role. While Disney has not commented on *Raya's* sexuality, they have created a scenario where an opportunity for same-sex attraction exists.

There are specific moments from the beginning of *Raya* that lend to a queer interpretation of *Raya's* character. When Namaari and *Raya* first meet, Namaari is incredibly shy, indicated by the way she hesitantly pushes her hair back from her face and struggles to look *Raya* in the eye (12:37). This behavior is less reflective of two casual friends meeting and more reminiscent of two people with a romantic interest. Immediately after they meet, *Raya* and Namaari walk off holding hands (12:57). This behavior is typical for younger children but less typical for twelve-year-old girls (the assumed age of *Raya* at the beginning of the movie). While learning more about each other, Namaari remarks, "We're both *warrior women* who despise uncomfortable formal wear" (13:50 emphasis added). Namaari puts a strange amount of emphasis on the words "warrior women." That combined with the comment about formal wear, which is stereotypically disliked by lesbian and bisexual women, seems to point to a deeper meaning in this phrase. Both *Raya* and Namaari use the term "dep la" to refer

to each other in their interactions (15:05). While the author was unable to find a direct translation for “dep la” in traditional Southeast Asian languages, the phrase is similar to “dep qua” in Vietnamese. The term “dep” means “beautiful” and “qua” means “very,” so a rough translation of “dep qua” could be “very beautiful,” (*Duolingo*).⁶ Perhaps this phrase was invented by the writers as a vague nod to the physical attraction between Raya and Namaari. When Namaari confronts Raya for the first time several years later, Raya responds, “And here it’s because I thought you missed me” (34:06). This reads similar to the playful banter between two possible romantic young adults.

The interpersonal conflict between Raya and Namaari is very similar to that of a romantic relationship. Namaari played on Raya’s interests and trust to manipulate Raya into revealing the location of the Dragon Gem. After Namaari’s deception, Raya is racked with guilt for revealing the gem’s location. Her father entrusted her with the responsibility of protecting the gem, and Raya’s short-sighted decision to take Namaari to the gem resulted in a considerable loss of life. Whenever Raya addresses this moment in the film, her word choice and tone reflect that she is specifically agonizing over her decision to trust someone who betrayed her (24:11). This idea of trust is central to the message of the film. Raya would obviously be devastated by the loss of her father and the re-emergence of the Druun, but it seems like she has not been able to trust anyone since the day her trust was initially broken. Namaari’s betrayal would be even more significant if Raya had initially felt a romantic connection to Namaari. Of course, all of these moments contain a level of plausible deniability, most likely to protect the substantial financial investment *Raya* represents.⁷

4. Racial Representation

The history of racial representation in Disney films is extremely complicated and historically disheartening. Some of Disney’s animated features have received severe backlash for their racial representation (see Benschhoff and Griffin’s case study on *The Lion King* as an example of this issue). This struggle with representation has affected the Disney Princess franchise, especially when the heroine is from a non-European culture. Jasmine from *Aladdin* and Pocahontas from the film of the same name suffer especially from hyper-sexualization rooted in their ethnic and foreign

6. At the time of this article’s conception, *Duolingo* was the most helpful tool in determining an approximate translation for this phrase. Further research and commentary would be welcome from someone more familiar with the languages and dialects used in Southeast Asia.

7. Movies with blatant homosexual themes are often censored in the international market. *Lightyear* (2022) was banned from several Middle Eastern and Southeast Asian countries because it contained a same-sex kiss (Vivrelli).

beauty (Cappiccie et al. 53-54; Ellis). Disney appears to side-step the issue of Tiana's race in *The Princess and the Frog* (2009), by entirely ignoring race relations in 1920 Louisiana (Dundes and Streiff 1; Ellis). *Moana* (2016) served as a significant step forward in Disney's attempt accurately and respectfully to feature a heroine of color with the establishment of the Oceanic Trust. The trust was a group of anthropologists, cultural practitioners, historians, linguists, and choreographers from the Polynesian islands who assisted in the film's authentic representation of the Polynesian culture (Robinson, "Pacific Islanders"). The trust provided insight into everything from the costume design to the environmental design. However, *Moana* still received some criticism for pulling aspects of multiple Polynesian cultures instead of presenting one specific culture, which can lead to a homogenized view of Polynesian people instead of recognizing the distinct differences between certain groups. The plot of the film also received some criticism for following the traditionally American coming-of-age story arc instead of representing a truly Polynesian tale (Ellis).

4.1 Asian Representation in *Mulan*

Mulan struggles with Asian representation, due to a general whitewashing of the story and the general issues of orientalism in film. The source material used for inspiration for the film was altered in such a way that the film barely resembles the original Chinese ballad. In the original ballad, Mulan does disguise herself as a male soldier to take the place of her father in the army, but she does so with the blessing of her parents and serves in the army for over ten years without her true identity as a female ever being discovered (Cappiccie et al. 52; Dundes and Streiff 3). Disney forsakes the traditional Chinese ideals of cultural collectivism and filial obligation present in the ballad and "Americanizes" the story by framing Mulan's actions as a rebellion against her family in a search for honor and individual self-actualization (Cappiccie et al. 52). Other departures from the original story include the addition of Mulan's sidekicks, Mushu and Cri-Kee,⁸ and the replacement of the Mongols from the original ballad with the Huns (Cappiccie et al. 3). These changes mirror the colonizing attitude that promotes taking what one desires from a target culture and then imposing their own values on said culture.

Historically, Asians and Asian Americans have suffered extreme stereotyping in the American film industry. It is also important to examine how the characters in *Mulan* either conform to or defy these typical stereotypes. Asians are usually posited "as being of one extreme or another in either a positive (wise sages, exemplary

8. The inclusion of Cri-Kee as the "lucky cricket" is especially alarming since the concept of the lucky cricket has no basis in Chinese culture.

students) or a negative light (sadistic executioners, devilish heathens),” (Mok 194). This results in Asian women being stereotyped as beautiful, dainty, dependent, docile, and submissive or as evil and menacing. Asian men are stereotyped as reserved, studious, socially awkward, and effeminate or as dangerous, exotic, and menacing (Besana et al. 214-216; Mok 191-194). Some of the characters in *Mulan* circumvent these stereotypes. For example, Mulan displays independence, courage, and leadership without coming across as the menacing “Dragon Lady” (Mok 190). Nevertheless, many of the other characters fall into these stereotypes. Li-Shang is presented as reserved and menacing at the beginning of the film and struggles to express his emotions both after his father’s death and when attempting to express his feelings for Mulan. Many of the male side characters are either socially awkward (Ling, Chien-Po), menacing (Yao), the comedic fool (Yao, Ling, Chien-Po), or effeminate (Ling, Chien-Po). The most blatantly stereotyped character in this film is Chi-Fu, who is drawn with exaggerated Chinese features, such as a stringy beard and mustache, slanted eyes, and crooked teeth (Towbin et al. 32). He is also extremely effeminized throughout the film, emerging from his tent with a towel draped around him like a dress (46:01), screaming “like a girl” (46:56), cowering under a rock away from battle (54:14), and fainting in front of the emperor (1:17:19) (Dundes and Streiff 5). While Mulan defies traditional Asian stereotypes by displaying self-autonomy, it is unfortunate that so many of the other characters in the film are still confined to these depictions.

4.2 Racial Representation in *Raya*

As Disney heavily marketed *Raya* as a Southeast Asian princess, they needed to rectify the mistakes in characterization and representation they made in *Mulan*. It appears that the creative team went to great lengths to ensure the film incorporated cultural elements respectfully and with authenticity. Don Hall, one of the film’s directors, discussed how the creative team behind the film took three research trips to different countries in Southeast Asia. They were able to establish a “Southeast Asian Story Trust” (similar to the “Oceanic Trust” established for *Moana*) to consult on aspects of the film such as the script, screenings, character design, costumes, and minuscule details such as the designs on Sisu’s horns (Frederick). Osnat Shurer spoke about the importance of including individuals from the target culture from the very beginning to the very end of the film. Adele Lim, one of the film’s writers grew up in Malaysia (Frederick); Qui Nguyen, another writer, is Vietnamese-American; and Fawn Veerasunthorn, the Head of Story, is Thai-American (Moon). Having people on the story team from the target cultures represented in the film made it possible to include personal details that lent themselves to an accurate depiction of those cultures

(Frederick).

Even with the establishment of the Southeast Asian Story Trust, the film still received criticism for how it homogenized the distinct cultures of several Southeast Asian countries. Historically, when Asians have been the subject of film, the multitude of different Asian cultures, traditions, and lifestyles have been “collapsed” or “lumped” into one group under the umbrella term “Asian” (Mok 186, Towbin et al. 22). This depiction of a single, Asian monolithic culture, “[obscures] the distinctive ethnic and cultural differences within this population,” (186). Some *Raya* viewers were disappointed with the way that the film mixed elements from distinct Southeast Asian countries, therefore not representing a specific ethnicity or culture and contributing to the homogenization of distinct Asian cultures. The film pulled influences from the Vietnamese, Thai, Laotian, Malaysian, Indonesian, Cambodian, and Singaporean cultures, but there is no specific differentiating among these cultures in the film (Moon). Qui Nguyen, one of the film’s writers, addressed this concern during an interview:

And in creating the five regions in *Raya and the Last Dragon*—each with its own personality and aesthetic, the filmmakers intentionally incorporated commonalities across Southeast Asia. “The easy thing we could have done was, this land in Kumandra was Thailand, this was Vietnam, this one’s Malaysia,” Nguyen says. “But then it gets into a really ugly place of going, oh, well, this country is bad, and this one’s good, and our hero’s from here.” Instead, inspirations from specific countries were infused across the setting. (Moon)

From the interviews with the creative team, it appears that the decision to “incorporate commonalities from across Southeast Asia” was intentional to avoid villainizing one specific culture due to the nature of the film’s plot. While this does not negate the desire for people from these cultures to see more of their specific culture represented on screen, it does clarify that this decision was intentional as a way to protect the cultures represented in the film.

Considering how much research and attention went into the writing and directing of *Raya*, it is very strange that Kelly Marie Tran, the voice of Raya, is the only Southeast Asian who was cast in a major role in the film (Martin, Moon). Two of the supporting roles, Boun and Noi (also known as “Con-Baby” for most of the film), are played by Southeast Asians, Izzac Wang and Thalia Tran, respectively, but the rest of the “top-billed” cast is East Asian (Moon). When asked about this decision for casting, Adele Lim stated, “Any time there is a prominent Asian-forward movie or we have

Asian leads, you know, that one project has to kind of take on the burden because there's just not enough of them," (Martin). This statement seems strangely similar to a comment made by Mok when discussing the use of "yellowface" in early cinema: "As the common perception of the time was that there simply were no talented Asian Americans to put on the screen in a starring capacity, Whites were frequently used in roles depicting Asians" (190). While it may be true that there is a limited number of professional Southeast Asian voice actors, this film could have been the chance to either discover or highlight more Southeast Asian talent. If any company would have the resources to conduct a casting call for this specific group, it would be the media giant, Disney. More research is needed in this area to determine if there could have been a more concentrated effort to include specifically Southeast Asian actors.

6. Conclusion

The Disney Princess franchise represents a multi-billion industry within the Disney Corporation (Orenstein). Each of the films represents a multi-million-dollar investment, and Disney relies on these films and characters being relatable and likable to generate revenue. In a society demanding more equitable cultural representation and inclusion in media, it makes sense that Disney would attempt to include more progressive ideologies to meet these demands. We have seen Disney move toward more inclusive representation by including outward LGBTQ+ characters in their animated films and utilizing Trusts to ensure a film's cultural authenticity. *Raya* represents another step forward toward respectful, authentic cultural representation through the utilization of the Southeast Asian Trust and the inclusion of individuals from the target culture all the way through the writing and story process. Where this film falls short is that it did not include enough voice actors from Southeast Asia. Disney is such a well-known and powerful brand that it does not need to rely on billing big-name stars to attract an audience (Moon). This would have been a wonderful opportunity to find more Southeast Asian voice talent and provide them with a platform to showcase their ability, thereby bringing more Asian talent and representation to the film industry. Additionally, the inclusion of more Southeast Asian voices could have further lent to the film's cultural authenticity by utilizing voices that have been influenced by listening to and speaking a Southeast Asian language (Moon).

Recently, Disney has been making advancements in including more modern-day feminist ideals in their princess films, specifically by removing the "male love interest who saves the heroine and otherwise drives the plot" aspect from its recent films (specifically in *Brave* [2012] and *Moana*). *Raya* also omitted this common

princess movie trope and instead focused on the relationships between the three female leads. The film also echoed the progress made in *Mulan* by depicting a badass female character with incredibly athletic and fighting abilities. However, *Raya* was especially significant as the film took the traditionally passive feminine qualities of cooperation and trust and made them essential to the resolution of the plot, positing these characteristics as powerful, useful, and necessary. Disney could even further this feminist messaging in future films by including and exploring more female identities and relationships.

While Disney is outperforming their competitors when it comes to general female representation in animated films (Schiele et al. 661), there is still a need for the Disney Princess franchise to include more diverse representations of their female characters, specifically in the areas of ability, sexuality, and ethnicity. While *Raya and the Last Dragon* serves to rectify many of the mistakes Disney made in *Mulan* and demonstrates the positive progression Disney has made in representation within the Disney Princess franchise, there is still room for the company and franchise to grow.

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Subversive Habits: The Study of Nuns from the Sixth Century to the Early Modern Era

Sarah E. Wolfe

ABSTRACT

Through examining Boniface's correspondence with female friends of his circle, a *vita* of Saint Radegund, an anonymous medieval story of a pregnant abbess, the tale of Chaucer's Prioress, and Marlowe's play *The Jew of Malta*, I seek to uncover nun's "real selves" in contrast to their often-uncomplimentary portrayals in medieval and early modern literature. The vivid and diverse literature nuns composed or the works that were written about them reveals how they saw themselves or were perceived by others. Because these women's creative and intellectual abilities add richness and multilayered perspectives to the realm of medieval literature, their importance and visibility are vital to study, reflect, and discuss to a comprehensive audience of both laypersons and specialists.

Introduction

What does a modern Western audience think of when there is a reference to “nuns?” Do people think of the salacious and cruel women in Matthew Lewis’s 1796 novel *The Monk*, or do they imagine most nuns to be like the figure of Mother Teresa? Typing “nun” in Google Image will get hundreds of returns ranging from Audrey Hepburn in her habit to inappropriate links about how nuns are secretly masochists and have everything but the Lord on their mind. For example, there were numerous medieval tales of nuns who had affairs with local men or gave birth to children. In the early modern era, sixteenth-century author Thomas Robinson accused the English Brigittine community of Lisbon as weak, depraved, and carnally inclined (6).

Perceptions of nuns as encapsulating an *either/or* binary causes individuals to believe that nuns are only one-dimensional and constrained by their life choices, which is a narrative that has been portrayed since the medieval era. This simplistic mindset does a great disservice to their rich and complex lives as religious women. I will focus on the themes of friendship, encouragement, obedience, and agency, as well as the bleaker aspects of corruption and irresponsible behavior which encapsulates the range of actions and attitudes that were demonstrated by the nuns discussed in this work.

This paper will explore a variety of religious women in literature from the historical Radegund, a sixth-century queen who became a saint, to Christopher Marlowe’s fictional Abigail, a Jewish woman who chose the life of a nun. Their lives were fruitful and multifaceted and further suggest they practiced self-agency and were not constrained by their roles as both women and nuns. Instead of identifying medieval nuns as one-dimensional, I argue that they are well-rounded and multi-dimensional individuals. I am applying the term “well-rounded” to mean that the nuns whom I discuss are well-learned, had a liberal arts education in the *trivium* and *quadrivium*, and used this education to either show off their accomplishments or to use their knowledge to argue their point in debates and arguments. Some talented nuns were also artists, authors, and translators, who used their skills for the glory of God and for their communities. For the term “multi-dimensional” I contend that beyond devoting their lives to religion, these nuns have their own personal flaws and positive attributes. They should not be viewed in black or white, but as possessing various “shades” of emotions and beliefs. Some nuns, such as Radegund, came from a royal background and used their power for their religious ideals while others, such as Christina of Markyate, had to combat both her parents and the local ecclesiastical authorities to follow her desire to dedicate her life to Christ. These different examples

show that both nuns and their lives were unique and did not follow one exact pattern of either how to be a nun or how to transition from one stage (secular) to the next (religious).

The sources used in this paper draw attention to the rich array of women's voices that can be heard across time, such as correspondence, saints' lives, and drama. Religious women's voices not only heard in these sources, but are also a valuable tool to demonstrate that religious women's lives were well-rounded and multidimensional. In her 1997 book *To The Glory of Her Sex: Women's Roles in the Composition of Medieval Texts*, Joan Ferrante focuses on the positive aspects of women's roles during the medieval era, such as what they could do, rather than what they could not. She peels away the narrative that all medieval women were weak, passive, or viewed with suspicion by their male associates. Ferrante argues that, "Despite the period's intense misogyny... women could be respected colleagues, friends, relatives, whose affection, support, even advice was sought and cherished" (4). Ferrante's optimistic and progressive outlook demonstrates that medieval women should not be viewed in wholly black or white perceptions, especially in regard to their relationships with men. Ferrante is a part of an ongoing and exciting discipline that continues today to discover and reveal new ways of looking at how medieval women, including nuns, lived, and what they accomplished in their lives.

Friendship

In order to explore how nuns were multidimensional, I begin with the concept of friendship. I contend that friendship between monks and nuns challenges the narrow belief that monastics only cultivated friendship with each other, or that their relationship concentrated only on spiritual or scandalous matters. The early medieval texts of Baudonivia's *vita* of Saint Radegund and Boniface's *Letters* to various religious women, reveals an abundance of references about these religious women cultivating friendships not just with each other, but with male figures also. Enduring and passionate remarks of care and devotion are especially noticeable in the correspondence between Boniface and such figures as Leoba, Eangyth, or Eadburga. These different correspondents do not just ask for the consolation of each other's prayers or for composing and illuminating books, but they earnestly desire their support, encouragement, and advice about life-changing experiences.

Eangyth, for example, writes to Boniface about her difficult life as an abbess for a double monastery, which is a monastic house comprised of men and women who were ruled by an abbess. The constant stress and strain of having to provide materially for her religious community combined with her frustration with the constant

outflowing of money of her community's: "obligations to the king and queen, to the bishop, the prefect, the barons and counts" which has caused her to be, "overworked and dejected" (6). Her overwhelming burdens and strife that comes with dealing with a monastery full of men and women has caused her to long to go on a pilgrimage with her daughter, as she tells Boniface that she has "long wished to go to Rome, once mistress of the world, as many of our friends, both relatives and strangers, have done" (7).¹ This is no pleasure jaunt, she insists because she wants to seek forgiveness of her sins, "I [am] more advanced in years and guilty of more offenses in my life" (7). However, even though she knows that Boniface and others of her acquaintance recognize her spiritual longing, Eangyth tells him that she is conscious that other individuals urge her to stay within the precincts of her own double house.

Even if Eangyth uses Scriptures to make her point about the righteousness of her aspirations, she still yearns for support and guidance from Boniface. She wants Boniface to be her intercessor, as she refers to him as "our Aaron," and asks his advice on what choice she should make: "whether to live on in our native land or go forth upon our pilgrimage" (7). Eangyth's writing to Boniface emphasizes that she trusts his judgement. She also believes that he will give an answer that will aid her in deciding what choice she should make. Her letter to Boniface calls attention to how he is her friend and how she relies not just on his prayers, but on his judgement and wisdom. Since Eangyth feels as if she has no one to turn to except for Boniface as she states in an earlier passage that she has "neither son nor brother father nor uncle," she then declares that Boniface is "the friend whom we have wished, prayed, and hoped for" (6-7). Eangyth's warm words highlights her happiness in finding a sympathetic friend, as she claims that Boniface is her "brother in the spirit, most loyal, beloved" (7). These warm and affectionate terms that describe Boniface show that they do not just have a caring and meaningful relationship, but that Boniface is Eangyth and her daughter's support system.

In a letter pleading for intercessory prayers on behalf of her family, Leoba reminds Boniface that he is "bound to [her] by ties of kinship" and hopes he does not forget his "ancient friendship for my father" (9). Leoba's request demonstrates that a strong connection to far-flung relatives is crucial for her emotional wellbeing.

Their correspondence not only shows Boniface and Leoba's burgeoning

1. Women who were abbesses during the early medieval era were often widows or divorced from their husbands. Many convents and monasteries were filled with noblewomen who chose to devote their lives to God, such as Eangyth and her daughter, Bugga. In this letter to Boniface, Eangyth and her daughter desire to go on a pilgrimage together.

relationship, but also Leoba's creative talents: "I have composed the following verses... to exercise my little talents" (9). Leoba's artistic abilities in her letter to Boniface points out that letters between monks and nuns also contained poetry or literary works that the recipients shared, critiqued, and praised. Leoba then hopes that their relationship will continue and transcend their earthly lives: "May the bond of our true affection be knit ever more closely for all time" (9). Boniface's and each of the nuns' that are in correspondence with him accentuate the pattern of mutual trust and concern for each other. Boniface's friendship with women, such as Leoba, brought comfort and respite to all, even if they were separated by geographical distances.

The Frankish Baudonivia's *vita* of Radegund discusses not just her wide-ranging miracles or how her motivations for her abbey were both politically and religiously inclined, but Baudonivia also demonstrates the intimate relationship between Radegund and the nuns in Poitiers. Baudonivia highlights the closely connected and affectionate relationship between Radegund and the community of nuns by relating how she performed the role of their loving but strict parent. This spiritual-parental bond causes Radegund to act as the leader of various religious practices, as Baudonivia relates: "She...at once first eagerly applied herself to and then afterwards showed the community how to do it, as much by her word as by her example" (5). While living, Radegund sets a precedent of exercising her religious faith so that her community can follow her good example. After her death, Baudonivia breaks out into lamentation about the loss of Radegund and how much her nuns miss her presence and the influence she had on all of their lives: "We, her humble sisters, miss the teaching, the appearance, the countenance, the personality, the knowledge, the holiness, the kindness and the sweetness of her whom God set specially apart from the rest of humankind" (12). Although these words to a modern audience may seem hyperbolic and the nuns' grief extreme, Radegund fulfilled her role as a religious leader so well that her nuns could hardly imagine life without her. They miss their spiritual mother so much that Baudonivia wishes Radegund had demanded of the Lord: "The right to send on ahead of you the sheep which you had collected together! You, following the Good Shepherd, would have handed your flock over to the Lord" (12). Because of the gaping hole that Radegund had left in her community in the wake of her death, Baudonivia and the rest of the nuns assert that they should have followed her in death so they would not be separated from Radegund's powerful and compassionate figure.

Baudonivia's *vita* of Saint Radegund reveals that nuns created networks of supportive and encouraging relationships. Boniface's letters to such varied figures as

Leoba, Eadburga, or Eangyth show that such close-knit relationships among women, were also made outside the convent as well. These two sources demonstrate that men and women viewed their interactions with each other as collaborative, warm, and mutually beneficial. The *Letters* of Boniface and the *vita* of Radegund point out the positive and comforting aspects of frequent advice-giving and encouragement in the lives of these nuns. Even though there were times of dissatisfaction and infighting in nuns' communities, these recollections by Baudonivia and the wide-ranging correspondence between Boniface and his female correspondents show that nuns did have positive interactions with each other; their advice, comfort, and gifts were highly valued by the recipients and made their lives even more enjoyable.

To Encourage and Support

Turning now to twelfth-century Italy and Prague, Italian Claire of Assisi wrote to the Bohemian Princess Agnes of Prague because she had received news that Agnes gave up her secular lifestyle as a royal woman to become a Franciscan nun. Even though Claire of Assisi and Bohemian Princess Agnes of Prague had never met each other, they sent letters to one another to support and uplift one another in their shared pursuit of living for Christ. Although Agnes's original letters do not survive, we can still surmise how much Claire's letters meant to her. Their friendship transcended geography and politics. Claire writes to her with admiration, "Spurning all these things with your whole heart and mind, you have chosen instead holiest poverty and physical want, accepting a nobler source, the Lord Jesus Christ" (3). Instead of Agnes becoming Empress of the Holy Roman Empire, she decides to give away her dowry and become a nun.

Claire's letters to Agnes were aimed at urging her to remain true to her vocation and to support Agnes as a new nun. Although Claire praised her decision, however, Agnes's plans to follow her Franciscan calling became threatened by the Pope's interest to absorb her monastery and hospital into a Benedictine order. Like Agnes, Claire had undergone the same issues with the Pope and offered her advice as she contends: "be mindful... of your founding purpose always seeing your beginning" (1.11), and she asserts, like a holy chant, "What you hold, may you continue to hold, what you do, may you keep doing and not stop" (l.11). If Claire could overcome the Pope's suggestions on how she should run her monastery, then so could Agnes. Agnes's agency demonstrates her evasion of Gregory IX's endowments, which were contrary to the Franciscan ideal of giving away personal wealth to emulate Christ's poverty. Agnes only accepted the bare minimum of what Gregory IX offered her. This tactic was shrewd since Agnes could not afford to outwardly thwart him both

politically and financially. If Agnes had visibly challenged Gregory IX's plans for her monastery/ hospital, he could have excommunicated her or withdrawn all support from her monastery/ hospital. In each of the four letters that Claire wrote to Agnes, each displays sympathy, cheerfulness, and support for Agnes and her community. Claire's letters to Agnes undoubtedly eased Agnes's concerns about her choice as a follower of St. Francis.

Claire helps Agnes balance her obligations to her foundation and papal intervention as she frequently exhorts Agnes to be serene in God's care, act in a shrewd manner, and have a positive outlook: "may you go forward tranquilly...trusting in no one and agreeing with no one because he might want to dissuade you from pursuing your founding purpose....and embrace the Poor Christ" (l. 13-14,18). Their epistolary friendship deepened because both were Franciscan religious women who had the same goals and dreams to grow in their faith and be more like the "Poor Christ" (l. 18). This is made apparent in Claire's third letter to Agnes: "I am filled with such great joy about your well-being...and your favorable successes" as well as adding that Agnes is, "embracing with humility, the virtue of faith, and the arms of poverty" (l.3-7). This praise of Agnes demonstrates that she is following the precepts that St. Francis and Claire, his co-associate, had created to fight back against the leniency and corruption of their contemporary church. Agnes's growth in the Franciscan faith, delights and awes Claire, who continues to both uplift and guide Agnes in their shared manner of spiritual living.

Lastly, the English Christina of Markyate cultivated a wide-spread and diverse network of religious figures. Instead of writing to others for support and encouragement, Christina's friendships were from her own community. Her network of religious individuals not only helped her escape from her family, but also protected her from their anger as well. Individuals such as Sueno the canon, Roger the hermit, and Ælfwynn, a female recluse, supported her choice to live her life for God. Several of these figures lied to Beorhtred, Christina's spurned husband, who went looking for her on behalf of Christina's family. As he tried to bribe a follower of Roger to find out where she was, the man answered indignantly, "It is with greatest difficulty that a woman is allowed here even in broad daylight," while the recluse Ælfwynn insisted, "Stop imagining that she is here with us" (35). These blatant lies were essential in protecting Christina from harm from her family's wrath since she earnestly longed to devote herself to God and not marry an earthly spouse. Even though Christina practiced agency in escaping her family, which I will discuss in a later section, these individuals proved valuable to her as they offered guidance in how to live her life as

well as kept her safe from her family. From a helpful member of Roger's community to the recluse Ælfwynn, each of these individuals extended support and encouragement in Christina's religious endeavors, and they demonstrated that religious friendship and networks were closely interwoven.

In these medieval texts, it is noticeable that every one of these individuals offered reassurance, guidance, and the joy of their mutual interaction to uplift each other in difficult or trying circumstances. From Baudonivia's memories of Rade Gund, who cared deeply about her community of nuns, to the wide-ranging correspondence of Boniface, these various texts highlight the lively and intertwined relationships of nuns with not just each other, but with men as well. Claire's letters to Agnes reveal that women's friendship can be supportive and create positive experiences with each other even if the correspondents had never met. In Christina of Markyate's *vita*, vital religious networks were viewed as crucial to give support and assistance to Christina as she escaped from her family. The wide-ranging network of local recluses that populate her *vita* also show that these relationships between Christina and individuals such as Roger the hermit or Ælfwynn highlight a common bond of shared devotion and similar cultural values. These various examples of historical nuns, such as Leoba or Saint Rade Gund, with their positive and rich relationships, reveal that their interactions with both men and women were not just essential in the spread of religious beliefs, but also for their emotional wellbeing. The intertwined bonds of kinship and friendship demonstrate that these relationships were cultivated to endure throughout both individuals' lifetimes. These tightknit and beneficial interactions demonstrate that medieval nuns could and did have a satisfying relationship with not just their own communities, but with male acquaintances as well. The cultivated friendships between both nuns and monks demonstrated that they cared deeply for each other through their advice, spiritual care, and exchanges of poetry and books.

Agency versus Obedience

Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe argues in her work *Stealing Obedience: Narratives of Agency and Identity in Later Anglo-Saxon England* that: "attention to narratives of monastic obedience in both the polish of their surfaces and the fractures those surfaces conceal shows us the intimate interconnections between monastic identity and a construction of agency markedly different from our own" (6-7). She puts forth the idea that the concept of obedience is a balancing act of free will and submission. She further argues that a conversion: "illustrates the contemporary understanding of the operation of individual will within an individual's orientation to the divine will" (80).

O'Brien O'Keeffe then asks what constitutes both obedience and agency

during the Anglo-Saxon time period, which connects to how the Christina of Markyate viewed her competing claims of her obedience to God and to her obedience as a daughter to her family. Since the act of obedience is one of the most important vows a nun takes, it is understandable that Christina views her will as being subject to God, yet her parents, Auti and Beatrix, believe that Christina should have been submissive to their wishes for her to marry. They argue that she should be married instead of living her life as a nun, because Christina's *vita* points out that: "She was so shrewd in understanding, so prudent in affairs. . . , For if she remained chaste for the love of Christ, they feared that they would lose her and all that they could hope to gain through her" (21). However, Christina yearned to be a nun and prayed: "O Lord God. . . . Deign to grant me, I beseech thee, purity and inviolable virginity" (6). Christina has made a private vow to God to dedicate her virginity to His service. Christina's commitment to God reveals that she wants to live her life devoted to God and not conform to her parent's wishes of secular marriage and influence. However, in the description that her anonymous hagiographer gives in her *vita*, Christina of Markyate had a painful and difficult journey in becoming a "bride of Christ."

Agency and obedience are connected to the idea that nuns are multifaceted individuals. The concepts of agency and obedience are complicated, and not mutually exclusive in Christina's *vita*. The text contains confrontations of many types of obedience: obedience to God, obedience to family, and obedience to religious leaders. Furthermore, the idea of agency is interwoven throughout this work as Christina uses persuasive speech to subvert her parent's will, hides to escape from the threat of rape and violence, and even uses a disguise to escape her home to live as a recluse.

As she plays out the *passio* of her namesake, a fourth-century martyr who was beaten by her father and imprisoned, Christina is also ill-treated, mocked, and psychologically terrorized by her parents who want her to give up her vow of chastity and marry their choice of a husband, Beorhtred. When they try to lock her in her room with Beorhtred, she reverses her parent's "script" of rape and confinement; she tells the story of Valerian and Cecilia, a married couple who practiced chastity, to influence her betrothed. She persuades him to think about a marriage that is not based on desire, but chastity: "So let us, insofar as we can follow their example so that we may become their companions in their eternal glory" (11-12). Christina uses her agency of reciting saints' lives to attempt to persuade Beorhtred to influence his viewpoint about marriage, and to dissuade him from rape by telling a story. Her tale had its effect as he "eventually left the maiden" (12). Her parent's household soon mocked him because they viewed her subversion of their work as, "deceitful tricks and naive

words" (12). Christina's "tricks" saves herself from a potentially frightening situation, and her quick-thinking helps her evade what her parents had envisioned for her. She used her agency to continue to keep herself pure for God. Throughout most of her *vita*, however, she would be criticized and ridiculed by her family and acquaintances for her choice in remaining chaste and pure.

Throughout Christina's conflict with ecclesiastics such as Ranulf Flambard, Fredebert, or Robert Bloet who attempted to force her to accept her marriage to Beorhtred as valid, their reluctance to believe her truthfulness highlights an issue of what I call the "pseudo-religious" woman. As Fredebert states to Christina: "Perhaps you are rejecting marriage with Beorhtred in order to enter into a more wealthy one" (18); this assertion demonstrates that some women claimed to want to be a nun to avoid marrying the man their family had chosen for them. I argue that these women who claimed to want to be nuns in order to circumvent their parent's wishes and marry someone else, caused a disturbance between the scorned betrothed, the ecclesiastical authorities, and the woman herself. Christina swears that she is sincere in her desire to live a holy and chaste life: "I must fulfill my vow, which through the inspiration of his grace I made to the only son of the eternal King, and with the same grace I mean to fulfill it" (19). This problem illustrates that some women could make their own decisions about love, political connections, and affluence. Even though Christina resolutely practiced agency to follow her dream of devoting her life to God, this "double-minded" choice on the part of "pseudo-religious" women, portrays them as multifaceted and fully capable of determining on how they wished to live their lives.

Unlike those women, who were, as Christina charged: "anxious about worldly things and how to please my husband" (33), she instead yearned to live for Christ no matter the cost. Her determination on fulfilling her religious desires is evident in a specific passage in her *vita* as she displays subterfuge toward her family. After making plans with a supporter's servant, she then deceived her sister Matilda by giving her the keys to the house and a garment to take back with her: "Christina set off as if she were going towards the monastery, but then turned her steps towards the meadow" (34). After she misled her sister and caused her to return toward their house, Christina continued in her plan to escape her family and accomplish her dream to live her life as a recluse. Throughout Christina's *vita*, it is clear that God's will was stronger and of more significance than any plans her family might have had for her. God's plan for her is made evident in a vision that Christina had, as Christ urges her to: "Fear not. For I have not come to increase your fears but to bring you reassurance" (42). This heartening statement demonstrates that she is following the "right path" of devoting

herself to God.

As Christina prepared to escape her home, she then urges herself to not be afraid: "Put on manly courage and mount the horse like a man" (34). Instead of embracing fear, Christina chooses to be daring in order to leave her family and fulfill her vow to God. By deceiving her family and utilizing various networks to fulfill her desire of being a female recluse, Christina both obeyed the higher authority of God and used her agency to escape the life that her family members wanted her to achieve. This highlights that even deceit and dishonest behavior can be used to further a nun's life toward God. Although the concepts of guile and deception are not viewed as acceptable behavior for a religiously inclined person to pursue, for Christina, these actions show that they can be used for a higher purpose. As O'Brien O'Keefe argues: "obedience is both the stuff of monastic identity" and "an identity in which self-will is left behind and...is conceived to lie in the cheerful, immediate, and complete accession to the will of another" (93).

For example, Boniface is a bishop and a dear friend to most of the women in his correspondence, thus it is important for them to abide by his advice. For Abbess Bugga, who wants to go on a pilgrimage to Rome, Boniface first begins with a non-committal statement: "I dare neither forbid your pilgrimage on my own responsibility nor rashly persuade you do it" (8). Boniface does not want to forbid her to go, but he also has no desire to persuade her to go on a dangerous journey to jeopardize her life and to potentially break her vows of chastity. He further adds if she cannot find rest and peace among her inmates at her monastery, then she: "should obtain freedom of contemplation by means of a pilgrimage," only on the conditions that she is strong enough to go and able to make the arduous journey (8). Even though we do not have Bugga's reply to Boniface's recommendation, it is certain that she probably took his words seriously. His sound advice in this double role of friend and bishop likely helped her make a prudent decision about the next step in her religious life.

The relationship of Bugga and Boniface rests in the concept that she, as an abbess, must allow her own will to bend to Boniface's because he is a bishop and has a higher ecclesiastical authority over her. If Boniface had answered Bugga with an immediate denial of her desire to go on a pilgrimage, she would have had to accede to his wishes. The concepts of obedience and agency frequently clashed in monastic institutions, but as O'Brien O'Keefe points out: "Obedience is never perfected, never finally achieved, for its end is only continued obedience" (93). This assertion highlights that the individuals living in monastic establishments constantly had to negotiate their own desires and wishes with those of a higher authority.

This conflict between an individual's will being subsumed into other authoritative ecclesiastical figures is continued in the *vita* of Queen Radegund. It is a reasonable assumption that she would have had difficulty in submitting her will to the abbess's authority since she had been a powerful female ruler. However, her biographer Baudonivia presents a different image. Baudonivia states that once Radegund entered the monastery at Poitiers, she: "handed over to [the abbess] herself and her possessions" (3). Although Baudonivia lauds Radegund for being so humble that she did not want to be abbess herself, this move may have been unusual, since many queens became heads of their monasteries in deference to their rank and power. Baudonivia further adds that Radegund, "kept none of her own rights to herself" (3). However, this obedience to the abbess further strengthened Radegund's decision of placing herself entirely in God's care: "She handed herself over to her Bridegroom with such complete devotion that she embraced God with a pure heart and felt that Christ was dwelling within her" (3). Baudonivia's declaration connects Radegund's humble acceptance of the abbess ruling over her whole self to Radegund's unconditional willingness of handing herself over to God's care and mercy. This type of obedience to a religious leader leads to a fuller and richer experience of trust and obedience with God. This conscious choice of setting aside an individual's own will in order to accept and follow a higher authority demonstrates that the concepts of obedience and agency were not just a major part of a nun's life— this could also lead toward an intimate relationship with God.

From Christina of Markyate, who used her agency to escape from her family's plans for her, to Queen Radegund's actions of power and agency, which were cast aside to embrace both her abbess's authority and God's, the struggle between an individual's free will and the concept of wholehearted obedience in a monastic setting is diverse and unique to each individual. The figures' stories who have been discussed in this section, namely Radegund and Christina of Markyate, show that even though there is a struggle between following an individualized concept of self-will and agency, being humble and deferring to a higher authority can be satisfying. Because acts of obedience and agency are conscious choices on the part of the individual nun, deciding to follow God has more significance and consequence than what a nun's family or friends desire. By examining these historical nuns, agency and obedience are layered and conflicting, but these concepts can also lead to having a deeper relationship with God.

Uncovering Corruption, Recognizing Humanity

Moving away from historical nuns and their diverse ways of devoting their

lives to God, the fictional religious women such as the abbess in a fifteenth-century miracle story, Geoffrey Chaucer's Prioress, and Abigail in Marlowe's drama *The Jew of Malta*, exhibit a form of cynicism in each of their respective works. Cynicism and lukewarm religious faith among monastics are a common stereotypical belief during the medieval to early modern period, which has influenced how individuals view nuns even today. These texts usually have a nuance of cynicism and a vocalization of the problems with the church and clergy that were rampant during the late fourteenth century throughout the early modern period in England. These deviations from the monastic norm reveal the issues and anxieties of audiences for each of these works.

In *The Alphabet of Tales* by Etienne Besançon, which was translated in the fifteenth century into English, the abbess is not portrayed in a wicked manner, nor does she behave in a stereotypical fashion. Nevertheless, she lapsed into sin as she: "let her carver, that was her own kinsman, have his way with her / so that she conceived and was with child" (1). When the abbess hears that the bishop is coming because of the suspicions that her nuns have told him that she is pregnant, she is filled with despair: "And this abbess was great with child, made great sorrow and was did not know what she might do." (1). She is undoubtedly distraught that the bishop will recognize that she is with child, while her melancholy and embarrassment cause her to go into her own "private chapel" that is situated in her own chamber (1). When the bishop comes to visit her community and the abbess goes to sit beside of him, he reproves her and commands that she "leaves the chapter (chapterhouse)" and further orders that two clerks "examine her, and to search whether she was with child or not (2). Even more humiliatingly, the bishop does not believe the clerks who have examined her, but he insists that he will "search her himself (2). Much to his embarrassment, he also does not find any sign that the abbess is with child.

However, the abbess explains to the ashamed bishop that she had a dream-vision of the Virgin Mary who rescued her from her plight. The Virgin Mary, who does not rebuke her for her lapse into sin, but instead reassures her: "I have heard thy prayer and I have gotten of my son forgiveness of thy sin and deliverance of thy confusion" (2). The Virgin's solution is to deliver the child: "to a hermit" and the Virgin Mary "charged him to bring it up until it was seven years old; and he did as she commanded him; and at once our lady vanished away" (2). The abbess awakens from her dream-vision, much lighter in both body and spirit, as she amazedly: "grasped herself and felt herself delivered of her child and whole and sound" (2). The abbess has been granted a new and chaste body through the grace and compassion of the Virgin Mary. To further underscore her humanity, the narrator of *The Alphabet of Tales* points out

that although the abbess became pregnant, she continued in her abbatial duties and responsibilities until it became obvious that she was pregnant as she: “waxed great and drew near her time.” (1). Her actions still indicate that she is a good person because she continues to be responsible toward the spiritual welfare of her nuns.

Overall, this story about the pregnant abbess demonstrates the reality of what occasionally occurred in monasteries such as sexual scandals or corruption. Although this unnamed abbess had a child, her portrayal is not stereotypical, as she is not like the immoral and disillusioned religious women of Giovanni Boccaccio’s *Decameron*. This is evident in Filostrato’s tale where one of the nun’s scorns the idea that they should keep their virginity for God’s sake: “We are constantly making Him promises that we never keep! He can always find other girls to preserve their virginity to Him” (196). The abbess of Besançon’s *The Alphabet of Tales* may have failed to be chaste, but her transgression points out her humanity. Even the most well-intentioned nuns may stray which shows their multifaceted behavior. In *Sisters in Arms: Catholic Nuns for Two Millennia*, Jo Ann McNamara asserts that: “Criticism often went hand in hand with correction” (358). The pregnant Abbess may have been created to point out the issues of laxness and permissible behavior that intermittently happened in various monasteries. Even though this translation could have been a reminder for nuns reading this story to change their behavior before they were corrected by a higher authority, there is always grace to be found.

On the other hand, Geoffrey Chaucer’s Prioress is urbane and portrayed ambiguously by him. Even though religious women were meant to stay cloistered, as Graciela Daichman states in her work *Wayward Nuns in Medieval Literature*, “in the year 791 a council had forbidden religious women to participate in pilgrimages” (137). However, the Prioress is on a pilgrimage to Canterbury with a train of nuns and priests.

Madame Eglentyne’s entourage she has with her also signifies her high status as she is the Prioress of her community. On her pilgrimage, she has her secretary, which is the “Second Nun,” and three priests. This train of people demonstrates her secular display and presentation. Religious women should not have a procession of people, especially on a pilgrimage, because it suggests too much importance on a secular lifestyle. Madame Eglentyne should be concentrating on living humbly, as Christ did, and scorning worldly pomp, instead of embracing opulence and magnificence. Daichman further adds Madame Eglentyne’s presence would: “cause a medieval audience to smile in tolerant amusement at a frequent real-life situation” (137-138). Although Madame Eglentyne is breaking her monastic vow by leaving her monastery to participate on a pilgrimage, her reasons for doing so may demonstrate

a concern for her spiritual wellbeing. Chaucer comments in his General Prologue: “The holy blessed martyr for to seek, / That they hoped he would help them for what they sought” (l. 17-18), which suggests that Madame Eglentyne wanted to go to Canterbury to supplicate Thomas à Becket for spiritual guidance or to give thanks for being healed from an illness. Chaucer leaves the reason for Madame Eglentyne’s pilgrimage up to his readers, thus further suggesting his ambiguity about her as a character.

On the other hand, Madame Eglentyne’s temperament is characterized as: “charitable and so piteous” (l. 143) and her figure is parallel to a romance heroine as her eyes are, “grey as glass” with a “mouth very small and therefore softe and reed” (l. 152-153). Her romantic ideals clash with her religious profession. Her beads: “gilded all with green” (l.159) and her golden brooch, “On which there was first written a capital A, / And after [that] *Amor vincit omnia*” (l. 161-162) show off what wealth she has, as well as point out that her motto can either be applied to secular or spiritual love, underscoring her ambiguity. Her motto could be about holy love which is connected to the Virgin Mary’s beauty and how it relates to the Prioress’s own loveliness and chastity. The opacity of her motto adds another layer of uncertainty about her religious values.

Even though Madame Eglentyne is meant to be inside her monastery and was not supposed to shower love and affection on her dogs: “that she fed / With roasted meat, or milk, and wastel-bread” (l. 146-147), her devotion to her dogs is understandable. Her absence from her monastery and her owning possessions and pets are a challenge to the monastic rules of having everything in common with the rest of the nuns and its erasure of individuality. While Mary Laven’s book *Virgins of Venice: Broken Vows and Cloistered Lives in the Renaissance Convent* concentrates on Venetian nuns, the focus on institutional issues was undoubtedly viewed similarly in England, as: “personal possession was an institutional reality and an accepted fact of convent life” (5). Instead of behaving as an unworldly nun, Chaucer portrays the Prioress acting in a secular manner. Not only is she outside of her religious house, but she is also devoted to her animals, which was viewed as standard behavior of nuns during this period.

Horacio Sierra, in his book *Sanctified Subversives*, contests the concept of nuns as stereotypical figures. He states in his first chapter: “By eschewing bawdy, lewd, and propagandistic literature about lusty nuns that serve as whores to priests who act as pimps, this book [*Sanctified Subversives*] employs mature works to tease out how canonical writers employed the role of the nun to showcase the powerful potential these women possessed in acting as sanctified subversives” (4). The figure

of Madame Eglentyne can balance Chaucer's ambiguity of her as well as point out her individualistic pursuit of living. While reading both "The General Prologue" and "The Prioress's Prologue," she is portrayed as a believable though flawed character. Her flaws show how human she is, instead of a caricature.

In the "Prologue" of her tale about a child martyred by Jews, she gives praise and attention to the Virgin Mary, who was widely venerated throughout Europe as an intercessor and the Queen of Heaven. The Prioress's focus on the Virgin in her prayer links her to Mary's incomparable femininity, goodness, and might. The intertwined notions of Mary's inviolable virginity with the Prioress's own chastity are encapsulated with the phrase: "white lily flower / [. . .] and is a maiden always" (l. 1651-1652). Since the Virgin Mary is regarded as a perpetual virgin, the Prioress can link Mary's chastity with her own, since she has been consecrated as a nun. Her concentration on the Virgin Mary in both her "Prologue" and "Tale" could signify devotion to her, such as the ardent phrases: "she herself is honor and the root / Of bounty (l.465-466), "O bush unburnt" (l.468), or "This well of mercy, Christ's mother sweet" (l. 656-657). These statements would be a positive attribute to a figure who is often viewed by critics with derision. I argue that her affection for her dogs, her love of fine clothing, and her determination to go on a pilgrimage demonstrate her humanity and her unwillingness to proscribe to the Church's mandates about giving up personal property for the common welfare of the religious community.

Turning from Chaucer's medieval Prioress to the early modern era, we find further instances of nuns in works of fiction that subvert traditional views of how nuns are perceived. *The Jew of Malta*, a revenge tragedy composed by the controversial Christopher Marlowe, focuses on the crafty and murderous Jewish merchant, Barabas, and his plans of revenge against the Governor of Malta. Since this play was written after the Reformation, Marlowe depicts in a stereotypical manner how monks and nuns' way of life is depicted. Barabas's daughter Abigail would do anything to help her father succeed in his plot, even pretending to convert to Christianity and become a nun.

Abigail's feigned conversion to the nunnery is part of a plot to reclaim Barabas's gold. Her decision to aid her father in his dishonest behavior, shows that she is not sincere, but only acting on her father's orders. In reply to Abigail's unease with pretending to be a Christian, he reassures her: "A counterfeit profession is better / Than unseen hypocrisy" (l. ii. 302-303). His statement depicts how Marlowe's audience viewed nuns and monks and their lifestyles as false and corrupt. Abigail performs the part of a devout and earnest convert so well, that the abbess permits her to go into

the nunnery: "Fearing the afflictions which my father feels / Proceed from sin or want of faith in us, / I'd pass away my life in penitence, / And be a novice in your nunnery" (I. ii. 333-336). The abbess's reply to Abigail's feigned religious conversation is depicted as one of simple acceptance: "Well, daughter, we admit you for a nun" (I. ii. 341). Even Don Mathias is deceived by her "conversion" to Christianity as he remarks in wonder that is Abigail is now a "strangely metamorphos'd nun." (I. ii. 394). Nevertheless, Abigail is easily allowed entrance into the nunnery that was formerly her home, which shows that Marlowe viewed the admittance into a religious house as permissible and lax. Although Abigail is claiming to be a nun because she wants to assist her father in his pursuit of revenge, her words are believable enough, as she states in one passage: "First let me as a novice learn to frame / My solitary life to your strait laws" (I. ii. 342-343). Her contradictory and misleading stance demonstrates that some women who entered a monastery viewed this lifestyle with less enthusiasm than their sisters who were genuine about their choice.

Later on in the play, Abigail undergoes a radical transformation from a woman who pretends to be a nun to one that has lived: "Chaste, and devout, much sorrowing for my sins" (III. vi. 14-15). Marlowe gives several references that, on the other hand, the Friars Jacomo and Barnardine are not as holy and chaste as they appear. In retaliation of Abigail's sincere choice to become a nun, Barabas poisons the whole nunnery, including Abigail, who dies "a Christian" (III. vi. 40). However, Friar Barnardine adds on to her statement with the remark: "Ay, and a virgin too; that grieves me most" (III. vi. 41-42). Barnardine's remark reveals that he and Friar Jacomo view the nuns as potential partners of promiscuity. There are also a few phrases throughout this scene which relates that the abbess must also confess her sins and Friar Barnardine quips that it will be a "sad confession" (III. vi. 4-5), while Friar Jacomo adds that he must hear "fair Maria" confess her sins as well (III. vi. 6-7). Does this exchange imply that these women had or were going to have relationships with the two friars? Marlowe's suggestive language highlights the frequent observations about licentious behaviors in which both monks and nuns participated. Comments made by Barabas who claims that the nuns and monks are: "not idle, but still doing, / 'Tis likely they in time may reap some fruit" (II. iii. 87-88) or Ithamore who asks Abigail: "have not the nuns fine sport with the friars now and then?" (III. iii. 36-37) focus on sexual immorality between religious men and women. The remarks made by the friars are especially relevant since Marlowe wrote his play after the decades of the Dissolution of the Monasteries, when the monastic way of life was viewed with suspicion and hostility.

Abigail's untrustworthy performance about converting to Christianity

and becoming a nun soon changes after her lover Don Matthias is killed in a duel. Distraught by his death, she becomes sincere in her desire to dedicate her life to God. Thus, she transforms not only herself, but the trajectory of her life within the play. Abigail concludes that her father's act of revenge and Jewish faith no longer have any meaning for her, and she decides to commit herself fully to the life of a nun: "But I perceive there is no love on earth, / Pity in Jews, nor piety in Turks" (III. iii.33-34). This realization causes her to implore friar Jacomo to: "get me admitted for a nun" (III. iii. 61). Yet, Friar Jacomo reminds her: "it is not yet long since / That I did labour thy admission, / And then thou didst not like that holy life" (III. iii. 62-63). Her reply is authentic as she explains: "I was chain'd to follies of the world; / But now experience, purchased with grief, / Has made me see the difference of things" (III. iii. 66-68). Abigail believes that the nunnery will ease her heartache and provide her comfort as she pleads with Friar Jacomo: "let me be one, / Although unworthy, / of that sisterhood!" (III. iii. 75-76). Abigail undergoes a major shift in behavior from her duplicitous attitude to her earnest appeal to become a genuine nun.

Abigail's trajectory from a "pseudo religious" woman, only intent on abetting her father in his plans for revenge, to a nun who is concerned for the salvation of her soul, reveals that even though a nun may not be an enthusiastic member of the collective religious community at first, a significant situation may change her mind. A shifting of priorities or tumultuous events may cause a nun to change from cynicism to devout behavior. Although some readers may view the figure of Abigail entering a nunnery for the second time as counterfeit, since her lover was killed in a duel, this more genuine choice reflects her altered viewpoint of the religious life as a place of safety and healing from life's harsh vicissitudes. Marlowe's Abigail balances the contradictory conceptions of a nun as either discontented about religious life or content in following monastic rules. Abigail's shifting attitude about religious life and being a nun is a vivid example of being human with its countless attitudes and emotions. Thus, the examples given of the anonymous abbess, Chaucer's Prioress, and Christopher Marlowe's Abigail in *The Jew of Malta*, all show that the breaking of their monastic vows reveals their multidimensionality and their humanity as fallible human beings— not caricatures of frivolity, licentiousness, and greed.

Conclusion

The examination of wide-ranging and unique figures such as the historical Queen Rade Gund to the fictional character of Christopher Marlowe's Abigail argues against the belief that nuns are constrained by the binaries of extreme or stereotypical behavior. As shown in this paper, medieval nuns demonstrated a wide and varied

range of behaviors and viewpoints while they lived their lives in the pursuit of their religious ideals. The religious life was, for many nuns, not just a genuine vocation, but a place of joy, and a space to pursue their creative and intellectual interests. However, other depictions of nuns demonstrate that the religious life was not always consistent with the ideal monastic image of the monastery being an enclosed paradise. I conclude that medieval and early modern nuns were not as stereotypical or caricatures of sensuality and greed as writers have sometimes portrayed them. They were not passive or one-dimensional, but independent, creative, and resolute in living their life for God.

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Integration and Education: The Search for Identity Post-Civil War

Lis Sodl

ABSTRACT

Prior to the Civil War, American identity was grounded in community, hard work, and a connection to the land. One woke up, did what one had to do, and kissed one's family before bed. Within literature, life was simple and idealistic—full of romanticization of the land and of its people. Following the Civil War, everything began to change. Between mass industrialization and urbanization, to an increase in immigration and the assimilation of former slaves into society, the world was different, and the definition of what it meant to be an American had to adjust. Through an examination of the literature of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, such as Constance Fenimore Woolson's "Rodman the Keeper" and W.E.B. DuBois's rhetorical *The Souls of Black Folk*, the definition of American identity shifted to represent New England perspectives on traumatized Southern lands as well as proposed solutions to post-emancipation integration. Writers of fiction and non-fiction alike examined the ways in which the trauma of the Civil War and slavery impacted national identity, often in problematic ways that erased disadvantaged or traumatized perspectives in favor of elitist, privileged views.

NORTH VERSUS SOUTH

The Civil War prompted massive industrial shifts within the United States that led to urbanization, evolving labor laws and unions, and railway monopolies; furthermore, the trauma from such a bloody event also led to shifts in perspectives. What is often referred to as the Lost Cause principle reflects growing romanticization of the trauma of the South and its lands, particularly focused on salvation through Northern involvement, and has appeared in literature across the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. Within this principle lies the following tropic elements: the glorification of the white New England man (likely through his own perspective) and education as salvation for the South.

A NEW ENGLAND EDUCATION

Constance Fenimore Woolson's "Rodman the Keeper"¹ will serve as the first example. This text focuses on a Union Army veteran who is the caretaker of a Confederate cemetery, and the struggle of existing in a liminal space neither romanticized nor remembered. Woolson writes, "This was not patriotism so-called, or rather miscalled, it was not sentimental fancy, it was not zeal or triumph; it was simply a sense of the fitness of things, a conscientiousness which had in it nothing of religion, unless indeed a man's endeavor to live up to his own ideal of his duty be a religion."² John Rodman not only acts as caretaker for the cemetery, but he acts also as a reminder to the world around him that war has consequences. He himself remains in charge of the legacy of the war, which reflects the concept of the New England man—wherein the correct version of Southern history lies within the perspective of a Northerner with little regard for the trauma the land and its people experienced. Rodman quite literally takes care of the history of his conquered Southern home and how it is remembered.

In his time down South, he becomes caretaker to a Confederate veteran just off the property, left impoverished and wounded by the war. They bicker and fight until they come to understand one another as the same: discarded from an event they had both believed in, left to survive in a world that no longer has color. When the Confederate veteran, De Rosset, passes away, Rodman finds himself in a conversation with Miss Ward, De Rosset's relative. They discuss contrasting views on grief and transition, but inevitably come to agreement about the only hope of the South—

1. Constance Fenimore Woolson, "Rodman the Keeper," in *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, ed. Nina Baym, Wayne Franklin, and Robert Levin (New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company, 2017), 374-393.

2. Woolson, "Rodman the Keeper," 376.

education.³ Rodman's belief mirrors Union sympathies at the time in that only through education can the South truly recover from the trauma caused by the Civil War; despite coming from a rather affluent Southern background, Miss Ward agrees with Rodman's sympathies. At this point, it is unclear whether Miss Ward is so much a character as she is the embodiment of the land itself, breezing in and out of the consciousness of a New England man, a character who romanticizes the ideal of a war-torn South and uses its vulnerability to push his own agenda. She in turn represents the Lost Cause principle. She herself is romanticized by Rodman (and Woolson) as a symbol of Southern lands. However, Rodman and Miss Ward exemplify sentiments of not just the South at the time, but also of life in general. With the close of the war, the South was left with questions of rebuilding and whether education could adequately fix what Northern perspectives thought to be unacceptable. Through Rodman, Woolson argues for remembrance of history and heritage of the South, particularly through Northern perspectives, as an integral part of American identity. What is lacking, as we will continue to see through authors throughout this review, is a consideration of Southern perspectives, particularly through the lens of former slaves.

Henry Adams published *Democracy* in 1880 as a critique of the American political system and its relation to corruption and morality. Education and the concept of knowing are integral to the text. It is the main motivation behind Madeleine Lee (Adams's protagonist) and her travels from New York City to Washington D.C. However, Adams places higher educational value on Carrington, a Confederate veteran turned Virginian lawyer who plays the role of tutor to Lee. Adams, a Bostonian, allows himself to glance through the point of view of a Southerner in a section directly referencing his role in the Civil War:

"The Lees were old family friends of mine," said he. "I used to stay here when I was a boy, even as late as the spring of 1861. The last time I sat here, it was with them. We were wild about disunion and talked of nothing else. I have been trying to recall what was said then. We never thought there would be war, and as for coercion, it was nonsense. Coercion, indeed! The idea was ridiculous. I thought so, too, though I was a Union man and did not want the State to go out. But though I felt sure that Virginia must suffer, I never thought we could be beaten. Yet now I am sitting here a pardoned rebel, and the poor Lees are driven away and their place is a grave-yard."⁴

3. *Ibid.*, 393.

4. Henry Adams, "Democracy," in *Democracy, Esther, Mont Saint Michel and Chartres, The Education of Henry Adams* (2020), 54.

How interesting it is that we have a Confederate veteran who would have been a Union man in any other universe, seated on reclaimed Southern land, talking to a daughter of Union loyalists. His only certainty is that the land itself would be more a victim than the actual fatalities, whilst still maintaining sympathy for the Lees (distinct from the New York Lees of Adams's fiction; referencing the immediate families of General Robert E. Lee). This sympathy, however, comes off in an elitist tone. Through Carrington, Adams simplifies Southern land into that of a graveyard, a place wherein only Northern industry can rebuild. Only through his own education to become a lawyer does Carrington make it out of post-Civil War poverty and support his family.⁵ The Southerner with Northern sympathies (a pseudo-New England man) finds his salvation through Northern knowledge and business, but even that cannot repair the damage done to the land itself. He has used his education to pull himself out of his previous standing and become a coveted companion in D.C. politics, thus reflecting the ascent of Northern carpetbaggers in their dominance of Southern industry post-Civil War.

In the latter portion of his life, Adams penned his autobiography in the third person as an analysis of the importance (and unattainability) of education in one's life. Here, he reveals that, during his time at Harvard, he befriended Rooney Lee, a Virginian relative of the Confederate Lees and describes his character:

The habit of command was not enough, and the Virginian had little else. He was simple beyond analysis; so simple that even the simple New England student could not realize him. No one knew enough to know how ignorant he was; how childlike; how helpless before the relative complexity of a school. As an animal, the Southerner seemed to have every advantage, but even as an animal he steadily lost ground. [...] Strictly, the Southerner had no mind; he had temperament. He was not a scholar; he had no intellectual training; he could not analyze an idea, and he could not even conceive of admitting two; but in life one could get along very well without ideas, if one had only the social instinct.⁶

Here, Adams places himself among the educated elite, a class within which Southerners like Lee have little chance of ever being accepted. He debases Southerners to animals and, though Woolson does so with a tad more grace, begins to claim that, though Southerners can live without education, they would be the

5. Adams, "Democracy," 11.

6. Henry Adams, "The Education of Henry Adams," in *Democracy, Esther, Mont Saint Michel and Chartres, The Education of Henry Adams* (2020), 381.

better for having attained it. This directly reflects Carrington's educational evolution in *Democracy*; respect for the character grows through this confession on Confederate soil just as respect for Rooney Lee grows through his (failed) attempts at gaining an education.

These elitist attitudes of the New England Man regarding education in the South became a thoroughly explored trope in literature following the 1860s. In a satirical allegory to the post-Civil War South, Mark Twain sends his Hartford-born main character to the Middle Ages to patronizingly suggest education as salvation in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. When faced with the people of King Arthur's court, he resorts to an elitist point of view: "There were people, too; brawny men, with long, coarse, uncombed hair that hung down over their faces and made them look like animals."⁷ The commoners of the fictional sixth century are less than human to the narrator, who continues to describe naked children oblivious to being exposed and the crippling need for all of these creatures to be educated.⁸ Though the message boils down to the a similar view on education as Woolson, Twain's language borders on pseudo-racist. This elitist language reflects perceived Northern sympathies of the time, focused on how to take advantage of the trauma of a Civil War scorched South to their own benefit. In his observations of the new world he finds himself in, he searches for what will benefit him and lead to not just his survival, but also a life of affluence. He suggests that equality can be gained only through education, but only the education that he deems useful, which gets in the way of any genuine attempt to educate the people. Twain's narrator, an educated New England man, suggests the belief of inferiority of the Southern class through his characterization, much like Adams in his autobiography. He even goes so far as to refer to the commoners as "white Indians," which is to say, "their philosophical bearing is not an outcome of mental training, intellectual fortitude, reasoning."⁹ Twain's character has little respect for these people by whom he finds himself surrounded. They are small, uneducated, and valued only for the ways in which they can be useful to his pursuit of power and control over his situation.

Through an examination of the literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, elitist New England sympathies (fictionalized for your viewing) triumph over Southern survivors unless, in Carrington's case, they are willing to assimilate. This concept of assimilation continues throughout the early twentieth

7. Mark Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (New York, NY: Signet Classics of the New American Library, 2004), 14.

8. Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, 21, 29.

9. *Ibid.*, 20.

century, especially among prominent black philosophers and activists of the time. As we continue into the discussion of authors of color, keep in mind the ideals of the New England man and education as salvation, as they oftentimes have racial connotations reflective of contemporary struggles of integration post-Civil War.

CARPET-BAGGERS AND THE FREEDMEN

Up until this point, we have explored primarily white authors and their perspectives on a post-Civil War American identity. As we consider emancipation and the perspectives of people of color, it would be inappropriate not to explore pieces written by prominent black authors of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In this section, I aim to explore the ways in which these writers have analyzed the integration of the black population into larger society following emancipation, particularly within the South. Whilst contrasting, Chesnut, DuBois, and Washington provide an in-depth glance at the troubles faced by African Americans of the time as well as solutions proposed to create a more integrated multi-racial society.

In his compilation of social critique, *The Souls of Black Folk*, written for white audiences, DuBois illustrates post-war society for African Americans. He references the Freedman's Bureau through its rise and fall, as well as explains the socio-economic assistance in place for former slaves; his main argument in this first chapter is the achievement of equality and success through education. This is a cornerstone that he comes back to later in his essay "The Talented Tenth," where he argues that the top ten percent of educated, successful black society should aim to continue to "guide the Mass away from the contamination and death of the [w]orst, in their own and other races."¹⁰ Despite making a direct call to action among black society, the audience of "The Talented Tenth," akin to *The Souls of Black Folk*, is still white society. Across his texts, DuBois holds true to the argument that equality can only be achieved through education and employment thereafter.¹¹ However, the language in this text comes off as elitist, suggesting that DuBois does not acknowledge his own identity as a Northeastern African American. He has seen the benefit of education firsthand, sure, but this does not fully erase the privilege of being a New England Man himself nor his intended white audiences of both texts. This comes off as rather patronizing, making claims to white society that the elite top ten percent of black society—a demographic he considers himself to be a part of—is responsible for pulling the rest of the

10. Dan S. Green. "W.E.B. Du Bois' Talented Tenth: A Strategy for Racial Advancement," *The Journal of Negro Education* 46, no. 3 (1977): 359. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2966779>.

11. Green, "W.E.B. DuBois' Talented Tenth: A Strategy for Racial Advancement," 360.

community up by their bootstraps. To posit these solutions to integration to largely white audiences suggests a distance to the community he both identifies with and wishes to serve.

As DuBois continues in *The Souls of Black Folk*, he walks audiences through the history of the Freedman's Bureau. Through the explanation of the Bureau's attempts at setting black society up for success, he presents the arguments against free public education for his people:

The opposition to Negro education in the South was at first bitter, and showed itself in ashes, insult, and blood; for the South believed an educated Negro to be a dangerous Negro. And the South was not wholly wrong; for education among all kinds of men always has had, and always will have, an element of danger and revolution, of dissatisfaction and discontent. Nevertheless, men strive to know.¹²

He empathizes with Southern whites on the account of education being a danger (though a necessary danger indeed), but he continues to argue for its implementation. Through the achievement of education, black society stands to finally reclaim the equality extended to them in emancipation. Without it, how could America ever hope to fulfil its promise of equality for all?

To DuBois, the efforts of the Freedman's Bureau, which arose from Puritan and Christian desires of helping others, meant nothing because efforts toward education were not prioritized. The money given to freed slaves was lost when the banks went under,¹³ the land parceled out was retaken by white businesses (as deeds were not recognized in the South),¹⁴ and suffrage was discriminatory; with all these losses, DuBois argues for an increase in education so that his people could claim the basic rights promised to them at the close of the war. Without it, there can be no advancement. Education thus remains integral in his solution to what he terms the Negro Problem: the question of what to do with the black population (especially in the South) post-emancipation.

In the second essay compiled in *The Souls of Black Folk*, DuBois outlines and critiques Booker T. Washington's views on the path to success for black society. In his discussion of the "Atlanta Compromise," DuBois claims that Washington aimed for "ultimate assimilation through self-assertion, and on no other terms."¹⁵ Washington felt as though black salvation lay in the hands of economics and monetary gain, forfeiting

12. W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (2020), 15.

13. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 17.

14. Ibid., 11-12, 17.

15. Ibid., 21.

(to DuBois's chagrin) basic suffrage, civil rights, and higher education.¹⁶ Washington thus argues, in his proposition for economic success, black society ought to strive toward learning or continuing in an already known trade such as farming or culinary arts. He preferred these trades over more academic pursuits such as economics or academia. Whereas DuBois posits that, without a basic education, former slaves who have known nothing else but lives of manual labor and grief will not be able to integrate fully into a predominantly white society, especially as it continues to industrialize.¹⁷ The surrender of basic education, political power, and civil rights would be detrimental and continue to box black society into an otherness similar to which they had just been freed.

Similarly, we have the question of how to "Americanize" former slaves, portrayed in Charles W. Chesnutt's "The Wife of His Youth."¹⁸ The main character of this story is a black man who embodies traits largely associated with elite white culture. Mr. Ryder is a member of an exclusive society called the Blue Veins, has a passion for poetry, and large romantic notions about how to propose to a girl much younger (and lighter) than himself. Though the Blue Veins was a "little society of colored persons organized in a certain Northern city shortly after the war,"¹⁹ its exclusivity and gatherings represent idealized upper class white society gatherings, a direct implementation by Chesnutt no doubt. Mr. Ryder is a black man in a white man's world, emulating elite white culture and thus internalizing racism through the promotion of colorism. Now, this brings up debate on the definition of black culture much too large for this space—but Chesnutt's characterization portrays the proposed assimilation of his piece "The Future American," in which he argues the only true integration of black people into society post-Civil War is through desegregation and intermarriage.²⁰ To be American is to confine to American standards, set not by the indigenous or former slaves, but by white society. This is exemplified by Mr. Ryder, who has tried his whole life to erase his own past as a black man and assimilate into white society.

While it is largely problematic to assert that black society cannot achieve

16. *Ibid.*, 22.

17. *Ibid.*, 15.

18. Charles W. Chesnutt, "The Wife of His Youth," in *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, ed. Nina Baym, Wayne Franklin, and Robert S. Lavine (New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company, 2017), 740-8.

19. Chesnutt, "The Wife of His Youth," 740.

20. Charles W. Chesnutt, "The Future American," in *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, ed. Nina Baym, Wayne Franklin, and Robert S. Lavine (New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company, 2017), 1176.

its promised equality without fully assimilating into predominantly white society and embodying its traits, throwing away all references to their own cultural identity, Chesnutt argues for full assimilation by any means. In a thorough analysis of Chesnutt's "The Future American," Elder writes:

Chesnutt's vision of a time when, through intermarriage, racial differences will fade and ultimately disappear, creating his 'new American,' strikes at much more than the commonly accepted segregationist policies of his day. Of profounder significance, he is heralding the erasure of the marker of color, the semiotic of skin, historically distinguishing between the civilized and uncivilized, the godly and unregenerate.²¹

Chesnutt's solution to the problem of post-Civil War integration is to remove boundaries society has placed around race. He illustrates this blending with his introduction of Mr. Ryder's wife from his years as a slave, who he claims as his own at the end of the piece.²² To be American is to forfeit individual racial and cultural identity for the sake of equality.

In his short story "The Goophered Grapevine," Chesnutt explores not only Northern and Southern interactions, but he also introduces race relations both during and post-slavery. Through the storytelling of Uncle Julius, a former slave in South Carolina, to the narrator John and his wife, a Northern white couple, Chesnutt introduces audiences to the realities of a life after slavery. Uncle Julius resides on the property of his former plantation owner, reaping the benefits of a neglected vineyard, when John arrives with the cash and determination to turn Southern soil into Northern industry.²³ Julius proceeds to tell John and his wife of a curse he believes was placed on the vineyard to keep slaves from stealing grapes from Mr. McAdoo,²⁴ which he frames as a warning to John to not purchase the land. John, of course, does not heed the former slave's warning, nor does he believe in his story. He states, "I bought the vineyard, nevertheless, and it has been for a long time in a thriving condition, and is often referred to by the local press as a striking illustration of the opportunities open to Northern capital in the development of Southern industries."²⁵ Readers learn within

21. Arlene A. Elder, "'The Future American Race': Charles W. Chesnutt Utopian Illusion," *MELUS* 15, no. 3 (1988): 121-29, <https://doi.org/10.2307/467507>.

22. Chesnutt, "The Wife of His Youth," 748.

23. Charles Waddel Chesnutt and University of Virginia, *The Goophered Grapevine*, (Charlottesville, VA: Generic NL Freebook Publisher, 1996), 254, <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.mtsu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=2010588&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

24. Chesnutt and University of Virginia, *The Goophered Grapevine*, 255.

25. *Ibid.*, 260.

the last few lines that, through John's point of view, Uncle Julius's story had served no purpose other than potentially to allow Julius to keep the land and the grapes for himself.²⁶

John represents the carpet-baggers, or Northern pioneers who saw conquered Southern land as their own piece of Manifest Destiny. He purposely moves his life to South Carolina to take up a formerly Southern industry, which happens to displace Uncle Julius as the land's caretaker (though he assures readers he kept Uncle Julius employed after the land purchase). Not only does this reinforce the ideas presented in DuBois's analysis of the successes and failures of the Freedman's Bureau, but "The Goophered Grapevine" also places John as a New England man, discussed earlier in this study. Julius does not receive profit from the sale, nor does he seem to be considered as the former owner—which happened more often than not to former slaves who were given parceled land by the government, inevitably forcing them into sharecropping or other means of indentured servitude. The assurance of keeping Uncle Julius employed falls short when readers are informed that he has become John's driver, a position wherein he lacks the autonomy he once had while caretaker of the neglected vineyards. While not in a clearly defined position of servitude, he lives at the beck and call of John and his wife rather than his own ambitions, unfortunately throwing him back into a subservient position rather than a land-owning citizen in control of his own destiny.

Through the struggle of reconstructing American identity in the South after the Civil War, prominent black philosophers and activists of the time proposed contrasting solutions to integration. While each proposal had its pros, they were not without cons. DuBois's insistence on education mirrored the New England man sympathies, wherein Northerners were to provide the pathway to successful integration. Even with the best of intentions, he refuses to acknowledge his own privileges as a successful, Northern black American and reiterates elitist language. Washington boxes in black Americans, insisting that they rise to success through economic means within their control (and skillset), without consideration of the impact of Jim Crow and the failures of the Freedman's Bureau. Though compensation was now provided for the services of black Americans, in it there was little to no profit, thus trapping them in an endless cycle of debt through sharecropping. Finally, Chesnutt suggests for assimilation at all costs and inevitably lends voice to the concept of colorism, wherein the lighter your skin, the more valued you are. His successful characters are those who either are white or embody the traits of white society, whilst

26. Ibid.

boxing black characters into roles of tricksters (Uncle Julius) or representations of the past ("The Wife of His Youth").

SYNTHESIS

Reconstruction brought about the question of how to redefine American identity post-Civil War, especially in the South where former slaves adjusted to emancipation. In an examination of literature of the time, three overlapping tropes develop: the New England Man, education as salvation, and integration through assimilation. In "Rodman the Keeper," Constance Fenimore Woolson paints a portrait of the post-Civil War South, wherein a Union veteran is left in charge of a Confederate cemetery. Rodman, a New England Man, reflects contemporary sympathies of Northerners maintaining agency and control over the legacy of Southern land and history. This concept returns in Henry Adams's *Democracy*. Carrington's identity as an educated Southern-born Union man mirrors carpetbaggers, who arrived on traumatized Southern lands with the inception of northern industry.

Adams himself represents a New England Man, as evidenced by the characterization of Southern Harvard classmates in his autobiography, as does Twain's narrator in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. Unlike Adams, however, Twain's narrator does not acknowledge his privilege or elitism. Both texts utilize elitist language, but Twain's narrator takes this to another level by employing racist tactics such as reducing the people of Camelot (symbols for Southerners post-Civil War as well as freed slaves) to animals and valuing only their utility to his own needs. What is interesting with Twain, however, is the appearance of education as salvation within this text. While this concept is seen through Woolson and others, Twain satirizes the notion; the narrator claims this need but has no intention to help educate nor provide any suggestions regarding how to do it. Instead, he leverages his own education in order to dominate the society.

Domination of Southern territory by northern industry also appears in Chesnut's "The Goophered Grapevine." Uncle Julius cares for the neglected vineyard before John purchases the land and usurps his responsibilities. Side-by-side with Woolson and Adams, however, Chesnut's exemplification goes a step further by illustrating Southern racial relations post-emancipation. Uncle Julius's demotion to chauffeur for John and his wife exemplify the general loss of autonomy and indentured servitude for African Americans during Reconstruction. This is a concept that DuBois also acknowledges in *The Souls of Black Folk*, written for white audiences about the struggle of post-emancipation integration. He highlights the failures of the Freedman's Bureau to help former slaves integrate into American society through the

history of northern dominance of Southern capital—to the eventual detriment of both regions.

However, DuBois posits that the failure of the Freedman's Bureau and carpetbaggers' attempts at providing salvation and support for the black community can be tied back to the failure to provide accessible education. He argues against Booker T. Washington's belief in the superiority of trade school education, claiming that more academic pursuits have higher likelihoods of benefiting the entire black community. Though both arguments have merits of their own, DuBois takes this a step further by proposing that the top ten percent of successful black men should give back to their community both financially and through education. This presents a hierarchy within his own idea, suggesting the emergence of an elite class but doing so to white audiences.

Oddly enough, a similar structure appears through the Blue Veins in Chesnutt's fiction of "The Wife of His Youth." This text reflects Chesnutt's own belief in full assimilation, which brings with it the idea of colorism. Though DuBois does not overtly support assimilation in his texts, the suggestion of an elite class of educated, successful black society mirrors the Blue Veins, led by Mr. Ryder who embodies traits the text connotes with white society instead. Chesnutt and DuBois side-by-side create an interesting juxtaposition wherein concepts of classism solve the question of integration with little regard for the hierarchical society it will create.

American identity is concerned with newfound realizations of classism and the recreation of hierarchies as seen through the New England Man, tense race relations within post-emancipation integration, and the importance of education in the reconstruction of war-scorched Southern lands. As we continue toward the present, these three themes evolve alongside literary movements and historical contexts. New wars bring about new definitions, going so far as to further emphasize the division of developing American ideals, the emergence of women's suffrage, and civil rights. Following these traumatic events, literature continues to assert definitions of identity to reconcile opposing forces—whether they be physical nations as with both World Wars or socioeconomic factors as with post-emancipation integration. Only a thorough examination of the Modern, Post-modern, and beyond can fully recognize the impact these battles and desires for identity and reconciliation have on society itself.

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Closures, Masks, and Quarantines: Historiography of Social Distancing and Preventative Measures During the 1918 Influenza Pandemic in the U.S.

Carol A. Stuart

ABSTRACT

An oft-forgotten footnote to World War I, the novel and virulent strain of influenza that swept through the U.S. and around the globe swiftly in fall 1918 has received more recent attention due to late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century emerging diseases and the centennial anniversary. While the COVID-19 pandemic just over one hundred years later will likely now spark even more historical interest, this historiographical paper addresses how recent scholars treated what social measures U.S. cities and communities took to help slow the spread of the Great Influenza and how historians interpreted acceptance and effectiveness of public health mandates. Scholars have shown how officials missed warning signs or failed to act with enough urgency to stop or even to slow the virus early, yet still probably saved lives by taking eventual precautions. Some newer studies also have started to fill the gap in how marginalized communities like African Americans and Indigenous peoples were affected, as well as spotlighted smaller towns and various regions. With parallels to COVID-19, historians will have plenty of opportunity to compare contemporary actions (and inactions) to the 1918 public health responses, along with acceptance, resistance, and effectiveness.

Introduction

A novel and virulent strain of influenza swept through the U.S. and around the globe swiftly in fall 1918 amidst a world war, killing what is now estimated to be at least fifty million worldwide and over a half-million Americans during a pandemic that ranked as the United States' worst medical disaster until COVID-19 over a century later.¹ This was apparently a second wave of a milder epidemic that spring that mostly hit Europe, and two lesser waves followed. This historiographical paper addresses how recent scholars have treated the social measures U.S. cities and communities took to help slow the spread of the Great Influenza, such as closings of schools, businesses, entertainment, and other large gatherings including sports and faith meetings, as well as mask-wearing, any other social distancing, and to some degree isolation and quarantines. This project also will look at interpretations of whether these public health preventative mandates were accepted and were effective.

While the origin of the disease is still unknown, it is now determined to be an avian H1N1 "swine flu" virus, appeared first in the U.S. near Camp Fuston in Kansas in spring 1918, and traveled with troops to Europe—where it likely mutated—and back to the East Coast by ships before spreading across the country through army encampments and railways. Although the germ theory had mostly taken hold, there were no knowledge of viruses, no antivirals, no antibiotics for the deadly secondary infections, no flu vaccines, and, as remains true today, no cure. Perhaps primarily due to World War I, the pandemic remained buried in America's collective memory and by U.S. historians until Alfred W. Crosby's *Epidemic and Peace* was published in 1976 (the year of a swine flu scare) and reprinted during the early AIDS epidemic in 1989 as *America's Forgotten Pandemic: The Influenza of 1918* and again with a new preface in 2003 during SARS.² Since then, both broad histories and community-focused studies have begun to proliferate due mostly to emerging diseases of the twenty-first century and the centennial anniversary of the influenza pandemic—with renewed interest anticipated now due to the COVID-19 crisis of 2020-22. In recent works, historians have shown how officials missed warning signs or failed to act with enough urgency to stop or even slow the virus early—too little, too late—yet still probably saved lives

1. John M. Barry, *The Great Influenza: The Epic Story of the Deadliest Plague in History* (New York: Viking, 2004), 396-7. Estimates by epidemiologists now suggest 675,000 deaths of a U.S. population of about 105 million.

2. Alfred W. Crosby, *America's Forgotten Pandemic: The Influenza of 1918*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2003), xi-xii; Barry, 446. Barry notes that scientists still are not sure if humans gave swine the H1N1 type infection or if swine gave humans the virus and that most segments of the virus have avian origins.

by taking eventual precautions. Some newer scholarly studies, further discussed in the second section below, also have started to fill the gap in how minority communities like African Americans and Indigenous peoples were affected through the lens of racial disparities and discrimination.

Broad-Based Histories

As the first of major histories considered here, Crosby's trailblazing work traces the fall outbreak from the Boston naval pier in late August and the nearby Camp Devens army cantonment, then through its swift wartime spread elsewhere and the ensuing research efforts. This pandemic perplexed physician scientists who tried to treat an influenza that differed significantly from the endemic version as it attacked virile sailors, soldiers, and civilians in their prime, particularly with pneumonia and other lung complications (likely an immune over-response). Crosby points out that "the machinery of the army continued to function" in the meantime and that army leaders in late September ignored belated recommendations of suspending new troop arrivals and departures from Devens as well as reducing overcrowding and expanding space per person.³ Although citing a Boston naval hospital physician who in early September predicted the disease would spread rapidly across the country, Crosby lets leaders off the hook by saying the "epidemic was moving too fast for authorities to react sensibly." Contradicting himself, he subsequently points out that sailors and shipyard workers marched on Boston streets September 3 for a Win-the-War-for-Freedom parade that "certainly spread flu"; a public dedication event (including dancing) with civilians and sailors took place at the Navy Radio School at Harvard two days after cases appeared there; and influenza showed up at Devens September 8, just four days following the arrival of 1,400 new Massachusetts recruits. As the city and state waited weeks to "take measures to defend their citizens against the pandemic,"⁴ Crosby and others show that a failure to halt troop movements and patriotic events contributed to the spread, including a September 12 nationwide draft registration and Liberty Loan Drive parades in Philadelphia and beyond. Crosby notes that the U.S. Army did finally cancel an October draft call and quarantine camps.⁵

Crosby spends two chapters comparing responses in Philadelphia and

3. Crosby, 10.

4. *Ibid.*, 40, 45.

5. *Ibid.*, 49. Crosby notes Chicago's health department expected its Liberty Loan parade to spread the flu but advised marchers to remove clothing at home afterward, dry their body, and take a laxative! Even President Wilson spoke at the New York opera house September 27 to launch the Liberty Loan Drive, even though cases were double the previous day, and led a parade of 25,000 on October 12, 53-7.

San Francisco, with Philadelphia the hardest-hit U.S. city despite its health bureau actually issuing a warning in July about the flu in Europe. With a naval yard and two army camps infected in neighboring states, Philadelphia began a “campaign against coughing, sneezing, and spitting” September 18 but allowed the 23-block parade September 28 with 200,000 attending—an event Crosby says caused the pandemic to explode days later with 635 new civilian cases reported October 1 alone. As shipyard workers called out sick, Crosby notes that on October 3 the city closed churches, theaters, and other amusement businesses and the state shuttered saloons and all public entertainment (however, Pennsylvania left church and school closings up to local authorities). Although the nation’s surgeon general urged all state health directors to follow suit if needed, and many locals did, Crosby maintains such closing orders “did little to limit the spread of flu”—in part because of crowded restaurants, elevators, and street cars. He asserts death rates were often higher in communities with stricter orders and that officials only closed entertainment places to “do something.”⁶ Crosby does not discuss acceptance of mandates other than quoting the *Philadelphia Inquirer* as bans were lifted October 27-30 that they should not have happened and were tyrannical. And, despite describing bodies piling up during the devastating death toll, a coffin shortage, and funeral price-gouging, Crosby points out that closings cost entertainment businesses \$2,350,000, and he does not estimate how many lives may have been spared—even while saying grief has never been successfully quantified.⁷

In San Francisco, where the pandemic hit later, Crosby shows how leaders used time wisely by asking area naval facilities to quarantine. However, a Liberty Loan Drive parade, community sing, and other rallies (one with Mary Pickford) took place, with Crosby again contradicting himself by claiming “As in Philadelphia and elsewhere, it is doubtful that such patriotic shenanigans accelerated the spread of the flu to any great extent.” He contends packed factories, stores, and street cars would have spread the disease just as much.⁸ Crosby says by October 18 San Franciscans were “scared enough to accept drastic measures,” and the city joined several other California localities as it closed schools, amusement places, and public gatherings—and then churches. Furthermore, Crosby says a mandate to wear gauze masks was credited for the city’s sharp decline in influenza—even as he argues that enforcement is “impossible” and that communities with and without such compulsory orders

6. *Ibid.*, 71-4.

7. *Ibid.*, 85-7

8. *Ibid.*, 94. One doctor treated 525 patients in a day in October 1918, riding on a running board as a friend drove.

“almost always” had the same health records.⁹ Residents voted and even celebrated the armistice with masks. As historians show in other places, however, public health policies became less popular as time wore on—masks were called inconvenient, humiliating, and infringing on personal liberty by some—and in late November, officials removed the mask mandate that they said had reduced influenza cases by half as well as limited other infectious diseases. When another spike happened, residents initially refused a voluntary request to re-mask, then despite an Anti-Mask League formed after masks were made mandatory in mid-January, cases began to drop anew—yet Crosby comments that San Francisco still suffered 3,500 deaths even with stringent measures.¹⁰ Crosby also spends time discussing native populations in Alaska and American Samoa, where territorial governors had more leeway and the latter had an effective quarantine.

John M. Barry’s 2004 semi-scholarly work, *The Great Influenza: The Epic Story of the Deadliest Plague in History*, is the most “popular” work on the pandemic after being reprinted during the 2018 centennial with a new afterword. Especially focusing on scientists searching for a cause and vaccine, he digs into evidence the new influenza began in Kansas in early 1918 and mentions schools re-opening “with healthy children” by mid-March in Haskell County as well as the outbreak in nearby Camp Funston.¹¹ Barry charges the New York City health department’s leader for taking “no action whatsoever to prevent the spread of infection” after a Norwegian freighter arrived with influenza aboard in mid-August, yet says Boston navy physicians did all they could to isolate and contain the late August pier outbreak “but the disease was too explosive.”¹² However, he also shows that ships and sailors from Boston helped spread the disease to Philadelphia, New Orleans, and the Great Lakes training station near Chicago, and that Philadelphia’s Navy Yard quarantine came a day too late after sailors were then sent on to Puget Sound.¹³ Concentrating on Philadelphia like Crosby, Barry claims health director Wilmer Krusen “had done absolutely nothing,” with the city initially only launching a campaign to cover coughs and sneezes, advising to avoid crowds, forbidding organizations or parties entertaining military—and not canceling the parade (although streetcar passengers were limited).¹⁴ Barry notes that only

9. *Ibid.*, 101-2. Masks were even popular at sea on at least two troopships, 138.

10. *Ibid.*, 105, 108, 112, 114. Whistles, sirens, and bells “signaled the great unveiling” at noon November 21.

11. Barry, 94-5.

12. *Ibid.*, 181, 184.

13. *Ibid.*, 192, 200.

14. *Ibid.*, 202, 204-5, 208-9.

after all hospital beds were filled seventy-two hours later, did Krusen close churches, schools, theaters, public funerals, and gatherings, including any Liberty Loan events—but left saloons open (a constituency of the mayor’s machine, although closed by state health order the next day). Hundreds were dying a day, city and health workers wore masks, and people spitting on the street were arrested.¹⁵ In particular, Barry addresses the fear and isolation of people avoiding each other and conversation on the street, even turning away to avoid someone’s breath, and says people fled because of “ghostly surgical masks” when a doctor, nurse, or policeman showed up during a manpower shortage. He also claims masks did not work against the virus because thirty-three Philadelphia police officers died by mid-October¹⁶ and later says millions wearing masks did not make a difference, but writes in his new afterword that masks on someone sick were proven effective in 1918!¹⁷

The initial interest in this historiography subject stemmed from a 2020 sports article during COVID-19 about the influenza pandemic a century ago and an accompanying 1918 photograph from a Georgia Tech college football where fans pictured in the crowd (including uniformed soldiers) mostly wore cloth masks properly. Since WWI likely already affected professional and college sports, not much can be found in recent literature about athletics that fall, particularly football, so this subject could be researched further. Barry, though, is one of the few historians to mention sports, noting that major league baseball had already shortened its season because players had to find “essential” jobs or be sent to war due to a May 23 draft order and that the 1919 Stanley Cup hockey finals were cancelled due to influenza.¹⁸

Blaming the war effort for public health failure to act as “relentless” as during polio outbreaks previously, including in New York City, Barry additionally emphasizes camp transfers were not halted until thousands of soldiers were dead or dying. Although arguing influenza was too contagious to be contained like SARS, he contends “ruthless intervention and quarantines” in 1918 may have delayed flu’s arrival or slowed its spread in a community and “would have saved many, many thousands of lives.”¹⁹ It is interesting that at least twice Barry points out President Wilson made no public statement on influenza. The author also looks at some smaller communities, including the mixed success of some Colorado mountain towns: Lake City allowed no one to enter and stayed flu-free; Ouray’s “shotgun” quarantine kept miners out

15. *Ibid.*, 220-1.

16. *Ibid.*, 225-6, 326.

17. *Ibid.*, 359, 457.

18. *Ibid.*, 301, 457.

19. *Ibid.*, 314.

and Silverton closed businesses, but both were still hit; and railroad town Gunnison thwarted influenza by banning gatherings, blockading roads, and threatening rail passengers with arrest and quarantine. Barry notes that Prescott, Arizona, even made shaking hands illegal, and two Colorado towns required customers to wait outside stores to order and receive packages. However, his reasoning is incongruent when he terms it “ironically” that Phoenix suffered less than other places due to initiatives from its influenza citizens committee, which included a mask mandate and 1,200 cubic feet of air space per customer. He does portray panic and fear there with killings of dogs by people and police after a rumor of canines carrying influenza.²⁰

Published in 2012, Nancy K. Bristow's *American Pandemic: The Lost Worlds of the 1918 Influenza Epidemic* brings a more up-to-date scholarly approach to the pandemic and argues that the crisis reinforced the social and cultural status quo despite reshaping individuals' lives. As government gained more power during the emergency and during WWI, Americans grew “restless” over being controlled as the disease was not contained and time dragged on, Bristow contends, somewhat similar to the trend witnessed during the contemporary COVID-19 containment efforts. In Chapter 3, she examines epidemic measures such as mandated mask-wearing, school closings, and prohibited common drinking cups through the lens of Progressive era reforms.²¹ Bristow illustrates initial cooperation by clergy, teachers, students, and movie theater owners as public places were closed October 29 in Roanoke, Virginia, but how the local newspaper questioned a month in why a reopening of movie houses and theaters should be gradual—and then how a resurgence forced a return to restrictions in December. While pool hall owners contested the legality of orders, schools closed for another three weeks, and the city put limitations on Christmas gatherings. She likens the progression of citizens' initial acceptance and later weariness to the rise and collapse of Progressivism itself.²²

Bristow criticizes Surgeon General Rupert Blue for not calling for “a broader quarantine of all incoming ships” in mid-August, but she strangely states that “One could not always avoid crowds, of course” when discussing Blue's guidance to the public including improving personal hygienic habits.²³ Bristow notes that enforcement issues affected some significant measures and that public health leaders often did not agree on approaches, such as debating masks—for instance, a Chicago health official

20. *Ibid.*, 345, 347-8, 350.

21. Nancy K. Bristow, *American Pandemic: The Lost Worlds of the 1918 Influenza Epidemic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 12.

22. Bristow, 82-6.

23. *Ibid.*, 93.

called them “useless” as worn by most people. Likewise, she points out why closings of schools and churches were controversial and how non-essential closures would not eliminate congestion for urban workplaces, transportation, and sidewalks without shutting down all businesses.²⁴ Although the surgeon general deferred decision-making to local authorities, Bristow does highlight Blue’s adamant recommendation to close schools, as well as ban other public gatherings, to slow the spread and allow communities to prepare. Instead of using fear to motivate the public, Bristow recounts how public health officials utilized patriotism, the war, and a sense of duty as strategies to encourage cooperation with anti-spread efforts and often received support from the local press such as in Wallace, Idaho (for example, an article entitled “Make Your Own Mask; It Is a Simple Task” ran below a “Stop Spread of Influenza” editorial). In determining that “reactions were as diverse as the country itself,” Bristow uncovers measures in numerous cities and towns across the U.S. and how they were received, from support for 27 specific directives in Quitman, Georgia, to lawsuits filed over school and theater closings in Globe, Arizona.²⁵

Focused Community Studies

In the past decade or so, historians have built upon scholarship by Crosby, Barry, and Bristow particularly by focusing on the 1918 influenza outbreak in a single community, while emerging diseases and the pandemic’s hundred-year anniversary have increased interest in the topic. James Higgins’s 2010 journal article, “‘With Every Accompaniment of Ravage and Agony’: Pittsburgh and the Influenza Epidemic of 1918-1919,” says the western Pennsylvania industrial town had the worst urban outbreak of influenza in the U.S. but that its longer, persistent outbreak has not received the attention of other cities, including Philadelphia across the state. Along with an ineffective relief response and air-quality issues that already caused the nation’s worst pneumonia rate, Higgins blames city officials in part for high morbidity and mortality rates due to their refusal to enforce and strengthen state quarantines and in undermining and ending them early.²⁶ He describes how Pennsylvania banned

24. *Ibid.*, 94-6.

25. *Ibid.*, 106.

26. James Higgins, “‘With Every Accompaniment of Ravage and Agony’: Pittsburgh and the Influenza Epidemic of 1918-1919,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History & Biography* 134, no. 3 (July 2010): 263, 266-8, <https://doi.org/10.5215/pennmaghistbio.134.3.263>. In addition to coke production and coal burning causing preexisting conditions, overcrowding led to workers living in sheds on hillsides and in ravines, boxcars converted into barracks, reopened condemned buildings, subterranean apartments, and 50,000 day and night shift workers sharing bunks in boarding houses.

assemblies of crowds in early October and closed entertainment venues including saloons, theaters, soda fountains, and ice cream parlors. Noting that Pittsburgh's public health director was not a physician and got his job through patronage, Higgins highlights how the city did not close its schools until October 24 (although county and parochial systems did) or places of worship like Philadelphia and planned to monitor the illness in the city through schoolchildren; Catholic and Jewish congregations did shutter early voluntarily.²⁷ He notes that a September 29 war bond drive attended by 40,000 did not result in explosive spread as Philadelphia's although numbers rose sharply in area military camps, and the city illegally excepted loan-drive workers from the state gatherings ban and allowed an October 19 event to hear war bond results.²⁸ Finally, Higgins argues Pittsburgh's public health response was weakened by liquor lobbies challenging the ban and city hall turning "a blind eye" to open bars before the city public health director asked the state to intervene; meanwhile, primarily Protestant ministers protested a mid-October worship ban. Crediting the public health director for tying his efforts to patriotism and chastising the entertainment industry "for putting lives at risk . . . for profits," Higgins shows that after the mayor negated the state ban early and revelers celebrated a rumored and the real armistice, Pittsburgh's influenza cases increased, the city had 728 orphans, desperate calls for nurses continued through November, and infection rates stayed high into early 1919.²⁹

Also published in 2010, shortly after swine and avian flu and SARS epidemics had taken place, James Derek Shidler's "A Tale of Two Cities: The 1918 Influenza" compares and contrasts how newspapers 10 miles apart in two rural Illinois towns covered the pandemic. He finds that the *Mattoon Journal-Gazette*, a Republican-leaning paper in a blue-collar industrial and railroad town, "never tried to hide or dilute the seriousness" of the deadly influenza and reported the closings of schools, churches, movie theaters, and Red Cross meetings by October as well as Illinois officials shutting down political gatherings. The Mattoon paper also was "overwhelmed" with obits for civilians and troops, listed business closings in one editorial, and noted stores would have late Christmas Eve hours to lessen shopping congestion. While Shidler does not analyze acceptance or effects of the preventative public health measures, he quotes a local doctor on December 18 that Mattoon was averaging 20 cases reported a day and predicted successive waves, which Shidler says never "devastated" the city.³⁰ Shidler

27. Higgins, "With Every Accompaniment of Ravage and Agony," 271-2.

Higgins does not address why most Protestant churches remained open for worship.

28. *Ibid.*, 270-1, 276.

29. *Ibid.*, 278-9, 281-2.

30. James Derek Shidler, "A Tale of Two Cities: The 1918 Influenza," *Journal*

determines that the *Charleston Courier*, a Democratic paper in a white-collar, teacher-producing town that outbid Mattoon for the East Illinois normal school, seemed to “ignore” influenza and even appeared “annoyed by all the hype.”³¹ The Charleston coverage mostly focused on larger cities including Chicago, so no local orders were discussed, and the college-town paper approached the disease from a more scientific standpoint, such as referencing an anti-spitting campaign in Cleveland.

Patricia J. Fanning’s 2010 book, *Influenza and Inequality: One Town’s Tragic Response to the Great Epidemic of 1918*, also focuses on the epidemic in a smaller industrial town—Norwood, Massachusetts—as opposed to usual studies on the “urban and national experience.” Citing Charles Rosenberg’s *The Cholera Years*, Fanning examines how social and public health responses to epidemics usually end up increasing control, surveillance, and enforcement over victims, especially the poor and immigrants, amidst moral judgments and subsequent resistance to regulations.³² She claims the state’s first warning September 5 after the Boston outbreak came too late; highlights a Norwood hospital fundraiser fair and Masonic event in late September; notes the first cases stemmed from a railway car maintenance shop; and mentions the shuttering of schools and other voluntary closings after 700 influenza cases including a baby among the deaths.³³ Stating the epidemic was treated as a “political emergency,” Fanning concludes that immigrants in Norwood could not afford to stay home due to quarantines or illness, had their homes searched, and often delayed treatment because of forced evacuations—showing that both protectionists and well-intentioned, paternalistic progressives contributed to impoverished immigrants’ woes.³⁴ In addition to bans on worship, wakes, funerals, and entertainment like billiards and soda fountains, Fanning details that packages in a neighborhood were left on porches, mail was baked in the oven, and a newsboy remembers his manager disinfecting money first before accepting it; however, a girls church choir sang and civic organizations took

of the Illinois State Historical Society 103, no. 2 (2010): 167-8, www.jstor.org/stable/25701282. The Mattoon newspaper also ran numerous ads for remedies, including Vicks VapoRub, unlike the Charleston paper.

31. Shidler, 171, 176. Shidler points out the Mattoon also has reported on “mass hysteria,” including rumors about the “Mad Gasser.” He also confusingly describes Democratic as liberal and Republican as conservative, perhaps belying some of the changing political viewpoints in the early modern era.

32. Patricia J. Fanning, *Influenza and Inequality: One Town’s Tragic Response to the Great Epidemic of 1918* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010), 5-7.

33. Fanning, 21, 25, 56, 58.

34. *Ibid.*, 100.

part in the funeral of an elite woman's club member.³⁵ Fanning finds that 75% of adult residents who died during Norwood's deadly fall wave were foreign-born, while she also updates with literature showing that the very poor had triple the mortality rates of those well-off and that a GIS study in Hartford, Connecticut, linked disproportionate deaths to ethnicity.

A couple of articles in 2013 regional historical journals, meanwhile, explore the epidemic in two Texas towns: Ana Luisa Martinez-Catsam's "Desolate Streets: The Spanish Influenza in San Antonio" and Peggy A. Redshaw's "Sherman, Texas, and the 1918 Pandemic Flu." Noting much of the pandemic historical scholarship concentrates on the northeastern U.S., Martinez-Catsam illustrates how the army used a quarantine October 1 to keep area soldiers from visiting San Antonio except on official business and cancelled football, track, and other recreation. Even without cases in the city, she points out that San Antonio officials prohibited a circus performance and ordered businesses to sweep outside daily, but did not close schools, churches, or movie houses until mid-October when military and civilian influenza cases skyrocketed after the army relaxed camp restrictions. Martinez-Catsam notes jury trials and funerals also were banned while sales were discouraged and street cars had windows opened and were disinfected.³⁶ Although cases declined steadily until bans and the army quarantine were lifted just in time to celebrate the armistice, closings were instituted again in early December briefly and the city used similar measures in a milder 1920 outbreak, the author says.³⁷

Redshaw discusses influenza hitting Dallas in late September 1918 before the visit of the Liberty Loan train, with initial warnings for infected people to quarantine and stay out of public buildings falling "on deaf ears in Sherman." She notes that the start of school, fall classes at Austin College, a two-week religious revival, musical programs, and a September 29 Liberty Loan Campaign patriotic service all took place in the last half of the month in the city, and that 3,000-4,000 people then turned out to see the train and its war exhibits October 3—which Redshaw calls an "even greater opportunity" to spread the virus. Showing evidence influenza likely arrived earlier than the first death October 4, Redshaw contends the public events helped spread the flu quickly, leading to a thousand cases in Sherman; the closing of churches,

35. *Ibid.*, 79, 85. Interviewing residents to recover recollections including those handed down through families, Fanning did not name people who wished to keep their identities private.

36. Ana Luisa Martinez-Catsam, "Desolate Streets: The Spanish Influenza in San Antonio," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 116, no. 3 (January 2013): 295, 297, <https://doi.org/10.1353/2wh.2013.0010>.

37. Martinez-Catsam, 303.

schools, theaters, pool halls, and movie houses; and quarantines on students at two colleges.³⁸ She maintains the disease did not discriminate and lists various victims from obituaries, such as the sheriff, a physician treating influenza, a theater owner, a restaurant manager, a barber, a pharmacist, a shoe salesman, a firetruck driver, and several railroad employees and families. Redshaw discovers a newspaper plea by the Sherman War Council saying “precautionary measures” are working and calling on the 25% of people not following health rules to cooperate,³⁹ and then prohibitions were lifted in late October as cases declined. Referencing the swine flu epidemic of 2009, Redshaw recognizes that the “same limited protocols used in 1918— isolation, quarantine, hand washing, and masks”—are still recommended in present times and that Vicks VapoRub remains among patent medicines in use today!⁴⁰

In 2014, Benjamin R. Brady and Howard M. Bahr extend scholarship further by exploring neglected accounts of the vulnerable Indigenous community, drawing on Navajo literature, National Archives, and southwestern university library sources for their article “The Influenza Epidemic of 1918-1920 among the Navajos.” They discuss why Native Americans had mortality rates four times the overall population during the pandemic, which reflected the higher risk of remote Indigenous people worldwide, and have compiled a historiographical chart on social factors related to mortality.⁴¹ In considering social distancing, the authors argue that distance worked against tribe members living in isolation in their dispersed settlement patterns, because although influenza reached them in “trackless” areas, many died due to lack of care. Families often became ill at the same time, some sick Navajos fled into the wilds to avoid contagion and spirits, and health care was even more inadequate due to war service by medical personnel, Brady and Bahr write. Additionally, a ceremonial “sing” with a medicine man and family members also helped spread the flu, while dying people were moved out into the elements to prevent haunting the shelter. The scholars do outline how the father superior at Saint Michael’s imposed a successful quarantine on the school after influenza swept through Fort Defiance, but also assert that the Indian

38. Peggy A. Redshaw, “Sherman, Texas, and the 1918 Pandemic Flu,” *East Texas Historical Journal* 51, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 69-70, <http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.mtsu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=asn&AN=84984932&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

39. Redshaw, 71-3.

40. *Ibid.*, 80. A side note: Redshaw makes good use of funeral home ledger books for source materials.

41. Benjamin R. Brady and Howard M. Bahr, “The Influenza Epidemic of 1918-1920 among the Navajos,” *American Indian Quarterly* 38, no. 4 (Fall 2014): 262-3, <https://doi.org/10.5250/amerindiquar.38.4.0459>.

Service bureaucracy and informal Navajo communication system contributed to the spread by not recognizing, informing, or providing resources in time.⁴² Ultimately, the large tribe of Navajos, among the poorest of the poor in 1918, suffered “unusually high losses.”⁴³ Throughout history during epidemics, marginalized communities usually receive less care and furthermore often suffer the brunt of fear-mongering as “the Other” is blamed for the spread of disease.

Two other papers looking at how marginalized communities were affected are among the new wave of scholarship emerging in the past few years around the pandemic’s centennial: Mikaëla M. Adams’ “A Very Serious and Perplexing Epidemic of Grippe: The Influenza of 1918 at the Haskell Institute” published in 2020 and Elizabeth Schlabach’s “The Influenza Epidemic and Jim Crow Public Health Policies and Practices in Chicago, 1917–1921” printed in 2019. Adams’ article on the federal Indian assimilationist boarding school in Lawrence, Kansas, focuses on an influenza outbreak in the spring of 1918 that may have been the same virulent strain found at nearby Camp Funston in the first wave. Adams, whose aim is to delve beyond the oft-studied colonial period of disease in Native American history, illuminates how Haskell superintendent Harvey B. Peairs often prioritized the institute and its fiscal survival over his students at the nation’s largest non-reservation boarding school.⁴⁴ Overenrolling students contributed to overcrowding in dorms and helped spread influenza, while Peairs also “discouraged parental visits and refused students home leave.”⁴⁵ Thus, Adams shows, like Fanning in Norwood, how this marginalized community was controlled. Haskell’s first diagnosis of grippe (another common name for the flu) occurred 11 days after the March 4 army camp outbreak, and a total of 17 students died at the school in the spring and fall from influenza. Adams points out that Peairs, investigated a decade prior for large numbers of tuberculosis cases, asked for outside help early on but a U.S. Public Health Service surgeon attributed the spring epidemic to climatic causes. Meanwhile, students participated in a Liberty Loan parade and a Sousa concert in Lawrence in early April, yet Adams stresses that the school had higher morbidity and mortality rates in the spring than army camps. In the fall outbreak, Peairs never sent students home despite a warning against overcrowding but halted classroom learning until October 28 and continued a partial quarantine;

42. Brady and Bahr, 470-3.

43. *Ibid.*, 482.

44. Mikaëla M. Adams, “A Very Serious and Perplexing Epidemic of Grippe: The Influenza of 1918 at the Haskell Institute.” *American Indian Quarterly* 44, no. 1 (2020): 1–2, <https://doi.org/10.5250/amerindiquar.44.1.0001>.

45. Adams, 3.

however, Adams notes he cruelly allowed no leaves or visits through the holidays (many students requesting leave in April never returned for fear of influenza).⁴⁶ Working on a book about the 1918-20 influenza pandemic in Indian Country, she also writes in her footnotes that she believes Barry wrongly assumed “Haskell” in a surgeon general’s report is Haskell County, Kansas, instead of Haskell institute and is incorrect about the origin of the virus.

In examining the epidemic in Chicago, Schlabach eyes another marginalized community as African Americans battled public health campaigns including during the 1918 pandemic, and she calls the historiography of the Black experience in the influenza outbreak “shockingly sparse.” Citing Bristow in claiming the Chicago health director’s stance to keep schools open was a way to continue surveillance of the Black community, Schlabach also uses Samuel Kelton Roberts’ *Infectious Fear* about race and tuberculosis as inspiration for her article.⁴⁷ At the time of the epidemic, Schlabach writes, fifty-eight bombs were hurled at homes of Blacks or real estate agents in Chicago to help maintain the color line in housing, and African Americans’ migration to the north had caused a fear of disease spreading. The historian contends that African Americans were asserting rights to public and political spaces just at the time that public health campaigns could “upend all urban spaces.”

Schlabach shows how the Illinois Influenza Commission in late September helped prohibit dances and funerals, as well as was an arbiter of medical inspections. With influenza reaching Chicago via the Great Lakes Naval Training Center, the health department recommended mask-wearing, flu cases were ordered quarantined, and an anti-spitting ordinance was enforced anew.⁴⁸ She argues that African Americans were only welcome to abide by measures, rather than protest segregated medical care, although interestingly Blacks weren’t dying in high numbers nationwide. The epidemic allowed health officials to invade families’ privacy to search for unreported influenza, and measures extended to even controlling play on streets, she writes, with “toxic racialized effects” akin to Jim Crow laws.

The city also shut down public events including athletics, banquets, and conventions October 18 and prohibited entertainment in restaurants and crowding in pool halls and saloons in the name of defense and patriotism. But the health director stressed in 1919—the year of race riots—that churches, schools, and many

46. *Ibid.*, 21.

47. Elizabeth Schlabach, “The Influenza Epidemic and Jim Crow Public Health Policies and Practices in Chicago, 1917-1921,” *Journal of African American History* 104, no. 1 (Winter 2019): 32-3, <https://doi.org/10.1086/701105>.

48. Schlabach, 37, 39-40.

businesses had remained open.⁴⁹ Schlabach digs through local Black newspapers to see postponements of the Chicago American Giants baseball team's season in the National Negro League and Hampton Institute's fiftieth anniversary celebration in Chicago, while also finding fashion advice for the flu season including about masks. Additionally, the Black press also covered the AAU national track and field championships in September, which Schlabach maintains belies the "military's lack of knowledge of the seriousness of the epidemic."⁵⁰ While she does not address effectiveness of policies, Schlabach does demonstrate how African Americans still managed to make some progress in desegregating both medical training and care during the era.

Four other new works concentrate on the 1918 pandemic in Pennsylvania, including Sarah Wilson Carter's "The 1918 Influenza Outbreak in Harrisburg" (2020) and a trio of articles on Philadelphia: "The 1918 Spanish Influenza: Three Months of Horror in Philadelphia" (2017) by Christina M Stetler; "An Epidemic's Strawman: Wilmer Krusen, Philadelphia's 1918–1919 Influenza Epidemic, and Historical Memory" (2020) by the aforementioned Higgins; and "Influenza Pandemic Warning Signals: Philadelphia in 1918 and 1977-1978" (2020) by James M. Wilson, Garrett M. Scalaro, and Jodie A. Powell. Carter discusses how key civic reformers of the City Beautiful movement in Harrisburg also were involved with public health, including the new director, a physician who issued quarantines and closed school, churches, and public events. He also asked employers to schedule workers at intervals to alleviate crowds and limit spread of influenza, while newspapers recommended mask-wearing and good cough etiquette.⁵¹ Carter uses digital tools to trace how the virus spread from an industrial area into the congested rail center of Pennsylvania's capital city. Showing that African Americans and immigrants had higher death rates, Carter additionally argues that the epidemic was limited by public health measures—yet acknowledges more work should be done with data sets.⁵²

Even though Philadelphia's influenza crisis and responses have been the center of broader histories as seen above, Stetler tackles the subject in-depth and covers much of the same ground including the initial navy yard outbreak, Krusen's initial reluctance to act, an explosive spread at the Liberty Loan parade, and subsequent public closures. Unlike most works cited here, she addresses athletics

49. *Ibid.*, 43-4.

50. *Ibid.*, 47-9.

51. Sarah Wilson Carter, "The 1918 Influenza Outbreak in Harrisburg," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 87, no. 1 (2020): 149, <https://doi.org/doi:10.5325/pennhistory.87.1.0148>.

52. Carter, 153-4.

with the cancellation of an October 4 pep rally and October 5 football game at the University of Pennsylvania against the Marines—and, by October 6, the city had 200,000 announced cases. Stetler expounds on Catholic nuns stepping into nursing roles as the city became overwhelmed—twenty-two sisters died from influenza—and stresses their care for African American families during a “time of stark racial segregation.” She uncovers interesting nuggets of the U.S. Public Health Service advising that the “firing range of a careless cougher or sneezer is at least three feet” and to burn a paper sack of cloths containing nose or throat secretions.⁵³ Deaths mounted, however, and 10,000 had died by October 19. As the mortality rate slowed and the city reopened slowly, Penn and the Marine team played the football game October 26, allowing only students to attend under health board rules, Stetler writes. Liquor sales were at first limited to three times a day of two hours each. In her conclusion, she notes the Eighteenth Amendment prohibiting alcoholic beverages passed the next fall, followed by the rise of crime, the Roaring Twenties, and the women’s suffrage Nineteenth Amendment.⁵⁴

In Higgins’s article on the influenza devastation in Philadelphia, he challenges previous portrayals of Krusen as inept and inexperienced and says the record should be set straight since the epidemic is often studied for public policy responses to disease outbreaks even a hundred years later. He argues that Krusen was “overwhelmed by factors beyond his control” and that the flu was already circulating among sailors in Philadelphia even before the 300 transfers arrived from Boston.⁵⁵ Higgins particularly takes Barry to task for flimsy evidence about “physicians” trying to halt the Liberty Loan parade, and he provides qualifications of Krusen’s competence and professional experience. Higgins claims the mayor alone had authority to cancel the city’s largest event since the 1876 Centennial Exposition and that the danger of influenza in the civilian population was not high enough at the time in Philadelphia. He also says scholars have misjudged the severity of Philadelphia’s navy yard outbreak and wrongly measured it against much more severe conditions at Boston and Chicago.⁵⁶ Krusen “didn’t sit idly by” but mobilized volunteers and organizations, doing what other major city health leaders did in fall 1918 “with a great deal less warning that

53. Christina M. Stetler, “The 1918 Spanish Influenza: Three Months of Horror in Philadelphia,” *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 84, no. 4 (2017): 468, 473-5, <https://doi.org/10.5325/pennhistory.84.4.0462>.

54. Stetler, 477-8, 482.

55. James Higgins, “An Epidemic’s Strawman: Wilmer Krusen, Philadelphia’s 1918-1919 Influenza Epidemic, and Historical Memory,” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 144, no. 1 (2020): 76, <https://doi.org/10.1353/pmh.2020.0003>.

56. Higgins, “An Epidemic’s Strawman,” 78-82.

major cities farther west,” Higgins contends. He concludes by blaming Philadelphians for tolerating city leaders who ignored tenement conditions, admonishing historians to dig further into primary sources beyond newspapers, and advocating that cities commit to public health even when there isn’t an epidemic.⁵⁷

While Wilson, Scalaro, and Powell’s article is as much a public policy paper as history, it compares the warnings and responses of the 1918 Philadelphia influenza pandemic and the 1977-78 return of flu Type A/H1N1. Reviewing how local media reports can serve as intelligence to inform officials of pandemics, these scholars argue that Philadelphia officials in 1918 underestimated the threat level when influenza swamped nearby Camp Dix and opted for only disinfection and hygiene recommendations rather than social distancing measures—until October 4 (Day 15 of civilian cases in Philly). The trio write that police were authorized to enforce bans, and no resistance was reported other than some “editorial exchanges.” Elsewhere in the state, though, Scranton considered martial law after some businesses served liquor through the “backdoor.” As seen in other places, there were further protestations—plus an opinion piece “praising the ‘return to sanity’”—in the “waning days of the epidemic” as re-openings awaited.⁵⁸ The authors, however, discovered an August 16 advisory of vigilance to East Coast marine quarantine stations about influenza aboard ships from Europe. Philadelphia, which suffered with 15,785 deaths from influenza (one percent of the population), also utilized a volunteer police force to enforce quarantines and isolation for area homes which met little or no resistance, the scholars note.⁵⁹ Wilson, Scalaro, and Powell hypothesize that the war effort probably created an environment for community cooperation and that Philadelphia’s lack of proactive response when forewarned was due in part to the newness of public health in the United States at the time.⁶⁰

Conclusion

Recent scholarship on the 1918 influenza in America not only examines the history of public health more in-depth for this pandemic, but it also offers parallels to the contemporary coronavirus/COVID-19 crisis the world has faced this century, including how marginalized communities were impacted. While some early warnings were ignored or underplayed in 1918, widespread and faster forms of communication

57. *Ibid.*, 83-8.

58. James M. Wilson, Garrett M. Scalaro, and Jodie A. Powell, “*Influenza Pandemic Warning Signals: Philadelphia in 1918 and 1977-1918*,” *Intelligence & National Security* 35, no. 4 (June 2020): 505-6, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02684527.2020.1750141>.

59. Wilson, Scalaro, and Powell, 508.

60. *Ibid.*, 511.

in 2020 will give historians an even larger lens in which to compare how officials' actions saved lives or contributed to the death toll. There similarly will be plenty of opportunity and material for political and social history in how a U.S. presidential election year, racial unrest and protests against police brutality and inequality, and a growing anti-science and anti-intellectual movement affected compliance and resistance to public health measures to slow the spread. And as sports and schools started up again for the first time in months in fall 2020, social distancing remained a large part of the social fabric and a determinant in how the virulent virus circulated while researchers rushed to develop a vaccine and treatment—similar to 1918 (although modern medicine has advanced markedly).

Interestingly, media scholar Katherine A. Foss, whose *Constructing the Outbreak: Epidemics in Media and Collective Memory* (2020) was nearing publication when COVID-19 struck, incorporated the 1918 influenza pandemic as one of seven case studies where diseases decimated American towns from 1721 through 1952 and how the epidemics were framed by media outlets during the outbreak as well as in the country's popular media and collective memory. Focusing on Lawrence, Kansas—from the overlooked original outbreak in spring at Camp Funston and Haskell Institute through the publicized deadly autumn wave—her chapter on influenza discusses actions (and inactions) from quarantines and school closures to voluntary/involuntary cancellations and limitations on entertainment businesses and public events, particularly at the University of Kansas. Her research into what was happening at the college in fall 1918 eerily parallels what was taking place at the time of her publication, yet with the war effort front and center instead, including the male student training corps on campus. The Middle Tennessee State University professor notes that female students and professors, Indigenous people, and African Americans not only faced disparities but also had their stories neglected in the past and present. (Even the “Spanish flu” moniker blamed the Other, ignoring its Kansas origin.)⁶¹

In 1918, Bristow notes that “early cooperation was not always enough to halt the epidemic” and that “the public sometimes became restive” as attempts to contain the virus continued. The growing power of government, then as now, was a concern for the citizenry.⁶² However, as Wilson, Scalero, and Powell write, researchers today have theorized that Philadelphia in 1918 needed to act sooner to save more lives and that other U.S. cities in fact responded to warnings and prevented more

61. Katherine A. Foss, *Constructing the Outbreak: Epidemics in Media and Collective Memory*. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2020), muse.jhu.edu/book/81277, 121–147.

62. Bristow, 9, 86.

deaths by instituting social distancing measures more quickly.⁶³ Ultimately, over one hundred years ago, a number of businesses took economic hits from closures, the medical profession suffered from shortages, and numerous orphans were left by both the ravages of the influenza pandemic and war. Despite the world war overshadowing the pandemic in the nation's consciousness, historians have continued to look back both nationwide and at local communities in how authorities responded to this deadly strain of influenza by restricting activities drawing large crowds of people and instituting other public health policies. The centennial of the 1918 flu as well as parallels to the recent COVID-19 pandemic should keep historians busy further investigating the subject to interpret public health responses as well as the effectiveness of social distancing measures and the acceptance and resistance therein. And perhaps the past will continue to inform the future.

63. Wilson, Scalaro, and Powell, 511, 513.

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The Retrieving Memories of Gandhi's Peace-mission: Noakhali Riots 1946, East Pakistan

Parvez Rahaman

ABSTRACT

In 1946, Gandhi visited the Noakhali district in Eastern Bengal (now Bangladesh) to bridge the communal rift of the Hindu-Muslim communities just before the British Empire divided the subcontinent into two new countries: India and Pakistan. This sojourn is almost forgotten now, and no concrete attempt has been made to study Gandhi's peace-mission in a Muslim majority area from a historical perspective of Hindu-Muslim relationship as Gandhi would have wanted. This article attempts to understand Gandhi from the perspective of Muslims who saw him and how they subsequently remember him. Therefore, the article explores how Muslim people recollect Gandhi's visit and his ideas as a relevant way to make harmonious relations between antagonistic communities. The aim of this article is to recall Gandhi and, through recollecting him, create a reflective mindset that underscores the communal harmony embedded into core values of an equal and harmonious society. Through their neglect, the partition historians have safely buried Gandhi's chapter in Noakhali, but historians could potentially use this "peace-mission" of dealing with communities torn apart by riots. Therefore, it can be safely stressed that to have a just society in South Asia and to learn from past errors, then memories of Gandhi's visit must be remembered collectively as a mode of returning to the past and reshaping the present through memories of the adults who witnessed it and passed it down to their descendants.

Literature Review

Marian Hirsch argues that the totalitarian regime and the Nazis's erasures of records was a way to suppress and eradicate history. Yet the postmemory of survivors drawn from family and social groups works to counteract or to repair this loss. She also focuses on "reactivat[ing] and re-embod[y] more distant political and cultural memorial structures by reinvesting them with resonant individual and familial forms of mediation."¹ The aim is to retrieve and engage with the generations who have been less directly affected and can be an archive of the memories of the familial descendants. This is called postmemory. Public memories, as Aleida Assmann writes, "reflect a general desire to reclaim the past as an indispensable part of the present, and to reconsider, to revalue and to reassess it as an important dimension of individual biographies and historical consciousness."² Telling stories is a way to transmit memories from one generation to another, but it also helps to recognize the victims, make new archives of stories, and above all, attempt to liberate the individual through sharing. Sharing a story can cause the individual to let go of trauma and the past. Remembering the past through memories is also a powerful weapon to eradicate disinformation, fabricated news, biased interpretation, insular narratives; it is also a weapon to heal. It is a way of interpretation and an insertion of the past that comes down to us in the present.

As the British Empire was withdrawing from India in 1946, riots erupted in the Hindu-Muslim community of Noakhali, where Gandhi went to restore harmony between the two communities. The Hindus were victimized and targeted in Noakhali as a retaliation of the Great Calcutta Killings in 1946, where Muslims were killed. Their homes were pillaged and set on fire.³ Women were not spared. Gandhi went to Noakhali with his "peace-mission" to bridge the gap between Hindus and Muslims. There are still memories of his visit, and these memories are being passed on from generation to generation, an act of collective remembrance and dispelling the hatred of the past.

1. Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust* (Columbia University Press, 2012), 33.

2. Aleida Assmann, "2. Re-framing Memory. Between Individual and Collective Forms of Constructing the Past," in *Performing the Past: Memory, History, and Identity in Modern Europe*, ed. Karin Tilmans, Frank van Vree and Jay M. Winter (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010). <https://doi.org/10.1515/9789048512027-004>, 39.

3. Suranjan Das, *Communal Riots in Bengal 1905-1947* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993), 161-205.

Transmitting Memories across Generations

"For an experienced event," wrote Walter Benjamin, "is finite—at any rate, confined to one sphere of experience; a remembered event is infinite, because it is only a key to everything that happened before and after it."⁴ This resonates with the similar impression that I am inquiring about Gandhi's sojourn to Noakhali when a communal riot flared up in 1946. Right after his visit, stories about him have been elaborated, interpreted, and misinterpreted through the memory of the people in the community. Much in the same way, oral historian Alessandro Portelli said that an event's importance lies on the ground upon which collective memory and imagination built a cluster of tales, symbols, legends, and imaginary reconstructions. To foreground his narrative, Portelli also quoted Hans Magnus Enzensberger who stated that "History is an invention which reality supplies with raw materials. It is not, however, an arbitrary invention, and the interest it arouses is rooted in the interests of the teller."⁵ Through remembering Gandhi, people in Noakhali collectively recollect him while telling stories of his journey, often creating contesting narratives of him and passing them on to the immediate generation. It is where the strength of Gandhi's visit was grounded as people still think about it, making it a special event from many accounts and obviously making many speculations about what they saw.

It has been almost 76 years since Gandhi's sojourn to Noakhali in 1946 where his monument was recently erected to commemorate his memory. The villagers have shared the sojourn through storytelling, remembering about where he opened camps and the food that was served, the road he took and so on. A substantial number of people have discussed and occasionally challenged who visited with him; one particularly important mention was about his granddaughters who accompanied him. Public memories are quite vibrant in the community, and researchers have long been communicating with the people who saw him and the memories they have in order to make the past into the historical present. This community was the last to see him in living memory. There are numerous people who came close to him in Noakhali, and artists later painted his picture to hang up in people's drawing rooms. Some people also reiterated his ideas on religion to commemorate him. For example, Lutfunnessa Abbas recalls that she saw Gandhi put on a loin cloth due to the deficiency of cloth in the Indian subcontinent. She also recollected that Gandhi wanted people to be able to eat and dress properly before he himself would put a cloth to cover his entire body.⁶

4. Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli, and other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 1.

5. Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli*, 2.

6. Tofael Ahmed, *Mahatma Gandhi in Bangladesh (East Bengal)* (Dhaka:

Lutfunnessa also highlighted Gandhi's understanding of religion as something that should be a matter of the soul and kept out of politics. No one would intervene to hinder people from carrying out their religious duties freely. He believed that Hindus and Muslims must coexist together without fear of one another.⁷ And yet during the time of riots, religious people committed heinous acts.

When riots broke out in Noakhali in 1946, the mob attacked the houses of the Hindu people; these stories later propagated from one person to another. Many individuals do not think incidents like these could have happened during the chaotic rioting. Targeted people were encircled from all directions and fire was set in the areas that people wanted to escape. Moreover, a substantial number of people were not interested in believing something that they did not witness directly through their naked eyes. However, the military crackdown which followed a number of deaths in the Bangladesh war of independence in 1947 convinced people to believe that people can be as heinous as they want. People believed the stories of the riots and what had happened during the time. Mominul Haque did not believe the stories of the riots, but he then asked his sister, Asrafun Yasmin, about the brutalities in Noakhali during the riots. She said what he had heard was right. This is called "communicative memory" which is biographical, factual, and witnessed by someone as an adult who passed it on to their descendants. Marianne Hirsch remarks that family is a crucial unit of transmitting memories across generations.⁸

It is not my intention to compare the Noakhali riots to the Holocaust but to give an idea concerning how memories are transmitted; I bring up the example of *Maus* to show how inside the family stories get told among family memories. *Maus* is a comic book written by Art Spiegelman through interviewing his father who had a terrifying account of the holocaust. It is not only a story of devastation, massacre, and torture—unspeakable tragedies— but it was also about haunting stories shared between son and father. This comic books tells how children "affected by collective trauma inherit a horrific, unknown, and unknowable past that their parents were not meant to survive."⁹ The Noakhali riots are not comparable in any sense to the massive killings of the Holocaust but can be remembered as a traumatize event related to the ideas of displacement, home, exile, and a sense of belonging.

Remembering the Past

Public memories of Gandhi can be used to counter disinformation and

Panchgaon Prokashoni, 1992), 63.

7. Tofael Ahmed, *Mahatma*, 63.

8. Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory*, 34-6.

9. Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory*, 34.

recover the past, redefining it to understand community, which cannot be possible through traditional archives and books. This way of remembering is powerful as it exposes how masses accepted Gandhi in their community. Gandhi was one the most well-known people in the Indian subcontinent and beyond and people irrespective of religious affiliation joined him in his prayer meetings. His recitations in the prayer meetings were taken from Quran, Gita, and Tripitaka and Bible, a way of acknowledging multiple faiths. The Muslim people of Noakhali talked about Gandhi in a deified manner, ignoring the fact that he was just a man and instead treating him as a prophetic personality. Thus, an image reverberates through time of Gandhi as more than just a man who went to both Hindus and Muslims and preached nonviolence. He is remembered for the power of his ideas and the aura that tied people's minds in one thread. For example, when masses of people had never chanced to see India nationalist towering leaders, let alone Gandhi, they were suddenly mesmerized by him, the man of simple living who held no hate for the people who he knew were rioters. When Muslims remember Gandhi, they often share stories of how Hindus were victimized, and this is because of Gandhi's impact. They do not hide the truth even though it casts their own community in a negative light.¹⁰

Through his aura (Gandhi was a spiritual energy), people who set entire villages aflame, murdered families they had lived beside, and committed unimaginable cruelties still acknowledged their depravity. Gandhi had purified them just like separating clean water from polluted water through chemical reactions. In the book *Mahatma Gandhi in Bangladesh (East Bengal)*, Tofael Ahmed discusses how among Muslim people of Noakhali, "in 1946, there was a big procession and training of rioters in the clay-drenched areas; it was drizzling, and one person directed the training of rioters in the yelling tone, a tone filled with insolence and hate. People marched to Hindu houses and attacked them."¹¹ Riots ensued and people were killed who had been living together for generations. In the upsurge, dwellings, huts, and shops were burnt and looted. The sky of the area was ablaze with smoke. People were forced to convert to Islam. This happened in Panchgaon, Noakhali.

The Hindu of Noakhali were forced to wear lungi (a sarong Muslim men wear) instead of dhotis (a type of sarong that outwardly resembles trousers and is worn by Hindus). The people who wore lungi were also forced to go the Mosque for prayer. Gandhi's visit had settled many problems even before he reached there. The miscreants were scared of Gandhi and went to seek vindication for their mistakes

10. Mr. Jitu Mia and Mr. Abul Kalam, interview with author, December 2020.

11. Tofael Ahmed, *Mahatma*, 3.

from the people upon whom they had inflicted pain.¹² They were trying to repent and letting the Hindus who were converted return to their own religious rituals. Gandhi came with his peace-mission in the community to heal the scars left by the rioters. Tofael Ahmed shared¹³ that he was reading in class five and had no idea why Gandhi came, but he and his friend named Bashirullah ran diagonally through a dry canal. Having reached the primary school field, they immediately saw Gandhi almost without any clothing, only wearing dhotis and thin frame glasses. He shares that “the only memory I have of him is that he preached among the people. But I had no idea what he was delivering as Gandhi was not speaking Bengali, which is our native mother tongue.” He also said that “I have not seen any prophets or messengers but Gandhi.”¹⁴ Nevertheless, one person was translating it into Bengali, and he went there to see him, not to listen.

Gandhi could instantly understand people and their problems and get a sense of the place where he was. Judith Brown remarks that “Gandhi’s school of politics was rough and ready because there was none to help him, and he was pushed into action by the pressures of the situation in which he found himself.”¹⁵ For example, during a hearing, Gandhi patiently gave Mahbubur Rahman, a Muslim in Noakhali, a full 30 minutes to speak. His choice to listen to the Muslim first was crucial and made Rahman feel proud. Gandhi always took time to give people an opportunity to show others what they could each contribute to what was going on in the village. This demeanor is still remembered by the villagers. His voice was soft and gentle, and he allowed people to share as much as they wanted. He had lived in the Muslim community as one of them and did not distinguish people based on the religion they followed. Having come to Noakhali, he says, “I have come to stay here with you as one of you.”¹⁶ Gandhi’s version of the Hindu-Muslim relationship was despised by his opponents, who accused him of pro-Pakistani attitudes and made a point that had outraged his assassinator, Nathuram Godse. The assassinator and his idea of India lies in making a Hindu rashtra (state), while Gandhi, through his life and acts, comprehensively countered this

12. For further reading, see Shahid Amin “Gandhi as Mahatma,” in *Selected Subaltern Studies*, ed. Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988), 288-350.

13. Tofael Ahmed, *Mahatma*, 3.

14. Tofael Ahmed, *Mahatma*, 4.

15. Judith Brown, *Gandhi’s Rise to Power Indian Politics 1915-1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 3.

16. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (New Delhi, Publications Division Government of India, 1999), vol. 93, 8. All references to Gandhi’s works will be abbreviated as CWMG.

communal feeling. Through his open politics, he marginalized the idea of a Hindu rashtra (state) and reduced those people, like Godse (his assassinator), as useless in the Indian public life.¹⁷ He did not believe India to be a country for Hindus; it was a country where Muslims would also get equal respect and rights, a notion despised by his opponent.

The Powerful Gandhi's Absence

For so many people in Noakhali, Gandhi's absence was as powerful as his presence. For example, Noni Bala Bonik is a survivor of the riots who is in her nineties. She also joined Gandhi's prayer meeting once. In a personal interview, she shared that after Gandhi returned to Bihar from Noakhali, "we have a very peaceful time and situation. None has the courage to perpetrate violence and created condition for their favor. However, we had spent few days after Gandhi was assassinated thinking people would come again."¹⁸ But nothing transpired. Abul Kalam, now almost 95 years of age and whom I have interviewed, joined Gandhi's prayer meetings in Noakhali. He recalls that "Gandhi also recited from Quran and told the villagers the meaning of Scripture."¹⁹ People like Kalam saw Gandhi as someone impressive and he frequently shared this kind of spiritually charged moment with young people and researchers when they visited him. He had such a presence that Kalam is still deeply influenced by Gandhi and his teachings that he continues to follow them to this very day. He also mentioned how Gandhi's mission in Noakhali quickly brought peace to the area. His presence and prayer meetings settled so many questions that people asked.

Gandhi's ideals also played a large role in the concept of power and nonviolent aggression in the civil rights movement, during which Dr. Martin Luther King said that nonviolence "does not seek to defeat or humiliate the opponent, but to win his friendship and understanding." King also stressed that "non-violent resistance is not a method for cowards; it does resist."²⁰ He argued that if someone is merely lacking in violence that person is not truly nonviolent. King also used the same tactics that Gandhi used in Noakhali: attacking the forces of evil rather than the individual

17. Dharendra K. Jha, *Gandhi's Assassin: The Making of Nathuram Godse and his Idea of India* (India: Vintage, 2021), 168.

18. Noni Bala Bonik, interview with author, December 28, 2020. See also Parvez Rahaman, "Gandhi's sojourn in Noakhali," *The Daily Star*, October 3, 2022, <https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/in-focus/news/gandhis-sojourn-noakhali-3133786>.

19. Abul Kalam, interview with author, December 28, 2020.

20. M. L. King, Jr. *Stride toward freedom: The Montgomery Story* (Beacon Press, 2021), 90.

who happened to be doing the evil.²¹ This approach is characterized by a willingness to accept suffering rather than retaliating. It is nonviolence that is intended to endure pain without responding violently in return. It is an idea to endure the blows that come from the opponents and wait for the time when the perpetrators will change their minds. King also stated that if going to jail is necessary for nonviolence, he would go “as a bridegroom enters the bride’s chamber.”²² The violence in the United States of America during that time and now suggest we now need more of Gandhi and his ideals in this country than ever. According to King, “nonviolent resistance is a willingness to accept suffering without retaliation, to accept blows from the opponent without striking back.”²³ At some point, the opponent will understand and retreat from violence, and violence will breed violence, nothing else.

Conclusion

Remembering Gandhi is a way of addressing concerns particularly associated with religion and race. These are two prevalent problems that the world is fighting against with the former in the Global South and latter in North America. Gandhi came to Noakhali like a messenger, and Tafazzal Husain, a literary person from Noakhali who wrote a book on Gandhi, has compared him to a prophet.²⁴ He gave equal respect to the women and men and only used two pieces of clothing. Just like a prophet, he used a portion of white cloth without stitching. Gandhi sought the true meaning of life in simple living with minimum clothing. The white cloth was meant to be a sign of purity. A monument was erected in Noakhali to honor Gandhi. When people see this monument of Gandhi with a walking stick in his hand, they immediately have the chance to recall him. The monument gives all people a chance to remember him and his ideals of nonviolent philosophy. It also brings back the past to which we belong and allows us to envision a future that we can look forward to with hope.

21. King, *Stride toward freedom*, 91.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

24. Tafazzal Husain, *Smritikana* [Bits of Memory] (Dhaka: 1978), 93.

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