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Spring 2007

### Otterbein Aegis Spring 2007

Otterbein Aegis

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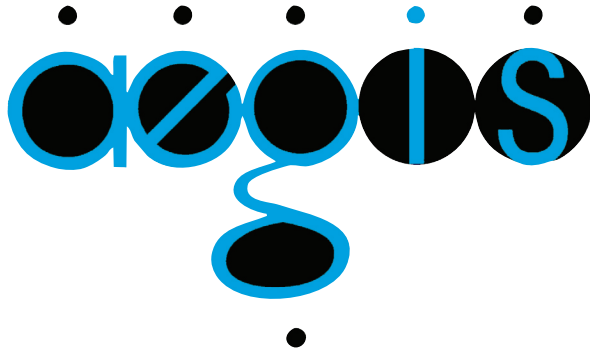
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spring 2007



## **Aegis: The Otterbein College Humanities Journal**

### **Statement of Editorial Policy**

A journal designed to catalyze a deeper critical appreciation of the humanities at Otterbein College, *Aegis* seeks scholarly essays and book reviews that advance the presence and values of the humanities on campus and beyond.

In accord with the National Endowment for the Humanities' (NEH) definition of the humanities, *Aegis* will consider scholarly essays and book reviews in the following disciplines: history; philosophy; languages; linguistics; literature; archeology; jurisprudence; the history, theory, and criticism of the arts; ethics; and comparative religion.

Essays and reviews of books in the social sciences that are historical or philosophical in approach—or that involve questions of interpretation or criticism traditionally in the humanities—will also be eligible for publication in *Aegis*. *Aegis* will also consider essays and reviews of books that use the disciplines of the humanities to interpret, analyze, or assess science and technology.

Essays should be between 10-30 pages—in twelve point type, double-spaced, and in Times New Roman font with standard one-inch margins. This includes pages devoted to notes and/or works cited pages. Book reviews should be between 1-4 pages—in twelve point type, double-spaced, in Times New Roman font with standard one-inch margins.

*Aegis* is committed to nonsexist language and to wording free of hostile overtones.

*Aegis* will appear annually each calendar year toward the end of spring quarter. Essays and book reviews will be received on a rolling basis. The deadline for the coming year's edition shall be the second Friday of Winter Quarter. Essays and book reviews received after this date will be considered for the following year's edition—even if the writer is in the final year of his/her study at Otterbein.

Submissions, prepared according either to the *MLA Style Manual* or *The Chicago Manual of Style*, should be sent in duplicate and addressed to Andrew Mills, Faculty Advisor, *Aegis*, Towers Hall, Otterbein College, Westerville, Ohio, 43081. If you are submitting through the U.S. Mail and wish for one copy of your submission to be returned, please include a self-addressed envelope with sufficient postage. Authors' names should not appear on submitted essays; instead, submissions should be accompanied by a cover sheet, on which appear the author's name, address, and the title of the essay. All essays accepted for publication will need eventually to be submitted on hard diskette in Microsoft Word.

### **Aegis 2007 Editorial Board**

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Students interested in serving on *Aegis*' Editorial Board for the 2007-2008 school year should contact Dr. Andrew Mills at [amills@otterbein.edu](mailto:amills@otterbein.edu).



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# Editors' Introduction

● ● ● Jason Craig and Meghan Johnson

It is an honor to present to you the fourth edition of *Aegis*, the Otterbein College Humanities Journal. With every edition the Journal grows, encompassing both more humanities disciplines, and facets of research within those disciplines. For instance, in this year's edition you will read on topics as diverse as metaphysics, music, the Vietnam War and Marxism, gender issues and politics. This diversity is itself a reflection of both the astounding breadth of what we generalize as "the humanities" as well as a reflection of the depth of research taking place at Otterbein College. It is the sincere hope of those involved with the Journal that its continued growth and diversity is an exponential trend. In the past, these introductions have some times taken on outside issues that directly reflect on the humanities and scholarship in general. Last year, the issue of intellectual honesty was dealt with at length. One prevalent theme this year is that of being conscious of one's lifestyle and the world around oneself. As we are getting well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, concerns over the environment and the economy are becoming more and more urgent and in need of consideration.

Land is becoming a more precious resource as increasing talk about consumption and land development takes form in the theory of the "tragedy of the commons." This topic is addressed in two of our essays and the relevance of this concern is brought to the attention of the readers of *Aegis*. Whether the environmental situation is viewed from a more bureaucratic standpoint with solutions surrounding government intervention and regulations, or a more individual standpoint (like the man of the wilderness in one of the featured book reviews, *The Last American Man*) where solutions are as simple as people taking it upon themselves to examine their lifestyles and level of consumption, the concern is legitimate.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has brought on many events and changes and we must now consciously address them. Growing demands for resources and increased land use to meet the comfortable lifestyle so many Americans value is putting a strain on the environment and eventually we will be faced with the consequences of the indulgence and consumption we enjoy presently.

Globalization is quickly spreading, the world is becoming more and more connected, yet America, at this point, is isolated when it comes to environmental concerns because, luckily, we are at this time generally not experiencing the problems that the rest of the world is beginning to address. By looking at the economy and being mindful of our own lifestyles, we can independently make our own changes to begin to address these concerns.

An easy place to start would be our own day to day practices. Our daily impact could easily be reduced if the one place we all have in common, the campus of Otterbein College, began a campus-wide recycling program. Also, simple and easy independent choices could take form in what we decide to purchase. Examining the environmental consequences of the food and materials that we purchase could reduce the strain on the environment. No one wants to give up the modern conveniences we enjoy, but we can reduce our consumption and join the world in an effort to save the one thing that we all rely on and value.

While Otterbein and many other cities, towns and colleges have made great strides in placing emphasis on the issue of conservation, and humankind's relation to its external world, there is, as always, a danger of both counter-arguments against the conservation-environment-

talist position (as seen with the recent publishing of many books that supposedly “debunk” extreme global climate shift) and of those involved in the movement becoming complacent or apathetic. While it is impossible for a journal such as this to directly combat these claims with quantitative data, it is no less important for those in the humanities to face this issue with all of the tools at their disposal. It is only through a combination of the humanities and science, with their divergent lenses of examination and interpretation, that enough pressure and change can be implemented to cause action and permanent shifts in the ego-centric anti-environmental mindset of many people.

While the issue of conservation and the environment is by no means the only “theme” of this edition of *Aegis*, we claim that it is an answer to the question raised by the journal’s first editors—Ashar Foley and Teresa Moore—in the first editors introduction of *Aegis*—“why *Aegis*?” *Aegis* exists not only to put on display the finest minds Otterbein has to offer, or to display the vitality and urgency of the study of the humanities, it exists to show that the humanities exists as a *necessary* field of research that in and of itself can raise, question and promote problems, thoughts and plans for applicable action in the real world. In this way the humanities not only fulfills humankind’s ever persistent desire for knowledge. It is itself an immediate way to address the world’s most pressing issues.

# An Interview with Dr. Henry Abelove

● ● ● Meghan Johnson and Jason Thomas Craig

AEGIS: *Let's begin by discussing the title of your collection of essays "Deep Gossip." In the introduction, you break down the aspects of a phrase used by Allen Ginsberg in his elegy for the poet Frank O'Hara that in your words are "resonant still." Ginsberg describes O'Hara as a "curator of funny emotions" and drew attention to his "ear." It was a "common ear," he wrote, "for our deep gossip." In your reflection on the phrase "our deep gossip," you state that gossip is "illicit speculation, information, knowledge." You question, however, the "we" that makes up the antecedent of the "our"—can you expand on this? Is "our deep gossip" an aspect of all disempowered humans everywhere? Is it, in this way, a kind of universal condition for collection, elucidation, and remembrance to both subvert the narratives of the majority and maintain the knowledge and purpose of groups in danger of tyranny and oppression?*

Abelove: You're asking me about the missing "we" in the Ginsberg poem. Most evidently the missing 'we' would be queer. But Ginsberg suggests a larger 'we' as well—a 'we' that would, as you say, include disempowered people everywhere—marginalized, threatened people—and also those who identify with them and want to share in their lives and struggles and cultures.

AEGIS: *I thought it was an interesting way to phrase it, to leave it [deep gossip] open, something for everyone within that specific group...*

Abelove: It is both a commitment to a particular group, and an open-ended commitment, too.

AEGIS: *At the end of the introduction, you scribe that "funny emotions should be genuinely valued, and deep gossip should be genuinely shared," and that the theme of the book is "Funny emotions lead the way to deep gossip, and deep gossip fosters funny emotions." We were curious if you could expand on this thought. Why are "funny emotions" and "deep gossip" so valuable to us? Can there be negative sides to these types of discourse?*

Abelove: "Funny," I say there, means first of all pleasure-giving. Surely pleasure is valuable. Can it be "negative?" Of course. A regard for pleasure only might be irresponsible. If I emphasize the value of "funny" emotions, it isn't because I think they are invariably or uniquely valuable, it's because I think their value is underestimated, or dis-acknowledged, particularly perhaps in American life.

AEGIS: *In your essay "Freud, Male Homosexuality, and the Americans" you give an exposition of Freud's views contra what could be labeled the "western Moralists." Freud himself, it appears, believed that the reason for the distinctly American focus on ethical goals, and moral treatment in the practice of psychoanalysis is the result of Americans being "extraordinarily over repressed...sexually vapid, flavorless" and that "[s]exual morality as...American society—defines it, seems very despicable to me." How do you assess this statement in contempo-*

*rary America? Are we sexually vapid? We do, after all have perhaps the world's largest legal and illicit sexual markets, and many decry the "lack of moralism" inherent in our supposedly secular country. What, if any, credence do you give to the thought that our moralist, religious bent comes from our commodified, consumer life?*

Abelove: Are Americans sexually vapid, comparatively? (Laughs) I can't say; I haven't universal sexual experience! Freud was right to note an American tendency to moralism, but he may have been mistaken in his explanation of what produced the tendency. On the subject of American history he wasn't especially impressive. I doubt that our abiding moralism comes only or chiefly from a commercialized consumer lifestyle. That lifestyle may influence it, of course. I'd look elsewhere for an explanation of American moralism—which, by the way, I'd distinguish sharply from morality. As you know, the European settlers of New England, the mid-Atlantic and Southern colonies were overwhelmingly religious and their religiosity has deeply affected the development of American culture. It's an obvious point, almost *too* obvious of a point, I'm almost embarrassed to make such a point, but we are in various ways the heirs of these settlers still. It doesn't matter if we're Christian, secularist, Jewish, Moslem, the moralistic religious outlook of the settlers is a powerful shaper of our destiny.

AEGIS: *Besides the question of morality in American psychoanalysis, there are undertones of a basic schism in thought about homosexuality in general; namely, the debate on the importance of biology as a determining factor in one being a homosexual. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century there was a very open eugenics movement in this country, one that has since been, at least ostensibly, stopped. Can you speak to the question of biology as a determining factor in one's sexuality? Also, has the moralist trend really ever stopped, even with the dropping of the pathologized definition of homosexuality by the APA? Have these thoughts been subverted and continued through religious "re-indoctrination" camps, and, perhaps most importantly, does our society as a whole still basically align with the early twentieth century view of homosexuality?*

Abelove: There are a lot of questions here; I don't know if I can handle them all in one short answer. I put no credence in any biological or quasi-biological work that I've seen on the etiology of homosexuality. For one thing, it isn't clear what those who write on this topic mean by the term "homosexual." Is a homosexual someone who has lots of sexual experiences with other men? That would be one definition. Is it also someone who desires to have such experiences but doesn't in fact have them? Is it also someone who desires to, tries it once, but never does it again, marries a woman and has five children with her? And could we talk about a homosexual child? I mean, suppose that he dresses up in girl's clothes; he has crushes on little boys at school, and wears his mom's high heels. Is that homosexual? None of the studies known to me has a persuasive and rigorous account of what "homosexual" is and isn't, what the category includes and excludes. So how good could their account of its origins be? That's just the beginning of a critique; I could expand it. But let me turn to the second part of your question. Is our society still aligned with an early twentieth-century view of homosexuality? A better, sharper point of comparison would probably be the mid-twentieth century, at the height of the Cold War. Even on that basis, the comparison would be difficult, because in this matter our society is enormously varied. It's different in Salt Lake City than in New York City, differ-

ent in Manhattan than in Staten Island. On the whole, yes, the view is not unlike what it was in the 1950's.

AEGIS: *On page 24, in your essay "History of Sexual Intercourse," you bring up what you call a "discomfiting dual feeling" in regards to drawing conclusions about the history of sexual behavior. You remark that the feeling is ideologically determined, and that in the measure we give way to it and allow it to govern us we reinforce that essentialism that so disempowers us both as historians and as political beings." Can you elaborate on this line of thought?*

Abelove: What I was talking about when I said "discomfiting dual feeling" is a common emotional reaction based on the devoutly held superstition that sexual practices are eternal. If they are eternal, then any contrary demonstration of their mutability will confuse us. We will perhaps feel that the demonstration is too bizarre to be cogent yet at the same time too obvious to be interesting. This is a discomfiting dual feeling. It's also a defense. ....All human practice is mutable, and what is usually and tendentiously called "sexual intercourse" is just another human practice. I like to think that I've shown that it became increasingly popular during the eighteenth century in England.

AEGIS: *You speculate that the marked rise in population in late eighteenth-century England is dependent upon (or perhaps coeval to) the rise of industry—of capitalism. Are you suggesting that the ways in which capitalism impacted the commodification of time, the loss of free expression in exchange for materialist wealth, etc. are reflected by a loss of sexual freedom? That the emphasis on production in capitalism transcended material things and morphed sex into a mode of production (reproduction)?*

Abelove: I'm interested in how the rise in the use of sexual intercourse so-called relates to the concurrent rise of a modern industrial economy. I don't see the one as dependent on the other, but rather as related to the other. And in the end I suggest that they may be in a sense the same, just different aspects of a single development.

AEGIS: *Do you think this take on sexuality is so controversial because of unwillingness on the part of one discipline [demographers] to accept conclusions from someone outside of their discipline? People seem to be very guarded about their area of expertise, and this seems to be something that theory in general subverts.*

Abelove: Right, and most people seem to believe that we human beings have always had this kind of sex (sexual intercourse so-called) primarily. It seems obvious. Or natural.

AEGIS: *If the reading of Walden as an "antinovel," one in which there is a total rejection of the typical discourses of "domesticity, romantic love, and marriage, and the white bourgeois family" is the real intent of the book, despite efforts to canonize it otherwise, what would the reaction be if it were published for the first time in modern America? Are we, as a body politic, any more open to the themes of simplicity and alternative lifestyle than those who originally called Thoreau "eccentric" for being "non-domestic" in his approach to life?*

Abelove: These are very interesting questions. I'm flattered that you all have been reading my work. It's what every author wants—to be responded to—and it happens too seldom, at least to academic authors like me. ... If it were published now [*Walden*] ... that's hard to imagine isn't it? Do people still read it in high school?

AEGIS: *Yes, sophomore year, parts of it—being one with nature, simplifying your life—it does not go into the areas of the book that we read about in your essay.*

Abelove: It might be initially helpful to think of it as a book less about nature, about being outside, than about being inside ..... Did you see the recent headlines concerning the 2005 census?

AEGIS: *50.2% households are not headed by a married couple.*

Abelove: But a certain sort of domesticity, combined with romantic love, is still culturally dominant. That is the discourse that largely governs acceptable behavior today.

AEGIS: *Even if you're not married, you're emulating it.*

Abelove: Right, and that's true for gay people too, mostly .....Americans seem to believe that you're only grown-up when you're in a stable, loving couple .

AEGIS: *People appear to be profoundly unsettled by being alone.*

Abelove: Well, they think they are. because they believe they're supposed to be with another person. But *Walden* is a beautiful book about just that misconception. Thoreau's argument is that it isn't being solo that makes you feel lonely. You're quite as likely to feel lonely in company or in a couple. What makes you feel lonely is something else. What that something else is, is his topic. And whether you're with someone else or not is quite irrelevant....

AEGIS: *In the same essay, you write that "Thoreau represents himself as despising the American state as much as he requires the American nation." In many ways, it appears that the bulk of those within the state, the body politic, have similar problems with the kind of life that Thoreau was advocating. In light of this, do you think that "actions," as you call them, have the real potential to subvert dominant narratives within this country (and the world)?*

Abelove: The potential? Certainly, I do think that the book has the potential to unsettle. I don't know that I'd say "subvert." In a movement like *Queer Nation*, I see a kind of Thoreauvian ethic and transgressivilty in politics....

AEGIS: *In your essay "The Queering of Lesbian/Gay History" you make a statement about the disconnect between the "from the margins" approach of past gay and lesbian students and authors that shows how contemporary "queer" students have moved away from the trope of marginalization. You elaborate that part of the reason for this is that "These queer students, the self is a myth, a delusion, a sham, a part of the ideology of humanism, and in*

*their eyes humanism has long since been fundamentally and irrevocably discredited...along with the self, they also resist as misleading and destructive the concepts of originality and inner depth.” We were wondering if you could elaborate on the influence and development of post-modern theory on your students’ concept of “self” and “action.” What do you think they advocate in place of these “outdated” tropes of humanism? If original action is not possible then how can narratives (such as anti-queer narratives, gender identity, or historical narratives) be subverted? Maybe you can speak to how it’s changed from the writing? We are just interested in the story as a whole, the shift from your generation to the present day.*

Abelove: From gay to queer? What I wanted to suggest is the view they had, the post-modern view they had then, wasn’t one which they had altogether developed ideas about. It was something that they had absorbed. So, I don’t know if they could always have given a very coherent account of why they thought the “self” was an illusion, but that’s what they thought. That was a while ago. Talking about Wesleyan students now, which I also did with your teachers last night... we were talking about the differences between my students and their students—you. Right now at Wesleyan, students are concerned with transgender. They’re deeply interested in the whole transgender phenomenon, queer students especially, but lots of other students, too. This interest of theirs is very new, I haven’t seen it before. And at the start of my course in queer theory last year, my students asked me if they could go around the room, and each claim a pronoun. And some of those who might have been thought to be women wanted to be called “he.” And then some others said that they thought that since there were a lot of genders, that gender was a thing that was multiple, they wanted to be designated by the pronoun “zie,” an invented pronoun that represented all the potential varieties of gender beyond the usual male/female binary. When I was young, and second-wave feminism was starting, we all learned not to use the pronoun “he” for everyone. We learned to use “he or she” instead. My students now don’t much like that usage because it seems to them to suggest that there are only two genders. So what we found to be progressive in the 60’s many now think of as reactionary. A group of them has sent a message to all faculty members, asking for a new sense of sensitivity to the use of pronouns in the classroom.

AEGIS: *What are your views on “authenticity?” I mean “authentic” insofar as an authentic person seems to require a definite “self,” in order to recognize that goal, to motivate one’s self to achieve it. It seems like with many of your students there’s this pervasive assumption that humanism does not work. What, if anything, has replaced that attitude with your students? What do they advocate?*

Abelove: Well, this was 10 or more years ago.

AEGIS: *Or even now. Are they coming back to humanism?*

Abelove: No, I don’t think so. I think that their critique of authenticity has been set aside, but that doesn’t mean that authenticity has been embraced. Their interest in trans-genderism suggests that they would wish to continue saying—if they were asked—that there is no such thing as an authentic gender.





AEGIS: *Could you elaborate more on why there are more queer/post-modern theory courses in English departments than history departments? Or, perhaps you could speak to the divide between the disciplines and theory? There is a seemingly rigid alienation of theory in “mainstream” philosophical and historical circles. Butler speaks to this in the last chapter of Undoing Gender—what are your thoughts on these rigid demarcations in the disciplines, and the future of Theory?*

Abelove: Yes, that would be her [Butler’s] view. I’m a multi-disciplinary, or maybe I should say, an *undisciplined* creature. I did my PhD in History, but I’m an English professor and have been for many years. Since you’ve read my book, you’ll know that I write about philosophy and literature and history and politics. To be confined to a singular discipline would seem to me to be anti-intellectual. I don’t know how to be interested in literature without being interested in history and politics and philosophy and more.

AEGIS: *Do you think as theory grows it will foster more interdisciplinary mixtures? As the disciplines stand, they seem so rigid.*

Abelove: I don’t know that theory is what we would use as a way of transcending the disciplines. The disciplines are good ways to learn things, but they aren’t necessarily good ways to practice intellectually. It is true that we have to learn how to scan a poem; it is true that we need to learn something about the history of the revolutionary movement in France. I mean, we learn one in an English course, the other in a History course, and then we know them. But if you want to practice as an intellectual, or even as an alert citizen, you’re going to have to put what you’ve learned and your ideas together in a coherent way in your head, and then think! It isn’t theory I think that does that, saliently and exclusively for us, not at all. What we have to resist is rather, not so much the un-theoretical, well, we have to resist that too. We have to resist the guildish, the merely professional....

AEGIS: *Thank you for your time.*

# Facebook.com: Preparing Future Leaders with Ignorance

● ● ● *Colleen Deel*

## Introduction

In February 2004 Mark Zuckerberg, a Harvard University undergraduate student, started the website and the revolution Facebook.com. The exclusive social network based in academia has moved from being a Harvard online student directory to being one of the most important web sites on the internet reaching 2,100 colleges campuses and 7 million users.<sup>1</sup> This site, ranked as the 7<sup>th</sup> most trafficked on the web, is a place where students in college get their own web page to create a profile that reflects their interests, friends, school information and photographs.<sup>2</sup> Although this community is a good way for students to stay connected, it is also a breeding ground for views on gender and normativity.

Facebook.com is a site that has its roots in the heterosexual binary and I plans on showing that. I will argue that there is an obvious acceptance of heterosexuality as a lifestyle in the Facebook.com community and that any queer lifestyle is ignored. I do not profess to know the actual motivation behind Zuckerberg's invention, only what Facebook.com is intentionally or unintentionally doing to students and members of the community. I will provide an overview of the theory that will be used to form the argument against Facebook.com. I will then lay out a short history of sexuality in the United States starting with the mid-twentieth century and the roots of corruption in views of sexuality that exist today. I will also show how heterosexuality became even more mainstreamed during this time. An overview of Facebook.com and its features will also be present in the paper. Finally, the theory will be applied to Facebook.com to help understand the problems with this social web community.

Facebook.com, as will be shown, binds members into conforming to particular gendered norms that in turn shape the college student's mind when thinking about particular gendered ideas. The community is based around dating and a few sexual innuendoes that all find their home in the heterosexual binary. The site offers a minimal amount of creativity for the members to work with and the options that are offered are ones focused on a very narrow view of sexuality and being. The online Facebook.com community is centered around the members, most commonly college students, who present their lives and personalities through the guise of the site. The connections that occur throughout each college in Facebook.com set standards for the students logging on each day in what they should put in their profiles and what they should share with the public. Generally, the things that are being shown through the profiles not only include interests, but also lifestyles. These lifestyles are of the college type—partying, friends and even schoolwork. Although each separate Facebook.com page includes different things, the norms that the campus accepts are seemingly still adhered to. For example, when the web-based community was opened to Otterbein College, the school I currently attend, in 2005 the response was overwhelming. Today, there are around 2,500 Otterbein College members of Facebook.com from a college that only has around 3,100 students.<sup>3</sup> Although some of these members may be alumni of Otterbein, it is still clear that a majority of the students that are currently in school are part of the community. Although

Facebook.com is not technically affiliated with Otterbein College, the high number of Otterbein Facebook.com members lends itself to be seen as a way for Otterbein students to make new friends without having to leave one's desk chair.

### **First, What Do I Mean By Gender?**

As stated above, I am arguing that there is a major problem with the gender terms that are used (and not used) in Facebook.com. But gender is a tricky subject. There are opposing viewpoints in the United States when it comes to the word "gender," clarification is needed as to what I actually mean. When the word "gender" is used, the definition implied is, "a language, a system of meanings and symbols, along with the rules, privileges, and punishments pertaining to their use—for power and sexuality (masculinity and femininity, strength and vulnerability, action and passivity, dominance and weakness)."<sup>4</sup> The language that is used when gender is asserted is one that, as the definition implies, may be cutting and harsh. Jaques Derrida's theory of language is a prime example of how language is used, especially with a tricky word like gender. He wrote that language is only a complex system of meanings, it is not, what is commonly believed, a concrete set of words that can be visually represented. Instead, all language is only a naming game that favors the idea of understanding from sameness.<sup>5</sup> One of the main problems in language in Western culture, Derrida believed, is that language "exclusively concerns intentionality." He theorized this because the words that do exist are not fully able to explain or understand what one is actually saying.<sup>6</sup> Derrida is concerned with the truth, as he sees it, that there is not a "realness" in language. Instead, something like the word "gender" only means what a person may believe it to mean. The definition is culturally specific and culture is constantly changing and therefore so is language itself, including the word gender.

Because language plays a massive part in gender in society, the language does not just stop with restricting those into the term. It goes on to restrict society's view of what actually constitutes gender. This is what is referred to as the gender binary. The binary leaves much to be desired because only masculinity/male and femininity/female are considered in the realms of gender on a consistent basis. These restrictions ignore anyone else who dares try to enter the binary and does not fall within its boundaries.<sup>7</sup> Because language is so important in this paper, even though Derrida does not think it is efficient, it will have to do in explaining the problems with Facebook.com.

### **The Heterosexual Matrix, Gender Norms and the Livable Life**

The Facebook.com community is involved in some way with the heterosexual matrix, gender norms and the ability to have a livable life. In order to argue for or against these ideas, first I must explain what they are. Theorist Judith Butler has defined the heterosexual matrix in a way that makes the wrongdoings of those inside the matrix want to search for a way out. This matrix is created mostly by heterosexuals who do not have the knowledge or the language outside of the heterosexual world to comprehend homosexuality.<sup>8</sup> Because of this naiveté, heterosexuals also believe that sex is a natural thing, which leads to their assumption that sexes are different (in other words that there is an obvious binary present for them). The matrix is built around the heterosexual desire and a differentiation of the sexes. Because the matrix is one that everyone is forced to live in, it creates problems for anyone who wants to live outside of this close-minded language and knowledge of only the heterosexual.<sup>9</sup> It is clear that many of those inside the heterosexual matrix do not even know it exists although they are playing into it every day.

Within this matrix there is the notion of norms that work with people's lives. With this idea, a few questions first need to be asked, including, what is a norm and how does it encapsulate society? Norms are easily explained by law professor Richard Epstein as:

The norms in question set the standards of cooperative behavior for individuals living and working in groups. When all individuals comply with the applicable norm, the group is able to achieve its ideal cooperative solution, and most likely will (probably by other norms) find some acceptable way of distributing fairly the cooperative surplus generated by norm compliance.<sup>10</sup>

When only examining this definition, norms seem to be worthwhile ideas to follow in order to appease society. Yet, there are problems surrounding this idea, especially if one is using the example of the gendered norm. These problems arise from the gender norms that exist around the United States today because those norms are limited to only accepting heterosexuality. As Butler states in her book *Bodies That Matter*, "The efforts to denaturalize sexuality and gender have taken as their main enemy those normative frameworks of compulsory heterosexuality that operate through the naturalization and reification of heterosexist norms."<sup>11</sup> So, there are efforts to undermine these gendered norms that effect society, but they are met with a fierce resistance because, as Butler believes, there is a "normative conception of gender" in the world, a human's actual personhood can be undone through norms. When a person is undone they are not able to live life in a way that those around them can recognize because the undone are not within the accepted norms of society.<sup>12</sup>

Butler's concept of the livable life is one not to be taken lightly because it revolves around the realness of the queer community (as seen by those outside of this realm) and the norms (which lead to violence) that they must endure. Not only are these norms ones that are harsh for many in the queer community, they are not norms that are able to be changed from one generation to the next. Instead, these norms are taught at a young age, perhaps unintentionally, commonly through a child's own examination of society. Butler has come to recognize that, "We come into the world on the condition that the social world is already there, laying the ground work for us."<sup>13</sup> We are not all able to create a new society and new norms every generation, instead these things are there for us and that makes the normalities even harder to change. Butler uses the example that she cannot exist without someone else recognizing that she exists. This recognition only happens if she is essentially normal. Overall, as Butler says, "the sense of possibility pertaining to me must first be imagined from somewhere else before I can begin to imagine myself."<sup>14</sup> This imagination clause creates an entire world of people that essentially do not exist in the actual world. Although some may argue that it is not worth living in this "natural" world because it is centered around the heterosexual matrix, which is at some points a valid argument. Yet overall, I would claim, it is still better to be able to live a life than to have it taken away just because the life one is living is not accepted by the majority (or at least those producing the gender norms).

These unlivable lives are ones that may seem trivial to one that is already able to live his/her life without anyone questioning his/her living, but "for those who are still looking to become possible, possibility is a necessity."<sup>15</sup> It is almost incomprehensible to one that has not gone through the trauma of being considered impossible until one has been there. It

seems as if this is an obvious societal norm that needs to be changed immediately, but it is not that easy. Subjects that are transgendered are often times “criminalized and pathologized” and those that actually cross gender “risk internment and imprisonment.” This may seem impossible and one may ask why the state is not stepping in, but it is actually the state that is inflicting such violence, not saving those from the problem.<sup>16</sup>

It is also important to mention the difference between what one may think is unlivable and what is actually an unlivable life. It seems that many like to say that they are “oppressed” and therefore have an unlivable life. But this is not the case, “to be oppressed means that you already exist as a subject of some kind.”<sup>17</sup> The actual unlivable life is one that, “to find that you are fundamentally unintelligible (indeed, the laws of culture and of language find you to be an impossibility) is that you have not yet achieved access to human to find yourself speaking only and always as if you were human, but with the sense that you are not, to find that your language is hollow, that no recognition is forthcoming because the norms by which recognition takes place are not in your favor.”<sup>18</sup> It is more than oppression, it is incomprehension.

It seems that the best way to get outside of this heterosexual matrix (in order for everyone to be able to live a livable life) is to ignore said matrix and live a more true life, but this is also nearly impossible while the heterosexual matrix is so prevalent in the United States. Butler argues that:

indeed, the capacity to develop a critical relation to these norms presupposes a distance from them, an ability to suspend or defer the need for them, even as there is a desire for norms that might let one live. The critical relation depends as well on a capacity, invariably collective, to articulate an alternative, minority version of sustaining norms or ideals that enable me to act. If I am someone who cannot *be* without *doing*, then the conditions of my doing are, in part, the conditions of my existence. If my doing is dependent on what is done to me or, rather, the ways in which I am done by norms, then the possibility of my persistence as an “I” depends upon my being able to do something with what is done with me...The “I” that I am finds itself at once constitute by norms and dependent on them but also endeavors to live in ways that maintain critical and transformative relations to them<sup>19</sup>

So it seems that there is little one can do in this search for a way to undermine the norms that are hurting so many today. But it is possible, although difficult, to live in the matrix and still remain a critic.

### The Dualism of M/F

The online community of Facebook.com has much of its content centered upon the male/female binary. Actually, one of the first pieces of information that a member is asked to put up on his/her site is “gender.” But these categories did not start on Facebook.com, they had been emphasized many years before this site came into existence. In actuality it seems, as theorist Monique Wittig states, “Masculine/Feminine, male/female are the categories which serve to conceal the fact that social differences always belong to an economic, political, ideological disorder.”<sup>20</sup> Therefore, the categories are so prevalent because of their ability to

connect one's thought from male and female to successful and unsuccessful or rich and poor. It is clear, as Wittig believes, "there is no sex. There is but sex that is oppressed and sex that oppresses."<sup>21</sup> Obviously, in the United States today, the perception of sexuality and gender is centered around the sex that oppresses, male and the sex that is oppressed, female.

Dualisms seemed to begin when philosophers begin to theorize about a process of reasoning. The dualism in thought was a way to examine how one would be able to reason in order to weigh consequences and options. Aristotle, for example, decided on a two series (dualism) set of reasoning. In this, the main categories were essentially labeled "good" and "bad." Under this line of reasoning, it seems that what would be considered "good" would be the terms, male, straight, one, etc. To further reasoning, it would seem that female, gay and many would be considered "bad." Wittig's conclusion of this Aristotelian way of thinking is that "good" would be godlike while non-being is being anything else.<sup>22</sup> The dualism then can be transferred into the sexual dualism and again females are considered the lesser sex and therefore, less of a being.

Not only are there problems, as stated above, of the duality in general, but there are also problems that society gives to those that are outside of these options just because this question is asked. For example, a biological woman may dress and act as what society perceives a man to be. This woman may believe herself to be a lesbian because she is sexually attracted to women, but there is a problem that occurs when this happens. Should this woman tell people her gender is a man and that she enjoys the company of women or should this woman say she is a woman and also likes women. There is no language for this woman to use in order to express how she feels. Wittig firmly stated that, "The situation of lesbians here and now in society, whether they know it or not, is located philosophically (politically) beyond the categories of sex."<sup>23</sup> There is no language, as Derrida, I think, would agree, to explain the plight of lesbians. The phrase "whether they know it or not" may be the most damning of Wittig's entire statement because there are many lesbians (and many others in the queer community) that do not understand the extent of their oppression.

Along with this dualism, as previously mentioned, is the degradation of the female within the duality of the sexes that is so commonly preached in the United States. It is clear that "pornographic images, films, magazines photos, publicity posters on the walls of the cities, constitute a discourse...it signifies that women are dominated."<sup>24</sup> The domination mostly comes from the media which has a way of getting inside the minds of men and women telling them what they should like or dislike. From this media society is being fed an idea, or an ideal, that is now becoming what should be "normal." As Susan Bordo theorized in her book *The Male Body*, "Most (women) merely want to look 'normal' in a culture where 'normal' is being radically redefined by the surgeons, the actresses, and of course the aesthetics of the media." But it does not end there. The images that women see are also seen by men and they too are fed the same food. Men are also being enticed by the idea that a normal woman is quite similar in looks to Heidi Klum.<sup>25</sup> Perhaps, the only way to get out of this circle would be to change the media and the ideals they portray.

### **The Rise of a New Age**

Because Facebook.com only started a few years ago there is clearly something that occurred before the rise of Facebook, or for that matter the rise of web communities in general, that prompted the overly heterosexuality of Facebook.com. It seems that one of the more important revolutions pertaining to this topic in the United States occurred in

May of 1960. The approval from the Food and Drug Administration of one pill changed the relationships between men and women in society.<sup>26</sup> The birth control pill was a revolution in a pack and all a woman needed to do to prevent pregnancy was to take a tiny pill once a day. When the pill was approved, a revolution of sorts began and the 1960s soon became an era of liberation for (heterosexual) women and their lifestyles. Within this revolution came later, and even fewer marriages, more sexual intercourse outside of marriage and the ability for women to work during their twenties, thirties and forties instead of caring for a baby.<sup>27</sup> Not only did this revolution make way for a new type of (heterosexual) woman, wife and sexual partner, it also created a new type of culture. The culture that took rise was more sexually liberating and allowed a lot more “free love” (sex without consequences) and a more sexually open culture.

This massive overhaul in the way that women and men could live had the obvious sexually liberating consequences and also a more general culture liberation. Not long before the birth control pill was introduced into American culture, the magazine *Playboy* became a household name. The magazine was introduced in 1953 and made pornography mainstream.<sup>28</sup> The magazine itself made pornography a more accepted idea and the national consciousness was expanded to accept the concept of the “men magazine” in the public that featured full length, unapologetic pictures of nude women.<sup>29</sup> *Playboy* also offered a new twist on the type of women that were posing for magazines of this type. The biographies that were given next to the nude pictures of women were those of the proverbial “girl next door.” The biographies depicted women that had morals and were ethically sound. These women were also written to be humanitarians and to have strong family ties.<sup>30</sup> The wholesomeness of the playmates that were shown in *Playboy* created an opening for women everywhere in America to have aspirations to be a playmate too. Although it may not have been a dream of most 18-year-old girls, the innocence that was portrayed opened the door for any woman to see value in a playmate career. This could lead to women believing that showing off their sexuality, be it by posing nude in a magazine or something a little more subtle, is a good thing that men enjoy and women should too.

Although the birth control pill and the rise in the acceptance of “men’s magazines” by the general public are both, as considered by some, extremely sexually forward and important moments in American Twentieth century history, they are also extreme implications to the types of sexuality that became accepted and prevalent in later times. The ability for women to have sexual relations with men with fewer consequences than before the birth control pill, and the rise in sexually crazed males for females posing in a magazine opened the door for a heightened heterosexual community. The norms that were present from the stated beginning did not include any alternative lifestyles and therefore minds were closed against those queer lifestyles in the future. *Playboy* (and now the many other pornographic magazines) are advertised towards men and include female fantasies for men with which to delude themselves. Birth control also allowed heterosexual relations to prosper even more in the United States because women and men did not have to worry about pregnancy. Any queer lives were pushed out of normality because straight sexuality was so much more accessible than ever before. Wittig wrote on the problems of the straight mind that has evolved in this society. She stated:

I can only underline the oppressive character that the straight mind is clothed in its tendency to immediately universalize its production of concepts into general laws which claim to hold true for all societies, all



epochs, all individuals. Thus one speaks of *the* exchange of women, *the* differences between the sexes...giving an absolute meaning to these concepts when they are only categories founded upon heterosexuality, or thought which produces the differences between the sexes as a political and philosophical dogma.<sup>31</sup>

As Wittig explained here, the meaning of the words of difference are used everyday that perpetuate the heteronormativity in the United States. Just as the meanings of this heterosexual movement in society is perpetuated every time a men's magazine is purchased by a man to view women and every time a woman disregards queer relationships thinking that using birth control while having sex is a must for every woman.

### **Facebook.com—the Revolution**

The concept of Facebook.com is to create an online social network among college students. Although there are other networks outside of college networks (including location, work and high school) they are all individual networks. The closed atmosphere of each network (and the check system that exists in order to get into a network, which will be explained below) is different than other communities that permeate the Internet. The uniqueness behind this particular site is that it only allows those who have a valid college email address to join a college network. This validity gives the site more concreteness in its social community as opposed to other popular online communities like Myspace.com where there is little to no accountability because anyone who has access to the Internet can join and pose as anyone they want to be. The students who log onto Facebook.com every day know who are generally going to come across in his/her<sup>32</sup> own network (their particular college) and these people will normally be 18 to 24 year olds. The members of Facebook.com are forced through the design of the site to be who he/she actually is, a college student. The fluidity that is allowed for people's identity in other online community networks is not as much as an option on Facebook.com. The members of Facebook.com have themselves to answer to and also the other people in their network that not only see them online but also presumably see them on campus, classes, dormitories and dining halls.

Another security device that Facebook.com utilizes is the requirement of every member of each particular college Facebook.com community to first prove they have a working college or university email address, as the log in name for each student who gets an account. In order for a person to become a member of a college community, they must reply to a conformation email that is sent to the valid campus email address to be activated. This keeps tabs on who is able to get inside of a college community on Facebook, which has the possibility of making those in the social network feel safer about giving information about themselves on their own page. Because each member's email address links them to a particular school this automatically becomes the network that the member is in. For example, if a student attends The Ohio State University and provides an OSU email address, they are automatically put into the OSU Facebook.com network. This means that the student at OSU can initially only see Facebook.com pages of other students that attend that University. As a consequence, every college and university in the Facebook.com network has their own specific mini-network that only students from that college or university are able to be on. This creates an atmosphere of intimacy with the students in their university because they are only connected to the other students that attend.



The page that each member of the online community can create has a variety of options for each particular student's interests. With this being said, each member can decide how much or how little they want to put on their individual page. After signing up for an account, the new member is given a variety of fields that they can choose to fill in or to leave blank. The first category of information is a mandatory field that states which social network that person is in. This includes what college the member goes to and what year they are planning to graduate. In this primary field there is also the place for the member's name. Because, as previously stated, Facebook.com is based more on truthfulness than other online communities, the name that is entered is usually the actual name of student instead of, as other online communities may have, a nickname or a quote (this is even semi-regulated by Facebook.com administrators, because the name of the member must be approved before changed).

The second line of information on one's Facebook.com page states the secondary information about a person that is not mandatory to fill-in in order to have an account. The first line in this "basic info" is the sex of the member. The two options are male and female; there is no "other" or "transgender" to choose from or a box to type in another sex that one may identify with. The second line is devoted to whom the person is "interested in." The member has the option to check that they are either interested in "men" or "women." They also have the ability to check both or neither if they so choose. In order to examine how many people list themselves as being "interested in" their same gender I searched on the Otterbein College network of Facebook.com for everyone that chose to say they were a "woman" and that they were "interested in" women. At Otterbein College 23 women came up as being "interested in" women. I then did the same for men "interested in" men. In this search 30 men matched the inquiry. Although it seems that a decent amount of people say they are "interested in" their same sex this does not take into account the unknown, which includes those that say they are "interested in" the same sex only to be ironic or for only platonic reasons. Overall, it still seems as if the queer community is lacking recognition on Facebook. The third line is also centered around the relationship status of the member. In this line the member can tell their relationship status from the options of "single," "in a relationship," "in an open relationship," "engaged," "married" and "it's complicated." Not only do they have these choices, but in the latter five options, they can also assign a person that is also a member of Facebook, with whom they are in a relationship. This leaves the field open for a student to say they are "in a relationship" (or any of the other four choices) with anyone that concurs.

This emphasis on relationships is one of the most obvious parts of Facebook.com that is open for theory application. It seems that facebook.com is not only trying to be a community that connects college students to each other in order to discuss classes and interests, it also is clearly an online social community that is centered on relationships. First and foremost Facebook.com does not allow for a member whom does not identify with the terms "male" or "female" to tell the viewer of the web site what they actually believe themselves to be. Identity should be considered more fluid than just two boxes and two choices. Now it seems that with the second and third line Facebook.com begins to reaffirm itself as queer-friendly because any member could input that they are interested in, and even in a relationship with, someone of the same or opposite sex. The problem that occurs is the fact that Facebook.com already deterred a student from choosing anything else but being predominately "male" or "female." The heterosexual matrix is largely a part of these first

few questions that members are given to fill in. Putting the heterosexual matrix aside there are also clear problems with the wording that Facebook.com allows for the members. Going back to the language theory of Derrida, gender should not even be an issue on each member's Facebook.com web page to begin with. Language itself does not have the ability to allow for everyone to be able to say what one believes themselves to be on a certain day. There should also be a disregard for this area of information in general because it certainly would not matter in a society if the heterosexual matrix did not exist.

The outcome of living in the heterosexual matrix is that, for example, the Facebook.com community presents its members as limited to a small amount of "real" living. Many of the members of the Facebook.com community are not only addicted to the site but are also being fed (and feeding) false and damning information to other members. For example, members are living within the heterosexual matrix, and just as the creator of Facebook.com may not know the ill effects of buying into this norm-demanding society, the effects are there. Students that sign up for this site without knowledge outside of the nature they perceive as true are also, quite possibly on accident, hurting those that are not allowed to live this "real" life (the queer community). The site in general is unhealthy for students at colleges. This is because the college years are usually considered the forming years of a life. These lives are being held back because of Facebook.com instead of being allowed to flourish into new ideas. Instead of the Facebook.com arena that leads students into a false consciousness, learning (and embracing) should take place about different cultures and sexualities.

After the first few lines of the basic information that can be provided on the Facebook.com page, the question of what a member is "looking for" is then asked. In this area the member has several boxes that can be checked, "friendship," "a relationship," "whatever I can get," "dating" and "random play." With the ability to check these different categories each member is able to tell each page viewer what they want in their relationship. Because these options are stated on a page that works within the reality of truth (more so than other online communities) any other member would have the ability to take these options, that are chosen by the page owner, literally. Especially because the next portion of information that one gives is the "contact info." The information that students are able to fill in ranges from email address, AOL screen names to even telephone number and street address. The information that is allowed in this section opens the door for members to be contacted in multiple ways from friends, classmates and even strangers in the same network. In all of this, one could easily become a victim on Facebook.com (and in the realm of reality). For example, a woman is already degraded in the media, and the societal realm. Given the option to also tick the "random play" box paired with a dorm address may not lead to the happiest of visitors. This is playing within the realm of common heterosexual relationships, and because the woman is more likely to become the victim than the man (considering common victimhood outside of online relationships), the use of gender within Facebook.com is promoting the cyclic nature of the heterosexual victim and aggressor relationship.

After this area is a section that is labeled "personal info" which includes the entire surface information one might give while getting to know someone for the first time. This portion of the page includes political views, interests, favorite music, films, books and television, and students are even able to put in their favorite quotes. In this portion of the site the member is able to put as much or as little information as they care. Some students fill up the page with any band or movie they have even slightly heard of for the "favorite" section

while other members leave the entire section blank. At the end of the bulk of the page, the interest section, members have the option to put more information about themselves in the “about me” column. In this area members are able to write anything else about themselves that is not included above. This section can range from a member just writing “I’m an open book, just ask!” to another member writing full paragraphs telling the reader more about themselves. Following the interest section, there is a new block of information that gives a viewer the member’s educational information. The college that the student is attending is automatically put up on the site in this area. But if a member wants to add more, there are places open for when the student will graduate, the concentration of that student in their school and the high school they attended. He/she also has the options of posting his/her work information (job, company, and amount of time at particular job) and the courses he/she is currently enrolled in.

One of the most recent additions to Facebook.com is the “mini-feed.” On each member’s home page, there is a list of things that this member’s friends recently did to his/her Facebook.com page. For example, on my home page, at any moment, I could find out that a friend updated his picture, that another changed her “about me” or that one friend wrote on another’s wall. This new option has come under some fire from the Facebook.com community because it seemed to be a way to “stalk” friend’s, but this heat died down quickly after members saw the (what was quickly thought of as) benefits on constantly knowing what Facebook.com “friends” have done to their sites at all times. In addition to the mini-feed there is also now a “status” option for any member to update their status for his/her friends to see. For example, if Patty wants to tell people within her network that she is shopping until she drops that day, she can put that in her status bar so other members and friends can know what Patty is currently doing, in addition to the general information that Patty provides that is updated less regularly.

Perhaps Facebook.com would be a well traveled site with only those options for members, but there is actually more that a member can do just with the information given in the interests section. After the information about a person is posted each item becomes a link. When one clicks this link one can be lead to anyone else, in his/her network, and friends list that also put this interest in his/her profile. When this feature is utilized the social connections begin. Members are able to see who else likes his/her favorite band Hawthorn Heights or the book *1984* just by clicking the link on the profile page. In order for me to see how often queer ideas actually get presented on Facebook.com as interests, I searched multiple words to see how often there was a hit on the Otterbein College Facebook.com network. I searched the words: transgender, lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, intersex, GLBT and transsexual. Within all these searches only seven profiles appeared to include these words. To break it down, the word queer received six hits and the word lesbian received one, the rest came up with nothing. This means one of two things, either seven people (including me) are interested in those categories at Otterbein College or only seven people were not too scared to place those words in their profile. In fact, many people might not even realize that the oppression is happening, but subconsciously, there is oppression taking place, and the person being “scared” might only be after the realization of the overbearing matrix. Many students may be interested in GLBT rights, but the option is not even available, in his or her eyes, because it is not allowed within the matrix in the first place. This is one example of how there is quite possibly a cluster of queer people who are being pushed, from an outside source, into living a “livable”

life. Although in this case, the life is still not (maybe even less so) “livable” because they are conforming to something they are not.

After a member finds out who else has similar interests, connections can be made. The member can “friend” the other member or even send a message telling how interesting the found member is. When these connections are forged, members have a high likelihood of meeting on or around campus because they both supposedly go to the same school. Not only are members able to click on their interests to view similar people, other areas of each Facebook.com page also include the possibility for connections. For example, if a member chooses to let their high school be known on his/her page this also becomes a link to everyone else within Facebook.com that also attended that high school. Although the members cannot see their high school classmates’ pages unless they are within each others networks they can “friend” the old high school friends in order to keep in touch after high school. This leads to a widening of a person’s network. Although this feature is one that promotes friend-making, there can also be a dark side to the search. Now, the ability for the heterosexual to find the people around them that are queer is easier than ever. All one has to do is type in a “queer” word and a profile may come up which opens the door for hate crimes to occur.

Often times the social networking that is done on Facebook.com leads to new friends and acquaintances meeting outside of a cyber chat room, because Facebook.com is centered around locational networks instead of an entire world network that is usually the case on other social networking websites. Because each network is more tightly bound than other social networks may be, what each person puts on their personal page may differ from what they would put on a page that people they did not know would see. This means that the pages on Facebook.com could be considered more truthful than those of, say, a Myspace.com page (another online social network). Myspace.com promotes the validity of each member, but the check system is not in place as it is in Facebook. I could have a Myspace page in which I am only friends with people I know from the “real world” in which I input all the correct information about my life, but I could just as easily pose as a 14 year old boy from Sweden (I could even have both pages with little difficulty). The people that are creating Facebook.com pages in a college network, alternatively, have to see their social network in person on a daily basis in the social and academic realms of their college. Therefore, it is also possible, and what I am arguing is more likely the case, that many members are too afraid of bending norms that occur in his/her college setting because he/she have to inevitably answer to those peers that may view the Facebook.com page.

As previously mentioned, Facebook.com is guilty of having a few options for members that are enamored with sexual innuendo. One of the more obvious ones that many members may use quite innocently is the “poke” feature. Many of the features that Facebook.com boasts of today are a relatively new phenomenon on the site, but the poking feature has been an option from the beginning.<sup>33</sup> When a member wants to connected with another member’s Facebook.com page there are several options given. Two have already been discussed, (messaging and writing on the wall of a member’s page) but the third is a more abstract way of communication. When member A “pokes” member B, member B gets a message on his/her front page the next time he/she logs on to the site that member A has sent a poke. Member B has the option of ignoring the poke “hiding” it from view (which essentially throws that message away) or “poking” member A back. Although the concept is simple, the interpretations of what a “poke” actually means are endless. “Poking” seems like

a pointless gesture but to many members it considered much more. A member may “poke” another because there is an attraction to that other member or the “poke” may be a simple “hello.” But when a message appears for a member that says “Member C has poked you” this could mean so much more. It might just be a cyber gesture of greeting or acknowledgement or it might be an invitation for more physical poking in person. Yet still others use the “poke” as an annoyance and continually cyber “poke” someone, or everyone, so that every time a member logs on, a new “poke message” appears. These are just a few possibilities to show how ambiguous the poke truly is.

One of the more outlandish but commonly constructed ideas behind the “poke” is the option for a member to poke another member in a strictly literal sexual way, alluding to wanting to be sexually “poked.” This brings about a heterosexual image for those imagining the word in a sexual sense. Even if the language is not interpreted sexually there is still the ability of that interpretation. The consequence of the virtual “poke” can be interpreted in as many ways as the poke itself is considered, but because the sexual nature of the word and the idea of the action, sexuality is often conjured in a member’s head while giving or receiving pokes. With the help of a society that does not show or discuss much outside of the heterosexual matrix (especially not homosexual relations) the meaning of the poke for most people is possibly going to reinforce the heterosexual matrix, heterosexual sex, and therefore the dominance of the man (as the man gives and the woman receives during heterosexual sex).

When Facebook.com was first created there was only the ability for each member to show one picture of themselves (presumably their face) on the main page. This has changed with the addition of the Facebook.com photo album. This feature allows each Facebook.com member to upload an infinite amount of photos onto the main page in the form of photo albums. The photo albums that members put on each Facebook.com page range from pictures of a favorite horse to pictures of a spring break trip to the island of Bora Bora. This option is not only another way for members to represent themselves to his/her network but it is also extremely popular. The amount of photos one can upload seem actually to be endless, I have personally one “friend” that has 32 photo albums on her page (and counting). Each photo album can hold 60 pictures so she has approximately 1920 photos on her site than any member that she allows in her friend circle can access. When I look through the photo albums of my Facebook.com “friends” I see a large amount of photos taken at bars and parties. Some of these parties that have picture albums on Facebook.com have alcohol in the pictures and are clearly taken in Otterbein College housing. Although Otterbein College is a dry campus and anyone who has alcohol in a dorm or on campus would be punished by school officials; Otterbein College members still seem to put these incriminating photographs up on his/her site. It is clear that the image that these members are putting out about themselves on their page is more important to them than any possible punishment that may go along with the photographs.

With the addition of the photo album a new cornerstone of Facebook.com came into being. Not only are the members of Facebook.com able to tell viewers of their site about themselves, these members can now show viewers about themselves through photography too. Here again the heterosexual matrix is kept intact. Although Facebook.com does not have a box to tick that says “I affirm that I the pictures I am uploading are heterosexual in nature,” it is implied that putting up pictures that are outside of the matrix and the livable life would be negative for any member. This is true because every member within a college Facebook.

com network is being, as previously stated, judged by others within the network. Many of the photographs that members put up are ones that reaffirm their (hetero)sexuality. Many members that consider themselves heterosexual upload photographs with their boyfriend or girlfriend and the love they share for the opposite sex. For example, one female member in the Otterbein College network has an entire album that is named “Dave” which is filled with pictures of her boyfriend, Dave, and her cuddling. It also is apparent that many photo albums are created by females that include, what many would say are, derogatory pictures while wearing revealing clothing or acting in a sexual way presumably in order to attain attention from the male sex. One album in question is titled “MORE of PANAMA CITY BIATCH!!” and it includes pictures of the female that uploaded the pictures and her friends participating in a wet tee-shirt contest in Panama City. Because this member states that she is solely interested in “men” and “dating” them she is presumably placing those photos on her site in order to attract some men to date.<sup>34</sup>

The final interesting aspect of the web community is the ability for all members to create and join “groups.” Members can join groups that are created either in his/her own network or universal groups for anyone within the entire Facebook.com community (which spans all networks, college and otherwise) and anyone can join (or create) as many groups as he/she wants. Although some groups in each network are just online extensions of physical groups that meet at the college regularly (for example a cooking group that meets on campus might also have a Facebook.com group to keep members informed online), others are more fun in nature. One group in the Otterbein College network that is interesting to the topic at hand is the group named, “I’m Completely Heterosexual 101%” (it will now be referred to as “Heterosexual”). Each Facebook.com group includes a description, founder and (presumably, if anyone joins) members. “Heterosexual’s” description reads, “We like the opposite sex, as simple as that. I don’t think I need to tell you what a girl does for me. And girls, I know/ hope you feel the same way, only opposite...lol...open to straight guys and girls alike.” “Heterosexual” also includes a “recent news” section which reads, “Congratulations, your straight! (sic) If you aren’t or have a problem, then leave. We would leave you be if you’d stop having those parades. Don’t see us having straight parades??”<sup>35</sup> The group name, along with its description and news is the epitome of how, not only a heterosexual matrix is adhered to blindly by the society within, but also the ability for those in the heterosexual matrix to scare those outside back inside. It is also appropriate to note that “Heterosexual” claims 51 members from the Otterbein College network. Those who already have a livable life are the gatekeepers to heterosexuality and livability. These members (along with anyone who has these thoughts) are trying to keep their heterosexual life apparent to the point of degradation to those outside of the matrix. “Heterosexual” is not the only group in Otterbein College’s network that is concerned with this matter, but it is the most degrading to those that consider themselves not heterosexual. Obviously, many of the groups that Otterbein College has are not as harsh, but because groups like “Heterosexual” exist, the scare tactics are there and ready to injure the queer community.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, it is clear that the web community of Facebook.com has many of its roots in what would be considered an online dating web site. The first several pieces of information that members give out on their site include their relationship status and preferences. There is a great deal of authority that the Facebook.com creators have somehow



acquired because of the web site's popularity. Zuckerberg, and his employees, have changed the language of a generation of youth with this online community. College students today are able to use the words like "poke" and "friended," and the phrase "I'm looking for random play" with a general consensus of meaning from peers. Yet it seems that language is not the only thing that has been shaped through the conception and popularity of Facebook. College students have more knowledge about peers and the students that go to school with them because of the ability to view each other's Facebook.com page. If a Facebook.com user does not know a person they see around campus that they potentially are interested in, all the member has to do is type the name of the student in the Facebook.com search engine and more likely than not that student's page will appear. This knowledge is the type that Facebook.com members may boast about, but it is not all simply fun and games. Being able to find out all about a person from just a click on the computer can have its dire effects, especially if gender norms are concerned. This country has seen its hate crimes against the queer community, and this community is a perfect way for a few ignorant college students find their next victim. This type of thinking is what is promoted as one examines the layout of each Facebook.com page.

The Facebook.com community creates an environment that is not queer-friendly. Therefore, students that consider themselves heterosexual (and maybe even heterosexist) are being fed the ability through links and searches to find members that allow the knowledge of their queer sexuality onto their page. Perhaps if Facebook.com changed some of its language, allowing for more creativity, and policed those groups and members that profess their hatred for anyone outside of the heterosexual matrix this generation of Facebook.com users would be opened up to a new set of languages and ideas. With these simple changes perhaps those that consider themselves "101% heterosexual" will realize the problems that are continued within the Facebook.com community. Along with this more open site, a language would come into being that is lacking for the queer community and therefore an acceptance or even realization of a livable life would be made for those outside of the matrix. If small changes are made to the language and arena of Facebook, it might lead to a less ignorant class of humans being sent out into society after those formative college years.

## Notes

1 Mark Zuckerberg, "About Facebook" [Available Online] Accessed on 14 May 2006 from <http://facebook.com/about.php>.

2 ibid

3 Mark Zuckerberg, "Facebook.com Edit" [Available Online] Accessed on 29, May 2006 from <http://otterbein.facebook.com/editaccount.php?networks>

Otterbein College Front Page [Available Online] Accessed on 29, May 2006 from <http://www.otterbein.edu/default.asp>

4 Riki Wilchins, *Queer Theory, Gender Theory*. (Los Angeles: Alyson Books. 2004), 35.

5 Ibid, 35-36.

6 Peter Sedgwick, *Descartes to Derrida*. (Malden: Blackwell Publishers Inc. 2001), 205.

7 Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity (Thinking Gender)*. (New York: Routledge. 1989), 13-15.

8 Although I say that heterosexuals are the only ones to perpetuate the heterosexual matrix, this is not entirely true. There are many times when I have seen someone that is queer not only live within this matrix but agree with it. Although they may be but performing this act, and do not believe in it, this does not matter. Therefore, the heterosexual matrix is one that the queer community can be a part of even though they are not being true to themselves.

9 Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity (Thinking Gender)*. (New York: Routledge. 1989), 69-70.

10 Richard A. Epstein, "Enforcing Norms: When the Law gets in the Way." *The Communitarian Reader: Beyond the Essentials*. Ed. Etzioni, Amitai et al. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2004), 81.

11 Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter*. (New York: Routledge. 1993), 93.

12 Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender*. (New York: Routledge. 2004), 1.

13 Ibid. 32

14 Ibid. 32.

15 Ibid. 31.

16 Ibid. 30.

17 Ibid. 30.

18 Ibid. 30.

19 Ibid. 3

20 Monique Wittig, "The Category of Sex." .” *The Straight Mind and Other Essays*. (Boston: Beacon Press. 1992), 2.

21 Ibid. 2.

22 Monique Wittig, "Homo Sum." *The Straight Mind and Other Essays*. (Boston: Beacon Press. 1992), 49-51.

23 Ibid. 47.

24 Monique Wittig, "The Straight Mind" *The Straight Mind and Other Essays*. (Boston: Beacon Press. 1992), 25.

25 Susan Bordo, *The Male Body: The New Look at Men in Public and Private*. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 1999), 283 & 285.

26 Rodger Streitmatter, *Sex Sells: The Media's Journey from Repression to Obsession*. (Boston: Westview Press. 2004), 1.

27 Ibid. 1-2.

28 Ibid. 16.

29 Ibid. 16.

30 Ibid. 19.

31 Monique Wittig, "The Straight Mind,." *The Straight Mind and Other Essays*. (Boston: Beacon Press. 1992), 27.

32 I am using "he/she" and "his/her" in a strictly to stay within correct English grammar for papers. I realize that using these terms does not allow, perhaps, for those who consider themselves outside of those two choices. But, as stated before, there are not words within the English language that allow for those outside of the binary to live, and so it is impossible for me to use anything else in conjuncture with a group of people.

33 For example the ability for each member to post unlimited photo albums just occurred in the world of facebook.com in the past few months. This interesting feature will be discussed later in this paper.



34 I am not condoning the liberation of sexuality, I am simply showing that sexuality is rampant, but only *heterosexuality*.

35 Mark Zuckerberg, "I'm Completely Heterosexual 101%" [Available Online] Accessed on 31, May 2006 from <http://otterbein.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2202384447>

# Jesus: Apocalyptic Messiah or Counter Apocalyptic Social Prophet? An Alternate View of Jesus and Why the Church is Called to Serve the Oppressed

● ● ● Nick Kiger

Proof Text:

Luke 6:20-21

*Congratulations, you poor! God's domain belongs to you. Congratulations, you hungry! You will have a feast. Congratulations, you who weep now! You will laugh.<sup>1</sup>*

## Introduction

Christians around the world do not seem to agree on much these days, but presumably all Christians define themselves as followers of Jesus. What I mean by this is the Christian Church (which I use all-inclusively to describe the Christian movement) sees Jesus as its authority and inspiration. It is unfortunately apparent that the Church is having difficulty defining the purpose for its presence, and at many times is getting its priorities tangled in politics and a narrow interpretation of scripture. The Church is ultimately having trouble defining who it should serve, and how it should do so.

An example of this confusion can be seen in two different decisions made by the Roman Catholic Church in the United States. The Archdiocese of Los Angeles decided they would not uphold a law prohibiting them from offering assistance to illegal immigrants. The law, if passed, would require churches and other charities to require documentation in return for services (Watanabe 2006, 1). Cardinal Roger M. Mahoney stated he would instruct priests to defy the law (1). On the other side of the country, the Archdiocese of Boston has decided to discontinue adoption services because a Massachusetts state law prohibits agencies from discriminating against gay and lesbian couples in adoption cases. The Archdiocese refuses to offer adoption services until the law is changed to allow the Roman Catholic Church to make exceptions due to religious beliefs (Johnson 2006). It seems that in these two decisions, the Roman Catholic Church has decided to break one law to help a group of oppressed people, and has refused service to another group that would have been within the law.

These recent decisions made by the Church are laden with confusion about who the Church should serve. This apparent confusion causes me to raise a few questions. First, does the Church have the responsibility to assist the oppressed? Second, is it acceptable to ignore a certain group of the oppressed? And last, if my earlier assumption was right about Jesus being the Church's authority and inspiration, I am led to ask, what instructions does Jesus' message give to the Church. The first and second questions rely on the answer to the third. We must determine what Jesus' message was in order to determine the approach the Church

should take towards the people it serves.

### **Searching For Jesus' Message**

Since Jesus did and said many things, interpreting his message is no simple task. For the purpose of argument I will use two contrasting views of the historical Jesus. The first view, held by a majority of Christians, sees Jesus as the messiah, offering an apocalyptic message. In this view, the historical Jesus came to earth as the messiah to deliver a message about his second coming and the end of time. Marcus Borg (1999) offers four ways to view Jesus' messianic status:

1. Jesus thought he was and was the messiah. This view is the one accepted by most Christians.
2. Jesus thought he was but was not the messiah.
3. Jesus did not think he was and was not the messiah
4. Jesus may not have thought he was the messiah but was (56).

All four views focus mostly on whether or not Jesus believed himself to be the messiah. I will come back to this list later.

The second view, and the view I will argue for, is that Jesus was not concerned with the end of time, or being the messiah, but rather he was a social prophet, and his message was in fact counter-apocalyptic.

It is important to establish Jesus' messianic status because whether or not Jesus believed himself to be the messiah would ultimately determine his motivation. If Jesus believed himself to be the messiah, then his message would have been focused on his fulfillment of prophecy and other messianic characteristics. I place Jesus, as I believe Borg does as well, somewhere between not thinking and not being the messiah (Borg's third), and not thinking and being the messiah (Borg's fourth). I place Jesus in this category, because I believe Jesus' message was not motivated by his messianic status, whether he knew or considered himself to be the messiah or not. If Jesus' focus was on bringing the end of time, he would not have been able to focus his entire ministry and message on serving the oppressed. Through looking at Jesus' words and actions, we can see that Jesus identified with the oppressed, gave preference to the oppressed, and was a servant to the oppressed, thus making service to the oppressed the motivation for his ministry.

### **A Breakdown of Luke in Defense of a Social Prophet Status:**

I will attempt to defend my position by using a breakdown of the sayings in Luke. First, to be consistent, I have used only the sayings decided to be red or pink by the Jesus Seminar. Red and pink designations indicate the saying to be plausibly original to Jesus. No black or gray sayings are included.<sup>2</sup> I have developed a list of criteria to use in categorizing the saying as either "social-prophet," "apocalyptic," or "miscellaneous":

#### **Social-Prophet:**

- The saying directly speaks to, or, about an individual or group of oppressed people (i.e. women, children, toll collectors etc.).
- The saying points out corruption in the social, political and religious systems of Jesus' time.
- The saying gives instructions for good human relationships
- The saying defines God's domain in terms not usually associated with the notion of God's domain (i.e. God's domain is like a mustard seed).

- The Saying defines God's domain as being currently present (Counter-apocalyptic).
- The saying emphasizes the inclusion of the oppressed in God's domain.
- The saying emphasizes God's concern for humanity.

#### **Apocalyptic:**

- The saying defines God's domain as coming in the future, or not currently present.
- The saying refers to the end of time
- The saying includes Jesus' self-identification as the messiah (i.e. Son of Adam).
- The saying includes language about a final judgment.

#### **Miscellaneous:**

- The saying shows wisdom of Jesus, but does not include any of the criteria for social prophet, counter-apocalyptic, or apocalyptic sayings
- The saying contains certain instructions for apostles, but does not directly criticize social practices of Jesus' time.
- The saying could not be definitely placed in one of the two previous categories.

Using the above criteria, I separated the red and pink sayings in Luke into one of the categories.

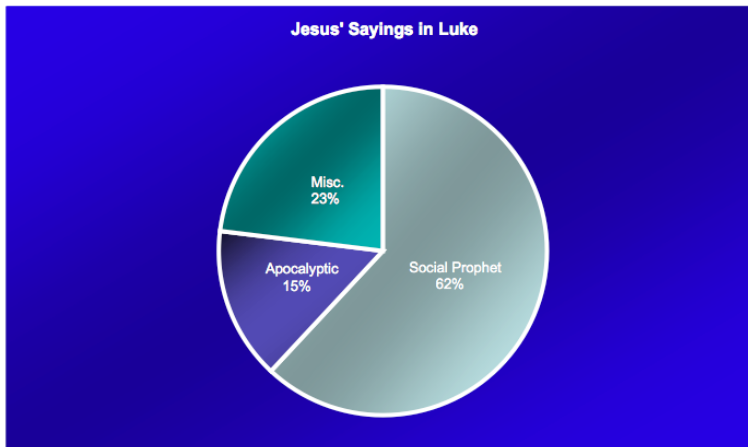


Figure 1

As Figure 1 shows, the red and pink sayings were majority social prophet sayings according to my criteria. This breakdown of Luke shows that Jesus' message was hugely devoted to being a social prophet.

#### **Defining the Oppressed**

A defining aspect of Jesus' social prophet status is his preference for, and focus on, the oppressed. Because this paper is meant to be applied on a practical level, I will now focus on this aspect of Jesus' message. Before I go further, I think it is appropriate to define my understanding of the oppressed in a first century context. Today we view the oppressed mainly as those who are poor, or those who are an abused minority. In the first century these groups would be seen as oppressed as well, but added to the list would be some groups that we do not usually view as oppressed, at least not to the extent that they were in the first century. Robert W. Funk (2002) defines four groups of oppressed people with whom Jesus would have interacted: the sick, tax collectors, women, and children. Each of these groups was considered

oppressed in the first century (48-55). It is important to first understand how and why these groups were oppressed in order to understand Jesus' interaction with them.

Today we have pity on sick people because their illness is a burden to them physically and financially. In Jesus' society they not only had these reasons for pity, but were oppressed in being labeled "unclean." Being labeled as "unclean" was devastating to a person's social existence. Leviticus 13:3-4 discusses the Jewish law concerning sickness; in this case Leviticus is describing skin disease. The passage states that the priest shall examine a sore on the skin to determine whether or not the person is "ceremonially unclean." If the skin is in a certain condition, then the priest can place the infected in isolation for up to fourteen days. In a society governed by Jewish law, not only were the sick isolated from society, but they were prohibited from having regular social relationships and were denied religious observances if pronounced to be "ceremonially unclean" (50).

Tax collectors are quite different from the other groups of the oppressed. It seems many tax collectors were responsible for bringing oppression upon themselves. They gained the reputation of being liars, cheats and thieves (50). Because of their reputation, tax collectors were often grouped with sinners, whores, and pagans (51). Although they had a heightened status in the political system, being compared to these groups would have made being a tax collector just as bad as being a prostitute or even a murderer. This shows that Jesus even identified with criminals. Despite their political and economic status, tax collectors were nonetheless socially isolated, and Jesus recognized this.

Throughout history women have been oppressed. There was no exception to this in the first century. Women were considered practically invisible outside of the home. During periods of menstruation, women were given the same label of unclean as those who were sick. Women had separate social roles, and it was not customary for them to associate with men (48). Because of this, women were not allowed to be involved in social, religious, or political affairs. They were seen as unimportant in these matters.

Children in the first century had a contingent existence. Many factors determined whether or not a child would be accepted into the family, which was ultimately the father's decision (49). The first factor was simply whether or not the father wished to accept the child as his. Most female babies were rejected (49). Babies with deformities were often killed (49). If the family could not afford to raise the child it was abandoned, and even wealthy families abandoned children who were threatening to their estate (49). Children were only born to carry on the family name, do work to help the family, and to take care of the parents when they reached old age.

### **Jesus' Identification With the Oppressed**

We must next establish why Jesus would have any reason to want to serve the oppressed. To do this, I will explain the political situation in the first century, and how Jesus fit into it.

Not only was Jesus' society dominated by Roman rule, but it was governed by both Roman and Jewish law, Jesus being at odds with both in many instances. Borg (1999) explains the "domination system" in which Jesus functioned. Borg gives three characteristics of this system:

1. Politics were dominated by an obvious hierarchy. The Roman rulers and Jewish leaders, usually controlled by the Romans, made most of the decisions. No

voice was given to the commoner.

2. The peasant class was exploited for economic production. Although they generated the majority of the wealth, it was taken from them through taxation and upper class' control of land ownership.
3. The will of God was used to justify oppression and the power of the elite (71-72).

Jesus was not only a part of this system, but given his status he was oppressed by it as well. As Borg points out, Jesus experienced injustice. This was not only an experience, but a factor that shaped Jesus and his ministry (65). The gospels claim that Jesus' family was part of the peasant class. That Joseph was a carpenter or mason would most certainly land Jesus' family in this category. Being from Nazareth, Jesus lived near the city of Sepphoris, a major city where he would have been able to experience social injustices firsthand. Because of his experience of social oppression, Jesus had a reason to make it the motivation for his ministry.

Because of the domination system and because of his experience, Jesus spent his entire ministry interacting with the oppressed. Jesus had many means of expressing his connection to the oppressed, as I will show. He used these means to interact with the poor, the sick, the tax collectors, women, and children. He did all of this in the face of the Roman Empire and the Jewish hierarchy. I understand, along with many scholars that Jesus' interaction with the oppressed ultimately lead to his death. Not only then did Jesus serve the poor, but if my understanding is correct, he sacrificed himself for them as well.

### **Jesus' Interaction With the Oppressed**

Jesus' social prophet message greatly emphasized service to the oppressed and is evident in the synoptics' description of his interaction with them. The familiar instances in the gospels where Jesus casts out demons, heals, and eats with many different people are often not acknowledged for their impact on society. Given the synoptics' portrayal of Jesus' status as a teacher and a prophet, simple interaction with the oppressed alone, without a secondary action such as healing, would have still been of great social importance to certain groups of people.

As mentioned above, healing was one way in which Jesus chose to serve the oppressed. Luke 5:12-13 gives an example of one of Jesus' healings: "And it so happened while he was in one of the towns, there was this man covered with leprosy. Seeing Jesus, he knelt with his face to the ground and begged him, 'Sir, if you want to, you can make me clean.' Jesus stretched out his hand, touched him, and says, 'Okay-you're clean!'" As mentioned before, people with leprosy were considered unclean. Not only did Jesus allow the man to come close to him, but in the act of healing him, Jesus touched the man. This would have made Jesus unclean himself, and Jewish leaders very uncomfortable. Jesus pronouncing the man as clean allows him to skip the process of becoming clean through means of the temple, which would have been the traditional process. Instead the man is clean not because of a ceremony, but because Jesus said so. As Funk says, Jesus "restores [the man] to full standing in human society" (Funk 50).

Jesus also disregarded social customs in service to the oppressed, especially in regard to women, children, and tax collectors. In these instances Jesus simply used interaction as a form of service. Jesus surrounded himself with female followers. In allowing women to accompany him in public, Jesus was allowing them to defy a social norm (Funk 48). Perhaps this was a message to those in charge that women were acceptable in the same social situa-

tions as men were, and should be allowed to interact with men.

An instance in Mark 10:13-14, shows Jesus' own disciples as the oppressors of a group of children: "And they would bring children to him so he could lay hands on them, but the disciples scolded them. Then Jesus grew indignant when he saw this and said to them: 'Let the children come up to me, don't try to stop them. After all, God's domain belongs to people like that.'" Jesus is obviously irate with his disciples, and allows the children to come to him. These children, who were not really understood as complete persons, but only as a means for income, according to Jesus, were worthy of God's kingdom.

Matthew 9:10-11 gives another instance in which Jesus breaks a social code in order to interact with the oppressed, this time tax collectors: "And it so happened while he was dining in [Matthew's] house that many toll collectors and sinners showed up just then and dined with Jesus and his disciples. And, whenever the Pharisees saw this, they would question his disciples: 'Why does your teacher eat with toll collectors and sinners?'" At the end of this passage it is clearly apparent the Jewish leaders were uncomfortable with Jesus' actions.

### **Inheriting God's Domain**

I have mentioned a few instances in which Jesus promises the oppressed God's domain or the "kingdom of God." God's domain is usually viewed as God's imperial rule, when God becomes the supreme ruler, ending evil and corruption. This was a Jewish belief that someday there would be a world of peace and freedom. Luke 6:20 is a prime example of Jesus' promise to the oppressed when he says "Congratulations, you poor! God's domain belongs to you." The inheritance of God's domain would have been important to the oppressed.

Being regulated by laws and social customs, the oppressed were likely to feel they could not be a part of God's domain. Jesus makes it very clear God's domain is attainable by all, and in fact God's domain is already on Earth. In Luke 17:21 Jesus says "God's imperial rule is right there in your presence," which I describe as a counter-apocalyptic statement. In Mark 10:13-14 Jesus promises God's domain to children. In doing this, Jesus gives the message that the oppressed have the upper-hand, and those who oppress them are condemned, and refused the inheritance of God's domain. Thus, the perfect world that was being anticipated was not only on Earth and present, but was reserved for the oppressed and those who served them.

### **Would Jesus Recognize the Church?**

In light of all of this, I must wonder if Jesus would say that the Church has picked up on his message. I do not think that Jesus would be particularly happy with the Church today. In fact, I am sure he would find it unrecognizable. As the test case in the beginning shows, the Church has decided to ignore the needs of children who are in need of adoption services, and to refuse to respect the rights of gay and lesbian couples to adopt. I do not think that Jesus would commend such picking and choosing.

Some denominations of the Church have actually taken on the role of the oppressor in many instances. The best example is many denominations of the Church's widespread oppression of gays and lesbians. The Church views gays and lesbians as outsiders. A popular response to this claim is that homosexuality is a sin, and the Church should oppress it. My response would be that Jesus made no such exceptions in the area of sexuality. He served outsiders ("sinners") just as he served insiders ("the holy").<sup>3</sup> His interaction with tax collectors and prostitutes are striking examples of such interaction. In Matthew 25:46, the oppressor is not only condemned, but will "head for everlasting punishment."

### **Conclusion: An Alternate View of Jesus and What it Means for the Church**

Today the Church has rooted itself in political debate. Fundamentalists have taken to the narrow interpretation of scripture. Many Christians rely only on what is said from the pulpit on Sunday, and they dismiss any academic inquiry. Churches focus more on numbers than productivity. It is easy in these conditions for Jesus' message to be distorted. It is easy in these conditions for people to turn to religion for the wrong reasons. It seems that the Church has been plagued by a season of confusion.

The alternate view of Jesus and his message may help to clear up some of this confusion. As Christians begin to put Jesus' words and actions into perspective, they can know the impact of Jesus' constant interaction with the oppressed, and his expectation that the same impact would be made long after his death. The Church needs to realize its ability to be a voice to the oppressed just as Jesus was. If the Church will recognize that the presence of God's domain is not a distant apocalyptic thought, but is here in our presence, it can see more clearly its role in the care for those isolated by society.

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## Notes

- 1 All references to Biblical scripture come from The Scholars Version.
- 2 Although the work of the Jesus Seminar has been debated, the issue is too large to contend with in this study.
- 3 I would like to point out the "hate the sin, not the sinner" mentality is not what I am supporting here. I am simply trying to explain how Jesus served even those made outsiders by the Church, regardless of whether or not they were committing a "sin."



# The Rise of Marxist Thought in Twentieth Century Vietnam

● ● ● *Halle Neiderman*

At the turn of the twentieth century, the French entered Vietnam with plans to modernize the country. The western power argued that modernization of the country would be in the best interests of both the French and Vietnamese. The French forced their entry into the country for the economic and military benefits of having a colony. The Vietnamese were not privy to modernization and favored their communal farming to the tenant farming or factory work they were soon to endure. For the Vietnamese, this modernization would be a complete breach of their old system and in its place would be a new system, which they did not understand, want, or appreciate. During the first half of the twentieth century, the Vietnamese attempted to reform French colonial laws to create a less oppressive government. When reform ideas did not work, the Vietnamese turned to revolutionary ideas, and it was the communists that advocated a revolt from the colonial oppressor. Thus, French colonization and its radical changes in Vietnam ultimately led to Vietnamese communism because the colonizers failed to change the process of modernization as reform movements spread throughout the country.

Vietnam was populated almost entirely with communal and sustenance farmers and as the French invaded and colonized the country, the enforcement of their new laws and taxes left the communal farmers destitute and without resources to better their situation. Colonial oppression forced poor workers into starvation because the French had imposed such high taxes on rice that they could not afford the rice patties that were their main form of sustenance. This imperialist form of colonization was foreign to the Vietnamese, and though both the Chinese and Japanese occupied the country previously, the citizens had not faced such oppression until the French occupied the country. The French completely altered their socio-cultural systems and kept the poor class begging and the elite class dominating. The Vietnamese may not have favored communism, but with great leaders and promises of better economic situations, the majority of the ninety percent of farmers and workers began migrating toward communism and Marxist revolutionary groups.

Prior to French colonization and its attempt at the modernization of Vietnam, Vietnam was an inherently communal society, though never decisively socialist. Leadership in villages and social customs stemmed from the deep rooted Chinese Confucian theology that helped guide the Vietnamese for centuries. Despite being a monarchical state, pre-colonial Vietnam had a hierarchy of power within each village. At the top of this hierarchy was the “council of notables” which was consisted of elders within the village. Though these elders were inherently powerful, in pre-colonial Vietnam being on the council was more of a chore than a power position.<sup>1</sup> An elder on the council of notables did not necessarily gain power or fortune from his post; he merely looked after the well-being of his village and people. This socio-political role suggests that exploitation of power was not an issue within the Vietnamese villages. The “chores” of the council of notables demonstrate that those in power did not focus on personal gain, but instead focused on the collective good of the villages.

In pre-colonial Vietnam there was also a striking hierarchy between the genders, placing the male at the top and the female as the subordinate. In this institution native men were given rights to vote and to land distribution. The political rights that the Vietnamese men were given was the right to eat and speak. These inalienable rights help to illustrate what the Vietnamese held valuable in their culture: food and voiced opinions. These rights were guaranteed by the council of notables, who were granted power by the village men. This power, however, could not be given until the elder held a banquet for the entire village. Since a village-wide banquet was expensive this age-old custom ensured only the elite ruled the village; however, the banquet was a way to break social barriers and legitimize the future leadership of the elder in the council of notables. The feast itself was a symbolic dinner to prove to the villagers that the elder would guarantee food during his term and look after their rights.<sup>2</sup> The feast also illustrates the communal nature of the country, as each person shares a meal together to initiate their new leader who ensures his people food for their lifetime.

While the communal persona of Vietnam is expressed through the villages' hierarchical customs, their distribution of land was an obvious communal endeavor. In theory, most of the land was public land, owned by the state. Those that did privately own land were residents of the village, very rarely was a non-resident a private landowner. The wealthier were looked down upon for having land, and often Vietnamese courts would confiscate land from the wealthier elite and give it to the peasants. The pre-colonial imperial powers believed that large landowners were the cause of social anarchy and if peasants had access to land they would provide the country with a solid foundation and stable tax revenue.<sup>3</sup> Within this system, the welfare of the community was contingent on cooperation of every individual, meaning cultivation of lands and taxpaying from the peasants and overseeing the villages but not exploiting power from the council of notables. It was understood that peasant ownership of small land plots alongside unexploited taxpaying was best for the stability of the villages; this equated to an economy based on local consumption, not international trade.<sup>4</sup> The local economy ensured low taxes and allowed for the council of notables to recognize and fix problems as they arose.

The heart of this system was ensuring each peasant family owned their plot of land. Within pre-colonial Vietnam there were three different ways villages achieved communal landownership. The most widely used form of communal landownership was the "mouth-share" land, which distributed land to each male in the village, providing them with the ability to attain basic sustenance. Secondly, communal land was rented out by the wealthy as a means for the community to raise money for the village teacher, banquets, social welfare, or any other village costs that may be necessary. The last of the village land was given to the leading officials, soldiers, and the soldiers' families. This tradition was carried out until the French occupied Vietnam and the Nguyen dynasty had confiscated and redistributed considerable amounts of land for the peasantry.<sup>5</sup> The local market economy and communal land ownership were in place. Vietnam's economy was stable before the French entered the country, redistributed land, and opened up Vietnamese markets.

When the French occupied and colonized Vietnam, the villages' communal framework was destroyed. The French used the council of notables as a way to enforce power, not as a way to ensure the village was running properly. Those on the council of notable now had to collect taxes, control political dissent, and implement colonial laws.<sup>6</sup> This change gives the socio-economic elite the ability to overpower the village, whereas before they were only

overseeing its operations. One institution, the Services of the Gouvernement General, was established to extract more taxes from the peasants, oversee public works, and implement the alcohol, opium, and salt monopolies.<sup>7</sup> These institutions not only created discontent among the Vietnamese, but they also created the building blocks for long term exploitation and reliance on international markets. The peasant exploitation and Vietnam's entrance into international trade placed an unstable economy in the hands of the rest of the world. When the world-wide economy did well, Vietnamese trade did well; however, when the world economy was down, the Vietnamese trade suffered as well as the peasants.

These institutional changes raised tensions among the peasants, but transformed the traditional values and structure of the socio-economic elite. For instance, the council of notables, under French rule, now had control over political dissent. Controlling political dissent meant the Vietnamese men were losing one of their traditional rights: the right to his voice. In several instances, men who attempted to protest high taxes were punished by flogging.<sup>8</sup> Further transformations in values of the elite are revealed as admittance into the council of notables has changed. No longer did men need to hold a banquet as a symbol of his goodwill toward the peasants. With French colonization, power was received through monetary bribes, which meant the more an elder was willing to pay the better his position would be.<sup>9</sup> The council of notables soon lost their ability to help the collective well-being of the village. Instead, it is found that the notables remained in their posts during the French colonization and were able to increase their wealth and their landholdings.<sup>10</sup> This is an obvious misuse of power in Vietnamese society. The council of notables was not a committee meant for personal gain, and the increase of landholdings for the wealthy had been frowned upon for centuries. This act not only allowed these elitists more wealth and land, but it took away the livelihood of the peasants, leaving many of them landless and therefore jobless.

Aside from using the council of notables to oversee the seizure and concession of peasant land, the French had different ideas than the natives on how to use the Vietnamese land and property. Where the pre-colonial Vietnamese stressed peasant ownership and a stable economy, the French favored private ownership. This was a lucrative endeavor for the French because it required exploited tenant farmers and instability, leaving the peasants with no choice but to work on the land and make money for the French and the new international markets.<sup>11</sup> The French colonizers distributed land in Vietnam as they had distributed land in all their colonies: they granted private ownership of large amounts of land at a fixed cost, at an auction, or free of charge. The land that the French had given away was mostly from peasants who fled during the French invasion. This land was likely given to French settlers in Vietnam, French companies, or Vietnamese men serving the French.<sup>12</sup> This concession of land was in direct conflict with the peasants. When a peasant returned after fleeing during the invasion, his land was given away and he was forced to work on what used to be his land as a sharecropper or tenant farmer. By 1931, in Annamm, the property owning peasants dropped to one in eight people. In Cochinchina only 255,000 people owned land and from those that owned land, 90,000 rented it out.<sup>13</sup> Not only did the redistribution of land conflict with Vietnamese views on the distribution of land, but it was in direct conflict with the Vietnamese right to eat. By taking away a family's livelihood, the French took away its main form of sustenance and forced them to work on the land that was stripped from them. While the peasants are still able to make a living as sharecroppers and tenant farmers, the stripping of their land coupled with new taxes and an inability to voice opinions forced many Vietnamese peasants into starvation.

Their sharecropping jobs were not yielding enough output for them to make a living.

The insecurity and unrest in Vietnam in the 1920s and 1930s is tied to the exploitation achieved from the colonial forces and their use of Vietnamese lands. The most debilitating facet of the seizure and redistribution of Vietnamese lands was that it enabled the French to more effectively place taxes on the people of the villages.<sup>14</sup> Pre-colonial Vietnam had only two taxes, but by the end of French rule, the colonizers had nineteen taxes in place and a monopoly in the opium trade.<sup>15</sup> Among the various taxes issued, the French issued taxes on fishing, distilling rice into alcohol, and heavier salt tax.<sup>16</sup> Not only did these taxes further exploit and oppress the Vietnamese, they exploited the forests and rivers as well. The Vietnamese viewed these things as free gifts of nature, and thought the French did not have the right to tax such items. Furthermore, these taxes kept the peasants from creating a livelihood and from eating. With these taxes, a peasant could not afford to fish to make living, and if he could he would have to sell or trade his merchandise at a very high price to make it worth while. Those peasants looking to buy the product were too poor to afford the taxes on it, and therefore too poor to eat.

The new taxes coupled with the concession of peasant lands put the peasant in a precarious position. The taxes they paid for daily sustenance and the land they sharecropped only increased the wealth of the French colonizers while the peasants continued to be exploited for their labor and remained poor. As the exploitation of peasants continued, revolutionaries began to arise in Vietnam with the hopes of stabilizing the country and its people and creating a new identity for the Vietnamese. Resistance movements in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century stemmed from Confucian scholars. These movements were popular, but not wholly unified. Scholars such as Tran Cao Van, Phan Boi Chau, and Emperor Duy Tan favored a monarch and several old Confucian and Vietnamese customs that the peasants were no longer in favor of. Furthermore, these leaders failed to create a successful resistance movement because they were too isolated from both governmental power and the peasants.<sup>17</sup> This isolation forced their movement to favor only their aims and those in their socio-economic demographic. Among their revolutionary ideas were ways to help the new burgeoning class receive more privileges and exemptions, like that of the French.<sup>18</sup> These ideas would only help a select few in the country, though, while the estimated ninety percent of the peasants in the countryside became further exploited and oppressed.

The peasantry was not the only class of people who were exploited and oppressed, the workers were as well. For the French, Vietnam appeared to have an endless supply of labor. Between 1919 and 1929 the amount of workers jumped from 100,000 to 220,000. The increased labor enabled factory owners and companies to exploit Vietnamese labor and pay the workers increasingly low wages for exceedingly long work days. Workers were often forced to work twelve hour days, seven days a week and endure terrible working conditions.<sup>19</sup> Conditions for the laboring class remained uniformly bad from the sweatshops to the rubber plants.

Throughout Vietnam, the new laboring class began spontaneous, unorganized, and unsuccessful strikes. However, by 1920 the first organized workers' union was founded by Ton Duc Thang. Unions were illegal under French rule, which forced Ton to keep his organization secret with little activity. He was committed to Marxism and by 1925 his union was active in political strikes against imperialism and aggressively demanded an increased salary and shorter working hours.<sup>20</sup> Ton's support of workers rights and anti-imperialism was the first introduction to Marxism that the Vietnamese received. Marxist ideas failed to spread with Ton's union since it was kept mostly secret and contained to the laborers.

Widespread Marxist-Leninist ideas failed to surface within Vietnam by World War I. After Emperor Duy Tan's death in 1916, Bui Quang Chieu developed the Constitutionalist Party, also to represent the new middle class. Like previous efforts, this party failed to offer rebellion for the peasants. However, its demands did include "greater indigenous representation in elected bodies; more prestigious positions for natives in administrative and specialized services; expanded educational services; and protection of Vietnamese business against Chinese and Indian competition."<sup>21</sup> These demands illustrate that not only were the Vietnamese not ready for a Marxist revolution, but that they were not ready to emerge independent of France. Their revolutions were an attempt to work with the colonizer to reduce tensions and create a healthy environment for both the French and Vietnamese. However, these revolutions were obvious failures because they failed to mobilize the peasantry, therefore failing to mobilize ninety percent of the population. The inability to lure the peasantry resulted in a failure to stimulate the French into action for the Vietnamese, and succumb to the revolution's pressures. The French never feared resistance movements before World War I because the Vietnamese never had the support of the masses and they never used violence to assert their demands.<sup>22</sup>

The next resistance movement won support of the peasants, but failed to reach its goals. Albert Sarraut spoke to the Vietnamese and rallied their support for his power and he promised to give them "the instrument of liberation."<sup>23</sup> He, too, favored east-west relations and advocated the Vietnamese and French to have more unified interactions for the betterment of the country and its people. The AFIMA (Association pour la Formation Intellectuelle et Morale des Annamites) was organized to promote Vietnamese-French relations. However, as Sarraut won over the people of Vietnam, the AFIMA became a tool for French propaganda and for the Vietnamese in status positions to maintain their status.<sup>24</sup> Once again, the cares of the peasantry were unspoken for and the oppression continued while bureaucrats, notables, village chiefs, etc continued to gain wealth and material goods. While the internal reforms of Sarraut were not effective in the end, his reign exposed the continuing fragility of the French. By 1923, when Sarraut abandoned his endeavors, it was clear that the French were spread thin. The French needed to make reforms in Vietnam or they would face continual pressures from more and more resistance movements. French colonizers feared creating drastic reforms because the rest of Indochina would view colonizers as weak and attempt to revolt as well.

By 1925 Indochina was well aware of the weakness within the French colonizers and looked for leadership and revolutionary ideas to liberate Indochina from the French regime. There were a few factors which warranted the insurgence of the communist movement, the first of which was the death of the first wave of anti-colonial revolutions. Many of the previous leaders were dead or in jail, which took away voices that believed in cooperation and arrangements with the French. Their silence, peasant desperation, and French weakness opened the doors for a new movement to emerge not only in Vietnam, but in Indochina as a whole. Under the orders of Mikhail Borodin, a leading figure in the Comintern of China, Ho Chi Minh was sent to Canton, China to "begin a systematic and intensive effort to develop a communist movement ... using as his nucleus the various Vietnam émigré radicals in China."<sup>25</sup> Vietnam was seen as a strategic location for the movement for various reasons. The first was because Ho was a native of the land and he was an obvious Marxist leader since he had been studying socialism and creating movements outside Indochina for years. Another reason was because French were becoming weak in the country. Lastly, and most important, was that the peasants were desperate for revolution and for someone to support them. Because of those rea-

sons, support was likely to come quickly from Vietnam, as well as with the rest of Indochina.

Ho Chi Minh began his revolution with the organization of the Vietnamese Revolutionary Association, or Thanh Nien, in 1925. This was the first anti-colonial organization in Vietnam that united both political and social issues in a colonial resistance movement.<sup>26</sup> This two-tier movement was inspired by Lenin's Theses on the National and Colonial Questions. This idea was supposed to be used throughout the Comintern. It explained that supporters of the revolutionary movements did not need to support Marx, Engels, Lenin, or Stalin, they merely needed to support the revolution to bring conformity and continuity to the movements and make them successful.<sup>27</sup> In fusing both these elements, Ho was able to attract both the emerging middle class of bureaucrats and notables and the peasants. Through his speeches, he was able to effectively expose problems in the French colonization policies and explain why the two nations could not achieve peace with one another. The reason for his success was the grafting of a two-tier arrangement in the party: half-communist, half-nationalist.<sup>28</sup> Thanh Nien, which began with six to eight youths, gained momentum as Ho created a school in Canton for communist revolutionaries. In 1929, the year it opened, the enrollment started at 250 students. The Thanh Nien also developed and distributed propaganda. This usually involved mass meetings and demonstrations. The main theme of their propaganda was revolution and anti-reformism: the Thanh Nien believed that reform movements were too late and the Vietnamese needed complete liberation from their colonizer and from western influence.<sup>29</sup> As stated previously, there were several reform movements that sprung up throughout Vietnam and throughout France's rule, but each failed because a reform movement could not unify both the working class and the peasantry and would still rely on exploitation of peasant labor given the adopted Western economic system.

While Ho was in Canton expanding his communist network, the Vietnamese were faced with more debilitating problems due to worldwide problems. In 1929 the Vietnamese economy was suffering from world-wide depression. "Prices dropped disastrously. Unemployment jumped. Farmers were unable to sell their produce."<sup>30</sup> As a result, starvation became rampant and peasant uprisings occurred. The Nationalist Party and their secret party helped spur the uprising, instilling Leninist ideas among the workers and peasants; however, the uprising was a disaster.<sup>31</sup> The French were able to suppress the uprisings and blamed the Vietnamese Nationalist Party for the rebellion, which in turn suppressed the Nationalist Party. However, the Nationalist Party was able to successfully implant anti-imperialist and pro-Leninist ideas with the Vietnamese to the peasants' restlessness and the suppression of the Vietnamese Nationalist Party, in 1930 Ho Chi Minh and other communist leaders were able to successfully organize the Indochinese Communist Party.<sup>32</sup> The party merged each of Ho's resistance movements, and by 1931 the movement included 100,000 Vietnamese peasants.

Ho's mobilization of the Vietnamese resistance was contingent upon his own leadership, speeches, and writings. He was the first leader to speak directly to the people, which motivated them to work with each other and for each other. In his speech at the founding of the ICP he began by addressing the people "workers, peasants, soldiers, youth, and pupils! Oppressed and exploited! Sisters and brothers! Comrades"<sup>33</sup> Here, he was able to incorporate nearly every person in Indochina to fight for his cause, for the oppressed's cause. After addressing the public and forcing them to recognize that he was speaking to them, not at them, he moved to expose the indecencies that the colonizers have done to the natives.



They set up new factories to exploit the worker with low wages. They plundered the peasants' land to establish plantations and drive them to utter poverty. They levied many taxes. They imposed public loans upon our people. In short, they reduced us to wretchedness.<sup>34</sup>

As Ho Chi Minh exposed the deeds of the French Imperialists on the public, the Vietnamese were forced to recognize the oppression they have lived with for decades. He included himself in the oppression; he was not above being manipulated by the French, but wanted to prove that he could reverse that oppression with the public's help. He directly called to his audience for help. He spelled out the wrongs that had been done to them, and then spelled out how he hoped to reverse those wrongs. At his appeal he exclaimed ten actions he wanted implemented with the help of the Proletariat class:

To overthrow French imperialism, feudalism, and the reactionary Vietnamese capitalist class. To make Indochina completely independent. To establish a worker-peasant and soldier government. To confiscate the banks and other enterprises belonging to the imperialists and put them under the control of the worker peasant and soldier government.. To confiscate the whole of the plantations and property belonging to the imperialists and the Vietnamese reactionary capitalist class and distribute them to poor peasants. To implement the eight hour working day. To abolish public loans and poll tax. To waive unjust taxes hitting the poor people. To bring back all freedoms to the masses. To carry out universal education. To implement equality between men and women.<sup>35</sup>

In this speech, Ho was able to effectively speak directly to the Vietnamese and address their concerns. With his broad ideas on reform, Ho created a rebellion with the hopes of developing a government which reverted back to many previous Vietnamese economic traditions, such as confiscating the large land plots and redistributing them to the peasants. However, his movement also rested on ideas that were inherently Western, such as equal rights for women. This introduction of the communist reform in Vietnam would not only change how the country was run, but also changed its identity to be a mesh of old Vietnamese cultural customs and a mix of the French culture as well.

The same year of the ICP formation and Ho's promises to the Vietnamese, rampant uprisings from the workers and peasants in Vietnam began occurring in late August. In the province of Nghe An, villagers engaged in wide-scale riots, looting, and building burning. These rioters were met with little resistance and expanded their activities. As they expanded, local communist activists expanded their ideology as well: promising relief from poverty, end to unnecessary taxes, and redistribution of lands. By September the French responded with excessive force killing 174 Vietnamese and silencing the rioters.<sup>36</sup>

The riots of the region created panic with local officials and forced them to flee the area and directions from higher levels were non-existent. The absence of French leadership and political structure left room for the first small-scale communist organization to be created in Vietnam. Throughout the districts of Nghe An, the institution of a village militia and



peasant associations were encouraged and organized. Furthermore, local taxes were annulled, rents lowered, land redistributed, and rice given to the needy while the French were absent from the village. The development of these institutions and policies led to the development of communism on the small scale village level. At the small-scale level, the major duties were divided into eight sections: secretariat, communications, organizations, finance, verification, training, inspection, and struggle.<sup>37</sup>

Though Ho had appealed directly to the citizens of Vietnam, the ICP and Ho's organizations were not the most popular movements in response to colonial oppression. These popular movements were Trotskyism and Stalinism. They were an embarrassment to the ICP because they illustrated their weakness and lack of ability to mobilize all anti-colonial forces, however, the resistance movements were increasingly helpful in raising the awareness of Marxism and communism.<sup>38</sup> The height of the Trotskyists and Stalinists occurred from 1932 to 1935, and coupled with the ICP, the Comintern and the workers movement's dissention with colonial force continued to rise as well as proponents of communism.

The leaders of these new resistance movements were a part of the new middle class and came from Nam Ky.<sup>39</sup> This location is imperative in looking at the spread of communist ideas throughout Vietnam because each of the other movements stemmed from Bac Ky or Trung Ky and each of their leaders followed Confucian Vietnamese political ideology. The Trotskyists and the Stalinists, in contrast, followed French political structure and Western revolutions, a direct result of the Western education. Regardless of how the leaders chose to lead their movement, those that followed it brought the concepts of Marxism and communism further south. This area was previously impenetrable to communist forces simply because Ho Chi Minh and the Comintern were working with the North and the ideas did not trickle down. Though these groups took power and support away from the Comintern, they did successfully raise awareness of the same ideas they were arguing for in areas they failed to reach.

The Trotskyists believed in Trotsky's theory of "revolution in permanence." This theory was in contrast to those that believed that the Soviet Union needed to become communist and to consolidate the world communist power there. Trotsky's theory argued that revolution in the Soviet Union would create class conflicts in Europe, turning a national class conflict into an international class conflict, which then completes the cycle of revolution.<sup>40</sup> Trotsky's main concern was to influence communist opinion and return to a truer form of Marxism. The Stalinists favored overt political and militant action as a means to spread communism.<sup>41</sup> Stalinism was in clear opposition to Trotskyism and in Vietnam it was the first time the two factions were able merge. Both viewed the development of Marxism to be more important than their long term goals of worldwide class conflict revolutions or military operations to increase power throughout the world.

The Trotskyist and Stalinist ideas merged, and cooperating Trotsky-Stalinist forces created a strong anti-colonial movement in Vietnam and called La Lutte. The main concern in the movement was to create a revolution for the working class and oppressed masses. Their ideas on Vietnamese revolution reinforced the ICP's because their main objective was to collaborate together to oppose imperialism and capitalist exploitation.<sup>42</sup> Their ideas not only raised awareness of colonial pressures and exploitation as well as raised awareness of Marxist and communist ideas, but it also brought a new element into the anti-colonial revolutions: elections. In April of 1933 and May of 1935 the Vietnamese anti-colonial forces held a significant impact on the outcomes of these elections. Prior to La Lutte, rebellion forces were

viewed as illegal and overt; they were not to public organizations and those involved in anti-colonial movements were not to openly admit to rebellion. Members of La Lutte; however, chose to openly demonstrate their dissent and attempt to be elected into city council positions. They did win the elections of 1933 and 1935 and acted as the “clearing house” of politics in the South.<sup>43</sup> Their political activity changed the face of revolution movements in Vietnam as well as raised more awareness of their ideas and of Marxist ideas in general. Their platforms stood with the workers and the oppressed peoples, creating clear anti-colonial demonstrations within the politics of Vietnam.

By 1940, the French had still refused to cede the rights and requested reforms of the Vietnamese had been met. In 1941 Ho Chi Minh returned to Northern Vietnam and the Viet Minh were formed on the Chinese border. At this time, the Vietnamese had yet another colonial power to deal with as Japan took over Vietnam, forcing France to be a puppet government within the country. In 1944 the Viet Minh began their military coup against the French. At the same time, the Vietnamese leaders began restructuring their government. Their administrative committees at the village level included five members: a president, vice president, a member responsible for finance, one for administration, and one for public works and agriculture. After the August Revolution, the government was renamed the Liberation National Committee of Vietnam.<sup>44</sup>

Ho was forced to create the Viet Minh with nationalist motives with communist undertones as a means of obtaining more support for the anti-colonial cause. This is both a direct reflection of the strong anti-colonial spirit surrounding Vietnam as well as the different ideas concerning how the country should be run if it were to become independent. The Viet Minh also illustrated the evolution of Marxism within Vietnam. The Comintern had originally planned to use the country as a vehicle to spread strict Marxist ideas throughout the East. With Ho’s establishment of the Viet Minh, it was clear that Vietnam had changed the ideas of Marxism and how their country should be run. It was the Viet Minh who were to ensure that Ho’s ten demands were carried out, and a revolution was necessary to ensure that and World War II gave them the chance to create their revolution. During the August Revolution, the Viet Minh were able to seize and control several cities around Vietnam, including Hanoi, Hue, and Saigon. Seizing these areas did not prevent the French from returning to the country after the war, but it did force out the Japanese who were currently in control of the country and created a de facto political situation among the Allied forces who would attempt to enter the country. On September 2, Ho read the Vietnamese Declaration of Independence and declared the birth of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, though the French return was inevitable.<sup>45</sup>

Ideas circling change in rule had changed significantly from the beginning of French colonial rule to Ho’s rule. However great the change had been, Ho still addressed the idea that there needed to be significant steps made to ensure the Vietnamese were no longer oppressed by the French or any other government in Vietnam. He wrote to the executive committees at each level of the Vietnamese government in October of 1945 concerning breaches of law, arrogance, debauchery, sectarianism, division, and conceit. He recognized these problems, and addressed them as mistakes of his public officials. In this letter, he asked his government officials to not use personal hate to arrest honest people, to not disregard public opinion, to not be wasteful of money by dressing in finery and using cars paid for by the citizens with tax money, to not give friends government positions they do not deserve, to ignore past grievances and unite the entire country, and to not look at the people in contempt.<sup>46</sup> Ho’s writing clarified the direction communism was going in Vietnam at that time. It was clear

from his list of grievances that these were also a list of grievances from the French colonial government as well. Each of these corrections within the DRV that he hoped to change would unite the country and keep the Vietnamese on equal terms, while the French did the opposite.

After the August Revolution, Ho wrote several letters to the DRV, the people of Southern Vietnam, and the Vietnamese in France pleading with them to help create a unified front against the French and appeal to the people of Vietnam. At the heart of his ideas was returning peasant land to peasants and ending the oppression of the workers. He stressed equality among classes and genders and a return to traditional Vietnamese values. A change in the government was at the heart of these reforms, as his address to Vietnamese government officials illustrates. However, these reforms did not completely revert to traditional Vietnamese roles. While Ho believed in the traditional idea that small peasant landholding kept the economy stable, gender equality and the working class were not ideas circling among 19<sup>th</sup> century Vietnamese. That in mind, Vietnamese socialism continued to develop and change through the 20<sup>th</sup> century and Ho's revolution continued to gain popularity as he pressed for reforms such as these.

By 1945, concepts of Marxism and communism for the Vietnamese had changed considerably, but it still was not the entirely accepted by each Vietnamese citizen. Ho was forced to continually change his ideas regarding communism as a means to affect each citizen's ideas on independence and revolution. By the time Vietnam had declared independence, French protestors had argued for a more traditional government, but that had been futile; reformers argued for less taxation, worker's rights, and redistribution of land, but that, too, had been futile. Traditional reformers then turned to socialist reformers, advocating more strongly for worker's rights or agrarian reform, and while receiving a large following, these socialist groups were never able to succeed until their ideas coalesced and transformed to appeal to nationalist and communist revolutionaries. Each of these reform and revolutionary factions, while transformational and unsuccessful, were all retaliations of the French colonization. Immediate changes in the government and the land holdings due to French rule led to reform protest movements by the Vietnamese and the lack of response from the French led to more radical, less traditional communist revolution movements. Ultimately, French colonization led to the rise of communism in Vietnam and the destruction of Western rule in the country.

## Notes

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38. Khanh, 190-191.
39. Khanh, 191.
40. Trotskyists argue that the cycle of revolution begins with class conflict in one nation and as the working class rise, they spread their ideology across the globe. Indochina was a strategic location for the Soviets create a socialist government because they hoped to gain the eastern countries and move to Africa and Europe. Creating an international revolution in the name of socialism was the end of the cycle of revolution, according to Trotskyists.
41. Khanh, 194-196.

- 42. Khanh, 201.
- 43. Khanh, 204-205.
- 44. O'Meara, 79.
- 45. Pike, 52.
- 46. Fall, 147-148.

# Resurrecting Judith: Edith Summers Kelley, *Weeds*, and the Politics of Gender

● ● ● Christi Amato

When Edith Summers Kelley's *Weeds* was published in 1923, protagonist Judith Pipping Blackford's tragic plight was described by one reviewer as the "common story of humanity" (Krutch 65). Nearly a century later, Kelley's mastery still resonated with reviewers: in 1996, the *New York Times* hailed *Weeds* "a major work of American fiction" (Graebel). The real story of *Weeds*, however, unfolds in the seventy years of silence separating these laudatory reviews. Kelley's compelling saga of the tedium, monotony and ultimate spiritual suffocation of Judith Pipping Blackford plunged into obscurity after 1923, when *Weeds* sold so few copies, Kelley was unable even to pay back her publisher's advance for the book.<sup>1</sup> Ultimately, the critical and popular failure of *Weeds* is fashioned from many tangled threads, with contemporary social, political and academic movements as the primary contributors that would seal the novel's fate: Judith would have to wait nearly a century for her story to be retold.

When *Weeds* was rediscovered in 1972 and rescued from its long-imposed silence, Kelley's passionate novel found new significance and meaning in an era that valued diminished and marginalized voices. The moving story of Judith Pipping Blackford, the restless, yearning wife of a Kentucky tobacco tenant farmer reached through the generations to touch a mournful chord among readers and critics alike. Charlotte Margolis Goodman notes that as she taught the newly reprinted *Weeds* to

class after class of college students[...]they were always surprised to discover, in a novel written so many years ago, that Kelley was very much aware of the of the ways in which the lives of women may be circumscribed by material circumstances, biological imperatives, and patriarchal attitudes. (354)

Matthew Bruccoli, the English professor credited with rediscovering *Weeds* in 1972, called the work "a superb forgotten novel...a quiet masterpiece" deserving of a position in the American "realistic/naturalistic" tradition (335). When the Feminist Press reissued *Weeds* again in 1996, the *New York Times Book Review* praised the book for its "compassionate realism, its narrative pace, its sensitive evocation of character and for its sure literary craftsmanship" (Graebel). Indeed, it would seem *Weeds* had finally found its audience in the late twentieth century, and yet, the contemporary critical and popular appeal of *Weeds* raises compelling questions about its failure to succeed in its first publication: how could a novel with such obvious value and relevance to the American literary tradition slip into virtual anonymity?

## I

One of the primary factors shaping the fate of *Weeds* was the shifting, chaotic social climate of the 1920s. The aftermath of World War I and the emerging desire to elevate litera-

ture that represented uniquely “American” interests created a turbulent atmosphere for writers. The decades leading up to the publication of *Weeds* provide significant social context for the cultural milieu that would define the twenties and shape the writing environment for authors like Kelley. The turn of the twentieth century favored “historical romances of America,” celebrating sentimentalist yearning for “a simpler America closer to the soil” (Hart 202, 203). Insecurity wrought by industrialization, burgeoning American wealth and a changing worldview led readers to embrace fiction saturated in idealism and nostalgia. As Malcolm Cowley observes, this era in literature, also known as the “genteel tradition,” was characterized by “an effort to abolish various evils and vulgarities in American society by never speaking about them” (50). Instead, rosy portraits of “grandiose Southern plantations worked by happy negroes” and sagas of westward adventures captured the imagination of the reading public in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century—a public determined to embrace “ideality” over realism (Hart 203). Indeed, as Elizabeth Ammons observes, the romance saga was “the nation’s best and most important form” in the early twentieth century (3).

In the years leading up to the publication of *Weeds*, romantic fiction by women also surged in popularity, inadvertently shaping the identity of women novelists in an isolated realm of sentimentalism and domesticity. Books like Eleanor Porter’s *Pollyanna* reigned in popularity among young women, while mature female audiences embraced the “bright sweetness” of Gene Stratton-Porter in books like *Freckles* and *A Girl of the Limberlost*, nostalgic tales of orphans and misfortunate waifs transcending their diminished circumstances (Hart 211). The popularity of such works confirms Cowley’s assertion that “novels had to be written with pure heroines and happy endings in order to flatter the self-esteem of female readers” (50). In response to the “Sunday school morality” of women authors, American men asserted their own interest in literature through the “primitive virtues of vigor and courage,” with one extreme example being the success of Edgar Rice Burroughs and his novel *Tarzan of the Apes* in 1914 (Hart 214). The result of this budding dichotomy between typically “male” and “female” gendered interests would make the literary world a treacherous place for American female writers in the twenties and thirties. It is important to note however, as John Hart points out, that the only prevailing qualification (regardless of the writer’s sex) in the appetite of the reading public between the Spanish-American war and the era of World War I was that “the writer possess a romantic view conforming to the prevailing genteel standards” of the time (223).

The trauma of World War I wrenched America from its idealism in every conceivable sector of life. The world of literature began to evolve in response to the increasing industrialization from the production of war goods and the technological advances that paralleled booming industry. Women found themselves admitted into the voting booths for the first time in 1920, and debates raged about everything from prohibition to birth control (Hackett 89). The American public was consumed with war novels like H.G. Wells’s *Mr. Britling Sees It Through* and Ian Hay’s *The First Hundred Thousand* (Hart 224). Realism in fiction also dominated writing of the day, with books like Sinclair Lewis’s *Main Street* bursting onto the literary scene in 1921<sup>2</sup> (Hackett 91). The common denominator in these trends was the radical rejection of the romantic ideals espoused in the preceding decades: the lens through which America perceived its reality had irrevocably shifted.

As World War I wound to a close, an indelible imprint was left on the American public and by extension, the literature produced. Hart observes:



the first years of peace began to show the effect of the war upon public taste. The twenties did not produce many popular books about the combat itself, but one work after another was stamped by the change in interests and values that could be attributed to the war. (226-27).

The advance of technology also fed the general sense of dislocation in life and literary taste, with the advent of the automobile, the phonograph and the motion picture revolutionizing the way Americans were entertained. Hart further explains that Americans now demanded books “that would explain a new generation” (228). Life was different, but good in the early 1920’s, with “waistlines at the hips...mah-jongg” and dance marathons peaking America’s interests (Hackett 93). Sigmund Freud titillated the masses with his theories on human sexuality, which to Americans “seemed to make sexual freedom almost essential” (Hart 231). The sense of a growing divide between the prevailing intellectual worldview jaded by postwar cynicism and a public determined to embrace the high-spirited “roaring twenties” created unique trends in literature in the early 1920’s. Unlikely companions shared the bestseller lists, in books like F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *This Side of Paradise* and *The Sheik* by Edith Hull. American literary tastes absorbed the sensational as well as the skeptical. While Fitzgerald’s novel traces the “cynicism and sophistication among Princeton-bred youths” Hull’s book outlines an improbable romance that blossoms between a naïve English girl and her Arab abductor (Hart 232). It is interesting to note that even Fitzgerald seemed aware of (and indignant about) this divide in literary appetite among Americans, resorting to writing magazine “formula-fiction” in the 1920’s to supplement his income. Charles Hearn observes that even as *The Great Gatsby*, a masterpiece of realist fiction published in 1925, achieved popular success, “most of [Fitzgerald’s] income came from magazine fiction—\$11,025 for five stories compared to \$1981.85” from *Gatsby* (33). Hearn observes that Fitzgerald’s magazine stories, which he notoriously resented writing, were adapted to the “tastes and values of the mass audiences,” which characteristically meant “rags-to-riches” fables, “that favorite American fairy tale that panders to the dreams of the reader by showing how success can come even to the most humble” (33, 34). Fitzgerald’s personal writing career aptly demonstrates the existence of dueling tastes, attitudes and trends circulating in the literary world during the twenties complicating the job facing serious writers: even as he wrote works like *Gatsby* and *This Side of Paradise* that would win him canonical status, Fitzgerald was forced to resort to publishing romanticized Horatio Alger myths to support himself as a writer.

It was into this tempestuous literary atmosphere that, in 1923, Edith Summers Kelley released her novel *Weeds*. Amid the backdrop of global stability concerns and the obsession with the daily minutiae of New York’s *nouveau riche*, Kelley descended into the backwoods of poverty-stricken Kentucky, among a world where recreation reads like an exercise in monotony:

There would be a long family gathering about the wagon before the visitors drove off; for nothing having to do with social intercourse is ever done in a hurry in rural Kentucky. They had all day to talk to each other, and they had repeated the same things many, many times over. It was getting late, too, and there was a long drive ahead of them and all the chores were waiting to be done. But still there could be no hurried leave-taking; there was no precedent for such a thing. So they all stood about the

wagon and exchanged some more prophecies about the weather and some more comments on Aunt Jenny Boone's stroke... (10)

Into this leisurely, complacent world Kelley immerses her reader, introducing Judith Pippinger Blackford and the trivialities and hardships of farm life. Discussions of weather patterns, trips by horse-drawn wagons, and dinners of corncakes and scant rations of cow's milk occupied a different realm of reality than most Americans of the day cared to be absorbed in. Kelley's choice in setting was far removed from the world of cinema, the automobile and arguments about contraception. In fact, Kelley's son, Ivor Updegraff, years later noted to publishers that Kelley complained "bitterly that the American public wanted romantic novels about women who got jobs in offices and married the boss, rather than realistic novels like *Weeds*" (qtd. in Goodman, 362). It would seem that, in echoing the sentiments of Fitzgerald, Kelley revealed a keen insight that popular American literary appetites limited her prospects for commercial success.

## II

Worlds away from *bourgeois* society and war-stained psyches, scenes of rural Kentucky dominate *Weeds*, and relegate the novel to a different sphere than most popular books of the day. Kelley's depiction of the Kentucky landscape forms a spectacular natural backdrop that she expertly blends with the realities of crushing poverty and monotony in the life of tenant farmers. *Weeds* emerges a masterpiece of naturalism, a popular literary tradition typically associated with authors such as Theodore Dreiser, Stephen Crane and Frank Norris, for its depiction of the inevitable cycles of the natural world and human nature. Entangled in the naturalist themes of the novel are more potential reasons for the book's failure.

In particular, Kelley's blunt, critical portrayal of labor, both farm labor and the labor of unrelenting childbirth, isolated the novel from other popular and acclaimed naturalists like Crane and Dreiser: Kelley's brand of naturalism was unique in its female point of view. While Kelley and other naturalists shared an emphasis "on the power and scope of mechanical laws over human desires," Kelley elevates singularly female interests in her critique of dreary, unrelenting farm life (Walcutt 266). Even women writers that had experimented with the "naturalist mode" before Kelley created completely different environments for their female protagonists (Hochman 275). Barbara Hochman offers Edith Wharton and Kate Chopin as examples of women writers that "exemplify the 'naturalist' plot of individual decline, with [their] concern for the pressures of environment and circumstance, and...focus on forces (both inner and outer) beyond the control of the characters" (274). Edna Pontellier and Lily Bart share a naturalist progression toward tragedy, seemingly pulled toward their own defeat by forces both within and without of their grasp<sup>3</sup>. Lily and Edna, however, occupy completely different social realities than Kelley creates for Judith in *Weeds*. Edna and Lily are both "well educated and very sophisticated," moving in circles of society and culture worlds away from Judith Pippinger Blackford, her inadequate education, and the tobacco fields that are the bane of her existence (Hochman 275).

*Weeds*, then, is exceptional from other naturalist works of the period produced by both male and female authors in its overt criticism of the hard life of farming *from a female perspective*. *Weeds* is a novel concerned both with the highly gendered female experience and the working-class experience of farming. The profession of farming had already been long characterized as "the virtual embodiment of the American way" according to Janet Galligani

Casey (96). In her essay on female authors and agrarian landscapes, Casey argues that works examining the farming life in the United States existed and thrived in the early twentieth century, but only from the male perspective, which essentially relegated women to a supporting, gender-limited role. Casey argues that the agrarian landscape was “highly gendered” in novels from the modern period, with farm culture as an unlikely setting to propagate “truly subversive social ideals, never mind a radical theorization of women’s bodies” (Casey 96). Yet, this is exactly what Edith Summers Kelley does in *Weeds*. Her unsympathetic portrayal of life determined by fluctuations in tobacco prices produces a dismal portrait of the farming way of life. A tobacco killing drought means Judith and Jerry must subsist in the winter off of a “great desert of corn meal” with no milk or meat, and only the occasional “wormy runt” of an apple (Kelley 96). The community in which Judith and Jerry live is populated with farmers shriveled to deformity from malnutrition and back-breaking field work. Indeed, the men, women and children of Scott County, Kentucky drudge through an unfulfilling and bleak existence, punctuated only by grueling labor and the occasional pint of corn whiskey. At the party where the young Judith Pippinger is described as “a poppy among weeds,” a survey of the rest of the room paints a very different picture:

Although nearly all of the ‘old folks’ were under fifty and most of them in the thirties and forties, it was a scarecrow array of bent limbs, bowed shoulders, sunken chests, twisted contortions and jagged angularities, that formed the circle for the old folks’ dance[...]these men and women, who should have been in the full flower of their lives were already classed among the aged. (91)

Kelley’s brutal realism, her depictions of the broken and bruised farmers in the Judith’s community, counters the ideologies espoused by institutions like the “Country Life Movement” established by Theodore Roosevelt in 1908. Casey explains that the pre-Depression era in the United States found many advocates for “moderniz[ing] images of the rural American family to reinforce both an ‘agrarian myth’...and ‘agrarian fundamentalism’” (97). This involved propagating sentimentalism about farm life and emphasizing farming as the “base of the larger economy” in response to increasing urbanization (Casey 97). While Casey notes that Congress refused to take the “Country Life Movement” seriously, it received a substantial amount of attention in mainstream and agricultural publications (98). The impact of such movements can be seen in the editorial comments of publications like *The Farmer’s Wife* in 1920, a mere three years before the publication of *Weeds*. An editor claimed:

City women have given up their jobs as homemakers, preferring to live in one-room city apartments to save work in order that they can follow the ‘jazz’ amusements of the city, and shirking responsibility at every turn, [but] the farm women of America, God bless them! continue to live in the way that the normal wife and the normal mother should live. (qtd. in Casey 99).

While the “Country Life Movement” had no specific causal relationship to the failure of *Weeds*, it reveals the existence of ideologies that undermined Kelley’s major themes in the novel<sup>4</sup>. *Weeds* would have been offensive on two fronts to groups like the “Country Life

Movement:" she attacks both the romantic visions of farm life, and deeply sacred notions of motherhood. Judith Pippinger Blackford fails to be fulfilled by her domestic role on the farm and her uncontrolled childbearing. Such themes fall outside of the highly gendered roles delineated in agrarian novels, according to Casey. In fact, an unimpressed review of *Weeds* in 1923 by *The Independent* complained of precisely these aspects, sustaining Casey's argument about the agrarian landscape in novels. Reviewer H.W. Boynton criticizes Kelley, saying, "for me, the chief blemish in 'Weeds' lies in the author's tendency to over-emphasize items of mere physical unseemliness and squalor" (Boynton 288). He goes on to diminish Judith's unhappiness in the novel, while calling her husband an "honest boy, with a real devotion for her" (289). Boynton's only comment on Judith's quiet resignation at the end of the novel to accept her plight is that it is "not, after all, an ignoble or unhappy ending" (289). This particular review aptly exposes the attitudes embraced by organizations like the "Country Life Movement" circulating in mainstream America. Boynton totally misunderstands or does not comprehend Kelley's female-centered perspective about farm life and motherhood in the novel, instead dismissing her realism as overemphasis on unsightly details.

*Weeds* is subversive in that Kelley brings to life a voice outside the mainstream, masculine worldview of the agrarian landscape. In agrarian-based fiction by female authors, according to Casey, "the landscape assumes enormous proportions...as it has vast material and psychic ramifications for the female characters whose lives unfold in it" (Casey 99). Casey claims that Kelley's portrayal of farming exposes a "Jeffersonian ideal for the elitist paradigm it is"<sup>5</sup> (102). With this kind of radical sentiment threaded in Kelley's writing, it is not unreasonable to assume *Weeds* may have suffered for want of audience.

### III

Casey's comments on the highly-gendered nature of the female role in agrarian novels reverberate beyond simply the "type" of novel Kelley wrote. One of the most critical issues surrounding the failure of *Weeds* is the concept of gender, concerning both Kelley as a writer and of the major feminist themes she championed in *Weeds*. The social identity of women in the 1920's was complex, both in the world of writing, and the world women authors created for their female protagonists.

One of the most revealing incidents in the publication of *Weeds* is the refusal of the publisher, Harcourt Brace to include Kelley's chapter, "Billy's Birth" in the novel. The chapter, a brutally realistic account of the birthing of Judith's first child, brings cohesion to the novel, and clarifies and reinforces its naturalist themes. Various scholars have dissected and analyzed the significance of the excision of the birth chapter from the book, exploring its connection to the content of the novel as well as the insight it provides into cultural attitudes about typically "female" perspectives in writing. Casey claims Kelley uses the birth chapter to emphasize the *unnaturalness* of childbirth and labor, a further fracture from the contemporary notions of maternal gender roles (103). In "Billy's Birth," Judith is alternately described as animalistic and machine-like; she paces the floor

like a wild tigress newly caged. When the terrific spasm of pain would grind through her body, she would grasp the nearest object and utter, again and again, the strangely unhuman shriek, a savage, elemental, appalling sound that seemed as though it could have its origin nowhere upon the earth. (338)

As Judith's labor progresses through the night, her contractions are described as "the ever-recurring drive of some great piston which went on its way relentless and indomitable" (344). Judith reflects during her labor that "nature that from her childhood had led kindly and blandly through pleasant paths...had at last betrayed her" (344). This passage is critical to understanding the naturalist themes that dominate the novel: the reader realizes during the childbirth scene the *power and scope of mechanical laws over human desire*. Judith's birth scene is vital to bringing unity to *Weeds* as a naturalist work. Every action that occurs in "Billy's Birth" works to reinforce the idea that Judith does not control her surroundings; she is relentlessly driven by a force of nature beyond her power:

Through no volition of her own, but following only the grimly pointing finger, because follow she must, as a leaf is drawn upon a downward current, the girl entered between the towering entrance boulders of that silent canyon and passed far away from the world...It was her fate only to struggle on desperately, blindly, knowing only one thing: that each struggle meant the suffering of anguish that is unbearable and that yet must and will be borne; and to do this endlessly, endlessly, endlessly without rest, without respite. (345)

Reading Kelley's moving portrayal of childbirth, it seems hardly believable that Alfred Harcourt could tell Kelley, "We don't think you need all of the first obstetrical incident. It is a powerful piece of writing and is what thousands of women go through, but-almost therefore-it is not peculiar to the story of Judith or the Tobacco country" (qtd. in Berg 89). Another editor wrote to Kelley, "It [childbirth] is common to the lot of all women and not to Kentucky alone. It has been done over and over again in modern realistic novels" (qtd. in Berg 89). In fact, it hadn't been done before. As Allison Berg explains, there were only "veiled references" to childbearing in literature, with "nothing approaching the detail or length of Kelley's description" (Berg 90). We can only speculate about the real reasons Harcourt felt it necessary to omit the "obstetrical incident," despite Kelley's adamant defense to Harcourt that she "had never read in the works of a woman novelist...an adequate description of childbirth" (qtd. in Goodman 361).

The events in the birth chapter seem so inextricably linked to the meaning of the novel that it seems unlikely that the novel could retain its shape without it. Casey argues that "Billy's Birth" "substantially revises our understanding of Kelley's major themes in *Weeds*, which emerges as more daring, and more complex in its treatment of Judith's relation to the natural world" (107). Casey makes a compelling argument in this claim, because the entire scope of the novel shifts with the inclusion of "Billy's Birth." Berg supports this notion, saying the omission of "Billy's Birth"

Significantly blurs [Kelley's] focus. Indeed, because they did not read this pivotal scene...reviewers focused on the 'local color' aspect of *Weeds*. Kelley received ample praise for her rendering of the dialect, as well as the physical landscape, or rural Kentucky, and some reviewers noted the oppressive conditions...few, however, put issues of maternity at the heart of the novel. (89)

Perhaps it is partly because of the novel's sense of incompleteness that many reviewers in 1923 failed to sympathize with Kelley's protagonist, much less praise *Weeds*' feminist proclivities. *The Springfield Daily Republican*, for example, described Judith as having an "exotic temperament and strange inclinations" (7a). *The Boston Transcript* review from 1923 trivializes Judith's struggle for freedom and independence by lumping *Weeds* into the category of unoriginality, saying "many a novelist has written the tale o' the dissatisfied woman. Whatsoever the cause, whether logical or not, the usual remedy provided by the closing chapter is either a return to the soil...or the rearing of children" (F.A.G. 288). While the reviewer never articulates what qualifies as "logical," he goes on to say that Judith is "amply supplied with necessary occupation," but inexplicably rebels anyway. These reviews depict Judith as an irrational, potentially imbalanced farm wife who suffers miserably in spite of reasonable solutions to her unhappiness in life. In short, they diminish and dismiss the sense that in Judith, Kelley has offered a unique perspective and valuable female voice contributing something viable to the literary world. Instead, Judith's true identity as an artist, dreamer, and woman is overlooked in the critics' superficial characterization of Judith as a "dissatisfied" woman.

Other reviewers lapsed into addressing the only other aspect of the novel that stands out: the setting and community of farmers. *The Literary Digest International Book Review* illustrates this idea quite well when it compares *Weeds* to the "many stories that commence with the childhood of the heroine, the influences which surrounded her early development, and the carry on her life until such a time as the author thinks that the book is long enough" (74). This review relegates *Weeds* into a class of clichéd, formulaic fiction disdained by discerning readers. Worse, the review mocks the subjects and lifestyle of Kelley's chosen community, even going so far as to attack Kelley's writing style:

Those readers who are interested in squalid life, in the coarse and common language and immorality of the uneducated—in the typical life of the Kentucky tobacco-growers, the tenant-farmers in the tobacco lands—will find the story a very complete and minute description of that life. There are parts where the reader is devoutly thankful that the author has gone no further in her suggestive descriptions, while those who like a 'little smut' in their books will not be disappointed, for it is there. (74)

The review fails to even register the major premise of the novel—the deeply personal journey Judith undertakes, and the tensions between fate and human desires that complicate success or contentment in such journeys—instead relegating Judith's trials and tribulations to the category of smut. This persistent thread in many reviews of *Weeds* (overlooking or misunderstanding Judith) can't simply be explained from the missing birth chapter, though.

While the excision of the birth chapter detracts from the novel's feminist themes, *Weeds* still retains feminist underpinnings, primarily in Judith's unorthodox views of motherhood. Even without Judith's grueling labor sequence, readers clearly recognize that birthing as well as motherhood is a major source of misery for Judith. Directly after the birth of Judith's first child, she reflects that "life in the little house in the hollow fell along quite different lines" (Kelley 158). The baby "claimed most of Judith's attention...[and] after the novelty wore off, [it] began to fret her like the tug of innumerable small restraining bands" (158). Judith finds herself miserable in her separation from nature and the outdoor world that



always refreshed and revitalized her spirit; the introduction of a child into her life confines Judith in bondage, one that ties her to the circumscribed world of domesticity. Jerry maintains his freedom of leaving to work the tobacco fields each morning, while it is simply assumed that Judith's assigned realm is motherhood and the home.

Judith's second pregnancy finds her despondent; feelings of oppression consume her as she contemplates:

In such moments, she hated them both, the born and the unborn, two little greedy vampires working on her incessantly, the one from without, the other from within, never giving her a moment's peace, bent on drinking her last drop of blood, tearing out her last shrieking nerve. (208)

Judith becomes hopeless, "degraded and in bondage" by the betrayal of her body; she becomes unresponsive to her husband and Billy's needs (219). Judith is very much aware of the source of her misery: she feels that she has "neither the courage nor the strength to go through with it all again," and yet she has no choice—she is fulfilling her prescribed role in procreation (240). Her husband becomes irritable at her domestic failings, her indifference, chiding her in saying, "seems like you might take a little interest in a man's trouble's, Judy.... Mammy allus did" (245). Jerry has reinforced, as Judith has come to believe, that her only viable role is mother, wife, counselor, and housekeeper: all roles firmly planted in the domestic sphere.

Even more radical, Judith's third pregnancy less than a year later finds her contemplating abortion with a "knitting needle," a method learned from "the whispered confidences of other women" (282). Judith is resolute: she will not survive another pregnancy, her third in three years; to her "bodily misery and disgust were added a misery and disgust more hateful and appalling...how could she bear to bring this child into the world?" (282) Judith tries the less intrusive method of vigorous horseback riding first, hoping to induce abortion and instead sets the neighborhood gossip aflame as she returns home "dejected," having failed (285). She then makes an awkward attempt with the knitting needle, only to abandon the procedure at the "first stab of pain" (285).

Representation of children as vitality-sucking vampires and failed home abortions present evoke powerful images, even in modern times. It is not unreasonable to assume that Judith's belief that children feed off the life of the mother would be considered subversive then, in 1923. Kelley's bleak representation of the parent-child relationship is especially rebellious considering the views of motherhood disseminated in popular publications of the time. Berg offers *Overland Monthly's* Mother's Day edition in 1920 as an example of some of the more popular views of motherhood abounding in Kelley's time:

There is no form of life lying nearer Divinity than mere protoplasmic animation, but in some manner is imbued with the sentiment of mother love[...]the human heart knows no higher sentiment. Husbands may turn against wives, wives may give up husbands; children may repudiate parents and fathers disown sons-but the mother love abides forever. (qtd. in Berg 79)

It seems perplexing that in a decade characterized by Freud, sexual freedom and



debates over contraception that such sentiments could still persist in mainstream American culture. Allison Berg explains the contradiction thus: “despite the ascendancy of the New Woman and the sexual freedom she represented, the cult of True Motherhood was alive and well” (78). She points out that even the push for something as radical as birth control was wrapped in rhetoric about being a better mother; Margaret Sanger argued that “far from neglecting her maternal duties, a woman freed from reproductive ‘slavery’ would be all the more motherly” (Berg 79). Where did this leave women like Judith Pippinger Blackford, who didn’t want children *at all*? What place was there in American culture for women who thought that childrearing crushed a woman’s autonomy and creative spirit? The answer is that the romanticized ideal of the “mother-woman” in the 1920’s left no place for women like Judith to thrive or find acceptance.

In addition to motherhood being “divinely inspired,” the 1920’s saw a push for women as promoters of the “great race” in the movement known as eugenics (Berg 79). Berg explains that a drop in birthrates among “white, native-born, middle class women” induced paranoia that America’s pure race would be extinguished if women didn’t take action (79). Increases in immigration and the push for equality in the U.S. during the post-World War I years led white America to close ranks, and American women, willing or not, were assigned a hefty role in realizing the “great race.” Berg notes the comments of Edward Wiggam as evidence of popular arguments supporting eugenics. Wiggam claimed that “it is peculiarly to women that America looks for the realization of this ideal. She is the natural conservator of the race, the guardian of its blood...only a noble race will or can build noble institutions”<sup>6</sup> (qtd. in Berg 79). According to this logic, women like Judith were not only aggravating the ire of God, but shirking their civic duty.

As Berg notes, viewing children as “economically as well as psychologically crippling” is the ultimate rejection of eugenics, which may have won Kelley few admirers (Berg 80). Berg points out that there may have been a limited audience for Kelley’s message in the 1920’s, one “not prepared for a critique of reproduction—for unsentimental depictions of maternity in general” (88). Berg’s observation is critical because she reveals that while *Weeds* satisfied a predominant literary trend of the time, realism/naturalism, it was through a female, reproductive-centered perspective. She notes that, “for women, biology is destiny in a more fundamental way than for the male protagonist of the natural novel” (88). Again, this suggests an audience unsympathetic to Judith’s plight, and perhaps a male audience that may have hostile to the suggestion that female experiences were more “fundamental” than that of males. Kelley’s representation of the “material conditions in which reproduction becomes bodily colonization” was a completely radical sentiment for both literature and mainstream culture of the time (Berg 3).

The fact remains, however, that despite the large body of unfavorable reviews about *Weeds*, there were positive critical responses to the novel when it was originally published, which complicates any clear-cut assessment of why the novel failed. In particular, Stuart Sherman wrote a glowing review of *Weeds* for *The Literary Review*, that parallels many modern reviews in its insight and attention to Kelley’s true themes. Even more remarkable is that Sherman’s astute observations and interpretation of the novel emerge without the inclusion of the birth chapter in the original publication, clearly revealing that there *were* critics who gleaned value and relevance from the novel in its original published form. Sherman characterizes *Weeds* a “social study,” in which

these good people are as innocent as our parents in Eden. They are not within hailing distance of the rural civilizations denoted by the possession of Ford cars and victrolas. They are still at the accordion and lumber wagon stage, where they were left by their great-grandfathers...(363)

Sherman diverges from other critics here, in that he doesn't punish Kelley for her rural, somewhat dull setting choice and the poverty that permeates it. Instead, Sherman digs into the novel's more substantive themes: the reasons for Judith's gradual decline into a "serf of the soil...slave of circumstance" (363). Sherman appraises Judith with empathy and a critical eye for what Kelley intended her to be: "eager, fearless, [and] self-reliant," a woman "lapsing into defeat by irresistible processes which [she] doesn't understand" (363).

Joseph Krutch of *The Nation* wrote a similarly perceptive review of *Weeds* in 1924, concluding that the Kentucky community is "interesting not chiefly because of the strangeness of their story but because it is only a slightly different version of the common story of humanity" (65). Much like Sherman, he calls attention to Judith in particular, calling her story "the story of all women" (65). Krutch focuses attention on the same aspects of the novel that Sherman pointed out: the inevitability, and hence tragedy, of Judith's loss of vivacity through processes beyond her control.

The existence of praiseworthy reviews concerning *Weeds* refutes the notion that the novel may have simply been ahead of its time in Kelley's feminist realism. While the lack of popular success may be attributed to lack of audience, reviews like those by Krutch and Sherman definitively prove that there *were* critics who took notice of the value of Kelley's work, making much the same arguments contemporary critics make for *Weeds*' inclusion in the literary canon today. What, then, explains the rejection or neglect of *Weeds* within critical circles?

#### IV

While a thorough examination of attitudes, trends, tastes and movements of the 1920's nets a broader understanding of *Weeds*' failure with the general reading public, questions still remain about Kelley's lack of appeal within scholarly literary circles. How could a novel with such clear value to the American literary tradition have fallen into obscurity, being excluded from college curricula and ignored by the literary elite that shaped the "canon" taught in those colleges? The answer again lies in the tumultuous decade of the 1920's, which saw incredible value shifts and power struggles in academic and literary circles. The preferences and attention of the literary elite are critical to novels like *Weeds*, as Paul Lauter's definition of the literary canon underscores. Lauter identifies the canon as "that set of authors and works generally included in basic American literature college courses and textbooks, and those ordinarily discussed in standard volumes of literary history, Works cited, or criticism" (435). As the institution that preserves and standardizes the literature that will endure in college classrooms and literary criticism, the power of the American literary canon cannot be underestimated. The canon can be construed as the vehicle by which we measure our identity and preserve our culture through literature—an authoritative institution which guarantees immortality for some writers, while relegating others, like Kelley, to the periphery. As Lauter observes, the canon "encodes a set of social norms and values; and these, by virtue of its cultural standing, it helps endow with force and continuity" (Lauter 435). Those authors and works which fall outside their culture's norms and values face certain exclusion.

The question remains, what trends and factors during the 1920's shaped the canon that excluded Kelley? According to Lauter, one of the more important developments in the twenties concerning literature was "the proliferation of American literary anthologies... [which] was a product of the expansion of higher education" (440). This single development was critical because it amounted to the "academic institutionalization of reading choices" (Lauter 441). According to Lauter

What had been the function of individuals, of families, or of literary clubs and certain magazines—choosing books to be remembered and read, building culture and taste—became the purview of the classroom. Even on college campuses, prior to 1920, and certainly in communities, a good deal of literary study, particularly of contemporary authors, was carried on within literary societies, mainly female. (441)

Essentially, the 1920's can be singled out as a unique period in which academia emerged as the purveyor of values and taste in literature. More specifically, the "influence over reading shifted...from women who were not academic professionals to academics, the great majority of whom were white and male" (Lauter 441). This trend promised trouble for women and minority writers because, as Laurence Veysey observes, "this meant vesting authority in a group that, as of 1900, numbered only a few hundred persons spread across the humanistic fields...the immediate result was thus the intensification of elitism" (qtd. in Lauter 441). Literary scholarship was reorganized "in ways that not only asserted a male-centered culture and values for the college-educated leadership, but also enhanced their [the dominant elite] own authority and status as well" (Lauter 442). The effect was a homogenized, whitewashed curriculum that reflected the values of this small professoriat, while relegating working-class, women and minority values and tastes to the margins. Women authors, when evaluated by academia, tended to be hindered by the same "ideology of domesticity" promulgated in mass culture, veiled in movements like "The Country Life Movement" and eugenics (Lauter 443). The work of women authors was consistently evaluated through a highly gendered lens, with those interests designated as typically female being devalued in the academic world. Lauter provides multiple examples evidencing the diminishment of all things "female" in the academic literary world in the early twentieth century. The MLA chairman, for example, as early as 1909 was confronting the issue of "coeducation and literature," complaining that the overwhelming number of women in literature courses was fostering the opinion that "literature is preeminently a study for girls" (Lauter 444). A popular novelist during the time of *Weeds* publication, Joseph Hergesheimer, provides another significant example of the flight from the feminine in his essay, "The Feminine Nuisance in American Literature" published in 1921. Hergesheimer complained that American fiction was being "strangled with a petticoat," and longed for the return and reverence of the masculine hero (Lauter 447). Subsequent statistics also support the notion that women were underrepresented and undervalued in the world of academia. The number of women obtaining doctorates and college professorships declined from 1920-1950, which not only evidences a lack of female representation in academia, but diminished the chances of feminist literature being advanced in those forums.

Such trends in the academic and literary circles have resulted in diminished presence and attention to works like *Weeds*, in which the sphere of domesticity, while portrayed

through the lens of brutal realism, is nonetheless devalued. As Adelaide Morris points out, implementing the values of white, upper-middle class males as the “universal” experience sought in literature

privileges the whaling ship over the sewing circle as a symbol of human community, satirizes domineering mothers and shrewish wives rather than tyrannical fathers and abusive husbands, and displays exquisite compassion for the crises of the adolescent male while dismissing the parallel turmoil of the female. (475)

The editorial and general critical response to *Weeds* illuminates Morris’s point aptly: Alfred Harcourt’s abrasive response to the birthing scene, and the various critics who reject Judith as irrational seem to be applying assumptions and beliefs about patriarchy and masculinity to the text, the result an elevation of that which is masculine (sympathy for Jerry), while necessarily devaluing the feminine (Judith’s characterization as odd or flighty).

Lauter also makes a compelling argument about the exclusion of black authors which demonstrates why authors like Kelley, and novels like *Weeds* may also have been ignored. Lauter notes that the 1920’s saw a swell of activity from black writers, producing a large body of work addressing “the activism of a decade of struggle for civil and political rights...[and] white curiosity about the supposed ‘exotic’ qualities” of African-Americans (Lauter 436-7). This writing joined an already rich literary tradition for black authors, including “songs, tales and slave narratives” from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Lauter 436). Yet, few classroom anthologies included any work by black authors, with the occasional exception of Phyllis Wheatley or Paul Lawrence Dunbar. What this systematic exclusion of black authors (who had been contributing to the literary tradition for centuries by this time) demonstrates is that the arbiters of value in the literary elite of the time deemed interests of black writers on the periphery of American norms and values. The writings and work of black authors were not allowed to shape the American collective identity in literature because the academic elite judged them unworthy. As is acknowledged today, these marginalized voices very much demand a presence in American history and culture, and contribute a richer, truer rendering of American identity. The same can be said of a novel like *Weeds*. Certainly, Judith Pippinger Blackford’s existence as a beaten-down wife, unwilling child bearer and farm-laborer fell outside of the “collective” experience sought by those measuring value and identity in the 1920’s. While the effort to exclude Kelley’s unique perspective probably wasn’t a purposeful exclusion, ignoring the value in *Weeds* was still a rejection of the experiences Kelley sought to represent through Judith. The plight of a trapped woman yearning for freedom and escape from her scripted, unfulfilling life was deemed on the periphery of American cultural norms and values.

## V

Why *Weeds* failed in the 1920’s is ultimately impossible to answer with a single, illuminating and all-encompassing response. Rather, the uninspired public reception and critical (and subsequent academic) snub of Kelley’s novel is fashioned from the exceptional set of cultural, political and academic trends that existed and disadvantaged Kelley in the years she plied her trade as a writer. Whether the unforgiving editing pen of Harcourt Brace is to blame, or the presence and social acceptance of gendered ideologies, or a public consumed with a

new, post-World War identity for America, the end result is the same. Judith Pippinger Blackford and Edith Summers Kelley became casualties of an indifferent, unreceptive public, one not prepared or particularly interested in Kelley's messages about the hardships of the working-class, the tyranny of motherhood, and the complex social identity preordained for women.

Potentially more important than the reasons *Weeds* failed are the interminable losses to generations of readers unacquainted with Judith, and what can be done to assure *Weeds*'s survival today. Certainly, the fact that *Weeds* was recovered does not guarantee its permanency or success in contemporary times. Almost as quickly as Bruccoli persuaded Southern Illinois University to reissue the novel in 1972, it was inexplicably out of print again shortly after. The Feminist Press reissued *Weeds* again in 1982 and 1996, the latter addition being the first ever to include the missing birth chapter. The survival of *Weeds* is even today by no means assured. As Goodman notes, "what is necessary to secure a permanent place for a novel like *Weeds* is that it be discussed over time by critics who focus on its literary merits and also link it to other works with which it may be compared" (364). Undeniably, *Weeds* falls into the realist/naturalist tradition in American literature, but as Goodman points out, "American writers within those traditions whose works are cited, particularly by male critics, are male" leaving the novel in the periphery, even now (364). In Donald Pizer's 1982 study, *Twentieth Century American Literary Naturalism: An Interpretation*, he mentions the works of Stephen Crane, Theodore Dreiser, Frank Norris, James T. Farrell, John Dos Passos, John Steinbeck, Norman Mailer, William Styron, and Saul Bellow (Goodman 364). Conspicuously absent are the works of female naturalists like Kelley, even though Judith easily meets Pizer's requisite for a naturalist protagonist: a "tragic figure whose potential for growth is evident, but who fails to develop because of the circumstances of...life" (qtd. in Goodman 364—get Pizer's study for direct citation). Pizer again published his idea of the quintessential naturalist writer and protagonist in his 1993 essay, "Contemporary American Literary Naturalism." Pizer's updated definition of a naturalist writer and his protagonist makes no mention of the female experience:

The naturalist will dramatize the pathos of the waste of human potential in the live of those feeling temperaments, a Clyde Griffiths or Studs Lonigan, who lack the cunning and strength to overcome the structured visions and expectations of their limited worlds. Or he will encourage our sympathy for the Joads of America, men of simple needs...or he will render the self-driven efforts by a Henry Fleming or a Sergeant Croft to obtain knowledge in a world clouded with ambiguity (257).

While Judith handily meets Pizer's criteria for a protagonist stifled by processes beyond her control, she merits no mention, nor do her better-known contemporaries, Wharton's Lily Bart or Chopin's Edna Pontelliar, despite their obvious affinities. It would appear that even in the late twentieth century, Kelley still found her work plagued by a culture that substitutes the male experience for the universal, one that continues to undervalue, or simply ignore the feminine.

*Weeds*'s endurance and Kelley's place in the American literary tradition has implications that go "far beyond the vindication of one woman writer" (Lootens 113). Indeed, as Barbara Lootens observes, "the first step in the destruction of the myth of the artistic irrelevance

of an ordinary woman's life, acceptance of *Weeds* is acceptance of the right of women to establish new literary traditions evolving from essential female experience" (113). Breaking Kelley's silence is *still* a tall order, but one that is critical, essential and worthy in rendering a richer, more authentic picture of American culture and identity and, in particular, an identity that includes and celebrates the female experience.

## Notes

1 See Fran Zaniello and also Goodman. Goodman notes that the Kelleys were in such financial straits at the time when Kelley wrote the novel that Kelley's good friend Sinclair Lewis lobbied Harcourt on her behalf for financial help, fearing that Kelley might "fail for lack of encouragement—particularly in the hard dollars which [would] make it possible for her to work." Lewis was instrumental in getting the book published, telling Harcourt "I think you have something big in her and this book."

2 Interestingly, Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street* was critically compared to *Weeds* by Stuart Sherman in his review of *Weeds*. Sherman drew corollaries between the two novels, noting that the two novels represent "distinct stages in the 'march of civilization,'" with the farming community of *Weeds* sociologically preceding the middle-class mid-Westerners of *Main Street*. Sherman takes care to note, however, that *Weeds* is no "aftermath" to *Main Street*, but a "fresh harvest in a new field."

3 It is of significance that Hochman notes that Wharton and Chopin are not typically associated with the "male authorship and 'virile' fiction" that is the naturalist plot. She claims that despite Chopin and Wharton's affinities toward naturalist fiction, the connection is typically ignored because the two authors are praised for their roles as "trailbreakers" in fiction by women.

4 In fact, "The Country Life" movement's founder, Theodore Roosevelt, had himself had contributed to this discussion of a woman's "sense of duty" a mere twenty years earlier in his "Address to the National Congress of Mothers." In his speech, Roosevelt echoes the sentiments of The Farmer's Wife, saying "the primary duty of the woman is to be the helpmeet, the housewife, and mother. The woman should have ample education advantages; but save in exceptional cases, the man must be, and she need not be, and generally ought not to be, trained for a lifelong career as the family bread-winner." Roosevelt claimed women who didn't meet this standard had fallen prey to "self-indulgence."

5 Casey presumably refers to the romantic notion of the "yeoman" farmer, an ideal long espoused by Jefferson as the apex of republicanism. Jefferson hoped to promote the yeoman farmer as the face of America: an independent landowner earning a living from the soil. Unfortunately, and thus ironically for Casey, this ideal embraced by Jefferson applied to a small population: white, middle-class males. Slaves, immigrants, women and the poor bore no part of Jefferson's calculation for America's gloried future.

6 Again, Theodore Roosevelt's speech from 1905 supports such sentiments. In it, Roosevelt claims that a people who engaged in "race suicide" by not producing enough children of a pure race, would conclusively prove that it was "unfit to exist."

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# Social Movements and the Politics of Place: Transnational and Local Change

● ● ● Sarah Prindle

*In Gibson-Graham's conceptualisation, this politics of place- often favoured by women, environmentalist and those struggling for alternative forms of livelihood- is a lucid response to the type of 'politics of empire' which is also common on the Left and which requires that empire be confronted at the same level of totality, thereby devaluing all forms of localised action, reducing it to accommodation or reformism. As Gibson-Graham does not cease to remind us, 'places always fail to be fully capitalist, and herein lie their potential to become something other.'*

-Arturo Escobar, "Beyond the Third World"

The importance of globalized resistance to neoliberal globalization and capitalism has been emphasized by theorists and social movements alike, particularly since the relative success of the World Trade Organization protests in Seattle in 1999. In some ways resistance to neoliberal globalization is new, dealing with a new set of regimes of capital, and working against a system that is global and in no way democratic. Reactions to the WTO, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank, often beginning as localized movements, have had to organize on a global scale to even begin to meet the widespread dominance of international trade organizations.

Social movements often seek the assistance of, or incorporate into, NGOs and civil society, where there are opportunities like the World Social Forum to discuss the needs of individual places or global needs of many places. It is important to recognize the increasingly global scale of social movements, as they respond to the global scale of the influences on localized places. However, the importance of place and movements rooted in a place should not be overshadowed by the globalization of social movements. Some have called this idea globalization from below, but it is more than that. Change must begin in a place, recognizing the knowledge derived from living in that place. This knowledge becomes the social capital of community, interacting internally, ecologically, and internationally, and this knowledge is attached to a particular place. The understanding of place is not replaceable by overarching theories of social being. It is from this importance of place that global social movements must be derived, or any change that is effectively made by these movements will not address the needs of individual communities and life-worlds, leading to the same problems that overarching theories like socialism have failed to address.

I will provide a framework for place-based politics through the work of Arturo Escobar. Escobar has written extensively about place and its role in global social movements as well as in the field of anthropology. Jurgen Habermas' concept of the 'life-world' is similar to Escobar's 'place' and addresses the context of social movements, so I will include a discussion of Habermas' life-world in my exploration of place. It is important to note that these terms are not interchangeable; but in using and discussing both, it is possible to understand

the complex relationships of a community to a place and vice versa.

Any discussion of global social movements needs to address the headway made by counter-globalization movements, as well as the role of transnational civil society and NGOs. The success or compromise of these groups' ideals is the framework, on a global scale, within which place-based movements have to work. The importance of globalization from below and the movement in civil society to understand indigenous knowledge systems show that, in reaction to the negative effects of globalization, social movements are beginning to look at the significance of place for social change.

Local movements, rooted in a place, have been forced to work on a global scale. The welfare state is as good as outlawed by neoliberal practices, and therefore to get the funding and support needed to provide for their communities, social movements have responded by working with global movements and civil society, which arguably alters their course as well as their methods. All of these concepts are important to take into account when examining the politics of place in global social movements because any group seeking social change has to understand the current framework of civil society and transnational social movements, and decide whether or not to work within it. I believe place-based movements can work successfully on a global scale, and influence other transnational movements by creating a significant alternative to the seemingly unachievable level of global influence of neoliberal capitalism.

### **Defining "Place"**

Marx and Engels talk in the *Communist Manifesto* about the colonization of the lives of the proletariat, and begin to get at Escobar's idea of place and Habermas' life-world; part of these are the set of relationships and values in the daily lives of people. Marx says that the bourgeoisie "has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless infeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom- Free Trade" (12). He even notes the way in which capitalism infiltrates places; "in place of the local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal interdependence of nations" (Marx 13). Global free trade is more highly valued than local markets and social mechanisms in place on the local or state level.

Herbert Marcuse and the critical theorists, responding to the failures of scientific socialism, examined the possibilities for alternatives to the all-appropriating Leviathan of capitalism. In *One-Dimensional Man*, Marcuse examines the possibility of the "backwards areas" or "undeveloped countries," not yet colonized, to create or rather preserve an alternative way of living (47). He concludes that if these places could hold on to their sense of place and present "strong resistance from the indigenous and traditional modes of life and labor- a resistance which is not abandoned even at the very tangible prospect of a better and easier life" (47). Though he admits it is likely that this prospect will lead developing countries to comply with neo-colonial pressures, an alternative is possible here. It is notably one of the few places in the book in which Marcuse finds a possible alternative to oppressive forces of capitalism. Marcuse interestingly notes that "indigenous progress would demand a planned policy which, instead of superimposing technology on the traditional modes of life and labor, would extend and improve them on their own grounds" (47). Reformulating the possibilities for industrial and political progress requires place-based progress: change must be made both physically and ideologically in a space rooted in the location of the culture.

The most significant contributor to the definition of place I will be using is Arturo Escobar. He feels that place becomes important when "we understand by place the experience

of a particular location with some measure of groundedness (however, unstable), sense of boundaries (however, permeable), and connection to everyday life, even if its identity is constructed, traversed by power, and never fixed” (*Culture* 140). A sense of place, and the politics of that place, is as valid for a dweller of informal housing in a slum in Nairobi, an indigenous rainforest dweller in Colombia, or a suburban housewife in California.

For Escobar, place’s counter part is “placelessness [which] has become the essential feature of the modern condition, a very acute and painful one in many cases, such as those of exiles and refugees” (*Culture* 140). Place has not been adequately addressed in western social theory because “Western philosophy—often times with the help of theology and physics- has enshrined space as the absolute [...] space has to be disassociated from the bodies that occupy it and from the particularities that these bodies lent to the places they inhabit” (*Culture* 143). This perhaps explains why place is not valued by western socialists like Marx and Engels, though they have in some way identified placelessness as a symptom of the proletariat in the capitalist system.

The concept of place addressed here and that Escobar discusses is related to the ways in which indigenous knowledge is attached to landscape; “the landscape is endowed with agency and personhood [...] connectedness of people with the land results from an active engagement with it” (*Culture* 146). In their exploration of indigenous knowledge systems “Belonging to Land,” Laurie Anne Whitt et al asserts that the “belief that knowledge and land are intimately bound to one another is widely shared among indigenous peoples” (Whitt 701). This is not to say that indigenous knowledge sees itself as the only guardian of the “pristine wilderness,” but rather that the land is part of humans and humans are a part of nature (Whitt 710). This binding of land and knowledge, of human-ecosystem relationships, echoes Escobar’s sense of place. Indigenous knowledge, Whitt argues, in which “a people belongs to a land, and land inheres in a people, [...] cannot be alienated or disowned. It cannot be reduced to a commodity” (Whitt 712). This addresses what is important to Escobar about place. Places cannot be completely reduced to capital because they encompass knowledge that values “elements of difference that are not reducible to the constructs of capitalism and modernity” (*Culture* 155). However, this search for the elements of place which are not yet commodified, or have not been influenced by capitalist or colonial processes, leads to the discussion of elements that have been appropriated by these systems, and how to separate or include these contradictory elements.

Place has frequently been left out of the discussion of globalization, which is significant because place often is a source of domination as well as resistance: place in the physical sense of land, with all the freedoms and conditions of the people attached to that place. Discussions of globalization present capitalism as “inherently spatial and as naturally stronger than the forms of noncapitalist economy (traditional economies, “Third World” economies, socialist economies, communal experiments) because of its presumed capacity to universalize the market” (*Culture* 154). In this way, capitalism alienates place and “the lived body [which] is the result of habitual cultural and social processes” from the discussion of global economies in theory and political action (*Culture* 143). Yet places, and people’s sense of place, cannot be completely extracted from experiences in the global capitalist system. Escobar asks an important question; “Is it possible to find in place-based practices a critique of power and hegemony without overlooking their emeddedness in circuits of patriarchy, capital, and modernity?” (*Culture* 142).

This is where Escobar's place and Habermas' life-world meet, in the search for a physical and ideological space not yet commodified by the modern capitalist-hegemonic system. In *New Social Movements*, Habermas describes the movements of the 1960s and 1970s as seeking "resistance to tendencies to colonize the life-world" (35). Habermas does not specifically cite capitalism as the source of colonization. For him, it is the "economic-administrative complex [that] spurs erosive processes in the life-world" (*New* 34). The resistance he find most significant in the new social movements is the "provincial, small social spaces, decentralized forms of interaction and de-specialized activities" (*New* 36). Habermas sees those who seek a place which is not yet commodified or appropriated by the economic-administrative complex as doing something radically new. Yet he also sees these movements as seeking to "defend or reinstate endangered lifestyles" as well as "put[ting] reformed lifestyles into practice" (*New* 33). So in a sense, new social movements do not seek to create new life-worlds, but to preserve old ones and to look back at how life was before the economic-administrative complex infiltrated and devalued the 'small social places' and 'decentralized forms of interaction' (*New* 36). A smaller, decentralized social place could describe indigenous communities before colonization as well as many of the places that are now resisting neoliberal globalization.

To address Escobar's question, how are we to locate the division between those elements of place and the life-world not yet appropriated by or reducible to the capitalist-hegemonic system and those already commodified, Habermas answers that these elements are found "at the seam between system and life-world" (*New* 36). Of course, since life-world and place are not equivalent concepts, this does not completely satisfy Escobar's question, but it is a beginning. For Habermas, the spaces where resistance seeks the life-world are in "ascribed characteristics such as sex, age, skin, color, even neighborhood and religion, contribute to [...] the creation of sub-culturally protected communications groups which further the search for personal and collective identity" (*New* 36). This search for identity does not necessarily include all the elements which describe Escobar's sense of place. However, the seam between life-world and system is identifiable because it is where conflict occurs. It signals the spaces people defend from the system because there is something within those spaces which is not reducible to the system, something which people identify with outside of the system.

Habermas' new social movements center on the search for personal or collective identity outside the capitalist-hegemonic system and Escobar identifies the importance of identity-based movements in *Women and the Politics of Place*. This collection of articles is an important exploration of the ways in which the system denies women their lived bodies, much the way it commodifies lived places, alienating people from their identities within a place/gender. Movements which resist the patriarchal-capitalist colonization of women's bodies reflect place-based movements, and they often become one movement because reclaiming women's bodies is connected to reclaiming the ecologies and communities in which those bodies live.

*Women and the Politics of Place* emphasizes "the political importance of looking at women mobilizing in place," which incorporates Habermas' identity-based new social movements and Escobar's sense of place (Harcourt 2). The politics of place takes women's social movements beyond identity-based, organized social movements to ubiquitous connections of women in "a 'politics of becoming'" (Harcourt 130). In this sense, both the politics of place and the liberation of women's bodies intersect, creating independent, non-hierarchical movements of women, rejecting "imperial globalization [...] and] continuing their orientation to the local, daily, and bodily, recognizing that transforming the world involves transforming

sites, subjects, and practices worldwide” (Harcourt 131). In this section of the book, “Building Community Economies: Women and the Politics of Place,” J.K. Gibson-Graham gets to the heart of the nature of place-based women’s empowerment: “If *women* are everywhere, a *women* is always somewhere, and those ‘somewheres’ are what the project is about: places being created, strengthened, defended, augmented, or transformed by women” (Harcourt 131). This shows how Habermas’ new social movements, as he considered the feminist movement, have been incorporated into or have educated place-based social movements, such as the women’s movement towards place described by Gibson-Graham.

### “Place” in Global Social Movements

With the framework of Escobar’s place-based politics and Habermas’ social movements, we can examine the global social movements as we have begun to do with women’s place-based social movements. Not all global social movements are responding to place, but, arguably, reclaiming place is at the heart of much of the current counter-globalization movement, if we incorporate actions in both the Global South and the North. The protests in Seattle against the WTO in 1999 marked the beginning of an identifiable counter-neoliberal-globalization movement or movements, at least in the Global North. This movement(s) has been hailed as a global rejection of neoliberal capitalist dominance, “crystallized into a concerted popular protest movement in the very ‘heart of empire’ and participated in by people coming from all over the world” (Rahman 13). This includes a conglomeration of what Habermas considered the new social movements with the old social movements, or organized labor. Anisur Rahman describes the ideology emerging out of this movement as “grassroots social activism [...] of a local or specific issue-based character without much significance for fundamental social change” (Rahman 14). Yet it is the decentralized nature of this movement that others find most significant, as Escobar notes that the best features of the movement are “self-organizing meshworks and largely non-hierarchical structures” (*Beyond* 210). This is compared to the centralized social movements of the past, Habermas’ new social movements.

This rejection of globalization, often called globalization from below, arises from locations because it reacts to modernity’s “process of distantiation, dislocation, or ‘disembedding’ whereby traditional symbol systems are lifted out of their local contexts and redistributed across new dimensions of time and space”: globalization’s appropriation of place (Dallmayr 323). It is therefore appropriate that the movement is theorized as non-cohesive, as the movement is worldwide, decentralized, and “political activism without a territorial base” (Falk 192). This description of the movement is often characterized as globalization from below because it is reclaiming place by beginning in local ways, and maintaining decentralization in recognition of the places from which the movements begin.

This decentralized, and seemingly disjointed, global movement is not simply a reaction to the chaotic dislocation of globalization; it is also a reaction to placelessness. The movements often spring from people who have experienced “a sundering of local like from place of greater depth than ever before,” as Escobar says (*Culture* 141). These movements are acting against a privileging of space by globalized economic power, such as the WTO, the IMF, and the World Bank. Therefore, it is perhaps important to be decentralized in order to create a movement that recognizes the local, the places from which the movement springs.

### Poor Places

At this point I think it is important to address placelessness and the complexity of place in order to more fully understand both the appropriation of place that global social

movements are reacting to. It is also important to see place not as an ideal, deep-rooted and indigenous way of being, although it sometimes is. Place is often left out of discussion of globalization because it is not recognized, particularly when a sense of place is found in the most dire of circumstances. This sense of place is overlooked because it is a valued space that has little economic or global power. Sense of place may not always be privileged or wholesome, but it is a global experience in the poor places of the world. It is these places that can be said to be most affected by the global capitalist-hegemonic system, and therefore this sense of place should be recognized and incorporating into the global movements which fight this system.

Though alienation from a sense of place occurs in both the global north and south, the experience of place is very different for the people in both worlds. For example, the experience of place for many in the global south is now constituted by life in a slum. Slums are not new anywhere, including the wealthy west, and certainly Marx and particularly Engels recognized the role capitalism plays in creating slums, described in Engels' *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*. The slums of the global south today can also be said to be a result of neoliberal capitalism.

This is the argument made by Mike Davis in *Planet of Slums*. Davis cites United Nations Human Settlements Programme in estimating that, as of 2005, there were about one billion slum inhabitants in the world, "nearly equal to the population of the world when the young Engels first ventured onto the mean streets of St. Giles and Old Town Manchester in 1844" (Davis 23). Davis complicates the idea of place, as he describes how the poor adapt to living in slums. Davis describes housing as "a hard calculus of confusing trade-offs [...] The urban poor have to solve the complex equation as they try to optimize housing cost, tenure security, quality of shelter, journey to work, and sometimes, personal safety" (Davis 27). Slum-dwellers are often adapting to urban life, when "rural migrants first move from province to the city center- location at any price- to find jobs" (Davis 29). Ideally, informal housing leads eventually to housing with municipal services, like water and sanitation, but many do not find such services. Neoliberal reform, which often prevents such services from being supplied by the welfare state, arguably is creating the conditions of slums and alters the sense of place for those living in them. Those living in the slums attempt to create a sense of place, of community and local knowledge, despite virtually uninhabitable conditions.

Davis complicates the idea of place because one would not think of a slum as a place of value. Yet, Davis later points to instances where this could be said to be true. While most government programs were cut by the "Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) imposed on debtor nations in the late 1970s and 1980s," some states created public housing in order to deal with the number of people living in slums (Davis 62-3). Beijing was one of the cities in which high rise public housing was created to house a large amount of people on the small amount of land that was not highly profitable in the city. The residents of this public housing were surveyed about the quality of their living and "in surveys residents report dramatic declines in social visits, intercourse with neighbors, and frequency of children's play, as well as increased isolation and loneliness of old people" (Davis 64). In addition, public housing provides no space for the "home workshops" of the "huge informal labor force" (Davis 64). A similar survey in Bangkok found that "the poor actively prefer their old slums to the new tower-blocks" (Davis 64). The creation of public housing did not recognize the need of the inhabitants and did not create a sense of place, of community and belonging, to the extent that some preferred the conditions of the slum because there was an opportunity to interact with community and place.



These people had created social capital in their slums, and had met Escobar's ideas of sense of place. In the slums they had some level of boundaries, rootedness in a place, and connection the social, economic, and environmental aspects of everyday life in that place, thought these aspects are at times unstable (*Culture* 140). This is why it is important for any movement for change to recognize sense of place. Some might have thought that cheap public housing would be a good answer for the problem of thousands of people with no formal housing. Yet, in recognizing what place really means, we find that is more than just recognizing spaces as legitimate. We must recognize place as independent of what the capitalist-hegemonic system recognizes as legitimate. Place lives outside of western and capitalist ideas of space, and must be recognized by making the movements against neoliberal globalization about re-legitimizing place, as informal as it may be.

### Place as Alternative

The question when recognizing place as global social movements becomes how to recognize place in a movement that is inherently global: how can we recognize place in global spaces? Gibson-Graham begins the answer to this question, as pertaining to place-based women's movements, by saying that second wave feminism becomes global because "not only are women everywhere, but so are economic practices, resource relationships, and organizations" (Harcourt 154). Places are everywhere, connected by the same commodifying globalization, which places, individually, move against everywhere, globally. Place in global social movements is important because place recognizes the differences of the ways in which places operate in contrast to the ways in which global capitalism operates. In fact, place creates "a new modality of being that is itself inherently opposed to authoritarianisms [...] place-based actors believe that an effective politics must work *to create other ways of being*" (Harcourt 183). Creating alternatives and therefore rejecting the prevailing capitalist-hegemonic system must begin in places, because it is in these places, which are not (completely) reducible to the system, that a space outside the system is found.

It may seem, then, that all of the global social movements, in rejecting the spaces created by the capitalist-hegemonic system, are acknowledging place. In her introduction to the global social movement and its roots, *Another World is Possible If*, Susan George describes solutions for the steps needed in a 'transitional phase,' which suppose that change will require at least some work within the current global capitalist system. George is a proponent of the democratic socialist model of Western Europe, as at least a temporary solution. She sees a body of the UN, made up of members of the global social movement or civil society, which oversees the governments of the world to make sure that redistribution of wealth (through taxation) and debt relief was properly enacted. At this point George becomes "'neo-colonial,' with no apologies" and states that "Northern NGOs, development and humanitarian agencies have been working in these [corrupted] countries [of the South...] they know who's who and they know which are the truly independent elements" (George 148). This is perhaps not an unusual attitude in the counter-globalization movement, and certainly one that George claims for the global social movement (of the North).

While George certainly opposes the capitalist-hegemonic system, she does not seem to recognize possibilities working outside of the system as legitimate, at least not in the transitional phase. It is precisely this "capitalocentrism" that Escobar and Gibson-Graham reject, the tendency "to devalue or marginalize noncapitalist development" (*Culture* 154). I would go further to say that the global social movement of the North often focuses on alternatives,



if any, of the North, as George does with democratic socialism. This accepts the “politics of empire” and “requires that empire be confronted at the same level of totality [...] thereby devaluing all forms of localised action, reducing it to accommodation or reformism” (*Beyond* 223). This valuing of globalized action over action rooted in localized places and therefore of capitalocentric values of Global North is precisely the way that place is devalued in the global social movement. It is this tendency that must be resisted, to recognize the alternatives found in localized places as legitimate, though they may not reach the level of totality of capitalism. It is for precisely this reason that they are true alternatives to capitalism.

To reinforce this point I would like to present an example of local action as preferable to national or global scale action, in order to show the legitimacy of small scale actions, working in a decentralized way, around the globe. In her work with commons research, Elinor Ostrom has sought to prove that the ‘tragedy of the commons’ described by Garret Hardin in 1968 is not inevitable. In essence, Ostrom has shown that to prevent exploitation of natural resources by people, it is not always necessary to have top-down regulations, or to privatize property to commodify its resources. Top-down regulations have not worked because they assume that “regulators will act in the public interest and understand how ecological systems work and how to change institutions so as to induce socially optimal behavior” (Ostrom 31). This system has often failed as the regulators have not achieved solutions and government controlled resources, such as those in Indonesian Borneo, or the cod fishing areas in Canada, that have been degraded at higher rates than before government control (Dietz 1910). This has led commons scholars to re-examine the question.

Dietz et al found that “locally evolved institutional arrangements governed by stable communities and buffered from outside forces have sustained resources successfully for centuries” (1907). The reason for this is perhaps because the social capital and knowledge of the ecosystem is highest in stable, localized communities. This leads Dietz et al to conclude that self-regulating communities which are directly interacting with the common resource are preferable to top-down regulation, where the “knowledge based is strongest with small-scale ecologies and institutions, where long time series exist on many successes and failures” (Dietz 107). This is a significant example of the ways in which place-based knowledge is often more successful at governing and providing livelihoods for communities than top-down governing. It is an argument that takes seriously the role of place in national and global movements for alternatives to the current capitalist-hegemonic system.

### **Place Transcends Places**

The question now becomes how to use place on a global scale, without leaving behind place-based alternatives, without indulging in capitalocentrism: how do we transcend place without leaving it behind? This cannot be answered in a few pages, and perhaps not even an entire book, but there are a few identifiable answers to this question. One answer is found in Daniel Mato’s work on transnational networking by indigenous peoples. Mato found that indigenous peoples’ organizations have begun to use “critical words” such as ‘biodiversity’ in order to communicate with transnational NGOs (Mato 345). But Mato found that this was more than just appropriation of language used by northern or transnational NGOs in order to gain a legitimate place among these groups. Mato found that the “incorporation of these words is meaningful because they come to provide meaning to certain practices of the Embera people and its organizations in terms that are acceptable to Panamanian and foreign governmental and non-governmental agencies” (Mato 346). Indigenous peoples’ groups, at

least some, use these critical words to legitimize their control over natural resources attached to their sense of place, positioning themselves as protectors of “biodiversity” and other spaces deemed as important by transnational civil society.

This serves their purposes, but also involves changing, at least superficially, the priorities of the groups in order to fit predetermined values of the governmental and nongovernmental agencies, which hold money and power in the capitalist-hegemonic system. This is because indigenous peoples’ groups “have been forced to seek extra-national support because national governments and diverse national groups of power have increasingly encroached their territories and deny them any rights” (Mato 347). So these groups have to participate on the transnational level, often joining together in larger groups such as the Coordinating Body for the Indigenous Peoples’ Organization of the Amazon Basin (COICA). Separate groups of indigenous people have found it necessary to create a collective identity, like COICA, in addition to learning the critical language of the transnational scene. Mato does not identify these as negative changes, but rather points out an important shift in the social representations of indigenous peoples’ groups, such as valuing the environment for its biodiversity. Is this appropriation of valued language and concepts changing indigenous peoples’ movements and their sense of place? Or is it providing a means of preserving places and thereby preserving alternatives to the prevailing system? Mato does not answer this, but he does notably point to the fact that these representations “make questionable any assumptions that ‘global’ and ‘local’ agents exist as separate realities, since both kinds of agents have become increasingly interconnected” (Mato 355). Perhaps the question of whether or not place can be transcended is no longer valid because place-based movements are already becoming global. The question now becomes, how are place-based politics being represented in the transnational scene?

The answer to this question has been partially described in the definition of the term “glocal” which refers to the “two-way traffic between globalization and localization” (*Culture* 156). This includes the movement of local goods on a global scale, and the use of global concepts on a local scale. This term, “glocal,” is important in a discussion of place because there are “forms of globalization of the local that could become effective political forces in the defense of place and place-based identities,” such as transnational groups like COICA (*Culture* 157). There are also examples of “localization of the global that locals might be able to use to their own advantage,” such as access to, or information about, global movements (*Culture* 157). Escobar, however, distinguishes local from place, and therefore glocal may not be the best term to discuss place-based movements on a global scale.

Escobar provides an example of a place-based group in the context of a global network of social movements. The “social movements of black communities of the Colombian Pacific illustrate the politics of place” by providing the ideas of that place-based movements, its goals, as well as how the movement changed when placed in a global context (*Beyond* 223). The goals of this place-based movement are “four rights: to their identity (hence, their right to be different), to their territory (as the space for exercising identity), to a measure of local autonomy, and to their own vision of development” (*Beyond* 223). The goals of this movement connect identity and territory, the defining factor in place as opposed to ‘local,’ yet autonomy and difference are also significant to place because it is through these rights that the group is able to exercise and defend alternative ways of living. This becomes especially important as place-based movements like the black communities of the Colombian Pacific work in a global context. Autonomy and difference, as well as a sense of place, in social

movements mean that in operating on a global scale these movements must be at once independent, in defense of place, but also part of a network of other place defending movements. Escobar describes that this movement, when it began to encounter transnational civil society and social movements, created a sort of “region-territory of ethnic groups” in the Pacific, making it a legitimate defender of a culture and a place. This is much like what Mato describes in his discussion of COICA, where indigenous groups created a collective identity to have a legitimate role among transnational agents. Escobar feels that this is a “kind of border thinking from which they [social movements] engage with both their communities, on the one hand, and agents of modernity, on the other” (*Beyond* 223). With this logic we see why the nonhierarchical, decentralized nature of global social movement networks becomes necessary: as a protection of the right to difference and a defense of place. Escobar calls these networks “meshworks” to describe their nonhierarchical nature (*Beyond* 223). On a global scale, these meshworks in totality constitute a “form of counter-hegemonic globalization” (*Beyond* 223). This meshwork of noncapitalist (or at least not completely capitalist) space is global in scale, but is it a scale comparable to that of capitalist globalization? Is this form of global, counter-hegemonic social movement able to infiltrate the spaces that capital and modernity occupy?

Escobar and proponents of globalization from below would say that place-based struggles, united in global networks, do have the potential to create an alternative on the scale of neoliberal globalization. The World Social Forum stands as a testament to this statement. The World Social Forum provides a place for global social meshworks to come together to create a global network of alternative and place-based movements. This forum creates a place for social movements and NGOs to communicate different world and place-views, to stand as different individually and as a network of difference. It also stands in scale of, and in difference to, the World Economic Forum, creating a global space equal to international capitalist spaces. Escobar also points to the scale of anti-WTO, anti-GATT, and similar protests, which occur on massive scale all over the world, as a source of global “reorganization of space from below” (*Culture* 166). Place-based movements have networked to create regional and global resistance to capital, working to create alternatives in the places they live as well as representing a global alternative.

It is important to recognize that these movements are marginalized by the capitalist-hegemonic system. While some NGOs have been allowed into United Nations bodies, for the most part global social movements and their networks have been excluded from global governance. In “Beyond the Third World,” Escobar notes that this could be creating “transnational third worlds of peoples and knowledge” (224). This transnational third world could be reclaimed as “a theory of translation that, while respecting diversity and multiplicity of movements (albeit questioning their particular identities) [...] making possible a higher level of articulation of ‘worlds and know ledges otherwise’” (*Beyond* 224). In a sense, a global third world of marginalized places and movements would allow for successful difference and connection because these places are united in their difference, in their marginalization and their opposition to the capitalist hegemonic system. Social movements are often created out of marginalization, and successfully unite despite difference because it’s the oppressive forces that marginalize them that in fact unite them.

## Conclusion

Place, as individual and collective attachment to culture, territory, and the life-world, stand as perhaps one of the last refuges for identity outside of ,or alternative to, life in the

capitalist-hegemonic system. This is not because places are untouched by capital but because capitalism has to come to places to attempt to normalize them, and places still stand in difference despite capitalism's influence. This survival of place means that "capitalism is at least to some degree transformed by places; that in the same way as women are not completely defined by their relation to men, places and non-capitalisms are not completely defined by their relation to capitalism and space" (*Culture* 158). This is because sense of place and local knowledge is "a place-specific (even if not place-bound or place-determined) way of endowing the world with meaning" (*Culture* 153). I feel that this is at the heart of why places cannot be erased. Places, communities, ecosystems, and life-worlds do what capitalism can never do: provide meaning in a world where there often seems to be none.

Place-based politics have been largely ignored by hegemonic and counter-hegemonic globalization forces, but networks like those in the World Social Forum, which encourage connectedness and difference, prove that place-based movements are finding global spaces for to discuss change. Non-hierarchical, self-organizing, place-based movements are significant because they not only stand in difference to the current capitalist-hegemonic system, but also enact "a politics of place that contrast with the grandiose politics of 'the Revolution' and with conceptions of anti-imperial politics that require that empire be confronted in its totality" (Beyond 221). Place-based struggles need to be recognized, and counter-hegemonic and localized movements need to discuss place, as the personal, community, and ecological source of their movements. Place needs to be recognized as a basis for global social change, not only to recognize the meaning place brings to people and their life-worlds, but also to recognize difference in understanding as an alternative to the current system, and one that provides place-based needs without requiring uniformity or totality for global change. Recognizing place will not intrinsically solve the world's problems, but it is a beginning.

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# The Drama and the Comedy of the Commons: Rethinking “The Tragedy of the Commons”

● ● ● Sarah Prindle

In 1968, in his much-cited work “The Tragedy of the Commons,” Garrett Hardin proposed that property or resources held in common would always be exploited. The positives appropriated from the commons will be internalized by the self-interested individual, and the negative will be externalized into the community, so that no individual has incentive to prevent the exploitation of the commons. This, Hardin argues, inevitably leads to degradation of the environment, and the tragedy of the commons. After nearly 38 years, the idea of the commons, and its tragedy, has been reviewed by thousands of scholars, with positive and negative opinions. Hardin’s idea that privatizing the commons and/or using regulation as “mutual coercion mutually agreed upon” has been used to justify environmental regulation at all levels of government, with debatable success (Hardin 1247).

I intend to show that Hardin’s “tragedy” is not inevitable, and that his theory has shut out all possibility of self-regulation, or regulation on a small scale. This has often been detrimental to the environmental and to social relationships around the world. I do not deny Hardin’s presumption that the environment is being exploited and that this must be dealt with. Neither do I disagree with Hardin’s assumption that population affects the degradation of the environment. I argue that denying the context in which overpopulation and resource exploitation occurs often hurts the wrong people, particularly poor women, does not see the exploitation of the environment as related to the exploitation of people (or people as part of the environment at all), and does not allow space for self-regulation, be it indigenous or contemporary. The commons can be something that is tragic, but it can also be a comedy, when common resources are successfully shared in a sustainable way, making the commons something to enjoy.

## Thirty-five Years After “Tragedy”

The periodical in which Hardin published “The Tragedy of the Commons,” *Science*, recently reviewed the original article with a series of articles, determining how we have dealt with the commons in the 35 years since Hardin raised the issue. In “The Struggle to Govern the Commons,” Dietz, Ostrom, and Stern discuss that in the years since Hardin first published “Tragedy,” the theory has been “highly influential but has long been aptly criticized as oversimplified” (1907). They point out that there have been many instances of locally-governed arrangements, in which resource users were able to sustainably prevent the ‘tragedy of the commons.’ This includes fisheries of the Northeastern United States, where federal regulations had not worked. They found that in these instances “top-down rules [...] were not credible among users,” which led to resistance to national, environmental regulations (Dietz 1907). Local institutions allow resource users a sense of autonomy and responsibility, as well as the ability to have a say in regulations. Some of these local commons institutions “have sustained resources successfully for centuries, although they often fail when rapid change occurs,” such



as intervention by national regulation (Dietz 1907). The article emphasizes that while not all of these localized institutions have “succeeded, neither have Hardin’s preferred alternatives of private or state ownership” (Dietz 1907). Successful systems also have identifiable qualities, providing models of positive self-governance.

Dietz *et al* find that successful governance systems are informed, about human-environment interactions and about the resources, but also about the “inherent unpredictability in the systems,” as well as the ability to adapt to changes within the institution (Dietz 1908-9). These systems also work best with a means of enforcing rules, with consequences for non-compliance. Infrastructure is also needed, for monitoring resource users, as well providing means of compliance with the rules. Through these attributes of a healthy self-governing institution, communication between all resource users is important in creating and implementing all parts of the system.

Finally, Dietz, while encouraging the local institutional arrangement as an alternative, notes that “no single broad type of ownership- government, private, or community- uniformly succeeds or fails to halt major resource deterioration” (1908). They conclude that a variety and/or mixture of these types of institutions should be used in changing current, unsuccessful institutions as well as creating new ones. They do emphasize that unsuccessful institutions “are designed in capital cities or by donor agencies in ignorance of the state of the science and local conditions” (Dietz 1910). Successful institutions at any level will have incentives for resource users, use scientific and local information, have means of monitoring and inducing compliance. Dietz concludes that while Hardin correctly recognized the exploitation of natural resources, his methods of coercion have been shown to be ineffective in many cases, as well as detrimental to the environment and to older, community-based institutions that had previously effectively solved the ‘tragedy of the commons.’

In the same issue of *Science*, several other scholars gave their view points on the ‘tragedy of the commons,’ to understand why Hardin’s model has not worked. Jules Pretty discusses the effect of policies influenced by Hardin’s ideas, such as the creation of state or private institutions, on social capital and particularly on indigenous peoples. Pretty proposes that Hardin’s theory has partially led to the idea that “ecosystems are pristine and have emerged independent of the action of local people” (1913). This has led to the removal of people, often poor and/or indigenous, from the very resources that they have depended on for centuries. Often these people have lived sustainably in these environments, but the nationalizing or privatizing of these resources, in the name of protecting them, leads to the forced removal of indigenous populations. Pretty emphasizes that social capital, or “the idea that social bonds and norms are important for people and communities,” improves long-term cooperation in communities, and therefore is an important factor in governing the commons (1913). Without social capital, people do not trust the sources of rules and regulations, and have no incentive to cooperate with, for example, environmental institutions.

Pretty points out that while social capital in itself does not solve all problems, for example, a feudal society may have attributes of social capital, it is still a significant factor. He also importantly notes that communities with good social capital “do not always have the knowledge to appreciate that what they are doing may be harmful” to natural resources (Pretty 1914). So, as Dietz points out, scientific and local information is key to creating successful governing institutions, but social capital, and the trust and cooperation it entails, increases compliance with governing the commons.



Another article in the same issue of *Science* reinforces the importance of local knowledge in regulating institutions. Adams discusses the perception of resource users, and the importance of this in the “conflict over common pool resources” (Adams 1915). The authors discuss the “ideas, ideologies, and beliefs” which affect resource users’ perception of an environmental problem: “religious beliefs and moral conviction can be important in structuring and understanding, both among local people and scientists” (Adams 1915). Decision makers must be aware of these sources of knowledge in their prejudices and those of local resources users, as well as knowledge informed by science and theory, like ‘tragedy of the commons,’ as well as “ideas outside formal science, including informal or ‘folk’ knowledge” (Adams 1915). Emphasizing the ideas of Dietz and Pretty, Adams notes that understanding the knowledge of resource users, such as if they even know about environmental problems and their solutions, as well as the knowledge of those who regulate the commons is essential to effectively managing the commons.

### The Drama/Comedy of the Commons

Elinor Ostrom, one of the authors of the above *Science* articles, has been highly influential in reframing the debate over governing the commons. In “Reformulating the Commons,” Ostrom explains that empirical evidence has contradicted Hardin’s theory and its successors, which “makes a uniform prediction that users themselves will be unable to extricate themselves from the tragedy of the commons” (29). In this article, Ostrom presents a new theory for looking at the commons. Ostrom points out that not only does Hardin’s prevailing theory assume that resource users will only act in self interest, it also assumes that “regulators will act in public interest and understand how ecological systems work and how to change institutions so as to induce socially optimal behavior” (Reformulating 31). This goes back to what the *Science* articles emphasized: knowledge in both resource users and regulators. The prevailing theory, Ostrom notes, has been used in economics and law texts, so that these institutions often never consider the idea of self-regulating communities.

Ostrom explores examples of self-regulating resource users, such as farmers in Nepal who regulate usage of irrigation waters, whose small and medium-sized irrigation systems were found to be more efficient and produced higher outcomes per farmer than nationally regulated systems. The success of this example, Ostrom says, is dependent on “long-term ownership claims,” communication, the trust in established monitors, and “sanctions for those who do not conform to their own rules” (Reformulating 33). Ostrom also outlines a general framework for predicting success of local, self-regulating institutions:

Resource	Resource-Users
“Feasible Improvement”- the resource is not completely deteriorated.	“Salience”- users are dependent on the resource for their income
“Indicators”- relatively low cost way to monitor conditions of resource	“Common understanding”- users understand resource and how their use affects the resource
“Predictability”- amount of resource is predictable	“Low discount rate”- users receive a discount, low in comparison to the amount they will make from the resource
“Spatial extent”- resource is small enough that users can create “external boundaries and microenvironments”	“Trust and Reciprocity”- users trust one another and relationships have some level of reciprocity
	“Autonomy”- users set rules and sanctions, without outside authorities
	“Prior organizational experience and local leadership”

Source: Elinor Ostrom’s “Reformulating the Commons” (34).

Ostrom finds that “when appropriators cannot communicate and have no way of gaining trust through their own efforts [...the tragedy of the commons] theory is likely to be empirically supported” (Reformulating 46). Ostrom finds that, in empirical evidence, communication to establish trust is essential for creating conditions conducive to a self-governing commons community, as well as “draw[ing] on cultural endowments and their knowledge of local resources” (Reformulating 47). Though Ostrom does not claim this solution will work uniformly for all communities, it is a positive alternative to the prevailing theory of the ‘tragedy of the commons.’

S.M. Amadae examines the work of Elinor and Vincent Ostrom in “Bargaining with the Devil,” exploring the influences of the Hobbesian metaphor, as well as the ‘tragedy of the commons,’ in scholarly work on public choice. Amadae notes that it is Hobbes’ idea that an absolute sovereign is needed to govern society, or “‘Covenants, without the sword, are but words, and of no strength to secure a man at all’” (162). Elinor Ostrom wrote an article which discusses the same subject in *The Political Economy of Customs and Culture*, and both Amadae and Ostrom conclude that Hobbes’ idea is as influential in determining means of governing public choice as Hardin’s and the problem of governing the commons is much older than is often theorized. Amadae notes that is possible that “humans themselves often resolved the ‘tragedy of the commons’ problem long before it attracted the attention of social theorists” (163). She goes as far as to say that perhaps social theories, such as Hobbes’ and Hardin’s, have reversed human progress in governing the commons; “after all, teaching the lessons of non-cooperative game theory popular over the last decade, may not have the sanguine results hoped for in civic education classes if it leads to the tragedy of the commons” (Amadae 164). In the text of Ostrom’s article of the same topic, Ostrom determines that a Hobbesian *Leviathan* is not necessary, and that humans are not stuck in an inescapable tragedy, as Garrett Hardin and William Ophuls would have it, and therefore a controlling sovereign is not needed. Cooperation is possible, though it is not the rule.

In *The Drama of the Commons*, Ostrom, Dietz, Stern and others explore the field of commons research. Bonnie McCay goes beyond Ostrom’s criticism of the tragedy of the commons to say that the model “may blind investigators to other causes and justify the adoption of social policies that unfairly disadvantage the ‘commoners’” (*Drama* 392). McCay concludes that the context of human behavior is often touted as important by commons researchers, but “the theoretical and empirical underpinning for that observation is woefully lacking” (*Drama* 392). For McCay, examining human behavior in a laboratory is not enough, human behavior in the commons must be understood in the context of environmental regulation. She feels that rules change human behavior and community norms, and therefore the behavior of ‘commoners’ under such circumstances should not be taken out of context.

In this same collection, Carol M. Rose discusses what she calls “Community-Based Management Regimes” (CBMRs), and explores, as several other authors discussed here have, the attributes of successful CBMRs. Rose also compares these regimes against “Tradable Environmental Allowances” (TEAs), such as those prescribed by the Kyoto Protocol, and discovers that these two approaches have opposite strengths and deal with different sorts of problems. TEAs deal with pollution and CBMRs deal with resource extraction. Rose encourages a variety of approaches to solving environmental problems, but she points out the CBMRs are important in recognizing “community management practices [...] to help protect traditional peoples who otherwise would be deprived of their longstanding homes and livelihoods altogether” (*Drama* 252).

Rose is also the author of the *Property & Persuasion*, in which she discusses the “Comedy of the Commons” (Rose 105). Here Rose calls for the recognition of collective property, as a historic element, and as a possibility for future solutions to the problem of the commons. The commons is comedy because at one time in British law, custom recognized collective property for grazing and resource collecting rights on a manor commons. The remnants of that era are “maypole dances, horse races, cricket matches, and so on,” a celebration of the commons (Rose 173). Rose also emphasizes that public, or collective property, provides space for socializing, and this provides a space for social capital to gain value in a community. As Jules Pretty noted earlier, social capital is essential to creating self-regulating institutions for governing of a commons. This would suggest that in order to create the successful CBMRs, a social space is needed, such as a community commons, to create conditions conducive to commons governing.

### **Population, Women, and the Commons**

I would like to conclude with a discussion of population as a commons, and attempt to criticize Hardin’s approach to population. This is to show that looking for solutions alternative to Hardin’s is not only important because communities can self-regulate the commons under the right conditions, but because the alternatives of coercion or commodifying the commons can be harmful, especially when looking at population as a commons.

Elinor Ostrom addresses this issue in her critique of Ann and Paul Ehrlich’s discussion of population. Ostrom notes that Hardin’s solutions not only ignore previous, successful model of local common resource management, but also encourage “government takeovers of natural resources with tragic consequences for many of the poorest of the earth” (Evolution 179). Ostrom feels this argument is applicable to the Ehrlich’s solutions for population. She feels that the “draconian measures to reduce population growth in China without creating institutions fostering resource stewardship” has not been shown to save the commons, and certainly has not created sustainable practices (Evolution 179). Ostrom also points out the Russia’s falling birthrates have not prevented resource destruction, and reduced the number of young people who are willing and able to look for solutions to the country’s problems (179). Ostrom concludes “reducing population is no guarantee of establishing a sustainable society” (Evolution 179). Ostrom feels that top-down regimes to decrease population are less likely to lead to sustainable living than groups that would resemble the small resource sharing groups in her previous research, or Rose’s CBMRs.

Feminist critiques of population control have focused on educating women and ensuring they have access to, and the ability to make, reproductive choices (Dixon-Mueller 53). There has also been a call for reexamining the model to determine the environmental impact, put forth by Paul Ehrlich and John Holdren, of IPAT, where environmental Impact is the product of the number of People, the consumption of goods per person (A), and the amount of pollution created by each good (T) (Silliman 39). H. Patricia Haynes suggests, in *Dangerous Intersections*, that concepts like military spending, luxury, and renewable energy and resources be added into the equation.

Several ideas complicate alternative solutions to population control; as Ostrom’s model for a successful regulation of commons has certain requirements, so do theories about population control, or rather population self-regulation. In “Unmasking the Population Bomb,” Ann Filemyr notes that “the topic of overpopulation in the developing nations [...] is used to draw attention away from the taboo subject of over-consumption in the overdeveloped

countries” (Filemyr 138). For Filemyr, the perception of population in the work of Hardin and Ehrlich suggests that “women and their families are the primary cause of worldwide environmental degradation,” particularly “dark-skinned women surrounded by their hungry hoards of devouring children” (Filemyr 143). However, Filemyr points out that “less than 20 percent of the world’s population accounts for over 80 percent of resource use, leaving over 80 percent of the world’s population (including women in developing nations and their children) with less than 20 percent of the world resources” (Filemyr 143). This is the context in which we must see population. As we saw in the critiques of Ostrom and others, human nature is not uniform, and the commons of population is no different. Filemyr goes on to point to instances where groups of women have shown to be successful commons users, or CBMRs in Rose’s context. Filemyr also points out that population must be taken in the context of war or peace, the ability to make sexual, and therefore reproductive, choices, and, as Ostrom points out, population control as it affects sustainability.

The feminist critique of Hardin’s perception of the population problems, and the control mechanisms he suggests, is the same critique made by Ostrom and her contemporaries. Taking the actions of humans out of context, such as taking population as it affects resource consumption out of the context of consumerism, war, and living conditions, has created situations where coercive methods to prevent these ‘problems’ hurt people and do not create sustainable societies, as described by Ostrom in her critique of population control.

### **Conclusion**

Rethinking the commons is important not only to refute Hardin’s generalization that resource users cannot self-regulate, but also because in doing so we open up options that may not have been previously considered legitimate, such as indigenous knowledge systems. As Ostrom and her colleagues have emphasized, a variety of approaches is needed to prevent environmental degradation and natural resource exploitation. There are many factors, including trust and reciprocity, size of a resource, and long-term involvement as an incentive for self-regulation, which govern the ability of a community to self-regulate their commons. As Rose points out, the commons has been a historically important place and should not be easily dismissed, and turned over to state or private regulation, which may change the community forever. Regardless of what method of regulation is used in a commons, local knowledge and involvement should be included, because when locality has been ignored, the governing of the commons fails, as in the example cited by Dietz.

The community-governed commons, as Rose pointed out, should be celebrated not only because it is a solution to a problem, but because it provides a space for people to connect, building the level of trust, knowledge, and social capital needed both to govern the commons and to be a real community. What is so radical about the theory of Ostrom and her colleagues, as well as others who emphasize local governing, is the idea that a community could function on trust, knowledge, the mutual desire for success for oneself and others. This is not supported by traditional western theory, as we see in Hobbes, who believes that people needed to be forcibly ruled by a sovereign body in order to be good. This is not to say that a self-governing community built around the commons is only possible if human nature is inherently good or unselfish. But the commons should be celebrated because there is a potential to create a community that disproves Hobbes, Hardin, and other pessimists, and has faith in education and community over the tragedy of self-interested exploitation. Another world *is* possible.

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# The Material Language of Beuys and Antoni

● ● ● *Emily Starr*

In the decades following Abstract Expressionism and Clement Greenberg's formalist standards on art, contemporary artists have been abolishing the boundaries of convention in an effort to challenge the gallery system as well as generate awareness of social issues. In addressing the dilemmas of society, the artist is no longer preoccupied with stimulating visual pleasure but rather in questioning the intelligence of the viewer and contemplating philosophical subject matter. To escape the confinement of formal design and the expectation to define the next avant garde movement, they have sought a non-objective approach to their work through performance pieces and the use of unconventional materials (Weintraub 15). The critic, Lucy Lippard declares, "conventional art media are no longer adequate as media to be messages in themselves," and so the artist must devise a new medium in which to convey their message (Morgan 16). Some such artists have come to rely on the linguistic power of art. Joseph Beuys and Janine Antoni are prominent examples in that they have developed a language of their own through their choice of materials. In today's fast paced society, it is no longer possible to fully engage the audience with aesthetics alone and it becomes necessary to include a system of encoded meaning that provides a platform on which the artist can communicate with the audience. This task becomes more difficult when confronting a public that "tends to be disinterested, complacent, or already overloaded" (Weintraub 11). By utilizing society's conventional cognitive association with a particular material as well as incorporating their own personal reference, Beuys and Antoni effectively maintain the viewer's attention while engaging them in a critique of society.

Although Beuys and Antoni are each products of a different generation, their artistic missions cross paths on many levels. Beuys lived amongst the turmoil of World War II and experienced the ravaging effect it had on the psychological and economical atmosphere of Western Germany. He himself was involved with the Nazi regime and served as a radio operator and pilot until his plane crashed in Crimea. He claimed he would have died from wounds received in the accident and the freezing climate if it had not been for the care provided by a native nomadic tribe of Tartars. The tribesmen covered his body in fat to generate heat and wrapped him in felt to insulate the warmth. This was a pivotal experience for Beuys; a rebirth which remained a primary influence in his work throughout the remainder of his life. His objective became reconnecting the public to their spiritual being. As a teacher, he would provide them with the information necessary for a rebirth of their own.

According to Beuys, within everyone there lay a dormant "self-determination" which needed to be revitalized (Hopkins 92). The terror of war had paralyzed everyone's will to tap into their innate ability to control their own destiny. Borer describes the social climate following the war and states, "[the citizens of Europe] were no longer heroic protagonists but deconstructed victims" (14). Under Hitler's regime, independent and innovative thought was condemned as a threat to what he considered traditional and stable standards. For example, modern art work was banned and destroyed for its departure from classical aesthetics. His



intention was to eradicate any means by which opposition towards his agenda could be expressed. When the war was over, most people were still hesitant to confront the horrors they had witnessed. In Beuys' eyes, this was not a positive reaction to the problem at hand. He was convinced that the only way for society to heal and move forward was by holding an open discussion concerning the event's psychological impact on individuals and the population as a whole. This "group therapy" required everyone to engage in what he called the "Great Dialogue" (Morgan 152). This corresponded with his declaration, "Everyone [is] an artist" (Hopkins 89). Art was the only means of educating the public of the potential within them. Weintraub explains that through the dialogue initiated by Beuys' lectures and sculpture "[the public's] latent creative powers were unleashed as they exchanged ideas with the artist" (181). It was therefore a subject he regarded with great importance in respect to the power it held as a vessel for higher truth. However, he didn't perceive it as being beyond the grasp or comprehension of the masses. Art was the key to the unlimited creative potential within every being which would provide the answers to a flawless community. By locating the innate ability that exists within every individual to develop new concepts, Beuys was convinced that the corruption of centralized power could be eradicated. Thus, social democracy was the ideal state because it would be supplemented by the free exchange of ideas (Morgan 152). This circulation and ever flowing motion would serve as a defense against stagnation and corruption.

In assuming the role of a shamanic leader, Beuys also made it his mission to reveal the flaws of materialism. He insisted that capitalist society yielded false value in material goods, further distracting individuals from attaining a spiritual connection. Capitalism is driven by the production and sale of objects. With its success comes the need to promote material goods and to convince the public that these are essential to daily life. As a result, people become preoccupied with attaining material wealth as a means of satisfaction instead of utilizing their time and energy towards searching within themselves for a sense of comfort. Capitalism also promotes fierce competition for wealth. Currency becomes unequally stratified in society, creating different economic classes. Once these class distinctions begin to develop, Beuys argued that the circulation of currency was disrupted and wealth bottlenecked in the hands a small group of people. As a result, they gained power and authority which they would eventually abuse.

*The Pack* (1969) symbolized the urgent need society had for relief from such a way of life (Borer 25). The piece consists of a Volkswagen van followed by twenty sledges, each of which holds a piece of fat, a rolled blanket of felt, and a lantern. Each sledge was a personalized medicine pack for the individual providing them with the means necessary to nurse nature back to health. Beuys ardently believed that the flaws in civilization were due to a severed connection with nature (Borer 25). A primary culprit of this crisis was the priority society placed on monetary wealth. Again, the healing powers he attributed to fat and felt would aid in the revitalization of civilization. It was critical that society relieve itself from the false values of a capitalist economy and seek the sanctity of a natural lifestyle.

In her sculptural works, Antoni examines philosophical questions concerning identity and its existence within a capitalist society as well. However, in contrast to Beuys who viewed this relationship in political terms, Antoni studies it on a more personal level. She concentrates on consumerism's impact on the development of personal identity and the reciprocal relationship between our own self-perception and how we are perceived in society. For Antoni, the definition of "self" also extends to physical appearance. In an interview with

Art: 21 which aired on PBS in September of 2003, she discussed the idea of “an image that [we present] to the world,” and whether or not that is “an accurate description of the self.” In a world where image is everything, we often rely on our physical appearance to speak for us in making first impressions. Once removed from the womb, the view we have of ourselves becomes a product of exterior influence and societal convention (Cameron et al. 113).

Antoni explores these concepts in *Lick and Lather* (1993) in which she created seven pairs of self-portrait busts. Each pair of busts consists of an identical cast of herself; one made of chocolate and the other made of soap. As the title suggests, she distorted each cast through direct physical interaction. With the pieces made of chocolate, she sculpted them through a process of licking them from the chin, up the face, and back down around the head to the neck. The busts made of soap were sculpted by bathing with each one individually for hours at a time in a bathtub (Art: 21). The chocolate itself is a material suggestive of love and intimacy, a concept multiplied by the intimate manner in which Antoni sculpted it. The chocolate images thus become a representation of the physical self projected upon society (Art: 21). In reference to shaping the soap portraits, Antoni explains, “we spent several hours in the tub together...we were very intimate with each other” (Art: 21). A professor at Harvard and a writer on eighteenth-and nineteenth-century and contemporary art, Ewa Lajer-Burcharth, declares, “the busts define the body as both symbolic and imaginary: a cultural means of self-articulation and a psychic image of the self. The formation of subjectivity is shown to be a complex process of interaction between the two” (Cameron et al. 56-7). The soap busts provide a contrast to their chocolate counterparts in that they represent the personal relationship individuals have with themselves rather than the physical image of the self perceived by members of society.

Our culture has developed standards in regards to beauty and ideal physique. Individuals are confronted with the pressure to meet these standards and often find that their behavior is influenced as a result. Antoni raises the question of whether or not we can truly know ourselves outside of the image culture reflects back upon us. This in turn challenges our ability to truly comprehend who we are. Can we develop a concept of ourselves without conventionalized standards? If at birth we are stripped from our natural being, is it possible to ever again come in touch with it? Through her personal physical involvement, Antoni strives to raise public awareness of such questions, not provide a concrete answer. The art critic, Rosa Martinez concludes, “her works transcend the personal sphere, leaping into the collective and becoming intense metaphors for the human condition” (Cameron et al. 133). Beuys, on the other hand, would argue that locating a unique entity was indeed accomplishable. In fact, this “homecoming” of the spirit was a necessity for a utopian society.

To address their audiences, both artists utilized common materials throughout their bodies of work to which they applied symbolic significance. Fat is a sculptural material used by both Beuys and Antoni. Beuys’ choice to consistently apply fat and felt in his work was due in large part to his associating them with survival. He recalled their positive influence on the outcome of his near-death experience in World War II. In addition to this autobiographical context, the selection of these materials was based in their unconventional application to art. Many of Beuys’s German contemporaries made an attempt to regain their country’s position in the art world after the Nazis prohibited the production of any work unless it abided by classical standards in regards to content and aesthetic appearance. As a result, they had lost credibility in the art world and felt the need to reestablish their presence (Hopkins 87).

Aside from seeking critical recognition, Beuys was also intrigued by such materials for their possession of less refined attributes. He relied on the public's association of these objects as post-industrial products that repulsed and challenged the taste of high society (Weintraub 182). By acknowledging these conventional relationships he could strengthen his efforts in contradicting them. His materials weren't meant to be exhibited for what they were in society but as a "space for teaching;" an educating process suspended as a medium of transformation (Borer 15). In addition to fat and felt, his arsenal of constructive media included copper and chemicals which produced a variety of reactions by way of fermentation, oxidation, rot and corrosion (Weintraub 182).

Beuys' work exploits fat only in its purest form because in its natural state, it still embodies the potential to take on alternate identities. "Its malleability manifests the human potential to move from rigid materiality to dynamic creativity" (Weintraub 182). In this state of flux, fat holds the key to his statement as an artist. In his sculpture *Chair with Fat* (1963), he placed a slab of fat on the seat of a wooden chair. The chair appears aged and worn with nicks and scratches all over the surface. The legs are darkened with dirt and random splashes of paint appear on the back. The audience is to conclude that it has suffered this destruction through years of traditional use. Rather than leave the piece of furniture in a pathetic state, a slave to one purpose, Beuys made a point to give new life to the object. He accomplished this by "rendering [the] chair unusable by adding a sloping pile of fat, physically [changing] the object, emphasizing its metamorphoses" (Cooke, Kelly, and Funcke 52). Nothing should be confined to an eternal form. A world held static by immobile energy and stagnant forms would hinder any possibility for growth by way of knowledge, self-discovery, and improvement within society.

Antoni's various applications of fat explore the forms it can take through commercial production: chocolate, soap, and makeup. In assuming these alternative guises, fat can produce a radically different response. She relies on these contrasting perceptions to interrogate the public as to why and how these distinctions are made. As chocolate, fat takes on a complex identity. It signifies both desire and repulsion. Her sculpture *Gnaw* (1992) investigates the material's "role in the formation of a social dynamic based on beauty and pleasure" (Cameron et al. 28).

The piece is formed by several elements, the first being the display of a large block of lard and a similar sized block of chocolate. Initially, both cubes were of identical dimensions until the artist "chiseled" them with her teeth. She chewed on each block during separate sessions, sometimes consuming the medium and at other times spitting it out and collecting what she didn't eat. In the process of eating the chocolate, Antoni complied with its connection to pleasure and indulgence much like she did in *Lick and Lather*. Research has shown that when it is consumed, chemicals are released in the body that stimulates feelings of love and happiness (Cameron et al. 28). This desirable and romantic notion is universally acknowledged by our culture in such traditions as Valentine's Day where loved ones often exchange confectionary treats in a display of affection. But Antoni also addresses chocolate's threat in an image-conscious society through the mulled block of lard. While we indulge in chocolate's pleasures, we are simultaneously repelled by its high fat content. After eating it, there is the urge to expel it from the body. Too much indulgence can potentially alter the physique so it no longer meets aesthetic standards. In the process of repetitively consuming and discarding, she embodies the obsessive extremes some people engage in in an effort to re-

gain control of their body. Weight, waist size, and other such standards of beauty sometimes influence our behavior, seeking “the transformation of the corporal self into something that ...registers as desirable social currency” (Cameron et al. 29).

In addition to the dueling forms of fat, *Gnaw* also consists of a display of chocolate trays and tubes of lipstick. They serve as imitations of their commercially produced counterparts but are in fact made of the chocolate and lard discarded by Antoni in the process of “carving” the blocks. The chocolate trays represent the sensational gratification offered within the product they hold whereas the lipsticks symbolize a means to enhance beauty. Both products present romantic notions. Men traditionally present their dates with a gift of boxed candy and women often prepare for the date by putting on makeup. Together, the parts of the sculpture create a dialogue discussing the endless struggle acted out by members of society to exhibit self control in the face of pleasurable enticement and still achieve physical perfection.

Much of Antoni’s work employs the use of her own body. Her sculptural pieces are products of repetitive physical processes such as chewing and bathing. Beuys’ works also possess a strong personal presence of the artist in that they stem from one significant experience- one of survival. But in contrast, Antoni’s works are given life through various and distinct experiences. It is also these experiences that shape the sculpture’s appearance. In *Gnaw*, she chewed on a block of chocolate and a block of lard to the point of physical exhaustion. However, the physical act was not performed in front of an audience. Instead, they viewed the results of her activity and situated themselves in her absence. Mentally, they engaged in the act of consuming mass amounts of fat and began to conceive the experience through all of their senses. This sensual aspect parallels the spiritual connection on which Beuys founded his art. Both artists request that the viewer become actively engaged in the work as well as intellectually stimulated.

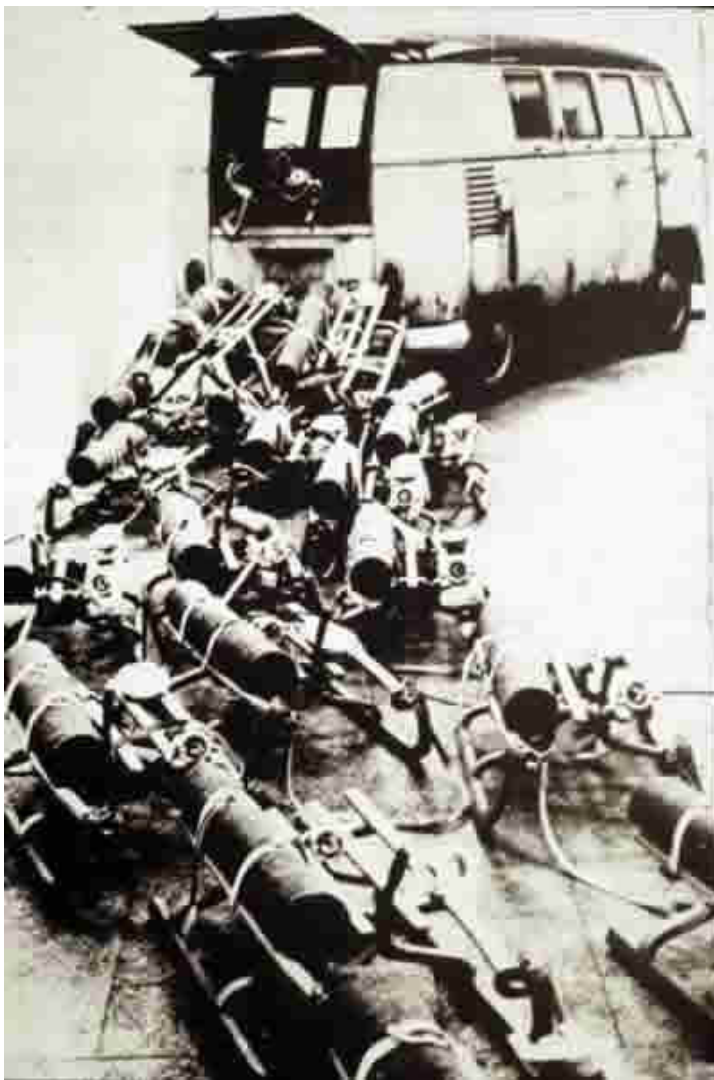
When first laying eyes on Beuys’ work, confusion is most likely the initial response of the uninformed viewer. There seems to be no logical reason for his unique arrangements of such untraditional objects. If this be the case, Beuys certainly accomplished his objective. Without a comprehension of his encoded meaning assigned to each particular material it is difficult for the viewer to decipher what the piece is about. Thus, the audience is required to abandon logic for it provides no means to understanding. Instead, they must engage in a more intimate conversation with the artist. In his process, he developed an effective method of exposing the crippling effect that analytic thought has on people’s ability to perceive the world. Consequently, “disengagement from rationality spurs the genesis of a new soul...Injury, disease, darkness and solitude are opportunities for rebirth” (Weintraub 181). Once the viewer relinquishes the confines of reason and adopts the artist’s symbolic associations, they possess the key to decoding the message behind his entire body of work. This evokes an image similar to that of the phoenix rising from the ashes. Rather than cling to a false world built on over-analyzed “truths” people should permit loss of control because the resulting chaos and self-destruction would require the construction of a new life. Losing everything puts us in a position where we have the opportunity of gaining everything.

It is evident that both Beuys and Antoni attribute a great significance to art for they both use it as a means to arrive at philosophical conclusions. Their sculpture becomes a language of communication in which the media assumes a vocabulary through self-prescribed and conventional association. The structures of their language differ in that Antoni permits

versatility to the symbolism assigned to her choice materials. Not only did she work with fat in a variety of forms such as lard, soap, and chocolate, but she had each form take on a different reference. On the other hand, Beuys maintained a strict code of meaning that worked as a common thread throughout all of his pieces. He always applied fat in its natural state. In his process, he relied on the material's potential capacity to change as a result of its environment. Antoni physically produces the alteration of the object through habitual and repetitive interaction. Despite all their similarities, the goals of each artist are distinct. For Beuys, art was a tool with which to teach and reveal the potential within every individual to reconnect with nature. He believed that once reunited with the natural self, it was possible to contribute to the whole of society and initiate the changes necessary to attain a pure society. The eradication of culture's standards is not Antoni's mission. She strives only to raise public awareness of such conventions. Her work is a study of accepted standards and their effect on behavior and the development of identity.

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Joseph Beuys  
*The Pack*, 1969





Janine Antoni  
*Lick and Lather*, 1993

*Detail:*







Joseph Beuys  
*Chair with Fat*, 1963



Janine Antoni  
*Gnaw*, 1992



# Is Trope Theory Viable?

● ● ● Jason Thomas Craig

Before me I am confronted, or appeared to, by numerous concrete entities. In the purest, non-philosophical sense, we are confronted by objects that we view as green, shiny, fluffy, circular, etc. We just accept them as they are. The philosopher is interested in what, if any, differences there are between the qualities or properties of these concrete particulars (the circularity, greenness, etc.), and the concrete particular itself. These concrete particulars—concrete because they physically occupy a spatiotemporal location that cannot be occupied by anything else at the same time—have what can be called attributes, or properties, associated with them (greenness, roundness, etc.). Our daily lives deal with a flood of these object-property observations and relations (we speak of these aspects of particulars by using subject-predicate sentences). There is a can of Mountain Dew before me. It is shiny, it is green, it is cold, it is twelve inches away from the computer monitor, and some thousands of miles away from Shanghai. Its top is spherical; its main body is cylindrical, etc. To my left, there is a book; it's rectangular, grey, and marked by an inscription of my name. To my right sit twelve cans of Mountain Dew. This is problematic (in a metaphysical sense) because we want, in a pre-philosophical sense, to differentiate between all of these similar objects—to say that there are thirteen individual, non-identical, cans of soda. How are we to explain numerically—exactly *identical* objects—from exactly *similar* objects? How are we to understand the relations between these objects, and the properties that we associate with them? In other words, what is the ontology of objects and properties? Are concrete particulars composed of properties that are abstract universals, or are there no abstract entities, but merely physical globs of various stuffs that exist, etc.?

Historically, there have been two main approaches to explaining the relations between particulars and their properties. And, as with many schools of thought and debates in philosophy, the differences in approach come from Plato and Aristotle. In this paper I will attempt to explain a third approach to metaphysical ontology that is both historically grounded, and more recent. This third approach, trope theory, purports to be a middle ground between what is called a “realist” approach to metaphysics, and a “nominalist” approach to metaphysics.<sup>1</sup> I will begin by explaining in more detail the differences in approach to similarity, or attribute agreement, as set out by the realist and nominalist. I will then explain what tropes are, and how some philosophers find them to be a viable alternative to realism and nominalism. Then I will examine a related problem, one of what the very nature of concrete entities is. The typical divide in approach to this problem also usually falls into two categories: the bare substratum theory, and the bundle theory. If tropes fail to fix the numerous problems associated with the historical approaches to metaphysics, both in the understanding of concrete objects, and in the debate between nominalists and realists, then we must see what options are left to the metaphysician. One possible solution is a move to an “Aristotelian Substance” theory, as suggested by Michael J. Loux.

## The realist position

The realist is a philosopher who believes in a Platonic (or modified Platonic) conception of abstract and concrete relations. A nominalist is a philosopher who rejects the notion

of abstract entities altogether, and endorses the existence of only concrete particulars. There are various epistemological, semantic, and argumentative reasons and motivations behind the two theories. The realist believes that when one is confronted by an object, the properties the object displays, or contains, are actually an exemplification of a universal entity (the universal, “green”). This, in its earliest form, is Plato’s idea of concrete particulars participating in Forms. So, for a person to be courageous is for that the person to be participating in the Form, Courage, etc. Modern realists who endorse this conception have moved away from Platonic terms like “Form,” and have replaced it with talk of “universals.” And they have replaced talk of “participation in Forms,” with objects “exemplifying” or being “instantiated” by abstract universals. So, my thirteen Mountain Dew cans exemplify the universals greenness, coldness, sweetness, etc. The soda cans themselves share, or exemplify, numerically identical universals. By appealing to an abstract universal, the realist thinks that subject-predicate discourse (sentences like “This ball is red,” or, “Napoleon is brave”), and multiply exemplified similar properties can be explained. Because these properties are universal, and not concrete, the realist argues that multiple objects can participate in, or be instantiated by one universal. These universals are not restricted by spatiotemporal locations, yet they “exist” in some sense of the word, and are able to be exemplified by a multitude of objects at once.<sup>2</sup>

### **The nominalist position**

The nominalist is set against the realist by the very nature of these abstract universals, and even more so by the way in which non spatiotemporal entities could exist, interact, and be in multiple concrete objects at once. The nominalist really is rejecting the idea of universals because of her empiricist leanings. Nominalists believe in experiential evidence and information as the basis for understanding being, and science, etc. Where the realist posits abstract entities such as universals as a simple way of viewing subject-predicate discourse, and explaining similarity in attribute, the nominalist points to what they see as an epistemic barrier to universals existence. How could we base our knowledge of objects, let alone our knowledge about anything else, off of these odd, “creatures of darkness” that are universals? The nominalist proposes that all that exists are concrete particulars, or, “blobs.” In other words, blobs are just various “stuffs” that are brute, or primitive, and exist as a whole, without dependence on attributes separate from the substance to give the substance definition. By arguing this, the nominalist is taking a position that they think is ontologically simpler (following “Ockham’s razor”), with the same explanatory force that the realist claims she has.<sup>3</sup>

The nominalist believes that the key to understanding objects hinges on the linguistic framework of sentences. The truth value of describing an object rests on the correspondence between that objects features, and those features actually being present in the object. This way of looking at subject-predicate discourse requires the nominalist to reinterpret sentences that realists construe as requiring universals; sentences that require “abstract reference.” So, sentences such as

1. Honesty is a moral virtue,

Must be reworded in order to show that they indeed talk about particulars, and not objects exemplifying universals. So, 1, would become (something like)

- 1\* Honest persons are virtuous persons,

Unfortunately, this leaves the nominalist in a position of having to approach each new, and increasingly difficult, subject-predicate sentence with a different methodology for conversion to talk about particulars. If this is the case, then the Ockham's razor justification for nominalism seems to be in jeopardy.<sup>4</sup>

We can see that both realism and nominalism have serious problems with their argumentation. The realist, while perhaps maintaining the upper hand in simplicity and ability to explain abstract reference and attribute agreement, is dependent upon entities that for most lay people, as well as philosophers, are hard to accept. The realist, of course, argues that this is not the case, and that the universals are necessary for basic knowledge and discourse, regardless of the counter-intuitiveness of the universals themselves.<sup>5</sup> The nominalist poses a theory that she claims to have the same explanatory force, but via a simpler, one-category ontology. This view falls into complex traps as well, as there is no set methodology to explain abstract reference, therefore, the simplicity the view strives to achieve is lost in the cumbersome project of converting every sentence to sentences about particulars. So, is there a way out of these problems? The trope theorist believes that she can show us a path out of the dense philosophical traps of realism and nominalism.

### Trope theory

What exactly, then, are tropes? The term 'trope' was not brought into popularity until D.C. Williams revived/popularized the phrase in the fifties (it had appeared in some literature, but not necessarily for the same purpose of Williams). Some others who had argued for a trope theory in the past, but had not called it trope theory, were Berkeley, Hume, and Leibniz.<sup>6</sup> At the simplest level, tropes are abstract particulars, or, specific instances of properties and attributes:

A trope then is a particular entity either abstract or consisting of one or more concrete entities in combination with an abstraction. Thus Napoleon and Napoleon's forelock are not tropes, but Napoleon's posture is a trope, and so is the whole whose constituents are his forelock and his posture, and so is his residing on Elba. (Williams 1953, 43)

Consider again, if you will, my thirteen Mountain Dew cans. They were produced from the same factory in New Jersey, and therefore, they have exactly identical properties (if you are a realist), or are just brute, unanalyzable blobs that can be described, but have no attributes (if you are a nominalist). The trope theorist is a nominalist, in the sense that she wishes to avoid the (as she sees it) unnecessarily burdensome ontology of the realist, but, she disagrees with the nominalist that there is just some primitive blob, or particular that we see, with no attributes. The trope theorist believes that there are attributes, but that for each object we perceive, that object alone has the particular attributes associated with it. For instance, two exactly similar blue shirts don't share a numerically identical property "blueness," there is just the blue in shirt 1, and the blue in shirt 2, and they may be exactly similar, but are numerically distinct, and essentially unique.

Partial motivation for this move comes from our pre-philosophical beliefs about sensory knowledge; and also from our empiricist worldview. If one is committed to nominalism, then one can't explain things through sensory experience, there is just some blob that is describable in a linguistic manner. Conversely, when we are confronted with a painting, it

seems odd to say that there are multiple objects that exist and can exemplify *the same* color, as a realist would assert. The trope theorist thinks that, when confronted, for instance, with my soda cans, we are experiencing that object's attributes in a way that is unique to that object. Each can has a common quality 'green,' but they don't share greenness, they each have a this-green, and a this-sweet, and a this-cold. Each property is particular to the object.<sup>7</sup>

Further, the trope theorist sees the subject-predicate problem as easily solvable. Talk of courage, and of color, and of shape, is just talk about specific tropes, each unique to some object. It is because tropes serve as particulars in substances, and yet can also be construed as abstract, such as a color, that they are labeled abstract particulars. Let me explain. A particular color is often thought to only exist with attachment to some concrete particular. There is no blue in general, but rather the blue of a certain object. Because there is no such thing as a pure blue object, one which is blue alone (there is no "blue mass," or "blue shape"), blue is not "concrete" like a block of actual concrete is. Rather, "blue itself" is abstract. The trope theorist believes that color, even though abstract, has somewhat of an independent existence. More often than not we see color tropes in association with other tropes, but there are instances of color tropes existing independently of common middle sized particulars (like a color of the rainbow). So, in the subject-predicate sentence "this book is blue." The "blue" refers to the color trope blue, which is an abstract particular, particular to that book alone. The same story would be told for all other subject-predicate sentences.

Along with explaining subject-predicate talk, tropes explain the problem of similarity in attribute (resemblance). These abstract particulars are, we are told, sets of tropes. This allows the trope theorist to group things that are similar into a 'one over all' grouping similar to a universal, but without the abstract entity. So, for each instance of green, there is a set of all green tropes, each a particular instance of green: {G1, G2, G3...}; for instances of courage, there is a set of all the courage tropes. When we speak of particular instances of courage and green, we are semantically relating (through subject-predicate discourse) those instances of tropes that we experience in particulars, to the set of all tropes for that attribute. Thus, objects that agree in trope attribute are never numerically identical with each other (there is no universal blue in the realist sense, in which there are multiple instantiations of a numerically identical property —blueness) but, they are exactly similar to each other.<sup>8</sup> It can now be seen why trope theory is, on the surface, such a nice counter view to traditional nominalism, and realism. It can explain subject-predicate discourse, and similarity of attributes in a way that avoids unnecessary entities, and still supports our traditional understanding of the way particulars function within concrete wholes. It doesn't force us to give up common beliefs, and it doesn't force weird ontologies on to us. Or does it? Let us now examine some objections to trope theory.

### **Some objections to trope theory—set theoretic objections**

One objection to the supposed superiority of trope theory is to the "set-theoretic" structure that most trope theorists endorse. This way of using mathematical sets is supposed to be the trope theorist's way of resolving the similarity in attribute of concrete entities. Rather than appeal to the universal, the tropes themselves belong to various sets. Not only does this avoid the universal, but it avoids the problem of resemblance that the nominalist runs into.<sup>9</sup> The two main problems to this construction are advanced by Loux. One problem with the set theory of tropes is the ability we have to refer, or ascribe properties, to entities that don't exist. The One Ring from the *Lord of the Rings* series is not an item that actually exists. Although,



it could possibly exist in another world, in which case it would have a possible solid trope, circular trope, gold trope, a being able to turn you invisible trope, etc. This item, however, has not and never will exist (like Dragons, Griffins, and a Super Bowl winning Cleveland Browns team—much to my chagrin). If these items do not exist, but can be meaningfully talked about via a possible world's framework, then where do they fit into the set structure?

Well, perhaps they would fit into the null set, or the set of things which don't exist. At this point, both the realist and the austere nominalist can claim a small victory. How is it that the non-existent entities like Griffins and Dragons both refer to the same trope set? The appeal of the trope is in its particularity, its existence in a specific, individual whole. Now, all of a sudden, there seem to be countless non-existent things, things we can speak of, and give properties to, that all refer to one trope set—the null set. But is this objection fatal? Loux thinks not, and I agree with him. It might just be the case that any talk about mythological, or other created fictions just is meaningless; that there are no Dragons or Griffins. As Loux points out, “only the Platonist, the philosopher who believes that there are uninstantiated or unexemplified universals, will take this objection to be a decisive objection to trope theory” (Loux 1998, 92). Another possible way to get around this objection is to appeal to a possible world's framework.<sup>10</sup> Let's examine Loux's other set theoretic objection.

Sets are unlike universals in the sense that, by definition, sets identities are created by their members. The structure of a set requires that the set has the members it has necessarily. This is unlike a universal, which exists and allows for multiple objects to exemplify it (someone could go from being non-courageous to exemplifying courage, and this fits with our pre-philosophical intuitions about change in properties). If, however, a set is nothing but its members, and its members could not have been other than what they are, then the set of all red tropes could not have had one more, or one less member. There could never have been one more or less particular that has a particular red; there could never have been one more or less particular person that has a bravery trope, and so on. This implies a very rigid deterministic nature for the universe; one which seems, at the very least, entirely opposite of what we perceive as changes in properties of people and objects. We all think that the coward can become a hero, or that the amount of human beings that exist fluctuates depending on copulation and disease, not on the fact that the set of human beings could not have one more member in it for it to exist.

Now we must examine the realist and trope theorist's explanations for the ontology of concrete particulars. Trope theorists believe they have an edge when it comes to the two historical ways of looking at the mereological relationship of concrete particulars, bare substratum and bundle theory. We must see if the trope theorist is able to circumvent the traditional flaws of both these views.

### **The nature of concrete particulars—bare substratum and bundles**

Furthering the quagmire of arguments and dead ends that confront realists and trope theorists, is the debate about what exactly concrete particulars are. Are concrete particulars something separate from their properties? Do these substances exist prior to the properties, or are the substances actually just the properties themselves? For a nominalist, who just believes in concrete particulars, they are essentially “blobs.” Stuff that is brute, or primitive, and exist as a whole, without dependence on attributes separate from the substance to give the substance definition. It is possible, according to the nominalist, to describe the parts of a particular, but the parts are unanalyzable in a metaphysical sense; the concrete particular is just



a particular, with no metaphysical structure to speak of. For the realist, and, as we will see, the trope theorist, this isn't an argument they would endorse. To these philosophers, objects are, or can be, broken down into their properties. Each property that we can describe—my soda can's greenness—is an essential or contingent part of that object's being. There is some relationship between the various properties, or constituents, that directly affects the status of the concrete particular, or whole.

Historically, the realists and trope theorists have been split into two camps on this question. One school of thought suggests that, along with the individual constituents in a particular, there is some property that literally serves as the bearer, exemplifier, or individuator of those properties. It is this property that creates the whole. It seems counter to our pre-philosophical intuitions to think about some attribute, or property, that is itself the exemplifier of the rest of the attributes. On the other hand, it might seem absurd to say that the possessor, or whole, is itself made up of just the properties. For instance, the green of my soda can seems to suggest that there is some property, green, and some other *thing* that possesses the property green to create the whole object that is the soda can. The language we use suggests that there is a bearer of properties. In order for a vicious regress of property relations to not occur, these theorists have posited what they call a bare substratum to exemplify the properties and create the whole. Let me explain. If one is attempting to explain what the attribute is that bears or exemplifies the rest of the constituents of a whole, it is logically impossible for some property necessary for that whole's existence to be the exemplifier. I can't appeal to the greenness of my soda can as the attribute that somehow exemplifies the properties of coldness, sweetness, sphericity, etc. because the green itself is a *necessary* attribute that must be exemplified by some *thing*; Hence, the bare substratum, or, bare particular.

The other school of thought, called the "bundle theory," finds the idea of a bare particular, which itself is property-less, and is able to somehow bind and exemplify other properties to create the whole that is a concrete particular, to be as empirically barren as the nominalist and trope theorist believes abstract universals are. For these philosophers, wholes are nothing but the "bundle" of their properties. So, there is no bare substratum that contains the properties roundness, tartness, and crispness that make up an apple, the apple is itself merely the collection of these properties, "compresently," "collocated," or "coactualized" to form the whole. This view also seems to fit with our perception of objects. Often when we think about a concrete particular we do not think of it in terms of its whole, but of its parts or properties (the sweetness of the apple). It is thought by this group of philosophers that the bundle theory is the simpler one, and so, the better one. It allows us to understand things in purely empiricist terms, putting forth no strange creatures to do our ontological work.

### **Bundle theory**

Some realists like the substratum theory, and some the bundle theory, and the same goes for trope theorists. I will examine the problems with both bare substratum and bundle; beginning with the bundle theorists. For a realist who is a bundle theorist, concrete particulars are "bundles" of compresent universals. This seems simple enough; a cake is the compresence of its universals involving shape, taste, texture, etc. And it is the combination of these universals that gives us the concrete object "cake." However, this view runs into what is almost assuredly a fatal flaw, as the realist bundle theorist is committed to endorsing the truth of a false principle called the *Identity of Indiscernibles*. Which Loux states as:

- (II) Necessarily, for any concrete objects, *a* and *b*, if for any attribute,  $\Phi$ ,  $\Phi$  is an attribute of *a*, if and only if  $\Phi$  is an attribute of *b*, then *a* is numerically identical with *b*.

Since the possibility exists for there to be numerous concrete entities that share all of the very same properties (my thirteen cans of soda), yet can be different objects, then (II) is false.

The bundle theorist who is a realist has no way of differentiating between objects with the same properties (if two objects have the same bundle, they are the same thing), and is indeed committed to the existence of such numerically identical entities, which are obviously false.<sup>11</sup>

This objection is fatal for the realist bundle theorist, but not so for the trope theorist. The trope theorist, by the very nature of tropes, has a theory that does not allow for numerical identity, but rather, only for exact similarity. The trope view of bundles is fairly simple: the concrete particulars we see are just bundles of compresent tropes; a redness trope, a circular trope, etc. each trope being unique to that particular.

### Problems for the trope bundle theorist

How is it that tropes, if thought of as the basic constituents of a substance, some of which are abstract, could ever be bundled together to create a whole? What is it that relates them? An objection to this theory of bundled trope relation may be raised by questioning the nature of these “abstract particulars.” The trope theorist argues here that there is confusion (or conflation) about the terms concrete and abstract. A concrete particular is a whole that exists in space-time. And it is usually thought that an abstract entity or property like color cannot exist without being a constituent of some concrete object. The trope theorist thinks that there are plenty of day to day examples of abstract entities that exist without being tied to a concrete particular. For instance, the colors of a rainbow, or the color of the sky, or the diffuse purple glow from a neon light at night; Williams puts it this way:

What we primarily see of the Moon, for example, is its shape and color and not at all its whole or concrete bulk. If now we impute to it a solidity and aridity, we do it item by item quite as we impute wheels to a clock or a stomach to a worm. (Williams 1953, 47)

While this may be an epistemic passage, regarding what we first encounter, or know, when we see an object—the trope theorist believes that it implies a metaphysically prior existence for tropes as well.<sup>12</sup> This is an interesting line of thought, and for some trope theorists, like Williams and Bacon, this leads to the idea that tropes are the basic constituents of the universe. That substances and particulars exist, and are formed out of tropes, but that the tropes themselves cannot be formed out of a substance or particular, hence, tropes are prior to these things.<sup>13</sup>

Cynthia Macdonald objects to the logic behind the assertion that tropes can be prior, both metaphysically and epistemically, to substances:

Just as substances cannot exist (according to trope theory) without the tropes that found them, tropes seem incapable of existing without the substances that they found. And this existence dependence makes it difficult to see how one can be epistemically prior to the other: when I see a substance, I do so by seeing its tropes; but equally, when I see tropes, I see them as individualized ways of the substances they found. (Macdonald 1998, 337)

This objection raises the question of how trope instances are related. If the first thing we encounter in this world are tropes, then there needs to be a good story for how or why tropes bundle or exist compresently in a way that gives us a “trope-whole.” If the first things we encounter are substances, then what tropes are necessary for that particular whole to be the way it is? It seems fairly clear that some abstract particulars can exist without a clear concrete substance (like the color of the sky), but this does not seem to be the case for all tropes, especially complex tropes that form complex wholes. There is the issue of how compresent tropes are “bound” together. The problem is set out rather nicely by Peter Simons:

Consider first the relation of compresence. It is not clear whether this should be a two-place relation binding two tropes, or a three-place one linking a place with two tropes, or a relation of many more places binding the whole lot into a system...[s]ince normal substances have many tropes, there must be many compresences all of which are compresent in order to build up a single substance. (Simons 1994, 369)

How many bundles of tropes does it take to have enough constituents to create a whole substance? This line of reasoning could easily lead to a problem of infinite regress. What binds this bundle of tropes? This third trope binds them. Well, what binds those tropes? This fourth trope binds them, and so on *ad infinitum*. It might be tempting to say that, like with resemblance between tropes, it could be some kind of internal relation. The resemblance between all the red tropes is the set red tropes, which are color tropes, and so, in some way are related to the set of green tropes. Perhaps the constituents of the bundle just need this kind of relation. This would, however, make trope relations all essential relations. So, for some whole trope, it would be essential that a certain shape trope and color trope be compresent to create the whole, but this seems necessarily false, as it would not explain contingent or accidental tropes. For instance, it doesn’t seem necessary that the trope whole for a piece of wax involves the trope of being pressed into the shape of Abraham Lincoln’s beard, but the wax can be manipulated in this way. This seems to be a fleeting trope, one that has no internal or necessary relation to the whole, “wax,” and so, exists in an entirely contingent manner.<sup>14</sup>

It could be suggested that space-time location serves to explain the compresent bundles that create the whole. However, by placing the identity requirement of a bundle on its location, this is essentially, as Simon points out, “a substratum theory, not the bundle theory.” Using space-time location also brings up objections that Loux states about *pure* and *impure* properties. When we say that a subject is a whole constituted of tropes, we are saying that there is a compresences of tropes which are essential to that thing, and related through some foundational relation as Simons suggests, or through some other compresence theory that avoids regress explanations. This is a pure property relation. Impure properties are those properties that use spatial location as an identifier, or differentiator. The problem with the use of impure properties is that they presuppose the complexity of the bundle, and they are not, at least intuitively, necessary for the identity of the whole. The tropes that constitute the whole of my soda can are not essentially related to the property of my soda can being several thousand miles from Shanghai—that is a contingent property. Also, if location is what provides a bundle its identity, then “if places were bearers, tropes could not move, since the moment a trope ceased to occupy the place it was in, it would cease to be, even if replaced next door by

an exactly similar one” (Simons 1994, 371). This seems like a bad move to make, as now it looks as though there is no persistence through time for a particular.

Macdonald makes an interesting objection to the idea that space-time regions or points in space-time are somehow “quasi-tropes” themselves. The objection is that by using space-time as a quasi-trope, the trope theorist is abandoning their claims to a simpler theory than the realist or nominalist suggests. The original attractiveness in endorsing trope theory is that it is supposed to be ontologically less clustered, while maintaining as adequate an ability to explain the ontology of particulars and properties as the realist or nominalist. If the space-time itself becomes a “quasi-trope” (a pseudo-trope, I guess) then what has happened is that trope theorists have gone from advocating a “one-category” ontology to sneaking in a “two-category” ontology. One in which there are internally related, essential tropes, and these tropes in turn rely on contingent, “quasi-tropes” to give them binding, so that the trope theorist does not get stuck in a vicious regress (Macdonald 1998, 341). If trope theory is stuck in a position where they can only explain internally related, essential trope bundles, then it looks as if the trope bundle theorist is in trouble (or at the very least, on equal footing with the realist in using some brute, primitive relation as a stopping point to avoid a regress of relations). Perhaps a move to the substratum theory will alleviate these problems.

### **The bare substratum theory: a solution to the bundle theory?**

If the realist is stuck with the necessary falsehood of the bundle theory, and the trope theorist is stuck with some severe difficulties, a viable option appears to be the bare substratum theory. By moving to the bare substratum, the realist seems to have a solution to her problems with (II). What can make it so that two objects have exactly identical properties—but are two different objects—is the bare particular that exemplifies all of those properties. Almost instantly, though, problems for this peculiar entity that is the bare particular start piling up. The first objection rests on a common sense intuition. If we are grounded in empiricism, then we should instantly object to the nature of this bare entity. It’s not available to touch, taste, smell, nor can it be “seen” in the most scientific sense of the word—even via an electron microscope. Indeed, it is not in a metaphysical sense a property that could be viewed. *It is a property we are told, but one that merely serves as a bare individuator of the substance whole.*

How damaging is this claim of empirical barrenness? In some ways it is damaging, no one likes to appeal to entities that can’t be seen, but, on the other hand, much of the high level physics that is going in science posits entities just as peculiar as the bare particular. What of the muon, or the electron, or string theory? Most of these things can’t be seen, and we postulate their existence off of mathematics alone, or, physically insignificant tell-tale traces of their existence. In this sense, the substratum theorist could appeal to the necessity of the bare particular in our explanatory grasp of the ontology of objects. This would shift the burden onto the strict empiricists to put forth a theory that did not fall into the traps of the bundle theory.

The more fatal flaw, as put forth by Loux, involves the claim on the substratum theorist’s part that the bare particular is in and of itself essentially featureless.<sup>15</sup> Now, the bare particular *must* be essentially “featureless,” or “without essence,” or it falls prey to the same vicious regress that plagues the bundle theorist; namely, the regression of relations. The argument goes something along these lines: the bare particular is itself essentially property-less, but it has the ability to exemplify properties. None of the properties that the bare particular exemplifies are necessary for that bare particular’s existence, and the bare particular is not dependent upon the properties for existence. Does this logic make sense? Loux states:

One might wonder, however, whether the idea of a thing that has no attributes essentially is coherent...the categorical features of a thing, we want to claim, are essential to it. But the categorical features of substrata would not seem to be unique in being essential or necessary to them...and there are attributes that while not essential to everything are essential to each thing that has them, attributes like being numerically different from the number seven. (Loux 1998, 122)

So it now appears that the idea of an essentially property-less being is absurd. Any particular has some property, even if it's a counterfactual property, like not having the property of being something else. If the substratum theorist admits some property features into their ontology, then they are in even more trouble, because they have admitted that the bare substratum is no longer bare. Hence, they must now appeal to some other relational "glue" to hold the properties together, and individuate them, and this leads to a vicious regress. The trope theorist attempting this approach runs into the same problems as the realist. What then, is left for us to consider? There are two theories that may get us out of the apparent dead ends of bundle and substratum theory. One is a "nuclear theory" as set out by Simons; the other is a move to the Aristotelian Substance theory set out by Loux. I will examine them in turn.

### **Simons' nuclear theory**

Simons proposes a move that he claims will provide a middle ground for the trope theorist; one that takes the best of the substratum and bundle theories, with none of the problems. In Simons' view, there are groups of essentially co-occurring tropes, and these tropes form a nucleus for any particular substance. In the section above on bundle theory I discussed how compresence was a problem, because most theories could not explain accidental or contingent properties, but only inherent, or internal relations. Now, this kernel, or nucleus of tropes, is itself an individual, however, there are accidental or nucleus dependent tropes that occasionally attach, or are pulled into orbit around the nucleus: "The other tropes it has, and which may be replaced without the nucleus ceasing to exist, may be considered as dependent on the nucleus as a whole as bearer...the nucleus is thus itself a tight bundle that serves as the substratum to the looser bundle of accidental tropes, and accounts for their all being together" (Simons 1994, 377). One immediate consequence for such a theory is that it resolves the relation and change issue tied to the bundle theory.

If tropes mainly consist of tightly bundled essential nuclear groupings, then they are not destroyed by location movement. There are accidental tropes that can be attached, somehow, to the nucleus. These tropes can come and go without destroying the essential whole. Relations are now understood as mostly essential, with some complex system of causation and attachment with accidental tropes. Simons just briefly sets out this view, and he leaves the details up to later works, and to other philosophers' objections. It does seem to me, however, that this theory has a lot of potential. The world and universe could be molded into essential bundles, and accidental or contingent properties. This is similar to what we will see with the Aristotelian substance theorist approach, but it differs in that prime matter is not the essential substratum for objects, but rather, the nuclear bundle of tropes is.

One problem I still have with the idea is the existence of the accidental properties. They are somehow, or would be, essentially tied to nuclear bundles, but they themselves are non-essential. Simons states the function of the accidental tropes as such:

Then again, perhaps there are substantial collections of tropes without a nucleus. This does not mean that there could be free single tropes...while such a trope could not, perhaps exist alone, it might change all its partners in its life. (378)

It's intriguing, but it doesn't get at the nature of these accidental tropes. If they are, by nature, unable to exist independently, as he seems to suggest, then isn't the notion of a contingent trope floating or changing partners over the course of its life false? Wouldn't the accidental trope become an essential trope? Its very nature requires it to be in the orbit of a nuclear bundle of tropes, so, doesn't that mean that the nuclear trope essentially has that "contingent" trope as a member of its identity? Perhaps part of the nature of these nuclear contingent relations is that the nuclear bundle has some kind of preset path with its shifting tropes already programmed in. Perhaps the nuclear bundle is somewhat deterministic in its nature, or, maybe there is a more scientific explanation for the co-existence of contingent tropes that necessarily are a part of nuclear tropes (as they can't exist independently). As the nuclear theory needs more literature and development to find its weaknesses and create counter arguments, let us now turn to a similar theory of property-object relations called the Aristotelian substance theory, as set out by Loux.

#### **Aristotelian substance theory**

The Aristotelian substance theorist (hereafter referred to as just substance theorist) believes that she can offer a way out of the dead ends of the substratum and bundle theory. The substance theorist believes that all talk of objects being constructed out of their properties is wrong. For the substance theorist, there are only concrete particulars (which are called *kinds*), but unlike the nominalist, these concrete particulars have properties, which are universals, some of which are essential to that beings *ousia* (essence, or genuine being), and some merely contingently related to the kinds. How could a substance be built out of properties that are themselves associated with substances as the bundle and substratum theorist suggest? Weight, color, shape, and texture all presuppose the substance of which they are supposed to be the constituents. We don't experience weight without some concrete particular, we don't experience texture without a substance of which it is a member (or exemplified by). The substance theorist takes a mereological (part-whole) approach to substances, and this is in stark contrast with the bundle and substance theorists' constituent-whole framework. To the substance theorist, the concrete particulars, or *kinds*, are the basic irreducible entities of the universe (kinds like maple trees, cats, etc are irreducible beyond that concept).<sup>16</sup> And that the particulars in the kind are the subjects for any and all attributes associated with them. There are, for what I take to be the stricter reading of substance theory, very few kinds. They are mostly biological: humans, animals, plants, etc.

A concrete particular belonging to a kind also has the added benefit of giving that particular item numerical identity while explaining exact similarity. Each kind is a universal, substance theorists are pseudo-realists, and the instantiation of each kind results in a numerically different object. There is no problem with (II) here, as the item belonging to a kind is itself pre-marked as an individual. As for similarity in attribute, by virtue of kinds belonging to the same general hierarchy of kinds, say, a rose and a daffodil, they will have some features that are necessary for that specific kind, and some that are similar because of the hierarchy of kinds (think of biology's kingdom, phylum, genus, species...). And it is important here



to not conflate what a kind is and what a set is. Kinds are different from sets that they create the identity of the particular. A kind exists already, and a member of that kind has its identity determined for it. A set's identity is constructed out of its members. There is no set until things are grouped into it. So, each individual flower, while unique, is related to the general class of kinds flowers, explaining similarity in attribute. Now, some properties are not related to the kinds, and therefore, are not essential properties. As Loux states:

Thus, a certain complexion may characterize a human being, but it does not determine his or her core being. The human being could exist without exhibiting that complexion, so while it does exhibit that complexion; it does so nonessentially or merely contingently. As Aristotelians often put it, the complexion is accidental, not essential to the person in question. (Loux, 1998 127)

This allows the substance theorist to have non-essential properties, which for them are contingent universals.<sup>17</sup>

### **A trope-centric substance theory**

This, in an extremely brief form, is the position of the substance theorist. There are, obviously, problems with the view that need work, namely, what things fall into kinds (electrons, muons, etc.), and how does that relate to large-scale items in the world which are not themselves kinds (mountains, etc.) But, those deeper problems aside, the main question I am concerned with is whether or not the trope theorist could find some refuge in the substance theorist's views. Assume that these kinds are the basic stuffs of the universe—that these particular concrete particulars are irreducibly unified in their being. Certain things that the trope theorist had been attempting to explain are obviously gone. On this view, kinds are irreducible, so there is no more universal trope cosmology, in which tropes comprise the basic constituents of all there is. However, kinds as the basic substance of the universe are a very appealing answer to the same dilemma the trope theorist was attempting to solve. The kinds are “universals,” but not in a necessarily spooky way as the realists argue. Rather, the kind universal is merely whatever is falling into those kinds (individual instances of humans, flowers, and fish). The kind being instantiated is merely an instance of that kind coming into being. We also wouldn't need tropes to do as much work in the resemblance of attribute problem (as things belonging to kinds are related via belonging to that kind), and we have concrete particulars that are strictly concrete, and indivisible, so all the problems of compresence and binding metaphysical “glue” are gone (the contingent tropes are stuck in the metaphysical “glue” of the kind, I assume—and this will need explaining), as well as problems associated with how anything as insubstantial as a single trope could combine and build a concrete particular.

In what I will dub the “trope-centric substance theory,” the tropes come into play as far as the non-kind universals — the trope of complexion, posture, vocal tone, etc. None of these things are essential to the essence of a human being, or similarly for other kinds of kinds, they are contingent. And because they are contingent, the trope can do the work of what the substance theorist was using abstract universals for. It comes down to having the most barren ontological landscape possible. If it is at all possible, I believe that non-concrete, abstract entities should be gotten rid of. The universals posited by the substance theorist as far as kinds



are, in my opinion, not that abstract. Accepting kinds as the basic stuffs of the universe is no more a desperate maneuver than the nominalist insisting that there are only unanalyzable blobs, or the realist insisting that there is some basic, brute, relationship that avoids a regress of universals, and the same for all of the other theories. Obviously if one accepts prime matter into their ontology, then other important questions arise, such as *what is the prime matter?* This is a question for another paper, one that delves more into Aristotle's *Metaphysics* for more applications of tropes. As a consequence of the problems the realist, nominalist, substratum, bundle, and trope centered views of these theories run into, I believe the only avenue for a valid understanding of concrete particulars and their properties is through a modified Aristotelian substance theory that allows for tropes. Obviously the intricacies in detail, and the relationships between the tropes (which are contingent), and the kinds needs to be thought about in much more detail. But, at the moment, the move to a trope-centric substance theory seems to avoid the major, insurmountable problems of the traditional metaphysical approaches.

## Notes

1 Unless otherwise noted, any reference to a nominalist is about an austere nominalist, as opposed to a metalinguistic nominalist. Trope theorists, while nominalists of a kind, I will just refer to as trope theorists.

2 For more in-depth discussion of the complexities and problems of the realists positions see Loux (1998), Plato (*Republic* and *Phaedo*), Wolterstoff (1973), Zimmerman (1997), and Macdonald (1998).

3 By reducing their ontology to just concrete particulars the nominalist is arguing that to explain a thing such as subject-predicate discourse, for any subject S (my soda can), 'S is G' is true (its property, green), iff S is G. That is, the nominalist takes the object and its features as brute, or primitive, unanalyzable facts. Objects are triangular iff they are triangular, blue iff they are blue, five miles from Stonehenge iff it is five miles from Stonehenge. It is not that these objects exist, and somehow their properties or attributes exist dependent on their exemplification of some universal, but rather,

[w]hat grounds the correspondence between language and the world, then, is naming and satisfaction. Both are referential concepts; both tie linguistic expressions to the appropriate nonlinguistic objects that a certain string of words corresponds to the world. (Loux 1998, 64)

The nominalist is endorsing a view that does not divide the particular from its properties. There just are blobs of stuff. My soda can is a blob of stuff, and we can describe it, but those descriptions are not separate stuffs that either create, or subsist in the whole that is the particular; rather, my soda can is green, if it is actually green, not if it 'participates in greenness,' and so on.

4 For a more detailed discussion of the various sentence structures that the nominalist must translate, and possible solutions to difficulties involved in that project (such as Sellarsian metalinguistic nominalism) see Loux, 1998.

5 For instance, it is not counterintuitive at all to think of multiple exactly similar concrete particulars. So, even though it runs against our “pre-philosophical grain” to think about abstract universals existing in multiple physical objects simultaneously, it is no different than the way we think about concrete particulars.

6 Some other terms for tropes are ‘individual accident,’ and ‘moments.’

7 As Loux puts it, “[W]hen I focus on the color of the Taj Mahal, I am not thinking of pinkness in general, but of that unique pinkness, the pinkness that only the Taj Mahal has” (Loux 1998, 86).

8 The classic example of the difference between exact similarity and numeric identity is set out by Williams:

The sense in which Heraplem and Boanerp “have the same shape” and in which “the shape of one is identical with the shape of the other” is the sense in which two soldiers “wear the same uniform” or in which a son “has his father’s nose... [T]hey do not have the same shape in the sense in which two children have the same father...or two college boys wear the same tuxedo (and so cannot go to dances together). (Williams 1953, 42)

9 Loux has a good example of this problem:

That is, it might be thought that they [the austere nominalist who is willing to endorse sets] could hold that ‘courage’ is a name, after all—a name of the set whose members are all and only the persons who are courageous...given the identity condition for sets, however, this account is bound to fail...the account is forced to say that the corresponding abstract singular terms name the same object...suppose that all the things that have hearts have kidneys and vice versa. Then, since the set of things with hearts and the set of things with kidneys are the same set, our...nominalist must hold that having a heart and having a kidney are the same thing; but we do not need to be high-powered anatomists to know that this is false. (Loux 1998, 89)

10 For further analysis of what the possible worlds framework entails, see Lewis (1973 and 1986), and Plantinga (1970, 1974, 1976). To see how a trope theorist fits modal problems into a trope oriented ontology, see Bacon (1995).

11 For a much more detailed examination see Loux (1998), and Zimmerman (1997).

12 Tropes are supposed to give us a story for a Direct Realist view of perception. We never really see the “whole” of anything at once. You don’t see the whole moon, a person’s whole body, etc. Campbell states:

A Direct Realist theory of perception would hold that not cats, but tropes of cats, are what is seen, touched, and so on...some of the tropes belonging to the cat are perceptible, some not. On any one occasion, some of the perceptible ones are perceived, others are hidden. That is the way in which the senses are selectively sensitive; that is why there is no need for embarrassment in admitting that the senses can give us knowledge only of certain aspects of concrete particulars. (Campbell 1981, 355)

13 Williams reasons further:

Plausible though it be, however, that a color or shape cannot exist by itself, I think we have to reject the notion of standard concreteness. For it means that from the awareness of even the thinnest abstractum—indeed, the thinner the better—we could deduce the presence of the rest of a concrete thing...it seems to me an analytic principle that all deduction must be analytic so that while any proper component is deducible from the composition which contains it, no composite is deducible from any of its proper components, and hence that abstracta must in principle be as independent of their contexts as concrete things are. (Williams 1953, 51)

14 Simons lays out these problems very effectively. His possible solution to the compresences problem involves a “foundational relation” that somehow prevents a vicious regress from occurring. However, “using foundation as the cement of groups of tropes into more substantial wholes will only work for tropes which are individually founded on one another. Between contingent or accidental tropes (even though they be of kinds, of each of which an instance is required) there is no foundation relation” (Simons 1994, 370).

15 For some further reading on problems with the bare substratum, see Denkel (1992 and 2000).

16 Or, as Loux puts it: “We have said that the kinds to which concrete particulars belong represent irreducibly unified ways of being” (Loux 1998, 128).

17 For much more in-depth analysis of the various arguments and problems with the substance theory, see Loux (1978, 1991, and 1998)

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# The Origins of Republican Womanhood

● ● ● Shannon Bauchett

In 1980, Linda Kerber coined the phrase, “Republican Motherhood” and argued that a transformation in women’s education took place because of the American Revolutionary War. After the war ended, principles of republicanism increased in importance and women began to be seen as crucial to the success of the new Republic. Kerber claimed that republican political theory asserted that women’s most essential role within the new nation was motherhood. As mothers living in a new America, women were expected to raise their sons on republican values and thus, ensure the country future virtuous and patriotic male citizens. Kerber’s basis for the emphasis on motherhood derives mostly from her examination of Benjamin Rush’s essays on female education, as well as lectures on education given at the Young Ladies’ Academy in Philadelphia. Nevertheless, further analysis of these sources reveals that motherhood was not the only role believed to be significant for the shaping of a new government. Historians such as, Ruth Bloch, Mary Beth Norton, and Jan Lewis expanded Kerber’s argument and reasoned that the role of the wife in addition to the role of the mother was considered to be equally as important to the new nation. Therefore, the new political responsibility women experienced because of the Republic should be modified from the original phrase, “Republican Motherhood” to a new phrase, “Republican Womanhood.” However, this is not the only issue in Kerber’s argument which historians have critiqued. Despite the fact that Kerber argues that “Republican Motherhood” was born out of the American Revolution, a re-evaluation of Western political theory in the years before the war prove otherwise. Republican Womanhood may owe its success to the war, but its origins stretch back long before independence was declared from Britain.

In her book, *Women of the Republic: Intellect & Ideology in Revolutionary America*, Kerber states that before the American War of Independence women lacked complete political identification. She argues: “As American women entered the Revolution, they had few theoretical analyses of their place in society on which they might draw for sustenance. There was no dearth of argument telling them that they were peripheral to the world of politics and decision making.”<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, Kerber claims that women were left out of Enlightenment ideology. Great intellectual figures such as John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau left little room in their discussions on intellect for contemplating the role of women according to Kerber, and when they did consider women’s role within society, they understood it as exclusively domestic—domestic in the sense, that women’s sole purpose in society was to oversee matters pertaining to the household.<sup>2</sup> In Kerber’s research, prewar republican ideology combined with Enlightenment philosophy failed to recognize women as intellectual and political entities.

Kerber draws her conclusion that before the American Revolutionary War women lacked direction in anything but matters of the home from her analysis of Enlightenment ideology. However, other historians give examples that suggest women’s contribution to society was indeed a topic open up for debate before the American Revolutionary War. For instance, Mary Beth Norton in her essay, “The Evolution of White Women’s Experience in Early America,” describes how the family was central to colonial life. She states: “Just as in the early years of settlement, the family was regarded as the primary mainstay of social order,

and indeed, as a critical microcosm of society.”<sup>3</sup> Norton does acknowledge that the family as an institution was dominantly patriarchal. This was especially the case when it came to matters dealing with property. Because of the law of coverture, married women’s legal identity was revoked and women were considered to be dependent upon their husbands when it came to signing contracts or dealing with other legal issues. In any event, although women were subject to their husband’s authority and the father was the master over his own domestic circle, Norton explains how changes in both religion and the economy allowed women to gain a greater influence over their own lives in general, and the well-being of their children.

Specifically, Norton argues that a rising rural population within colonial America may have increased women’s power within the household. She claims that as the practice of farming became more developed household goods also increased in quality. The improved development in household goods gave some colonial women the opportunity to trade with their neighbors. She states: “Women exchanged work and produce, employing each other’s skills and easing their own burdens in the process.”<sup>4</sup> In addition to this, she argues that the production of surpluses in the home which were taken to the market also could have contributed to a rise in women’s domestic power. Similarly, Norton also states: “Many colonial governments encouraged married women to support themselves by adopting feme-sole trader statutes that allowed women some limited power to run businesses in the absence of their husbands.”<sup>5</sup> Even though the main reason this was encouraged was to keep women off public relief and not to promote their economic independence, the acceptance of feme-sole statutes along with improvements in household goods discredit the myth of complete marital unity in seventeenth-century colonies. Given this information, one could argue that the American Revolutionary War was not the first time women relied on their own knowledge of business in order to survive.

According to Norton, women also experienced an increase in domestic influence during the colonial era because of religion. In particular, this was the case among Puritan and Quaker households. Within these religious traditions, individuals were themselves responsible for affirming their own faith. This was different from traditions such as, Anglicanism that awarded a person’s religious identity at birth. Because Puritan and Quaker households believed that individuals must make their own declaration of faith once they reached the appropriate age, spiritual guidance through parenting was especially important for them. Norton argues: “Children were more than nuisances or amusing playthings, and their development had to be carefully supervised. To the Puritans, that meant breaking a child’s will at an early age; to the Quakers, it meant taking a more nurturant approach. In both cases, the motive was the same, and so was the result: the families in both sects were child oriented.”<sup>6</sup> Consequently, this gave Puritan and Quaker women greater power over their children’s upbringing.

Norton claims that even though much of the advice literature on parenting recognizes the father as the essential caregiver, women were nonetheless responsible for the child’s early moral development. For example, Norton explains how until the ages of six, children were under the direct care of the mother and she was their primary supporter. Furthermore, she would continue to be held accountable for her daughter’s upbringing. In other words, as Norton makes clear: “The early moral development of the child—so crucial in Puritan thinking in particular—this fell actually, if not theoretically, within the mother’s domain. A formal acknowledgment of the importance of the maternal role came first from the Quakers, but Puritans soon followed their lead. The Northern family’s concentration on children thus helped

focus attention on adult women in their maternal capacity.”<sup>7</sup> Although the Puritan and Quaker women’s role in their children’s livelihood was not political, the fact that women were seen in these religious traditions as important figures to their children’s well-being demonstrates that the belief that women were responsible for raising righteous children existed in the colonial era as well as during the years of the early Republic in America.

In addition to merely raising their children on religious and moral principles, colonial women also participated in their children’s basic education. For instance, Norton illustrates how a child’s education during this time period rested on whether or not their parents (especially the mother) were literate. During this era, formal, organized schools were few in number. In rural areas, this was even more so the case. Because of the shortage of actual schools, often children received their education exclusively at home and the mother served as their instructor. However, Norton points out that when it came to learning basic skills such as reading and writing, often times women took charge of teaching their children how to read, whereas, the children’s father taught them how to write. This procedure was due to the fact that even though many colonial women knew how to read; a great number of them did not know how to write.<sup>8</sup> In any case, what also must be taken into consideration is that geography had a lot to do with how much attention mothers paid to their child’s education. As Norton suggests: “Regional differences also affected children’s acquisition of skills of literacy: religious motives undoubtedly led Northern Puritan and Quaker mothers to pay more attention to their children’s education than did Southern Anglicans and Catholics.”<sup>9</sup> Because women were active in educating their children during the colonial era, one sees that the role of women as educators was not entirely a post-Revolutionary War phenomenon. What would later become a political role for women (education) after the Revolutionary War had its roots in the era of early colonial America.

With all this in mind, one must remember that Kerber’s model of “Republican Motherhood” rests on the assumption that before the Revolutionary War women were confined entirely to a life centered on domesticity. However, Norton indicates that this is not completely the case. For example, in the Quaker community during the colonial era, religion, state, and the family were all intertwined and it was the mother, not the father, who was the most important figure in linking the family and the church.<sup>10</sup> Most significantly, Quaker women’s meetings had a direct impact on Quaker men. As Norton affirms: “Most important, women and men’s meetings cooperated in approving all marriages, investigating the character and piety of young couples who wished to marry in the faith. Quaker women, in other words, acted collectively in their maternal capacity. Among Quakers, maternity acquired a public function.”<sup>11</sup> Therefore, Quaker women already possessed social influence over their community decades before the “Republican Womanhood” ideology began to be constructed.

Other than the religious and economic examples which Mary Beth Norton provides in illustrating the ways in which women were active as parents, educators, religious figures, etc, in colonial America, other historians also reveal how principles of Republican Womanhood derived from ideas present before the American Revolutionary War. For instance, Rosemarie Zagari depicts how the values present within the Republican Womanhood ideology actually can be found within Enlightenment philosophy, despite Kerber’s argument that the Enlightenment was not a contributing factor. In her article, “Morals, Manners and the Republican Mother,” Zagari claims that in particular, philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment did indeed consider women’s role within society. Zaggari asserts the following argument:



“These writers (Scottish Enlightenment philosophers) articulated certain key concepts, such as a sociological understanding of the family, a four stage theory of history, and a characterological concept of ‘manners,’ all of which provided critical links between European and American conceptualizations of womanhood.”<sup>12</sup> By examining this specific Enlightenment philosophy which Zagarri suggests, one can see that what Linda Kerber called “Republican Motherhood” was actually a part of a broader, older transformation of the role of women because women’s role was something that was debated upon before the Revolutionary era.

Zagarri points out that there was a certain group of Scottish philosophers who promoted “a theory of history and society” in which women had a prominent role.<sup>13</sup> This group of individuals included the following thinkers: Adam Smith, David Hume, Henry Home, William Robertson, and John Pillar. Zagarri states this about their outlook on women’s place in society: “The Scots maintained that the family represented a primary transmitter of customs, habits, morals, and manners. Arguing that women acted as both the means and beneficiaries of social progress, they claimed that women softened men’s brutal passions and rose in stature as society improved.”<sup>14</sup> However, Zagarri does note that even though this outlook defined women as important to society, the role it defined was not political. In any case, Zagarri argues that this mind-set laid the foundation for the American ideology of “Republican Womanhood.” It laid the foundation because it recognized women as vital participants in a functioning society.

Above all, civil jurisprudential philosophers believed the family institution and women’s place within that institution to be intrinsic to society.<sup>15</sup> Most importantly, as Zagarri asserts: “civil jurisprudential thinkers saw women and the family as crucial to an understanding of the relationship between virtue and commerce.”<sup>16</sup> This idea originated with the philosopher, Francis Hutcheson in 1725 and continued with Hume when he expanded Hutcheson’s notion about family. Hume reasoned that family was the basic principle of society. He believed that family life set the groundwork for future relationships for individuals and through these relationships society was formed.<sup>17</sup> Hume states: “building on these extrafamilial associations, individuals forged a variety of social institutions. The creation of government followed from the collective decision to live according to certain rules based upon common interest, utility, and the preservation of the species.”<sup>18</sup> Therefore, the idea that moral upbringing within the family could contribute to a political society was an idea born before the American Revolution because philosophers such as Hume had already shown interest in the subject.

In her book, *Women of the Republic: Intellect & Ideology in Revolutionary America*, Linda Kerber does spend some time addressing the viewpoint certain Enlightenment philosophers had about education. One philosopher she mentions is Adam Smith. She addresses Smith’s concern about reforming education; however, she claims that Smith wished to exclude women from this reforming process—meaning that the education of women was not an issue, it was already satisfactory. Kerber’s argument comes from an excerpt Smith wrote in his book, *The Wealth of Nations*. In this excerpt, Smith stated the following: “There are no public institutions for the education of women, and there is accordingly nothing useless, absurd, or fantastical in the common course of their education. They are taught what their parents or guardians judge it necessary or useful for them to learn; and they are taught nothing else. Every part of their education tends evidently to some useful purpose...”<sup>19</sup> In this statement, Smith is maintaining the notion that women’s education need not be improved because it already served its purpose—it was not necessary for women to receive any more instruction.



Because of Smith's stance on women's education, Kerber assumes that Smith's philosophy is entirely unrepresentative of any of the principles "Republican Motherhood" would embrace.

On the contrary, Zagarri argues that Smith's philosophy did promote ideas that would later develop into the Republican Womanhood ideology. For example, Smith, like Hume, also supported the notion that the family was essentially important to the growth of society. For Smith, he believed that 'sympathy' was the glue which held society together. "Sympathy," he asserted was a quality which was learned within the family. Smith had faith in the idea of "sympathy and believed it allowed for individuals to be able to identify with other persons."<sup>20</sup> In addition to "sympathy," Smith also held the notion that patriotism was a quality which was also learned from the family. Smith wrote the following statement about patriotism and its connection to family relations: "Every individual is naturally more attached to his own particular order, than to any other. His own interest, his own vanity, the interest and vanity of many of his friends and companions, are commonly a good deal connected with it."<sup>21</sup> Therefore, this political attitude of patriotism was first learned growing up in one's own family and later attached to one's country. Smith's idea is connected to the idea that after the American Revolution "mothers" (as Kerber suggests) were held accountable for instilling in their sons patriotic sentiments. Smith's position proves that learning how to be patriotic through one's own family was already a recognized idea which was illustrated in Enlightenment thinking.

It is true that neither Hume nor Smith addressed any sort of non-domestic role for women. Kerber is correct when she argues that Adam Smith was not a proponent for women's education. This appears to be a general rule among all Enlightenment philosophers. They were not known for their position on the equality of the sexes, but that does not mean that their positions on matters such as the family and its connection to politics did not have an effect on forming the ideology of Republican Womanhood. Enlightenment philosophy was shaping the way Americans viewed society and this was the case both before and after the American Revolution. Because Enlightenment thinking had such an influence on American society, it is not hard to imagine that it also helped form the way American society came to view women's roles after the war. Kerber states in her book, *Women of the Republic*, the following about the importance of family: "The notion that a mother can perform a political function, represents the recognition that a citizen's political socialization takes place at an early age, that the family is a basic part of the system of political communication, and that patterns of family authority influence the general political culture."<sup>22</sup> Likewise, David Hume and Adam Smith proposed the same argument. They too believed in the political importance of the family as an institution. Enlightenment thought such as this appears to have inspired Republican Womanhood principles.

Another idea which Zagarri believes helped later influence Republican Womanhood is the "four-stage theory of history."<sup>23</sup> In each of the four stages, Zagarri argues that women received an increase in status. In the first stage, women could be considered the "slaves" of men since their main purpose was to see to the needs and wants of their husband. As society progressed to the next stage (the pastoral stage), women's status increased somewhat. During this stage they were able to free themselves from the harsh demands of physical survival. Women's position increased even further once society reached the agricultural stage. During this time, women were freed even more so from desperately trying to find a means for survival. Also, it was in this stage that the concept of chivalry was born. Women's status was increased because women were seen as desirable and men began to compete for women's affec-

tion. Finally, in the fourth stage, women's status escalated more than ever. With the rise of a mercantile society, men became wealthier and were able to focus their attention on 'pleasures of the mind.'<sup>24</sup> It was in this stage, according to Zagarri, that men truly began to appreciate women's company and because of this, women's social position was elevated. Zagarri states: "The rigid separation of the sexes began to break down. Women were encouraged to mix with men."<sup>25</sup> At this time, woman began to be admired for their personal attributes. Zagarri further explains: "Women were valued for their accomplishments rather than viewed as mere sex objects. They came to be seen, as the philosopher Hume believed, "as faithful friends and agreeable companions."<sup>26</sup> In connection with this, those who upheld the four-stage theory of history believed that women would need to be educated in order to completely become adequate companions for their husbands.

As far as education for women was concerned, first and foremost, women's education was supported by Scottish philosophers for the purpose of having women become more attractive to men. For instance, Hume persuaded women to learn history. However, he had this to say about why they should learn history: "a woman may behave herself with good manners, and have even some vivacity in her turn of wit; but where her mind is so unfurnished, it is impossible her conversation can afford any entertainment to men of sense and reflection."<sup>27</sup> Even though Scottish philosophers advocated women's education for the benefit of their husbands, the very fact that they promoted education for women at all is very important. As Zagarri claims: "Despite these limitations, the fact that these thinkers used the term at all with respect to women was highly significant and opened up the possibility for further expansions in the meaning of the concept."<sup>28</sup> Therefore, the discussion about female education existed prior to the American Revolutionary War.

Moreover, Zagarri also acknowledges that a "characterological notion of manners" held by Scottish Enlightenment philosophers also helped contribute to shaping the ideology of Republican Womanhood. When Zagarri speaks of manners she makes it clear that she is not describing matters of etiquette, but instead, "ideas of individual morality and personal character, suggesting a strong connection between private values and public behavior."<sup>29</sup> Zagarri further goes on to describe Montesquieu's position on manners in connection to society in his book, *Spirit of Laws*. Montesquieu's perception on manners is as follows: "Manners and customs, are those habits which are not established by the laws, either because they were not able, or were not willing to establish them. Laws regulate the behavior of the subject, while manners regulate the actions of man. Customs regulate exterior conduct, while manners relate to the interior conduct."<sup>30</sup> In addition to this, the subject of "manners" was also a topic found within the British periodical *The Spectator*. Zagarri explains how this periodical presented a number of articles that were directed at a female audience and encouraged them to use their influence to manipulate male behavior.<sup>31</sup> The emphasis on manners portrayed women as important in shaping the way society operated. As Zagarri indicates: "It described women as both an integral part of the process of social development and as important contributors to it. The schema led thinkers to advocate the benefits of education for women, even if for somewhat limited purposes. And it proclaimed that women were the social equals of men, even if that equality carried with it no political privileges. With this basis, the leap from European to American conceptions of womanhood was not as great as previously believed."<sup>32</sup> Zagarri's opinion that these philosopher's ideas promoted sexual equality is probably a bit of an overstatement, but nonetheless, it does prove that at least some Enlightenment philosophers were

concerned with women's role in shaping society.

In discussing the opinions of Scottish philosophers on the topic of women's role in society, it must be noted that Scottish Enlightenment philosophy greatly affected the thinking of American individuals. Zagarri makes clear that among the well-educated persons living in the colonies, treatises dealing with this type of Enlightenment philosophy were readily available. For instance, Zagarri points out the following: "By the time of the Revolution, Smith and Hume had become staples of the college curriculum. John Witherspoon of Princeton and William Small of William and Mary personally brought Scottish ideas to America. Political thinkers such as James Wilson and Benjamin Rush received their higher educations at Scottish universities."<sup>33</sup> Also, what is important to take into consideration is that some publishers during this era made an effort to make certain Enlightenment literature dealing with these particular ideas available to women. Zagarri claims that because of certain publishers' efforts, even though women could not go to college they were still able to familiarize themselves with these works. Because of this, Zagarri points out that it is not surprising that both Dr. Benjamin Rush, a male Edinburgh-educated physician, and Judith Sargent Murray, an author of many articles in ladies' magazines, were two of the first supports of the "Republican motherhood ideology."<sup>34</sup> In other words, they were probably directly affected by Enlightenment thought.

If Dr. Benjamin Rush was indeed influenced by Scottish Enlightenment philosophy as Zagarri suggests, then this would question Kerber's claim that the ideology of "Republican Motherhood" came into being exclusively because of the American Revolutionary War. The reason this is the case is because Kerber used Dr. Benjamin Rush's essay on female education in support of her claim for "Republican Motherhood." In fact, her argument that women became politicized because of their new role as mothers rests greatly on Rush's essay. Consequently, if Rush had been influenced by Enlightenment thinkers such as David Hume and Adam Smith then his stance on education may have been derived from their ideas. If this is accurate then Kerber is wrong about the origin of "Republican Motherhood." Republican Womanhood owes its heritage to Enlightenment ideas. The American Revolutionary War merely borrowed Enlightenment ideas when it created the new ideology, Republican Womanhood.

If Kerber is wrong about the starting point of the principles which would later contribute to Republican Womanhood, this would certainly not be the first error she made in her research, according to other historians who have critiqued Kerber. For example, as other historians suggest, Kerber's basis for "Republican Motherhood" only presents half the picture of what essayists such as Dr. Benjamin Rush addressed in their positions on female education. Kerber claims that ultimately Rush was advocating a new role for women by promoting their capabilities as mothers; however, critiques of Kerber's research on Rush depicts him also advocating a new role for women as wives in addition to their role as mothers. Furthermore, Kerber's other main source for information, The Young Ladies Academy of Philadelphia also promotes the idea that women's roles of both wife and mother were equally important.

Ruth Bloch is one of the historians who challenges Kerber's claim about "Republican Motherhood." In her essay, "The Gendered Meanings of Virtue in Revolutionary America," she argues that women were presented as essential and active promoters of patriotism in men. Bloch states: "It was repeatedly claimed, by American and English moralists both, that women's influence over men gave them the power to reform the manners and morals of

society.”<sup>35</sup> Above all, Bloch asserted that virtue was the most valued quality defining individual commitment to the American Republican cause.<sup>36</sup> Educated women according to Bloch, was a patriotic necessity because education would increase women’s ability to influence their husband’s behavior. More than anything, women were persuaded to make sure that both their children and their husbands became and remained virtuous citizens. This was the fundamental purpose of Republican Womanhood.

As Zagarrri suggested in her essay, the opinion that women were able to influence their husband’s conduct is reflected in the writings of Scottish Enlightenment philosophers. However, the fact that Linda Kerber failed to recognize that contemporary advocates of women’s education during the years following the American Revolutionary War were both promoting the idea that women had a political role in shaping their husband’s ideas in addition to their children’s behavior may be the reason why Kerber was unsuccessful in recognizing the connection between Enlightenment thinking and Republican Womanhood. However, historians such as Bloch did acknowledge the role women played in shaping their husband’s political behavior. What is important is that Bloch saw a link between courtship and marriage and the call for an increase in women’s education. For example, Bloch quotes a Columbia Orator about women’s authority when it came to these two things: “Love and courtship, it is universally allowed, invest a lady with more authority than in any other situation that falls to the lot of human beings.”<sup>37</sup> This relationship between women’s power, marriage, and courtship is representative of the same argument which Scottish philosophers such as Montesquieu were making about the increased need to promote behavioral “manners.” The only difference is that in this case Bloch is addressing post-Revolutionary America’s attention toward teaching women about virtue and how they could in turn influence their husbands and children to be virtuous citizens as well.

Bloch reasons that in order to understand the importance the idea of virtue had in a post-Revolutionary America, one must look to other prominent ideas involving women, human psychology, and education as well. She states: “In this broader intellectual history one finds the origins of a long term re-definition of gender distinctions already well underway by the 1770s and intimately connected to changes in the nonpolitical understanding of virtue.”<sup>38</sup> Bloch goes on to trace the origin of “virtue” and its association with women in her essay. In doing so, she presents three ways in which the idea of virtue influenced individuals living within the American colonies. The first she claims was through religion. What is most significant about how virtue is understood in connection to religion is realizing the role women played as religious citizens in the colonies. For example, even though Bloch points out that religious virtue was not necessarily considered to be characteristically feminine, she does indicate that during the years leading up to the American Revolutionary War religious sermons centered on the topic of virtue were in particular directed toward a female audience. Bloch proposes: “Women, long regarded as morally encumbered by their supposedly excessive emotionalism, were beginning to be regarded as particularly receptive to grace. The first vigorous proponent of this view was the third generation Puritan pietist Cotton Mather.”<sup>39</sup> Like Mather, other preachers spent time addressing the issue of female piety during the course of the seventeenth century.

Like Rosemarie Zagarrri, Ruth Bloch also addresses Scottish Enlightenment philosophers in her essay. Bloch claims that ideas of virtue came from particular notions held by certain Scottish philosophers as well as the philosopher John Locke. For instance, according

to the Francis Hutcheson, Bloch points out that virtue was believed to be an innate quality within individuals. For them, virtue was also believed to be “an instinct towards happiness.” John Locke and the Scottish philosophers argued that children should be raised in a non-coercive manner and that true virtue promoted a nurturing environment for children to be raised in. Though it is true that these philosophers were mainly addressing men as the primary educators of virtue for children, Bloch states this about their general stance on the subject: “Although these particular philosophers envisioned men as the principle educators, their ideas about the importance of early childhood education gradually led to a greater emphasis on the motherhood role in didactic and medical literature.”<sup>40</sup> Therefore, the position Enlightenment philosophers maintained about virtue would later contribute to principles surrounding the subject of Republican Womanhood.

According to Bloch, literary sentimentalism was the third aspect that contributed to ideas of virtue in early America. Bloch points out that the religious leader Jonathan Edwards and Scottish philosophers read this type of fiction which existed during this era.<sup>41</sup> Bloch claims that literary sentimentalism concerned itself with finding personal happiness within the individual through domestic relationships and Bloch asserts that what is most important about literary sentimentalism is that it had the most to say about women’s position in society.<sup>42</sup> Literary sentimentalism declares that virtue is fundamentally a feminine quality. In other words, literary sentimentalism emphasizes the emotional nature of women in general. Moreover, women were not only valued for their emotional character, but they were also cherished for their self-discipline. For example, Bloch argues: The sentimental conception of female virtue was used simply to mean chastity, and in the didactic literature of the period women were repeatedly enjoined to protect their sexual purity. In the midst of the early Revolutionary fervor a patriot magazine instructed its readers, “What bravery is in man, Chastity is in woman.”<sup>43</sup> Therefore, some virtues in women were considered to be innate in their essence. During these years leading up to the war and after the new Republic was created, women were expected to promote virtuosity in both their husbands and children. Promoting virtue in these individuals would become intrinsic to Republican Womanhood.

Kerber is right in stating that educational opportunities for women were transformed during the American Revolutionary War. Benjamin Rush’s essays which Kerber used to support her thesis on “Republican Motherhood” describe the importance the new Republic placed on women’s education. Rush argues that women should strive to be educators of patriotism and promote morality to both their children and their husbands. To Rush, women should see this as an essential responsibility to their country. Rush claimed that every citizen in the Republic was equally important in ensuring the liberty of the new American nature. In this he asserted, women were included.<sup>44</sup> Kerber’s claim that women benefited intellectually because of the American Revolution is supported in her analysis of both Rush’s essays and the lectures given at the Young Ladies’ Academy in Philadelphia. Republican Womanhood gave women a political position in the new Republic. Even though as a whole, women lacked many basic rights such as the right to vote and the right to have greater control of property, the fact that the Republican Womanhood ideology recognized that women had a political role through their responsibility as wives and mothers changed women’s position in America forever. Republican Womanhood confirmed that the household could function politically; however, the ideas that would shape the principles of Republican Womanhood do not derive exclusively from the American Revolutionary War like Kerber argues. Historians such as Mary Beth Norton,

Rosemarie Zagarri, and Ruth Bloch affirm that Republican Womanhood's origin derives from a number of factors leading up to the Revolutionary War. Some factors date back as far as the mid-seventeenth century as Mary Beth Norton suggests, whereas other factors developed during the early and mid-eighteenth century such as certain Enlightenment theories. In any case, the ideas that would set the foundation for Republican Womanhood began decades, and in some cases a century before the start of the American Revolutionary War, despite Kerber's claim that Republican Womanhood resulted entirely because of the war.

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## Notes

1. Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect & Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 32.
2. Kerber states that for Locke, Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Kames, women existed merely as wives and mothers. Ibid, 27.
3. Mary Beth Norton, "The Evolution of White Women's Experience in Early America," *The American Historical Review* 89 no.3 (June 1984): 602.
4. Ibid, 605.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid, 606.
7. Ibid, 606-7.
- 8 Colonial women who knew how to read, but not write was not uncommon because the two skills were taught separately. Most Protestants recognized that women should be able to read the Bible, but they saw no reason why they would need to know how to write. Ibid, 607.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid, 608.
11. Ibid.
12. Rosemarie Zagarri, "Morals, Manners, and the Republican Mother," *American Quarterly* 44 no.2 (June 1992), 193.
13. Ibid, 194.
14. Ibid.
15. Civil Jurisprudential philosophers are those philosophers who study the theory of law.
16. Ibid.
17. He claimed that sexual attraction between a man and woman provided the initial social bond for the individual and the offspring strengthened the union between the couple. The child could then go off and seek relationships outside the immediate family.
18. David Hume in Rosemarie Zagarri, "'Morals, Manners, and the Republican Mother,'" *American Quarterly* 44 no.2 (June 1992), 196.
19. Adam Smith in Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect & Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 25.
20. Zagarri, 196.
21. Ibid.
22. Kerber, 283.
23. The Four-stage theory of history is a four part analysis of the development of human civilization. This theory suggests a progression from hunter to shepherd to farmer to merchant—a mercantile society representing the peak of history. Zagarri, 197.
24. Zagarri, 199.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid, 200.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid, 201.
30. Montesquieu in Rosemarie, Zagarri, "Rosemarie Zagarri, "Morals, Manners, and the



Republican Mother,” *American Quarterly* 44 no.2 (June 1992), 201.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid, 203.

34. Ibid.

35. Ruth Bloch, “The Gendered Meanings of Virtue in Revolutionary America,” *Signs* 13 no.1 (Autumn, 1987), 47.

36. Ibid, 6.

37. Ibid, 45.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid, 49.

40. Ibid, 50.

41. Ibid, 51.

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid, 52.

44. Benjamin Rush, “Thoughts Upon Female Education,” Early American Imprints, O.S.U. Lib, Columbus, Ohio, October 1787

# Leonard Bernstein: *I Hate Music!* A Cycle of Five Kid Songs and its Cultural Context

● ● ● Danielle Hickey

“Life without music is unthinkable. Music without life is academic. That is why my contact with music is a total embrace.”

*Leonard Bernstein*

Known to many as the composer of the ground-breaking musical *West Side Story*, Leonard Bernstein began his career in classical music. Though Bernstein arguably achieved more success with his compositions for the Broadway stage, his classical music is often performed in concert hall settings.

A scholar, and a composer, Bernstein’s works often encompass underlying commentary on society. In his *I Hate Music!* song cycle, Bernstein cleverly displays the development of a young girl in America during the mid-1940’s. This realization can be achieved by studying Leonard Bernstein’s life, the composition of the song cycle, and the historical context from which this piece was composed.

On August 25, 1918 in Lawrence, Massachusetts, future pianist, conductor, composer and educator, Leonard Bernstein, was born to Russian Jewish immigrants Sam and Jennie Bernstein. He would later benefit from the births of two younger siblings, a sister named Shirley, and brother, Burton. Compared to most musical masters, Leonard is considered to have had a late introduction to music. With the death of an Aunt Clara, the Bernstein family was willed a piano (Secrest 3). Leonard was nine years old at the time, and was immediately fascinated with the instrument. Leonard Bernstein himself recalled, “I remember touching it...and that was it. That was my contract with life, with God” (Secrest 15). He pleaded with his father for piano lessons. Though Sam and the Bernstein family had the means to pay the fee for lessons, Sam refused, not wanting his son to follow a musical path. Defying his father, Leonard taught himself the basics, being an obviously gifted child, and soon began teaching lessons to neighborhood kids, using the money he earned to pay for his own lessons (Peyser 4).

Leonard was enrolled at Boston Latin School, one of the country’s most prestigious college preparatory schools. Its alumni include such notable past figures from Benjamin Franklin, John Quincy Adams, and John Hancock to Ralph Waldo Emerson and John Fitzgerald Kennedy (Secrest 15). He went on to attend Harvard University. There he was also introduced to composers David Diamond and Aaron Copland, one of Bernstein’s heroes (Secrest 43). Before graduating from Harvard in 1939, Bernstein went on to play for Marc Blitzstein’s controversial leftist musical, *The Cradle Will Rock*. After graduation, Bernstein headed to the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, studying piano with Isabella Vengerova, conducting with Fritz Reiner, and orchestration with Randall Thompson (Briggs 21). The following year in 1940, Bernstein attended the newly created Tanglewood Music Festival sponsored by the Boston Symphony Orchestra and met renowned conductor Serge Koussevitzky, later becoming his conducting assistant (Gradenwitz 31).

This apprenticeship launched Bernstein's conducting career, which led to him becoming the long time music director for New York Philharmonic Orchestra. He favored conducting pieces by Haydn, Beethoven, Brahms, Schumann, Sibelius, Mahler, and those of his personal friend, Copland. Bernstein also delved into the realm of composition, writing three symphonies: *Jeremiah* (1943), *Age of Anxiety* (1949), and *Kiddish* (1963). Other notable compositions include *Prelude, Fugue and Riffs* for solo clarinet and jazz ensemble; *Serenade* for violin, strings, and percussion; *Chichester Psalms*, a choral masterpiece; and *Mass: a Theater piece for Singers, Players and Dancers*. Bernstein also composed several works for the stage including three ballets, and even a one-act opera, *Trouble in Tahiti*. However, today's society best remembers Bernstein for his contributions to the musical theatre genre introducing *On the Town*, *Wonderful Town*, *Candide*, and the groundbreaking *West Side Story*. Less well known, but still highly acclaimed are three song cycles<sup>1</sup>: *La Bonne Cuisine*, *Two Love Songs* and *I Hate Music!*.

*I Hate Music! A Cycle of Five Kid Songs*, was Bernstein's first composed song cycle. He wrote both the music and lyrics. Composed in 1943, Bernstein dedicated the cycle to his friend and then roommate Edys Merrill. It is said that Aaron Copland bought Bernstein a piano, and thus Bernstein coached singers and rehearsed dances at his apartment night and day. The music was so constant that Edys recalled, "I would walk around the apartment with my hands over my ears screaming, 'I hate music- la de da de da,' and Lenny wrote a cycle of songs based on what I screamed..." (Peyser 78). Though the cycle was complete, Bernstein needed it to be premiered. During this time Bernstein had been introduced to the acclaimed soprano, Jennie Tourel, and was immediately taken with her voice and innate performance abilities. The two quickly kindled a friendship, and Tourel agreed to sing his songs at her U.S. debut recital (as previously she was known as a stage performer, not a recitalist). However, Bernstein's mentor and teacher, Serge Koussevitzky, was the conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra which would be presenting Tourel's recital. Koussevitzky refused the cycle stating that it had "too much bleed with popular music to be considered serious art" (Peyser 81). Since Bernstein was not only the assistant conductor but also the pianist for the evening, he was able to help Tourel offer the cycle as an encore despite Koussevitzky's objections.

Jennie Tourel's performance of the *I Hate Music!* song cycle was well received by the audience. Leonard Bernstein recalls, "people yelled and stomped and cheered and I had to take a bow...a party commenced" (Peyser 91). Critics' reactions were mixed. Publicist and friend of both Bernstein and Tourel noted, "I hated them when I heard them at town hall. They are not art songs but cute little jazzy songs that should be sung at a house party. They did not rise to Jennie's style or stature" (Peyser 100). Noel Straus of the *New York Times* "praised Bernstein's songs as 'amusing' though pointing out that they appeared to show the influence of Mussorgsky's 'Nursery' cycle" (Briggs 80). Bernstein claimed that at that point in life he had never heard Mussorgsky songs. The main debate was whether this cycle truly could be considered a cycle of art songs or not, as strong jazz and popular influences were readily apparent. Interestingly enough, Bernstein wrote his Harvard undergraduate thesis about the use of jazz in classical music (Briggs 56).

The cycle, in which the protagonist is a ten-year-old girl, is written for soprano and piano. Sequentially, Leonard Bernstein's *I Hate Music!* cycle explores the "coming of age" of this girl. In the first song, the child asks the age old question: "Where do babies come from?" This question is often associated with children at their first moments of intellectual curiosity. From there, the child looks beyond the earth in the second song, and questions the universe,

and her place in it. Song three comments on society, while song four uses a riddle demonstrating a higher level of intelligence. Though a seemingly trite riddle, it does show some sophistication. However, the true peak of maturity is reached in the fifth and final song of the cycle, where the child seems to be discovering herself as an individual. It is the ultimate step in maturation and individuality.

In a broader sense, the cycle has an overlying connection as all the songs are in ABA form<sup>2</sup>. Being considered the “simplest” of forms, Bernstein seems to be commenting on the misconception of children being completely trouble-free and naïve. In other words, Bernstein is commenting on the simplicity of youth—how everything seems much simpler during childhood. Behind the façade of simple ABA exteriors, each song contains chromatically<sup>3</sup> conceived melodies, multicolor rhythms, and rich harmonies with interwoven jazz elements.

In the first song, it is clear that an E-major chord plays an important role in the structure. It seems no coincidence that “E” is also the first letter of *Edys Merrill*, to whom Bernstein dedicated the piece. There is an ‘E’ pedal tone<sup>4</sup> incorporated throughout, and the piece starts and ends with an ‘E’, which serves as the dominant<sup>5</sup> in the key of a-minor.

#### Example 1: ‘E’ Pedal Tone

VOICE

My moth - er sa

PIANO

*p*

*Tad.* *Tad. simile al segno \**

This beginning and ending on the same note (or chord) is a favored Bernstein device as will be seen in the following song. This device may also be connected to a simple beginning: simplicity is, after all, associated with youth. The song ends with a final declaratory sentence stating, “My Name is Barbara,” where we again see the importance of “E,” as the phrase begins and ends on E. Ending with a half-cadence<sup>6</sup>, Bernstein’s musical form suggests that the development that the child is making is not completed.

#### Example 2: Half Cadence

*p sweetly slowing up*

My name is Bar - ba - ra.

*p* *pp*

Also seen throughout the pieces is the extensive vocal range that the vocal line encompasses as witnessed from mm. 2-5 and mm. 14-16. One might presume that the vast space used in the vocal line continues to represent Bernstein's "child-like" theme, commenting that children often see themselves having no limits until a certain level of maturity is reached. The song questions where babies come from, but the climactic moment of the piece is at m. 14 where she not only questions the information her mother has provided, but begins asking more probing questions: "What's a baby bush anyway?"

*Examples 3: Extensive vocal range in mm.2-5*

VOICE

Moderato

*mp* very legato, contemplative

My moth - er says that

PIANO

*p*

*Red. simile al segno \**

ba - bies come in bot - tles;— but last week she said they

*Example 4: Extensive vocal range in mm.14-17*

all in the zoo, bus - y with their own ba - bies! And

*f* almost

*p*

*mf*

*dim. poco a poco rit.*

resentfully

what's a ba - by - bush, an - y - way!?

The second song reuses the notion of beginning and ending on the same chord, F major. The F is also found in the beginning and ending of the vocal line. Fittingly, Bernstein once told a student, “There are still some reactionaries hanging around like myself clinging arduously to the old beloved F majors and modulatory harmonies” (Secrest 286). Also notable is Bernstein’s use of a very distinctive D-flat major chord for special moments of intensity. This chord seems to be associated with the word “one” which in m. 23, m. 44, and mm. 48-50 shows a realization about how the world is.

Examples 5 and 6: D-flat major chord m.23 and m.44

Example 5 (left) shows a vocal line with the lyrics "one! Just" and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a D-flat major chord (F major) in measure 23, marked *mp*. Example 6 (right) shows a vocal line with the lyrics "one! lamentando" and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a D-flat major chord (F major) in measure 44, marked *lamentando*.

Example 7: D-flat major chord mm.48-50

Example 7 shows a vocal line and piano accompaniment for measures 48-50. The vocal line starts with the lyrics "one!" and is marked *Tempo I*. The piano part features a D-flat major chord (F major) in measure 48, marked *dim.*, and continues through measures 49 and 50, marked *pp*.

By examining the lyrics one can see that just as the earth has only one moon (despite the vast number of moons other planets contain) the girl is only one person in the infinite number of people who populate our planet. The build up to the D-flat chords seem to be at heavier more in-depth moments. This serves as a foil to the skittish, carnival-like music heard throughout the rest of the song. As the child’s imagination grows more whimsical, the tempos<sup>7</sup> fluctuate with the moods, and the more melancholic slower tempo returns for the closing lament in which notes are emphasized by *tenuto*<sup>8</sup> marks.



Example 8: Tenuto marks

On a smaller scale, Bernstein uses repetition to emphasize the girl's child-like manner. Measures 12-13 show repeating rhythmic and melodic figures on the similar sounding "million, billion, trillion," very much in representation of childish antics.

Example 9: Repeated rhythmic and melodic figure of mm.12-13

Song three, the title song of the cycle displays Bernstein's exploration of range in the vocal line. Interestingly, Bernstein favors the use of a Major 9<sup>th</sup> interval<sup>9</sup>. This, and the seemingly tuneless melody sung on nonsense syllables, represents the child's first experiences with music.



Example 10: Major 9<sup>th</sup> interval and tuneless melody of nonsense syllables

*Sostenuto* *f* *p* suddenly relaxed

I hate mu - sic! But I like to sing:

*mp* freely, rather tonelessly and carelessly *In tempo*

la dee da da dee;— la dee da dee. But

It takes training for children to sing or play in tune. As the text states, “I hate music! But I like to sing.” The child does just that by offering this tuneless seemingly toneless and carefree melody. To show the importance of this motif, the song begins and ends with nonsense syllables, “la dee da da dee.” These syllables seem to be a parody of the dodecaphonic<sup>10</sup> technique that Bernstein was publicly opposed to (Gradenwitz 139).

Example 11: Parody of 12-tone technique as seen at the end of the piece

*mp* not too slowly *f* subito, showing off *rit.*

la dee da da dee: la dee da dee: la dee da dee.

*p* (to herself)

Only when the child begins thinking of the pretense of music, and society in general, does she move away from these leaps and wide range. The B section is faster with complex repeating rhythms of triplets<sup>11</sup>, not only contributing to the vocalist’s rant, but providing a sense of urgency and irritation.

### Example 12: Beginning of the B-section

*Allegro molto*  
*f* *mp*

Mu - sic is a lot of men in a

The sense of irritation on the word “hate” is punctuated by a very distinctive F-sharp major chord. The repeated rhythmic and melodic phrase on the words “hate music” focuses again on the F-sharp major.

### Example 13: F-sharp major chord

*p*

I hate mu - sic! I

One must also appreciate the irony of this songs’ basic statement, since Bernstein’s life was so obviously imbedded in music and the “concert hall” setting on which the girl comments.

Bernstein makes the fourth song sound extremely playful, and this seems appropriate since the song is a riddle. There are accents on a majority of the notes in both the voice and piano parts and unevenly grouped quavers are used to drive the music forward with the eagerness of a child. It comes across as impatient with irrepressible enthusiasm, qualities often associated with children, especially children eager to share something.

### Example 14: unevenly grouped quavers

*p* (but very sharp accents)

A big In - di - an and a

*p* *eguale*

After singing the riddle, Bernstein creates a section where the piano is playing “E” octaves for the vocalist to speak the riddle in its entirety. The same words that Bernstein asks be emphasized in this speaking part by underlining, are musically emphasized by being the highest notes of the phrase, often by way of a leap to bring greater emphasis to the word. Such words include “Little” and “Big.”

*Example 15: “E” octaves with spoken riddle*

*(spoken very fast)*

You see the riddle is, if the little Indian  
was the son of the big Indian, but the big  
Indian was not the father of the little Indian,  
(?) who was he?— I'll give you two measures:

Bernstein provides a variation on the typical “Indian” sounds in mm.18-22. The accompaniment even reads, “pesante, like Indians.”

*Example 16: “Indian” sounds of mm.18-22*

In - di - an: —

*f pesante, like Indians*

Bernstein was fond of writing emotional clues blatantly in the music, as can be seen with the last three measures of the song, where the directions read, “triumphantly” as the child gives the answer to the riddle.

In contrast to the light-hearted fun of the riddle, the fifth and final song of the cycle is very serious in tone, and sounds very final. It is the most melodic and homophonic<sup>12</sup> of all the songs. It’s a song of revelations and self-discovery. The child’s thoughts are represented by longer note values showing her contemplative and introspective side. “Everyone’s” views are represented with a repeated rhythmic figure as seen in m.9 and m.24.

Example 17: Repeated rhythmic figure of m.9

But ev-'ry-one says, "Is-n't she cute? she likes bal-loons!"

Example 18: Repeated rhythmic figure of m.24

ev-'ry-one says, "Is-n't she sweet? She wants to know ev-'ry-thing!" Don't you? Of

In an attempt to fit in and point out that she “likes things that everyone likes” (m.14), she offers a faster rhythmic listing of the items including “soft things and movies and horses and warm things and red things.”

Example 19: Faster rhythms of mm.14-15

I like things that ev-'ry-one likes: I like soft things and mov-ies and hors-es and

Adding key signatures helps to convey different lines of thought, and also to show a new dimension of meaning and complexity to the song where the child is in the final stages of becoming an individual—a person. Key signatures<sup>13</sup> offer clarity within the music, clarity that the girl may finally have achieved on her road to individuality. Her final statements show that she has finally achieved this moment of self-identity as the piece modulates to the original key of F-major.

Example 20: Final Statement

Musical score for "Final Statement" from the New York City March, 1943. The score is in 3/4 time and features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line includes the lyrics: "I'm a per - son too! Though I'm on - ly ten years old; I'm a per - son too, like you!". The piano accompaniment includes the instruction "Meno mosso" and "with dignity". The score is marked with "f" (forte) and "mf" (mezzo-forte). There are handwritten annotations: "sing" with an arrow pointing to the vocal line and "f" with an arrow pointing to the piano line. The score is titled "New York City March, 1943".

Bernstein notes at the beginning of the cycle that “in the performance of these songs, coyness is to be assiduously avoided. The natural, unforced sweetness of child expressions can never be successfully gilded; rather will it come through the music in proportion to the dignity and sophisticated understanding of the singer” (Bernstein 8). It appears that the innocence of youth is of the utmost importance to Bernstein. One may wonder why Bernstein wrote a cycle so heavily imbedded with youthful themes. Much can be attributed to Bernstein’s own childhood and his belief that “all children have a natural gift and that musical training ought to be an integral part of education” (Secrest 24). On the other hand, this composition has much to say in terms of historical context about being a child at the beginning of World War II (the time when this piece was composed).

It is no secret that Leonard Bernstein and his father had a volatile relationship. Sam Bernstein refused to support his son’s career in music up until Leonard’s first conducting performance with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra in 1943, the year that the *I Hate Music!* song cycle was composed. Sam Bernstein feared that being a musician would leave his son poor, and he had not immigrated to America for his son to end up a beggar (Secrest 120). However, when finally convinced of Leonard’s success Sam was quoted as saying, “Lenny, I spent \$12,000 on you. But... you paid me back every cent—with interest!” (Secrest 120). This song cycle outlines the growth of a child’s individuality, which Leonard ultimately was able to achieve despite his father’s efforts to discourage him.

Growing up during the Second World War and going through childhood was a challenge at the time. The United States entered World War II in 1941, with the bombing of



Pearl Harbor. It appeared that childhood was lost to many. Families were forced to join the war effort, even though they were still recovering from the Great Depression. To help with the war effort, children collected scrap metal and the Boy Scouts “salvaged 150,000 tons of wastepaper. Children received 50 cents for aluminum foil balls” (Derks 265). The war had a devastating effect on children as some suffered when tragic telegrams arrived, while others learned to eat what ration tickets made available. Ultimately, children grew up without the steady support of their mothers who at the time had been called to work outside of the home, filling the voids left by the men serving in the war. Due to war expenses, rations were put on food, clothes, toys, and about every other type of commodity.

Small concessions were made to entertain and provide a more optimistic and youthful atmosphere for the children growing up at this time. Walt Disney began making a name for himself in 1937 with the feature color cartoon film, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. Shortly after, Disney produced *Fantasia* (1940), *Dumbo* (1941), and *Bambi* (1942) (West 154). Radio programs became popularized as the war had halted progress developing television since the materials and finances were needed for the war effort. Another point of interest during this time included the advancements in space exploration. With the raising awareness of technology and war, it was noted that “the space rocket age began with the first successful test of the A-4 as part of a Nazi sponsored project” (Derks 251). Though no man had yet landed on the moon, interest had piqued, and its influences are hinted at in the second song of Bernstein’s cycle.

Bernstein wanted to help cultivate the idea of youthfulness again. Author of *Leonard Bernstein a Life*, Meryle Secrest notes, “For him the idea that music could be—ought to be—fun is a reoccurrent theme in Bernstein’s music during this period” (Secrest 248). She later states, “For him, the United States is the place to be young, versatile, breathless with possibility, suddenly the measure of all things musical” (Secrest 478). This is reflected not only in this specific cycle, but also is evident in his creation of the “Young People’s Concerts.” The Young People’s Concerts (fifty-three concerts in all) were broadcast via television for fourteen years. Conceived and hosted by Bernstein, the program discussed such topics as “What Does Music Mean?,” “What is American Music?,” “How Musical are You?” and “Humor in Music” (Secrest 247). A Young People’s Concert titled, “Who is Gustav Mahler” had Leonard saying Mahler had the ability to “recapture the pure emotions of childhood, oscillating between extremes of happiness and gloom” (Horowitz 479). The same can be said for much of Bernstein’s music, and specifically, the *I Hate Music!* cycle. Another program titled “Jazz in the Concert Hall,” summed up Bernstein’s views of jazz in classical music. The *I Hate Music!* cycle had been criticized for its incorporation of jazz, but Bernstein defended his compositional style. Bernstein explains,

In spite of these tries at combining jazz and symphonic writing, the two musics have somehow remained separate, like two streams that flow along side by side without ever touching or mixing—except every once in a while. But it’s those once-in-a-whiles that we’re interested in today: those pieces in which the jazz stream now and then does sneak over to the symphonic stream, and for a moment or two, flows along with it in happy harmony. And these days—at least, for the last five or fifty years, that is—there is a new movement in American music actually called “the third stream” which mixes the rivers of jazz with the other rivers that flow down from the

high-brow far out mountain peaks of twelve-tone, or atonal music (<[www.leonard-berNSTEIN.com/youth.html](http://www.leonard-berNSTEIN.com/youth.html)> n.pag).

Interestingly, the cycle uses a young girl as its storyteller. Though women gained the right to vote in 1920, women were not considered equals to their male counterparts. It was already challenging for a boy child to maintain his innocence while discovering his individuality, and was even more difficult for a girl. Though girls were educated, their education emphasized the learning of “certain styles of food preparation, table manners, costume and personal appearance, all patterned on the ways of life of middle class homes” (West 135). The ideal household contained the breadwinning father, and the housewife mother. World War II deferred this ideal for a bit, having the women take over the jobs left behind by men who left for war. Rosie the Riveter became an icon for the Women’s Movement. Though many went back to their homes when the war was over, some women maintained their jobs outside of the home. Perhaps Bernstein was helping aid this advancement, as he wished so much more for his beloved sister Shirley.

The two had a seemingly strange relationship, as friends note the two as “being in love with each other” (Briggs 22). They saw each other as the ideal, and had difficulty finding lasting relationships among others. Bernstein taught Shirley how to play piano, how to sight-read, and often casted her in many of his childhood productions (Peyser 9). As adamantly as Sam Bernstein had been about not allowing Leonard Bernstein to become a musician, he was twice as hard on Shirley. Their younger brother Burton Bernstein noted, “She was a girl child, the second born, of whom nothing much was expected or demanded save the *nachas* that comes from her being one day a good homemaker and a bearer of children—she was suitably educated of course” (Peyser 98). Perhaps this is the reason why Bernstein chose a girl to be the protagonist in this specific cycle. In the fifth and final song, the girl laments how everyone disregards her thoughts and only notes how cute and sweet she is, dismissing her ambitions and goals as childhood dreams, which will amount to nothing. Bernstein clearly disagrees, as the girl declares, “I’m a person too.”

Regardless of the detail and complexity of this song cycle and its audience approval, there continues to be debate as to whether it is serious or “high art”—that which one would see in a concert hall setting. The jazz influences and irreverent tone of the cycle were target points for critics<sup>14</sup>. Bernstein admitted to being fascinated with jazz noting, “It’s the stuff I’ve soaked up ever since I heard music” (Peyser 225). Despite controversy of what serious or “high” art is, Bernstein never totally eliminated jazz from his creative process. In fact “it can be heard in everything he did” (Peyser 32). Bernstein is able to lift jazz from its original context and transform it into something new. Believing firmly that jazz was a major part of American music, he attempted to bring this quality into the concert and opera world (Briggs 56). It appears that many great performers agree with Bernstein. With such names as Jennie Tourel, Roberta Alexander, and Barbra Streisand performing this piece, it has survived its early criticism. During a televised Young People’s Concert, Bernstein explained, “Jazz belongs to everyone...so remember to be serious. You are listening to the authentic roots of a great culture” (Bernstein 128).

“The key to the mystery of a great artist is that for reasons unknown, he will give away his energies and his life just to make sure that one note follows another...and leaves us with the feeling that something is right in the world.”



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## Notes

1. A group of individually complete songs designed as a unit
2. Also known as binary form — where a piece starts with section A, moves to section B and returns to section A.
3. A chromatic scale consists of an ascending or descending line that advances by half-steps.
4. A sustained tone, typically in the bass.
5. In the tonal system, the dominant is the fifth degree of the scale, the triad built upon that degree, or the key that has this triad as its tonic. The dominant scale degree is considered one of the most important pitches of a key, since as the fifth in the tonic triad it is harmonically stable.
6. A cadence, or ending, which comes to rest on the dominant, making it sound seemingly incomplete.
7. The speed or pacing of a composition. Literally the 'time' of a composition.
8. A performance instruction used to denote either a holding of individual notes to their full length or a complete interruption of the meter.
9. The distance between two pitches, or notes.
10. Also known as *12-Tone Technique*. This method of musical composition devised by Arnold Schoenberg ensures that all 12 notes of the chromatic scale are given more or less equal importance, and the music avoids being in a key.
11. A group of three notes to be performed in the time of two of the same kind. Indicated by a figure 3 usually under a slur

12. Homophony is a texture in which two or more parts move together in harmony, the relationship between them creating chords.
13. A series of sharp or flat symbols placed on the staff, designating that notes are to be consistently played one a half-step higher or lower than the equivalent notes unless otherwise notated.
14. For more reading on jazz and its critics see *Blowin' Hot and Cool: Jazz and Its Critics* by John Gennari and *Fascinating Rhythm: Reading Jazz in American Writing* by David Yaffe.

# Discovering Knoxville: A Biography, Analysis, and Study of Cultural Context

● ● ● Alison Brooks

Music is an ever changing art form. As time progresses, music has become increasingly diverse, with many different genres and subgenres. During the twentieth century originality of composition has often been stressed over understanding and coherence of a piece. One composer who did not fit the stereotype of newness brought on by modernism was Samuel Barber. He is often referred to as a neoromantic<sup>1</sup>, but even this term does not fit the full scope of his music. Robert R. Reilly comments on the academic reaction to Barber's music by noting:

Barber gave Romanticism<sup>2</sup> a fresh start with his freedom of expression and melodic and orchestral genius. For this, he became the composer of the twentieth-century members of the avant-garde loved to hate. He was the last thing they needed—a composer who breathed new life into a language they had declared dead (46).

Although critically acclaimed by many of his colleagues, Barber's music spoke for itself as he became one of the most well-known and often played composers of the mid-twentieth century. Barber is especially known for his vocal works because of "his lyricism, along with a great sensitivity to the nuances and accentuation of poetic texts..." (Nicholls 486). *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*<sup>3</sup> illustrates this point. This work has become one of Barber's most famous vocal works. Scored for orchestra and soprano, it provides a glimpse into Barber's mixture of old and new styles and reflects the culture in which Barber was submersed at the time he wrote it. This essay seeks to analyze *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* by investigating the life, compositional style, and cultural environment that surrounded Barber at the time of its composition.

Samuel Barber was born on March 9, 1910 in West Chester, Pennsylvania. He was born into an affluent family, his father being a doctor and the head of the West Chester School Board. Barber's family was a musical one. His maternal aunt was the well known contralto Louise Homer, and his uncle the notable composer of American song, Sidney Homer (Broder, Samuel Barber 10). These two relatives would encourage and support Barber throughout his musical career. At the age of six Barber began to play the piano. This was not encouraged by his parents who would have preferred him to play sports like a "normal boy." By the age of eight Barber had decided to follow the career path of a composer, and wrote the following to his mother, "I was meant to be a composer, and will be, I'm sure...Don't ask me to try and forget this and go and play football, Please!" (Hennessee 3).

At ten years of age Barber had begun composition on his first opera, *The Rose Tree*, which he never finished. During high school he was accepted as a charter student at the up and coming conservatory, the Curtis Institute of Music, during its first year of operation in 1926. Barber remained at the Curtis Institute for eight years and studied with a number of well-known musicians including George Boyle, Isabelle Vengerova (who studied piano with

Leschetizky), Rosario Scalero, and Emilio de Gorgorza. Barber was the first student at the Curtis Institute allowed to major in three areas: piano, voice, and composition (Alcorn 2-3). His studies at the Curtis Institute helped to shape his compositional style and abilities, and the effects are seen throughout his music. While still a student, Barber won a number of awards which allowed him to travel extensively throughout Europe. In 1928 and 1933 Barber won the Bearns award for his compositions. *Overture to The School for Scandal* was one of the works awarded and is a piece still seen in the classical repertoire today (Alcorn 4). In the year 1928 Barber met his soon to be life-long friend Gian-Carlo Menotti at the Curtis Institute. The two collaborated on many works throughout their lives, with Menotti often providing librettos<sup>4</sup> for Barber to set. The two traveled extensively together and until 1974 maintained a home in Mt. Kisco, New York, fondly named Capricorn (Hennessee 4).

In 1933 Barber left the Curtis Institute. During the next few years he attempted both teaching and singing to support himself but found he did not like either. In 1934 the president of the G. Schirmer, Inc. publishing house was introduced to Barber's music, resulting in Barber's first published work *Dover Beach*. G. Schirmer became the exclusive publisher of Barber's music, proving rather lucrative for the company as the composer's popularity began to increase. In the later years of his life Barber "achieved the status of earning enough from his compositions in royalties, performance fees, and commissions for new works and awards, to enable him to devote all his time to composing" (Broder, Samuel Barber 24). This is a claim that can be made by very few American composers of the twentieth century.

In 1935 and 1936 Barber received the Pulitzer traveling scholarship allowing him to travel throughout Europe. While there he received the *Prix de Rome* award from the American Academy in Rome. Barber's career took off when in 1938 the famous conductor Toscanini led the NBC symphony orchestra in a premiere of Barber's *Adagio for Strings* and the *First Essay for Orchestra* (Alcorn 4-5). While serving in the military from 1943 to 1945, Barber found inspiration for a number of works and continued to compose in a wide array of genres. The years after his military service proved to be very successful. Barber wrote many of his most famous works during this time including: *Symphony No. 2*, *The Hermit Songs*, *Violin Concerto*, *Medea Suite*, *Piano Sonata*, and *Vanessa*. *Vanessa*, Barber's first completed opera, eventually won a Pulitzer Prize. He received the Pulitzer again in 1962 for his *Piano Sonata* (Hennessee 6-9).

In 1947 Barber composed what would become one of his most famous vocal pieces, *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*. The text for this composition was taken from a short autobiographical work by author James Agee, whose work had impressed the composer. Barber adhered very closely to Agee's text only cutting short snippets that did not fit the flow of the music. Barber received a commission from Eleanor Steber in February of 1947, after he had begun work on *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*, and therefore continued working on the piece with her in mind. Barber completed this composition on April 4, 1947. The premiere of *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*, which was scheduled for April 9, 1948, happened to coincide with one of Barber's extended stays out of the country. The conductor Serge Koussevitzky was slated to premiere the work with the Boston Symphony Orchestra with Eleanor Steber singing Soprano. Barber asked Koussevitzky if the date could be rearranged. His request was refused and Barber was unable to attend the premiere of the work. He was quite distraught because of the strong connection he felt with this piece, but his spirits were lifted when he learned about the premiere's success from both Menotti and Koussevitzky. Barber eventually went on to re-

score this work for soprano with small orchestra, and soprano with piano (Heyman, Samuel... 428-451).

Due to Barber's talent for composing vocal music and his ever increasing fame, he was commissioned to write an opera for the opening of the new Metropolitan Opera House in Lincoln Center. *Antony and Cleopatra* was premiered September 16, 1966 with Leontyne Price singing the role of Cleopatra (Hennessee 10). This work was not received well, and is now performed very rarely. Despite this set back, Barber continued to compose music in almost all the genres for the next 12 years. His last composition, completed in 1978, is a work entitled *Canzonetta*, written for Oboe and Strings. On January 23, 1981, after a long and successful career full of many accomplishments and cherished memories, Samuel Barber died from cancer at the age of 70 ("Obituary," The Musical Times).

Barber's compositional style is at times difficult to describe. He utilizes characteristics from older styles as well as new and often mixes them within a single piece of music. Nathan Broder in the journal article "The Music of Samuel Barber" talks of Barber's music as encompassing two style periods. Barber's first style period lasts until approximately 1939. His music during this time is more traditional. It is governed by tonality<sup>5</sup>, and the melodic lines are lyrical<sup>6</sup>. The music of Barber's first style period can also be "dramatic and expansive, characterized by broad leaps" (Broder, "The Music..." 326). Even though Barber's earlier works include a tonal center, they often shift between major and minor keys. The music of his first style period normally includes simple melodies and rhythms. Barber's second style period is said to start in the year 1940. During this time his music became more chromatic<sup>7</sup> and angular<sup>8</sup> with many short, disjunct<sup>9</sup> themes. When talking about the expanse of Barber's music and output, Broder writes: "Tonality is no longer the principal determining factor; instead, certain intervals dominate the melodic structure" (Broder, "The Music..." 326). Dissonances<sup>10</sup> become more common and rhythms become more varied and difficult. In the second style period vocal lines are fluid and reflect a free declamation of text<sup>11</sup>, with frequent meter changes being the norm. While Barber did begin to use more modern techniques in his second style period, he only did so when they would not interfere with the clarity and expression of his works (Heyman, "Barber, Samuel" 1). Throughout Barber's two style periods, his feeling for form remained strong. Not all of Barber's works conform to the boundaries of the two style periods. One such work is *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*. This was written during his second style period but at times deliberately reflects on a more traditional writing style. Broder comments on this mixture of old and new by writing, "In the tender and nostalgic *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* Barber returns to traditional key relationships (though not to traditional harmonic textures)...Yet even here seconds<sup>12</sup> and ninths<sup>13</sup> combine to intensify a climactic passage" (Broder, "The Music..." 328). While Barber's music is very distinct, it cannot always be confined to one stylistic genre.

*Knoxville: Summer of 1915* was originally scored for Soprano vocalist and full orchestra. The orchestration included Flute/Piccolo, Oboe/English Horn, Clarinet in A, Bassoon, Horns I/II in F, Trumpet in C, Triangle, Harp, Violin I/II, Viola, Violin Cello, and Bass. This work is mostly homophonic<sup>14</sup>, with the melodic spotlight held firmly by the voice. When the voice is not present, the melody is passed between different instruments and is usually sustained by a solo instrument. The melody of this work shifts between lyric and dramatic in the various sections. This work is a loosely constructed ternary<sup>15</sup> form, the sections divided by the text being sung and the music that accompanies it. The A section includes a calm, quiet, and

lyrical melody, with a rocking accompaniment. The mood changes in the B section where the melody becomes disjointed and dramatic. The C section shows a return to melodic lyricism (Alcorn 26-29). The melodic line is normally three measures long, helping to propel the piece forward, while still allowing it room to expand and contract. The lines often have an ascending and descending arch like motion (see Ex. 1). This serves to reflect the mood of the piece and the text being sung.

The vocal range of the melody is wide, spanning nearly two octaves (from middle C to B-flat over an octave higher). The wide range allows Barber to expand the melody for dramatic purposes, especially in the B and C sections. The melodic lines in this work are almost exclusively diatonic<sup>16</sup>. Increased chromaticism<sup>17</sup> in the melody is seen in the B section. The melody of this piece, for the most part, is very pronounced throughout and becomes a unifying factor in the work as a whole.

Ex. 1, mm. 117-119, "Arching motion of melodic soprano line."

The image displays a musical score for measures 117, 118, and 119. The vocal line is written on a single staff and is highlighted with an orange background. The lyrics are: "From damp strings morn-ing glo - ries hang their an - cient faces." The vocal line shows a wide range of notes, with a prominent arching motion. The instrumental parts include Violins I and II, Viola, Violoncello, and Bass. The Violoncello part includes markings for "pizz." (pizzicato) and "div." (divisi). The Bass part includes markings for "arco" (arco) and "ten." (tenore). The score is written in a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The measures are numbered 117, 118, and 119 at the top. The page number 139 is visible on the right side.

The meter<sup>18</sup> of this work is ever changing, using duple, triple, compound, and irregular. The time signatures<sup>19</sup> fluctuate constantly and include: 4/4, 2/4, 3/4, 5/4, 3/2, 12/8, 9/8, 6/8, 7/8, 15/8. The constantly changing meter provides Barber a flowing, ever changing beat, reflecting the free declamatory style of the sung melodic line. Through ties across the bar line and syncopation<sup>20</sup> Barber weakens the downbeat, creating a feeling of ambiguity and nostalgia. The tempo of this work varies constantly and is often accompanied by a change in mood (see Ex. 2).



Ex. 2, Chart of tempo and mood changes in *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*

Measure Numbers	Tempo included in score by Barber	Relation of Tempo and Mood
mm. 1-5	Adagio ma non troppo	Reminiscent quality, calm, with a steady beat.
mm. 6-40	Andante, un poco mosso	Feeling of rocking on a porch. Strong beats on 1 and 4 of 6/8. Calm and nostalgic feeling.
mm. 41-76	Allegro agitato	Faster moving section. Reminiscent of a busy street corner. Vivid sounds and images are brought to mind.
mm. 77-91	None included	Transitional section which is gradually slowing down, reminiscent of a fading memory.
mm. 92-123	Sempre con moto	Tempo is slower and smoother, with no stressed beat. Feeling of nostalgia.
mm. 124-128	None included	Tempo slows down even more, providing a brief interlude.
mm. 129-182	Allegretto a tempo	Text is again reminiscing about childhood. Strong beat on 1 and 4 of measures subdivided into 8. Tempo is more rubato, molding the mood back and forth.
mm. 183-197	Piu agitato	Includes a strong down beat and is swift. The mood is now agitated.
mm. 198-230	m. 202 marked Meno mosso	Returning to first tempo. Lifting and forward moving, but restrained.
mm. 231-263 (end)	Come prima, un poco mosso	Return to a lilting, walking tempo. Reminiscent mood is rekindled and present to the end.

The tempo of this work resembles an arch form. The outer sections are calm and tranquil, often reflecting nostalgic feelings of childhood with the midsection including active, excited rhythms and tempos. Rhythm in this work is an important facet helping to establish the mood and setting up themes. Triplets and dotted rhythms prevail throughout. In general, the rhythms in this piece are not overly complex yet they help to create forward motion in the melody. At times the rhythm in the melody is contrasted with the rhythm of the instruments in the orchestra. These sections, though brief, add much texture and color to the work as a whole.

The harmony in *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* is completely tertian<sup>21</sup>. Although chromaticism is rather rare, it is utilized in the B section to help accentuate the highly hectic and dramatic mood (see Ex. 3).



Ex. 3, mm. 107-110, "Increased use of chromaticism in the B section."

Fl. 107 108 109 110

Ob.

Cl.

Bn.

Hn. I

Hn. II

Harp

Voice

dew, my father has drained, he has coiled the hose.

More than anything else, this piece is dominated by intervallic relationships. Intervals of a second, third, fourth, and seventh are emphasized throughout this work (Alcorn 20). This was a common trait of Barber's second style period. The frequent use of diminished chords facilitates many modulations<sup>22</sup> to related keys. Barber makes scarce use of strong cadences<sup>23</sup> in this work. A few examples are the weak, deceptive cadence at m. 40; a strong, dramatic cadence at m. 90 and another dramatic cadence in m. 263 ends the work. The harmonic rhythm is most often based on the quarter note, with the only exceptions being mm. 6-40 and mm. 104-124, which utilize the dotted quarter note for the harmonic rhythm<sup>24</sup> (Alcorn 19). The harmony in this work incorporates both old and new styles of composition.

This work is based on traditional tonality, but the major and minor keys are often ambiguous, merging seamlessly into one another. Modulations are often accompanied by a change in mood and/or tempo. Carla Alcorn outlines the constant modulations throughout the piece in her dissertation entitled *Samuel Barber's Knoxville: Summer of 1915: An analysis and performance suggestions*. A chart has been included based on her findings (see Ex. 4).

Ex. 4, Chart of modulations in *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*

Measure Numbers	Tonal Center
mm. 1-5	f# minor
mm. 6-40	A Major and g# minor
mm. 41-102	Various tonal centers, resolves to A Major
mm. 103-124	A Major
mm. 124-128	Chromatic/ transitional
mm. 128-155	F Major
mm. 155-173	A flat Major
mm. 174-182	F Major
mm. 183-201	B flat Major
mm. 202-230	d minor and f# minor
mm. 231-263	A Major

The form of this work is loosely based on a ternary form, with the A section being modified on each return. The A section is characterized by a lilting forward moving quality. The text is often very nostalgic and reminiscent of childhood. A gentle feeling of rocking back and forth is created by upward moving eighth notes in the accompaniment. This is reminiscent of rocking on a porch swing in the summertime. The B section of this work is much more agitated and dramatic. Mechanical noises are heard, such as a car horn in m. 41, reflecting a busy street corner in the middle of the day. The tempo is much quicker at the beginning of this section, and slows down steadily as the text reflects on forgetting (m.90). This creates the effect of a flashbulb memory, one in which you can vividly hear and see what you are remembering slowly fading away into another, less vivid memory. The C section begins by restating an idea that was heard earlier in the work. This section is much more straightforward and has been marked “very simply” by Barber where the text begins, and later is marked “casually” (m. 151). The text talks of family and reminisces about the good times spent together. The text is both narrative and reflective in the C section (Alcorn 27). A form chart for the entire work is as follows (see Ex. 5):

Ex. 5, Form Chart for *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*

Measure Numbers	Section
mm. 1-5	Introduction
mm. 6-40	A
mm. 41-102	B

mm. 103-114	Transition
mm. 114-124	A
mm. 124-128	Transition (includes B material)
mm. 128-201	C
mm. 202-263	A

This piece lasts approximately 15:00 to 17:00 minutes when performed with the original scoring for full orchestra. The text is written in English and paints a nostalgic picture of childhood during the early twentieth century. The text is prose with Barber's setting following precisely Agee's words. There is little repetition of text within the musical work and individual words are rarely repeated (see Ex. 6).

Ex. 6, “Text from *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*”

*...It has become that time of evening when the people sit on their porches, rocking gently and talking gently and watching the street and the standing up into their sphere of possession of the trees, of birds' hung havens, hangers. People go by; things go by. A horse, drawing a buggy, breaking his hollow iron music on the asphalt; a loud auto; a quiet auto; people in pairs, not in a hurry, scuffling, switching their weight of aestival body, talking casually, the taste hovering over them of vanilla, strawberry, pasteboard, and starched milk, the image upon them of lovers and horsemen, squared with clowns in hueless amber.*

*A streetcar raising its iron moan; stopping; belling and starting, stertorous; rousing and raising again its iron increasing moan and swimming its gold windows and straw seats on past and past and past, the bleak spark crackling and cursing above it like a small malignant spirit set to dog its tracks; the iron whine rises on rising speed; still risen, faints; halts; the faint stinging bell; rises again, still fainter; fainting, lifting' lifts' faints foregone: forgotten. Now is the night one blue dew.*

*Now is the night one blue dew, my father has drained, he has coiled the hose.*

*Low on the length of lawns, a frailing of fire who breathes...*

*Parents on porches: rock and rock. From damp strings morning glories  
hang their ancient faces.*

*The dry and exalted noise of the locusts from all the air at once enchants my eardrums.*

*On the rough wet grass of the back yard my father and mother have spread quilts. We all lie there, my mother, my father, my uncle, my aunt, and I too am lying there... They are not talking much, and the talk is quiet, of nothing in particular, of nothing at all in particular, of nothing at all. The stars are wide and alive, they seem each like a smile of great sweetness, and they very near. All my people are larger bodies than mine,... with voices gently and meaningless like the voices of sleeping birds. One is an artist, he is living at home. One is a musician, she is living at home. One is an artist, he is living at home. One is a musician, she is living at home. One is my mother who is good to me. One is my father who is good to me... By some chance, here they are, all on this earth; and who shall ever tell the sorrow of being on this earth, lying, on quilts, on the grass, in a summer evening, among the sounds of the night... May God bless my people, my uncle, my aunt, my mother, my good father, oh, remember them kindly in their time of trouble; and in the hour of their raking away.*

*After a little I am taken in and put to bed. Sleep, soft smiling, draws me unto her: and those receive me, who quietly treat me, as one familiar and well-beloved in that home: but will not, oh, will not, not now, not ever; but will not ever tell me who I am.*

Barber places emphasis on certain words through the use of dynamics<sup>25</sup>, rhythm, and chromaticism. The form of this piece revolves around the words being set as one can see within the different sections. Barber enjoyed setting this text because it was very lyrical and speech like (Heyman, Samuel... 428-451). Considerable examples of word painting can be found throughout this composition, such as in mm. 66-67 on the word “moan” (see Ex. 8).

Ex. 8, mm.66-67, “Word painting seen on the word ‘moan’.”

The image displays a musical score for measures 66 and 67. The top staff is for the Voice, with the word "moan" written below it. The music for the voice is highlighted with an orange background. The lower staves are for the orchestra, including Violins I and II (VI.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vcl.), and Bass. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *f* (forte) and *p* (piano). Specific performance instructions like "arco" (arco), "div." (divisi), and "pizz." (pizzicato) are also present. The measures are numbered 66 and 67 at the top of the staves.

Samuel Barber combined a wide array of compositional elements in his work *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*. Heyman describes this piece by saying, “A reverie of childhood in a small Southern town, on a text by James Agee, it is a palpable evocation of folklore in a quasi-pastoral style, with frequent word-painting, hints of the blues, rich orchestral colour and freely varied metre” (“Barber, Samuel” 1). This piece includes both old and new styles of composition, and does not easily fit into the typical compositions of Barber’s second style period. The simple beauty that this piece bears allows one to see why it has remained popular for almost sixty years.

There is much speculation as to why Samuel Barber wrote *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*. In her doctoral dissertation, Barbara B. Heyman investigates the origins of Barber’s work through personal statements made by Barber himself in a number of different media. The results of this research offer many insights into the origins and reasoning behind *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*.

Upon the completion of this work both Barber’s father and aunt, Louise Homer, were gravely ill. Barber wrote to his uncle Sidney Homer about the circumstances surrounding this work and gave insight into why he decided to write it. “We have been through some difficult times in West Chester...It [James Agee’s text] reminded me so much of summer evenings in West Chester, now very far away, and all of you are in it!” (Heyman, [Samuel Barber](#) 428).

Barber seems to have been drawn to this text because it reminded him of his own childhood memories which he would have been dwelling on because of the impending deaths of his father and aunt, both to whom he was especially close. Barber later commented upon this text in an interview by saying, “...This prose poem particularly struck me because the summer evening he describes in his native southern town reminded me so much of similar evenings when I was a child at home” (Heyman, [Samuel Barber](#) 429). Agee’s prose also would have appealed to Barber because of its strong emphasis on family. Throughout his life Barber maintained a close relationship with many members of his family. In mm. 137-146 the text, “On the wet grass of the back yard my father and mother have spread quilts. We all lie there, my mother, my father, my uncle, my aunt, and I too am lying there,” clearly shows an affinity for family ties. Barber, who was going through so much personal turmoil at the time, would have found peace in the memories that this text brought. Another section of text (mm. 204-218), “May God bless my people, my uncle, my aunt, my mother, my good father, oh, remember them kindly in their time of trouble and in the hour of their taking away,” is accompanied by direction in the score that it is to be performed “with intensity and deep feeling.” This section is the climax of both Agee’s prose and Barber’s musical setting. Barber broadens the music in this section, placing special emphasis on each of the different people being named in the score. Barber places even more emphasis upon the text “my good father” by lengthening the notes and thinning the accompaniment texture. At this point it is apparent that Barber is grieving for impending family deaths but also celebrating each individual. In m. 218, which ends this section of text, Barber suddenly modulates on the words “in the hour of their taking away.” By modulating Barber once again emphasizes the changes that are taking place within his family and the negative effects they are having upon him, his mother, and his uncle. He may also be showing these family members being taken to another spiritual realm at the time of their deaths. Barber’s anguish over the inevitable loss of his father is obvious in this piece, and the compositional process may have been a way for him to cope with this loss.

While investigating this work, some peculiar similarities between Barber and James

Agee appear. Barber and Agee did not meet, or even correspond, until after *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* was completed. Upon meeting one another, they found that there were many similarities between their lives. Barber commented upon these coincidences, by saying:

...I found out, after setting this, that Mr. Agee and I are the same age, and the year he described was 1915 when we were both five. You see, it expresses a child's feeling of loneliness, wonder, and lack of identity in that marginal world between twilight and sleep... (Heyman, [Samuel Barber](#) 429).

Barber brings up the fact that this text is supposed to be written from the viewpoint of a child. He personally relates to the feelings of "loneliness, wonder, and lack of identity" that surrounded this piece. When a child experiences the death of a parent, it can often seem as though an actual piece of one's being is wrenched from within. Barber would be able to identify with the child telling this story for this exact reason: that his father was dying. In response to this quote from Barber, Heyman writes, "The intensity of Barber's identification with Agee's reverie coincided with Roy Barber's impending death and may be the reason he dedicated *Knoxville* to his father" (Heyman, [Samuel Barber](#) 430).

Barber commented upon the similarities between himself and Agee once again in 1980:

We both had back yards where our families used to lie in the long summer evenings, we each had an aunt who was a musician. I remember well my parents sitting on the porch, talking quietly as they rocked. And there was a trolley car with straw seats and a clanging bell called "The Dinky" that traveled up and down the main street (Heyman, [Samuel Barber](#) 429).

These similarities may seem to be superficial, but when looking back at childhood, they become very important. Everything is intensified in memories of childhood, even the rocking of people upon their porches. Things that would otherwise seem meaningless take on significance. Other similarities that Barber and Agee shared are discussed by Carla Alcorn. Both men were introduced and encouraged to pursue the arts by their mother's side of the family. Both were from prosperous families and attended esteemed schools of higher learning. Both received formal training in their fields (15-16). Agee's inspiration for his text was the death of his father when he was six years of age. Agee wrote extensively about his father in his works, believing his father's death, "...was the pivot around which ...his [Agee's] life evolved" (Aiken 150). Agee was very exact in his descriptions of *Knoxville*, making his writing walk right off of the page. The similarities between Barber and Agee cannot be overlooked. Although they did not know one another before this work was written, they shared common backgrounds and common emotional ground on which they both tread. This, obviously, would have been another reason why Barber chose to set this text. He could relate personally to it, therefore it appealed to him.

*Knoxville: Summer of 1915* is one of Samuel Barber's most influential vocal works. The motives behind this work are not completely known but can be deduced from the circumstances surrounding Barber at the time of its completion. Barber was drawn to the prose of James Agee because it reminded him of his own childhood. The similarities between Barber's and Agee's lives are many, and explain why Barber was so drawn to Agee's prose. He also



set this text because it reflected the emotional turmoil which he was experiencing due to his father's illness. By writing this composition, Barber found an outlet which let him express his anguish and love towards his father and aunt, an outlet that would transcend the hurt and the years that were to follow.

This piece was written soon after the end of WWII. Families were being reunited as men returned from war. This led to a greater emphasis upon family values in American culture. The themes within this musical work resonated with people because of the emphasis on family and "the good old days." This composition is still valued today for many of the same reasons. One can see with all of the personal investment put into this work why it has remained successful for over sixty years. One would hope this piece of noble proportions will continue its journey for another sixty years and by doing so touch the hearts of many in the process. That is what Samuel Barber would have wanted.

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## Notes

1. "A term loosely applied in the 1980's to a style of composition that is reminiscent of nineteenth-century romanticism in emphasizing emotional expressiveness rather than strictly rational formalism..." (Ammer 260).
2. "The chief characteristic of romanticism in music...is emphasis on feeling, both very personal emotions and larger ones, such as love for one's country" (Ammer 362).
3. *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* can be heard by following these steps:
  - 1) Access the [www.otterbein.edu](http://www.otterbein.edu) website
  - 2) Click on "Links for the OC Campus" drop-down menu and choose library
  - 3) Click on "Find Articles and more" and choose "Research Databases—by subject"
  - 4) Click on Music
  - 5) Click on "Classical Music Library"
  - 6) Type Knoxville into the search engine and click go
  - 7) Click on Play and enjoy listening to the piece!
4. "The text to which an opera or oratorio is set" (Ammer 215).
5. "The use of a central note, called the tonic, around which the other tonal material of the composition—the notes, intervals, and chords—is built and to which the music returns for a sense of rest and finality" (Ammer 445).
6. A lyrical melodic line is one which is songlike and easily remembered.
7. "Pertaining to or containing notes not belonging to a given major or minor key" (Ammer 78).
8. Music that is angular does not follow traditional rules of composition, and is more strident in sound.
9. A disjunct theme involves large leaps between notes, and is not songlike.
10. "A musical interval that sounds harsh or unpleasant" (Ammer 109).
11. Text is speech like and free flowing.
12. "The interval made up of the first and second tones (in rising order of pitches) in any major or minor scale, for example, C—D in the scale of C major..." (Ammer 379).
13. "The interval of an octave plus a second" (Ammer 262). For example, C and the D over an octave above in the key of C major.
14. "Music in which one voice-part, carrying the melody, is supported by chords in the other voice-parts carrying melodies of equal importance" (Ammer 183).

15. "A basic musical form, consisting of three sections, ABA, the third section being virtually identical to the first" (Ammer 437).
16. "Pertaining to or containing the notes that make up a particular major or minor scale" (Ammer 107).
17. "The use of chromatic notes...The use of chromatic harmony" (Ammer 78).
18. "The arrangement of beats (units used to measure musical time) into measures, groups of equal size (time values) and with regularly recurring accents" (Ammer 242).
19. "A sign consisting of two numbers, one placed above the other, that indicate the meter of a musical composition or section" (Ammer 441).
20. "An effect of uneven rhythm that results from changing the normal pattern of accents and beats" (Ammer 423).
21. Tertian harmony is made up of intervals of a major or minor third, which form chords.
22. "Changing from one key to another within a composition or a section of a composition" (Ammer 247).
23. "The series of notes or chords that ends a melody or a section, giving the listener a sense of partial or complete finality" (Ammer 57).
24. "The pattern of changes in harmony in a composition or section" (Ammer 173). Also associated with how frequently the underlying chords in the harmony change throughout the composition.
25. "The gradations of loudness or softness with which music is performed" (Ammer 118).



**Fukuyama, Francis. *America at the Crossroads: Democracy, Power, and the Neoconservative Legacy*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006. 264 pp.**

● ● ● *Cassi Smith*

In light of this current presidential administration, criticism has become easy. This criticism is easy when it is so obvious to the American public that the Iraq war has become a major blunder, if not a historical mistake on account of Bush and company. The connections between Iraq and Al Quida were small, there were no weapons of mass destruction, and Operation Iraqi Freedom is taking longer and is more costly in American life than previously expected. When things are going obviously wrong, it is easy for the media to criticize and the American people follow suit.

When it became apparent that September 11 was an excuse for America's leaders to act on an Iraq invasion plan that has existed long before Bush's election, it became easy to criticize neoconservatives as a whole for a plan only a few drafted. The media defined neoconservatives as those within the American conservatism that sought it as America's moral duty to enact democratic government around the world, with little regard to international organizations. Therefore with all the easily criticized ideas that the Iraq war has produced it has become easy to criticize neoconservatives without any knowledge of what neoconservatism entails. In fact, neoconservatism contains its own Iraqi war and Bush administration dissenters.

Former neoconservative, Francis Fukuyama's book, *America at the Crossroads: Democracy, Power, and the Neoconservative Legacy*, provides a history and a definition of neoconservatism as well as a critique of the Bush administration's meddling in Iraq.

According to Fukuyama, the beginnings of neoconservatism came in the 1930s out of anti-communist reaction to the Soviet Union, these first neoconservatives were from both sides of the aisle, and current conservatism has recently taken up neoconservative ideas. Fukuyama seems to characterize neoconservatives as individuals with varying ideas, but have four main principles in common: "that the internal character of regimes matters and that foreign policy must reflect the deepest values of liberal democratic societies," "American power has been and could be used for moral purposes, and that the United States needs to remain engaged in international affairs," "a distrust of ambitious social engineering projects," and "skepticism about the legitimacy and effectiveness of international law and institutions to achieve either security or justice" (48-49). While the ideas perpetuated in *The Weekly Standard*, or *The National Interest* may differ to some extent, these four characteristics make up neoconservatives, or at least used to.

These four characteristics are much more viable and less extreme than the common perception of neoconservatives as a group of right wing extremists who create democracy across the globe by violating the sovereignty of other countries in the name of just moral purposes. In fact, this perception is a new concept perpetuated by neoconservative William Kristol and Robert Kagan in the late 1990s' issues of *The Weekly Standard*. Fukuyama explains, "The Kristol-Kagan effort to redefine neoconservatism in this fashion has been immensely successful, insofar as most people around the world now perceive it this way; such people will not be persuaded to change their minds regardless of the facts about the diverse views of

actual neoconservatives” (40). While politically minded Americans may see neoconservatives as Bush and Iraqi war supporters, Fukuyama strays from this stereotype.

The second portion of *America at the Crossroads* contains Fukuyama’s critique of the Bush administration’s dealing with the Iraq war. He believes that the threat that Saddam Hussein posed was exaggerated and America took a high risk chance when it decided to add a new dimension to foreign policy: preemptive strike. Fukuyama explains that preemptive action has always been a possibility in American foreign policy, but Bush’s *National Security Strategy of the United States* takes this concept a step further than previous administrations. “Preemption is usually understood to be an effort to break up an imminent military attack; preventive war is a military operation designed to head off a threat that is months or years away from materializing” (83). Changing the national security strategy was not the eminent mistake the Presidency made, the reasoning behind the Iraq war was the historical mistake. “The problem with NSS doctrine was that in order to justify stretching the definition of preemption to include preventive war against nonimminent threats, the administration needed to be right about the dangers facing the United States. As it turned out, it overestimated the threat from Iraq specifically, and from nuclear terrorism more generally” (84). Throughout his critique of the Bush administration Fukuyama points to the *National Security Strategy of the United States* as the basis for his negative opinion about Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The second major mishandling of the war Fukuyama focuses on is the rebuilding process. This was another facet of the Iraq war that was not fully thought through before invading because as neoconservatives see democracy promotion as the American moral duty, they distrust ambitious social programs.

It is the area of political and economic development that two important neoconservative principles potentially collide. On the one hand, neoconservatives rightly believe that internal character of regime is important: liberal democracies tend to respect the basic human right of their citizens and are less externally aggressive than dictatorships...On the other hand, another strand of neoconservative thought has emphasized the dangers of overly ambitious social engineering (114).

So once democracy is promoted by military force in places such as Iraq there is no set of social plans to get democracy stabilized and an economy started.

Fukuyama suggests that America should invest more organization into soft power that promotes democracy through social engineering and development rather than military forces that focus only on regime change. “Foreign policy has revolved around activities like fighting wars, balancing threats, or negotiating agreements. Development has always come as an afterthought, a kind of mop-up activity pursued when the ‘serious’ players left the stage” (139). Fukuyama’s major idea seems to lay in his analysis of America’s role as a force that promotes democracy through military force. His major suggestion is to develop more programs within foreign policy that help countries develop socially, not only militarily.

*America at the Crossroads* is a worthwhile read for anyone who hates neoconservatives or the hard headed military force that America seems content on using. Fukuyama provides a fresh look at what neoconservatism used to be and what it has become; he then dismantles President Bush’s administration’s reasoning behind Iraq and view of American military might. The foreign policy changes Fukuyama suggests are worthwhile ideas that hopefully future generations will employ to nations finding themselves in need of social change.



**Whites, LeeAnn. *Gender Matters: Civil War, Reconstruction, and the Making of the New South.***  
New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. 256 pp.

● ● ● *Megan Hatfield*

In her book *Gender Matters: Civil War, Reconstruction, and the Making of the New South*, LeeAnn Whites examines the role that gender played in the events of the South in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Her thesis is quite simple: gender mattered. While this seems like a simple and obvious assertion, she is actually arguing against traditional scholarship in that area of study which has essentially held that gender was not important in the South because issues of race and class were privileged above one's gender status. This rendered gender "invisible" on the level of the individual, and therefore, had no real or significant impact on that society. Whites points out that while that is in part true, scholars have defined gender too narrowly by restricting it to the ideological and individual level. Instead, she explains that gender needs to be understood as a relational matter between men and their dependent women; thus, tying gender to the larger workings of the social structure. With this definition, it is possible to examine the events of the 19<sup>th</sup> century South in a new light revealing that not only did gender matter in shaping those events, but it actually played a central role in them. Basically, she is saying that by not understanding the role that gender played in the social structure of the South, historians are not able to fully understand the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the making of the New South.

The book is a compilation of essays written by Whites. She divides the book into two parts: the first part focuses on the Civil War and Reconstruction, and the second part focuses on the making of the New South. In the first four essays Whites argues that the Civil War "turned the household inside out, laid bare to public view and public significance the role of gender in the social order" (6). She shows that the Civil War was fought by the men in the South in order to preserve their standing in the social order as the heads of their households which rested on their ability to keep slaves and their women dependent. However, the war itself destabilized the structure of the household offering all of the dependents the opportunity and necessity to enter the public realm and to become socially visible. Typically, it seems like a wonderful opportunity—finally Southern women could achieve some independence, but in reality, Whites argues that that was far from what they wanted. Independence was at odds with traditional conceptions of femininity. Significantly, while women were taking charge on the home front, Southern men were experiencing a major crisis in gender as their role as the head of the household—their masculinity itself was deteriorating as the war was lost. By losing the war, the Southern white man lost his position in society since he was no longer the master of slaves, and less able to protect his wife. The final two essays in the first part specifically examine the role gender played in Reconstruction focusing on how the South attempted to "turn back the clock" by having gender return back in invisibility. Whites shows how the Southern white women simply wanted to reconstruct Southern white manhood and return to the time when women were protected by men and confined to the household. To do this, the Southern white women formed associations that were dedicated to memorializing the men who fought in the war.

The second part of book examines the role of industrialization in the making of the New South. Whites argues that Southerners were dedicated to preserving the social hierarchies that persisted before the Civil War and Reconstruction. This meant that not only were blacks supposed to stay at the bottom of the social hierarchy, but also, that women were supposed to be socially invisible. While both white women and white men saw this as the desired ideal, the effects of industrialization threatened to undermine this social order more permanently. In the first two essays of this part, Whites studies the rise of the textile industry and it's affect on the household. She shows that the textile mills primarily employed and exploited the labor of women and children. Meanwhile, men were not doing their fair share of work and only perpetuating the problems of the working class by participating in a capitalist market system that worked against their interests. As a result, this virtually inverted the household structure as women were the workers and unable to maintain the household properly, while men were unable to protect their wives. The final three essays of the book investigate the politics and views of Rebecca Latimer Felton. Felton was one of the most prominent advocates of women's rights in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and she was also strongly committed to preserving the racial and social hierarchies that existed before the war. In essence, Felton perfectly illustrates Whites' point that gender mattered in the events of the South because Felton recognized that gender was used as a systemic social construct and that gender played a significant role in the major events of their time.

In summation, LeeAnn Whites is successful in showing that gender did indeed matter in the 19<sup>th</sup> century South. By understanding gender as a relational matter that impacted the social structure she has contributed a new viewpoint and method of investigation to the area of gender studies in that time. Although I recognize the validity of her work and the strength each individual essay, I did not like the way the book was structured. The nature of the book as a compilation of essays means that each essay is able to stand on its own apart from the book and have its own argument. As a result, the last four chapters or essays felt like they repeated much of the same information because they dealt with the same person, Rebecca Latimer Felton. Additionally, the essay structure meant that she relied heavily on case studies. Most of the first part was centered on case studies from St. Louis, Missouri—an area she specifically chose to study because of its particular situation as a border state and thus, a heavily contested area during the Civil War. While this certainly makes it interesting to study, the uniqueness of those circumstances makes it difficult to discern if her conclusions are applicable to the South more generally. In general, the essay structure just made it difficult to follow her overarching argument, but the benefit of this structure is that this book can be used specifically for an individual essay, or it can be read as an entire book. Overall, it was a well written, interesting, and significant contribution to the field of gender studies and social history that I would recommend to anyone interested in 19<sup>th</sup> century American history and/or gender issues in that era.



**Gilbert, Elizabeth. *The Last American Man*. New York: Penguin Group, 2005. 288 pp.**

● ● ● *Meghan Johnson*

In *The Last American Man*, Elizabeth Gilbert invites readers into the life of Eustace Conway, a man whose mission in life is to return to nature. Not only is this a goal for himself, but Eustace also desires all people to make an effort to connect with nature and live a more simple lifestyle. Gilbert's illustration of Eustace Conway became a National Book Awards finalist and was also a *New York Times* Notable Book.

Gilbert explains the timeline of Eustace's life: where he grew up, the differing styles in which his mother and father raised him, and the steps he took to achieve his current lifestyle.

It didn't take long for Eustace to realize that in order to live a simple life, he needed to preserve his own piece of wilderness. Growing up, he would familiarize himself with nature in the woods surrounding his home in North Carolina, when those woodlands were developed to provide more and more homes for people requiring more and more conveniences and distance from nature, he knew he needed to own his own land and save it from development and urban sprawl. This desire led him to acquire more than 50,000 acres in North Carolina which he calls Turtle Island.

Turtle Island serves as more than just Eustace's home and a nature preserve; he wanted it to be "the setting of a colossal utopian experiment in which he would try to do nothing less than change and save America." (95) He has had groups of children and adults visit Turtle Island to experience nature and he even runs an apprenticeship program through the compound. People apply to "shadow" Eustace and learn to live off the land and be more nature-savvy individuals. Unfortunately, no one has been able to complete the entire program and usually ends up leaving due to the heavy work load or because they just cannot deal with Eustace's impersonal and demanding personality. Eustace has such great plans and goals for himself and society but unfortunately he lacks the interpersonal communication skills to accomplish all that he has set out to do.

Eustace's main argument against modern society is that we are too absorbed in the conveniences and not in the basics such as nature and life itself. He differentiates his lifestyle from that of the typical modern American in that he lives

in nature, where everything is connected, circular...The ancient people understood that our world is a circle, but we modern people have lost sight of that. I don't live inside buildings, because buildings are dead places where nothing grows, where water doesn't flow, and where life stops. I don't want to live in a dead place. People say that I don't live in the real world, but it's modern Americans who live in a fake world, because they've stepped outside the natural circle of life. (18)

This is an interesting perspective for how technology and other modern conveniences and



comforts have detached humans from nature and the land.

During the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, boys going west and becoming pioneers served as their transition into manhood, but in 1890, new came from the “Census Department that the American frontier was suddenly and officially closed.” (7) When there was no longer a Western Frontier of which to conquer, being a pioneer was no longer a literal concept and transitioned into a popular metaphor. Gilbert points out that many phrases are reminiscent of our nation’s Western Frontier days: describing an entrepreneur as a “pioneer” or “cowboy,” or referring to people beginning something new as “staking their claim.” Society has replaced nature with business and economics and kept the same mentality. (123)

From his experiences with children during visits to Turtle Island or school presentations, Eustace has become concerned with the mental and emotional state of America’s children. He feels that “children are now less than human” because they are so focused on material things and conformity.(137) To fight this trend, he has gone to extremes to get children to really experience nature and return to the mentality of children before the “closing of the frontier,” one example being actually having children lay on their backs in trenches on the forest floor and leaving only their faces exposed, so that they become one with the surroundings.

It’s fitting that Gilbert gives Eustace Conway the title of the “Last American Man” because he seems to be the only known person actively pursuing the lifestyle upon which so many Americans believe our nation was founded upon. Gilbert claims that “he is our mythical inner self, made flesh.”(126) He is able to live in a way that most of us respect and are amazed by, but at the same time think “*I could never do that,*” or maybe it’s that we don’t want to, or are afraid to.

It’s this thought that Eustace wants to eradicate. He believes that through mindfulness, “showing up for one’s own life,” we can return to the “mythical” idea of American pioneer lifestyle and mindset. His advice? “Don’t pass your days in a stupor, content to swallow whatever watery ideas modern society may bottle-feed you through the media, satisfied to slumber through life in an instant-gratification sugar coma. The most extraordinary gift you’ve been given is your own humanity, which is about consciousness.”(258) Eustace’s philosophy really gets the reader to reflect on their own lifestyle and just how far removed from nature and the “basics” they really are.

Perhaps his expectations of society are a little extreme and unrealistic. Not everyone will quit their job and leave the city to live in the woods in a teepee. That would be Eustace’s ideal. However, re-familiarizing the youth of America with nature, promoting less conformity within society, saying “no” to unnecessary luxuries, and eliminating the “I can’t” mentality would do wonders to save the mythical “American Man” from extinction.



**Brooks, Geraldine. *March*.** New York: Penguin Group, 2005. 304 pp.

● ● ● *Larsa Ramsini*

In her most recently published novel, *March*, Geraldine Brooks tells the story of the absent father, Mr. March, from Louisa May Alcott's classic *Little Women*. It is the story of a passionate, idealistic minister during the Civil War confronted with cold reality, religious hypocrisy, challenges to his strongest beliefs, as well as his cowardice and the seemingly unbearable guilt that results.

March believes he is fighting for a great cause and will be able to do much good for his country and fellow man; but the road is bumpy right from the start. It is during this time that he realizes why "simple men have always had their gods dwell in the high places. For as soon as a man lets his eye drop from the heavens to the horizon, he risks setting it on some scene of desolation" (4). The war brings him to an understanding of the sharp contrast between his views of an ideal world, and the reality in which he and the rest of mankind are trapped. He recognizes the times when one needs to be realistic in one's dealings with the world, especially when it is an issue of life or death. In speaking to the youth ready to go off to battle, March refers to the scriptures in saying that they must know *why* they are going to war, and what they are fighting against. But he feels the "essential emptiness" of his words as he recognizes that "action, now, was all that mattered" (182). The war has come, according to March, because one group of people has a great ideal that it wants to see realized; and in order to win, they cannot give up on this ideal. Despite everything he has seen and gone through, March still yearns for a better future and believes it is possible through courage and determination. But March knows how important the end goal is, and truly believes that the ideal is possible, even if the reality of achieving it is monstrous. So paradoxically, in order to work toward the idealistic goal of equality, one needs to be realistic in action. In the words of his wife, March is one of the "few dreamers" who believe that one can "build a nation upon ideas such as liberty and equality" (216).

The theme of the hypocrisy of religion in this novel runs along the same lines as the idealistic versus realistic view of the world, because ideally, Christianity is meant to be one thing, but when people maintain views that appear utterly opposing to Christian doctrine, this religion turns into something completely different. This novel frequently regresses back to March's past so the reader can further understand his feelings and experiences during the war. When March intervenes in a Bible study that is going on inside a church, and asks why the money they are about to use to send the scriptures to Africa cannot be better spent by freeing the human beings being sold into slavery right outside its doors, he is rebuked with cold hostility and asked to leave. Afterward, March wonders "how the scene might have gone if the pastor had led his people of faith out from that little church to stand in that square with their Bibles raised in protest;" that is, if their Bibles were used for purposes for which they were intended, instead of being blind to reality (44). If religion is intended to help people in this

world, then people who claiming to be religious cannot ignore everything around them; they have to recognize what is really important. According to March, religion isn't doing what it's supposed to do if it is not helping as many people as it can. When religious institutions overlook people in this world, they are too focused on the ideal that they don't see how they can *use* reality to move closer towards that ideal goal, because they are *absolutely certain* that what they are doing is right.

One of the most valuable pieces of knowledge March gains during the war is the realization that he really does not have very much at all. He has been a man of strong moral convictions, but through the war he realizes that everything is not black and white. Before going to war, March invests, and subsequently loses, all of his savings to a man named John Brown's endeavors for the Underground Railroad. After "Brown proclaimed that he had *no doubt* it would be right, in opposing slavery, not only to accept a violent death, but also to kill," March cringes (120). He claims to have believed back then that "if there is one class of person [he has] never quite trusted, it is a man who knows no doubt" (120). If he truly believes this before the war, then after the war he knows how much doubt *really is* inevitable for a human being living in this world. To address one of his realizations, in one of his letters home to Marmee and his daughters, he writes of how surprised he is at how intelligent the black children are, even though they have never learned to read or write; beforehand, he always judged "a man's mind" by "how lettered" he was (135). This is certainly a small trifling of knowledge that March gains, but it is the seemingly insignificant instances like these, as well as the obvious doubts that result from seeing bloodshed all around, that drive March to doubt almost everything he thought he had right. As he sits alone, away from his family, he thinks to himself:

"And now, a year has passed since I undertook to go to war, and I wake every day, sweating, in the solitude of the seed store at Oak Landing, to a condition of uncertainty. More than months, more than miles, now stand between me and that passionate orator perched on his tree-stump pulpit. One day, I hope to go back. To my wife, to my girls, but also to the man of moral certainty that I was that day; that innocent man, who knew with such clear confidence exactly what it was that he was meant to do" (184).

It is easier to be ignorant of reality and the terrible atrocities committed in this world than it is to own up to them and form beliefs that take reality into consideration. If March is to be an effective preacher to his community, it is imperative that he be able to tell his parishioners how to deal with the seemingly hopeless reality of the world while at the same time maintaining their foundational convictions. What March doesn't know when he makes that comment about John Brown is that he is commenting on just the type of person he is at that time. March may have had a few doubts about his beliefs, but nothing as grand or profound as the doubts that arise out of his most recent experiences. By going through this war, he will now be able to help people develop even more by showing doubt to be almost, if not as most, admirable as conviction itself. It is through doubt and experience that March will continue to learn and build his faith even further. What will now be difficult for him will be to live up to the new standards he sets for himself.

While at war, March gives a brief commentary on, in his view, the surprisingly close proximity of courage and cowardice on the entire spectrum of behavior:

“Are there any two words in all of the English language more closely twinned than *courage* and *cowardice*? I do not think there is a man alive who will not yearn to possess the former and dread to be accused of the latter. One is held to be the apogee of man’s character, the other its nadir. And yet, to me, the two sit side by side on the circle of life, removed from each other by the merest degree of arc. Who is the brave man—he who feels no fear? If so, then bravery is but a polite term for a mind devoid of rationality and imagination. The brave man, the real hero, quakes with terror, sweats, feels his very bowels betray him, and in spite of this moves forward to do the act he dreads. And yet I do not think it heroic to march into fields of fire, whipped on one’s way only by fear of being called craven. Sometimes, true courage requires inaction; that one sit at home while war rages, if by doing so one satisfies the quiet voice of honorable conscience” (168).

March doesn’t feel as if he lives up to this conception of courage after leaving a man to drown in a river and ignoring the Confederate who threatens to kill an old slave if March does not come out from hiding. As he speaks with his wife Marmee about this in the hospital, he cannot cease dwelling over his cowardice, and his stubbornness tells him he needs to stay in the war and make up for the pain he had caused. But it is not only March who lacks the courage necessary to complete the tasks he endeavors to finish. Courage is shown in a different light with Marmee, who cannot manage to tell her husband to stay home in the very beginning, that what he is doing at his age is ridiculous. But the difference between them is that she is able to forgive herself and see the positive in the situation, whereas without this faith from his wife, March would have gone back to the war as a man set on making amends for his failures. When Marmee finally gets through to him and he realizes his duty to his family, he returns home, thinking that “truly, walking up that path was an act of courage greater than any asked of [him] at war” (271). According to March, it takes much more strength to face and own up to another about the mistakes one has made than it does to do the right thing in the first place. What March needs to learn, and what he certainly hasn’t learned even at the end of the war, is how to forgive himself and to accept his best efforts as outcome enough.

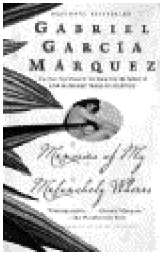
March goes into the war thinking that he is going to help multitudes of people, but is overwhelmed with guilt at having behaved so cowardly. March’s problem is that since he is a man of God, he thinks he needs to be infallible. When he does make mistakes, he is unable to forgive himself because his standards for courage are realistically unattainable. Marmee hits the issue right on when she tells him:

“‘it is not enough for you to be accounted commonly courageous. Oh no: you must be a Titan. You must carry all the wounded off the field. You must not only try to save a man, you must succeed at it, and when you can’t, you heap ashes on your head as if all the blame were yours—none to spare for the generals who blundered you into that battle, or the stretcher bearers, who also fled for their lives; or for Stone’s own panic, or for the fact that he never troubled to learn to swim, not even a modicum of blame for the man who shot him...You did not kill Silas Stone, or Zannah’s

child. The war killed both of them. You must accept that''' (258).

March loathes himself for valuing his principles of not killing anyone over lives of the innocent. In his mind, the outcome is the only thing that matters. But even through all of his wife's coaxing, she still cannot convince him that he is still the same honorable man he was before entering the war. As he spends time with his family following his departure from the war, he is constantly reminded of the hurt he has caused and decides that, "this was how it was to be, now: [he] would do [his] best to live in the quick world, but the ghosts of the dead would ever be at hand" (273). Brooks uses the word "decides" at the very end of the novel to emphasize the point that how we view things in this world is up to us. We can choose to dwell in our past and never forgive ourselves for our transgressions, or we can learn from them and move on.

As is evident, none of the themes mentioned here seem to shed any new light on the hardships and trials of war that we haven't already seen and heard before. The novel is extremely well written with a good use of vivid imagery and frequent flashbacks to make the reader really feel involved, and Brooks does a fine job of depicting what one man goes through as representative of the problems most soldiers probably face. But if the reader is looking for a new glimpse of light in an old story, this probably isn't a good place to look. I would recommend the novel to a younger, more inexperienced reader that is just being introduced to these ideas, but not to the critical reader looking to be challenged.



**Marquez, Gabriel Garcia. *Memories of My Melancholy Whores*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005.**

115 pp.

● ● ● Shannon Bauchert

Gabriel Garcia Marquez in his new novel, *Memories of My Melancholy Whores* presents a story that is a tantalizing pleasure to read, yet at the same time, somewhat unsettling to digest. In this unusual love story, the reader is introduced to the novel's unnamed narrator—a somewhat reclusive man who has recently turned ninety years old. From the very beginning, the reader discovers the narrator's most coveted wish: to engage in sexual relations with an adolescent virgin, an act which he hopes to perform as a birthday present to himself. As it soon turns out, the narrator is soon granted his wish by an old brothel owner and friend, Rose Cabarcas. The remainder of the novel focuses on the narrator's growing obsession with the young girl and describes the details of his utter infatuation with her silent presence.

The virgin whom Rose Cabarcas supplies the narrator with is a poor girl. She lives with her crippled mother and is forced to take care of her brothers and sisters on a petty salary she receives by sewing buttons in a clothing factory. When the narrator first meets the young girl in one of the rooms at Rose Cabarcas' brothel, she is asleep, having been drugged by Cabarcas in order to assuage her fear of losing her virginity. Throughout the course of the novel, the young girl is always sleeping during the narrator's visits. Even though the narrator's initial intention was to sleep with the girl, he never wakes her, but instead studies her while she sleeps. His only physical contact with her body is the nearness of his own while he sleeps beside her. Yet, slowly, he becomes fixated by the mute girl to the point that he believes he has fallen in love with her.

The love the narrator describes for this young girl whose real name is never mentioned (though he refers to her as Delgadina) is intense and poignant. Despite the fact that she is a child and he has never communicated with her, but merely gazed upon her speechless form, may appear disturbing to many readers, but Gabriel Garcia Marquez illustrates the narrator's feelings for the young virgin in such a way that his love for her appears genuine and heartfelt. For instance, the narrator at one point expresses his love for his, "Delgadina," with the following words: "...I sailed on my love for Delgadina with an intensity and happiness I had never known in my former life. Thanks to her I confronted my inner self for the first time as my ninetieth year went by" (65). Though the narrator's love is upsetting in the sense that the object of his affection is clearly an inexperienced child, at the same time, the message the novel sends is daring: for it speaks on behalf of a love that is forbidden. In fact, it speaks on behalf of pedophilia. In spite of this, Marquez portrays the narrator in such a way that the reader can sympathize with his emotions. He is someone who is worth trying to understand. He is someone to pity.

It is hard to feel any sort of animosity toward the narrator because of how he describes his lifestyle and because of how he describes himself. He considers himself to be, "ugly, shy, and anachronistic." Over all, he has a very low opinion of himself. He lives alone

except for Damiana, his loyal servant who occasionally comes around to clean his house and makes sure he is still breathing. Besides Damiana, he has no one. He never married and is without children. In addition to this, he has never even had a lover that lasted any significant amount of time. At one point he even claims that he has never participated in sexual relations with a woman in which he did not pay for. The narrator considers himself to be an outsider and the only social interaction he appears to have is through a small writing job with a local newspaper who he has written a column for fifty years. In any case, he expresses little happiness even with his writing. He feels disappointed that he cannot express the sentiments and thoughts he truly wishes to express because his editor believes no one wants to hear them. He wants to discuss the topics in his writing that are important to him, but is frustrated that the readers of his column are merely interested in the fact that he is old. The narrator is feels disillusioned by his age. By describing all these characteristics of the narrator, Marquez has created a character that any reader would feel sorry for. The reader truly finds himself hoping that something will occur to take away the narrator's incessant loneliness.

*Memories of My Melancholy Whores* is really about two things. It is a love story in the sense that an old man falls in love with the idea of a pure young girl, who he is never touched, yet remains enchanted by her very essence. However, it is also about a man dealing with the inevitability that he must grow old and die. Marquez's blending of an old man who has experienced many different sexual encounters with a young, untainted girl appears to convey a message about age. In a way perhaps what Marquez's is trying to communicate is that such a relationship between two people is not completely atrocious and grotesque, but instead it expresses a certain type of reality about what it means to fall in love or seek companionship in order to end loneliness. Despite the disquieting themes of such a story because of the age difference between the narrator and his lover, overall the novel is beautifully written and definitely worth reading.





**McCarthy, Cormac. *The Road*.** New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006. 256 pp.

● ● ● *Jason Craig*

McCarthy's position as one of the greatest living American novelists is solidified by this latest and darkest in a long line of novels that explore wandering people seeking an identity and purpose in a universe of brutal violence, of utter meaninglessness. In many of his novels, such as *Blood Meridian*, McCarthy explores the darkness at the heart of humanity by setting his narratives around the clash between "traditional" life and modernity. Thus, in *Blood Meridian*, one gets the story of the Kid, a figure whose capacity for violence allows him to serve as a kind of template for the darkest vision of America's "Manifest Destiny." One in which it becomes apparent that all notions—classical and modern—of enlightenment and morality become subsumed by the march of a kind of blind, brute and amoral violent destiny/nature. *The Road*, then, is the logical conclusion of these previous novels. In it, a man and his son are trying desperately to survive in a post-apocalyptic America. The details of what exactly happened are elusive, but this remembrance of the man about it sets the tone for the dark journey to come:

The clocks stopped at 1:17. A long shear of light and then a series of low concussions. He got up and went to the window. What is it? she said. He didnt answer. He went into the bathroom and threw the lightswitch but the power was already gone. A dull rose glow in the windowglass. He dropped to one knee and raised the lever to stop the tub and then turned on both taps as far as they would go. She was standing in the doorway in her nightwear, clutching the jamb, cradling her belly in one hand. What is it? she said. What is happening? I dont know. Why are you taking a bath? I'm not. (45)

With each horrific confrontation, be it with sickness, starvation, sleep deprivation, or the roving bands of cannibalistic humans that use "the road" as their personal hunting preserve, it becomes harder and harder to not imagine oneself in the shoes of the man and his son. Their very existence in this world, their identities both within the novel and for the reader become complicated, blurred, and then shattered with each ethical choice they are forced to make.

*The Road*, through its narrative and use of shockingly gruesome imagery, comes to shatter the precious façade of peace and complacency that so many of us perpetuate. It violates those easy distinctions between good and evil. And it calls into question what those terms can mean; especially in a world where the ultra-violent has become the mundane—the quotidian. The conversation between the man and his wife, who commits suicide, sums up this destruction of man-made notions of ethics very well:

She was gone and the coldness of it was her final gift. She would do it with a flake of obsidian. He'd taught her himself. Sharper than steel. The edge an atom thick. And she was right. There was no argument. The hundred nights they'd sat up debating the pros and cons of self destruction with the earnestness of philosophers chained to a madhouse wall. (49)

In the end one comes to question the purpose of the stands we make everyday. At the very least, even if one is not so dark minded or pessimistic as McCarthy appears to be about the fate of humanity, the novel serves to remind one of the necessities of questioning ones assumed positions. Along with the ability to bring the reader to complex thoughts and contemplations about society and ones own ethical views, McCarthy's prose makes the book worth reading. His writing is lyrical, and while much of his narrative is disjointed chronologically (on purpose), his style and imagery convey a dark beauty that I think is unparalleled in other modern novels.



**Friedman, Thomas L. *The World is Flat*.** New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005. 608 pp.

● ● ● *Jennifer Scarbrough*

*The World is Flat* by Thomas L. Friedman is a masterpiece about the changes that took place in the 21<sup>st</sup> century which drove the world to globalize at an increasing rate which is still occurring today. Friedman also discusses what this means to the world and why governments and societies must change and adapt or be left behind.

Friedman traveled the world in order to research this book. After visiting ground zero of India's outsourcing industry—Infosys—he began to realize that “the global competitive playing field was being leveled. The world was being flattened.”(8) Through his research, he noticed that the “flattening” of the world was not only drawing innovators and multinational companies, but also angry terrorist groups who distrust and reject globalization.

Globalization, however, offers the possibility for individuals to collaborate and compete on a global versus a national scale. Globalization today also means moving work where it can be done best. “The gains in productivity will be staggering for those countries, companies, and individuals who can absorb the new technological tools. And we are entering a phase where more people than ever before in the history of the world are going to have access to these tools—as innovators, as collaborators, and, alas, even as terrorists.”(47)

Friedman lists the forces that “flatten” the globe: the fall of the Berlin Wall, the rise of Netscape and the dot.com era, the emergence of common software that allows global collaboration, the rise of outsourcing, insourcing, offshoring, uploading, and in-forming. These “flatteners” came into effect around 2000 and helped to mold the world into a more globalized society. The countries that emerged due to the effect of the “flatteners” on industrialized countries are China, India, and the former Soviet Union. Friedman states that the three billion people who were out of the game, walked onto the playing field.

Friedman also writes about the United States and how they may have “missed the bandwagon.” In a speech given at MIT, Friedman said there was a “political perfect storm—the dotcom bust, the attacks of 9/11, and the Enron scandal—distracted us completely as a country.” Just when we needed to really focus on globalization and its effects in order to compete in the new “flat” world, we were looking elsewhere.

The new updated and extended version of *The World is Flat*, published in 2006, includes an extra 100 pages which talk about current events including 9/11. Overall, this book is a great but lengthy read. This book would be of great interest to students studying business, especially at a global level. It is an intriguing book that interests the reader from start to finish.

# Contributors ● ● ●

- **Christi Amato** graduated last summer (06) from Otterbein with a degree in Literary Studies. She now lives in the frigid tundra of North Dakota with her husband, an Air Force officer, and she work as a tobacco prevention coordinator for the northwest counties of North Dakota, providing grant funds for tobacco education in schools. She is also working on a Master's in Public Affairs at the moment. She would also like to acknowledge her favorite mini partner in crime, her amazing and brave stepdaughter, Alexa. As far as acknowledgements, she must foremost mention the late Dr. Rebecca Bowman who initiated, inspired and guided her senior lit project. She was an amazing mentor, and she was fortunate to have worked with her. She also needs to acknowledge both Dr. Ashworth and Dr. Eisenstein for picking up the pieces of her project at the end, and helping her mold it into something coherent. They were incredibly supportive and helpful.
- **Shannon Bauchert** is a senior majoring in History, with a minor in Women Studies, who upon graduation, plans to take a year to do nothing but travel, read good books, and write for a year. After that, she plans to continue her education—most likely in history, but you never know with her. Shannon would like to thank her friend, Cristina Frick for all the crazy, fun times they had together, as well as for her unconditional support and good advice. Shannon would also like to thank a few professors who have impacted her life in more ways than she could ever describe: Glenna Jackson, Paul Laughlin, and Tammy Birk. Lastly, she would like to especially thank Sarah Fatherly for her help with writing this paper and for making her realize how important it is to study women's history.
- **Alison Brooks** is a double major in vocal music and psychology and will graduate from Otterbein College this coming June then anticipates attending graduate school. This is her first publication and she wishes to thank the following persons for their help: Dr. James Bates for his encouragement and guidance, Philip and Gloria Brooks for their continued support and patience, and many friends (Rachel, Kristen, Katie, Kelley, Haley and Peter) who helped her stay positive when times were difficult. Alison is dedicating this work to her grandmothers, Alice Brooks and Delores Burke Adams, who continue to encourage her to achieve her very best.
- **Jason Thomas Craig** is a Senior at Otterbein with a double-major in Philosophy and Islamic studies. He would like to thank Drs. Andrew Mills, Debora Halbert, Paul Eisenstein, Alan Cooper, Charles Zimmerman, Paul Laughlin and Stephanie Patridge for unparalleled support, guidance and mentoring. He would not be where he is as either a person or an academic without them. Jason will attend the Master's program at Georgia State University in Atlanta next year, where he will pursue his goal of becoming a philosophy professor; as well as proving Dr. Mills' supposition that "they don't just hand out Ph.D.'s in Cracker Jack boxes." No "thank

you” would be complete without also mentioning his parents and Adam Cottrel—without whom the struggles of the last year would surely have been catastrophic.

- **Colleen Deel** is a senior Political Science major with a minor in Women’s Studies and Sociology, she plans to seek, at some point after graduation, a masters/doctorate in Women’s Studies. She would like to thank Dr. Debora Halbert for making her write this paper in her Contemporary Theory class and subsequently looking over the paper multiple times. She would also like to recognize those professors at Otterbein, in addition to Dr. Halbert, who have created a fulfilling and enriching environment for her to learn and grow including Tammy Birk, Dr. Suzanne Ashworth, and especially Dr. Sarah Fatherly.
- **Megan Hatfield** is a senior History major at Otterbein, but it was not always this way. When she transferred to Otterbein her junior year as a Spanish major, she had the good fortune of taking a history class that reminded her of her love for the subject. It radically changed her life, and she would like to thank Dr. Richard Yntema for guiding her academic studies and bringing her into the history department. She would also like to thank Dr. Sarah Fatherly for influencing her life in more ways than she can count. Without them, she would not be the person she is today. Her future plans are still up in the air, but she would like to go to graduate school for history or law school in the near future.
- **Danielle Hickey** is a senior music major, concentration in voice. After graduation she plans on taking a year off to figure out what she’d like to do in grad school. This piece was originally written for her music history class. She would thus like to thank Dr. Jim Bates for making her write the paper in the first place, and for encouraging her to submit it. Thanks also go to Dr. Paul Eisenstein for his excellent writing tips. But the highest accolades go to Leonard Bernstein himself, for leaving a legendary legacy for music lovers everywhere.
- **Meghan Johnson** is an English major with a concentration in Literary Studies and a double minor in Speech Communications and Public Relations. She would like to thank the professors of the English Department who helped her emerge from the gray area of life as an “undecided major” and realize that her love and talent for writing could actually be put to use. She’d also like to thank her parents and fiancée for reinforcing her confidence (when it seems there are just too many papers to write and books to read) and their unending support.
- **Nick Kiger** graduated from Otterbein in 2006 with a B.A. in religion. He is currently attending Methodist Theological School in Ohio where he is pursuing his Master’s in Theological Studies. His areas of concentration for his master’s are biblical studies and ethics. When he is done with his master’s degree, he plans on applying to the Ph.D. program in the Department of Comparative Studies with a specialization in Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean at The Ohio State University. He would like to thank Dr. Glenna Jackson in Otterbein’s Religion and Philosophy Department for all of her advice and support for this paper.

- **Halle Neiderman** is a History and English major with a Women's Studies minor. After graduating, she plans to attend Carnegie Mellon University to receive an MA in Cultural Literature Studies. She'd like to thank Dr. McCormick for encouraging her to submit this essay and each of her professors in the History and English departments for molding her into the writer and thinker she is today.
- **Sarah Prindle** is a senior English major with minors in Art and Environmental Studies. She'd like to thank Garrett Hardin and Arturo Escobar, who don't know her but wish they did. She'd also like to thank Dr. Debora Halbert and Dr. Michael Hoggarth for supporting her through her caffeine-induced delusions as she wrote these papers. Her plans for after graduation include writing a book on how to change the world or moving into a yurt.
- **Larsa Ramsini** is a sophomore with a double-major in Mathematics and Philosophy and a minor in French. This summer she will be doing research at Texas A&M University in mathematical modeling for ecology and physiology, and this fall she will be studying abroad in Dijon, France.
- **Jennifer Roberts** is a Senior Double major in English Creative Writing and Women's Studies. She is moving back to San Francisco to pursue an MFA in creative writing at the California College of Arts. In her spare time she will be stalking the editors of McSweeney's for an internship. After a few years of city life, she plans to buy a cabin in the woods and establish a writer's colony. She would like to thank her mentors, Shannon Lakanen, Tammy Birk, and Sarah Fatherly—three amazing and strong women who have nurtured and encouraged her in different, but equally important ways.
- **Jennifer Scarbrough** is currently a junior at Otterbein College. She is double majoring in Business with a concentration in International Business and also Spanish. After she finishes her Bachelors degree at Otterbein, she plans to stay in the Westerville area and get her Masters at Otterbein. Many thanks to her family for their support.
- **Cassi Smith** is a senior psychology and political science major. After graduation she plans to attend The Methodist Theological School in Ohio to pursue a Masters of Arts in Counseling Ministries.
- **Emily Starr** is currently a sophomore art major with a concentration in drawing and a minor in art history. She would like to thank Dr. Amy Johnson for her valuable advice and assistance during the writing process of her essay. It has been a significant experience in her efforts to challenge herself and grow both as a student and an individual.

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