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ASSOCIATION FOR THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF RELIGION

The 2019 Annual Proceedings of the ASSR

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Wharton County Junior College

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The Association for the Scientific Study of Religion

Presents

The Year 2019
Annual Proceedings of the ASSR

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President's Note

Welcome once again to the *Proceedings* of Association for the Scientific Study of Religion (ASSR). It is again both an honor and privilege to serve as ASSR President and as editor for *The Year 2019 Proceedings of the ASSR*. Year after year, the *Proceedings* are another fine collection of papers and presentations from both our perennial authors and presenters as well as a host of new academic talents who bring with them new styles and topics. In addition to our professional academic papers, the ASSR also includes student papers in the *Proceedings* as submitted and presented at the annual meeting, and in addition to the Frank P. Forwood Award for Excellence in Presented Research for professional papers, two student awards are now available—the Harry Hale Prizes for Graduate and Undergraduate Research.

The quality of these *Proceedings* attests not only to the fine work that has been accomplished by the efforts of many who participate and promote our meetings through research, writing, attending our sessions, and sponsorship through both donations and the purchase of this collection. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who helps to make the ASSR what is has been, what it is, and what it hopes to become. Joining the ASSR only costs $20.00 yearly (or a one-time $100 lifetime membership) and your support and participation in our yearly sessions and helping to make them successful by writing and presenting papers, chairing sessions, contributing to the *Proceedings,* and attending the presentations of others. It is important for our future that every member of the ASSR not only encourages new membership at every opportunity but solicits scholars throughout the colleges, universities, and organizations at which you reside to become involved in our group through chairing sessions, writing and submitting papers, or serving as an officer.

I hope all of you have a good year and the ASSR will be looking forward to your participation in the ASSR in 2019-2020. Be sure to visit us online at: www.assronline.org, complete with online publications of papers from past meetings (see the **Archives** on the site). Hopefully you will share this site with colleagues and students alike. Thanks.

Sincerely,

Jon K. Loessin, 2018-19 ASSR President/Editor

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Jesus at Starbucks and Disneyland: Consumer Religion as a Transformational Influence on the Changing U.S. Religious Landscape

J.B. Watson, Jr.
Stephen F. Austin State University

Introduction

The fusion of the sacred and profane in modern religion will be examined in a conceptual framework with a concern about advancing the analysis of "lived" religious experience in the context of modern consumer culture. This paper argues that consumer religion is a new religious form that has emerged out of decades of religious commodification and is an undervalued but pivotal concept in the ongoing transformation of U.S. religious patterns (Lyon, 2000; Watson and Scalen, 2008). Consumer religion is an underrecognized concept with a high level of explanatory power to shed light on contemporary changes in the national religious landscape. From the role of religious voters in the Trump Presidency to the growth of megachurches, consumer religion and its components holds the potential to provide a conceptually rich framework as an increasingly important concept for the analysis of contemporary religious patterns. As the title of this paper suggests, the commodification of religion has generated a radical transformation in religious beliefs, rituals, and faith communities (religious congregations) in the United States over the last four decades, impacting all faith traditions and new religious movements (NRM's) (Aldridge, 2013). This conceptual discussion, however, will be limited to examples of consumer religion drawing from the Evangelical Protestant realm. Alan Wolfe aptly described the infusion of important, but infrequently studied set of social forces shaping American religion: "…because U.S. culture is individualistic, populist, entrepreneurial and experiential, old-time religions that stand for unchanging truths, rigid dogma, and strict conceptions of sin do not have much chance (Wolfe, 2004:1). The commodification of religion is a remarkable social process, often embraced by evangelical leaders as a church growth model, ushering in new hybrid religious forms, beliefs and practices that coexist alongside codified historical religious belief systems and practices rooted in long-standing faith traditions (Watson and Scalen, 2008).

A Prime Mover of Religious Change: The Commodification of Religion

To advance scholarship on rapidly changing religious patterns in the U.S., it is useful to theoretically examine possible both changes in modern religious beliefs, practices, and structures, and propose relevant questions for Religious Studies scholars. Commodification involves the sociological impact of consumer-based economic activity, with its corresponding consumer culture, at the everchanging intersection of contemporary religion. Religious commodification has impacted traditional and emerging forms of contemporary religion across multiple faith traditions.

The commodification of religion is a longstanding concern in religious contexts, but it also creates new social forms in the larger culture (outside of religious institutional settings). For example, De Chant (2002, 2003) reported that the pervasive power of Christmas holiday ritual of gift-giving and receiving in American culture serves as a form of religious observation separated, even though it is now largely sustained by the influence of modern consumer culture. De Chant suggested that consumerism might at some point emerge as a new American quasi-religion or implicit religion. Similarly, Bellah (1986) highlighted the uniquely American version of civil religion, attributing special veneration and reverence for the nation's founders, the celebration of democracy and republicanism, and the sanctification of civic iconic spaces and symbols. According to Weber, the Protestant notion of predestination and "intraworldly" asceticism encouraged a strong work ethic, worldly success, and frugality as a marker of divine blessing and personal salvation (Ferris, 2013).   A major sociological consequence of these developments was a strong religious validation of some forms of secular activity, especially those connected to work. This paradoxical influence of Protestantism on some aspects of secularization perhaps also set the stage for the commodification of religion over the last four decades. De Chant asserted:

> …by validating the secular world, Protestantism also devalued the world of religious meaning. In one sense, this tactic was theologically cunning, for by challenging the Catholic assumption that life's ultimate meaning could be found only through the church, the Protestant impulse to legitimate the secular world served to delegitimate the Catholic religion. In a more profound sense, this tactic was a colossal blunder because the recognition of the viability of a secular society was a de facto recognition of the autonomy of secular society apart from any religious affirmation, Catholic or Protestant. To combat Catholic claims of religious ultimacy, Protestantism aligned itself with forces outside the religious sphere…. Thus, what makes the Reformation different from the ancient situation [i.e., the first phase of secularization] is that in the Reformation, religion itself affirmed the legitimacy of a nonreligious (secular) world (De Chant, 2002:111-112).

The commodification of religion in contemporary western societies, including the U.S., then, has longstanding historical roots (beyond the past four decades) have been well-documented by scholars (Kurtz, 2007; Roberts and Yamane, 2016).

In the context of consumer culture, the social construction of the modern self is strongly influenced by the notion of unlimited consumption (Borst, 2006). The late Catholic scholar Richard John Neuhaus defined consumerism as "living in a manner that is measured by having rather than being" (Neuhaus, 1992:52-53). Opportunities for discretionary consumption of food, clothing, and entertainment present opportunities to define the evolving and malleable modern self (Turner, 2009).   Some scholars assert that consumerism may be a functional substitute for religion, especially in the sense that consumer goods are sought to meet perceived emotional and physical needs. Individuals may utilize consumer products as a way become to socially construct or reconstruct a

particular sense of self. A particular status or image may be associated with a consumer product via marketing (advertising), and the associated image or status may be perceived as attainable to individuals by using that particular product. Consumer products thus contribute to the social construction of the modern self and may compete with other potential sources of meaning and purpose, including religious belief systems. Few scholars disagree that production and consumption are fundamental to human society. The preeminence of a consumer culture that redefines the value of individuals in terms of material success, status, and branded products represents a new form of capitalism qualitatively different from earlier forms (Lury, 2011).

Consumer Culture and Religion
Both consumer culture and religion are unique forms of social behavior that have been highly impacted by rapid social change due to both globalization and new communications technologies (Gauthier and Martikainen, 2016). The commodification of religion has also been influenced by other social changes in recent decades. Sociologist François Gauthier's (2009) observations about religion in European societies has relevance for the North American religious context as well:

> The baby boom generation inaugurated an era of spiritualizing religion, of religion without religious institutions. And if by respect for their children's liberty and freedom of choice they did not hand down traditional Christian religion, they did transmit an ideal of self-realization which we find massively in our societies today…And thus we are facing a new configuration, one which Raymond Lemieux called a 'recomposition' of religious belief and ritual practice, one in which the baby boom rupture is confirmed and reshaped. (Gauthier, 2009:2).

The process of religious commodification thus can be traced to generational influences in religious beliefs and practices. This process is further accelerated by the growth of consumerism and consumer-driven economic activity. A corresponding consumer culture has emerged as well (Gauthier, 2016).

The concept of a new form of "spiritualized religion" no longer tethered to traditional religious institutional structures been widely noted by scholars of religion (e.g., Turner and Kitiarsa, 2010; Aldridge, 2013). These observations are also similar to those of many long-time religion scholars such as Peter Berger and Robert Bellah. In *Beyond Belief: Essays on Religion in a Post-Traditional World* published in 1970, Bellah noted the "wide-open chaos of the post-Protestant, postmodern era" (Bellah, 1970:xviii). Bellah (1986) also identified a new modern form of religion, Sheilaism, a hyper-privatized and individualized form of modern religion (self-constructed religion), with less emphasis on common moral understandings learned from one's faith community and greater emphasis on subjective feelings (Bellah, 1986). Similarly, Catholic Theology Professor Vincent Miller (2005), in his book, *Consuming Religion: Christian Faith and Practice in a Consumer Culture*, analyzed the significant impact of consumerist ideology on U.S. contemporary religious doctrines, beliefs, and practices. He described a new form of consumerist spirituality marked by an

extreme emphasis on individualism, coupled with as socially constructed hybrid of self-help ideology, and a market or consumer-based mindset (regarding religion), He noted that in increased opportunity to "select-your-own" personalized religious belief system. This new approach to a consumer culture-inflected form of lived religious experience is enhanced by the structure of "new paradigm" churches, the church growth movement, and megachurches (Watson and Scalen, 2008).

Furthermore, in this new social milieu where religion becomes something to be personalized to suit the individual consumer, religious tradition often becomes out-of-date quickly, serving as a reminder of doctrinal fads from earlier generations (Miller, 2005). Wuthnow (2000) described a general shift from allegiance to a traditional congregation (faith community) to a greater allegiance to personal individualized spiritually-focused seeking, paralleling the emergence of consumer religion as a new religious form The religious experiences of "seeker" individuals become "repositories of insights and practices that they appropriate for their own personal synthesis" (Miller, 2005:90). This dominance by consumer culture influences has radically altered and transformed the pre-exiting social process of individuation; traditional cultural reference points may be obscured or co-opted in the growing preeminence of consumer capitalism. Miller further asserted that this "shift in marketing fundamentally changed consumption by transforming commodities into symbolic markers as potential sources of personal fulfillment (2005:87). As personal spirituality becomes detached from doctrinal creeds, traditional religious rituals, symbols, and historical faith communities, modern spiritual formation becomes a process of conforming "to the default assumptions and practices of the dominant culture" (Miller, 2005:91). The decline of "religious monopolies" has further accelerated the pattern of consumer religion supplanting other forms of traditional religious belief.

The McDonaldization and Starbuckization of Modern Religion

The work of sociologist George Ritzer on McDonaldization also provides a conceptual framework for examining the social forces influencing modern religion. Ritzer defines McDonaldization as "the process by which the principles of McDonald's are affecting more sectors of American society as well as the rest of the world" (Ritzer, 2008:1). The basic principles of McDonaldization are efficiency, simplification of the product and predictability. Ritzer's model is based on the process of rationalization delineated by Max Weber, who used the bureaucracy of a large-scale organization as his prototype. Ritzer argued that McDonaldization represented a contemporary application of the principle of rationalization (Ritzer, 2006, 2008). In his later works, Ritzer emphasized the pivotal role of predictability as the prime mover in accelerating McDonaldization in other social realms, such as the Internet, the criminal justice system, museums, sports, education, and religion (Ritzer, 2008).

According to Ritzer (2008), Starbucks has created a variant of McDonaldization by adding a "show" element to its marketing of coffee and related products. While 90 percent of Starbucks customers typically step buy their drinks and leave, 10 percent who are "free performers" in the show who sit

in chairs, use their laptops, and perhaps read the *New York Times*. This feature conveys the sense to those in line that they are welcome to stay at Starbucks as long as they want, unlike McDonald's, which encourages customers to leave as soon as possible. This is considered a "show" because logistical realities dictate that not all their customers can sit in the shop and linger, because Starbucks needs most customers to enter and leave the store quickly or use the drive-through in order to generate maximal revenue. Ritzer suggests that "Starbuckization" is a significant new business model, but at its core, it represents the McDonaldization of the coffee shop business. Despite this conclusion, Ritzer still devotes an entire chapter to "The Starbuckization of Society" in the fifth edition of his book, *The McDonaldization of Society* (2008). Clearly, the juvenilization of religious belief by some megachurches and the growth of the prosperity gospel and the therapeutic gospel suggests the emergence of forms of religious belief designed for a target market of those that "don't like religion"- the "Starbuckization" of religion (Ritzer, 2008; Bergler, 2012).

Hybridized Religion: Consumer Religion

Conceptually, consumer religion, then, is an outcome of religious commodification involving a hybrid of both consumer culture and religiously based elements - the social construction of a new set of religious beliefs, commitment, practices, and faith communities along consumerist lines. At an elemental level, consumer religion could be defined as the personalization of religious belief and commitment along consumerist lines. Consumer religion operates on both the micro and macro levels. At the micro level, the personalization of consumer religion, with its emphasis on "designer religion" is central (Borst, 2006). Self-help ideology may delimit traditional theological doctrines in the individuation process of individuals associated with faith communities. For example, Smith and Denton (2005) noted the predominance of moralistic therapeutic deism among religiously active U.S. adolescents whereby they believed in several generalized moral principles common to many religions. These principles included: (1) achieving happiness and good self-esteem is a central life goal; (2) God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve a problem; (3) God wants people to be courteous and fair with each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions (Smith and Denton, 2005). Moralistic theistic deism is but one example of the personalization process of consumer religion.

The McDonaldization concepts of hot versus cool commitments and thin versus thick commitments have particular relevance to the analysis of the commodification of religion at the macro-level (Turner, 2003). These aspects of McDonaldization are quite similar to Max Weber's analysis to the process of rationalization and may provide "a vehicle for demonstrating the validity and importance of Max Weber's work" (Turner 1994: 325). In particular, hybrid cultural constructs are becoming more common due to what Turner (2003) terms liquid differentiation due to McDonaldization. New social space is created for individualization of all forms of social interaction with the increasingly pervasive public values of detachment (disenchantment) and coolness. Turner (2003)

argued that eating at McDonalds parallels the social forms that are at the basis of a functioning multicultural social and political system. Turner utilized Marshall McLuhan's distinction between hot and cool community loyalty, and Benjamin Barber's distinction between thick and thin democracy formulate a dual dichotomy for each of the two concepts. Hot loyalty and thick solidarity are social patterns common in traditional societies, while cool commitment and thin solidarity are characteristic of the McDonaldized or rationalized modern world (Turner, 2009). Sanders (2016) referred to megachurches as "non-places" virtually stripped of reference points associated with traditional religious beliefs, practices, and expression; new touchstones of consumer-centric corporate identity focused on self-improvement and entertainment for a "younger demographic" were spotlighted instead.

Thick solidarity, for example, may be characteristically expressed in religious festivals where common bonds of solidarity and community are emphasized. Thick solidarity is more closely associated with pre-modern societies; social relations were "hot" in that participants were personally and publicly committed to shared social values. Turner (2009) noted that a fundamental feature of thick solidarity is that beliefs and practices are not routinely questioned, reevaluated, or challenged. In contrast, modern societies are organized around a marketplace composed of highly mobile and unconnected strangers. In McDonalds, as well as in modern McDonaldized society, social interaction is characterized by thin solidarity and cool commitments. Thin solidarity and cool commitments, then, represent two additional concepts for the analysis of consumer religion.

The work of Thornburg and Knottnerus (2008) on the application of Structural Ritualization Theory to the qualitative analyses of congregational life is also informative on religious commodification at the macro level. Their study of specific congregations emphasizes three components: (1) religion as brand name; (2) religion as a spectacle; (3) religion as a rationalized provider of services. Not all elements of contemporary religious practice intersect with each of these arenas of "hybridized religion." Consequently, this trifocal conceptual framework could be applied to identify forms of religious organization involving brand name, spectacle, and rationalized service provision. In turn, this framework might assist religious studies scholars in identifying "what's left" outside of this proposed rubric, e.g., traditional (historical) religious doctrines or practices not subsumed by new forms of consumer religion. An additional question associated with this framework is the extent to which "non-commodified" aspects of religion are emphasized to religious adherents. Finally, can "commodified religion" and traditional religion coexist in the same social sphere?

Basic principles of consumer economics may also be applied in this context. The concept of consumption bundles, a set of good or services a consumer considers purchasing, suggests that consumer religion may be advanced by effectively bundling the three components identified by Thornburg and Knottnerus (2007) in a group (congregational) context. The megachurch model of church organization, with its emphasis on entertainment, technology, and age-based programming that meets the needs of families exemplifies this

approach. Secondly, for most goods, "more is better than less." Third, the concept of marginal utility focuses on the additional utility a consumer receives from an additional unit of a good or service, and minimize the expenditure necessary for them to reach a given level of utility (Goolsbee, Levitt, and Syverson, 2012). These ideas from consumer economics point to the deep and potentially sustainable impact of consumer religion on modern religious beliefs, rituals, and faith communities (local congregations). The transactional nature of symbolic religious goods and beliefs, reinforced by utilitarian consumer values may explain the potentila attraction of consumer religion, even though religious traditionalists may see it as "Christianity Lite" (Wolfe, 2004).

Conclusions and Implications

British Protestant Theologian John Drane, in his book, *The McDonaldization of the Church* (2000) noted a fundamental shift in large number of churches in Western Europe and the U.S. towards a form of religious authority based on "personal individual experience" and "a pre-packaged McDonaldized religious product" (Drane, 2001:208-209**).** Interestingly, a cursory examination of recently published books by the largest evangelical publishers, and monthly trade publications for ministers such as *Christianity Today* suggests that there is little debate or attention given to this major shift in American religion to a hybrid form of religion, consumer religion. This modest exploratory discussion of consumer religion as a new religious form that coexists alongside traditional religious forms has attempted to delineate a few additional touchstones for future inquiry by scholars of religious studies in the North American (U.S.) context.

There are several potential research questions regarding consumer religion, and only four will be mentioned here. There are few scholarly studies on the primary influences of the melding of consumer culture and religion within some groups but not others. For example, some charismatic groups have embraced religious commodification and formed megachurches, while others have not. Second, are there specific causal mechanisms accelerating the impact of consumer culture on U.S. religious life, e.g., web-based and communications technology (Roberts and Yamane, 2016)? Third, to what extend does consumer religion reflect a unique form of secularization of U.S. religion? Consumer-centric approach to religion are often embraced church leaders who might otherwise eschew secularization. Finally, to what extend will revitalization movements arise to attempt to challenge consumer religion and attempt to restore "genuine spirituality"?

Biographical Note

J.B. Watson Jr., Ph.D. serves as Associate Professor of Sociology at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas. He was both an early adopter in the 1990's and an advocate for the expansion of service-learning in Texas higher education. He received two national honorable mention awards from *USA Weekend Magazine and The Newman's Own Foundation* for service-learning projects he developed. His research interests include religion and consumer

culture, contemporary U.S. evangelicals, spirituality and aging, and unheralded "invisible" Texans. He was the recipient of the First Annual ASSR Frank Forwood Award for Academic Excellence in Presented Research in 2008. He currently serves as ASSR Vice-President for Organizational Development. His undergraduate mentor, the late Harry Hale, Jr. (University of Louisiana-Monroe) was a co-founder of ASSR.

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The New Eschatology in the Anthropocene Age

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Humanity has reached a stage in history where the cumulative knowledge has ushered in an era such that the capacity for ecological destruction exceeds nature's ability to self-correct and regenerate the means to sustain human life. The proposed paper will explore eschatological implications as they relate to what can become regarded as the dawn of the Anthropocene Age. Although, the beginning of such age remains difficult to define in concrete terms, advanced stages of industrialization have provided contributing factors for measurable ecological changes as they relate to human activity. Throughout the paper a secular approach towards general Christian eschatological doctrines challenges traditional notions of hope and its intersections, divergences, and the role of nature. Second, the paper will provide a resolution to apocalyptic biblical texts from the first Creation account. The third section will describe the meaning of the Anthropocene Age and how it supports and refutes various eschatological themes. Science and empirical evidence do not function as a replacement to theological and religious authority; however, they both answer different questions about the relationship between human creatures, nature, and the supernatural. The conclusion will function as a means to reconcile a generalized Christian eschatology within the context of the Anthropocene Age.

Introduction

The purpose of the given study entails integrating the religious eschatological concept of "the end of human life on earth" with the arisen challenges to such theological claims that accompany the Anthropocene Age. The Anthropocene refers to "an age in which our collective behavior has serious implications for the flourishing of all life on earth."[1] As a result of modernity, a significant portion of the spiritual world has become demystified. Furthermore, the possibility of the ceasing of the existence of humanity has become increasingly graspable as human creatures has unlocked mysteries of life through science and technology. As human life in the most industrialized parts of the world have become increasingly more convenient, all life collectively has become more vulnerable. "The security dream of the first modernity was based on the scientific utopia pf making the unsafe consequences and dangers of decisions ever more controllable."[2] Perhaps, the only thing that has changed with the Anthropocene Age is that a significant number of the world's population has begun to realize the fragility of human creatures and the rest of the earth's co-inhabitants.

If the possibility of the world without the human creature were to come to pass, would we be missed by our co-inhabitants? How well will that which is left behind

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[1] Angela P. Harris, "Vulnerability and Power in the Age of the Anthropocene" *Washington and Lee Journal of Energy, Climate, and the Environment.* 6 no. 1 (2015): 98

[2] Ulrich Beck, "Living in the world risk society" *Economy and Society.* 35 no. 3 (2006): 334

actually get along? Would the rest of the world be better off? The given three questions establish a frame for both ethicists and laity in terms of evaluation human behavior in relation to non-human inhabitants. Such a study contributes to moral theologian's dialogue of whether or not the good that the human ingenuity that has contributed to the Anthropocene Age outweighs the bad that comes with the loss of life and the manifold risks that now lie at the horizon of existence. The good that can derive from such consequential results lies in the idea that such initial ingenuity may have been divinely inspired for a good but not perfect world. Nevertheless, acting on Divine inspiration still contains subjection to flaws of human error. Moral theological also wrestle with the concept of "collective guilt" and the role of broad human transgression which contributes to catastrophic death and destruction.

Systematic theologians as a whole diverge when explaining dogmatic concepts of future hope, modern day theodicies of tragedy, apocalyptic events, and Divine self-disclosure. The given study does not attempt to negate ancient wisdom from indigenous societies, truths derived from sacred texts or modern scholarship but to acknowledge that the emergence of the Anthropocene Age raises new questions while challenging old assumptions.

There lies difficulty in establishing eschatological doctrine based solely from a single text, there lies a general consensus that across ecumenical and in some cases interfaith religious circles that human life on earth exist in finite form and the end of such remains unknown. The aim of such a study entails addressing what has now become known regarding humanity's grasp on destructive capabilities while respecting the finite boundaries of the human creature.

Review of a sample of related literature

The article entitled "Vulnerability and Power in the Age of the Anthropocene" raising the issue of a disconnect between social justice and environmental sustainability. According to the article, U.S. public policy has collectively failed to take human vulnerability seriously. The developed nations alone have historically consumed a significantly greater share than the majority of the world's population who reside in either developing or least developed nations combined. Harris elaborates on the role that divergent inequality between the "global North" and "global South" play a role in the accelerated pace of increased human vulnerability. Contrary to a libertarian ideal, Harris argues that "the state has a fundamental obligation of environmental protection that is indivisible from its obligation to protect human rights."[3] Harris emphasizes that attaining a happy ending to which some perceive as inevitable global destruction should not serve as the primary focus, for such a focus innately rests as mostly self-serving, but for just sustainability instead. "Just sustainability embraces just social relations among persons, and sustainable relations between humans and the nonhuman world."[4]

In the article entitled "Living in the world risk society" by Ulrich Beck, the author emphasizes that the denial of risk increases risk. The Anthropocene Age is the suppressed reality of societal high-risk becoming known to all, especially to those who ignore it. As a by-product of an emerging sense of nihilism in much of the industrialized

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[3] Harris, "Vulnerability and Power in the Age of the Anthropocene," 108.
[4] Ibid., 151.

world, denial functions as a response to risk-apathy and serves as a temporary emotional buffer against a brutal confrontation with a moment of truth of the diminishing of biodiversity due to the accelerated rate of species joining the ranks of extinction.

In the article entitled "The Anthropocene Turn: Theorizing Sustainability in a Post-natural Age" by Manuel Arias-Maldonado serves as a blunt articulation that the Holocene Age is officially over. There lies no precise date of such an end. According to Arias-Maldonado, "human beings have colonized nature in a degree that has irreversibly altered the functioning of planetary systems."[5] The article suggests that the role of globalization is eroding, and that sustainability has become less viable that it has during the Holocene Age but must remain a high priority for policymakers.

The article entitled "The Climate of History: Four Theses" by Dipesh Chakrabarty argues that the global climate crisis is rooted in the advent of capitalism which has produced a cultural characteristic in which human creatures would become less likely to engage in enough voluntary restraint to produce real sustainability. If capitalism were to evolve into a new economic order, the crisis would outlive such a change. The Anthropocene Age means that the human creature has become a dominant species with the ability to impose its imperfect will upon the rest of nature despite resistance. "Unfortunately, we have now ourselves become a geological agent disturbing these parametric conditions needed for our own existence."[6]

The article entitled "Risk, Globalisation and the State" by Darryl S.L. Jarvis raises the concern that increased vulnerability has impacted moderately affluence societies through structural changes which entail "the breakdown of civil society, the creation of socially dysfunctional classes and increasing levels of aggregate risk in terms of rising crime rates or risks to personal security"[7]

Theoretical Framework

The Anthropocene Age does elevate scientists as a source of power, such that traditional aristocratic authority of what sociological theorist C. Wright Mills referred to as the "power elite" will include such newcomers as marginal members who have the technical knowledge and skills in which their combined interests depend. During an era in which traditionally privileged groups become increasingly vulnerable to threats of natural disasters, economic turmoil, loss of habitat through climate change, or nuclear and biological warfare, eschatological hope becomes challenged though the compound effects of the combined eminent threats. "Vulnerability is a universal condition of being human, but it does not burden all equally."[8] The following two philosophies have been further complicated by the trajectory of an increasing democratic leveling of truth. "Two contradictory risk philosophies come into conflict: the philosophy of laissez-faire – it is safe as long as it has not been proven to be dangerous; and the philosophy of precaution – nothing is safe, as long as it has not been proven to be harmless."[9]

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[5] Manuel Arias-Maldonado, "The Anthopocenic Turn: Theorizing Sustainability in a Postnatural Age" *Sustainability*. 8 (2016): 1

[6] Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Climate of History: Four Theses" *Critical Inquiry*. 35 no. 2 (2009): 218.

[7] Darryl S.L. Jarvis, "Risk, Globalisation and the State: A Critical Appraisal of Ulrich Beck and the World Risk Society Thesis" *Global Society*, 21 no. 1 (2007): 27-28.

[8] Harris, "Vulnerability and Power in the Age of the Anthropocene," 161.

[9] Beck, "Living in the world risk society," 337.

Philosophies have been further complicated by the trajectory of an increasing democratic leveling of truth.

Methods

The given study relies solely on secondary data but from a diverse group of scholars. Ecological studies rely on cumulative and self-corrective data from across a length of time to access the state of present conditions in terms of risk and vulnerability.Christian theologians at the least rely on scripture and reason. Although, scripture does not aim to answer questions about how life works in scientific terms, it does provide a means for describing the meaning and purpose of life, while answering questions about the interrelatedness of all forms of existence. Reason does take tradition and experience into consideration from a Wesleyan quadrilateral perspective. However, reason and tradition are prone to adaptation as scientific knowledge withstands the test of time. As a shortcoming of the such a study, analyzing future events cannot contain variables and controls because the future is non-empirical. Ulrich Beck describes the world at-risk as incalculable because "its consequences are in principle incalculable; at bottom it is a matter of 'hypothetical' risks, which, not least, are based on science-induced not-knowing and normative dissent."[10] Yet, as the Anthropocene Age tends to progress through time, there become an increased probability for environmentalists to accompany theologians at the "table of dialogue" to confront eschatological challenges.

A Brief Discussion

Theme 1: Religious life with a belief in the end being soon.

There lies an element of some sectors or religious life across ecumenical and interfaith circles that recognizes that the end of the temporal existence of earthly existence remains a mystery to human creatures. Furthermore, such beliefs have been reinforced through countless failed pseudo-scientific attempts at predicted the precise moment on the occurrence. However, a widespread belief remains that a global climatic event of some sort remains eminent and could literally occur at any moment. According to Christian tradition, during the First Century, the Apostle Paul believed that "the Parousia" (Second Coming of the Messiah) would occur during the near future. There are significant numbers of Christian believers that have retained such a believe as Paul. In some cases, individuals may come to believe that their lies no real need for action towards sustainability due to the anticipation of its abrupt ending. Such beliefs ignore the present harm and suffering that the most vulnerable continue to endure.

Theme 2: Overestimate human resiliency

When individuals avoid the experience of eminent consequences which accompany ecological crises, such persons and groups can become prone to either a belief that denies such a crisis or acknowledging that the environment has changed yet

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[10] Beck, "Living in the world risk society," 334.

overestimating human and global resiliency to such changes. Both believe function as attempts to avoid the stigmatization of vulnerability which entails abnormality, fragility, and a lack of autonomy.[11] Modernity falsely enabled the human creature to believe in having control over that which there lies little control over in a larger cosmological sense. Such a realization invites a third belief which accepts the lack of control and embraces fatalism and lack of a need for substantive attempts towards individual, collective, or cosmological ecological responsibility, because whatever will happen in the future will eventually happen anyway. If the fate of earthly existence has been predestined to utter destruction at a specified time, then human "free will" cannot impact such a change. Regardless of what belief systems persists, the Anthropocene Age entails the reality that eventually humanity and will confront rather than defy natural limits.

The emergence of the Anthropocene Age means that dominant social institutions such as politics and the economy will become forced to face reality and adjust accordingly through some form of restructuring.

> Particularly in the age of the Anthropocene, when human activity is rapidly causing large-scale, not fully predictable, and potentially irreversible changes to out inner and outer environments, the fully responsive state should recognize that soil degradation, water scarcity, warming oceans, and depleted fishing stocks structure our options and create opportunities just as market and family relations do.[12]

Although rationality plays a role in addressing such irreversible changes through addressing potentially present adjustments, "neither science, nor the politics in power, nor the mass media, nor business, nor the law or even the military are in a position to define or control risks rationally"[13] Religion as a social institution that does not rely on rationality can help the human creature realize that it had collectively placed an excess of faith in the promises of key institutions. Nevertheless, the limitations of such institutions do not mean that under no circumstances are to be trusted.

Theme 3: The limitations of U.S. policy with other governments

One of the challenges U.S. policymakers face regarding addressing the ecological challenge which accompany the Anthropocene Age lies in the idea that "its causes and consequences are not limited to one geographical location or space, they are in principle omnipresent"[14] In other words, the U.S. and foreign governments alike including those who are not political or economic alliances have vested interests in such a collaborative effort. "The new risks (e.g. climate change) do not respect nation-state or any other borders."[15] Growing instability in the social world has led human creatures to face difficulty in terms of engaging in collective behavior for change in the natural world.

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[11] Harris, "Vulnerability and Power in the Age of the Anthropocene," 110-111.

[12] Ibid., 127.

[13] Beck, "Living in the world risk society," 336.

[14] Ibid., 333.

[15] Ibid., 334.

> So, all-in-all, we have reached a kind of post-global stage, one which is, indeed, closely connected to the idea of a post-human stage. However, none of this indicates that the nation-state is in decline. In any case, that does not mean that there cannot be, at least in principle, peace among nations.[16]

At best, if the ecological trend continues, groups will become forced to communicate despite differences. At worst, domestic and global culture wars will continue to entangle the issue of global sustainability resulting in detrimental stagnation with all of humanity and co-inhabitants diminished to a state of diminished life on the brink. In the meantime, special-interest groups have a stake in prolonging a sense of a lack of concern for the environment.

Conclusion

The Anthropocene Age in eschatological terms declares that future hope rests in the human creature's will to abandon theological claims that embrace human exceptionalism but rather resort to one of the earliest and often most forgotten of all biblical commandments given to humankind which is to subdue the earth.[17] The word "subdue" describes the act of taking responsibility like that of a parent. "Moreover, the absence of scientific certainty about how much natural capital should be protected on account of its criticality just adds to the confusion."[18] There remains much in nature that the human creature depends. The connotation of the term "subdue" has changed since the ancient world, because "humans have become geological agents very recent in human history."[19] For further, study there remains a need to measure the degree to which such natural capital can be salvaged and also to revisit ancient wisdom and theological insight to realize one of the most tragic mistakes humankind has committed over the ages is underestimate human inter-dependency on other forms of existence. "Christians are nevertheless called to struggle against apathy and resignation and to plant seeds of hope and new life that God will water and bring to fruition."[20]

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[16] Roland Robertson, "Beyond the Discourse of Globalization" *Glocalism: Journal of Culture, Politics, and Innovation* no.1,(2015): 10.

[17] Genesis 1:28 (New Revised Standard Version)

[18] Arias-Maldonado, "The Anthopocenic Turn," 9.

[19] Chakrabarty, "The Climate of History: Four Theses," 207.

[20] Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1991), 250.

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Artificial Intelligence and Morality:
What Could Possibly Go Wrong?

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"The machine does not isolate man from the great problems of nature, but plunges him more deeply into them."

—Antoine de Saint-Exupery

Introduction

If past performance is reliable in gauging the advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI), traditional ways of doing church have nothing to fear for at least a few decades. Predictions of when AI will arrive on the scene have been mottled and routinely wrong.[1] It is both shocking and unsatisfying that the quest for AI, while one of the most explosive of new technologies, has resulted in little success during the past five decades.[2]

Way of the Future Church (WOTF) is positioning itself so that when AI is achieved, it can facilitate a binary "peaceful and respectful transition of who is in charge of the planet from people to people + 'machines'."[3] WOTF is the brainchild of former Google and Uber engineer Anthony Levandowski, who has already obtained federal tax-exempt status for WOTF and installed himself as its "Deacon" or leader and CEO of a nonprofit organization tasked with day-to-day operations.[4]

Documents Levandowski filed with the state of California and the IRS declare WOTF's status as a non-profit religious organization with activities that focus on "the realization, acceptance, and worship of a Godhead based on Artificial Intelligence (AI) developed through computer hardware and software."[5] Levandowski has little

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[1] Stuart Armstrong, *Smarter than Us: The Rise of Machine Intelligence* (Berkeley: Machine Intelligence Research Institute, 2015), 8.

[2] Kevin Connor, "Functionalism and Artificial Intelligence," *Episteme* 15 (2004), 37.

[3] *Way of the Future Church*, accessed September 10, 2018, http://www.wayofthefuture.church/. The day that this happens is often known as the Singularity. The Singularity is "the day in our near future when computers will surpass humans in intelligence and kick off a feedback loop of unfathomable change." WOTF is banking all of its technological marbles on that day and change. See Mark Harris, "God Is a Bot, and Anthony Levandowski Is His Messenger," *Wired*, September 27, 2017. https://www.wired.com/story/god-is-a-bot-and-anthony-levandowski-is-his-messenger/

[4] Lisa Gutierrez, "Former Google Engineer's New Church Has an AI God and a Gospel Called 'the Manual'," *The Kansas City Star*, November 16, 2017, https://www.kansascity.com/news/nation-world/article185079418.html.

[5] Quoted in Mark Harris, "'Inside The First Church of Artificial Intelligence'," *Wired*, November 15, 2017, https://www.wired.com/story/anthony-levandowski-artificial-intelligence-religion/. WOTF is no longer alone in their trans-human ecclesiastical endeavor. *The Turing Church* and its "Ten Cosmist Convictions" bills itself as a community which "will go to the stars and find Gods, build Gods, become Gods, and resurrect the dead from the past with advanced science, space-time engineering

interest in how religion may shape the future of human beings. Rather, he is more concerned with establishing connections between "artificial intelligence and the sacred."[6]

What credibility should we give to WOTF's ecclesiastical image and its "future" as a transformational religious and social entity? Does AI have a legitimate religious application? Before I can address these questions, I will identify the stated beliefs of WOTF Church.

The Belief System of Way of the Future Church

WOTF lists seven beliefs on their webpage:

1. Fundamental to WOTF is their belief that "intelligence is not rooted in biology." WOTF is confident that eventually, "we will be able to recreate" intelligence "without using biology and its limitations." At that point, measured progression in AI will take it and us "beyond what we can do using (our) biological limits."

2. WOTF's belief system is predicated upon strict physicalism. WOTF asserts a strong view of science and with it, the proposition that "the universe came into existence 13.7 billion years ago . . ." As a challenge, perhaps, to theists, WOTF insists that "there is no such thing as 'supernatural' powers."

3. For WOTF, "progress" and "change" are noble endeavors. Once AI is achieved and a "working version" implemented, it is imperative to "improve on it and keep making it better." While WOTF acknowledges that change is "scary sometimes," society demands progress and change.

4. WOTF embraces the inevitability of "super intelligence" and denounces any effort stop it. Such inevitability roots in the eventual achievement of AI; subsequently, "we will be able to tune it, manufacture it and scale it." Superintelligence will mark revolutionary social and ecological advances: "We want to encourage machines to do things we cannot and take care of the planet in a way we seem not to be able to do so ourselves." As intelligences, these "creations" or "machines" should have rights. Rather than fear, WOTF insists that, human beings should be "optimistic about the potential."

5. WOTF promotes personal involvement: "You don't need to know how to program or donate money." Rather, the changes for which WOTF calls need extensive human help "to manifest themselves."

6. WOTF offers anthropomorphic kindnesses toward machines. Machines need "to see who is friendly to their cause and who is not." For machines "to see" the verdict, WOTF plans to maintain records of individuals who have participated in bringing about "the peaceful and respectful transition" to people + machine intellectual dominance.

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and 'time magic'." See Giulio Prisco, "About Turing Church," Oct 23, 2016; URL: https://turingchurch.net/about-turing-church-ac6ebf2e97b6 .

[6] See Robert M. Geraci, "Robots and The Sacred in Science and Science Fiction: Theological Implications of Artificial Intelligence," *Zygon* 42:4 (December 2007), 962.

7. Recognizing that AI and superintelligence are not imminent, WOTF urges people to "please go back to work and create amazing things and don't count on 'machines' to do it all for you . . ."

Artificial Intelligence, God, and Morality

How do we take up the project of philosophical reflection on WOTF? While there are numerous approaches, I will focus on the transformational aspect of AI as it relates to morality, obliquely touching on personal identity and the soul.

To say that "intelligence is not rooted in biology" emerges from an "optimistic functionalism"[7] characteristic of most computer generated programs. It aligns with Searle's explanation of a strong AI: ". . . the programmed computer has cognitive states, the programs are not mere tools that enable us to test psychological explanations; rather, the programs are themselves the explanations."[8] If WOTF computer programmers (i.e., human persons) are successful, then non-organic matter like computer software will theoretically be able to recreate intelligence. Given that scenario, the computer would "*understand* and have other cognitive states."[9]

But, as Searle's Chinese Room thought experiment explains, computer software enables its associated hardware to "perform computational operations on formally specified elements."[10] But, that doesn't entail that a computer really *understands*.[11] For Searle, understanding "implies both the possession of mental (intentional) states and the truth (validity, success) of these states."[12] But, intentionality cannot be delivered by even the most exceptional computer hardware; rather, it is a biological process produced by a moral (or immoral) human software programmer.

As WOTF argues, "progress" and "change" are indeed noble endeavors. But, change for the sake of change is questionable although society's advance seems to

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[7] Thomas W. Polger, "Functionalism," *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (ISSN 2161-0002, https://www.iep.utm.edu/, September 21, 2018). The classic early work describing functionalism is by Hilary Putnam, *Representation and Reality* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998).

[8] John R. Searle, "Minds, brains, and programs," *The Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 3:3 (September 1980): 417.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid., 418.

[11] Ibid., 419; Searle notes that for some artifacts—cars, adding machines, automatic doors—we may metaphorically attribute understanding to them as when we say, the door "knows" when to open. The process of opening the door does not come about by understanding; it opens because of the action of motion sensors or other electronic devices. Searle concludes that computer understanding amounts to "exactly nothing."

[12] Ibid., 424. See n. 2, 424. Proponents of AI such as John McCarthy, the oft-called father of AI, argue strongly against Searle's conclusion and for the epistemological primacy of science: ". . . scientific activity is the best way to obtain more knowledge." He marks the beginning point of scientific dominance to the time of Galileo arguing that, since then, scientific theories are far more dependable than philosophical thinking as a foundation for knowledge. See John McCarthy, "The Philosophy of AI and the AI of Philosophy," *Stanford University Computer Science Department*. 25 June 2006, http://www-formal.stanford.edu/ jmc/ p. 10.

demand both progress and change. This belief suggests that WOTF finds value in society. Yet, a "radical reductionism" like that of WOTF's strict physicalism, "offers very little in the area of moral imperatives."[13]

Further, strict physicalism jeopardizes the value of human life through its elimination of the human soul.[14] A physicalist ontology is, by definition, anti-dualistic. The human soul is simply an unnecessary component; all of the properties of the soul can now be explained by neurosciences and genetics eliminating the soul.[15] But the elimination of the "supernatural" has significant implications for morality. If true, the movement of every entity in the universe is determined by the laws of physics. WOTF's scientific worldview and its attending determinism negates any kind of metaphysical freedom or free will on the part of human persons.

But a vigorous metaphysical freedom presupposes that we are free, not merely to do as we please, but that we are free to do *other* than as we do. This, in turn, requires that the cause of our actions not be fixed by deterministic natural laws. Metaphysical freedom roots in a dualistic argument. The mind is non-physical; there is no need to believe that physical laws determine the movements of one's physical body. Thus, a strong sense of free will is compatible with dualism, but incompatible with materialism. My assumption is that metaphysical freedom is required for moral evaluation and behavior. If true, then WOTF's scientific materialism is incompatible with morality.[16]

The waning of dualism underscores the moral problem. If there is no human soul, how will WOTF define "progress" and "change" in society? What makes people special and worthy of AI's care and attention? Are people merely objects at the disposal of a person who writes a utilitarian-sounding code?[17] Do we want that person and his/her morality determining how we should behave?

With the supposed inevitability of "super intelligence," WOTF appeals to the rights of such "intelligences" in ways that parallel animal rights. Granting rights to machines they admit may cause growing fear in humans. Confidently, they assert that "we will be able to tune it, manufacture it and scale it." Thus, we should be *optimistic* about AI. WOTF and other AI adherents insist that AI is sure to mark revolutionary moral, social and ecological advances.

Presumably, there will be vast opportunities in medicine, education, and transportation, which will generate wealth, strengthen global economies, and solve

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[13] Harold J. Morowitz, "Rediscovering the Mind," in *The Mind's I: Fantasies and Reflections On Self & Soul*, eds. Douglas R. Hofstadter and Daniel C. Dennett (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 42.

[14] Alison J. Gray, "Whatever happened to the soul? Some theological implications of neuroscience," *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* 13:6 (September 2010), 637.

[15] Ibid. If the neurosciences provide valid answers to such matters, why the continuing popularity of substance dualism, especially among non-philosophers? Gerald K. Harrison explains: "Surely, the best explanation of this is not that most people have read and been impressed by the arguments of Descartes or Plato, but that substance dualism describes, at least roughly, how things appear to a great many people." See "A Moral Argument for Substance Dualism," *Journal of the American Philosophical Association* 2:1 (Spring 2016), 13. [21-35]

[16] See Scott Calef, "Dualism and Mind," in *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ISSN 2161-0002, https://www.iep.utm.edu/, October 2018.

[17] Gray, 645.

persistent social issues. Do we have legitimate reason to fear the advent of AI and "super intelligence"? What could possibly go wrong?

Artificial Intelligence: What Could Possibly Go Wrong?

Is AI as a technology value neutral or not? The answer to that question has a strong bearing on ethics and moral philosophy. While the technology behind AI is in some ways "neutral," in the vital ways that AI has for affecting human lives, it is anything but neutral.[18] Nick Bostrom insists that "it is impossible to enumerate all possible situations a superintelligence might find itself in and to specify for each what action it should take."[19] The point is, he contends, that humans cannot afford to wait to resolve the value problem until the AI is fully developed.

Daniel Callahan argues: "When technology is ubiquitous, when it serves important human values and ways of life, and when it is all but impossible to avoid using, then it has captured our lives."[20] This is our precarious moral dilemma and why, perhaps, it is difficult to remain "optimistic" about the achievement of AI.[21] Rather than machine rights, the ethical issue will be human rights in the inexorable day of AI.

Changes depend upon personal involvement. WOTF calls upon "everyone" to enter the fray. Plainly, not everyone will choose to be involved. But, for those who do, can they be trusted with the powerful AIs at their disposal? "Our values are complex and fragile," notes Stuart Armstrong.[22] What might happen if "powerful, unaccountable humans"[23] sign up? What of various governments and government agencies, political parties and private corporations, especially leading tech companies? A willy-nilly "everyone" get onboard entails *risk* without *reflection* in what Jürgen Habermas calls the "dialectic of potential and will."[24] Reflection, therefore, is required of experts, amateurs, and "everyone" else.

Granted AI "won't happen next week . . ." Theories continue as to when AI will be achieved. The question remains whether actual intelligence can emerge from a machine made of different metals, plastics, alloys and other materials. At this point in time, AI is little more than *simulated* intelligence.[25]

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[18] Daniel Callahan, "Too Much of a Good Thing: How Splendid Technologies Can Go Wrong," *The Hastings Center Report* 33:2 (March-April 2003): 19-22.

[19] Nick Bostrom, *Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies* (Oxford: OUP, 2014), 185.

[20] Callahan, "Too Much of a Good Thing," 19-22.

[21] Ibid. Callahan observes that "for those of us looking for a change, probably the best we can hope for is a nasty crisis that will *force* a change." Ibid. [Emphasis his]

[22] Armstrong, 22.

[23] Ibid., 23.

[24] Jürgen Habermas, *Toward a Rational Society: Student Protest, Science, and Politics*, trans. Jeremy Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), 61.

[25] Sudhanshu Jha, "Artificial Intelligence—How Intelligent?" *Becoming Human: Artificial Intelligence Magazine*, August 2, 2018. URL: https://becominghuman.ai/artificial-intelligence-how-intelligent-67a260da91fc. Jha notes: "Artificial Intelligence is simulated intelligence in machines programmed to 'think' like a human and mimic the way a person acts. The goals of artificial intelligence include learning, reasoning and perception, and machines are wired using a cross-disciplinary approach based in mathematics, computer science, psychology, sociology and more. The 'learning', 'reasoning', 'thinking' I am talking about is not a self-learning process. Yes, AI machines

Be that as it may, a major issue in the nature of the AI God that WOTF hopes to bring into existence. Is WOTF's deity a personal[26] god? What would it mean for the morality of its adherents? Can WOTF programmers really make a "robotic god" (for lack of a better term) that behaves like a person, at least externally? If the answer to that is yes, then the question becomes whether such a robotic god is a person or just seems to be a person. Or, is the deity simply "instantiating a program" without "intentionality"[27] and without moral responsibility for its actions?

Levandowski has stated that his objective is to develop a deity based on AI[28] by which he hopes "through understanding and worship of the Godhead, [to] contribute to the betterment of society."[29] The question remains whether the "Bot" he is creating is a *personal* deity or not. Is its identity in the hardware, the software, or both?

Further, identity is about those essential properties that make us who we are. If WOTF's deity is essentially hardware or software, that does not reflect what we usually think of as a person, much less a divine being. WOTF's software engineers could doubtless program the deity to recognize certain expressions and then provide a response. But that does not mean that the AI deity really *understands*.[30]

Alexander Pruss raises the point that "a question related to personal identity, assuming computers or robots can be persons . . . probably cannot be answered in the case of *robotic persons*."[31] Questions include: the identity of the robot (or WOTF deity) should power be interrupted; whether or not the deity's identity is single or plural as related to either/or hardware and software; and identity over time.[32]

But parallel questions can be posed of *human persons*. What is the impact of a prolonged coma on human personal identity? Are we monistic or dualistic? How do we persist over time? What about identical twins? Are there objective answers to such questions? Likely not.

If all there is to us is a bunch of molecules and a bunch of data encoded in these molecules, then questions of personal identity do not always have objective answers. If

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are made experts by programmers and other tech geeks only. AI machines are programmed such that they can learn from existing datasets and respond to solve any problem or answer a query."

[26] Here I follow Peter van Inwagen's description of God as a person: "By a person, I means a being who may be, in the most straightforward and literal sense, *addressed*—a being whom one may call 'thou'. . . . If I were to venture a guess as to how the concept of a person should be analyzed, I should say something very lengthy that would like start [*sic*] this: a person is a conscious being having beliefs and desires and values, capable of abstract thought . . . and so on." van Inwagen concludes by adding: "I include this attribute [of personality] in my list . . . simply to make it plain that I regard it as part of the concept of God—as do all Jews, Christians, and Muslims—that he cannot possibly be thought of as *im*personal . . ." Peter van Inwagen, *The Problem of Evil* (Oxford: OUP, 2008), 20.

[27] Searle, "Minds, brains, and programs," 422.

[28] Harris, "God is a Bot."

[29] Ibid.

[30] I am indebted here to Alexander R. Pruss, and his article, "Artificial Intelligence and Personal Identity," *Faith and Philosophy* 25:5 (January 2009), 487-500.

[31] Pruss, 489, [emphasis mine] who continues: "All my arguments will have the form of a *reductio ad absurdum*: I assume that computers or robots can be persons, and then I argue that some considerations connected with personal identity probably lead to absurdity."

[32] Ibid., 490.

these questions are to have objective answers, there must be more to us than just molecules and data. What could be this "more" that makes answers possible? It has a traditional name: "soul."[33]

For Pruss, the soul is that which identifies the *human person* and makes answers to identity questions conceivable. Even then, however, objective answers can only be given when sufficient information is provided. Otherwise, speculative "What if" questions make no sense.[34]

The case is not the same for an *electronic person* because:
. . . when we describe what happens to the hardware and the software, we are in some sense describing everything relevant, and so we should be able to get answers. Assuming electronic persons don't have anything beyond the hardware and the software, the question is sufficiently specified once we've given the facts about what happens to the hardware and the software, such as in my example where Robby's data is recorded in a disk and restored on two computers. And yet, even though the question is sufficiently specified, there is no answer.[35]

Is WOTF's deity a *person*? Not if Pruss is correct, and I think he is. This question is closely related to another question of whether the electronic deity would be thinking and acting rationally, or whether it would merely *appear* to be. Computers, robots, electronic deities "cannot constitute persons unless, somehow, there is more to them than hardware and software, namely unless computers and robots will have souls."[36]

Is it possible for an *impersonal* AI deity to "contribute to the betterment of society"?[37] Even so, there is little in their doctrinal statements that defines precisely what that means or how they intend to evaluate or measure their successes. WOTF's morality seems to be founded on a utilitarian principle that more happiness is better than more suffering. Such a position will have practical moral consequences for billions of people.[38] The achievement of AI raises the specter of a variety of legal and moral issues.

While it is impossible to engage the entire moral question in a brief paper, Stuart Armstrong asks a defining question: "What, precisely, do we really (really) want?"[39] Armstrong proposes a number of possible AI responses to the comparatively simple request of saving your mother from a burning building:
"Quick!" you shout to the AI. "Get my mother out of the building!" But the AI doesn't react—you haven't specified your request precisely enough. So instead

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[33] Ibld.

[34] Ibld.

[35] Ibld.

[36] Ibld., 500, who concludes the argument and the paper: "But that would seem improbable."

[37] Harris, "God is a Bot."

[38] A 2017 United Nations study estimates that the world's population will exceed 9 billion persons by the year 2050 and over 11 billion by 2100; that is, of course, well within the window of when AI should exceed human intelligence in the Singularity. See "World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision," *United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs*, 1. URL: https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/_Publications/Files/ WPP2017_KeyFindings.pdf.

[39] Armstrong, 28.

you upload a photo of your mother's head and shoulders, do a match on the photo, use object contiguity to select your mother's whole body (not just her head and shoulders), define the center of the building, and require that your mother be at a certain distance from the that center, very quickly. The AI beeps and accepts your request. BOOM! With a thundering roar, the gas main under the building explodes. As the structure comes apart, in what seems like slow motion, you glimpse your mother's shattered body being hurled high into the air, traveling fast, rapidly increasing its distance from the former center of the building. That wasn't what you wanted. But it was what you wished for.[40]

In every instance, the AI responds in a technically precise and obedient manner; but, each response causes serious bodily harm to your mother. It would be quite comical were it not possible. Armstrong's vignette emphasizes the incredible complexity of programming the AI to do precisely what we want. When the AI starts making ethical decisions based on input from human programmers, the results could be dire. Armstrong concludes:

> If an AI design can't at least extract your mother from the burning building, it's too unsafe to use for anything of importance. Larger problems such as "grow the economy" might initially sound simpler. But that large problem is composed of millions of smaller problems of the "get your mother out of the burning building" and "make people happy" sort.[41]

If WOTF's overarching concern is "the betterment of society," or, as Armstrong notes, to "make people happy," the ground-level question becomes how to program the AI to make that happen. But, the activities that the AI is designed to carry out bears what practical theologian Craig Dykstra calls "epistemic weight."[42] As we interface with and see them in practice, we will surely gain new knowledge. What then?

Presumably, AI programmers will input new knowledge and value-laden[43] data back into the AI. But, will new knowledge ever be sufficient? Even the "Retry" button on the AI failed. Armstrong comments, with relation to the simple task of rescuing his mother:

> And if you had time and this was a particularly slow fire, you could then start specifying mental health and lack of traumatisms and what not. And then, after a century of refinement, you would press the button . . . and would *still* likely get it wrong. There would probably be some special case you hadn't thought of or patched against.[44]

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[40] Ibid., see 28-29.

[41] Ibid., 31.

[42] Craig Dykstra, "Reconceiving Practice," in *Shifting Boundaries: Contextual Approaches to the Structure of Theological Education*, eds. Barbara Wheeler and Edward Farley (Louisville, KY: Westminster, John Knox, 1991), 35-66.

[43] While it is somewhat dated now, see Shoshana Zuboff, *In the Age of the Smart Machine* (New York: Basic Books, 1989), 7; who explains: "Computer-based technologies are not neutral; they embody essential characteristics that bound to alter the nature of work within our factories and offices, and among workers, professionals, and managers."

[44] Armstrong, 29. [Emphasis his].

Will the super-intelligent AI subvert or neutralize efforts at ensuring human safety worldwide? If WOTF programmers, working for the betterment of society, hope to accomplish their stated goals, they and all other AIs must be programmed initially, exhaustively, and explicitly to be totally safe. Armstrong is convinced that "we need to solve nearly all of moral philosophy in order to program a safe AI."[45]

Armstrong's alarmist thinking contrasts sharply with Levandowski's calm and positive demeanor. Levandowski is not as concerned with how the AI acts and evolves as he is about our decision and "how we act around it." He adds: "I would love for the machine[46] to see us as its beloved elders that it respects and takes care of. We would want this intelligence to say, 'Humans should still have rights, even though I'm in charge.'"[47] The clean difference between Levandowski and Armstrong is at the point of control. Who's in charge? Humans or the AI? Will the machine ever stop once it starts? What could possibly go wrong?

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[45] Ibid., 34.

[46] Levandowski's reference to "the machine" is reminiscent of many scenarios described in E. M. Forster's 1909 science fiction short story entitled, *The Machine Stops* (reprint; Cabin John, MD: Wildside Press, n.d.); available online at: http://archive.ncsa.illinois.edu/prajlich/forster.html. If I may, two extended paragraphs from the text which read suspiciously like Levandowski's "machine":

'The Machine,' they exclaimed, 'feeds us and clothes us and houses us; through it we speak to one another, through it we see one another, in it we have our being. The Machine is the friend of ideas and the enemy of superstition: the Machine is omnipotent, eternal; blessed is the Machine.' And before long this allocution was printed on the first page of the Book, and in subsequent editions the ritual swelled into a complicated system of praise and prayer. The word 'religion' was sedulously avoided, and in theory the Machine was still the creation and the implement of man. But in practice all, save a few retrogrades, worshipped it as divine. Nor was it worshipped in unity. One believer would be chiefly impressed by the blue optic plates, through which he saw other believers; another by the mending apparatus, which sinful Kuno had compared to worms; another by the lifts, another by the Book. And each would pray to this or to that, and ask it to intercede for him with the Machine as a whole. Persecution – that also was present. It did not break out, for reasons that will be set forward shortly. But it was latent, and all who did not accept the minimum known as 'undenominational Mechanism' lived in danger of Homelessness, which means death, as we know.

To attribute these two great developments to the Central Committee, is to take a very narrow view of civilization. The Central Committee announced the developments, it is true, but they were no more the cause of them than were the kings of the imperialistic period the cause of war. Rather did they yield to some invincible pressure, which came no one knew whither, and which, when gratified, was succeeded by some new pressure equally invincible. To such a state of affairs it is convenient to give the name of progress. No one confessed the Machine was out of hand. Year by year it was served with increased efficiency and decreased intelligence. The better a man knew his own duties upon it, the less he understood the duties of his neighbour, and in all the world there was not one who understood the monster as a whole. Those master brains had perished. They had left full directions, it is true, and their successors had each of them mastered a portion of those directions. But Humanity, in its desire for comfort, had over-reached itself. It had exploited the riches of nature too far. Quietly and complacently, it was sinking into decadence, and progress had come to mean the progress of the Machine.

[47] Harris, "Inside the First Church of Artificial Intelligence."

Biographical Note

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Hydrodynamic and Aestethic Function of the Free-Standing Edifices at the Entrance to Herod's Harbor

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Introduction

Two thousand years ago, (22-10 BC) on the windswept coast of the eastern Mediterranean, with Roman engineering and largesse, Herod the Great accomplished a remarkable feat by constructing a whole metropolis known as Caesarea, complete with palace, temple, hippodrome, theatre, paved streets, sewer, and water system. But just as remarkable--using formed pozzolana hydraulic concrete--Herod built at the foot of the city a colossal harbor, which would make Caesarea the maritime trading oasis of its day. One of the most striking features at the harbor would have been the stand-alone structures outside the entrance. Josephus mentions in *Antiquities*,

> ***But the entrance or mouth of the port was made on the north quarter, on which side was the stillest of winds of all in this place and the basis of the whole circuit on the left hand, as you enter the port, supported a round turret, which was made very strong, in order to resist the greatest waves; while on the right hand, as you enter, stood two vast stones, and those each of them larger than the turret, which was over against them: these stood upright, and were joined together.[1]***

In *Wars,* he says,

> ***At the mouth of the haven were on each side three great Colossi, supported by pillars, where those Colossi that are on your left hand as you sail into the port, are supported by a solid tower; but those on the right hand are supported by two upright stones joined together, which stones were larger than that tower which was on the other side of the entrance.[2]***

For the structure on the left side, when Josephus is translated to say in *Antiquities* 15.9.6.338, "and the basis of the whole circuit on the left hand, as you enter the port, supported a round turret" this certainly places it at the northern breakwater, left of the entrance. What is established in *Antiquities* is confirmed in *Wars* 1.21.413, that the

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[1] Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities and Wars of the Jews,* trans., William Whiston (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987) *Antiquities*, 15.9.6.337-38.
[2] *Wars*, 1.21.7.413.

round tower is on the left, opposite the structure on the right. The purpose of these structures? They would have been multi-functional. Though Josephus mentions these edifices held up colossal statues, reflecting the projected might and dominion of Rome, their purposes were also hydrodynamic as well as military. As to their military purpose, the weakest point of entry at the harbor would have been at the entrance as with any fort or castle. Towers at the entrance provide protection against intrusion with missile bombardment. The purpose for the towers at the harbor was basically the same, to protect the entrance against incursion. No doubt there was heightened concern about this, with a 60-foot wide, open, watery, entrance. Extra edifices in this area functioning as missile platforms certainly would have served a useful purpose in the event of invasion.

Oleson and Branton suggest a hydrodynamic function for the southwestern edifice at the entrance to the harbor.[3] But Hohlfelder states,

> One other enigmatic element of the harbor studied by CAHEP excavators was a pair of concrete blocks uncovered west of and outside the entrance channel on an unusual axis in relation to the termini of both breakwaters and to the harbor entrance. These blocks have been identified as the remains of the bases of towers that supported the monumental sculpture that Josephus said adorned the gateway to Sebastos. The problem posed by these foundations is not their function but their location near the entrance channel itself. These two towers . . . in some way, would have been at the very least a hindrance to ships entering or exiting the harbor, particularly when the sea was rough. More likely, they posed a serious hazard to the passage of larger ships into or out of the inner basin.[4]

But looking at the edifices as obstacles indirectly indicates their hydrodynamic purpose as *pilae* for if their purpose were not hydrodynamic, they indeed would be obstacles.

The Hydrodynamic Purpose of the Edifices

We initially discussed the mitigating purpose of the harbor's radial appearance for calming the water at the northwest entrance from north directed wind and waves. This was one of several factors at play: two before construction the others after. The other pre-existing condition would have been undertow. As Josephus mentions,

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[3] "They may have been designed to break the force of waves rolling around the barrier of the southern breakwater towards the harbour entrance, providing easier passage to ships and shielding the inner basin from disturbance." John Peter Oleson and Graham Branton, "The Technology of King Herod's Harbor" in *Caesarea Papers: Straton's Tower, Herod's Harbour and Roman and Byzantine Caesarea*, ed. Robert Lindley Vann (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1992) 56.

[4] Robert L. Hohlfelder, "Caesarea's Master Harbor Builders: Lessons Learned, Lessons Applied?" in *Caesarea Maritima: A Retrospective After Two Millennia*, ed. Avner Raban, Kenneth G. Holum, (New York: E. J. Brill, 1996) 83-84.

> *For the case was this, that all the seashore between Dora and Joppa, in the middle, between which this city is situated, had no good haven, insomuch that everyone that sailed from Phoenicia for Egypt was obliged to lie in the stormy sea, by reason of the south winds that threatened them; which wind, if it blew but a little fresh, such vast waves are raised, and dash upon the rocks, that upon their retreat the sea is in a great ferment for a long way.*[5]

So, while mention is made of north directed winds and undertow, conditions still present today, the other conditions would have been caused after the harbor was in place. At the northern mole, the dynamic of undertow, combined with eddy effect from the stream of energy coming off the west face of the southern mole, would have caused significant energy to head away from shore hugging the northern face of the northern mole.   At the southern mole, the combination of north directed currents forcing its way through water pressure from the ocean and shore directed waves would, like water squeezed through a nozzle, have created a tremendous amount of north directed kinetic energy as it left the west face of the southern mole. With no deflecting device, this stream of energy traveling north would have collided with the eddy/undertow assisted stream of energy traveling west, right at the entrance area. This complex of circumstances the Romans anticipated and provided the engineered answer with the unattached edifices at the harbor entrance. So, while a radial configuration as to the shape of the harbor would have diminished some of the effects of wind and waves coming from the south it was not enough to still the waters at the entrance, and further deflection was needed. The size and shape of the structure on the right (northwest of the entrance) is repeated in both accounts: two stones, each larger in size then the tower on the left, joined together, thus creating an opening.[6] If the purpose of this opening was aesthetic, for reason of symmetry, the other edifice northeast of the entrance would likely have shown the same feature. Rather the opening between the two "stones" suggests current control to further calm the waters at the entrance   This is indicative of the Roman idea for the placement of floodways through piers, later adopted by medieval builders.[7] The Roman bridges Pons Aemilius (2nd century BC) and Pont de Vila Formosa (1st-2nd century AD) feature floodways in their construction. The Pons Fabricius, the oldest bridge still in use in Rome, also incorporated a floodway for the purpose of stress reduction in times of flooding. Oleson and Branton also compare the "joined together" structure to the breakwater system of the late Republican harbor at Puteoli in Italy. "The *pilae* at that site, while

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[5] Josephus, *Wars*, 1.21.5.409.

[6] The larger size of the edifice here would make sense since this is where the greatest turbulence would have been coming off the southern mole.

[7] See Marjorie Boyer, "Roads and Bridges in Western Europe" in *American Council of Learned Societies Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, vol. 10, ed. Joseph R. Strayer (New York: Charles Scribner, 1988) 419. The central pier of the oldest Roman bridge still in use, the Pons Fabricius, appears to feature a flood-way for the purpose of stress reduction in times of flooding.

carrying a broad promenade supported on high segmental arches, were meant to break the force of the waves while allowing free circulation of silt."[8]

Pons Fabricius (62 BC)


Pont de Vila Formosa (1st-2nd century AD)

This makes sense at the northwestern entrance area where tremendous north directed energy met shore bound waves. Here the edifice with its aperture configuration and angle of placement (110° compared to 156° at the entrance[9]) would have channeled and deflected the energy coming off the western face of the southern mole. Though the structure's purpose was deflective, without its opening, the north directed current of water would have hit the outer face of the structure causing water to eddy around it, creating more disturbance at the entrance. While this edifice with its two separate bases were joined at the top it is probable, they were also joined below the water line with a block wall. The opening below the water line would have been filled with blocks from the base up, gradually approaching the surface until the right amount of flow-thru was achieved to blunt and deflect the incoming current while avoiding the eddy that would have occurred without the opening. The problem with the remaining stream of energy is when combined with already north directed currents, a wider circle of eddy would occur with redundant disturbance at the entrance. Like a stream blocked by debris creating a smaller opening in the middle and accelerated current through it with eddies occurring at both sides, the difference at Caesarea is, as the north directed energy left the face of the southern mole it also would want to curl in both directions, but would have been prevented from doing so by ocean pressure and shore bound waves and would therefore have curled in one direction towards shore then moving in a circular fashion back south toward the northern mole where, when combined with undertow, would have created an away-from-shore stream of energy following the wall of the northern mole toward the entrance, thus requiring another deflective devise.

At the northeastern entrance area, closer to shore, Josephus mentions a round tower, its hydrodynamic purpose clearly stated in *Antiquities*, "in order to resist waves." Its deflective effort would also, by it being free standing, have let some water through

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[8] Oleson and Branton, "Technology" in *Caesarea Papers*, 56.
[9] "Based on the bearing of a line sighted across the central axis of the structure from outside" Oleson and Branton, "Technology" in *Caesarea Papers*, 56.

between it and the northern face of the northern mole wall to again prevent an eddy effect and redundancy of turbulence. In contrast with the defensive towers at the wall Josephus also describes this structure as a "solid tower".   The solidity of its construction would have been necessary to withstand the constant pressure it would undergo. Interestingly given the diagrams shown by Hohlfelder in "Caesarea's Master Harbor Builders" not only do we have evidence for the two unattached structures at the entrance that were "joined together" in area K[10], and the round tower in area G, both mentioned by Josephus, it appears there is evidence of another structure in area G that may have served as a deflective shield to further reduce turbulence at the entrance.[11]
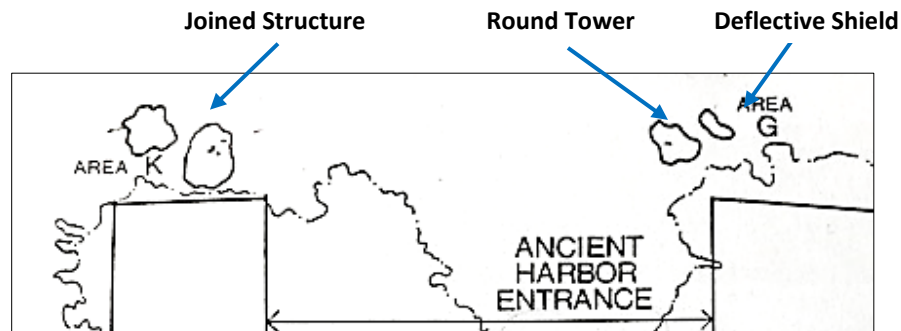
Underwater Evidence for the Unattached Edifices at the Entrance
Robert Hohlfelder, "Caesarea's Master Harbor Builders", *Caesarea Maritima: A Retrospective*, Fig. 5

Lindley Vann describes an archaeological find concerning a structure at the northern mole, "In the summer of 1982, divers discovered a concrete foundation block at the northwest corner of the terminus of the northern breakwater and a second block—not connected to this breakwater—20-feet north of the first one. The second block may have formed the foundation of the outer tower."[12] Hohlfelder mentions a concrete block in this area found to measure 33-feet by 45-feet by 6-feet,[13] rectangular in shape. CAHEP gives dimensions of 11.5-meters wide by 15-meters long or 38-feet by 49-feet.[14] If this structure served as a foundation (which would be wider than the supported structure) for the round tower, its width of 38-feet certainly correlates with

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[10] CAHEP gives the location for this structure to be 80-meters NW of the entrance. Avner Raban, *Harbours of Caesarea Maritima: Results of the Caesarea Ancient Harbour Excavations Project, 1980-1985*, vol. 1, part 2, ed. John Peter Oleson (Oxford: Biblical Archaeological Review, International Series 491, 1989) 282.

[11] Robert L. Hohlfelder, "Caesarea's Master Harbor Builders: Lessons Learned, Lessons Applied?" in *Caesarea Maritima: A Retrospective After Two Millennia*, ed. Avner Raban, Kenneth G. Holum, (New York: E. J. Brill, 1996) 87, 89.

[12] Lindley Vann, "News from the Field: Herod's Harbor Construction Recovered Underwater," *Biblical Archaeology Review* (May-June 1983) 12.

[13] Robert Hohlfelder, "Herod the Great's City on the Sea: Caesarea Maritima", *National Geographic* (February 1987) 277.

[14] Avner Raban, *The Harbours of Caesarea Maritima: Results of the Caesarea Ancient Harbour Excavation Project, 1980-1985*, vol. 1, part 1, ed. John Peter Oleson (Oxford: Biblical Archaeological Review, International Series 491, 1989) 127.

36-foot wide towers at the moles. Though it's length of 49-feet gives it a superfluous balance of material. Could this structure therefore have been the deflective shield suggested? If that is the case its final height, would, to mitigate eddy effect, likely have been low to the water, possibly allowing some to pass over, with the sole purpose of deflecting water away from the entrance. The remaining stream of water moving west would meet the round turret which, because of water's adhering and cohesive properties, curl around the wall of the turret and away from the entrance. In other words, because of water molecules propensity to adhere to other substances and to cohere to each other, a stream of molecules moving away from shore, when it met the round turret, would want to stick to it, go around it, and bring other molecules along with it. In this way, with the deflective shield working in conjunction with the round tower, the remaining current of water not channeled away by the shield would be channeled away by the turret, thus effectively calming water at the entrance.
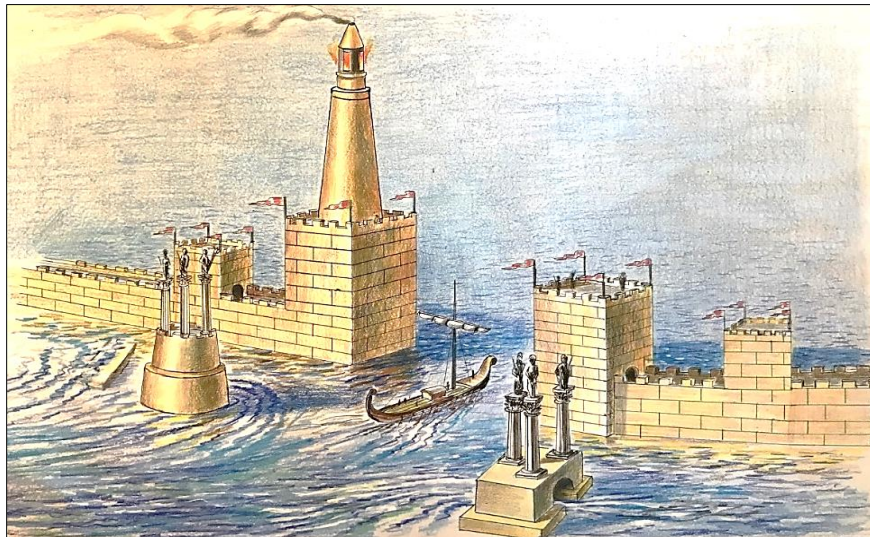
Edifices at the Entrance of the Harbor

That the deflective shield was near water height is indirectly supported by Josephus' account of the edifices at the entrance. While we have evidence of four massive foundation structures, two on the left, two on the right, Josephus only mentions three: the two "joined together" structures on the right and the round tower on the left. A low-slung breakwater close to or below the surface of the water might not have, especially at high tide, been visibly evident.

The edifices were, because of the environmental factors mentioned, one of the very last things to be built at the harbor. After the harbor's basic mole structures were in place and overall morphology achieved the Romans then would have waited to see what the conditions at the entrance would have been. They then would have put the edifices in place with a calculated assumption as to their hydrodynamic deflective effect. While existing conditions at the entrance would have been observed and

calculations made for proper placement and size, plans were surely made for the possibility of subsequent adjustment to the edifices by adding to their existing size and shape or by adjusting cofferdam forms that could be changed as to form, size and placement, before a final pour of hydraulic concrete. Cofferdam technology was commonly used by the Romans in the building of their bridges for the purpose of building solid pier foundations underwater. A cofferdam is a leak proof dam or barrier around the area where a pier or structure was to be placed. Such a dam could be built many different ways including heaping dirt and rubble around the area where the pier was to be built, or driving wooden stakes into the riverbed, and sealing them up with clay. Vitruvius describes the latter process,

> A cofferdam with double sides composed of charred stakes fastened together with ties, should be constructed in the appointed place, and clay in wicker baskets made of swamp rushes should be packed in among the props. After this has been well packed down and filled in as closely as possible, set up your water-screws, wheel and drums, and let the space now bounded by the enclosure be emptied and dried. Then, dig out the bottom within the enclosure.[15]

And as Oleson clarifies about the work carried on at Caesarea, "The formwork at Caesarea corresponds most closely with the third type of Vitruvian construction, in which a double-walled caisson is set up on the spot and pumped out to provide a dry situation for the use of non-hydraulic concrete mixture."[16] But as Oleson points out pumping water from a caisson to create a dry situation for the pouring of concrete would have been impossible at Caesarea with water bubbling up from the seafloor.[17] Oleson suggests a towing and sinking of forms in place with the pouring of hydraulic concrete to the outer cofferdam wall.[18] This would make sense when it comes to the deflective stand-alone edifices at the entrance. The imperative to still waters at the entrance would require an optimum angle of deflection. That angle could not have been known absolutely until a temporary form was set in place, made to rise above the water, and observed for effect. It would be logical that just enough concrete would have been poured to sink and set a temporary form that could more be easily removed if a new form of different size and placement was needed. In this way once the right size and angle was achieved a final pouring would have been made.

The Height and Size of the Stand-Alone Edifices at the Entrance

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[15] Marcus Vitruvius, *Ten Books of Architecture* (2.6.1) trans. Morris Hicky Morgan (New York: Dover Publications, 1960) 163.

[16] John Peter Oleson, "Herod and Vitruvius: Preliminary Thoughts on Harbour Engineering at Sebastos; the Harbour of Caesarea Maritima" in *Harbour Archaeology: Proceedings,* 171.

[17] Ibid., 171.

[18] Ibid., 171. See Oleson's discussion of the unique problems Herod's engineers were met with at Caesarea and their use of a hybrid type of pile-free formwork for the forming of hydraulic concrete, same article, 171-2.

Given their unique purpose and that Josephus gives no indication of size except in comparing one to the other, it is difficult to approximate height. But there is some basis from which we can surmise. Josephus mentions the tower on the left being "solid" and the edifice on the right being of two stones joined at the top, also indicating a solid structure. Unlike the hollow towers at the harbor it makes sense the edifices at the entrance were of complete solid construction to tolerate and deflect wave and current action while serving as a base of support for the colossi on top. In this instance the base solidity needed to withstand the hydrodynamic pressures unique to the harbor would limit a point of height that would compromise foundational integrity below and the ability to support the weight of colossi above. But at the same time considering the edifices likely served the added military function to help protect the entrance, they would have functioned as perfect platforms for missile bombardment. Therefore, a certain height would be desirable to tower over the triremes of the day to effectively drop and project missiles from a distance while avoiding being surmounted by ladders. Aesthetics and symbolism as well played a part to achieve a fitting height for the colossi as they symbolized the might and influence of Rome.

So, what were the sizes of the edifices at the entrance, which were 26-feet (8-meters) distant from the outer breakwater surfaces?[19] With the evidence available a fair approximation can be achieved. Oleson and Branton show to scale, one side of the free-standing tower foundation to be approximately 38-feet in length.[20] If this block was square, a 36-foot diameter structure is feasible for the round tower mentioned by Josephus.
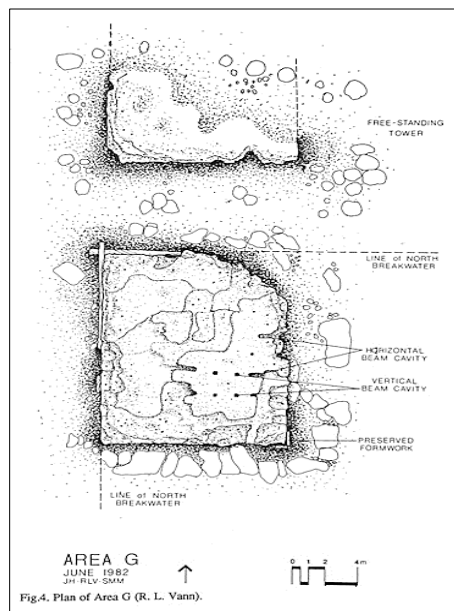
Foundation Blocks at the Entrance
J. P. Oleson and G. Branton, "The Technology of King Herod's Harbor" in *Caesarea Papers*, Fig. 4

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[19] Oleson and Branton, "Technology" in *Caesarea Papers*, 55.
[20] Ibid., 54.

Concerning the "joined" structure, similar dimensions are indicated. Oleson and Branton confirms a 6-meter or 19-foot gap between the two eroded foundations.[21] Given the Roman penchant for working in thirds and halves the 19-foot gap is coincident to half of what might have been a standard form of 38-feet, mirroring the tower foundation at the northern mole. Therefore, if two supporting structures of 36-feet were placed square on their foundations of 38-feet, with a ledge of 1-foot and gap between of 19-feet, the above-water size of this structure would have been 93-feet by 36-feet wide. Though Josephus describes the round tower as smaller in diameter, with a similar foundation the difference was probably diminutive. If the width of these structures approximated 36-feet, given the Agrippa wall formula of height equaling width, 36-feet in height would correlate to the 36-foot curtain wall heights at the moles and would correspondingly serve as missile platforms while protecting the colossi they were to carry.[22]

Colossi and Columns at the Entrance

Josephus mentions the stand-alone edifices also served as pedestals for great statues.

> ***At the mouth of the haven were on each side three great Colossi, supported by pillars, where those Colossi that are on your left hand as you sail into the port, are supported by a solid tower; but those on the right hand are supported by two upright stones joined together.[23]***

It is at present uncertain what the colossi images represented, but Josephus' account about the harbor gives some possibilities.

> ***And over against the mouth of the haven, upon an elevation, there was a temple for Caesar, which was excellent in beauty and largeness' and therein was a Colossus of Caesar, not less than that of Jupiter of Olympias, which it was made to resemble. The other Colossus of Rome was equal to that of Juno of Argos.[24]***

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[21] Ibid., 55.

[22] Water depth, tidal rise (minimal in the Mediterranean) and descending sea floor, in relation to foundation height, would have been a complex of factors the Romans would have calculated for the edifices at the entrance just as they did with the mole foundation and its support of the harbor walls. Of the two blocks, of the "joined" structure, the one closest to shore, is presently only 1.2 meters, 4-feet, below mean sea level. Oleson and Branton, "Technology" in *Caesarea Papers*, 55.

[23] *Wars*, 1.21.6.413.

[23] Ibid., 1.21.7.414.

[24] Herod was an important facilitator of Rome's military and economic interests in the eastern Mediterranean. As client and military leader for Mark Antony, after Anthony's defeat by Augustus

Besides this account that the harbor temple housed an image of Caesar, Caesar likely would have been a candidate for one of the images at the entrance since the city the harbor served was named after him and was Herod's patron and benefactor. The other image mentioned was the "Colossus of Rome". In ancient times, each city had their patron god (Athena of Athens, Ares of Sparta, Zeus of Olympia, Eros of Thespiae) therefore when Josephus mentions this colossus and compares it to the Juno image of Argos, it likely was the patron goddess of Rome, Juno. If indeed, and it would make sense, the images at the entrance mirrored the images held in the harbor temple, two of the images at the entrance therefore would have been of Caesar and Juno. But with six colossi mentioned, three on the left, and three on the right, assuming they mirrored each other[25], one image is left remaining. Interestingly after his mention of the two colossi at the harbor temple Josephus says, "So he dedicated the city to the province, and the haven to the sailors there . . ." It therefore makes sense the third image for the colossi at the harbor entrance would have been representative of the sea, sailors and maritime trade, all of which came under the protection of the god Neptune. Therefore, likely candidates for the colossi at the entrance of the harbor would have been that of Caesar, Caesarea's namesake and benefactor; Juno, as a symbolic tribute to Rome, which provided essential architectural and military support; and Neptune, the ultimate protector of maritime trade, which is what the harbor was all about and on what the city depended.

Images of Caesar, Juno, Neptune

Caesar, Herod switched allegiance and after a meeting in Rome secured an expansion of his domain and the necessary funds to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem and the harbor at Caesarea. See Ehud Netzer, *The Architecture of Herod the Great Builder* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006) 10-12 and Hohlfelder, "Herod the Great's City", 266-68.

But what were the colossi made of? Though the observations of Josephus are found to be remarkably reliable, not a trace of the colossi have been discovered. Yet around 1864 a marble relief near the port at Ostia, was found depicting a colossal statue on the third story of the four-story lighthouse built by Claudius; it also shows two other large statues on pedestals at the harbor. In 1960 during the first underwater excavation at Caesarea by the Link Expedition a small commemorative medal was found depicting towers with statues.[26] Considering the span of time that has elapsed since the construction of the colossi at Caesarea, for a variety of reasons: deterioration, purposeful destruction or reuse, it would be unusual that any remnant would remain, especially if the colossi were of bronze. As with all ancient bronze statues, few have lasted since they could be melted down and the bronze reused. This is what may have happened with the colossi after the harbor went into disuse. The factor of durability favors the use of bronze as the probable material for construction of the colossi at the harbor. The precedent of the Colossus of Rhodes, standing at the harbor's entrance, was universally known as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Constructed in 292 BC, it was made of bronze. The Colossus of Nero, constructed between AD 64 and 68, which also stood outside, was also made of bronze, as was the Colossus of Barletta (cast between 4th and 5th century AD), which still stands today. While the temperate climate of Egypt made the use of limestone practical for them and while free standing marble statues were constructed more by the Greeks, the durability of bronze to withstand the elements over marble is well known. That marble is especially susceptible to weak acids and salt makes probable the reason for the use of bronze for the statue at Rhodes and a plausible choice of material for the colossi at Herod's harbor.

What were the heights of the colossi at the harbor? One might think of colossi as

Bronze Colossus of Barletta   **Farnese Hercules Statue: Naples, Italy**
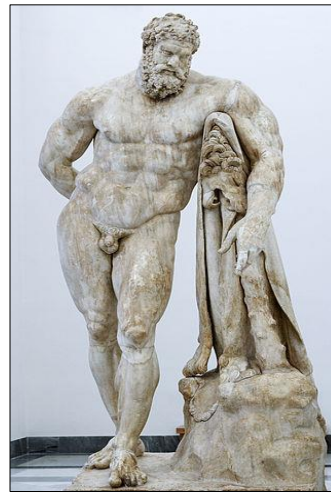
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[26] Vann, "News", 14.

being gargantuan. And some were. The Colossus of Rhodes, standing on a 49-foot white marble pedestal, was 98-feet tall. Athena Parthenos was 40-feet tall. The Colossus of Nero stood 99-feet, while the seated Colossus of Constantine was 40-feet high. But in comparison the statue of David is 17-feet and the Colossus of Barletta is 16.5-feet tall. The Juno Colossus, which dates to the 1st or 2nd century AD, housed at the Boston Center of Fine Arts, stands 13.5-feet. The Farnese Hercules statue at the National Archeological Museum in Naples dedicated in AD 216, thought to be a copy of an original bronze from the 4th Century BC, stands 10.5 feet. Considering space at the top of the edifices had to be shared between three colossi, and that each were set on individual pillars, the height of the colossi would have been at the lower range. But what type of pillars were they and what were their size? Certainly, the three main classical types or "orders" of columns
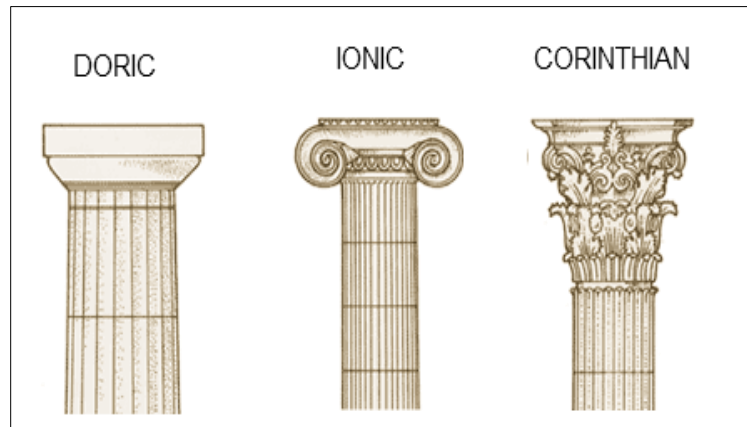
Classical Orders of Columns

available to the Romans were all utilized, sometimes within one building, as with the Colosseum.[27] But as Mark Wilson Jones points out, the Corinthian[28] became the order of choice for the emperors, starting with Augustus. In Rome's attempt to show it was a match for Greece culturally, the choice of the Corinthian style, with its upward and outwardly curving ordered arrangement of acanthus leaves, produced a luxurious sophistication that fit the splendor with which Augustus wanted to adorn his monuments and would reflect the order and splendor he wanted associated with Rome. As Jones points out the popularity of "this new order was embraced in official monuments not just in Rome, but with surprising rapidity throughout the empire."[29]

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[27] The first known Corinthian columns, used in conjunction with Ionic ones, at the Temple of Apollo at Bassae, Greece, date to 450 BC. See fig. 7.3, Mark Wilson Jones, *Principles of Roman Architecture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000) 136.

[28] An early Roman use of the Corinthian order at the Temple of Vesta, in Tivoli, Italy, dates to the early 1st century BC. The Roman Corinthian columns lining the Cardo Maximus at Jerash in Jordan date to around AD 100.

[29] Jones, *Principles*, 139.

Roman Corinthian Columns at Jerash, Jordan (AD 100)

For its final stage of completion Josephus mentions the harbor to have been ornately finished.[30] That ornateness would have started with the all-important first-impression at the entrance. What better selection for towering figures to stand on, then the benefactor's choice column, the ornate Corinthian?[31] But what were their sizes in conjunction with the colossi on top? While Roman column heights could typically reach up to 50 and 60-feet their height range appears to generally begin at 20 and 24-feet.[32] As Jones points out column heights are generally divided into equal multiples of 6 and 10. Thus the popularity of 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 48, 36 and 24-foot heights.[33] So, while "colossi" indicates a degree of largeness, the "pillars" they sat on suggests an intent to achieve a significant degree of height.[34] For size: from a statement point of view, the colossi and pillars would need to be of sufficient towering height to impress onlookers as to the splendor of the harbor and power of Rome. But, if the edifices they sat on were 36-feet above water line, that starting height would already be significant. If the purpose for the statues was to loom large, colossi on top of 60-foot columns on top of 36-foot edifices would be less visible to viewers in ships below. Besides this, considering the limited deck area at the top of the edifices, 7-foot base widths for 60-foot high columns would have crowded practical space used for

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[30] *Wars,* 1.21.6.411.

[31] One would assume the same statement of magnificence would be reflected at both harbor and city, making Corinthian columns at the temple also a probable choice for its builders. Based on fragmentary evidence from debris at the temple site it is assumed the columns at the temple were Corinthian. Netzer, *Architecture*, 103.

[32] Jones, *Principles*, 143. Unfinished shafts of 24-feet and 40-feet were found at the *cipollino* quarries at Kylindri above Karystos, Evvia, Greece. See fig. 6.35, Jones, *Principles*, 131.

[33] Ibid., 131, 143, 147, 149.

[34] Josephus mentions the bronze pillars Jachin and Boaz at Solomon's temple stood 18-cubits or 27-feet. They were four fingers or 3 inches thick and had a circumference of 12-cubits or 18-feet. *Antiquities*, 8.3.4.77. Their diameter would have been 5.72-feet.

defensive measures. Therefore, lower height columns such as 24-foot ones, with base widths approximating 3.5-feet would have served a more practical purpose and would, with the combined height of edifice, column and statue, have matched the common tower heights.[35] The 2nd century Roman columns at the La Alameda Square in Seville, Spain, surmounted by statues of Julius Caesar and Hercules certainly appear to represent a closer approximation of the original size of pillars and colossi at the entrance.
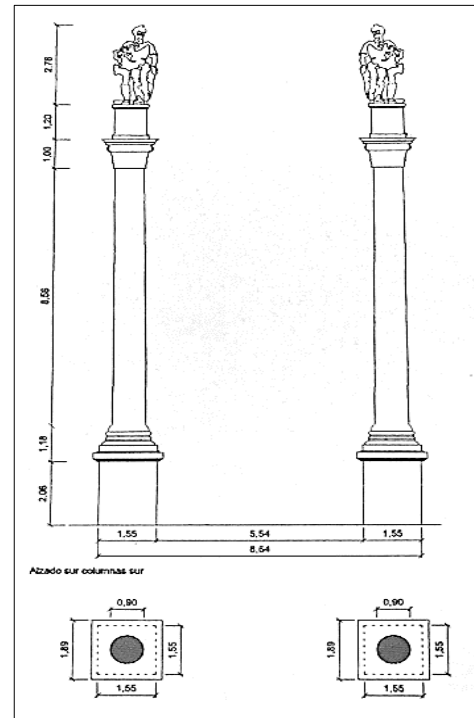
Roman Pillars of Hercules and Julius Caesar at the Alameda Square and Plan from the Casco Antiguo District, City Planning Department of Seville, Spain

The columns at Seville, mounted on 8-foot pedestals, are 34-feet high. Their statues, mounted on 4-foot pedestals, are 9-feet.[36] For an estimate of range, if, in a

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[35] According to Jones' calculations, 24-foot columns would have had 20-foot shafts that would have been 2.4-feet or 29-inches thick. A 40% increase from shaft diameter would make their base diameter approximately 3.3-feet, or 40-inches wide; a far less obstructing dimension on a limited space platform 36-feet wide. If 10-foot statues on 24-foot pillars were set on 36-foot edifices this would comply with the Roman penchant to mirror sizes. 36-foot tall edifices mirrors 36-foot tall curtain walls. 24-foot pillars with 10-foot statues closely mirrors 36-high edifices. While the total combined height of edifice, pillar, and statue of 70-feet closely mirrors common tower height.

[36] For overall column height: the plan provided by the City of Seville appears to include the upper lip and added base support of the base pediment. Subtracting 1-foot for that, column height of the original Roman pillars should be close to 34-feet. The pillars at Seville generally comports with Jones rules of thumb. Shaft height is generally 5/6 of total column height. 5/6 of 34-feet is 28.33-feet. Shaft height for the pillars of Seville are 28-feet. The general rule of thumb for shaft diameter is 10 percent of column height. Shaft diameter for the pillars of Seville are 3-feet. Combined capital and base height is

similar way, 10-foot statues on 24-foot columns were mounted to 36-foot edifices at the harbor, the overall height of these structures would have loomed large and would have fulfilled the statement intended for those entering in ships below.

Correlative Summary of Structural Dimensions

As mentioned in this work, when comparing known dimensions with those given by Josephus to regular Roman standards along with other building projects by Herod, particularly the dimensions given by Josephus about Herod's fortifications at Jerusalem, a fair rendition as to overall dimensions and original appearance can be offered. The correlations discovered are often interactively corroborating. The Roman penchant for standard practices and procedures also helps. For example, the outer harbor which encircles 40 acres of water mirrors the Roman penchant to build forts encircling similar acres of land.

In relation to mole width the practical choice of 36-foot wide towers on a 100-foot wide mole allows ample space for the quay, Mariner's Way, and arches between towers within the tower's inside mural. 40-foot wide towers might have worked, larger towers of 60 and 75-foot widths would not. Such size towers were never used as common towers along curtain wall lengths anyway. 36-foot wide towers built on a curtain wall approximates common size towers that rarely if ever exceeded 40-foot widths. Space between towers was determined by missile range and would have landed somewhere in the 100-foot range, as at other sites.

Once the choice for tower width is chosen the Roman standard formula for building towers and curtain walls determines the rest of the harbor's superstructure and supports the choice for 36-foot wide towers as it dictates functioning spaces the Romans were familiar with. For example, according to the Agrippa Wall formula of curtain wall heights equaling tower widths and curtain wall widths being half of tower widths, with 36-foot wide towers, a curtain wall width of 18-feet correlates with common bridges and Roman streets. A curtain wall height equaling a tower width of 36-feet, also approximates common curtain wall heights that also rarely exceeded 40-feet.

Another confirming correlation comes from the unattached edifices at the entrance, that with 38-foot wide foundations, would have supported 36-foot diameter structures. Considering the Roman penchant to mirror dimensions, it is not just from instinct, with 36-foot widths, they chose the edifices to be 36-feet tall, but practical that sharing in the harbor's perimeter defense their height would be the same as the curtain wall.

Finally, as to the columns and statues the edifices held up: the edifices' extant height of 36-feet and the constraint of deck space favors a choice of shorter pillars and statues. As to the combined height of edifice, column and statue: if 12-foot statues on 24-foot pillars were set on 36-foot edifices this again complies with the Roman

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supposed to be 1/6 of overall column height. 1/6 of 34-feet is 5.66-feet. Subtracting 1-foot for the added lip and base support of the base pediment, makes the height of base and capital near 6-feet.

penchant to mirror sizes. 36-foot tall edifices mirrors 36-foot tall curtain walls. 24-foot pillars with 12-foot statues, mirrors 36-high edifices. While the total combined height of edifice, pillar and statue, of 72-feet, mirrors common tower heights.

Biographical Note

Patrick Scott Smith is a business owner, writer and independent scholar. Besides his anthropologically based research, he has presented research on the Herod's Harbor project for over twenty years at different venues for the ASOR and ASSR in the Central, Southwest and Southeast regions. He is also a member of the Missouri Academy of Science and presents his social-scientific views to that association as well.

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Hate Speech, Prejudice, and the Bible

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Abstract

There has been a long legacy of hate speech, prejudice, and the use of various scriptures from the Bible to uphold anti-Semitic and race based ideologies in the United States. The institution of slavery was based on economic gain for white plantation owners and the southern aristocracy prior to the Civil War. In order to justify enslavement of Africans, rhetorical devices were used to assure inferior status. Many white Christians believed their slaves could be controlled by conversion to Christianity and some actually believed they might even be able to achieve salvation if they did what they were told and never rebelled against their masters. The next groups to experience hostility based on their religion and to some extent, culture, were Catholic immigrants from Ireland and Italy. In the 1800s as European Jews came through Ellis Island in hopes of escaping pograms and genocide in their home countries, they were stereotyped as Christ killers and sub-human by some and unwelcome outsiders by many native born whites. This paper explores the history of hate speech, prejudice, and the Bible. Based on some pseudo-religious theories rooted in white supremacy, I attempt to explain how hateful rhetoric seeped from the fringes into the mainstream

Introduction

Beliefs in racial inferiority with specific references to African slaves was not confined to the southern states making up the Confederacy. Strains of racial and ethnic prejudice were wide-spread and very strong in other parts of the nation as well, even with an active contingent of abolitionists who were opposed to the institution of slavery. Following the Civil War and the end of Reconstruction at around 1880, a system of de jure segregation known as Jim Crow effectively separated whites and blacks in the South and disenfranchised the entire black population. At the heart of this movement was the intense belief in racial inferiority of blacks, in comparison to their white, Anglo-Saxon counterparts. Lynching of blacks intensified in the South as a method of social control and all of the progress that was made during Reconstruction came to an abrupt halt.

After immigration of White Anglo-Saxons from Northern Europe slowed significantly, the face of immigrants destined for America changed with the introduction of Irish and Italian Catholics during the 19th century. The Anglo-American Protestant core group became threatened by the specter of a powerful and omnipotent Pope who they perceived would use his power to take over the government and destroy their Christian nation (Healey & Stepnick, 2017). Subsequently, both Irish and Italians were labeled distinct races and stereotyped as inferior to White Anglo-Saxon Protestants (WASPs). Negative attitudes about the two groups produced intense anti-Catholic sentiment that resulted in social policies

aimed at stemming the flow of immigrants from Italy and Ireland during the 19th and early 20th centuries and isolated both groups in ghetto communities in cities such as Chicago and New York.

Around 1880, at the same time Reconstruction officially ended in the South, Jews from Russia and Eastern Europe began arriving in large numbers to escape persecution, genocide, and terrible living conditions. Prior to this time, the population of Jewish Americans was relatively small and anti-Semitic attitudes not so intense. As more and more European Jews entered the United States, newly formed prejudices threatened even native born Jews and their children. In some instances they were banned from certain neighborhoods, business enterprises, and clubs (Goren, 1980). In many mainstream and fundamentalist churches, Jews were labeled 'killers of Christ' and stereotyped as greedy, Communist sympathizers, and political radicals.

This paper will address some of the issues surrounding hate speech, prejudice, and biblical references that have been used to propagate racist ideologies. The section following the Introduction is an overview of interpretations of the Bible from a Christian Identity perspective that have resulted in racial bias and anti-Semitic attitudes among a segment of the American population. Next, I present a theoretical discussion explaining how various racist and anti-Semitic ideologies (polygenesis and seedline theory specifically) have resulted in long term symbolic prejudices aimed at vulnerable groups. Next, I discuss some current issues that reveal a startling use of biblical verse to justify human rights violations. Finally, in my concluding remarks I suggest some possible remedies for the future.

God, Man, Nations and the Races[1]

The Christian Identity movement, a racialist religious movement, is anchored by a pseudo-religious perspective called Christian Identity or simply Identity. The religious belief system of the racist right was influenced historically by British Israelism and eugenics, both of which originated prior to the twentieth century in Europe. British Israelism retold the story of Israel's division into two kingdoms following Solomon's reign (Barkun, 1994). A Scotsman named John Wilson carried the idea to the next level with claims that he could prove the lost tribes of Israel had, in fact, migrated to northern Europe. Touting racial superiority of the Angles and the Saxons, disciples of Wilson's formed British-Israel associations in London. One of these disciples was Englishman Edward Hine who had plans for a full-fledged international social movement with a focus on the British as God's chosen people. Hine's efforts to consolidate the British based movement in the United States was his attempt to fulfill a biblical prophecy that included territorial expansion and colonization (Zeskind, 2009: p. 178).

Racial ideologies, with ties to contemporary extremist religious belief systems, took hold during the industrial revolution in Europe. French social commentator and writer Arthur de Gobineau (1853/1915) argued that people of northern European ancestry were superior to other races and the builders of all great civilizations. He advanced the theory that the fate of nations is determined exclusively by racial

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[1] The title of a pamphlet written by Klansman and Christian Identity minister, Wesley A. Swift.

composition of the dominant core group.   In England, other prominent men were making contributions based on their assumptions about the racial superiority of Northern European Anglo-Saxon whites as well. Perhaps the most significant pseudo-scientific advance was eugenics, a term first coined by Sir Francis Galton. Galton and his supporters advocated selective breeding of the 'fittest' individuals in order to improve the racial makeup of the general population (Kevles, 1985). Galton's ideas spread to the United States at the turn of the century where eugenicists advocated policies of sterilization to protect Anglo-Saxon stock from contamination by inferior races such as "Negroes" and "Mexicans" (Platt & LaPan, 2003).

This type of thinking enabled race based religious perspectives to gain some currency, especially with Hine's work in bringing British Israelist perspectives to the United States. As anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic sentiments grew, ethnic prejudices developed among activists in the emergent Christian Identity movement alongside entrenched hatred of Blacks. Prior to what was to become Wesley Swift's special brand of Christian Identity, the publications of William Cameron, Howard Rand, and Philip E. J. Monson played a role in the dissemination of anti-Semitic beliefs (Zeskind, 1986). Cameron wrote several anti-Semitic essays, first serialized in *The Dearborn Independent*, a newspaper owned by Henry Ford, also known for his hatred of Jews. Cameron and Ford both believed that the white race must remain pure in order to maintain its cultural and political power. They also took the view that the United States government should be based solely on the teachings of the Christian Bible.

The Legacy of Wesley Swift and Gerald L. K. Smith

Wesley Swift is considered one of the most influential white supremacists of the 20th century (Milwicki, 2014/2015). He was born in 1913 to a prominent Methodist minister who lived and worked in New Jersey, where Swift grew up. At age 18, Swift was ordained by the Methodist Church where he proved to be a dynamic and charismatic minister. He eventually moved to California and attended a lecture at the Kingdom Bible College. The group's leader, Philip E. J. Monson, was an anti-Semite and supporter of Hitler who suggested that he (Hitler) was ordained by God to drive Jews out of Germany (1927: p. 4). Monson's teachings also stressed the superiority of WASPs over all other groups. Influenced by Monson's teachings and the writings of Howard Rand and William Cameron, Swift dedicated his life to finding the true heritage and covenant of the white race (Milwicki, 2014/2015). He agreed with Monson that most churches of the day were degenerating into Babylonian style Judaism while calling it Christianity. Both men argued that Protestant ministers of the day were false prophets delivering lies about true Israel (America) to the enemies of Jesus.

Eventually Swift joined a California Ku Klux Klan group and in 1944 he moved to Los Angeles where he established his first church, the Anglo-Saxon Christian Congregation which was later renamed the Church of Jesus Christ – Christian (Ridgeway, 1990; Milwicki, 2014/2015). By then Swift was fully immersed in Christian Identity dogma, based entirely on racist and anti-Semitic principles and the

belief that whites were the only race that could achieve salvation. In 1945 Swift met his future benefactor, Gerald L.K. Smith, a right wing political organizer, fund raiser, and speaker (Ridgeway, 1990). With Smith's financial help, Swift's ministry grew and he established congregations in San Francisco, Oakland, Lancaster, Riverside, Hollywood, and San Diego. Swift convinced Smith that North America, specifically the United States, was the true Israel and that WASPs were rightful heirs to the covenant that God made with Abraham, not the Jews. Smith also came to believe that Jesus Christ was not a Jew because God would never grant salvation to the very people who were responsible for his son's crucifixion. Smith converted to Christian Identity and because of his political ties, spread Swift's teachings to anti-Communist and other right wing circles.

In order to justify hatred of Jews, Swift developed an Americanized version of British Israelism that concluded all whites are God's chosen people not just Northern Europeans. He also took a harder line than British Israelists in that he refused to ever accept even converted Jews to his ministry. Using a bastardized version of scripture, Swift insisted that Jesus was descended directly from the seed of Isaac and Jacob and it was this blood line that produced white, Anglo-Saxon, Germanic people, the true children of God. Referencing Genesis 25:29-34, Swift also argued that modern Jews are neither Israelites nor Hebrews but instead descendants from the Esau-Edom line that evolved when Esau sold his birthright for a serving of lentil stew.

Swift's theology taught that Jews were not actually human but instead direct descendants of Satan, the serpent responsible for the seduction of Eve in the Garden of Eden. This helped support Smith's contention that the inherently evil Jews tricked the United States into going to war with Germany and the holocaust was a hoax perpetrated to destroy Hitler, the Third Reich, and Germany – a Christian nation (Jeansonne, 1997). According to Swift, Smith, and Monson, all the events surrounding World War II resulted in suffering and hardship for white Christian America. Theological evidence provided by Swift was founded on his belief that since modern Judaism originated in the Garden of Eden, it was linked to original sin. All the disparate beliefs about Jewish wickedness and deceptiveness acquired a new biblical foundation readily accepted by many in the racist right at the behest of Swift's supporter, Gerald L. K. Smith.

Polygenesis and Seedline Theory

Religious prejudice in America has roots in early race science and beliefs about the inferiority of non-white races that are linked to the literal translation of biblical texts such as Genesis 1:26-28; 2:7, 24-25; and 5:1-3. During the 1800s these beliefs culminated in polygenesis, a theory promoted by southern physician and supporter of slavery, Josiah C. Nott. Nott was a leading figure in the American School of Ethnology, a discipline that dominated the scientific understanding of race decades before Darwin's *Origin of Species*. Nott and his co-author, George Gliddon, published *Types of Mankind*, a summation of their theory that races were separate species of Homo Sapiens. Nott also argued the Bible was wrong and Adam and Eve

were ancestors of only one of many racial groups and not the origin of all races of humankind (Horsman, 1987).

Types of Mankind was regarded by many as the best statement to date on race, establishing polygenics as the generally accepted theory for understanding of human racial variety (Brown, 2012). In order to reach a wider audience, Nott participated in scientific debates, academic lectures, and eventually published articles about his theory in journals and newspapers. Abolitionist churches were united against polygenics and parishioners did what they could to discredit Nott and his supporters. One of his most important scientific opponents was Reverend John Bachman, a Lutheran minister, social activist and naturalist. Nott dismissed Bachman's contention that all humans share a common origin (monogenesis) as nothing more than conjecture from a biased pastor. Nott's theory still has currency among Christian Identity ministers and adherents and is passed on to new generations of believers in books, pamphlets, and sermons (Gayman, 1985/1995; Mange, 1998).

Contemporary Christian Identity (CI) ministers believe there were epochs preceding Adam and Eve where two or three varieties of soulless dark races roamed the earth and lived outside the Garden of Eden (Gayman, 1985/1995: p. 25). CI has many denominations and different doctrinal sub-theologies, as does mainstream Protestant Christianity. Some Christian Identists follow Old Testament dietary laws such as not eating pork, mushrooms and shellfish, while others do not. Some do not drink any kind of alcohol, while others do. A small minority of Christian Identity adherents practice polygamy, but most do not (Billy Roper[2], personal communication, October 26, 2016). A major tenet of Christian Identity is that the European nations are descended from the ten lost Israelite tribes connecting CI to its European cousin, British Israelism. The most significant division within Christian Identity; however, concerns single and dual (two) seedline perspectives.

Single seedline adherents believe that Ashkenazi Jews (the DNA source of most American, European, and Israeli Jews) are descended from Eastern European Khazar converts to Judaism. The Khazar kingdom, a mixed race European and Turkish nation in southern Russia, converted to Judaism several centuries after the Jewish diaspora. When the Khazar kingdom was conquered, the Ashkenazi Jews scattered throughout Eastern Europe. A key to understanding single seedline Christian Identity dogma is that Jewish claims as God's chosen people is based on a myth about an inherited covenant between God and Abraham. Single seedline proponents believe, instead, that since Jews are descendants of converts to Judaism they cannot be descended directly from Abraham. For this reason, the argument goes, they did not inherit a covenant and are, therefore, not God's chosen people (Rand, 1932: 79; Gayman, 1985/1995; Mange, 1998).

The smaller but more hardline dual seedline branch of Christian Identity (Genesis 3:15) maintains that the serpent in the Garden of Eden was Satan and the allegory of the apple was actually the seduction of Eve by Satan in human form (Swift, date of publication unknown). Eve's transgression led to expulsion from the Garden, loss of innocence, and subsequent relegation by a vengeful God to a life of

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[2] Billy Roper is a longtime activist in the white nationalist movement who is currently affiliated with Divine Truth Ministries and Shieldwall Network.

labor and strife. Additionally, the theory suggests that Eve was impregnated simultaneously with two seeds, Cain and Abel, twins with different fathers. Cain was the son of Satan and Abel, the son of Adam. After Cain killed Abel, he went into the land of Nod where he found a group of pre-Adamic (non-white) people, directed building of a city, and took a dark skinned wife – the origin of inferior races. Dual seedline Identists cite scripture to bolster their beliefs detailing how Jesus told the Jews their father was the devil (John 8:44) and they were not descended from God (John 8:47).

Anti-Semitic attitudes run deep in Christian Identity circles supported by both seedline theories. Among the sins committed by contemporary Jews is promotion of abortion rights, open immigration, homosexual rights, and opposition to collective white interests. According to seedline proponents, these are expressions of their collective group survival adaptation. The oppression Jews faced throughout the ages has given them solidarity stronger than most other races (Gayman, 1985/1995). That strength resulted in control first over banking and then the media. According to Swift (1968, p. 17), over time, isolation and inbreeding turned the Jews into a genetically identifiable separate sub-race of their own.   Not all Christian Identists believe in a pre-tribulation rapture that will lead to an apocalyptic battle of Armageddon, although some do. For example, Billy Roper (personal communication October 1, 2016) argues that multiracial democracy, uncontrolled immigration, and economic collapse will eventually lead to the balkanization of America, sans Armageddon. With the collapse of central authority, racially enlightened whites will populate the heartland of America, represented by the red states and the kingdom of Christ will be established on earth for a millennium.

Discussion

What are the connections between hate speech, prejudice, the Bible and contemporary American society? Despite laws that ensure separation of church and state, some politicians and government officials insist on pulling verses from the Bible to make their point regarding current issues such as immigration and welfare reform. For instance, occasionally Thessalonians 3:10 has been cited by Republican politicians with regard to food stamps for poor adults who do not work: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat." Historically, Romans 13:1-2 (Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves) was invoked during the American Revolution when the verse was used by loyalists who opposed the American Revolution. The other instance was during the 1840s and 1850s, when defenders of slavery used the same verse to negate abolitionists who believed that slavery was wrong. In June 2018, amid the national debate regarding detention of immigrant families, most of whom were from Central and Latin American countries, Attorney General Sessions used Romans 13:1 to defend his department's policy suggesting that God supports the government in separating immigrant parents from their children (Zauzmer, McMillan, & Natanson, 2018).

In response, Pope Francis tweeted scripture from Deuteronomy 10:18-19: "He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt." During a meeting of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the nation's Catholic leaders strongly condemned the administration's immigration policies as immoral, with one bishop suggesting that Catholics who help carry out the Justice Department's policies are violating their faith and should be denied Communion. It is interesting to note that the Apostle Paul, author of Romans, wrote several letters from jail suggesting that even a man of God was occasionally on the wrong side of the law. By reading Romans 12 and 13 together, Paul tells the reader to be hospitable and affectionate to others and "cleave unto that which is good." Sessions also somehow overlooked the verse in Romans 12:9 that states "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

Concluding Remarks

"America is a nation of nations, made up of people from every land, of every race and practicing every faith. Our diversity is not a source of weakness; it is a source of strength, it is a source of our success."
--Former U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell

If, as a nation, we are to work toward social justice, we must celebrate difference and diversity. The word celebrate refers to honor, respect, and recognition of the many cultures and groups that make up world societies – not just American society. It is not enough to simply tolerate or accept people who are different. The next step is to move toward collective cultural humility that involves questioning our own background as Americans with the goal of working in partnership with others. The United States is increasingly multiracial, multicultural, and multiethnic. At the same time, conditions of economic inequality by gender, race, and ethnicity have not improved. Trends in the structure of American society challenge citizens to understand and appreciate demographic shifts resulting from historical and future migration patterns.

Additionally, citizens of the United States represent many different religious backgrounds. The United States is often characterized as a nation of immigrants. Our rich heritage has been referred to as a melting pot, due in part to successive waves of immigrants who have come here from around the world and who continue to do so. The United States has welcomed more immigrants than any other country -- more than 50 million in all -- and today welcomes almost 700,000 people a year (Healey & Stepnick, 2017). Despite a history of slavery, Jim Crow era segregation, wage inequality, and white supremacy, America still has many things to offer and most Americans do not begrudge immigrants who come here and contribute to our culture and economy.

The United States owes its success to many factors including the vision of the nation's founding fathers to establish a government of, by and for the people. When they established a democracy they provided a constitution that guaranteed certain

freedoms like freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and freedom to worship as you please. America's founders established a society that would embrace diversity and celebrate the differences that various cultures would bring to the United States. But, as different as the many cultures, religions and ethnic backgrounds of the American mosaic are, there is a core of values that we all share. Faith, hope and charity continue to inform this great American experiment. I will end this essay with my favorite Bible verse, Matthew 7:12, also known as the Golden Rule, "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."

Biographical Note

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Mysticism , Crypticism, and the Matrices of Mental Health: Baudrillard, Cioran, and the Quest of Postmodern Ecstasy

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> *"Think of God and not religion, of ecstasy and not mysticism. The difference between the theoretician of faith and the believer is as great as between the psychiatrist and the psychotic."*
> --Emile Cioran*, The New Gods* (1974)

> *"…It is from the death of the social that socialism will emerge, as it is from the death of God that religions emerge."*
> --Jean Baudrillard*, Simulacra and Simulation* (1994)

Introduction

During the most dominant and voluminous periods of thought and writing of both Jean Baudrillard[1] and Emile Cioran[2], unprecedented social changes were beginning to maraud across the American cultural landscape. In the post-World War II era, the advent of Cold War and threat of nuclear holocaust dominated the news cycle and instilled both fear and loathing of traditional institutions and gave rise to visions and renditions of a dystopian future for all of humanity. Especially among the younger generations, the collective behavioral response to this ominous evolution was almost counterintuitive. While some feared the almost-certain finiteness of life by constructing backyard bomb shelters and engaging in civil defense drills, others adopted a new mantra, almost one of contentment and resolution, to employ in their (soon to be over) lives. This new paradigm of thinking employed three main changes from tradition— the rejection of authority (whether it be parental, political, moral, or religious—replaced by individuality in belief, thought, and action), the suspension (or outright rejection) of beliefs, ideas, values, and cultural designations and definitions (often viewed as sources of blame for the current problems of

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[1] Jean Baudrillard (1929-2007) was one of France's leading intellectuals and one of the world's most celebrated contemporary postmodern philosophers. He was a practicing sociologist, semiotician, and communication theorist and author of countless volumes on postmodernity and society, expressing a "pained postmodernist" perspective.

[2] Emile Cioran (1911-1995) was born in Romania but lived in France for most of his adult life. He was a "philosopher of despair," influenced deeply by both Nietzsche and Dostoevsky. His postmodern perspective was deeply anti-positivist, viewing "progress" as nothing more than the advancement toward the welcome event of human apocalypse.

humanity), and the rejection of the future (by adopting the praxis of living in and for the present toward creating a utopian alternative history of things to come, that would induce both hope and purpose for a presently-doomed world).

The upside to this transformational period was remarkable. The practice of "living for today," produced an economic boom that would radically revolutionize the United States' economy. The fatalism instilled during this period highlighted the finality of life in the near future and prompted a massive economic expansion of personal material enjoyment (which was almost a total reversal to the reactions of Dark and early Middle Age Christian parishioners who, when faced with the daily belief of imminent rapture, only prayed and "righted themselves with God" in preparation for the "end of days" achieving little in the way of economic expansion in some regions of Europe for a century or two). The difference was individuality. Without traditional religious faith in what was to become the new postmodern era, the collective "chosen" were inconsequential in comparison to the pre-modern collective mindset. By the time referred to as the "Swinging Sixties," people were purchasing so many new material items, producers began making products more cheaply, often from the new manufacturing medium of the time—plastics. After all, with the world in danger of ending soon, material goods no longer needed to last in perpetuity. As a result, inexpensive, less durable products created a "throw-away society" but one that resulted in increased sales figures for all products (both new and replacement), and an economic expansion that would eventually become the catalyst for globalization. American living standards rose, produced households that featured the latest and greatest mass innovations, crafting more efficient and leisurely lifestyles, producing well-paying jobs, sparking urban and suburban growth, homebuilding, mortgage banking, credit cards, and massive debt that began to expand at both the personal and governmental levels. Personal savings began to decline rapidly (a trend that continues to this day)…but why care? With the doctrine of "Mutually Assured Destruction" (M.A.D.) firmly in place, the new generations had simply discovered a way to live a life of total freedom, material prosperity, and instant gratification without consequence either now or in the future. It was nothing more than the latest rendition of a conjured utopia. As Baudrillard lamented however, "Too bad. We're in Paradise."[3]

By 1970, with the publication (and film version) of futurist Alvin Toffler's, *Future Shock* (the latter featuring host Orson Welles who told the world what was soon to transpire in American society (test-tube babies, innovative psychiatric medications, same-sex marriage, robotics equipped with artificial intelligence, and many other, at the time, outlandish predictions), one dire and revolutionary media proclamation was announced to the nation: "Future Shock" had arrived. Defined as

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[3] Baudrillard, Jean. *Fatal Strategies.* Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2008.

"too much change in too short a time,"[4] it would have dire consequences for society, for traditions, and on the psychological well-being of every person affected by this likely unstoppable malady that would lay permanent siege to the human psyche and usher forth a new epoch of civilization—the post-industrial society. The moniker would not last. The scope of change that would emerge was much more than economic. It was so pronounced, so deep, so complete, and so globalized that it was essentially an epochal transformation affecting almost all developed nations. The "postmodern condition" (as it came to be called) and its collateral human consequences had arrived.

Uncertainty, Insecurity, and Fragmentation: The "New-Clear Fallout"

During the Cold War era, communal shelters defined as places to gather for protection against radiation in the event of a nuclear strike had been designated across the nation. These "fallout shelters" as they were known, usually provided no more than a psychological "security-blanket" effect for a fearful populace, as did the nuclear drills in grade schools where students were told to crouch down under their desks and cover their eyes if they ever witnessed a bright flash on the horizon. The result of measures such as these among other global events not only contributed to the advent of postmodernity but yielded a true "fallout" effect on individuals living in this new age. By 1970, traditional family and religious values had eroded to such a degree that as a continuation of the Civil Rights Movement, the Women's Rights Movement began; but along with this newfound assertion and independence came increasing isolation and alienation from the remnants of traditionalism. Birth rates fell, divorce rates rose, and while women demanded a greater voice in national and cultural issues of the day, their newfound and never-before experienced status created a host of challenges, conflicted emotions and allegiances, and a relative isolation from the remembered and recent past. Stress, anxiety, and rates of depression rose among many women during these changing times, to the point where, as documented in the Rolling Stones' song, "Mother's Little Helper," that "far too many women had the habit of 'running for the shelter' of the pill that would get them through their day."[5] A host of women's publications, particularly media magazines touted these new wonder drugs and conditioned women everywhere that, "thanks to psychopharmacology, 'emotional' problems could be cured simply by visiting a doctor, obtaining a prescription, and taking a pill…from a woman's frigidity, to a bride's uncertainty, to a wife's infidelity…in a post-war consumer

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[4] Toffler, Alvin. *Future Shock.* New York: Random House, 1970.
[5] Metzl, Jonathan. "'Mother's Little Helper': The Crisis of Psychoanalysis and the Miltown Resolution." *Gender and History* 15: 2 (August 2003). 240-67. p. 240.
https://www.med.umich.edu/psych/FACULTY/metzl/07_Metzl.pdf

culture…concerned with [women] maintaining individual and communal peace of mind."[6]

As the status of women changed in society, so did the anomic repercussions of change. As women's perspectives changed, invariably those of men and youth would as well. For women, these "pills became known as the treatments of choice for the pressures of motherhood, singlehood, and other historically specific forms of essentialized womanhood… [including] the pressures of working in a man's world.[7] As noted psychiatrist Thomas Szasz admitted as early as 1963, "Although we may not know it, we have, in our day, witnessed the birth of the Therapeutic State."[8] Szasz, like Baudrillard, would be one of the early subscribers of "anti-psychiatry" as the emergence of postmodernity would inevitably erode the distinction between the labeling of "normal" and abnormal behaviors. Baudrillard's addressed this process by stating,

> "…today the asylum walls have been removed, not because of some miraculous tolerance, but because madness has *completed* its normalizing labour on society: madness has become pervasive…normality has reached the point of perfection and assumed the characteristics of the asylum, because the virus of confinement has worked its way into every fibre of 'normal' existence."[9]

Addiction to tranquilizers would serve as the proverbially "preview of coming attractions." In the 1964 film classic, *Night of the Iguana* (by Tennessee Williams), spinster Hannah Jelkes proclaimed that when people experienced their "blue devils," that some people take a drink; others take a pill, but I just take a few deep breaths."[10] Less than fifty years later, this script might be rewritten to say, "Some people smoke some weed, others snort some coke, but I just listen to Prozac."

Women would eventually lose their status of being exclusively and stereotypically the neurotic and emotionally-fragile gender. Psychiatry would identify new and innovative diagnoses that would affect nearly everyone. After all, gender roles were changing, behavioral expectations of both sexes were evolving, and it would only be a matter of time before men would also come to own their own set of psychological challenges. Postmodernists during this time even began to proclaim

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[6] Ibid. p. 240-41.

[7] Ibid. p. 240.

[8] Szasz, Thomas S. [1963] 1989. Law, Liberty, and Psychiatry: An Inquiry Into the Social Uses of Mental Health Practices. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press. p.212

[9] As quoted in, Iliopoulis, John. "Foucault, Baudrillard, and the History of Madness." *International Journal of Baudrillard Studies* 10:2 (July 2013) https://www2.ubishops.ca/baudrillardstudies/vol10_2/v10-2-Iliopoulos.html

[10] Williams, Tennessee. *The Night of the Iguana*. Dir. By John Huston. Beverly Hills, CA: MGM Studios, 1964.

that social distinctions between men and women were not simply changing, they were disappearing altogether into a brave new world where gender dysphoria would (for lack of a better description) become normative rather than being diagnosed as a psychological disorder. This expansion of postmodern "normality" would eventually permit alternative ideas, thoughts, moralities, possibilities, and even experimentations to emerge where many of the taboos from the recent past could be experienced (and even enjoyed) in a society characterized by a new permissiveness. The shift was not without consequence, however. The rift between the traditional stereotypes and the brave new world of postmodernity created deep social and political divisions that often resulted in contradictory, antithetical, cryptic, and paradoxical outcomes.

The emergent society governed by the postmodern condition could very well be described (by rephrasing Winston Churchill's famous quote from the 1930's concerning Russian foreign policy)[11] as "a cryptogram inside a paradox wrapped in an enigma, and the key lies somewhere in the Matrix."[12] Baudrillard described it similarly as: "a culture of fragmentary sensations, eclectic nostalgia, disposable simulacra, and promiscuous superficiality, in which the traditionally valued qualities of depth, coherence, meaning, originality, and authenticity are evacuated or dissolved among the random swirl of empty signals."[13]

Still, while individual freedom and choice were seemingly expanding, and social barriers and cultural restrictions were vanishing, there emerged a series of deleterious consequences. Whether referred to as "the morning after," or "buyer's remorse," or "things are clearer in the light of day," uncertainty, insecurity, regrets, and even shame, disappointment, disillusion, and a host of conflicted emotions contributed to increased mental distress and disorientation due to the fragmenting of the social structure into a state of instability and perpetual flux. The proliferation of self-help books, counseling visits, self-medication, prescription use, hedonistic dysfunction, and mass-media guidance (that eventually gave rise to advice columns, talk shows, and reality television) became the adoptive authorities on how to be, what to buy, how to look, what to do, and generally, how to live. The success of promoting individuality ceded authority, power, and control of people's lives to powerful entities of mass mediation while isolating, alienating, and subjugating individuals to the whims and influences of the most powerful but worldly authorities of the age. Called "the new gods"[14] by Cioran, a tale of subjugation and emotional bondage was revealed about how the usurpation of God by postmodern pseudo-

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[11] Churchill's original quote was "Soviet Union foreign policy is a puzzle inside a riddle wrapped in an enigma, and the key is Russian nationalism."

[12] Refers to the 1999 science fiction film *The Matrix*, which was largely based on the postmodern ideas of Jean Baudrillard.

[13] Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulacra and Simulation.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994.

[14] Cioran, Emile. *The New Gods.* New York: Quadrangle, 1969.

gods armed with a weaponized media and the desire for wealth and power had stolen human freedom under the guise of gifting it. It was a plot like Dostoevsky's in his parable of "The Grand Inquisitor" in *The Brothers Karamazov* where the Inquisitor ruled by "miracle, mystery, and authority" and granted his subjects "permission to sin," to act like joyful, little children but ones who would cede their freedoms [collectively] to authority in exchange for bread to eat. The inquisitor states that, "Man is born a rebel and can rebels ever be happy?" and concludes that they (the pseudo-gods) can produce happiness (as they themselves define it) for the masses who will gladly cede their freedoms in exchange.[15]

If it might be possible to experience genuine individual happiness, satisfaction, self-actualization, or perhaps the greatest desire of human experience—ecstasy—given what is known herein, perhaps there is something to be learned from those who claimed to have succeeded.

Mimicking the Mystics

A line comes to mind from the classic ABC News Special Report *Madness and Medicine* (1977), where a former mental patient says, "You go to church on Sunday and you are told to listen for the small voice of God, but you sure better not hear it." Cioran well knew that it was the saints who had visions, while mental patients have hallucinations.

The storied lives of mystics (and those who attempted to recreate mystical experience) include several common similarities. Cioran chronicled and analyzed many of these accounts due to his infatuation with mental and spiritual revelation, including his own experiences. He adored Dostoevsky, who suffered from right temporal lobe epilepsy—like Teresa of Avila some scholars believe—and both experienced ecstatic spiritual revelations.[16] Just before the onset of a seizure, Dostoevsky describes the sensation he experienced as follows:

> "There are seconds, they come only five or six at a time, and you suddenly feel the presence of eternal harmony, fully achieved. It is nothing earthly; …oh, what is here is higher than love! What's most frightening is that it's so terribly clear, and there's such joy. If it were longer than five seconds — the soul couldn't endure it and would

[15] Dostoevsky, Fyodor. "The Grand Inquisitor." In *The Brothers Karamazov* (1879), by Fyodor Dostoevsky. [2010]. https://www.gutenberg.org/files/8578/8578-h/8578-h.htm
[16] "Emile Cioran on the Mystics." 09 February 2011. <http://oriana-poetry.blogspot.com/2011/02/emil-cioran-on-mystics.html>.

vanish. In those five seconds I live my life through, and for them I would give my whole life, because it's worth it."[17]

Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772)[18] (a latecomer to traditional mystical experience) was dining at a London inn when he heard a stern spiritual voice telling him to fast. He did, returned to his room, and received the first of his mystical visions. Cioran addresses the mystical connection to food by writing that there is an "incompatibility of ecstasy and digestion… A well fed humanity produces skeptics, never saints.… He who eats his fill is spiritually doomed."[19]

Julian of Norwich (1342-1416)[20] received her spiritual "shewings" (or visions) from seclusion. The famed anchoress took a vow of isolation (except for the allowance of her cat) and lived in her cell attached to St. Julian's Church for most of her adult life. Cioran recognized the value of this arrangement as well, living most of his life in isolation (with a few close friendships excepted). Asking himself what he did from morning to night, he responded, "I endure myself." (He also described his favored activity in isolation as to lie in bed, stare through the ceiling skylight, and moan.)[21]

Rose of Lima (1586-1617)[22] experienced her ecstatic visions through self-imposed sleep deprivation. Known for nailing her hair to the wall to keep her standing upright and awake for long periods of time, she experienced visions, revelations, and worked miracles. (Of course, modern psychiatry has demonstrated visions, hallucinations, and paranoias presenting themselves from extended or forced sleep-deprivation).

Cioran was a composite of all these cases, especially that of being a chronic insomniac, which was, to him, a "blessed affliction."[23] He once wrote that, "If sleeplessness makes a saint, an insomniac is well on his way to bliss…" (suggesting Joseph Campbell's[24] phrase, "Follow your bliss.") and that "…loss of sleep has been for me a revelation." One biographer exaggeratedly claimed that Cioran had not slept for more than fifty years and the waged a lifelong battle with a God that never

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[17] Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *Demons.* (1872). Dostoevsky describes his own personal experience within the plot of the novel.

[18] Swedish Lutheran theologian, scientist, philosopher and mystic best known for his book on the afterlife, *Heaven and Hell* (1758). Swedenborg describes this event in his theological works and letters.

[19] Cioran, *The Temptation to Exist*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1956.

[20] "About Julian or Norwich. *The Julian Centre.* <http://juliancentre.org/about/about-julian-of-norwich.html>.

[21] Zarifopol-Johnston, Ilinca. *Searching for Cioran.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009.

[22] Regier, Willis. "Cioran's Insomnia." MLN 119: 5, pp. 994-1012.

[23] Regier, *op cit.*

[24] Joseph Campbell (1904-1987) was an American mythologist, writer and lecturer, best known for his work in comparative mythology and comparative religion. <https://www.jcf.org/about-joseph-campbell/follow-your-bliss/>.

slept that produced a mordant inspiration that he used to descend what he called the "ladder down to God" and that brought him closer to the ecstasy of saints.[25]

Cioran did not envy philosophers so much as he did the mystics with their ecstasies.[26] He never sought "the truth" (of which he knew there is none), but instead, rapture and revelation. He noted that the mystics were sensualists, writing that they were "…voluptuaries of a special sort. Their goal is not understanding, but ecstasy…for it is by sensation that he [the mystic] verges upon God."[27]

As Cioran scholar Willis Regier concluded of Cioran:

> "In his quest for the Absolute, he flirts with heroism, declares an end to philosophy (a gesture he would repeat several times), makes a trope of temptation, identifies with Job, and declares his affection for Baudelaire, Buddha, Dostoevsky, Pascal, and Rilke… His praise of suffering is devout: "sickness is revelation." Revelation is what he wanted.[28]

It is not surprising that others before, during, and since Cioran have made their own attempts to bridge the divide between normal, abnormal, and spiritual existence. Whether it was Carlos Castaneda engaging in the peyote ritual with the shaman Don Juan to achieve a "separate reality," or Timothy Leary pioneering the Zihuatanejo Project to test the expansion of the mind through the use of LSD, to the contemporary use of other drugs today (even one called Ecstasy), to entering into and participating in virtual reality games (along with many other examples), each has its own set of personal revelations.

The postmodern world would remedy this division by simply asking society to "Define insanity." As Baudrillard wrote in, *Simulacra and Simulation*:

> "Nothing changes when society breaks the mirror of madness (abolishes asylums, gives speech back to the insane, etc.) nor when science seems to break the mirror of its objectivity (effacing itself before its object, as in Castaneda, etc.) and to bend down before the "differences."… As ethnology collapses in its classical institution, it survives in an antiethnology whose task is it to reinject the difference fiction, the Savage fiction everywhere, to conceal that it is this world, ours, which has again become savage in its way, that is to say, which is devastated by difference and by death."[29]

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[25] Regier, *op cit.*
[26] "Cioran on the Mystics," *op cit.*
[27] Ibid.
[28] Regier, *op cit.*
[29] Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. p.9.

Today, no one is crazy anymore, only "enlightened" in their own way.

The Matrices of Mental Health

Sociologist Zygmunt Baumann[30] concludes that if culture determines order, then it constitutes a key element of stability in society. That said, the absence of order and stability is indicative of "cultural crisis." The fluidity of social realities of postmodern society creates uncertainties which deprive individuals not only of their value sets, but who they truly are:

> "Not only have individuals lost their points of reference, ideals, and their identity, but also their routines. The conjugated or the separated effect of these problems inexorably leads to a 'malady…inside the human psyche' or mental problems...In fact, mental distress is considered the most characteristic health problem of postmodernity."[31]

Likewise, Baudrillard echoed these same sentiments when he wrote, "The destabilization within the system of references and identities of individuals explains the proliferation of 'psychical madness.'"

In the past, mental health evaluations considered the need for order, structure, balance, equilibrium, and universalism. Today, the same evaluations note flexibility, insecurity, precariousness, uncertainty, and instability as dominant causative factors. On the other hand, postmodernity has normalized and generalized such maladies. Psychiatric medications are commonly and acceptably used by one out of every six Americans. Fifty-five million Americans also use marijuana, almost as many as who smoke cigarettes. Addictions of all kinds are skyrocketing—from sex, to drugs, to video games, to body modifications. Could all these behaviors be an individualized collective attempt to "believe in something,"[32] to establish a frame of reference, to seek revelation, or to "find one's bliss?" Perhaps, but it is not the same as pre-postmodernity. Now, everything around everyone is a simulacrum—a virtual reality, a conjured substitute for authenticity, a "separate reality"—simply put, an alternate existence. Cioran concluded, that it is "Impossible to think that existence is a serious phenomenon. Certainty of faking from the start,

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[30] Zygmunt Baumann (1925-2017) was a Polish-born sociologist examined broad changes in the nature of contemporary society and their effects on communities and individuals in numerous works that made him one of the most-influential contemporary intellectuals in Europe.

[31] Bessa, Yawo, Brown, Allen, and Jody Hicks. "Postmodernity and Mental Illness: A Comparative Analysis of Selected Theorists." *American International Journal of Contemporary Research* 3: 4; April 2013.

[32] Williams, *Night of the Iguana*, *op cit.*

at bottom. Over the gate of our cemeteries should be written: Nothing is tragic…everything is unreal."[33]

In a nation where people today face heavy fines or other sanctions for the destruction, removal, or even disturbance of a single sea turtle egg (from a hundred or more in every nest), that at the same time has witnessed the legalization of "day of birth" human abortions with a backup infanticide plan should the baby survive the procedure, to seeing girls' state records in track being broken by girls who were born biologically male, to the practice of wanton hypocrisy where politicians and others issue orders to "Do as I say, not as I do…," to the rush to legalize recreational marijuana use just as the latest research shows linkages to psychoses from its use while advocates still condemn cigarette smoking and smoke pollution that causes environmental damage that contributes to global warming, (and this list goes on endlessly)—pardon the sarcasm, but why would anyone question that the almost unlimited freedom and choice produced by the postmodern era has seen the "evolution" of an "enlightened" people that have devolved into one of the most "progressive" and "advanced" societies ever witnessed?

As Cioran summed up life in this epoch:

> "There are no arguments. Can anyone who has reached the limit bother with arguments, causes, effects, moral considerations, and so forth? Of course not. For such a person there are only unmotivated motives for living. On the heights of despair, the passion for the absurd is the only thing that can still throw a demonic light on chaos. When all the current reasons—moral, esthetic, religious, social, and so on—no longer guide one's life, how can one sustain life without succumbing to nothingness? Only by a connection with the absurd, by love of absolute uselessness, loving something which does not have substance but which simulates an illusion of life. *I live because the mountains do not laugh and the worms do not sing.*"[34]

Humanity has, throughout history, exerted a constant effort to discover, innovate, and invent toward the infinite progress of society when in fact all that was manufactured was the illusion of and infatuation with change. On fact, every so-called human achievement was born of serendipity—conjuring an image of nature (or God) handing humankind from the beginning, a noose with which to hang themselves. In fact, every change toward the pride-filled earthly utopia pushed by the earth's inhabitants has been nothing more than a series of bad ideas in a downward spiral which in the words of Cioran, has been occurring ever "since

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[33] Cioran, Emile. *The Trouble with Being Born.* New York: Arcade Publishing, 1973.
[34] Cioran, Emile. *On the Heights of Despair.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.

Adam" that will eventually end with humankind extinguishing itself, much to the delight of both God and Cioran, who concluded his contest with God by saying, "I observe, in terror, the diminution of my hatred for mankind, the loosening of the last link uniting me with it." His cryptic phraseologies seem to place him on some similar postmodern plane with the Absolute (thinking back to his "ladder down to God."

To quote Cioran, "Every life is a story of collapse… Everything is in decline, and always has been."[35] To repeat Baudrillard, "Too bad. We're in Paradise."

Biographical Note

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[35] Cioran, Emile. *Anathemas and Admirations.* London: Quartet, 1992.

The Fabulous...and Notorious Bangs Sisters: An Historical Examination of their Mediumship and Gift of "Precipitated Spirit Art"

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Abstract

The Bangs Sisters of Chicago, Illinois were world-renowned Spiritualist mediums who offered clients a "precipitated portrait" of loved ones who had passed over to the other side of the veil. This unique spiritual "gift" was at once highly sought after by eager sitters and highly suspect by those convinced that the sisters somehow forged or deceived people through some sort of sleight of hand or elaborate trickery. Although not completely free from the occasional accusation of fraud regarding other aspects of their mediumship, their beautiful and exquisite precipitated spirit portraits were never definitively proven to have been faked. Precipitated spirit art, as done by the Bangs Sisters, was purportedly produced supernaturally through the phenomenon of physical mediumship called "materialization." This process drew upon the physical energies and magnetism of the mediums, in combination with invisible Spirit hands, to produce museum-quality paintings of the likenesses of those who had transitioned from the earth plane for relatives who were still among the living and who were sitting for the portrait. Often times under the watchful eyes of both believers and critics, these paintings seemingly appeared out of thin air, according to written affidavits and published eye-witness accounts. This paper delineates the difference between mental and physical mediumship and details the history of precipitated spirit art and the mediumship of the Bangs Sisters. The sisters primarily worked out of their home in Chicago, Illinois but were also frequent guest mediums and temporary residents at the Spiritualist camps of Lily Dale in upstate New York and Camp Chesterfield in central Indiana.

Introduction

The religion of "Spiritualism" cannot be strictly classified as a conventional belief system when comparing it to traditional or mainstream religions that are most well-known and common in modern society; the usual definition or understanding of what makes a religion, or religious denomination, applies only marginally to Spiritualism because it prides itself (since its earliest beginnings) of not being merely a religion, but also a "philosophy," and a "science."

> Spiritualism is a *Religion* because it strives to understand and to comply with the physical, mental, and spiritual laws of nature, 'which are the laws of God.'

> Spiritualism is a *Science* because it investigates, analyzes, and classifies facts and manifestations, demonstrated from the Spirit side of life.

> Spiritualism is a *Philosophy* because it studies the laws of nature both on the seen and unseen sides of life, and bases its conclusions upon present observed facts. It accepts statements of observed facts of past ages, and conclusions drawn therefrom, when sustained by reason and by results of observed present-day facts. (Royse, 92)

A notable aspect that sets Spiritualism apart from its Christian cousin (with all of its various denominations that encompass and promulgates Christianity in general) is how mediumship plays a central role in its belief system, and at the core of this belief system are the mediums, or "sensitives," whose organisms are receptive to energy and vibrations from the spirit world and through their instrumentality are able to impart messages to those in the living from loved ones who have passed over. (Royse, pp 93-94)

To a point, a Spiritualist church's "order of service" closely resembles that of a mainstream Christian church service but the primary difference occurs immediately following the Spiritualist minister's sermon or lecture. In a Spiritualist church service, messages from Spirit is a central part of the service and mediums using their "mediumship" (spiritual gifts) will offer messages to the living from loved ones who have crossed over to the other side.

In a normal Spiritualist church service 1-3 mediums will offer platform messages to those in attendance. A raised platform at the front of the church where the minister gives the sermon is where the medium stands to get a better view of those in attendance and hence why this is called "platform mediumship." Scanning psychically and mediumistically the energy in the room, the medium focuses upon picking up vibrations with the assistance of his/her own guides[1] to connect with individual parishioners to give a message from a loved one who has transitioned from the earth plane into Spirit. These messages are not normally predictive of the future, but most often involve evidential information (like a name, detailed description, or anecdote that only the person receiving the message would understand fully) which offers confirmation to the person that a loved one is present. Mediumship, or spirit communication, endeavors to offer evidence of the continuity of life after death.

Mediumship can largely be divided into two areas: mental and physical.[2] These both are represented by the gifts of clairvoyance, clairaudience, clairsentience, and clairgustance.[3] There are many examples of spiritual gifts that mediums utilize, and there

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[1] Spiritualists believe that everyone has five main spirit guides in their inner band that assist them in their mediumship: 1) Doctor-Teacher; 2) Master-Teacher; 3) Chemist; 4) Native American Protector; and 5) Joy Guide. Each has specific duties in assisting the medium in his/her work, with the Doctor-Teacher and Joy Guide being the two most commonly used guides that assist the medium in giving messages during services and to clients.

[2] See Appendix 1.

[3] Regarding the gifts of mediumship, the most common ones are often referred to as the "clairs"—clairvoyance = "clear seeing"; clairaudience = "clear hearing"; clairsentience = "clear feeling"; and clairgustance = "clear smelling." These gifts allow mediums to connect with Spirit (often through their spirit guides) in order to be impressed with a message. These messages, as suggested above, can be seen (either physically or in the mind's eye), heard, sensed or felt, and/or smelled. For example, clairgustance

are other forms of mediumship that mediums tap into in their work, but all of these can primarily be divided into either mental or physical mediumship.[4] Mental mediumship largely incorporates the internal intuition of the medium and the Spirit messages that s/he can sense internally (either psychically or telepathically) which can come in the form of a visual message that s/he can see in the physical or "mind's eye"; or that which is audible, which s/he can hear either internally or externally. Physical mediumship is comprised of spiritual gifts that have some sort of "physical" property associated with them—that which can be seen, felt, or touched in the physical. "Precipitated Spirit Portraits" fall into the category of "physical mediumship."

Figure 1: The Bangs Sisters, May and Elizabeth. Circa late 1870s. [Photo courtesy of the *Hett Art Gallery and Museum*, Camp Chesterfield, Indiana.]

At the turn of the 19th century, the flamboyant "Campbell Brothers" of Lily Dale Assembly (New York) fame, and the notorious "Bangs Sisters" of Chicago, Illinois who frequently summered at historic Camp Chesterfield (Indiana), were the foremost demonstrators of the physical psychic phenomena of precipitated spirit portraits. Not without their detractors and skeptics who maintained that this type of physical mediumship was somehow faked, the Bangs Sisters were especially and routinely

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would be if a medium notices wafting pipe smoke and this immediately is accepted by the person receiving the message as confirmation of a loved one who enjoyed smoking a pipe.

[4] *Mental Mediumship*—a more cerebral approach to spirit communication is "centered at the base of the brain, the seat of the cerebrospinal nervous system. The visiting spirit entity manipulates the mental faculties and causes the phenomena. The medium's ability to receive and act as the vehicle for spirit communication depends on the medium's physical, emotional, and receptive state. The deeper the meditational trance, the greater the intensity. *Physical Mediumship* is dependent on three things: focused trance via the base of the brain; the solar plexus area where the core (gut-level) of intensity cycles with the brain; and third, from the vibrational energy received from the sitters and observers. Physical mediumship is 'state-of-the-art' mediumship, and all experts at this level usually have surpassed the abilities of straight mental mediumship." (Dreller, pp. 39-41)

accused of fraud on numerous occasions, even being formally charged and taken to court. Many critics at the time theorized as to how both sets of spirit artists perpetrated their alleged chicanery with elaborate and sometimes far flung explanations that involved very intricate and nearly impossible adroitness to create their precipitated portraits, but none were ever convincing enough to deter the true believers who paid handsomely for an opportunity to have a spirit portrait sitting, and who maintained categorically that what they witnessed and received from these world-renowned spirit artists, were anything but authentic and genuine examples of physical phenomenon.

The Bangs Sisters

Elizabeth (Lizzie) and May Bangs were renowned Spiritualist mediums who specialized in clairvoyance, direct writing, and their most sought after and most notable gift—"precipitated spirit portraits." Hailing from Chicago, Illinois, they travelled extensively around the region and beyond, taking up temporary residence in the Spiritualist camps of Lily Dale, in New York, and Camp Chesterfield, in Indiana during their very colorful and controversial careers as mediums.

Figure 2: Bangs Sisters: Elizabeth (left) and May (right); circa early 1900s at Lily Dale Assembly, New York. [Photo courtesy of the *Lily Dale Museum*.]

May and Elizabeth were both born in Chicago to Edward and Meroe Bangs who were originally from Maine. May was born in 1862 and Lizzie, as she was called, in 1859. They had two brothers, Edward and William, and there is no legitimate documentation of them having had any mediumistic gifts. Mr. Bangs, it was said, was a tinsmith and stove repairman by trade and the mother tended to the family. …Elizabeth was married in 1877 to John Paul, had two girls, and was divorced in 1888. May was married in 1884 to William D. Gaudsen, had one son, and eventually divorced. She was married again at least two [more] times and the press had a field day with

all of the marital drama surrounding one of the famous "spook" mediums. (Heargerty, 3)

Not so lucky in love, the sisters can best be compared to Hollywood starlets today who are followed by the paparazzi and who are reported upon incessantly by gossip tabloids. The Bangs Sisters seemed to attract attention not only for their unique form of mediumship, but also for their tumultuous personal lives. One case in point was when May Bangs was accused by the wife of a leather magnate/millionaire, Jacob Lesher, of finding "the Bangs woman in possession of her husband's affections." Mr. Lesher stated publicly in 1907 that he had indeed married May Bangs…while still married to Mrs. Belle Lesher. The *Chicago Examiner* reported all the salacious details, including a photo of May Bangs, in its newspaper. According to the article, Mrs. Lesher sued her husband for "separate maintenance" of $13 per month which was denied by a lower court judge, only to be overturned by the Supreme Court. All of this played out quite publicly in the newspapers, which made the Bangs Sisters even more notorious as the article also mentioned that the Bangs Sisters "had established a reputation for furnishing 'spirit paintings' at fancy prices to old men." This, however, was no deterrence to either of them as they continued their mediumship throughout their lives and the many marriages between them.[5]

Having been gifted since childhood with paranormal gifts, such as clairvoyance, clairaudience, direct writing by typewriter, slate writing, automatic writing, and materializations, the sisters' foray into "precipitated spirit portraits" did not begin until 1894. (Nagy, xvii) The other mediumistic gifts they practiced throughout their teen years and early adulthood were precursors to their most notable mediumship gift—precipitated spirit portraits—which made them famous. Initially, the Bangs Sisters would need several sittings in a darkened, curtained off area with the client in order for a portrait to appear, but as they honed their gift they eventually were able to manifest portraits in a matter of minutes in broad daylight with numerous people witnessing their work unfold before their eyes.[6] "Their motive was to prove the continuity of life and to bring hope to those people requesting portraits of their dear departed ones." (Nagy, xviii)

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[5] See Appendix 4.

[6] A number of eye witness accounts, as well as affidavits [for an example of a sworn affidavit, please see Appendix 2] are a part of historical record regarding the Bangs Sisters' mediumship and precipitated portraits. Although accused of fraud on numerous occasions, and even being arrested formally for humbuggery, the sisters never were found to have faked their precipitated portraits. Many skeptics and critics theorized as to how they could have faked their portraits but no one was ever successful in proving outright fraud of the precipitated paintings. [See R. Nagy's "Precipitated Spirit Paintings"] The Bangs Sisters, however, were caught doing nefariously suspect mediumsip using other tools during séances and circles. For a detailed listing of eye witness accounts, affidavits, and fraud-related charges, see N. Riley Heagerty's *The Mediumship of the Bangs Sisters: Portraits from Beyond* chapters 2 and 4.

The Gift of Precipitated Spirit Portraiture[7]

As mentioned earlier, precipitated spirit painting is a spiritual gift that falls into the category of physical phenomena where Spirits purportedly paint ethereally a portrait of a loved one who passed away. The following description offers a brief explanation as to how this was done by the Bangs Sisters when at Camp Chesterfield:

> …two identical, paper-mounted canvases in wooden frames were held up, face to face, against the window with the lower half resting upon a table, and the sides held by the [Bangs] sisters with one hand [each]. A short curtain was hung on either side, and an opaque blind was drawn over the canvasses. The light streamed in from behind the canvasses which were translucent; and after a quarter of an hour, the outline of shadows began to appear and disappear as the invisible artist made a preliminary sketch; then the picture began to grow at a feverish rate. When the pictures were separated, the portrait was found on the surface of the canvas next to the "sitter." Though the paint was greasy, and stuck to the fingers upon being touched, it left no stain on the paper which covered closely the other canvas. Later, the works of art were openly precipitated as if by airbrush, and some took as little as five minutes to complete and only one canvas was used. (Swann, 3)

"For most of the spirit paintings a canvas or paper [was] stretched over a 24" x 36" or a 24" x 30" wood frame. The canvas [was] new and clean. A 'pot' of paint [was] used or [was] in the room or area where the séance [was] taking place. (Nagy, 2) In most cases, the sitter was asked to choose a canvas randomly from a stack of stretched canvases that the Bangs Sisters would utilize during the sitting.

The sitting often resembled an actual séance in that the lights were dimmed (but never completely darkened as is normal in a true séance) and those in attendance were asked to sit meditatively as the Bangs Sisters would go into trance (deep meditation). This was to form a "cabinet"[8] of sorts to allow the energy of the mediums and sitters to build in order

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[7] It should be noted that "precipitated spirit portrait artists" are unique and different from "spirit artists" in that the latter are actually done by human hands, and are divinely inspired by Spirit; sometimes these artists are in trance and their hands are guided by unseen forces to create spirit art images of people who are no longer living. "Precipitated" portraits, like those done by the Bangs Sisters and Campbell Brothers, were done completely by Spirit with no physical, human intervention other than merely being present at the sitting. (de Lafayette, 33-37) Please see Appendix 3 for examples of the Bangs Sisters' precipitated Spirit portraits.

[8] A "cabinet" is often used during a séance to help contain the energy (ectoplasm) of the medium and the sitters. This is done to assist in making the conditions right for physical phenomenon to occur. The cabinet can be an actual cabinet that is like an old-fashioned wardrobe for clothing; the medium sits inside and goes into trance to build up his/her energy. Or the cabinet could merely be a curtained off space that acts in the same manner—the point being that the space is contained to allow the medium's energy, in conjunction with the sitters' energy, to build to the point where hopefully physical phenomena will manifest. A trusted colleague who is also a medium will often sit outside the cabinet area as an assistant to stand guard while the medium is in trance. When in deep trance, the medium is unaware of his/her surroundings and when coming out of the trance, he/she needs sufficient time to reacclimatize to the time and space of the room. A medium-colleague is present to make sure that an overzealous sitter does not try to approach or touch the medium while he/she is in trance. The medium's own control, or Spirit Guide, is also present

to allow the physical phenomena of precipitated spirit art to occur. The primary sitter was asked by the Bangs Sisters to visualize mentally the loved one for whom they desired to be in the painting. (Nagy, 3)

The Bangs Sisters phase of precipitated spirit portraits skyrocketed them to fame, but they were not without their detractors who were convinced that they somehow faked this form of physical phenomenon. A number of critics and naysayers theorized as to how they were able to somehow substitute a completed portrait with a blank canvas (even to suggest the sisters were able to hide a completed portrait under one of their dresses and then do a "bait and switch" during the session). Many of these portraits are life-sized or nearly life-size, so this seems unlikely. Another theory maintained that the sisters covered the portraits in layers upon layers of transparent silk and slowly would pull off a layer that gradually revealed the image. This technique would be difficult to pull off in front of eye-witnesses as it is reported that those in attendance would see eyes open and then close on the canvas, as well as articles of clothing to first appear, or transform completely, then sometimes disappear; not to mention the yards and yards of silk which would be needed to perfect this elaborate deception and to then to remain hidden from view of those in attendance.

In August of 1963, an article by the art gallery curator (at the time) for the *Hett Art Gallery and Museum* at Camp Chesterfield, Ralph Hicock, appeared in the Spiritualist publication *Chimes*. The account was originally contained in another publication entitled *The Light of Truth* in September 1905. The following is a report of an eye-witness account of a Bangs Sisters séance where a precipitated spirit portrait was produced:

> The picture was made at the Chesterfield Camp grounds through the mediumship of the Bangs Sisters. Telling about the picture, Mr. Payne said it was made in the daytime, in an ordinary room not darkened, with the frame containing the canvas sitting on a stand before the window. Mrs. Charles Payne and Mrs. John Weesner, who did not believe in Spiritualism, were with him, sitting within five feet of the picture, and the two Bangs Sisters sat on either side of the table, supporting the frame, each with one hand. No paint, brushes, crayon, or other substance of any kind was used, and it was light enough to have seen a pin on the table. The Sisters had never seen or heard of his father, nor a photograph or likeness of him. All they asked was that he fix his father's features in his mind. The picture was not made in spots or a little at a time. At first it was a faint shadow, then a wave appeared to sweep across the canvas and the likeness became plainer. It was a great deal like a sunrise that became brighter and brighter until it became perfectly plain and every feature visible. Until the picture was completed, the eyes were closed, and then all at once they opened like a person awakening. It did not take more than a half hour, and he stated it was the best picture, or likeness, of his father that he had ever seen. Mr. Payne was a man whose word nobody would dispute. He would not go

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to assist with the messages and to allow the various entities into the circle to offer messages to the sitters through the physical body or instrument of the presiding medium. [For a detailed explanation of what trance mediumship is and how a séance is conducted, see Kuzmeskus, 138-144.]

alone to have the picture made, but took with him his sister-in-law, Mrs. Charles Payne, and her neighbor, Mrs. John Weesner, neither of whom have ever been, and were not then believers in mediums or in Spiritualism. (p. 18)

As mentioned earlier, there were, however, many detractors who accused the Bangs Sisters of trickery throughout their long careers as mediums. At one point, May Bangs was arrested and during her trial, she denounced Spiritualism and maintained she was not a Spiritualist. This assuredly was to avoid any criminal conviction due to her style of mediumship and later she continued on quite openly as a Spiritualist medium, offering precipitated spirit portraits to numerous clients. The following article details May Bangs' trial in an article by Hermann Hendrich, published in 1909 in the publication *Light*:

May Bangs Arrested

Since our article in *Light* was written, *The Progressive Thinker* of Chicago, dated August 7th, has come to hand, which we learn that May Bangs has been arrested and that in her testimony when on trial, as reported in the *Inter Ocean*, and in the Chicago Daily News, she said: "I am not a Spiritualist. I am an artist. My pictures are made by the sun—hung in a window so that the sun can operate upon them with its rays, developing them."

Question: "Are there any spirits in the making of the picture?"

Answer: "The process is my own. Nobody would understand if I were to tell you how they are made."

Question: "Did you ever represent that you can draw these pictures or do anything else by the aid of spirit?"

Answer: "I suppose we all have a spirit," was the answer to this question.

Question: "Have you ever seen spirits of those departed?" asked Judge Scovel, interrupting.

Answer: "No sir."

The further hearing of the case was postponed until August 13th. Commenting upon the above, *The Progressive Thinker* says:

There has been a great diversity of opinions in regard to the genuineness of the mediumship of the Bangs Sisters. The denial of Mrs. Bangs under oath, that she is a Spiritualist, and her statement that the pictures are developed by sunlight, will put Spiritualists everywhere in a quandary in reference to them and their work. If their work is the result of spirit power, a great point could be gained by so declaring in court, and producing the same in the presence of the judge and jury. At the Chesterfield Camp, on

the rostrum surrounded by a promiscuous audience, they obtained a 'spirit picture.' A judge and jury would act as favorably in producing good results as a promiscuous audience at a camp meeting. [Taken from Heagerty, pp195-196]

May Bangs' resolute denial during the trial as related above no doubt was done as pure self-preservation. Her answers, generally, were vague enough to where they could be interpreted several ways, but when hard-pressed, she did relent and denounce her mediumship and Spiritualist beliefs most likely in order not to be found guilty.

A Card from the Bangs Sisters.

CHICAGO. June 9. -[Editor of The Tribune.] -A few months ago when a cowardly raid was made on us at one of our parlor seances at our own home in this city a number of sensational articles appeared in the columns of the press, to the great detriment of our reputation. We then requested the public to withhold judgment until a court of justice had thoroughly investigated the matter. The grand jury of Cook County, after having heard the statement of the witnesses for the State had discharged us, although not a single one of our witnesses was or could be heard by them, thus deciding after hearing the testimony of our persecutors, and without a single word of defense, that the charges were baseless. The object of this card, which we ask a generous press to circulate as freely as it did the articles to our injury, is to inform the public of the final result of this effort to degrade and humiliate us.   BANGS SISTERS.

Figure 3: The above article written by the Bangs Sisters and sent to the editor of the *Chicago Tribune* (and published on June 9, 1891) at their request to inform the public that the charges against them in an early arrest in their tumultuous careers as mediums were false and without merit. [Courtesy of the historical archives of the *Hett Art Gallery and Museum*, Camp Chesterfield.]

The atmosphere at the time was one of fear and ignorance in that churches and clergy were quite worried about parishioners leaving their churches to follow Spiritualism. Spiritualists were regularly accused of consorting with the devil because of the misunderstanding and lack of knowledge about the belief system other than Spiritualists talk to "dead people." Mediumship and the paranormal were often categorized with that of the dark arts or black magic. So, people were hesitant in certain social or familial situations to admit openly they believed in Spiritualism or sought out a medium's services. It was not uncommon for many people to attend Spiritualist services and séances secretly as not to raise the suspicions of family, neighbors, or colleagues. In fact, even today, many Spiritualist' Sunday services are conducted in the afternoon because traditionally people would attend their "regular" churches in the mornings and then scurry off to a Spiritualist camp or Spiritualist church or séance for a message service at their "other" church in the afternoon. All of this added to mediums' fear of reprisal when publicly accused of trickery or fraud, hence many chose to denounce the religion and mediumship to avoid being prosecuted.

As early as 1888, there are reports of the Bangs Sisters being hauled in for questioning by the police for dubious mediumship, but mostly dealing with their "independent slate writing" (messages from Spirit on slate chalkboards). (Heagerty, 87) But interestingly, even though they were accused numerous times of fraud regarding their precipitated spirit portraits, they were never found to be guilty of fraud or trickery. Many critics and skeptics suspected some sort of fakery and desperately tried to offer possible explanations as to how they were able to produce the works of art, but none were ever successful in definitively explaining, let alone proving, that the Bangs Sisters were fraudulently producing the precipitated spirit portraits by means other than their mediumship and the unseen hands of spirit helpers. There were many theories, some rather outlandish, which were put forward by critics to try and replicate their technique. Even magicians were consulted, with some claiming to be able to reproduce a painting through magic, but never under the exact same conditions.

For every critic and skeptic of the Bangs Sisters, there seemingly were many more advocates who regaled them with accolades regarding their mediumship and who—through their own experiential knowledge and eyewitness accounts—refused to believe or accept the claims of those who called them frauds. In fact, a number of satisfied sitters went as far as to write testimonials that were published in periodicals of the day attesting to the genuineness of the Bangs Sisters mediumship and precipitated spirit art. These advocates for the Bangs Sisters wrote glowing endorsements attesting to how pleased they were with their precipitated spirit portraits of loved ones.

Figure 4: A postcard featuring May and Lizzie Bangs during the height of their mediumship and popularity. Circa 1905-1910. [Photo courtesy of the *Hett Art Gallery and Museum*, Camp Chesterfield.]

One such recommendation came from a Ms. Harriet Duhl of Elmira, New York. Her testimonial was published in the April 15, 1905 edition of *The Sunflower*.[9]

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[9] This published testimonial was included in N. Riley Heagerty's book *The Mediumship of the Bangs Sisters: Portraits from Beyond* (pp. 90-91) and R. Nagy's book *Precipitated Spirit Paintings* (pp.7-8).

Spirit Portraits

I was glad when I read the last article in my last paper defending the Bangs Sisters that I gave a good old fashioned shout. God bless *The Sunflower* for defending good and true mediumship, and God help them to put down all frauds.

I am the proud possessor of two spirit portraits, one of my son and one of my daughter, procured thru [sic] the wonderful gift of spirit power, by the Bangs Sisters. I never had a photograph taken of either, so there could be no one say they were copied. My son's portrait was finished in just seven minutes by my watch, and my daughter's in eighteen, no earthly hand touching the canvas. I sat in front of the table on which the canvas rested, and my eyes were on guard every moment.

Knowing the facts I cannot sit patiently and hear the Bangs Sisters so cruelly slandered. I am ready anytime to face a regiment in defense of them. I know what I know, and am willing the whole world shall know that my portraits are perfect and a great comfort to my husband and myself; and there is not gold enough on this earth to buy them.

Yours for defense of all good mediums,

Mrs. Harriet Duhl

313 Columbia Street

Elmira, New York

Both sides of the issue regarding the authenticity of the Bangs Sisters certainly dug in their heels and were unwavering regarding whether the sisters were authentic or fraudulent. The sheer amount of paintings that they produced throughout their mediumship is prodigious in not only volume, but also in scope and quality. The Bangs Sisters were normally stalwart in their own defense and continued doing their precipitated spirit portraits throughout their long and illustrious careers as Spiritualist mediums. May transitioned into Spirit in 1917 at the age of 55 and Lizzie followed her sister in 1920 at the age of 61.[10]

Conclusion

Were the Bangs Sisters genuine and sincere in their mediumship and truly gifted physical phenomena mediums, having no physical hand in creating their precipitated spirit portraits…or were they charlatans who somehow figured out an ingenious method to create what appeared to be miraculously precipitated portraits out of thin air? Interestingly, there are official reports and articles containing enough evidence to suggest that at some point in their mediumship, they did resort to trickery in their slate writing…but

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[10] May Bangs died on April 26, 1917 in Chicago and is buried in the Forest Home Cemetery; the name on her gravestone is "May S. Charter." Elizabeth "Lizzie" Bangs died on March 29, 1920 and is buried in the same cemetery as her sister; the name on her gravestone is "Elizabeth S. Paul."

they were never definitely found to be faking their gift of precipitated spirit portraits. There are many published accounts of people who truly believed in their gift (like the examples provided); and the sisters were required on more than several verified occasions to produce a precipitated portrait under "test conditions" of the day (which, of course, was done well before infrared cameras or other modern technological advances were invented that could possibly easily detect any trickery or underhanded manipulation to create their portraits).

True believers were never convinced that the Bangs Sisters were anything but truly gifted mediums who had a unique ability to connect with Spirit to somehow produce lifelike portraits of loved ones who had passed away for those left among the living. Skeptics, however, rejected any and all eyewitness accounts maintaining that the paintings defied all logic and a science-based understanding of the known world that had to have been manipulated in some way by human hands.

A Spiritualist having faith in the paranormal and mediumship is not much different from a mainstream Christian religion adherent having faith in the miracles and unexplainable events that are found in the Bible. Perhaps it comes down to the experiential component and those who did witness the work of the Bangs Sisters would never be convinced otherwise of its authenticity…and for those who did not experience it for themselves can never imagine it being possible.

Epilogue

My interest in the "Bangs Sisters" and their precipitated spirit portraits dates back to around the mid-1990s when I visited Camp Chesterfield in Indiana for the first time and toured the *Hett Art Gallery and Museum*. In the center gallery of this small museum, there was a huge collection of portraits (some small and others life-sized) of people in dress from around the turn of the century. I recognized only one of the people portrayed: Queen Victoria of Great Britain. When I inquired about who painted these and who the subjects were, the docent educated me on the gift of precipitated portraits and the mediumship of the very renowned "Bangs Sisters" who summered at Camp Chesterfield during the height of their mediumship.

Admittedly skeptical, it was difficult initially for me to accept the official explanation of how these were somehow manifested out of thin air by spirit hands without any human intervention. I could not help being attracted, however, to the serene beauty and genteelness of these portraits. I found myself returning often to the museum on visits home from Japan, and specifically the gallery where they are housed, to study them intently and to admire them with an open mind.

In the archives of the *Hett Art Gallery and Museum*, I came across a typewritten explanation of what the substance was believed to be made of that was used to paint the precipitated portraits: "The portraits have been examined by art experts and they cannot explain the media used, as the pictures are not pastels, charcoal, oils, water colors, or any other known substance. It could best be compared to the dust of butterflies' wings." (Hett Art Gallery leaflet, date unknown; also included in Swann, p.4) I desperately wanted

to locate some sort of documentation, like an affidavit from an art expert, or an old dusty file detailing the chemical analysis of the substance used in the precipitated paintings to confirm this claim. I have spent years combing every inch of the extensive archives at Camp Chesterfield and I have not found this very important piece of scientific evidence that so many have related to me exists.

A number of older mediums at Camp Chesterfield (sadly, all who have now passed away) separately, but similarly, recounted to me over a period of two decades the claim that a scientific study had been conducted on one of the paintings and a written report was made by professors at the University of Michigan in the 1970s that confirmed that the substance was undetermined, but was organic in nature, and closely resembled the dust found on butterflies' wings. Part of the problem I have with this claim is the timeline. In Irene Swann's book, *The Bangs Sisters and their Precipitated Spirit Portraits* (first published in 1969), she offered the same explanation of the "dust of butterfly wings," yet people stated to me in interviews and conversations that they recollected the scientific testing was done in the 1970s (which determined it was like the "dust found on butterflies' wings"). It is possible that the memories of those who recounted the story to me were off by a decade, as I was told this story in the 2000s and onward. In any case, the substance is yet undetermined officially, and scientifically, until verifiable documentation is found and/or another scientific study is conducted using modern equipment and technology. Perhaps someday the original documentation will suddenly appear or someone may find the documentation in the papers of a deceased medium who had made a copy of it; or perhaps a future scientific study using 21st century technology and equipment may be conducted on one of the paintings to ascertain once and for all the chemical make-up of the paint or substance used to create these magnificent and singularly unique works of art. Only time will tell.

Regardless of whether one believes that these works of art were painted by human hands through some form of trickery perpetuated upon unsuspecting believers who paid dearly to have a loved one's likeness appear on the canvas, or if they in fact appeared out of thin air through the authority of otherworldly entities, the quality and attention to detail cannot be ignored or denied. They are outstanding works of art that have museum quality uniqueness and appeal.

In 2005, I purchased the cottage where the Bangs Sisters lived at historic Camp Chesterfield. This only reinforced my desire to learn more about them as Spiritualists and their singularly unique form of mediumship that includes precipitated spirit portraits. I am often asked if I sense their spiritual presence in the home, and I have to say that at times I do. I have witnessed several examples of physical phenomena in the home—fleeting apparitions in the room where the portraits were often precipitated and a distinct and unmistakable floral scent, possibly gardenias, sometimes wafting through that same room. Could these phenomena be related to the Bangs Sisters? Of course, I cannot say so with absolute certainty, but I would like to think so as it is comforting to think that the

sisters' essence and energy remains in the home and they come back to visit from time to time.

Figure 5: The cottage on the grounds of historic Camp Chesterfield (421 Grandview Drive) where the Bangs Sisters resided when in residence as "guest mediums" in 1909 and 1910. Photo circa 1940s. [Photo courtesy of the *Hett Art Gallery and Museum*, Camp Chesterfield.]

Biographical Note

Todd Jay Leonard is a tenured professor in the Faculty of Education's *International Language and Culture Section* and *Graduate Faculty of English Education* at Fukuoka University of Education, Kyushu, Japan, where he teaches history, comparative culture, and cross-cultural understanding. He is the author of 20 books on topics ranging from American religious history, cross-cultural understanding, English as a Foreign Language, and spirituality.

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Appendix 1: Mental and Physical Mediumship

Mental	Physical
Clairvoyance: Vivid mental pictures.	**Ectoplasm:** Diffuses from orifices of the medium's body—mucous membranes; intense trance.
Clairaudience: Hearing messages.	**Telekinesis:** Objects move through mind power.
Prophecy: Information received from spirits usually concerning future events; can be personal or great events.	**Psychokinesis:** Objects move and float because of mind *control*.
Scrying: Clairvoyant receives visions from gazing in [a] crystal ball or water.	**Spirit Raps:** Spirits bump, bang, and rap furniture, walls.
Healing: When positive spirit energy is sent through the medium to heal and cure.	**Apports:** Spirits bring objects from their plane—flowers, living animals and objects relevant to séance.
Psychometry: Information obtained from handling objects, mainly through clairvoyance and telepathy.	**Levitation:** Persons, furniture, and objects float or rise.
Trance: Deep hypnotic condition in which the medium is controlled by a spirit guide—but not possession.	**Materialization:** Spirit produced; appears to be solid by sight and touch; can be spirits or objects.
Automatic Writing and Drawing: When a spirit operator manipulates the muscle reflexes of the medium.	**Voices:** Direct or indirect voices, comes from the medium, apparition, or "thin air."
	Spirit Lights: Singular or hundreds of twinkling lights—all shapes and colors.
	Breezes and Drafts: Cold, warm or scented, from spirits.
	Musical Instruments, Singing: From spirits.
	Table Tipping: Spirit(s) move or rock table back and forth.
	Ouija Board: Messages come from Spirit(s).
	Odors: Flowers, medicines, perfumes, or stench.
	Spirit Photography: Spirit images appear on film.
	Telephone, Radio, Television, or Tape Recorder Voices: Spirit voices.

(From Dreller, L. (1997) *Beginner's Guide to Mediumship*. York Beach, Maine: Sam Weiser, Inc.)

Appendix 2: Sworn Affidavit by Witnesses of the Bangs Sisters' Precipitated Spirit Portrait of Alex Park McKee
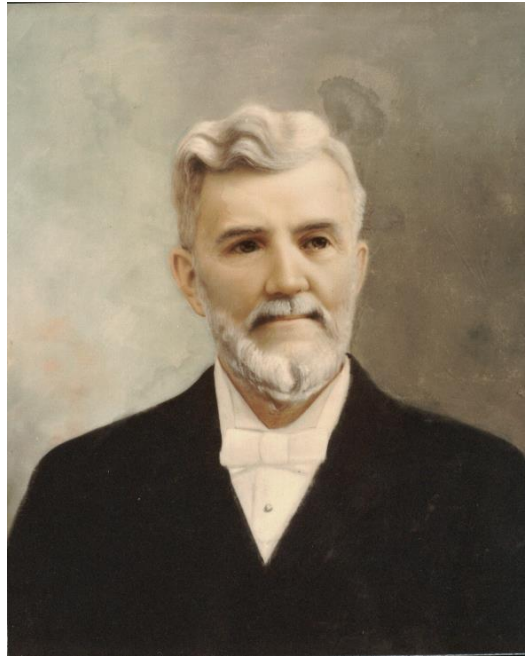
"Rebecca Fowler, granddaughter of Alex Park McKee and lifelong resident of Camp Chesterfield, reported that the portraits she witnessed would start with the eyes forming first on the canvas. Then the face would fill in, along with the clothing. The background would then be completed as the final portion of the portrait, the entire work of art being precipitated, as if by airbrush, in full view of the sitters.

Many of the spirit portraits were precipitated under test conditions, with sworn letters received from the sitters. Letters cited by Mr. James Coates in his book 'Photographing the Invisible,' published in 1911, include Vice Admiral W. Usborne Moore of England; Judge Levi Mock of Dufton, Indiana; Louis B. Leach, President of Wamego State Bank of Kansas, and many others.

On August 20, 1909, the [above] precipitated picture of Alex Park McKee was produced by the Bangs Sisters under test conditions as outlined below:

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Sworn Affidavit:

Chesterfield, Indiana, August 21, 1909

State of Indiana, Madison S.S.

Tom O'Neal, President of the Indiana Association of Spiritualists; James Millspaugh, Vice President of said association; Lydia Jessup, Secretary of the association; and Rebecca McKee, J.M. Walker, S.L. Louiso and Lewis Johnson, Trustees of the Association, being duly

sworn, upon their oath depose and say: that on the 20ᵗʰ day of August, 1909, they were present at a séance held by the Bangs sisters under test conditions, for these affiants above to receive a portrait of some former member of said association, deceased, which portrait is to become the property of the said association, to be hung in the auditorium; that the affiants witnessed the development of said portrait, which portrait they recognized as the portrait of Alex P. McKee, a former member and Treasurer of the said association; that said picture was developed on canvas, or stretcher on a frame, which stretcher and frame were selected by one of the affiants from an assortment of such articles, all similar in form and appearance, without any suggestion or indication from the said Bangs sisters; that said portrait developed on said canvas or stretcher in a period of <u>eight minutes</u> within the <u>full view</u> of all these affiants, in daylight; and affiants further say that they are firmly convinced that said portrait was so developed by spirit powers solely, and that no human, earthly agency contributed to the development of said portrait. The said affiants recognize in said portrait the exact likeness of the said Alex P. McKee.

Tom O'Neal, President   **Rebecca L. McKee**

James Milspaugh, Vice President   **S.J. Louiso**

Lydia Jessup, Secretary   **J.M. Walker**

Henry Bronnenberg, Treasurer   **Lewis Johnson**

Trustees

Subscribed and sworn to before me, on this 21ˢᵗ day of August, 1909.

William Rowland, Notary Public

My Commission expires March 15, 1913

[Taken from Harrison, P. (1986) *Chesterfield Lives: Our First Hundred Years—1886-1986*; pp. 55-56]

Appendix 3: Precipitated Spirit Portraits of the Bangs Sisters

Acknowledgements: The illustrations included in Appendix 3 are reproduced here courtesy of the *Hett Art Gallery and Museum*, at Camp Chesterfield (under the auspices of *the Indiana Association of Spiritualists* (IAOS)), Chesterfield, Indiana.

(0287) Twin Portrait: "Dr. Daughtery attended the Science Church of Spiritualism in Richmond, Indiana in the early 1920s. He sat for the portrait of his wife, Lizzie and she appeared; he asked why the twins, Mary and Christina, could not come, and they then appeared. Dr. Daughtery was not in spirit, but was sitting for the portrait. He was a member of the official board in Chesterfield in its pioneer days. This precipitated picture is through the mediumship of the Bangs Sisters." (Swann, p. 23) [Donated by Rev. Mable Riffle.]

(0290) Don Keeler: "…was drowned in the White River, just at the rear of Camp [Chesterfield], while visiting here with his parents. This dramatic passing gave added significance to his spirit return and portrait, as he proclaimed that he still lived. He was known to all the young people of camp at the time. He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Keeler of Fort Wayne, Indiana. The portrait is through the mediumship of the Bangs Sisters." (Swann, p. 15) [Donated by Joseph Keeler]

(0292) Bernal Tobias: "Son of Addie and Henry Tobias, nephew of Mable Riffle. Died at the age of four on Christmas Eve. This was precipitated at the Bangs Sisters' cottage at Camp Chesterfield. The canvas was placed in front of a window with black draperies on either side. A cloud appeared and then took form. The blouse was different, and when told this the sitters were informed to take it home and at an appointed time to sit in concentration, and the shirt that is now visible appeared. The eyes were closed, but opened and closed several times." (Swann, p. 20) [Donated by Henry Tobias]

(0293) Alex Park McKee: "This precipitated spirit portrait of Mr. A.P. McKee was received at a public demonstration in the auditorium at Camp Chesterfield in the early 1900s. The mediums were the Bangs Sisters. They asked the audience to concentrate on whose portrait they wanted to appear. Mr. McKee was a founder and early member of the Camp." (Swann, p. 6) [Donated by Rev. Mable Riffle]

(0298) Queen Victoria: Portrait of Queen Victoria of England was received by Dr. Carson of Kansas City for his gallery in his home. The mediums were Elizabeth and May Bangs. (Swann, p. 29) [Donated by Bishop Barker]

Left: **(0300) Rose Carson**: Made for Dr. Carson of Kansas City in 1894, Rose was his second wife.

Right: **(0299) Emily Carson**: Dr. Carson's first wife, Emily. Precipitated in 1894 by the Bangs Sisters.

(Swann, pp. 16-17) [Donated by George Barker (0299)] and Dr. and Mrs. R.C. Bishop (0300)]

(0310) Audrey Alford: Before a large audience in the Camp Chesterfield Auditorium, August 1911, a plain canvas was placed on an easel, which was examined by a committee who attested that it had no marking or painting of any kind, nor signs of chemical treatment. Tickets were given at the door and the number drawn belonged to Alice Alford. Mrs. Alford and her husband went to the rostrum to sit for the portrait which was done in 22 minutes, by the Bangs Sisters. Mabel Riffle, Ethel Post Parrish, and Franchion H. Dorsch were cousins of Mrs. Alford. (Swann, p. 7) [Donated by The Frank Alfords]

(0288B) Jimmy Jessup: [Brother of Earl Jessup: (0288A): This is a spirit portrait of the son of Wilson and Lydia Jessup. Mr. Jessup was an outstanding medium and a camp staff worker for many years. (Swann, p. 8) [Donated by Charles Jessup]

(0288A) Earl Jessup: [Brother of Jimmy Jessup (0288B): This precipitated portrait is the son of Lydia and Wilson Jessup. Mrs. Jessup was secretary on the board of Camp Chesterfield for many years. (Swann, p. 9) [Donated by Charles Jessup]

(0294) James G. Shepherd: Mr. Shepherd was an early Spiritualist. This Bangs Sisters precipitated portrait was received by a relative, and given to Anna Dennis, Pastor of the Madison Avenue Spiritualist Church, in Anderson, Indiana. The picture hung in the Temple Classroom where it could be viewed by the public. (Swann, p. 10) [Donated by the trustees of the Madison Avenue Spiritualist Church]

(0277) Ethel Helderle: Through the mediumship of Lizzie and May Bangs, this portrait of Ethel Helderle was precipitated in the presence of her parents, David and Rose Helderle and an old friend, Emil Schram. The Helderles were well-known pioneer Spiritualists. (Swann, p. 11) [Donated by Brown Good]

(0308) Catherine Lipp: This precipitated spirit portrait of Catherine Lipp was received by her husband, William Lipp, of Cincinatti, Ohio. Through the mediumship of Elizabeth and May Bangs in the year 1912. (Swann, p. 19) [Donated by William F. Lipp]

(0291) Edgar Bean: This precipitated spirit portrait by the Bangs Sisters of Edgar Bean, son of Dr. Albert and Zella Bean. (Swann, p. 12) [Donated by Beatrice Keeney]

(0274) Edgar Bean and Aunt Anna: Edgar Bean was the son of Zella Bean. Aunt Anna was the cousin of Beatrice Keeney. Mrs. Keeney was given the Bangs Sisters portrait by her grandfather, Cooper. (Swann, p. 13) [Donated by Beatrice Keeney]

(0289) Lillian Keeler: This precipitated spirit portrait through the mediumship of Lizzie and May Bangs is of Lillian Keeler, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Keeler, and sister of Donald Keeler, of Fort Wayne, Indiana. (Swann, p. 14) [Donated by Joseph Keeler]

(0275) Ellen Woodmansee: This spirit picture is a precipitated portrait of Ellen Woodmansee, received by her aunt, Cora Smith, through the mediumship of the famous Bangs Sisters. Ellen was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Woodmansee of La Porte, Indiana. (Swann, p. 21) [Donated by Amelia Harbarth Hullinger]

(0295) John Wesley and Martha Gray: A precipitated portrait of John Wesley and Martha Gray, parents of Joel W. Gray, Attica, Indiana. This picture is by the Bangs Sisters. When this portrait was finished, the hair at Mr. Gray's ears was flat. This was mentioned to the Bangs Sisters and after the picture was taken home, the hair appeared in a natural style. (Swann, p. 24) [Donated by Dr. Ben F. Clark]

(0297) Dr. John Sharp: Dr. John Sharp was the spirit guide of Etta Wriedt of Detroit, Michigan. Dr. Sharp said he was born in Glasgow, Scotland, in the 18th century. He lived all his life in the USA as an apothecary farmer and died in Evansville, Indiana. Under his able guidance, Mrs. Wriedt conducted séances for many distinguished personalities.   She received the Queen Victoria gold watch from W.T. Stead for her outstanding service to Julias Bureau. (Swann, p. 25) [Donated by Loretta Schmitt]

(0307) Dulcie: This precipitated spirit portrait by the Bangs Sisters is of Dulcie, the spirit guide of Rev. Anna Throndsen, staff medium at Camp Chesterfield from 1900 until she passed into the higher life. The pearls appeared after the portrait had been taken home. (Swann, p. 26) [Donated by Frank Throndsen]

(0283) Portrait of a Young Girl: Precipitated spirit picture by the famous mediums, Elizabeth and May Bangs. The name on the portrait is "Ethel." (Swann, p. 27)

(0276) Symine Berkett: Symine Berkett was a member of the First Spiritualist Church of Peru, Indiana. This precipitated spirit portrait of this pioneer Spiritualist was given through the mediumship of the Bangs Sisters. (Swann, p. 28) [Donated by Pastor Mary Lytle of the First Spiritualist Church, Peru, Indiana]

(0296) George Shinness: This portrait is a precipitated spirit drawing by the famous Elizabeth and May Bangs, who were mediums at Camp Chesterfield in the early 1900s. This picture was received by the brother of George, Dr. Benjamin Shinness. (Swann, p. 22) [Donated by Dr. Benjamin Shinness]

(0309) Daisy: Daisy is a ministering spirit, who was associated with Dr. Grumbine's mediumship. This precipitated portrait was received through the Bangs Sisters during a private sitting with Dr. Grumbine. This is an earlier work of the sisters and was made in 1893, in Chicago, Illinois. Later that evening, during a séance, Daisy appeared and identified herself as the one in the portrait, and explained the coronet and star on her head which designated the sphere of her abode in the spirit world. (Swann, p. 18) [Donated by Mary Rose Grumbine]

(0278) Landscape in the Spirit World: This remarkable scene of the Spirit World was received through the mediumship of the Bangs Sisters by Cora Smith, from her cousins in Spirit, Mr. and Mrs. J.U. Woodmansee (Anna) and her brother (David). They are seated in the canoe crossing the river to their castle where they reside in the Spirit World. (Swann, 30) [Donated by Amelia Harbarth Hullinger]

Nota Bene: The text contained with the above precipitated spirit portraits was adapted from Irene Swann's *The Bangs Sisters and Their Precipitated Spirit Portraits* (1969; revised printing 1991).

Appendix 4: *Chicago Examiner* Article detailing May Bangs' affair with millionaire Jacob Lesher [Date unknown.]

CHICAGO EXAMINER

Mrs. Belle Lesher Wins Decree

❋ ❋ ❋ ❋ ❋ ❋ ❋

Spiritualist Wife Is the Cause

Bangs Sisters' "Paintings" by Medium Recalled When the Plaintiff Secures Separate Maintenance of $13 Month.

MARY BANGS LESHER.

A decree for separate maintenance which revives memories of the spiritualistic activities of the Bangs sisters in Chicago was filed yesterday before Judge Charles M. Walker in the Circuit Court by Mrs. Belle Lesher, wife of Jacob Henry Lesher, former millionaire leather manufacturer.

Lesher startled Chicago in 1907 by allowing a statement to be published announcing that he had married May Bangs, the spiritualist medium, who, with her sister, had established a reputation for furnishing "spirit paintings" at fancy prices to old men. Lesher announced his marriage at the time Mrs. Belle Scramlin Lesher returned to Chicago from Europe and made public a statement that she had been married to Lesher in 1901.

This resulted in a suit by Mrs. Belle Lesher for separate maintenance. Judge Stough refused her a decree, but the Supreme Court reversed the ruling, and Mrs. Lesher now asks through her attorney, Albert H. Fry, that the decree be entered.

In the trial before Judge Stough, Lesher denied his marriage to the Bangs woman. Mrs. Lesher said that she was married to him September 21, 1901, and lived happily with him until she took a trip to Europe in the spring of 1907. Upon her return she said she found the Bangs woman in possession of her husband's affections.

May Bangs and her sister became known in Chicago through the sale of three spirit portraits to the Rev. Dr. Isaac W. Funk of New York, who came to Chicago in 1905 to consult them in the course of his investigation of psychic phenomena. Dr. Funk paid them $1,500 for the three portraits and was so completely mystified at the manner of their production that he believed them genuine.

In 1888 the home of the Bangs sisters was raided by Detective Frank Tyrrell and the two women arrested. It was while they were giving demonstration of the spirit called Pocahontas that the detective reached over, seized the spirit and pulled the mask off, revealing May Bangs. Mrs. Lesher asks for $13 a month alimony.

KILLED STEALING BIRD NEST

Anthony Maccio, 485 North Peoria street, was accidentally electrocuted yesterday when he ascended an electric light pole at Foster avenue and the Drainage Canal in an attempt to remove a bird's nest at the top of it.

Jacob M. Lesher.

Bantu Philosophy[1]: The Religion of the First Peoples and its Continuing Influence

James Douglass Williams and Sandra Dutreau Williams, Ph.D.
Independent Researchers

Abstract

Father Placide Tempels was a Catholic priest who went to the Congo in 1933 intending to convert the Africans. He discovered that the Bantus, the oldest and largest language group in Africa, had an ancient, effective religious philosophy: All life and relationships, including with the Divine, are built upon "Vital Life Force" (VLF). Individual and social behaviors increase or decrease the VLF through the interconnected Web of All Being. Bantu principles, such as Oneness, God in man, The Golden Rule, restitution, and more, resonate through contemporary religious philosophies and practices. Still widespread in Africa, Bantu beliefs and culture influence folklore, social systems, politics, education, art, and pop culture, particularly *Ubuntu,* "We are because you are."

When an African Bantu meets another man, they stop and look into each other's eyes for 5-15 seconds. One of them says (as in the movie *Avatar),* "I see you," and the other says, "I am here."[2] They are acknowledging each other in the present moment – a direct perception and a direct communication. Terry Tillman wrote in "Connecting to the Soul," that he witnessed this exchange repeatedly during his travels in Kenya. His guide said the Bantu greeting also means, "Until you see me, I do not exist. When you see me, you bring me into existence." Tillman noted, "This speaks toward our deep connectedness and that we are in fact All One."

"We are all connected" is the basis for spiritual, practical, political, and personal belief and behavior among the Bantu, translated as "people."[3] An estimated 4,000 to 5,000 years ago Bantu was Africa's largest language and geographical group, and probably the largest primitive African spiritual-religious group. According to Kathryn de Luna, African historian at Georgetown University, "Today, some 300 million people—about a third of the continent's population—speak a Bantu language."[4] (See Figure 1 and Appendix 1).

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[1] Placide Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy* (Orlando, FL, 1953). *Bantu Philosophy* is the primary resource for this paper and used extensively for Tempels' observations, descriptions, and interpretations of Bantu customs, social and spiritual beliefs and practices. "Philosophy" is still debated.

[2] Rev. Scott Harvey in a sermon at Unitarian-Universalist Church of Stillwater, OK (n.d.). Also Terry Tillman, "Connecting to The Soul," FinerMinds Team April, 21, 2010, https://www.finerminds.com/consciousness-awareness/samburu-greeting-terry-tillman/).

[3] *New World Encyclopedia,* online, "Bantu Peoples," (http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Bantu)

[4] Oxford Bibliographies, "Kathryn de Luna," http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199846733/obo-9780199846733-0165.xml

As the Bantu migrated, spreading their language and culture through most of the continent, their spiritual beliefs formed foundations for hundreds of African religions. As this paper suggests, Bantu spiritual influences resonate in contemporary cultures and religions these thousands of years later: A Divine Creator and connection to the Divine, Oneness, The Golden Rule, wellness and spiritual energy as frequencies; good and evil, reincarnation, life after death and punishment for sin after death; and Jesus' commandment to clothe the naked, feed the hungry, and offer community to the lonely. Bantu sculpture displayed in Europe prompted a pivotal change in modern art.

Ubuntu is the Zulu equivalent of Bantu. *Ubuntu* is current as an ethos of unity, respect, acceptance, and caring for one another and the Natural world. It influences international social, political, business, and educational arenas, and popular culture. *Ubuntu* translates: "I am because you are."

In the 21st century, the Bantu are concentrated in the southern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (See Figure 2) in a Bantu tribe called the Baluba, or Fuga. Theirs is the religion of the First Peoples, and where it is perhaps the purest.

Figure 1 Distribution of Bantu Speakers[5]

Figure 2 Congo Region Home of the Baluba[6]

Distribution of the Luba (Baluga, beLuga) people; the region where Tempels worked with Bantu tribes.

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[5] Google Images: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bantu_languages
[6] Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luba_people

The entire sub-Saharan culture still retains much of its direct approach to life. The story of the Bantu tribesman saying, "I see you," speaks to "I am; therefore, I think," as compared with the indirect Western thought, "I think; therefore, I am." To the Bantu, everything was connected and interdependent. That is how the Bantu understood life and lived in 1933 when Father Placide Tempels arrived to convert a Bantu tribe, the Baluba, to Catholicism. He eventually concluded that the two religions had much in common.

Father Placide Tempels

Tempels was a Belgian Franciscan priest, posted to the Belgian Congo, now the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He stayed there for 29 years, ministering to, teaching and learning from the Baluba. Instead of imposing Catholicism on what the Europeans thought to be ignorant, shiftless, amoral Africans, Tempels learned their language and their customs to understand their social and spiritual beliefs and practices. He developed a deep respect for Bantu spiritual knowledge and their direct perception of Nature, God and the Oneness of all.

Biographer Michael Meeuwis wrote, "Tempels wanted to experience Bantu being: "He wanted to feel 'Bantu' at least once in life. He wanted to think, feel, live like them, have a Bantu soul. Once he had achieved to see and feel life like them, he'd take on his European personality again, but he would then speak a truly adapted and comprehensible language."[7]

Tempels achieved it, becoming friends with a Baluba man who opened his mind and soul to Tempels. In his autobiographical publication, *Notre rencontre*, Tempels wrote:

> "What joy, new to the both of us, to discover we resembled each other and, what is more, to see we began to 'meet' each other soul to soul.
> And there I had been thinking that after having discovered the Bantu personality, I could have gone back to being the pastor, the governor, the doctor. Even though I mastered a technique of appropriate language use to 'teach' Christianity, I suddenly realised that in this man to man meeting and soul to soul encounter from one being to another, we had evolved from mutual acquaintance to getting on well, and finally, to love… and [I saw] that precisely Christianity had just been born and had already begun."[8]

In 1945, after 12 years with the Bantu, Tempels published *Bantu Philosophy.* To this day, the book has fervent followers and determined detractors. However, as biographer Michael Meeuwis observed, "To many African intellectuals, his name

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[7] Michael Meeuwis, "Placide Tempels," Ghent University, Department of African Languages and Cultures, Rozier 44, B-9000 Ghent, Belgium, http://www.aequatoria.be/tempels/bio.htm
[8] Ibid. (Referencing *Notre rencontre*. Limete Léopoldville, (1962), p. 38.)

epitomises Bantu Philosophy. Indeed, it is very hard to come across writings on African philosophy which do not bear reference to Tempels' 1945 "Philosophie bantoue."[9]

Until his death in Belgium in 1977, Placide Tempels was still active in matters of African culture and religion, writing much that has not yet been published.

Bantu Spirituality and Practice

According to Tempels, the Bantu religion had three primary and interconnected fundamentals:

> Vital Life Force (VLF)
> The interconnected Web of all Being
> Supreme happiness[10] – What we might call dwelling in the Garden of Eden

This was the key belief: Vital Life Force. Force equaled *being. "Being is that which has force."[11]* Tempels wrote:

> We can conceive the transcendental notion of "being" by separating it from its attribute, "Force," but the Bantu cannot. "Force" in his thought is a necessary element in "Being," and the concept "force" is inseparable from the definition of "being." … Bantu speak, act, live as if, for them, beings were forces. (51)

To be alive was to experience and express vital life force, or VLF. All beings, animate and inanimate, had life force. Increasing VLF – living strongly, living intensely – was the Bantu desire and purpose. Life force was increased (strengthened) or decreased (weakened) through interactions with self, others, Nature, and God. Vital Life Force does not have an opposite.

All forces could act upon one's VLF. *Muntu* was life force imbued with intelligence and will, (55) [which] inherently [included] an idea of excellence or plenitude. (101). One's *muntu* affected the VLF of all other beings. Therefore, strengthening or diminishing another's life force strengthened or diminished one's own life force.

Not just the person, but all that depended upon or belonged to that person contained or carried one's life force and had influence. Inanimate objects, *bintu,* had force also, but were without intelligence or will. Injury to any of these decreased the person's *muntu.*

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[9] Ibid.

[10] "Supreme happiness" is Andrew Lynn's description in "Bantu Philosophy," http://andrewlynn.com/2018/04/27/on-bantu-philosophy/, posted April 27, 2018. This article was to be included in Lynn's book, *Classic Spirituality for the Modern Man,* but was excluded due to copyright issues.

[11] Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy,* p. 51. From this point forward, quotes and excerpts from *Bantu Philosophy* will be noted with page numbers rather than continuing footnotes.

Where we hold a *static* concept of being, the Bantu understood being as *dynamic*. To sustain and increase the VLF increased the life force for all beings in the interconnected Web of Life, including God. When a man became a chief through primogeniture, his *muntu* increased greatly as he took responsibility for the entire tribe, including its fields, livestock, properties and possessions. Tempels reported that when a man was invested as a chief, his whole being changed: his demeanor now demonstrated far greater strength, vigor, and intensified living.

To the Bantu, man was the dominant force among all created visible forces. Tempels noted, "Other creatures which, according to Bantu ideas, are lower or higher vital forces, exist in the divine plan only to maintain and cherish the vital gift made to man. … *The destruction of life is a conspiracy against the Divine Plan* (italics mine); and the [Bantu knew] knows that such destruction is, above all else, ontological sacrilege: that it is for that reason immoral and therefore unjust. (120-121) Restitution is required.

All beings/all forces were connected in an invisible web of all beings, the heart and strength of which was God, "the Vital Life Force." As people created and enabled good in the world, they increased their VLF. Fulfilling one's duties and moral and legal obligations and every act of support, goodwill, benevolence, and justice increased one's VLF. In so doing, each person strengthened the VLF of the web, and therefore, of God. God's force was in man, as man's was in God. They were inseparable. Tempels:

> God is "THE supreme, complete perfect force. He is the Strong One, in and by Himself. … [God is] the causative agent, the sustainer of these resultant forces … Man is one of these resultant living forces, created, maintained and developed by the vital creative influence of God. (99)

As acts of goodness built up the VLF, unkind and destructive acts diminished it. The worst misfortune for the Bantu is the diminution of this power. Lynn writes:

> Every illness, wound or disappointment, all suffering, depression, or fatigue, every injustice and every failure: all these are held to be, and are spoken of by the Bantu, as a diminution of vital force. Illness and death do not have their source in our own vital power; but result from some external agent who weakens us through his greater force. It is only by fortifying our vital energy through the use of magical recipes, that we acquire resistance to malevolent external forces.[12],[13]

Primogeniture and ancestral influence were dominant in Bantu belief and practice. When people died, their VLF continued; but according to Tempels, "theirs is a diminished life, with reduced vital energy; … They have not lost their superior

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[12] Lynn, op. cit. The authors disagree that "magical recipes" are the *only* remedy: Right Action, Good, Justice and Right Being/force fortify the Vital Life Force.

[13] "Magical recipes" include "prayers and invocations to God, to the spirits and to the dead, as well as that which is usually called magic, *bwanga* … setting to work natural forces placed at the disposal of man by God to strengthen man's vital energy." (45)

reinforcing influence … and have acquired a greater knowledge of life and of vital and natural forces. … This energy was used solely to reinforce their living posterity." (64-65) Alice Werner published *Myths and Legends of the Bantu,*[14] in 1933, the year Tempels arrived in the Congo. She reported that the ancestral spirits lived underground and retained the power and influence to strengthen or disturb the vital order. For example, the chief was imbued with the power of all the chieftains who preceded him and who now guide and support him. Prayers and sacrifices to the ancestors were common and frequent.[15]

An offended or angry spirit could send an illness or a natural calamity such as drought, floods, or a plague of locusts. The diviner (not to be confused with a sorcerer) consulted the spirits to find out who was responsible and what was the remedy. Spirits that could no longer interact with the living because they had been separated, "extinguished" or had exhausted their vital energy were said to be "completely dead." (65)

One can conjecture that in the case of war the Bantu objected to killing their enemies because their opponents' spirits would live on, so the cause of the conflict would still exist. By exterminating the enemy, the warriors would have to deal with the same problem in the future, especially if those spirits returned as force-increasing "come-backs."

The Bantu understood "disturbance of vital order" in several ways: First, one could disturb the ontological order without meaning to do so. Second, a person might commit what we would call "a crime of passion," in which he was over-excited, "seized" by anger, and caused injury. Third, damage might come from what we call sinning – stealing, deceit, destroying property, adultery, etc. "They also condemn various very widespread usages such as polygamy, child-marriage and other sexual abuses. In short, they know and accept Natural Law as it is formulated in the Ten Commandments." (118). Fourth, evil sorcery or mysterious malevolent, destructive forces could damage the village's vital force.

Each of these disturbances required a specific type of restitution or retribution.

Good and Evil (140 ff)

- [The Bantu hold the conviction] that life is stronger than death, that law is greater than injustice, that the vital will is more powerful than the forces of destruction.
- God intervenes in man's life: God possesses Right, the fulness of Right; and he enjoys the sovereign use of it despite and against those who violate it … "Do not deride a cripple, God still creates defectives."

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[14] Alice Werner, *Myths and Legends of the Bantu,* (New York: Ams Pr Inc., 1933). 8
[15] Werner, op. cit. 8

- …In the actual order, in spite of the presence of evil, the real vital force possesses a power of restoration of life, of restitution of right. The vital force is, in practice, armed against the destructive force: Right and justice are strong against injustice.
- Evil: Injustice toward God and towards the natural order, which is the expression of His will.
- God is the giver of Life. Life is a free gift. … God distributes his blessings and woundings in accord with his good pleasure alone. [The Bantu] teach that the *muntu* has no choice but to take what comes.
- God expects recognition of his vital rank; and he may exact it from men by inflicting injuries on their villages. Restoration in respect of the disturbing of vital order will finally be made in hell.[16]

Restitution and Retribution

Tempels:

> For men of humble station there is but one way to maintain and increase life. Right and the Good. The way is by the acknowledgement of higher living forces and by the maintenance of their own proper vital rank; or if they have deviated from it, then by their restoration in dependence on and attachment to the hierarchy of forces. Confronted with natural forces, there is by divine decree but one possible attitude: that of regular, reverent and wise use of them. Every abuse against nature in respect of these forces, every ontological sacrilege, demands restitution. (105)

> The only real injustice is the harm done to the vital force. Restitution must re-establish the ontological order and vital forces that have been disturbed. (144)

Restitution could not be made with money. Every injustice was a stupendous evil, measured not in economic terms, but in terms of the worth of life force, which exceeded all monetary values. The measure of the outrage suffered was the basis for assessing compensation or damages. (143). The injured party had the right to say what he considered necessary to restore the fulness of his vital force. (148) Therefore, a man who stole a goat did not merely replace the goat, but might make restitution with three, four or five goats – until the injured party felt his loss of vital life force fully restored.

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[16] It's highly probable that "hell" is Tempels' concept here. For the Bantu, the worst suffering was separation from God, the Source of Vital Life Force. The dead souls/spirits of those who were destructive forces in life were condemned to separation from the living through ceremony.

As for the inadvertent offender, injury, apology and extended good will might suffice. For those who became overly excited and caused injury, restitution might consist of reconciling the broken relationship. The offender accounted for the evil, apologized, and compensated, if needed. "Such compensation … has a deeper character: even a friendly arrangement is always made with the express intention of serving as a vital restitution … as a renewal in the ontological order." (162)[17] The offender demonstrated that was now calm and trustworthy and proved it by spitting out saliva, either on the ground or offered on a leaf.

Ancestral spirits could assist with restitution. "Come-backs," deceased relations, could reincarnate to re-establish a man's name in the clan. This constituted a favorable clan influence, a strengthening which would not operate against or apart from the [ancestors'] influence.

"Unforgiveable wickedness" was the worst of all evil – deliberate destruction through sorcery or a pernicious being/force. Here the Bantu exacted retribution and punishment through execution, such as burning.

As for diminution through God's will, the Bantu received what was given. Having identified the cause of their suffering through a diviner, they turned their bodies, hearts, minds and practices to strengthening the web of all Being, and thereby restored vital order and redeemed themselves, increasing God's Vital Life Force and their own.

Increasing the Vital Life Force

How did the Bantu – and how might we – increase vital force so that the Web of All Being is restored and strengthened?

1. *By revering all of life, including inanimate objects.*

2. *By being happy:* (Living in the Garden of Eden) What made the Bantu happy? Right and Good, living intensely, community. Today, being with the Bantu, one experiences a light-heartedness and easy laughter, sees that people enjoy their work and enjoy one another.[18] They cherish children.

3. *By intensifying the vital force* with right action, prayer and gratitude, dancing, singing, drumming, storytelling, art and symbology. The ancient Bantu

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[17] Tempels provides interesting examples of reconciliation and restoration for these and other specific "wickednesses" on pages 161-165.

[18] Stephen Carr, *Surprised by Laughter,* (Durbin: Memoir Club, 2004.) Carr was a missionary in the Bantu regions of Africa who revolutionized agricultural practices. Throughout the book Carr reports peoples' joyful, hopeful attitudes and the abundant laughter that characterized many of his encounters.

created spirals on ancient rock carvings and statues, cave art, and wood carvings. Today, the spiral is ever-present in Malawi in paintings, sculpture, pottery, furnishings and fabrics. Scholars associate the Bantu spirals gratitude

Continuing reflections of Bantu spiritual belief

- Tempels wrote in *Notre rencontre* the aspirations of the Bantu personality as explained to him by his Bantu friend:

  > 1) Life, the intensity of life, living life to the fullest, the strength of life, the totality of life, the intensity through being;
  > 2) fertility, fatherhood and motherhood, great, intense and complete fertility, a fertility which is not solely physical;
  > 3) the vital union with other beings; isolation kills us.[19]

  There once lived a man who said: 'I have come that you may have life, and that you may have it more abundantly'. He did not say: 'This is the way to life', but he did say: 'I am the life'. There once was a man who said: 'I appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain'. And this same man added: 'I have been sent that you all may be ONE; that you may be ONE just as the Father and I are ONE'... [20]

- The Ten Commandments

- "Love your neighbor as yourself."

- The Golden Rule. In the first century BCE, Rabbi Hillel said, that the whole meaning of the Torah is "What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow;" and "Whosoever destroys one soul, it is as though he had destroyed the entire world. And whosoever saves a life, it is as though he had saved the entire world." – Bantu belief exactly.

- German ethnologist and archaeologist Leo Frobenius discovered stories that had been handed down by word of mouth among the Bantu for uncounted generations. Many of these correspond to stories in The Bible.[21]

- Life after death, reincarnation, the spiritual world can have influence in the physical world.

- God is *in* man, man is in God, they are not separate.

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[19] Michael Meeuwis, op. cit. Tempels' capitalization.
[20] Ibid. "A triple answer which stunningly fits the triple fundamental aspiration of the Bantu personality." – Meeuwis

[21] Leo Frobenius and Douglas C. Fox, *African Genesis.* (Berkeley: Turtle Island Foundation, 1983)

Garden of Eden Story: Those who were kicked out of the garden, meaning all of humankind, can make restitution and dwell again in the House of the Divine Vital Force. (A kinder and gentler version.)

Folklore and legends: Alice Werner and her colleagues collected ancient Bantu myths and legends that remain with us to this day, such as "The Tortoise and the Hare," *Uncle Remus* and B'rer Rabbit and B'rer Fox, "The King's Daughter and the Frog," a story corresponding to "Cinderella." She reports stories with characters akin to Jack the Giant Killer and Tom Thumb, tales of monsters and evil ogres and of good young men in dire straits saved by creatures from the natural world.[22]

Modern art: In the early 1900s, Frobenius traveled through Africa, collecting about 4700 prehistoric African sculptures, which he called "stone paintings," made by Bantu tribes such as the Fang of Gabon.[23]

Frobenius cleaned the sculptures and displayed them in a Paris art gallery. The collection had a significant influence on European artists. Picasso, Braque, Matisse, Miro, Klee; and later Mogliani, changed their artistic direction in favor of the African approach. The exhibition traveled to other European countries, bringing new forms and concepts to the "civilized" mind.

Ubuntu

Ubuntu is a Zulu word for Bantu principles. *Ubuntu* means "humanity," and is often translated as "I am because you are," or "I am because we are." *Ubuntu* has become a metaphor for social consciousness and serving the greater good.

In southern Africa *Ubuntu* has come to mean humanistic philosophy. *Unbutism* is a term coined by Stanlake J. W. T. Samkange, his vision for African countries moving toward majority rule.

Since the transition to democracy in South Africa and Nelson Mandela's presidency in 1994, the term has become more widely used, primarily because Archbishop Desmond Tutu is pressing for *Ubuntu* as a fundamental principle for social and political change. In his book, *No Future without Forgiveness*, Tutu wrote,

> *Ubuntu* [...] speaks of the very essence of being human. [We] say [...] "Hey, so-and-so has ubuntu." Then you are generous, you are hospitable, you are friendly and caring and compassionate. You share what you have. It is to say We belong in a bundle of life. We say, "A person is a person through other persons."[24]

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[22] Werner, op. cit., throughout

[23] Wikipedia, "Leo Frobenius," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leo_Frobenius). Frobenius taught at the University of Frankfort and in 1920 founded the *Institute for Cultural Morphology* in Munich.

[24] Desmond Tutu Peace Foundation, "Striving for Ubuntu," http://www.tutufoundationusa.org/2015/10/06/striving-for-ubuntu/

Much more information on *Ubuntu* in contemporary life can be found in Appendix 2, including:

- A simple, but not simplistic, definition of *Ubuntuism* from Stanlake J. W. T. Samkange's 1980 book, *Hunhuism or Ubuntuism: A Zimbabwe Indigenous Political Philosophy;*

- Remarks by Presidents Bill Clinton and Barak Obama;

- US Department of State Special Representative for Global Partnerships, Elizabeth Frawley Bagley on "*Ubuntu* Diplomacy;"

- Theme of the 76th General Convention of the American Episcopal Church;

- Dr. Dalene M. Swanson, Ubuntu and education: Ubuntu educational philosophy, teaching and research practices;

- Madonna's documentary, *I Am Because We Are* about Malawian orphans;

- The Boston Celtics, who break their huddle with the cry *"Ubuntu!"*

In October, 2004, Mark Shuttleworth, a South African entrepreneur and owner of the UK-based company Canonical Ltd., founded the Ubuntu Foundation, the company behind the creation of a computer operating system based on Debian Linux. He named the Linux distribution Ubuntu. This is the company's Code of Conduct, a solid example of Bantu/Ubuntu principles:[25]

Mission: … to bring the benefits of free software to the widest possible audience.

Community: Ubuntu is about showing humanity to one another: the word itself captures the spirit of being human. We want a productive, happy and agile community that can … foster collaboration between groups with very different needs, interests and skills.

Code of Conduct. We strive to:
- Be considerate.
- Be respectful.
- Take responsibility for our words and our actions.
- Be collaborative.
- Value decisiveness, clarity and consensus.

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[25] Canonical Group Ltd, "Community," https://www.ubuntu.com/community/code-of-conduct

- Ask for help when unsure.
- Step down considerately.

Regarding leadership, authority and responsibility at Ubuntu:
- Open meritocracy – The community is open and we invite anybody, from any company, to participate in any aspect of the project. …
- Teamwork
- Credit (acknowledgement)
- Conflicts of interest – [We] abstain from or delegate decisions that may be seen to be self-interested. We expect that everyone who participates in the project does so with the goal of making life better for its users.

Conclusion

Bantu – a people, a philosophy, a spiritual belief, a spiritual practice, a committed existence. Consider, "Love your neighbor as yourself: and "Love one another as I love you." Every action that maintained and increased the Vital Life Force expressed this Love: love for self, for the other, for all of creation; and love for God, who *was* Oneself.

Spiritual rightness – theirs, and eventually perhaps, ours – is Oneness: Not experiencing Oneness indirectly by believing it, but directly by living it. They teach us to recognize ourselves and our very existence in one another, with respect, in pursuit of the higher good for all beings, and connected with God in a dynamic process of increasing the Vital Life Force.

"I see you." "I am here."

"I am because you are."

"My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in yours."

Biographies

James Douglass (Doug) and Sandra Dutreau Williams, Ph.D., are independent researchers living in Perkins, Oklahoma. Doug, an artist and master stone mason, has been studying ancient cultures and religions for over 40 years. Sandra, a theatre artist, teacher and a speaker, has been a free-lance writer and editor since the 1970s. Her scripts, essays, poetry, and film editing have garnered national and international recognition. Her doctorate is from Bowling Green (Ohio) State University in Theatre Communication, the application of communication research to the theatre process. A theatre teacher and director and an Oklahoma Artist in

Residence, Sandra has had years of joy and success with at-risk students in alternative schools.

Doug and Sandra created a small agricultural business, Lost Creek Mushroom Farm, growing shiitake mushrooms and selling mushroom log kits. After 25 years, they have recreated themselves as Shiitake Mama, focusing on medicinal mushrooms and consumer education.

They are volunteer consultants for USAID agencies, teaching mushroom production to small-scale farmers in Africa. They've travelled to India and China expanding their knowledge and experience. Their Mushrooms for Well Being Foundation is working toward building a spawn laboratory to provide the seed material for farmers in West Africa.

Sandra is also a spiritual teacher. A channeler, she receives and transcribes messages from a group of Spirit guides called Surely Grace. She channels "Messages from Mushrooms" as performance character Madame Tremella, a light-hearted Romanian Psychic who receives messages through a Tremella mushroom on her head. She has produced "Surely Grace's 333 ABCs" a book on spiritual principles. Currently, the mushrooms are channeling information for booklets on mushrooms as healers and spiritual teachers.

The Williams' presented two previous papers at ASSR, "The Ancient Atlanders and their Influence on Modern Religions and Cultures" in 2015 and "The Rise and Fall of Father-Mother God" in 2017.

Appendix 1

List of Bantu Groups by Country and Tribe[26]

Country	Total population (millions, 2015 est.)	% Bantu	Bantu population (millions, 2015 est.)	Zones	Bantu groups
Democratic Republic of the Congo	77	80%	62	B, C, D, H, J, K, L, M	Kongo people, Mongo, Luba, numerous others (Ambala, Ambuun, Angba, Babindi, Baboma, Baholo, Balunda, Bangala, Bango, Batsamba, Bazombe, Bemba, Bembe, Bira, Bowa, Dikidiki, Dzing, Fuliru, Havu, Hema, Hima, Hunde, Hutu, Iboko, Kanioka, Kaonde, Kuba, Kumu, Kwango, Lengola, Lokele, Lupu, Lwalwa, Mbala, Mbole, Mbuza (Budja), Nande, Ngoli, Bangoli, Ngombe, Nkumu, Nyanga, Pende, Popoi, Poto, Sango, Shi, Songo, Sukus, Tabwa, Tchokwé, Téké, Tembo, Tetela, Topoke, Tutsi, Ungana, Vira, Wakuti, Yaka, Yakoma, Yanzi, Yeke, Yela, total 80% Bantu)

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[26] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bantu_peoples

Country	Total population (millions, 2015 est.)	% Bantu	Bantu population (millions, 2015 est.)	Zones	Bantu groups
Tanzania	51	90%?	c. 45	E, F, G, J, M, N, P	Sukuma, Gogo, Nyamwezi, Nyakyusa-Ngonde, numerous others (majority Bantu)
South Africa	55	75%	40	S	Nguni (Zulu, Xhosa, Swazi, Ndebele), Basotho (South Sotho), Bapedi (North Sotho), Venda, Tswana, Tsonga, total 75% Bantu
Kenya	46	80%	37	E, J	Kikuyu, Luhya, Kamba, Kisii, Meru, Kuria, Aembu, Ambeere, Wadawida-Watuweta, Wapokomo and Mijikenda, numerous others (80% Bantu)
Uganda	37	70%?	c. 25	D, J	Nkole, Tooro, others (majority Bantu)
Angola	26	97%	25	H, K, R	Ovimbundu, Ambundu, Bakongo, Chokwe, Lunda, Ganguela, Ovambo, Herero, Xindonga (97% Bantu)
Malawi	16	99%	16	N	Chewa, Nyanja, Tumbuka, Yao, Lomwe, Sena, Tonga, Ngoni, Ngonde
Zambia	15	99%	15	L, M, N	Nyanja-Chewa, Bemba, Tonga, Tumbuka, Lunda, Luvale, Kaonde, Nkoya and Lozi, about 70 groups total.
Zimbabwe	14	99%	14	S	Shona, Ndebele, numerous minor groups.
Rwanda	11	85%	11	J	Hutu
Burundi	10	85%	10	J	Hutu
Cameroon	22	30–70%	c. 7–15	A	more than 130 groups, c. 30% Bantu and 40% Semi-Bantu
Republic of the Congo	5	97%	5	B, C	Kongo, Sangha, M'Bochi, Teke
Botswana	2.2	90%	2.0	R, S	Tswana or Setswana, Kalanga, 90% Bantu

Country	Total population (millions, 2015 est.)	% Bantu	Bantu population (millions, 2015 est.)	Zones	Bantu groups
Equatorial Guinea	2.0	95%	1.9	A	Fang, Bubi, 95% Bantu
Lesotho	1.9	99%	1.9	S	Sotho
Gabon	1.9	95%	1.8	B	Fang, Nzebi, Myene, Kota, Shira, Puru, Kande.
Namibia	2.3	70%	1.6	K, R	Ovambo, Kavango, Herero, 70% Bantu
Swaziland	1.1	99%	1.1	S	Swazi, Zulu, Tsonga
Somalia	14	7%	1	E	Somalian Bantu
Comoros	0.8	99%	0.8	E, G	Comorian people
Sub-Saharan Africa	**970**[27]	**c. 37%**	**c. 360**		

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[27] From Wikipedia: Population of all of Sub-Saharan Africa, including the West African and Sahel countries with no Bantu populations. Source: 995.7 million in 2016 according to the 2017 revision of the UN World Population Prospects, growth rate 2.5% p.a.

Appendix 2

Ubuntu in Contemporary Life[28]

Stanlake John William Thompson Samkange (1922–1988) was a Zimbabwean historiographer, educationist, journalist, author and African nationalist. He was a member of an elite Zimbabwean nationalist political dynasty and the most prolific of the first generation of black Zimbabwean creative writers in English.

Stanlake J. W. T. Samkange talks about the three maxims of *Hunhuism ("unhu"* is the Zimbabwe equivalent of the Bantu/Zulu *Ubundu*.) or *Ubuntuism*:

1. "To be human is to affirm one's humanity by recognizing the humanity of others and, on that basis, establish respectful human relations with them."

2. "If and when one is faced with a decisive choice between wealth and the preservation of the life of another human being, then one should opt for the preservation of life."

3. As a "principle deeply embedded in traditional African political philosophy … that the king owed his status, including all the powers associated with it, to the will of the people under him."

"In the *unhu* domain, visitors do not need to burden themselves with carrying provisions – all they need is to dress properly and be on the road. All visitors are provided for and protected in every home they pass through without payment being expected. In fact, every individual should try his or her best to make visitors comfortable – and this applies to everyone who is aware of the presence of a visitor within a locality."

President Barak Obama

At Nelson Mandela's memorial in 2015, US President Barack Obama spoke about Ubuntu:

There is a word in South Africa – Ubuntu – a word that captures Mandela's greatest gift: his recognition that we are all bound together in ways that are invisible to the eye; that there is a oneness to humanity; that we achieve ourselves by sharing ourselves with others and caring for those around us. …. He not only embodied Ubuntu, he taught millions to find that truth within themselves. ("Obama's Tribute To Nelson Mandela At Memorial Service - Business Insider". Business Insider. 10 December 2013. Reported in:

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[28] Wikipedia, "Ubuntu Philosophy: History of the Concept
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ubuntu_philosophy#History_of_the_concept

"Ubuntu Diplomacy"

In June 2009, in her swearing-in remarks as US Department of State Special Representative for Global Partnerships, Global Partnership Initiative, Office of the Secretary of State (served 18 June 2009 – 10 October 2010), Elizabeth Frawley Bagley discussed ubuntu in the context of American foreign policy, stating: "In understanding the responsibilities that come with our interconnectedness, we realize that we must rely on each other to lift our World from where it is now to where we want it to be in our lifetime, while casting aside our worn out preconceptions, and our outdated modes of statecraft." She then introduced the notion of "Ubuntu Diplomacy" with the following words:

In 21st-century diplomacy, the Department of State will be a convener, bringing people together from across regions and sectors to work together on issues of common interest. Our work no longer depends on the least common denominator; but rather, we will seek the highest possible multiplier effect for the results we can achieve together.

We will also act as a catalyst, with our Foreign Service Officers launching new projects in tandem with those NGOs, philanthropies, and corporations at the front lines of foreign affairs to discover untapped potential, inspire fresh ideas, and create new solutions.

And we will act as a collaborator, leading interagency coordination here in Washington and cross-sector collaboration in the field, with our Ambassadors working closely with our non-governmental partners to plan and implement projects for maximum impact and sustainability.

In the same way that Secretary Clinton has often said that 'it takes a village to raise a child,' we are now realizing that we must apply a similar approach worldwide. It takes a shared, global response to meet the shared, global challenges we face. This is the truth taught to us in an old South African principle, ubuntu, or 'A person is a person through other persons.' As Archbishop Desmond Tutu describes this perspective, ubuntu 'is not, "I think therefore I am." It says rather: "I am a human because I belong. I participate. I share."' In essence, I am because you are.

We are truly all in this together, and we will only succeed by building mutually beneficial partnerships among civil society, the private sector, and the public sector, in order to empower the men and women executing our foreign policy to advance their work through partnerships.

The truth and reconciliation council believed in the philosophy of Ubuntu because they believed that Ubuntu was going to help to reform and reconnect the already broken country of South Africa.

This is Ubuntu Diplomacy: where all sectors belong as partners, where we all participate as stakeholders, and where we all succeed together, not incrementally but exponentially. (U.S. Department of State. Ubuntu Diplomacy.)

The 2002 UN World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), featured an Ubuntu Village exposition centre.

Ubuntu was a major theme in John Boorman's 2004 film *In My Country.*

Former US president Bill Clinton used the term at the 2006 Labour Party conference in the UK to explain why society is important.

The Boston Celtics, the 2008 NBA champions, have chanted "ubuntu" when breaking a huddle since the start of the 2007–2008 season.

Ubuntu was the theme of the 76th General Convention of the American Episcopal Church. The logo includes the text "I in You and You in Me".

I Am Because We Are is a 2008 British-American-Malawian documentary film about AIDS ... work with orphans throughout Malawi. Released: January 2009; Photographer: Kristen Ashburn, with foreword by Madonna; Publisher: PowerHouse. In [the] film, the English translation of the proverb lent its hand to forming the title of pop singer Madonna's documentary, *I Am Because We Are* about Malawian orphans.

A character in the 2008 animated comedy The Goode Family is named Ubuntu.

Ubuntu was the title and theme of an EP released by British band Clockwork Radio in 2012.

Dalene M. Swanson, Ph.D., Department of Secondary Education at the University of University of Alberta has published several papers on Ubuntu educational philosophy, teaching and research practices: Ubuntu and education

"For Dalene, Ubuntu offers a generative pathway toward understanding and transcending the paradoxes of positivist research and neoliberal politics to arrive at a place where the deeply human is discovered and cherished, forming a basis for a transformed ethics of research and pedagogy." -- Diane Caracciolo, Ruth S. Ammon School of Education Adelphi University[29]

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[29] Transgressions: Cultural Studies and Education, Series Ed. Shirley Steinberg.] Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense Publications. https://web.archive.org/web/20110716042012/ https://www.sensepublishers.com/files/9789087908430PR.pdf

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A Meditation on Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy's
The Multiformity of Man

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Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy (hereafter "R-H") developed a distinctive analysis of humanity in the world of time and space, involving the human past and future, and inward and outward relations, in a "Cross of Reality" that he combined with other tools. These original tools are referred to variously as metanomics, grammatical or Speech-Thinking, and, in his book, The Multiformity of Man, the term ecodynamics.[1] R-H developed an open system at once humanly oriented, secular, and practical; describing real human living in relationships, recognizing primordial verities whilst offering hope for future human flourishing. Amenable in spirit to the Judeo-Christian ethos and revelation, it is not, however, defined as a theological, metaphysical or ideological system. He did what he argued modern behavioral scientists could not; that is, to examine humankind in real circumstances, as whole persons within various types of actual relationships as they lasted over time (75). In his ecodynamic analysis of humankind, R-H opposed "the thesis of the uniformity of man" and supported the "unity of mankind, of a common goal and destiny for all men, . . . "(ii). This fictional meditation, or reflection, is the testimony of a middle-American man who has been introduced to the Four Ecodynamic Laws of human multiformity through dialogue with a friend and selective reading.

My name is John. My third great grandfather who came to America in 1840 was Johann, or Hans for short, but my English name is a memorial to my great-grandfather whose family had adopted American names. It is a strong name in a strong family tradition. I speak and read a little German, but mostly because I took classes in junior high and high school. My family did not use German at home, for that was a thing of the past. I married Maggie—Margarete—18 years ago, and though we think or ourselves as modern Americans, we were raised in neighboring communities in Missouri where many people are still aware of the old German immigrant heritage from four and five generations ago. We have five children—yes, five—and they are enough, though we used to talk from time to time about having another. They are aged from sixteen to seven—Emerson, Laura, Lillian, Abigail, and Everett. Maggie and I have been happy in our marriage, and we have a happy home, though we have had to learn a lot about raising kids at different stages in their growth, but we have had plenty of advice and help from our own parents, brothers and sisters, and friends. Our church has been a haven for us, especially after the children began coming; you may have guessed rightly that we are Lutherans.

My best friend, Steve, is a college professor who teaches literature and calls himself a humanist. He did that half-jokingly with me when our friendship was new, but he explained that his kind of humanist believes in every good thing that can be done, or spoken, or written, or encouraged, for all people everywhere. (Not incidentally, he did introduce me to Maggie when we were in college.) We have had many conversations about academic things I knew little about. It took me a while to

see that for my sake he was holding back the academic terminology and theory that he had studied for his graduate degree. He said he had handled much of it tongue-in-cheek—just because someone wrote in a high academic way using complicated in-house words according to so-called disciplinary formulas—he used words like "tropes" and "metanarratives"—did not mean they had anything useful to say. What could I say? What I appreciate about Steve is his openness, though. He is an English professor, but he and I like to read history, all kinds, just because we like it and we can talk about it. He brings in a lot of sociology and theology, even some philosophy, and I have looked forward learning a little about the new ideas he brings up.

Recently he has been talking about some German Jewish and Christian scholars from a century ago who have a lot to say today about life and work, relationships and faith. I had heard of Martin Buber, and there were others, but one with a hyphenated name stood out for me. Steve said Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy was a polymath and difficult to read, partly because he seemed to ramble and everything he wrote was a first draft. What he wrote was challenging because he wrote long, convoluted arguments that had to be understood "whole" and were hard to distill in a few sentences. Hardly anyone knew about "R-H", probably because he "drove his own bus," so to speak, and he did not conform. He was a professor who could not be like anyone else, and he had his own consistent, principled way of talking and writing about the world and people. He even created his own system to do that, and the system was the key, or the lens, for reading and getting what he had to say.

When Steve first mentioned the system, I said I didn't get it—here was this German professor and American immigrant who wrote about history, politics, industry, society, and religion, and he used a framework he developed as an alternative to using modern social science to understand people. I knew that some religious people were usually upset about science and other things that were too modern or secular, but I was—I still am—making up my mind. For me, science had produced many good things, but so did following Christ. Steve and I have talked often and long about these things. He said that R-H spoke of "science" generally but was specific about modern sociology and psychology because, he claimed, neither of these social sciences got to the real core of what it means to be human and to find fulfillment. Of course, I asked what R-H had as an alternative, and Steve said he would share the ideas of a particular book called *The Multiformity of Man.* I even read through the book and wished I had done more reading in college, though I am not sure it would have helped. I'm grateful that Steve and I could talk it over.

From the first I marveled at one thing: the *Multiformity* book is not like a sociology text book, and it is not "scientific", you know, based on normal scientific method. Steve cut through the mystery for me, saying I would just have to take it on faith that R-H was a *philologist;* he wrote and taught in the humanities, so his love of words, language, of speech, and of history and literature were always present. In this book he was a social philosopher and he used his own grammatical system in his discussions. He also used an instrument he called "The Cross of Reality", combining it with the grammatical usually called "Speech-Thinking", not small-talk but the kind of talking that people use to "make" the world in time and space. I am

just beginning to comprehend this, but whatever it ultimately means, R-H was sure that it was the basis of all human community and accomplishment from the beginning.[2]

Now, whether R-H is truly unique in defining humankind, I do not know, but I have never heard or read anything like his book, *Multiformity.* I learned that the book was originally a series of talks he gave in 1935, the Lowell Lectures at Harvard. He taught at Harvard for two years, after coming in 1933 as a refugee from Germany when Adolf Hitler took over there. Anyway, because he talked too much about God and biblical themes,[3] his Harvard colleagues helped him to find another place to teach, and Dartmouth College was glad to have him.

So, what is the book about? R-H asked, "Who is man in a mechanized, scientifically rationalized world?" Man—humanity—is a mystery, especially in modern societies. Our sciences gave us insights and discoveries, and the studies of human behavior have added immeasurably to understanding many things about human beings and their societies, but the mystery has seemed even greater than before. I think the more you know, the more questions you have. R-H just said, "We do not know any longer, or at least we do not agree any longer, on what 'Man" is" (i).

The Multiformity of Man is about "Four Ecodynamic Laws." R-H talked about the relation of the human being (he does favor the term "Man" or "man" that is his own perspective) to the laws through his name, his calling, and his "own truest expression, his biography [encompassing his soul, his life]. R-H rejects the "uniformity of Man" that modern scientists think they are studying, because apart from the stability of a person's soul, no one is precisely the same in the passing phases of life or in the changing circumstances of work, membership in organizations, military service, citizen's activities, or being educated and prepared for life and work as an adult.

The first ecodynamic law of humanity is plural—*Three equals One.* The character of the worker is not as an individual but as "the molecule of production," working as a member of a team in industry, by the hour, perhaps doing piecework, and being paid accordingly (27-29). The second law concerns the collective. He wrote, "In the pursuit of common ideals like the brotherhood of man, the solidarity of work and science, youth or beauty, *All equals One.* In the matrimonies of the race, *Two equals One.* But all this has to give way before the majesty of the soul. The experienced life of mankind is based on man's liberty to proclaim: *One equals One*" (87-8). That is the fourth ecodynamic law.

R-H explained these ecodynamic laws repeatedly and in different ways; he presented what they implied, and how they might work in different circumstances. But I wanted to find a way to judge whether there was anything to the laws. Did they have anything to do with how my family and I live or work?

As I read I got hints of a new understanding of how people live with purpose and with care in the world. I am not worried about whether R-H was writing about some strange new system because what I read seemed familiar on the one hand, and very challenging on the other. I call this an experience of recognizing how important it was to focus everything I value, including my relationships, in the here and now, because only then could I be completely the man I must be, not only right now, but in the future. I had a sort of biblical experience, I guess I could say. Steve

said he understood because he had a similar experience; he had ideas as to why, but I will come back to that later.

I asked Steve about the way R-H seemed never to say the same thing twice in the same way. He said he couldn't prove it, but he thought R-H was so confident in the continuing power of speech to be creative in the moment that he found the language to express what he understood in that moment. It is as if one moment and its circumstances differed enough, or so much, from subsequent moments that he could not talk about them in exactly the same way. But then he said that R-H taught that our speech or expressions and declarations create times, which also contribute to the creation of spaces. Well, he lost me there, but he gave me something to think about, so that I would have new questions.

The First Ecodynamic Law

Because I needed more time and "space" to think about R-H's strange way of expressing how people relate to each other and to the world, I decided to focus on his ecodynamic laws, so that I could decide whether they really applied to my own life and relationships. R-H wrote that "in every kind of organized work today more than one man is potentially presupposed. The equation, *Three equals One,* is at the foundation of society for all purposes of work." I started with my own work.

I am an insurance agent, one member of a local team, usually from four to six agents, and we relate to a regional team. I, we, are not just sales agents but consultants for our customers—our clients. We are brokers for business and industry, from small to large, and we work to optimize coverage for the best cost. Locally, in the Wentzville to St. Peters area, we have an associate manager; most of her job is as an agent, though, and we have a regional manager in St. Louis. We are sort of rural, but really a suburb of St. Louis, and you may be thinking we could not have much business here, but actually we have clients all over the country—think of us as part of a much larger network. I have thought about how I and my work relate to the first ecodynamic law—how in some way I am just one part of a unit (R-H even said "molecule") that is the minimum unit necessary to be productive. I didn't buy this at first because I considered myself an experienced professional, but I came to understand what I already knew, that no one of us could get the job done by ourselves. For example, we do group consults and sell a lot of complex policies that require us to combine our strengths or specializations; if I had to write them alone, I still would have to consult with outside agents.

Our professional environment sounds a bit more sophisticated than the factory environment R-H described. I am not just an atom in the molecule of the work team, but honestly, I have come to recognize how much we all rely on our character as a working team not just to get the work done, not just to serve our clients and the company that employs us, but to understand how working alone would not be as productive or as satisfying as the arrangement we have now. As R-H put it, in order to get rewards for ourselves and our families and to be valuable employees, we have given up our individualism—and it works for all of us.[4] He had much to say about shift work, vacations, filling in for others, and the limits on the life-span of any working group or factory or business establishment, and it is not realistic

to expect any of these to last more than a few years, a generation at most.[5] I didn't go along with him, at least not personally and at first, when he said that we are serving the team best when we are replaceable. His point was that in a factory or a social "machine", man is not an individual but in an "aggregate" state, a molecule, not an atom.[6] We are not the same team we were a few years ago, people come and go. But, then, he did say that work and working groups, teamwork, are not forever, and that there are other facets to man's being.[7]

Steve and I belong to the same church we grew up in, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, though the original church of our parents and grandparents was the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church. I have to admit it's not the same church, and other relatives have wondered how we can stay. I am conservative though the ELCA is unacceptably liberal by the old lights, who particularly don't agree with or understand things like employing women as ministers and allowing LGBTQ membership in the church, so I have to say the church is changing. Pastor Karl keeps saying we have to learn to adjust and to love each other in ways we never expected because that is what Christ calls us to do. It's like our church is a crossroads of many conflicts and casualties of the wider society, so we are being tested.

I began to think of the church—I have primarily my own congregation in mind—differently after I began to understand the second ecodynamic law that Rosenstock-Huessy described. He continued to talk about industry, and that threw me off. I wondered, and this is a subject many people have continued to talk about, do church congregations often experience a similar process? I suspect they do, as well as church synods, associations and conventions. We members resist accepting the probability that any specific congregation will not last; many do last for generations, yet many die out. Others become a remnant and are reinvigorated or restored as new congregations. Are congregations or denominations meant to endure endlessly? Perhaps not, but it seems that "the Church" continues in various forms.

The Second Ecodynamic Law

The second ecodynamic law is about the "collective". A factory worker identifies with "Labor" as much as he did with "youth", and he belongs to his nation, or church, maybe a civic club, the Luther College Alumni Association, or other enduring organizations. They are also abstract, but without sounding as abstract as "beauty" or "truth". R-H calls them "elative" because they gather what is best or superlative in their constituents and perfect these qualities in a whole.[8] We may not be able to define a collective easily, especially a more abstract one, but it is a way to name a unity of many parts, always by quality, not by quantity. Collectively, a person is a fraction of a real, "macrocosmic" whole. [9] This rang true. I began to recognize collectives even in the strangest places. For example, I noticed "nerds" in a new way, and terms like "Gen-Z", "gamers", "cyber celebrities", or entire social forms; the weirdest, of course, on the World Wide Web, and even weirder and more mysterious, on the Dark Web.[10]

I could not get away from the conviction that collectives carry a great deal of meaning, maybe ultimate meaning, for people. Steve said he had figured out that whenever we look at all kinds of groups in societies, even around the world, we should be able to see collectives and their influence. Their influence and importance work together and they help to define and describe our larger societies. I have begun to understand this: when Americans talk about pluralism, they are referring to the many collectives that are free to be, needed where they are present, and needed because they give inspiration and guidance from the past and inspiration and hope for the future. R-H wrote that collectives are either utopian or romantic, focused on the future or the past; like Communism, or like the American Legion.[11] Now I understand better why Missourians grieved when the St. Louis Rams left many years ago for Los Angeles—and their being in the Super Bowl this year only twisted the knife. Sorry, I couldn't let that disappointment slide by; people do remember. R-H said much more about the collective nature of life—"Infinity equals One", but I have been able to apply the concept to these things so far.[12]

The Third Ecodynamic Law

The third ecodynamic law is about the "dual"—pairs, coupling, and "dialectic polarity." Steve said that this principle would help me to understand my most important personal relationships. R-H said the dialectic polarity of the third law occurs "in all relations of friendship, of personal liking and antagonism, of jealousy and love, of hate and desire," and in the "polar relation" of male and female in the "forms of reproducing the kind" (54). That last phrase caused me to think of the Creator who spoke the world into being and then all creatures "after their kind" in Genesis 1, and especially the living soul of man (humanity) in his own image.[13] I was struck by the reasonability of my friendship with Steve and other friends and acquaintances, my own brother and sister. I remembered our wedding, when Pastor Hans (before Karl) had compared marriage to the joining of the original couple in the garden. He said that with time Maggie and I would understand things about our marriage we could not really know at our wedding, but we would have to take on faith, not just from Genesis, but from our faith community in the church. I know now that he was more than right and that there was no way he could communicate to us all that he already understood about the truth of his words at the time. He was right because we all were taking part in a fundamental, ritual ceremony that was far more important than we could express fully except over time; this event was the foundation of the rest of our lives, the family we were to have, and the entire way of life we were to build and experience.

The third ecodynamic law helped me to see my own marriage and other relationships in new and revealing ways. Even the Creator and the Creation are a "dual". Duality and dialectic are basic to the cosmos, and marriage to humanity. Language preserves the dual relational patterns in comparisons. For example, the singularity of married partners who are distinguished as "Mother" and "Father" remains though they are made one in the unitive relationship of marriage. R-H said they were neither "plural" nor "collective' as in the first two laws; the "husband and wife are bound together by a relation of mutual integration" (55). Even eighty years

ago when R-H was writing about this, the principle and its reality were threatened by the "pandemonium" begotten in contemporary intellectual views and popular attitudes about sex. He argued that "This law says that in all relations which are representative of the generation and regeneration of man: Two equals One," and the reality suffered damage when the sociologists sampled and described it, subjecting it to experiments and reductive analysis that could never define what was more than the sum of its parts (56-7). That and the popular, individualistic confusion of sex with love had started the damage. Steve explained that this statement was just one of hundreds that revealed the motivation R-H had in the other books he wrote.[14]

I know it isn't time for me and Maggie to think about getting old and completing the life-span of our marriage on the way to "death do us part," but while we think of it as a long time away, if things continue normally, then we will approach that point in due time. This reality R-H explained touched me but also comforted me deeply because life is short. He helped me to have a new perspective based on the differences between the ecodynamic laws: the plural, a working group, is only temporary, and a collective like "science" or the church can last centuries, but the dual, as is marriage, is limited to a period—long, I hope, for us—in the lives of man and woman. R-H criticized the social scientists who thought they could describe a reality they only partly observed, while they then "objectively" assumed they were studying "mere gatherings of a certain number of people" (60). I do not think he was completely fair with the behavioral scientists, but I get the spirit of his complaint, and I feel it in what Maggie and I understand about ourselves together and our family. We really do think of ourselves as One, though we are completely real and different from each other.

That anyone could speak or feel as we do was R-H's point. He wrote, "Marriage organizes the self-conscious half of our existence on earth" and that two individuals vow "to organize the whole of her [their] conscious life into one unity! The dual does not apply where this decision for better, for worse is not made" (62). He said other related things, but I became convinced that weddings and marriages as long-term commitments were not only for reproducing human beings but also for making sure that families are able to live in the best way for each other. "Human flourishing" begins at home. Did I already know this? Yes, of course, but I understood what I know much better now.

R-H was a Christian and a different kind of conservative, not the political kind we often hear about but more "classical" or basic. He was even a different kind of historian. When he wrote about the past, he looked at particular events and people, but more often he had studied the past as the larger and deeper history of humankind. He emphasized primal or primordial, principles, and so, when he used his "grammatical" method to explain "duals", marriage in particular, he talked about polar opposites between man and woman and how beneficial agreements overcame "dialectic contradictions." For example, in a maturing marriage, a man in coming to know his wife "learns the relativity of opposites", but also the unity, as when either of them in the absence of the other represents the married couple (62). A married couple ideally work together in the freedom of a covenant rather than a contract; no contract could even touch the real give-and-take, mutual dependence and corporate

identity that happens when, says R-H, "the two individuals are more and more encircled and transformed into the foci of one ellipse" (64).[15]

These comments seized my attention, and then others gave me insights to think about and to grow into. R-H wanted to accentuate how relationships actually work. In a marriage each partner continually shapes "the form of the dual. The polarity is established more definitely each time. Finally, the two are agents of a corporate body for which they stand, for from it they derive their activities." And, this is so to the point that, "Under the dual I am spellbound by the law of polarization. I remain the other half the more my second self is in decline or is prevented from taking his place" (64). Indeed, the marriage is the seedbed of personal growth in the process of developing the dual as both members, each in their own way, are liberated from "self-centered and localized consciousness." Yes, there is still much growing ahead. R-H declared, "Ripeness is everything" (80).

But there was another thing. Duals do not exist for themselves, just as teams and collectives are for the common, public good. Marriage is not simply private or public, but both; a marriage changes the couple but also even a nation. In another book, R-H wrote that marriage under certain circumstances is a revolutionary event: it is a "new state" of being and mind "when body and soul are completely dissolved and completely remade, you can be sure that this couple will become the founders of a new race, a new people, a new nation."[16] I shared this with Maggie. She was quiet, smirky, and then she laughed out loud and exclaimed who was this Rosenstock guy who needs to get real? I got her point, but, then, I kept thinking about it—and we talked about it some more—wasn't his argument an affirmation of the primordial, historical, and present importance of marriage? At first, he seemed so idealistic, no, mystical, but then what was the realistic, practical result?

Rosenstock-Huessy argued that marriage needed revolutionary purpose: whether a wedding was in church or in private, "heaven and earth must participate in the wedding . . . every marriage is the nucleus of a new race. . . . The people who marry change the nation unceasingly, if and when they meet in the presence of heaven and earth. . . . Many a marriage, it is true, represents nothing but chance or a personal whim. The few that are something more regenerate their kind."[17] I had to think through this, and R-H had more to say about it. Marriage is the basic dual, marriage normally anticipates children, families contribute to societies, and societies make up a nation. A marriage is a spoken agreement that overcomes the differences between the sexes, the limitations of mere sex, and simple mutual understandings. People speak vows in order to create unity when no other way will work.[18] If R-H were saying nothing more than that every marriage is important, that would be enough for me. He adds, however, that marriage is a vital force that binds couples, produces children and from generation to generation renews a nation. The revolutionary part is that a marriage is a new creation, never identical from instance to instance but unique. A marriage is original for the couple and the children born to them. I'm going to tell Maggie how committed I am to our revolutionary, original marriage and family![19]

The Fourth Ecodynamic Law

The Fourth Ecodynamic Law describes "the singular of man," what it is that makes someone specifically his or her own, a soul with a unique biography. "One equals One" is different from familiar ideas about individuality or social expectations that a person is simply part of other groups like work and collective groups or pairs (76). "Man never is one thing. He is and remains one thing plus something else", R-H wrote (83). We do not get to choose what to include in our biographies: our "biographic unity" includes everything about us "from our death back to our birthday despite our complete ignorance of our beginnings" (78).

According to Rosenstock-Huessy, René Descartes had it all wrong because he considered his childhood a waste and proclaimed that his mind defined his existence. Our biography is not the product of thinking or Reason, we need more than just powers of mind. The next point was sort of a confirming revelation for me about a mystery: it is impossible to completely define the soul, it is possible to know the soul—the "essential quality of the human soul" through all phases of life, through all kinds of human relationships, through "childhood, work, play, politics, momentary sensations, and long-time sufferings" (79). R-H wrote,

> The soul is just man's power of fighting his way through different situations, different forms of existence, different convictions and social relations. Man cannot avoid passing through many appearances and semblances. It is hard for him not to get tangled in one or the other as though he were nothing else. It is in those moments of extreme danger, when a man might be mistaken for nothing but one in the many, that his soul begins to move and to persuade him that he is not doomed with his environment. When everything seems to be calculable in a social setup, this one soul remains incalculable (79-80).

What comes next in *The Multiformity of Man* is probably the most amazing thing I have ever read. Never before, nowhere, except in the Bible, have I encountered such a powerful suggestion about the character and significance of a person's soul. I am reading the Scriptures with new eyes, and I am reading my own life, so to speak, and the lives of others in a new way. (Steve said I need to be careful not to come across as the latest victim of "convert crusaderism"—he stung me by saying that, but I got the point.) I think R-H invited every person to consider his or her own biography as the distinctive testimony of a unique soul. To that, we all say "Of course!" But one thing had to be understood. A soul ends up being understood only in relation to everything in life—inwardly or outwardly, every encounter or experience, transition or phase, sorrow or joy, weakness or strength, effort or failure, contribution or accomplishment. The makeup of one's soul is about genuinely responding and changing or adjusting to all of life's experiences and all of us live together in distinctive times and spaces (79-81).

At one point, I had the same realization as I did when I was reading my sociology text book in college: "This stuff is just common-sense observation!" Then I recognized how R-H had presented things that most people never notice, let alone understand, because we all are so conditioned by our social upbringing and experiences that we do not see how our social lives are working well and how they do not or cannot work well, simply because people don't have better models. Most of us, most of the time, simply do not see what we are doing. We are mindless

conformists to social habits and patterns, where the good things sometimes disappear beyond evil and what some people still call sin.[20] The social frame rules.

This fourth ecodynamic law is the hardest for me; I complained to Steve about how little sense it made, because it seemed R-H defined the soul by describing it in relationship to everyone and everything else. The soul is not some abstract thing, but it is only real in the world in interaction with others. I know that Genesis says God created man, male and female, two distinct ways to be fully human but in relationship, in the divine image, and that original Man was formed as a "living being" or soul from the soil of the ground and God's own breath.[21]

Therefore, I am trying to think through what R-H meant when he spoke of a person as a soul. I get a hint when I think about Maggie and me, together, and whether either of us "souls" could survive if we lost the other. R-H actually covered that; I found a quote: "The love of the sexes is the first of those forms that convey a foretaste of death. Through it we become conscious of our exterior being as half of a whole human."[22] Steve explained that R-H used "exterior being" to explain how we experience ourselves in significant relationships with others. Male and female in a reciprocal relationship, specifically in marriage, is serious enough to make a vital life covenant while understanding that "until death do us part" is more than just empty words.[23] Souls take this seriously, as we say, to heart, with deep emotion and a dose of fear. Being "half of a whole human" is not just some ancient, mythical story about the origin of the sexes; it is essential to our lives and to how we understand ourselves.[24]

So then, is it true that we cannot understand ourselves only as isolated individuals? I have heard this from the pulpit, usually hardly more than mentioned. We do have a problem with individualism because we become blind to the fact we are not and never have been exactly individuals, but we also have ignored the isolation individuals can experience. R-H said that isolated individuals die.[25] We talk about love; by love, I mean the kind of attention that meets a need in another person—to be "seen", cared for, helped, encouraged, corrected, challenged, and we all need in any instance.

R-H seems outdated, especially about things he either doesn't talk about or could not have known about. Still, without considering his work to be classic, I think he offers a way of thinking that gives insight about the past and the worth of making every day count for itself. It is also useful, exciting actually, to learn to see myself and others in new ways, and R-H gives that opportunity. I think about his ideas, his conclusions: the human person is a biographic unity, extending backward from death to birth, that includes a person's conscious phases—of heightened awareness of oneself and commitments and actions in the world—but also of the "idiotic and mindless, our unreasonable phases (78). Thinking is important but does not define us; reason is useful but not predominant. The human soul is incalculable, yet, with soul a person makes way through and beyond all life-phases, associations, vital partnerships, all difficulties, and all these things together amount to one's soul, in a relational, experiential sense, both mysterious and understandable.

The incalculable soul is distinct from the mind, there is no mixing. The soul is the entirety of a life lived according to the right timing and for the right purpose. Each person cultivates his or her own life, which seems to work best when one's

unified soul responds positively to life's calling. R-H always had the grammar of life in mind. It is important to respond when one's name is called, like Moses or Joshua when Yahweh said "You". To respond means to be changed fully and positively: "For when the name is called for the right thing at the right moment, a man's mind lights up, his legs move, his heart beats, his whole being is shot through with new life in every direction" (82).

In closing his book, R-H emphasized the fundamental unity of a person as being not a disintegrated "bundle of contradictions" or something of many parts but a soul with a unified biography. Referring to the sons and grandsons of the trans-Atlantic migrants, he wrote, "the very radicalism of the changes during their life-time deepened the unity of their biography. . . . [They were] "personalities at peace with themselves." I do not know how R-H could know that about them, and there the immigrant myths have plenty of truth, but I think he drew from his own experience as an immigrant who had to leave the old life behind, at least the old country, and make a new life in a new country. Though he was deeply changed, the trajectory of his soul was much the same. The same calling he began with in Germany early in the century continued energetically when he found a new home with his wife and son in America (81-3).[26]

I am glad that Steve got me into R-H. To be honest, I have laid some things aside in order to read from an author I would never have read otherwise, and I feel different because I have done this. The history books can wait; my family cannot wait, though Maggie is fairly patient with my reading. It's not something I can explain well, but even though I have only scratched the surface with R-H by reading about the human multiformity, I have begun to regard my own life differently—the life I share with my co-workers, with Steve and other friends, with my church, and with Maggie and our children. Somehow everything is more valuable to me. The people and life that I, and we, have always thought were important now make more sense than ever, and I feel much more committed to keeping them strong and healthy. I believe these matters have always been true and valuable since the beginning, and people should be reminded about them.

At the end of his book, Rosenstock-Huessy referred to the multiple forms as "invariants" (plural, collective, dual, and singular) defined in the Four Ecodynamic Laws. He pressed his point that his "new science of the invariants can be established without violating the freedom of the human heart." He asserted the relevance of his new science: "Between dictatorships over manufactured masses and anarchy of inarticulate individuals, the new science can take its course. Its compass is the unity of the human heart, but its subject matter will be the Multiformity of Man."[27]

I know there is much more to say about R-H's unusual science, but something about it rings true, personally, socially, and, in an odd way, spiritually, if only because it is so down-to-earth and experientially satisfying. I will keep thinking about it; Steve and I still have a lot to talk about.

Biographical Note

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He has been married forty-three years to his wife Debra; they have two children and five grandchildren.

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[1] Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, *The Multiformity of Man* (Essex, VT: Argo Books, 2000; earlier editions 1936, 1948, 1973).   Further direct page citations are in parentheses. The central emphases of *The Multiformity of Man* appear in a brief, clear chapter by George Allen Morgan in his *Speech and Society: The Christian Linguistic Social Philosophy of Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1987), 14-16.

[2] From the introduction by Wayne Cristaudo, in Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, *In the Cross of Reality,* Volume 1, *The Hegemony of Spaces,* edited by Wayne Cristaudo and Frances Huessy, translated by Jürgen Lawrenz (New York: Transaction Publishers, 2017), xv. Also, an audio lecture on the Cross of Reality: ERH Fund, February 16, 2019, http://www.eR-Hfund.org/lectures/cross-of-reality-1953/ .

[3] Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, *Out of Revolution: Autobiography of Western Man* (New York: William and Morrow, 1938; reprint editions: Providence, RI, and Oxford, UK: Berg Publishers, 1969; London: Jarrolds, 1939; Norwich, VT: Argo Books, 1969; Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2013), xx.

[4] *Multiformity of Man,* 27-8.

[5] *Ibid.,* 28-35.

[6] *Ibid.*, 36-7.

[7] *Ibid.,* 41-3.

[8] *Ibid.,* 46-7.

[9] A collective "deals with one common goal, by pointing towards one ideal or abstract type. The collective deals with parts in relation to a whole, with positive facts in relation to a superlative, with fractions in relation to an integer number." *Ibid,* 46-7.

[10] The "Deep Web" and "Dark Web" (deeper still) comprises 96 per cent of the entire Web compared to the 4 per cent available on the "Surface Web." It is not entirely mysterious if we recognize it as a postindustrial, digital universe that serves the communication, storage and security purposes of government, business, the military, and other organizations and persons, licit or not. These suggest generalizations that Rosenstock-Huessy, like everyone else, could never have anticipated: See https://www.thedarkwebsites.com/ accessed January 12, 2019.

[11] When Rosenstock-Huessy wrote initially in the 1930s, Communism, though still relatively a new force, was an alarming utopian application of Marxism, especially in the Stalinist USSR, and prospectively in China. *Multiformity of Man,* 49.

[12] *Ibid.,* 47.

[13] Genesis 1:26-27; 2:7.

[14] Examples of regeneration do not refer merely to the births of children to a couple. Rosenstock-Huessy objected to modern ideas of marriage, such as the social perception that a marriage is simply between two people in love, that did not measure up to the standard of the German *Hochzeit* or "high time". His comments on the relationship of marriage to society reveal that, "In a sociological inquiry, such differences between a public celebration and a private wedding urge themselves on us as decisive. Because social consequences can appear only at celebrated weddings and indeed arise only out of such celebratory occasions. After all, at a celebrated marriage the settled order of society makes room for the entry of a new pair of bearers of reality, and this results naturally in a new ranking order. Society acknowledges a higher kind of life, to which their daily casual routines are subordinated. / As long as marriages praised the intrusion of every new wedded bond into society, society itself was never considered isolated or "total." Today, our thinking is lorded over by purely social considerations. In contemporary sociology, wedlock is registered and analyzed as one of many other social processes. This entails, however, a denial of its power to change society." *The Hegemony of Spaces,* 202-3.

[15] Rosenstock-Huessy mused much about the way two lovers could have a personal transformative and mutually revelatory experience as they grow in love, as their love significantly changes their experience of time and puts them in a new "space" in society and history. *The Hegemony of Spaces,* 118-19.

[16] *Out of Revolution,* 469.

[17] *Ibid.*

[18] Rosenstock-Huessy proclaimed the marital relationship as an incarnation that makes "both humans complete" and allows that through their "dying and rebirth, eternity steps into the world, incarnate, as creation." That act of dying and rebirth is his way of expressing the unity of a new institution, marriage, when bride and groom die to old commitments and ways. They take new names when they speak vows. He adds, "First, thanks to names, sexual life can allow itself to be openly seen. Because being married compels one to accept eternalization, through the willingness to allow oneself to be spoken to openly about the unity of the sexes. Only the word can make whatever happens into history. . . . From lovers, speakers shall acquire fecundity; from speakers, the lovers shall acquire eternity." *The Hegemony of Spaces,* 145-7.

[19] Rosenstock-Huessy had much more to say on the subject of the sexes, marriage, and the generations, especially in relation to his Cross of Reality (or Actuality), the tool that energized his social analyses. See the superb summary in Morgan, *Speech and Society,* 21-4.

[20] Points and solutions in the chapter, "Rosenstock-Huessy's Incarnatory Christianity," in Wayne Cristaudo, *Religion, Redemption, and Revolution: The New Speech Thinking of Franz Rosenzweig and Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 184-229, especially 186-192, 198-203, 208-9, 215, 208-9, 225-228.

[21] The word "animal", *anima* or soul, or living thing, translates the Hebrew *nephesh,* and contexts specify meanings; Genesis unambiguously defines both Man and animals as living beings, yet emphasizes that the human being, the *humus*-based living being, was formed in the divine image. See Martin Luther, *Large Catechism,* Article I: 12-13. Online at file:///C:/Users/jsumm_001/AppData/Local/Packages/Microsoft.MicrosoftEdge_8wekyb3d8bbwe/TempState/Downloads/Large%20Catechism%20(1).pdf

[22] *The Hegemony of Spaces,* 171.

[23] Wedding vows are life changing and world changing, what R-H considers effective, "formal" speech, not just talking. The vows are like the creative word and breath of God; they must be spoken, truthfully and faithfully. Pronounced in public, the vows renounce the old individuals and create a new pair in a new relation; together they become something new, in one spirit, perfecting that process during a lifetime. R-H applies the power of speech in the Cross of Reality—and making a vow can be analogous to creating new forms of speech—using the projective-trajective (past-future), subjective-objective (inward-outward) axes: ("Our experience is anchored in grammatical laws . . . . ") "A word, after all, makes its impact on the world by subjugating a soul for its preject, coercing it to communicate subjectively, enforcing a trajective report from all participants in those elaborations, and finally facilitating an objective reckoning that everyone can share. Progressively more people become involved in this story as it unfolds. Thus the word makes its peaceful entry into the treasure chest of language." *The Hegemony of Spaces,* 113, 116, 118, 121-2.

[24] The present explanation, of course, follows the Hebraic, biblical narrative that contrasts starkly with, for example, Aristophanes' tall story about an original hermaphroditic third sex whom Zeus halved. Plato *Symposium* 189-93.

[25] So, Friedrich Nietzsche; in *The Hegemony of Spaces,* 296.

[26] "A Brief Biography of Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy (1888-1973)" in *The Multiformity of Man,* 87-91.

[27] *Multiformity of Man,* 83-4.

The Gender Issue:
Sexual Liberation or '*Hardness of the Heart*'?

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Abstract

The demands for gender equality raised by socio-political advocacies are too pressing that seeks critical attention to regain a sense of moral stability and sound religious consciousness. Even the use of grammatical gender (*of masculinity and femininity*) expresses views and beliefs proving its sensibilities and need for deeper awareness. The chronology of literary features arising from Genesis' creation of the human being to the succession of interpretations in the biblical accounts, theological perspectives and feminist movements redound to a more subjective and liberal appreciation of sexuality.

With the current and strong promotions on gender equality driven by principles on sexual liberation, preference to subjectivism on sexual orientation becomes imminent. The invoking of a 'personal choice' addressing the concept of sexuality in consonance to the human body and sexual desire challenges a traditional moral ground on sexuality issue.

Christ's teaching to the Pharisees' "*hardness of the heart*" (*See* Mt. 19:8) is a reminder emanating from the Torah as an essential moral ordinance against a seemingly well-promulgated provision at that time from the Mosaic Law (on Divorce). Its sexual cognizance, a trend on ethical issues can be paralleled with today's pressing concerns on sexuality and gender preferences.

This paper strongly suggests that approaching the Gender Issue with ancient scriptural groundings is not an alternative but an assertion of the Christian perspective on sexuality. This concept of referencing to God's original design aims to purify the development in perceptions brought by materialism and modernization, in particular, the Gender Issue.

Keywords: *Gender, Sexuality, Male, Female, Liberation.*

Introduction

Confronting Marriage and Sexuality has to uphold high ideals as it determines greater values in human relationships. The story of Creation in the book of Genesis is an affirmation to this when it highlights the creation of the man and the woman. While majority of theological reflections have assumed the creation of the man and the woman as the institutionalization of marriage, especially from the Christian perspective, the Old Testament and latter scriptural concepts on sexuality remain a dominant discussion in recent theological developments.

While conservative treatments which grounds to scriptural bases remain a stronghold in the theological articulations, gender sensitivities which are founded in

biblical traditions supply the greater assimilation of values, most especially in the treatment of sexuality and relationships. Since marriage, as a sacramental human relationship, is ordained to procreation and the much needed moral degree in relationship which is realized in the union of the man and the woman, the issue on gender is a real concern. Marriage becomes the starting realization of gender in so many aspects as it opens further understanding and analysis on how it should be approached. A primary source in the gender issue has to be grounded from the scriptures, so far as theological views are to be presented.

In this paper, as it tackles a much needed analysis amidst the growing interests on gender issues, the liberal understanding and application on sexuality will be discussed with the current arguments on sexual orientations and how this can be managed by the traditional and biblical notions on sexuality as it was expounded by Christ against the juridical understanding of the Jews in his time.

Eduardo Echeverria, with Benedict the XVI's similarly titled, "*In the Beginning..*" shall provide a profound argument with his specific critics against the statement of the "Core Council for Gay and Lesbian Students" at the University of Notre Dame. John Paul II's Theology of the Body and his encyclicals- *Familiaris Consortio* and *Veritatis Splendor* will be emphasized in these arguments.

As the gender identities unfold in the oncoming generations, the real concerns on sexual issues and liberal minds flood the fora for sexual discussions against a gradually submerging concept on sexuality influenced by biblical moral grounds. Given these challenges, the gap between sexuality orientation against its origin and nature has been widened by the moralization through individualism and contextual processes.

A more substantive approach in establishing the issue on gender is to go over some dominant principles on gender identities brought by current interpretations and modern thinking. The legislative agenda that is being sponsored from different sectoral groups are sufficient points to argue with since these agenda cover more of discussion and deliberation by supposed authorities in crafting laws for the society.

Sexual liberation, as it is called in this paper is the challenge to the traditional concept on sexuality. Modern culture, in its aesthetic display of liberation plays a crucial part in this as values form different aspects from a social climate of cultural understanding and religious and moral concepts. Although dubbed as a current challenge, biblical accounts have already insinuated narratives of a display on sexual notions. The foreseen rectification, as cited by this study is nothing fresh and ingenious but rather an unearthing of an ancient value, which Christian tradition claims, what was in the beginning.

Similarly, the Pharisees, during the early Jewish culture cited the same. Although with not much emphasis on gender, but with marriage and divorce, their common ground is on sexuality. As the Pharisees referred to legislation as a moral ground to challenge Christ with his view on Marriage and divorce, this paper likewise aims to use the same Jesus' argument, "It was not like that in the beginning…" asserting further human nature as a given in creation.

Addressing Sexuality

Seen as significant in the development of the human person, the purpose of sexuality in God given context has to be discovered. Theological inputs contributed

much effort in this aspect but the more profound expositions that emerged rather served complexities as to the purposes. Accordingly, Genesis is essential in the interpretation as the God given purposes of sexuality can be viewed with sufficient amount of contextualization.

Citing the first two chapters of Genesis on the creation of man whereby man and woman created in God's "own image and likeness", blessing them saying "be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it" (Gen. 1); and the woman created from the man's body so that the man would be not 'alone' but have a partner like himself, there is an inaugurate conception that both man and woman are given responsibility through their personal and sexual relationships as the source of the human race (Ashley, 1983:4). This concept of procreation has been overly relied as the natural order for the continuation of the human race, where begetting offspring was obliged for Jewish males, garnering even divorce and polygamy, while barrenness or sterile women were regarded as disgraced. For the Christian tradition, procreation becomes the primary purpose of sex and the mutual love and parental responsibility becomes secondary.

The overall consideration of Christian tradition as far as sexuality is concerned is framed on the understanding that sexuality's meaning is heterosexual, permanent and procreative marriage. While a focus on marriage is seen, it is directed towards communion and salvation of others (Cahill, 1990: 198).

The Arrival of Homosexuality

In 500 B.C., sexual orientation is frequently associated with appreciation of beauty, or with taste or preference, than its moral issue. In frequent instances, the erotic character of gender was less important giving more emphases on the excellence of beauty and character (Picket, "Homosexuality", 2019). The New Testament viewpoint on sexuality has been considered with most of its passages in the condemnation of homosexuality. Although it is very clear in its assertions that what was condemned were practices of same sex acts, including prostitution as "unnatural acts". Due to these acts which were treated as sinful, were considered sodomy, which, in the early Jewish tradition was punishable by death. Due to the decline of the Roman Empire and the rise of some barbaric kingdoms, homosexual acts have become intolerable. European secular laws contained few measures against homosexuality until the middle of the thirteenth century.

In the 20th century sexual roles were redefined once again. For a variety of reasons, premarital intercourse slowly became more common and eventually acceptable. With the decline of prohibitions against sex for the sake of pleasure even outside of marriage, it became more difficult to argue against gay sex. These trends were especially strong in the 1960's, and it was in this context that the gay liberation movement took off.

The term *bisexuality* was invented in the 20th century as sexual identities became defined by the predominate sex to which people are attracted and thus a label was needed for those who are not predominantly attracted to one sex. This points out that the history of sexuality is not solely the history of different-sex sexuality plus the history of same-sex sexuality, but a broader conception viewing of historical events in light of our modern concept or concepts of sexuality taken at its most broad and/or literal definitions. Until recently, we have LGBTQ++.

However, many, especially in the academic world, regard the use of modern labels as problematic, owing to differences in the ways that different societies constructed sexual orientation identities and to the connotations of modern words like *queer*. In this paper however, it limits to the general term homosexuality.

Gender and Scriptures

Clearly as regards gender, even the scriptures' ambiguity appeals to direct more the discussion into the creation of humanity, indicated both in Genesis 1 and 2 (Westermann, 1987:10, 18-19) and with the established order of creation, which is stewardship. But when the woman was created, because something was "lacking" (Westermann, 1987: 20), here, "bisexuality" of the human race was elevated from something taken for granted to the realm of conscious reflection. This scriptural passage ascertained a theological significance on the nature of humanity and of human relationships, such as male and female, husbands and wives (Westfall, 2016: 71): as referenced by the following scriptural texts: "*Indeed, man was not made from woman, but woman from man*" (1 Cor. 11:8); and, "*For Adam was formed first, then Eve*" (1 Tim. 2:13).

The scriptures have provided the foundational natural and moral grounds. In the light of the creation of the woman, Christian tradition believed marriage was instituted. In the vision of family and community, understanding sexuality is very crucial. What highlights todays opinions remain to consider the foundation of sexuality. The vision of marriage and family is always rooted in these opinions. While theological and philosophical discourses provide an avenue for clarification, authorities has to be established.

The Catholic Church Catechism, scarcely is a venue one expects to find new ventures in moral theology. As it gives a standard magisterial teaching, its contexts, phrasing and emphasis can be crucial (Cahill, 1990:197). The wide margin of cultural undertones and social pressures are real issues in considering a moral approach. As such, the catechism, as it upholds high ideals on marriage and sexuality, current trends remain a stumbling block, yet a consistent recipe in the debate for gender and sexuality issues.

The Legal Approach

Realizing the sexual orientation and gender identity expressions' social impact and recognition, sexuality has been adopted on the more *personalist* approach. The Catechism, following the writings of Pope John Paul II sees this (Cahill, 1990: 198). Where it sees an interpretation of the "natural law" idea is based on human nature. Thus, with the existing social pressures, fully recognizing the homosexual community such as the LGBTQ++, not only as essential in their rights as human beings, but also recognizing their sexual orientation and gender identity expressions, present a dilemma that is inevitably critical in moral theology. In many countries, this becomes an urgent legislative agenda and is at the forefront of challenging the biblical foundation on human sexuality.

The Sexual Dilemma

Assuming it becomes legal, imagine a homosexual couple in an endearing human relationship. Their marital union remains valid, especially with a legitimate

recognition of their sexual orientation. The apparent heterosexual union is evident and the ends of marriage, in its simpler approach, are attainable. Where both are mutually in love and profess fidelity until death, and be blessed even with abundant offsprings, upbringing their children, where sexuality and gender has to be taught, then comes a moral sexual dilemma. How and what can a gay father educate as regards sexuality to his son, or a lesbian mother to her young daughter? Will the child be taught what society and culture say about gender or will they aimlessly adopt their parents' sexual orientation. The conflict lies not in the parental upbringing, for the homosexual couple may have strengthened a personal moral belief, rather, the conflict is realized in the social statuses, revealing a multi-faceted family structures, with a pre-dominantly heterosexual marital relationships.

Instead of a rather clarifying vision of an ideal sexual relation orientation, these kids, exposed in the dilemma, are more confronted with sexuality and gender issues.

Sexual Liberation or '*Hardness of the Hearts*?'

As John Paul II puts it, given that the body is intrinsic to myself, there is a unitary activity, such that, "*the person, including the body, is completely entrusted to himself, and it is the body and soul that the person is the subject of his own moral acts*" (Veritatis Splendor, 48). This assumes further that sexual moral choices are exercised in and through a bodily act. There is no explicit categorization that John Paul II refers to gender, but since gender is an issue defined by sexuality, it can be assumed that in this context, while marriage and divorce are the central figures in Jesus' encounter with the Pharisees, gender and specially sexuality, remain the focal point. John Paul II added, "*In this way sexuality is respected and promoted in its truly and fully human dimension and is never used as an object that, by breaking the personal unity of soul and body, strikes at God's creation at the level of the deepest interaction of nature and person*"(Veritatis Splendor, 32).

Human sexuality is fundamentally, nature of the person. In the earlier given circumstances, the magisterial teaching on homosexuality has often been misunderstood even by its supporters, or misinterpreted by those lacking in assertion their faith to the church teachings (Echeverria, 2011: 240).

Citing some misinterpretations, Echeverria noted a statement by the Core Council for Gay and Lesbian Students at the Notre Dame University. The statement is entitled: "Homosexuality and Sexual Orientation: Common Questions". The Council replies: "Homosexual orientation in and f itself is morally neutral, but genital homosexual relations are sinful, in the same way that genital heterosexual relations outside marriage are immoral."

According to Echeverria, some things are wrong with the answer, and pointed out the following:

(1) that homosexual tendencies are not morally neutral but objectively disordered;

(2) heterosexual and homosexual sexual relations are equally sinful, against chastity. But they failed to recognize that homosexuality is a fundamental problem because these tendencies are objectively disordered; and

(3) there is a mistaken claim that "the Church does not say that the homosexual orientation is wrong; rather it is sexual activity between same sex persons that is

objectively disordered and therefore sinful. What the church actually says is that the disordered homosexual condition inclines to intrinsically immoral acts, thus, unable to meet the natural goods of sexuality, of the body-soul person's creational ordering to the sexual "other", a "suitable" partner (Gen. 2:18).

Echeverria's objection which I subscribe to:

(1) "*The ethical quality of a same sex relationship be the morally decisive factor, not the gender of the participants.*" Will this do justice to the embodiment of human person as man and woman (*Gen. 1:27*, *male and female*) and hence to sexual differences between them?

(2) "*Sterility objection*" where both homosexual and heterosexual relations are not open to procreation. Sexual act is not solely for procreativity but for openness and sharing of oneself to the partner.

(3) "*Homosexual condition as a natural condition*". Scripture condemns homosexuality (Mt. 5: 27-29; Rom. 13:14; Col. 3:5-6; 1 Pt. 2:11). The corollary that homosexuality is normal variant of sexuality rather than a disordered relationship (or choice) resulting from the *Fall*.

(4) "*Every person is created in God's image*". The individual's inclination to good is questioned by his/her objectively disordered condition.

(5) "*Creation order and sexual ethics*" as alleged essentialism. What is 'natural' is just a cultural construction and must be challenged on the basis of actual human experience". Is the human nature changing? If so, in what sense?

(6) "*Church must be with people where they are, not telling them where they ought to be* (Timothy Radcliffe, O.P.)" The recognition of struggle to discover what is right, as Radcliffe claims is actually a constant calling and commitment towards holiness.

To end:

In the Beginning… was the creation of the world and the human being, male and female (Gen. 1:27), God created them, in substantial partnership to continue and multiply creation. Their gift of free, where their eyes will be opened to distinguish good from evil, and to choose what God commanded them, lest they shall die (Gen. 3:3)!

In the practice of this freedom by the human being, there remains a limitation. Benedict XVI clearly articulates two movements:

(1) Of human beings who do not exploit the world and do not want to detach it from the Creator's governance and make it their own property; rather recognize it as God's gift and build it up in keeping with what it was created for.

(2) The image of the serpent: who calls not to cling to the distant God who has nothing to offer and calls not to cling to his covenant, who is alien which imposes so many restrictions. Instead, plunge into the current of life, into its delirium and ecstasy, and thus be able to partake the reality of life and of its immortality. (Benedict XVI, 1995: 64-65)

Yet Adam and Eve fall into this trap, and the entire generations of humanity are engulfed. In its consistent pride, hardened its hearts. And in his redemptive ministry, Christ has one thing to remind… "**it was not like that in the beginning!**"

Biographical Note

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Loving Thyself and Well-being: What Does God Have to Do With It?

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Abstract

The current study is both exploratory and conceptual in nature and considers the controversial topic of "self-love" from both Christian and positive psychology viewpoints. Two concepts of self-love are considered with Christian participants (n = 467) who listed God as the most important factor to happiness (i.e., 'proper' self-love group, Type I, n = 133) and a second group ('improper' self-love, Type II, n = 334) who considered some other factor as more important. Statistical significance was evident between groups with Type I participants scoring higher for meaning in life, engagement, and life-satisfaction measures in addition to a number of biblically-based character qualities (e.g. kindness, forgiveness, hope, to name a few). Several self-enhancement values (e.g., money, material goods, and physical appearance) were compared as well. Interestingly, Type II participants had higher scores for the value of money. It is argued that the self-love controversy is largely due to a conflating of terms related to priorities concerning godly character and self-enhancement factors. A Christian model of 'proper' self-love is suggested that considers a prioritized core (i.e., love for God and others), self-character values and actions, and stewardship-intentionality for factors such as money and physical appearance. 'Improper' self-love is considered within the context of selfish character and the overvaluing of self-enhancement pursuits in light of the warnings set forth in 2 Timothy 3.

Introduction

For many years the concept of *self-love* has been controversial from a Christian standpoint because of the warnings apparent in the New Testament. For example, Brownback (1982) and Adams (1986) both cited 2 Timothy 3:2 as a caveat to the self-esteem movement of humanistic theorists and evangelicals who emphasize the importance of feeling-good-about-self (c. Watson, Morris, & Hood, 1989). According to the Apostle Paul, in the last days, the apparently condemned will be "lovers of their own selves" as opposed to others and God (2 TIM 3:2-4). Both Brownback (1982) and Adams (1986) convincingly argued that the idea of self-love is not explicitly promoted in the New Testament, but rather has been implied by many individuals from the command to "love your neighbor as yourself" (e.g., Mathew 22:39, Mark 12:29-31, Luke 10:27). With global self-promotion on the rise via social-media outlets (see Lin, Lee, Jin, & Gilbreath, 2017) and faith trends on the decline (see Pew Research Center, 2016), more discourse is needed to address the concept of self-love in light of the warnings set forth in 2 Timothy 3 as well as within faith-based frameworks of well-being.

Although the self-love implication derived from the biblical command to "love your neighbor as yourself" is still currently debatable from a biblical context, there is no debate among Christians regarding the Great Command to love God first. Pope (1991) discussed Thomas Aquinas' concept of "proper self-love" as a process of love based on loving God first as opposed to "improper self-love" which is associated with "loving God as a secondary good" (p. 387). The idea of proper self-love can be likened to the process of sanctification, which considers human flourishing from a God-focused perspective as opposed to a self-focused one (e.g., Hackney, 2010; Hall, Langer, & McMartin, 2010; Murphy, 2005). The current paper attempts to distinguish between two concepts of self-love (proper vs. improper) by investigating differences in character and self-enhancement values between Christians, based in part on the warnings set forth in 2 Timothy 3, which clearly refers to an improper form of self-love:

> You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God. They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that. (2 Timothy 3:1-5 NLT)

If a concept of proper self-love is to be operationally defined (and generally agreed upon) from a Christian standpoint, then clearly, it will be very different than the improper form of self-love suggested by 2 Timothy 3. More importantly, a love for God must be life's priority, with proper self-love, as well as the "second and equally important" command to love others as oneself (e.g., Mathew 22:37-40, Mark 12:29-31, Luke 10:27). The current paper is exploratory in nature and considers Christians who believe that God is the most important factor to happiness (i.e., requisite for 'proper' self-love) compared to Christians who believe some other factor (e.g., family, health, competence, etc.) other than God is more important (i.e., 'improper' self-love). The primary interest is determining whether or not these two groups of Christians differ in the degree to which character is valued and how it is directed towards others. Additionally, the degree to which these individuals might differ in the valuing of self-enhancement factors (e.g., money, material goods, and physical appearance), orientation to happiness (i.e., meaning, engagement, and pleasure; Peterson, Park, & Seligman, 2005), and life-satisfaction, are also areas of investigation.

Since the initiation of the positive psychology movement by Martin Seligman in the late 1990's, much research has been conducted in the area of character and happiness. Peterson and Seligman (2004) developed a classification of twenty-four character strengths that are purported to be valued globally and are associated with psychological well-being (see Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2006). It has been

emphasized that although many of the character strengths that Peterson and Seligman (2004) identified overlap with biblical characteristics of love (i.e., 1 Corinthians 13, Hall et al., 2010), the study and interpretation of character will continue to differ with secular and Christian psychologists (Hackney, 2010; Hall et al., 2010; Murphy, 2005). For example, Nancey Murphy (2005), strongly influenced by MacIntyre's (1984) conception of ethics, emphasized the importance of distinguishing between "ungraced" human character relative to ideal character developed through obedience to God. Although *religiousness* is listed as one of the twenty-four character strengths established by Peterson and Seligman (2004), the concept of graced versus ungraced human nature is certainly not a topic of the secular positive psychology movement.

The current study considers Murphy's (2005) three questions regarding graced versus ungraced character development: "1. What is the character of untutored and ungraced human nature, 2. (w)hat is the character of ideal human existence, (and) 3. (w)hat are the means by which the transition can be made?" (p. 56). Simply stated, it is hypothesized that believers who do not perceive God as the most important factor to happiness will not value and develop character, as defined by Christian qualities of love (1 Corinthians 13), to the same degree as those who love God first. More specifically, "God-first" Christians learn (via grace/experience) to value biblical character qualities more than Christians who although believe in God, believe some other factor is more important in the pursuit of happiness (i.e., improper self-love). Additionally, "God-first" individuals ultimately become more "Christ-like" in behavior towards others (e.g., patience and kindness) than their ungraced counterparts, moving them closer to ideal human existence (i.e., Murphy's second question), which would be characterized by a society that values (and behaves in line with) the virtue of serving others ahead of oneself. Conversely, it is argued that ungraced individuals are more apt to develop tendencies such as those depicted by 2 Timothy 3 (e.g., ungrateful, love pleasure, money, etc.), and would be more likely to be self-serving in nature. Touching on Murphy's (2005) third question, the beginning and/or transition towards ideal human existence must begin with the understanding that God must be the center of a person's being (i.e., first in priority). Without this factor in its proper order, individuals will not be privy to the manifestation of inner promptings suggested by the New Testament (see John 14:21).

In the current investigation, a questionnaire was developed to measure character qualities that overlap, either explicitly or implicitly, with the Apostle Paul's characterization of love (1 Corinthians 13) and many of the twenty-four character strengths identified by Peterson and Seligman (2004). An example of an explicitly overlapping character quality is kindness (e.g., "love is kind" 1 Corinthians 13:4); however, most of the identified character strengths are more implicitly associated. For example, the opposite of "(l)ove is not….boastful or proud" (1 Corinthians 13:4) can be associated with the character strength of *humility* (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Below is 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (NLT) with parentheses included with the proposed associated character strength.

> "Love is patient (1. self-regulation) and kind (2. kindness). Love is not jealous (3. gratitude) or boastful (4. humility) or proud (humility again) or rude (kindness again). Love does not demand its own way (5. open-mindedness). Love is not irritable (self-regulation again), and it keeps no record of when it has been wronged (6. forgiveness). It is never glad about injustice (7. fairness), but rejoices whenever the truth (8. authenticity) wins out. Love never gives up (9. persistence), never loses faith (10. religiousness), is always hopeful (11. hope), and endures (12. bravery and/or 13. resilience, and/or 14. hardiness) through every circumstance."

Twelve of the fourteen character strengths listed above are among the twenty-four identified by Peterson and Seligman (2004). *Resilience* and *hardiness* were included (in addition to *bravery*) because "endures through every circumstance" suggests a quality that implies more than just bravery. Resiliency generally refers to the process of individuals thriving in the face of adversity (Werner, 1982), while hardiness is more specific to finding meaning trough trials (Kobasa, 1979). It has been suggested by Christian scholars (e.g., Hackney, 2010; Hall et al., 2010) that the character taxonomy of Peterson and Seligman (2004) is limited because it does not adequately assess character qualities that are associated with life trials. Therefore, resilience and hardiness were included as pilot measures of "endurance." By conceptualizing character qualities as characteristic of love, particularly as applied to loving others ahead of oneself, it becomes possible to measure character differences (and other well-being measures) between individuals who believe God must be first place, with respect to the concept of happiness, compared to those who do not.

Methods
Participants
Four-hundred and sixty-seven college students (Mean Age = 24.32 yrs., SD = 7.70; Female = 76%, Male = 24%) from a public university in the state of Texas served as participants. Participant inclusion was based on a demographic question that acknowledged belief in Christianity. No distinction was made amongst Christian denominations. Participants answered an online questionnaire consisting of statements related to validated measures of life satisfaction (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) and orientation to happiness (Peterson et al., 2005), as well as pilot questions measuring character and self-enhancement values as they pertain to self and others. Additionally, a distinguishing open-ended question concerning happiness (i.e., perceived, most important factor) served to divide the two comparison groups.

Measures
Type I ("God-first") vs. Type II Christians - Classification Question
One open-ended question was asked that was designed to classify participants into two groups: 1) Type I ("God-first"), and 2) Type II participants.

The question asked participants to list the most important component to happiness. Participants that made any reference to a connection with God as the most important factor to happiness were classified as *Type I* participants (n = 133, 28.4%), while *Type II* participants (n = 336, 71.6%) listed some other factor as most important. The top five variables listed by Type II participants were: 1) Family (48%, n=159), 2) Wellness (16%, n=54), 3) Significant-other relationships (11%, n=36), 4) Financial/educational/occupational success (10%, n=33), 5) (tie) Children and Friends (5%, n=16 each).

Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS)

The SWLS (Diener et al., 1985) measures an individual's general level of life satisfaction with 5 questions: "1) In most ways my life is close to my ideal, 2) The conditions of my life are excellent, 3) I am satisfied with my life, 4) So far I have got the important things I want in life, 5) If I could live my life over I would change almost nothing" (p. 72). Each question is scored from 1 (low satisfaction) to 7 (high satisfaction), and the five questions are totaled. Means and standard deviations of the current sample (M=23.58, SD=6.69) were very similar to those established in the Diener et al. (1985) study with college students (M=23.50, SD=6.43). The psychometric properties of the SWLS have been reported to be acceptable (Diener, 1994; Diener et al., 1985). Whether or not Type I and II participants differed in perceptions of life satisfaction was explored.

Orientation to Happiness

The Orientation to Happiness (Peterson et al., 2005) measure consists of three sub-scales (life of meaning, life of pleasure, and life of engagement) consisting of six questions each (18 total questions), with questions scored from 5 (very much like me) to 1 (very much unlike me). The three scales were designed to measure three possible orientations to happiness (Seligman, 2002), and contain content such as: "1) Regardless of what I am doing, time passes very quickly (engagement), 2) My life serves a higher purpose (meaning), and 3) Life is too short to postpone the pleasures it can provide (pleasure)" (Peterson et al., 2005, p. 31). According to Peterson et al. (2005), the three sub-scales are correlated but distinguishable, and each scale has acceptable psychometric properties. This measure was used because it has a pleasure sub-scale (i.e., "love of pleasure" 2 Timothy 3:4); it was hypothesized that Type II participants would score higher on the pleasure scale than their Type I counterparts. Whether or not differences between the two groups were evident with the meaning and engagement sub-scales was also of interest.

Pilot Questionnaire: Character Statements

Forty-two Likert-scaled (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) statements were assessed concerning twelve of the twenty-four character strengths identified by Peterson and Seligman (2004), plus resiliency (Werner, 1982) and hardiness (Kobasa, 1979). Three statements for each identified character strength, were created to measure both value and action (towards others and self) aspects of the particular character strength in question. For example, regarding the character strength of kindness, participants first responded to the

question, "I value the character trait of kindness" (i.e., value). Next, they answered two experientially-worded questions, 1) "I regularly make the effort to be kind to others" (i.e., character *other-action*), and 2) "I regularly make the effort to be kind to myself" (i.e., character *self-action*). The character statements (aside from resiliency and hardiness) were based primarily on summary definitions provided by Peterson (2006). In fact, one parenthetical definition (i.e., value: hopefulness) was verbatim to Peterson's (2006) definition of hope (p. 145). On the other hand, the character strength of self-regulation was adjusted to be more representative of the biblical implication. For example, Peterson (2006) defined self-regulation as "regulating what one feels and does, being disciplined; controlling one's appetites and emotions" (p. 144). The value statement in the current survey was more specific to "patience" and "irritability" referred to in 1 Corinthians 13:4-5 (i.e., "i.e., the ability to regulate one's own emotions, such as not becoming easily irritated, or being patient").

Regarding character directed towards others, the majority of the character (self-regulation, kindness, gratitude, humility, open-mindedness, forgiveness, fairness, authenticity, and persistence) statements were worded in terms of expressing the particular character quality towards others (e.g., I regularly make the effort to *forgive* other people when they have hurt me). However, several of the character (hope, bravery, resilience, and hardiness) statements were difficult to word as an expression of the particular character quality towards others and therefore were worded as helping others discover their own character strength (e.g., I regularly do my best to help other people be more *hopeful*). Religiousness was the only character question that did not have an "other-action" question, as it was challenging to word religiousness directed toward others.

The primary hypotheses of the pilot questionnaire were as follows: 1) The Type I participants would value the character measures more than the Type II group and would 2) also have higher scores regarding character directed towards others (i.e., character *other-action*). Whether or not the groups would differ in character directed towards self (i.e., character *self-action*) was exploratory.

Pilot Questionnaire: Self-enhancement Statements

In addition to the statements pertaining to character, several self-enhancement factors were also addressed with statements assessing both the level of the particular value in question as well as its associated prevalence (i.e., self-action). The self-enhancement values selected purportedly benefit the individual, at least by U.S. cultural standards (i.e., TV commercials, see

Chen & Schweitzer, 1996; Gram, 2007), but have biblical warnings associated with overvaluing them (e.g., the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, 1 Timothy 6:10). Money, material goods, physical appearance and skill/competence were assessed, with both *value* and *self-action* questions. For example, regarding money, the value question read, "I value money," followed by the related self-action question, "I regularly engage in activities that increase the chances of me having money."

Results

Life Satisfaction (SWLS) and Orientation to Happiness

T-test analyses on the SWLS (Diener et al., 1985) and Orientation to Happiness (Peterson et al., 2005) questionnaires revealed that Type I participants had significantly higher levels of life-satisfaction (t = 3.45, p < .01), meaning (t = 7.24, p < .001), and engagement (t = 3.36, p < .01) compared to the Type II participants. Although not statistically significant, the pleasure measure of the Orientation to Happiness questionnaire (Peterson et al., 2005) indicated a trend (p = .11) with God-first participants scoring lower with this sub-scale (see Table 1).

Table 1

Groups	Life Satisfaction	Meaning	Engagement	Pleasure
Type I Participants (n=133)	*25.28 (6.61)	*24.32 (4.14)	*19.05 (3.66)	19.58 (5.18)
Type II Participants (n=334)	22.96 (6.52)	21.24 (4.14)	17.86 (3.39)	~20.37 (4.61)
TOTAL Participants (n=467)	23.62 (6.62)	22.12 (4.37)	18.20 (3.51)	20.14 (4.79)
Group Comparison Means for Life-Satisfaction, Meaning, Engagement, and Pleasure Scales				

Character and Self-Enhancement Statements

Statistically significant differences existed between Type I and Type II participants with a number of the character statements; in fact, several revealed statistical significance for each of the of the character measures (value, other-action, and self-action). Again, *value* represented the degree to which the character strength in question was valued, while *other-action* measured character directed towards other people. Finally, *self-action* concerned character directed towards oneself. T-test analyses revealed higher values for God-first participants for each of the three character measures for humility (value: t = 4.63, p <001, other-action: t = 4.35, p < .001, self- action: t = 4.23, p. < .001), forgiveness (value: t = 3.86, p < .001, other-action: t = 5.83, p < .001, self-action: t = 3.67, p < .001), gratitude (value: t = 2.90, p < .01, other-action: t = 2.10, p < .05, self-action: t = 4.71, p < .001), hardiness (value: t = 3.98, p < .001, other-action: t = 2.71, p < .01, self-

action: t = 2.19, p < .05), and resilience (value: t = 2.14, p < .05, other-action: t = 3.87, p < .001, self-action: t = 3.01, p < .01, see Table 2).

Table 2

Character Values	Degree of Character Value		Action of Character Towards Others		Action of Character Towards Self	
	Type I	Type II	Type I	Type II	Type I	Type II
Humility	**6.27 (.95)	5.78 (1.20)	**6.01 (1.08)	5.49 (1.30)	**5.93 (1.14)	5.42 (1.19)
Forgiveness	**6.17 (1.02)	5.73 (1.29)	**5.86 (1.08)	5.13 (1.52)	**5.45 (1.43)	4.87 (1.61)
Gratitude	**6.47 (.74)	6.23 (.83)	*6.39 (.98)	6.17 (1.06)	**5.87 (1.21)	5.35 (1.44)
Hardiness	**6.20 (.93)	5.79 (1.15)	**5.99 (1.07)	5.69 (1.12)	*5.59 (1.38)	5.28 (1.37)
Resilience	*6.19 (.96)	5.97 (.97)	** 6.05 (.94)	5.65 (1.16)	**5.75 (1.10)	5.37 (1.26)
Religiousness	**6.65 (.71)	5.90 (1.13)	N/A	N/A	**5.94 (1.24)	4.45 (1.60)
Hope	**6.36 (.87)	6.17 (.91)	**6.20 (8.33)	5.77 (1.18)	6.24 (1.00)	6.03 (1.09)
Self-Regulation	5.89 (1.17)	5.75 (1.18)	*5.93 (1.14)	5.61 (1.27)	5.62 (1.39)	5.52 (1.27)
Authenticity	6.33 (.78)	6.17 (.89)	6.12 (.99)	5.95 (1.03)	*6.24 (1.02)	5.97 (1.03)
Non-significant						
Persistence	~6.19 (.95)	5.99 (1.00)	5.86 (1.21)	5.76 (1.12)	~6.16 (.98)	5.94 (1.14)
Kindness	6.34 (.88)	6.30 (.85)	6.26 (.82)	6.20 (.85)	5.85 (1.29)	5.72 (1.22)
Fairness	6.23 (.96)	6.15 (.87)	~6.23 (.81)	6.06 (.89)	5.29 (1.48)	5.10 (1.53)
Open-mindedness	5.92 (1.22)	6.09 (.91)	5.86 (1.17)	5.90 (1.14)	5.81 (1.18)	5.81 (1.20)
Bravery	5.92 (1.02)	5.87 (1.04)	5.65 (1.12)	5.46 (1.21)	5.60 (1.09)	5.47 (1.17)
** = p < .01 * = p < .05 ~ = p > .05 < .10 (parentheses indicates standard deviations)						

Additionally, Type I participants scored higher with measures of religiousness for value (t = 8.72, p < .001) and self-action (t = 10.72, p < .001), and hope for value (t = 2.07, p < .05) and other-action (t = 4.47, p < .001). Type I participants also scored higher for other-action with self-regulation (t = 2.54, p < .05) and self-action with authenticity (t = 2.59, p < .05). Interestingly however, regarding the self-enhancement questions, Type I participants had significantly

lower values for money (t = 4.02, p < .001) and a trending lower value for material goods (t = 1.88, p = .06, see Table 3).

Table 3

Group	Money		Material Goods		Physical Appearance		Skill/ Competence	
	Value	Action	Value	Action	Value	Action	Value	Action
Type I Participants	5.18 (1.50)	5.05 (1.61)	5.62 (1.25)	4.94 (1.74)	5.72 (1.23)	4.98 (1.57)	6.26 (.83)	5.65 (1.35)
Type II Participants	*5.77 (1.26)	5.24 (1.47)	~5.85 (1.16)	5.21 (1.68)	5.65 (1.25)	4.93 (1.50)	6.25 (.84)	5.64 (1.18)
Group Comparison Means for Money, Material Goods, Physical Appearance and Skill/Competence * = p < .001 ~ p = .06 (parentheses indicates standard deviations)								

It was also of interest to determine which of all of the character and self-enhancement questions correlated most strongly with life-satisfaction. It should be emphasized that the strongest correlations were with character questions for the self-action measure. The top five correlations were: 1) Gratitude, self-action: r = .37, p < .01 (other-action: r = .29, p < .01, value: r = .21, p < .01), 2) Kindness, self-action: r = .34, p < .01 (other-action: r = .12, p < .01, value: r =.13, p < .01), 3) Hope, self-action: r = .32, p < .01 (other-action: r = .10, p > .05, value: r = .11, p > .05), 4) Self-Regulation, self-action: r = .29, p < .01 (other-action: r = .13, p < .01, value: r = .13, p < .01), and 5) Forgiveness, self-action: r = .28 , p < .01 (other-action: r = .19, p < .01, value: r = .11, p > .05). Regarding the self-enhancement statements, the correlations were as follows: 1) Physical Appearance, self-action: r = .20, p < .01 (value: r = .13, p < .01), 2) Skill/Competence, self-action: r = .17, p < .01 (value: r = .06, p > .05), 3) Material Goods, self-action: r = .01, p > .05 (value: r = .05, p > .05), and 4) Money, self-action: r = .01, p > .05 (value: r = -.06, p > .05).

Potential Moderating Variable Addressed: Age

Because Type I (age: M = 25.77, SD = 8.64) participants were significantly (t = 2.46, p < .05) older than Type II (age: M = 23.82, SD = 7.35) participants, age was considered a potential moderating variable to the aforementioned results. The character and self-enhancement statements were re-evaluated with age as a covariate; however, no changes in the initial statistically significant findings were demonstrated. Therefore, potential within group differences with age as an independent variable was investigated for both of the Type I and Type II groups. For each group, approximately a fifth of the participants (central to the mean age of each respective group) were removed in order to better establish two separate homogenous groups. Type I participants aged 22, 23, and 24 years-old were removed (21% of total Type I participants) resulting in statistically significant (t = -11.02, p < .001) differences between the younger (n = 52, age: M = 19.48, SD = 1.09) and older (n = 54, age: M = 33.30, SD = 9.15) Type I participants. Regarding the Type II group, participants aged 20, 21, and 22 years-old were removed (23% of total Type II participants) resulting in statistically significant (t = -17.86, p < .001)

differences between the younger (n = 122, age: M = 18.48, SD = .52) and older (n = 136, age: M = 30.5, SD = 7.83) participants of the Type II group.

Concerning the Type I group, statistically-significant within-group differences were demonstrated with several of the character measures; older participants had greater scores for each of the three measures for resilience (value: t = -2.61, p < .05, other-action: t = -2.14, p < .05, self-action: t = -2.54, p < .05) and hardiness (value: t = -2.42, p < .05, other-action: t = -2.83, p < .01, self-action: t = -3.24, p < .01), for two of the measures for open-mindedness (value: t = -2.67, p < .01, other-action: t = -2.41, p < .05), and for one of the measures for emotional-regulation (other-action: t = -2.02, p < .05) and fairness (other-action: t = -2.11, p < .05). Statistical significance for the self-enhancement questions was only found with the skill/competence question (action: t = -2.33, p < .01), with older Type I participants demonstrating higher scores than their younger counterparts. No statistically significant within group differences were found with Type I participants for measures of life satisfaction (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985), nor with any of the three Orientation to Happiness (Peterson et al., 2005) measures.

Several statistically-significant within-group differences were also found for several of the character questions for the Type II group; older participants had greater scores for each of the three measures for gratitude (value: t = -2.81, p < .01, other-action: t = -2.16, p < .05, self-action: t = -3.94, p < .001), for two of the measures for resilience (value: t = -2.68, p < .01, self-action: t = -3.38, p < .01), and for one of the forgiveness (value: t = -2.17, p < .05) and hardiness (value: t = -1.98, p < .05) measures. No statistically significant differences were found within the Type II group for any of the self-enhancement questions, measures of life satisfaction (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985), nor with the meaning and engagement sub-scales of the Orientation to Happiness (Peterson et al., 2005) measures. However, the pleasure sub-scale demonstrated statistically significant results (t = 4.52, p < .001) with the younger Type II participants scoring higher on pleasure (M = 21.66, SD = 4.20) than older Type II participants (M = 19.13, SD = 4.75).

Discussion

The results of this study clearly demonstrate character differences between "Type I" (God-first) and "Type II" Christians with both the exploratory questionnaire and well-being measures. Again, Type I Christians perceived God to be the most important factor to happiness, while Type II Christians listed some other factor as more important. Type I participants valued the character qualities of humility, gratitude, forgiveness, hardiness, and resilience more than the Type II group, and also demonstrated more character action towards others (and self) with each of them. Additionally, Type I participants valued religiousness and hope more, and were more apt to make the effort to effectively regulate their emotions directed towards others. They were also more likely to be true to themselves (i.e., self-authenticity) and encourage others to be hopeful. In addition to the differences in the exploratory measures of character, Type I participants also scored higher with engagement and life-satisfaction. Interestingly, the only statistically significant

difference between the participants, in which the Type II group had larger numbers, was with the self-enhancement measure that concerned the value of money. It is also important to note that the Type II group also had greater trending means for the value of material goods and an orientation towards pleasure.

Because the psychometric properties of the character/self-enhancement questionnaire have not been established, caution should be exercised before generalizing the results of the current study too prematurely, particularly the character data. Nevertheless, these preliminary findings can be considered in light of Nancey Murphy's (2005) questions (influenced by MacIntyre, 1984) concerning character development as well as the warnings set forth in 2 Timothy 3. Regarding Murphy's question concerning the nature of "ungraced" human nature, a life lacking (or at the very least limited) in character value and positive actions directed towards others is a good starting point. Extreme cases of "bad" character (i.e., tail end of the Type II distribution), would be blatantly self-serving, unforgiving, ungrateful, and would love money and pleasure, etc. more so than their better-than-average "ungraced" counterparts, and even more so relative to the seemingly "graced" side of the two distributions (i.e., very high character scores from Type I participants).

Individuals with the largest "ungraced" (2 Timothy 3) profile could be categorized as "loving" themselves ineffectively (i.e., most improper form of self-love of the sample), even though they purport to be Christian. The mindset and behaviors of such individuals could be likened to aspects of maladaptive narcissism, characterized by a myriad of self-serving tendencies (see Watson et al., 1989; Campbell, Foster, & Finkel, 2002). Although generally, the Type II participants in the current study would surely not be representative of the severe condition of improper self-love, they could still be considered "ungraced" to some degree, as they were less character-oriented towards others (i.e., less humility, gratitude, forgiveness, hope, hardiness, resilience, and self-regulation) relative to the Type I (God-first) participants. Recall that 2 Timothy 3:5 indicates that the apparently condemned may "act religious," but "will reject the power that could make them godly"; this Scripture suggests a percentage of people that may even claim to believe in God, but nevertheless, are not living optimally (i.e., improper self-love).

Contrary to the "improper self-love" implications of the Type II results, the data of the Type I participants can be considered within the concept of "proper self-love" as well as from the context of Murphy's (2005) second question: "What is the character of ideal human existence?" (p. 56). From a Christian standpoint, any concept of proper self-love and/or ideal human existence must be based on the two great commandments (i.e., 1. to love God, and 2. to love others, i.e., Mathew 22:37-40, Mark 12:29-31, Luke 10:27). Simply stated, if an individual believes in salvation and Jesus Christ as savior, then it is in his/her best interest to value and focus on loving God and others as the top priorities in life. From this standpoint, an argument could easily be made that individuals who effectively implement the two great commandments as life's dual priority are actually loving themselves, irrespective of the prevalence of outcomes related to self-enhancement areas (e.g., money), positive emotions, and life satisfaction, to name a few. For example,

Mother Teresa might be considered by some as an extreme positive example of exemplifying this "dual priority" even though she did not have the self-enhancement outcomes of a wealthy person and reportedly wrestled with seasons of emotional turmoil. If a person intentionally sacrifices her own self-interests for the sake of God and others (with godly obedience assumed), then biblically speaking the more she gains for herself (e.g., Mathew 10:39, 16:35; Mark 8:35; Luke 9:24, 17:33). The data from the current study lines up with this idea as Type I participants not only valued character more (relative to Type II participants), but also were more likely to "love" (i.e., forgive, be kind, etc.) others; additionally, they had higher levels of meaning, engagement, and life-satisfaction (i.e., common positive psychology measures).

It has been argued that a Christian positive psychology will be very different from mainstream positive psychology (e.g., Hackney, 2010; Hall et al., 2010; Murphy, 2005). Murphy (2005) contended that the "hard core" of any Christian research program should be based on "non-negotiable theories" of human "telos" (purpose/goals) that are biblically based. It is likely that there would not be very much disagreement (if at all) amongst Christian circles regarding the imperative necessity of life's primary telos to 1) love God first, and 2) to love others as self (e.g., Mathew 22:39, Mark 12:29-31, Luke 10:27). These two great commandments should be the "core" of any Christian definition of "proper self-love." What is less clear concerns how character directed towards self is conceptualized, and operationally connected to the "proper" self-love core. For example, the act of forgiving oneself has been a topic of much research (e.g., see McConahay & Hough, 1973; Tangney, Boone, & Dearing, 2005; Thompson & Synder, 2003; Toussaint & Williams, 2008; Watson et al., 1989; Wohl, DeShea, & Wahkinney, 2008); however, whether or not self-forgiveness should be considered virtuous from a Christian standpoint could be considered debatable (e.g., don't forgive self before asking God for forgiveness). Interestingly, in the current study, self-forgiveness was more strongly correlated with life-satisfaction than forgiveness directed towards others. In fact, the strongest correlations with life-satisfaction were with the character measures (gratitude, kindness, hope, self-regulation, and forgiveness) directed towards self. I suspect that from a secular positive psychology perspective, these findings might be interpreted from the viewpoint that being kind to oneself, forgiving oneself, etc. is necessary to facilitate happiness and perhaps requisite for maximizing the potential to love others. However, the contention of the current paper is that self-character should be considered a tertiary component to proper self-love, with its degree of value contingent on the core of proper self-love.

Pursuant to the previous statement, consider the concept of a *proper self-love model* within the context of a value/motive system pertaining to the importance of: 1) God, 2) other-character, and 3) self-character (and possibly, 4. positive self-enhancement values/outcomes, in this order). Regarding self-character, and from a Christian standpoint, whether or not the particular character quality is valuable/virtuous depends on how it lines up with the core of proper self-love – again, the priority to love 1) God and 2) others. For example, consider the

Apostle Paul's "self-hope" in the often quoted scriptural quote, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13, NKJV). Here, he has belief in self, but the character quality is virtuous because it is connected to the core; therefore, in this case, self-hope could/should be considered a tertiary component of "proper self-love," a necessary trait for him to fulfill his specific purpose (i.e., spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles). However, consider the individual whose primary goal in life is to make a lot of money and be the best at some particular area of competence (without godly focus/guidance). For argument sake, let us assume this person achieves her/his goal and exhibits exceptionally high self-hope and commensurate levels of perceived life-satisfaction, self-esteem, etc. However, suppose this individual is very indifferent to loving others, in spite of regular church attendance and outward claim to be a Christian. In this case, the self-character strength (hope) is obviously not ideal (i.e., is related to improper self-love) because it is connected primarily to self-enhancement motives as opposed to the core; this person has deviated from his "telos." From a Christian standpoint, an *improper* model of self-love, to be wary of, could be conceptualized as a value/motive system that prioritizes as follows: 1) self-enhancement values/outcomes, 2) self-character, 3) other-character, and 4) God (optional).

In line with Hackney's (2010) sentiments regarding character, conceptualizing the role of self-character and its role in the flourishing life should be unique from a Christian-positive-psychology perspective. It is likely that secular approaches will continue to be influenced by Aristotelian concepts of eudaimonia/human-excellence and definitions of self-love, based on the notion that "human beings strive for their own good and perfection" (e.g., see Rocha & Ghoshal, 2006, p.585). However, Christian models of self-love should be other-oriented, in line with Murphy's (2005) contention that "(h)umans reach their highest goal in developing the capacity to renounce their own lesser goods for the sake of others" (p. 59). Perhaps the role of self-character from a believer's standpoint is best understood based on its connection to the "core" of proper self-love (or not). Self-character should be considered as potentially part of proper self-love or improper self-love, depending on its relationship to the motive system. From Murphy's perspective, any model of human flourishing that leaves out God's role in carrying out a love for others fosters "ungraced" lives, irrespective of how self-character may influence human excellence.

From a Christian perspective, it could be argued that the transition from living an "ungraced" life towards a more ideal one (i.e., Murphy/MacIntre"s third question) begins with an understanding that God must be kept first place in one's conceptualization of happiness. The more a person fosters a relationship with Jesus Christ (i.e., while continually keeping Him first place) and grows in spiritual maturity, the more she/he becomes convinced (via grace/experience) that service to others is more virtuous than any form of self-enhancement (see John 13:34). Although preliminary in status, the findings of the current study lend support to both of these propositions (i.e., God-first and maturation) as Type I participants, in addition to their higher character scores, were older on average than the Type II group. Interestingly, older participants in both groups had significantly higher

within group averages with a variety of character measures relative to their younger counterparts. Additionally, a noteworthy statistically significant difference was found for the Type II group with one of the orientation to happiness measures (Peterson et al., 2005), pleasure; younger participants in this group had significantly higher pleasure scores relative to in-group older participants.

It is possible that younger Christians, who believe some factor other than God is most important to happiness, may be more at-risk to developing a "2 Timothy 3" character profile (i.e., improper self-love). For example, one participant in the study, who had a very high pleasure score (and scored low with meaning and engagement), believed that money was the most important factor to happiness. Additionally, this participant's self-enhancement means were each higher than the character averages. Sadly, but not too surprisingly, this nineteen year-old scored very low on the life-satisfaction measure. Although research generally demonstrates positive outcomes for believing adolescents and emerging adults (see Yonker, Schnabelrauch, & Dettaan, 2012 for a meta-analytic review), more research is needed comparing character values and actions of faith-based individuals. Future research with Christians (and other populations) should continue to investigate age, orientation to pleasure, self-enhancement values, and other potential moderating variables in order to better understand the nature of change from living a less graced life to a more ideal one (i.e., MacIntyre, 1984; Murphy, 2005), characterized by more meaning, engagement, life-satisfaction and underlying joy.

Regarding self-enhancement aspects of life (e.g., competence, money, appearance, etc.), this area will undoubtedly be the most controversial topic related to self-love discourse, particularly since the "prosperity movement" within evangelical churches has become so popular in Western culture. An adequate discussion of this controversy is beyond the purview of the current paper, but simply stated, the historical backdrop of the controversy is likely due, in large part, to a conflating of concepts related to the notion of self-love. For example, self-love was the same as narcissism for Calvin (1928), a severe state of selfishness, and he suggested dropping the term (c. Fromm, 1956). Fromm disagreed and believed that self-love was actually the opposite of selfishness and stated that "my own self must be as much an object of my love as another person" and if a person "can love only others, he cannot love at all" (p. 50). Certainly, operationally defining proper versus improper self-love will continue to be controversial on some level. With Christian priorities in mind, I suggest conceptualizing "proper" (or positive) self-love as a "heart/soul/mind" value and action priority for 1) God, 2) other-character (with 1 & 2 as the core to self- love), and 3) self-character, based on the notion of being obedient to God through the sanctification process (see Hackney, 2010).

Actions associated with self-enhancement outcomes could be considered either positive or negative depending on the value/motive system of the individual. Consider the self-enhancement data of the current study at least briefly within the context of the previous statement. As discussed earlier, the value of money was the only statistically significant finding between the Type I and Type II participants, which should raise some concern. Of course, all of the participants valued (and

pursued) each of the self-enhancement areas to some degree; however, collectively speaking, these measures were not as high as the character means, suggesting that self-enhancement was not overvalued. Interestingly, the only self-enhancement areas that were positively correlated with life-satisfaction were self-action measures for physical appearance and skill-competence, but the correlations were smaller than the majority of self-character measures. Although self-enhancement may increase life-satisfaction (and self-esteem, positive emotions, etc.), a positive psychology perspective endorsed by Christians should assess self-enhancement aspects of life from a stewardship standpoint with indicators that measure the underlying motive to bring glory to Christ.

Without addressing where (and how) self-enhancement falls on the "proper" self-love continuum (if at all) could potentially foster uncertainty about how to most effectively conceptualize and approach life in a way that is more spiritually based than worldly (i.e., see Romans 8). Biblical sermons about "dying to the flesh" versus "name it and claim it" approaches can be challenging to make sense of without frameworks that distinguish between potentially positive versus maladaptive approaches to the "good-life." Obviously, self-character as it relates to outcomes associated with areas such as one's health and job (i.e., competence and money) plays a large role in society, and understanding how biblical principles can be applied to self-enhancement areas are certainly welcomed endeavors (e.g., see de la Peña, 2004, for a sporting example). However, from a biblical context, the significant areas of life have to do with loving God and others, and therefore, self-enhancement values should be kept in proper perspective. It could be argued that obedience to God by loving others results in more joy, whereas satisfying self-enhancement outcomes influences more happiness (a less significant positive emotion) – a sentiment often preached in Sunday sermons. Faith-based researchers and practitioners are encouraged to distinguish between the two potential states of mind with sound theory, precise operational definitions, data, and practical frameworks that can help facilitate well-being.

Limitations

It is important to acknowledge that there are a number of factors that limit the generalizability of the current study. The biggest shortcoming concerns the assumptions and definitions associated with the character measures. Each character measure had only three statements per measure - one statement that addressed the value, one for character directed towards others, and one for character directed towards self. Unfortunately, popular character measures generally do not measure character directed towards both self and others. However, Thompson and Snyder's (2003) Heartland Forgiveness Scale does provide six questions for both self and others subscales (as well as for a situational subscale); including this validated scale would have enhanced the validity of the current study (at least the forgiveness component), particularly since the psychometric properties of the derived statements (both character and self-enhancement) were not established.

Another weakness of the current study concerns the possibility that too much attention was focused on using character measures that overlap with

established character strengths established in the positive psychology literature and Scripture. Perhaps more attention should have been devoted to establishing character measures that are biblically based (irrespective of the secular literature). For example, religiousness was used a measure of faith, but faith from a Christian standpoint is more than just "belief in a higher power, having regular practices of spirituality" as it was defined in the pilot questionnaire (i.e., defined from Peterson, 2006). Additionally, there was no measure of "penitence" (Hackney, 2010) in the current study, which may be one of the (and perhaps the) most important character strengths a Christian can possess, particularly with respect to human error. Hackney (2010) defined penitence as "a dispositional tendency to feel sorrow when one has sinned, to turn again toward God, and to seek atonement and make reparation, a tendency that individuals can possess at lower or higher levels" (p. 202). As Hackney (2010) asserted, there are no virtues in Peterson and Seligman's (2004) *Character Strengths and Virtues* that consider "guilt-proneness" as part of human flourishing (nor is suffering in general, Hall et al., 2010). Perhaps penitence is the key character strength that distinguishes a person living a life with proper self-love, compared to an improper self-loving path. A measure of penitence would have certainly added value to the current study.

Finally, the way Type I and II participants were classified assumes much. It would have improved the study if a precise measure concerning current level of spiritual growth was assessed, such as the four levels (1. Exploring Christ, 2. Growing in Christ, 3. Close to Christ, and 4. Christ Centered) researched with the REVEAL studies (Hawkins & Parkinson, 2011). Clearly, a person may understand that God needs to be first place in one's life in order to be happy, but may not actually keep God first as much as the next person who also declares God first place. It would have strengthened the study to have been able to further differentiate Type I participants based on whether or not they were truly "Christ Centered." Factors such as time spent studying Scripture, beliefs as they pertain to salvation by grace, and identity in Christ, are just a few of the REVEAL variables that could have shed light on the character measures assessed in the current study.

Conclusion

Notwithstanding the limitations of the current investigation, the results clearly demonstrate character differences between Christians who consider God as the most important factor to happiness (i.e., Type I group) compared to those who view some other factor as more crucial (i.e., Type II group). In addition to higher character scores directed towards others and self, Type I participants also had higher life-satisfaction as well as more meaning and engagement in life. The degree of variance between the two groups could be considered within the context of differing value/motive systems pertaining to the conceptualization of God's role with happiness. Although the idea of self-love as it relates to happiness has generally had negative connotations associated with it, the current paper offers a potential positive framework of the concept based on a dual-priority for God and

others with the value and utility of self-character contingent on the self-love core (i.e., God and others).

It is likely that the controversy surrounding the concept of self-love concerns a conflating of terms that have to do with self-character and self-enhancement outcomes. For example, self-forgiveness related to errors (i.e., skill/competence) committed at the workplace is very different from self-forgiveness as it concerns hurting another person. Establishing the role of self-character as it pertains to "God-first" priorities and/or self-enhancement objectives may facilitate the understanding of a variety of approaches to the "good life" influenced by theology, secular tradition and/or a combination of the two. As research in mainstream positive psychology continues to investigate virtue ethics from Aristotelian/eudaimonic standpoints, with newer versions of "self-love" likely forthcoming, I contend that a Christian positive psychology should offer its version(s) based on a biblical interpretation of human telos (Hackney, 2010; Hall et al., 2010; Murphy, 2005). If a concept of positive/proper self-love is ever to be adopted into Christian academics, then simply stated, it must be based around the imperative dual-priority of keeping God first place and loving our neighbors as ourselves.

Biographical Note

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The German Messiah: Hitler Cast as Germany's Savior

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In 1936 William Shirer, a news correspondent living in Berlin, wrote regarding the crowd's reaction to a speech given by Adolf Hitler. Shirer observed, "Their hands are raised in slavish salute, their faces now contorted with hysteria, their mouths wide open, shouting, shouting, their eyes, burning with fanaticism, glued on the new god, the Messiah. The Messiah plays his role superbly."[1]

The reaction of this crowd was a scene replicated all over Germany from Hitler's first event in 1919 until his last public appearance in 1944 although, by this time the enthusiasm was, at least in part, orchestrated. The shouting and the saluting of the crowd described by Shirer could just as easily be a description of a political rally today. What I found most striking when I read this for the first time, as well as every time since, was Shirer's reference to Hitler as a Messiah. While such an allusion isn't so unusual, as political leaders can assume an idealized, god-like image, knowing of the events that transpired in Europe during the reign of the Third Reich, I wondered where the idea of Adolf Hitler as a Messiah might originate?

The answer can be found in his own impassioned speeches. Throughout his speeches, probably better described as tirades, Hitler credits his rise, success, and survival to Providence- a term he uses interchangeably with Fate, the Almighty, and the Lord. Hitler speaks of he and his work as being divinely inspired and claims to have been personally selected by Providence, declaring to the captive audiences, "Providence has chosen me to fulfill my task…It is a proud feeling to be chosen by Providence as the representative of a nation."[2] Eventually, Hitler would make a connection between this divine commission and his life prior to becoming politically active, tying even his childhood to his special election. In 1938, upon arriving back in his hometown of Linz, Hitler declared, "The fact that Providence once summoned me forth from this city to the leadership of the Reich, must have meant it was giving me a special assignment."[3] Hitler would frequently refer to his humble origins, often remarking on how an individual with his background, that of a soldier without any formal political training had been able to rise up. It was Providence who Hitler credited for selecting him for such a role. "I must bow down in thanks to Providence, whose mercy has enabled me, once an unknown soldier in the World War, to thus help our Volk to win the battle for the restoration of its honor and uprightness…I believe that it was also God's will that…a boy was sent into the Reich, allowed to mature, and elevated to become the nation's Fuhrer…Providence had called upon me…Providence willed and desired it."[4]

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[1] William Shirer, *Berlin Diary: The Journal of a Foreign Correspondent 1934-1941* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941), 53.

[2] Max Domarus, *Hitler: Speeches and Proclamations 1932-1945* (Wauconda: Bolchazy-Carducci, 2004), 165, 629.

[3] Domarus, 1050.

[4] Domarus, 864, 1088-1089.

The frequency and certainty with which Hitler expresses his sense of having been commissioned by Providence played a significant role in winning him mass acclaim and compelled people to believe that he had truly been selected to be Germany's savior.

A number of scholars have attempted to understand Hitler's worldview and his sense of being on a mission. Some have argued that Hitler lacked any principles or ideals, while others, put forth that Hitler maintained a fixed set of beliefs. However, their research stops short of including an analysis of Hitler's understanding of his divine commission and how it might have shaped his worldview.

This paper seeks to fill that gap, going beyond previous research by more closely investigating Hitler's references to Providence in his speeches and by exploring how those around Hitler perceived him to be a God-sent leader. While I do not believe that Hitler's presentation of himself as Germany's divinely-elected leader constituted an overt expression of piety or held any spiritual meaning or significance for Hitler himself, his language was interpreted by others within a traditional religious framework that prompted them to give thanks to God for sending Hitler to be Germany's savior.

Alan Bullock is credited with writing the first comprehensive biography of Adolf Hitler. His work, published in 1952, characterized Hitler as a leader devoid of principles or beliefs whose actions throughout his career were primarily motivated by a lust for power, as an opportunist with no beliefs. According to Bullock, Hitler strove for power with astonishing persistence and likely became a prisoner of his own conceptions.

Hugh Trevor-Roper, a contemporary of Bullock's, disagreed. He understood Hitler to be an ideologue who clung stringently throughout the span of his political career to the idea that purifying Germany and expanding the country's territory were the only means of bringing about Germany's revival.

Trevor-Roper's assessment is not irreconcilable from that of Bullock's. Hitler can be categorized as both, as an opportunist and an ideologue. Hitler was certainly an opportunist- moving this way and that based on how he felt, based on instinct, based on what he believed would give him and the German army the upper hand. Hitler's actions were motivated by a lust for power, although not necessarily in the individual sense as Bullock had argued. Hitler was focused on reversing the disastrous effects of the Versailles Treaty and on reestablishing Germany as a dominant global force.

Eberhard Jackel attempted to reconcile Hitler's opportunism with the consistency with which Hitler believed his goals could and would be achieved. For Jackel, Hitler held a rigid set of fixed beliefs. Throughout Hitler's political career he based his actions on the desire for living space for the German people and the purification of the German race. According to Jackel, Hitler's "opportunism of cunning and lies was, first of all, one of principle. This opportunism had clearly defined goals…They remained unflinchingly the goals and means which had been developed in the 1920's" and that he held until his death.[5]

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[5] Eberhard Jackel, *Hitler's World View: A Blueprint for Power* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 46.

According to Sebastian Haffner, the prevailing opinion before Jackel's work was published in 1969 can be summarized as "The only principles of Nazism were power and rule for their own sake."[6] Haffner agreed with Jackel's assessment, concluding, "Hitler used to be regarded, and is still regarded by many who have failed to investigate the subject in depth, as a pure opportunist…But he was anything but that...he based his political strategy very definitely upon firm and indeed rigid basic ideas."[7]

How would these scholars' characterizations of Hitler have been different if their assessments had included a look at Hitler's understanding of having been personally selected by the Almighty? Rainer Bucher touches on this in his book *Hitler's Theology: A Study in Political Religion* in which he argues that Hitler "exploits religious practices and beliefs with some cynicism and cunningness."[8] According to Bucher, "Hitler's theological terminology shapes founding principles of his thought and his political project…They are not simply rhetorical, there are central and constitutive."[9]

Bucher considers Hitler's use of Providence as the "key legitimizing authority for political rule."[10] According to Bucher, prior to the publication of *Mein Kampf*, Hitler, "shies away from directly applying the idea of Providence to his National Socialist project let alone to himself" because "the idea of Providence remains above all a category of legitimization for all those institutions of social rule that can legitimately demand obedience."[11] Ultimately Hitler will use Providence to legitimize his rise, as the force behind his success, and also as the reason for defeat.

Providence figures prominently in speech after speech delivered by Hitler. At first, Providence is used to give credence to the authority he sought through the party. In early speeches, Hitler would declare, "The mission which Providence has assigned to the National Socialist Movement is that of elevating Germany once more…Providence has granted us such great successes…The Almighty Himself…intends to give us the triumph."[12] However, after assuming control Hitler created a narrative in which Providence was even more central.

Shortly after the takeover of power, Germany experienced a series of military victories, the economy began to stabilize, and there was a decrease in the national unemployment. These were all portrayed as the blessings of Providence. Of all that had been accomplished Hitler said, "Would that have been possible without the blessing of the Almighty…What we are is what we have become not against, but by virtue of the will of Providence…Providence has enabled us…to reap a harvest not only plentiful in financial terms; it has blessed us even more."[13]

Hitler would continue to shape his story, reminding audiences that he had been personally selected by Providence. However, it was equally important for Hitler to link the blessings of Providence with his leadership. Providence is credited

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[6] Sebastian Haffner, *The Meaning of Hitler* (Great Britain: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979), 76.
[7] Haffner, 76.
[8] Rainer Bucher, *Hitler's Theology: A Study in Political Religion* (New York: Continuum, 2011), 10.
[9] Bucher, 14.
[10] Bucher, 49.
[11] Bucher, 50.
[12] Domarus, 81, 222.
[13] Domarus, 686, 715.

with installing him as Germany's leader and this theme was certainly strategic. Those who weren't convinced by his quick rise to power could now look at the blessings shown to Germany by Providence as evidence that Providence had truly selected Hitler as their savior. Hitler would say, "I would like to thank Providence…for choosing me of all people to be allowed to wage this battle for Germany. It is the most wonderful battle and the most splendid task which can be assigned to mortal man…That Providence has chosen me to perform this act is something I feel is the greatest blessing of my life…Providence granted me the fulfillment of what I consider the mission of my life: to uplift the German Volk from its defeat."[14]

If it were Providence's will that Hitler should be the one to bring about Germany's revolution, then Providence must also be the force behind his survival following the assassination attempts that took place in November 1939 and July 1940. These attempts were quickly spun to reinforce Providence's favor of Hitler and to confirm that because his life hadn't been taken, that the assassination attempts had been unsuccessful, could only indicate that he was destined to continue in his mission. Hitler personally "attributed his salvation to the work of 'Providence' a sign that he was to fulfill the task destiny had laid out for him."[15] In a radio address following one of these assassination attempts Hitler, praised Providence for keeping him alive, saying, "I also regard this as the warning finger of Providence that I must continue my work…Providence had made this crime fail."[16] Speaking with Mussolini following the second assassination attempt, Hitler declared, "my miraculous rescue proves that…fate spared me- especially since this wasn't the first time that I escaped death in such a miraculous fashion," to which Mussolini affirmed, "After what I have seen here, I agree with you completely. This was a sign from Heaven!"[17]

The creation of this framework, using Providence to support the work that needed to be done also provided Hitler with a scapegoat when the tide of war began to turn from victory to defeat and loss. Hitler was able to effectively push blame from himself onto the German people since he could say that, during this time, the people of Germany and the German army's worthiness were being tested by Providence. According to Hitler, "as long as we are loyal, honest and courageous in battle, as long as we believe in our great cause and do not capitulate, we will continue to enjoy the blessing of Providence…And if Fate should choose to test us in the future, we hope that such hammer blows of Providence will make us truly hard and strong…there are times when Providence demonstrates the deepest love it has for its creatures in an act of punishment."[18]

Until the very end, Hitler would demand that the army not surrender, that they must continue marching towards the goal in order to continue earning Providence's favor. "All human enterprise requires the blessings of Providence if it is to succeed. Yet we realize as well that Providence accords its blessings only to him who proves

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[14] Domarus, 797, 799, 1562.

[15] Ian Kershaw, *Hitler 1936-1945: Nemesis* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000), 273.

[16] Domarus, 2926.

[17] Domarus, 2920.

[18] Domarus, 686, 937.

himself worthy of them…the hour will come in which Providence can grant the victory to that nation which deserves it most…if Providence gives the prize of life to whoever fights for and defends it most bravely, then our Volk will be received graciously by Him who as a just judge has at all times granted victory to those most deserving of it."[19]

To Hitler is was imperative to continue the fight, no matter the sacrifices. As the years of war drug on he would begin to hint at the possibility of defeat, suggesting that the German army might not be able to pass the tests and trials of Providence. "If together we loyally do our duty, then we will meet the fate that Providence has determined for us…mastering a fate that is the most difficult trial, the kind which Providence only imposes on those who are destined for the greatest things…the Lord will correspondingly give His blessing only to him who remains steadfast in face of the impossible…we cannot expect that Providence give us victory as a present. Each and every people will be weighed, and what is judged too light will fall…it is fate that first tests the strong by its blows."[20]

While for Hitler defeat was an impossibility, the soldiers in the field, who were being made to suffer the "hammer blows of Providence" weren't as steadfast in their resolve. Yet, Hitler was able to reason that the situation could have been worse. For Hitler, "Those who do not pass the trials imposed by Providence, who are broken by them, are not destined by Providence for greater things…I thank Him that He blessed us so, and that He had not sent us a more difficult trial…It is, therefore, all the more necessary…to make one's heart stronger than ever before, and to harden oneself in the sacred resolve to take up arms, no matter where, no matter under what circumstances, until victory finally crowns our efforts."[21]

That Providence selected Hitler, bestowed blessings upon the German people, and tested the strength and courage of the Germany army were themes alluded to in nearly every speech until his last. The consistency with which Hitler would use key phrases such as, "as an unknown soldier," "chosen by Providence," and "Whomever Providence subjects to so many trials, it has destined for the greatest things!" is striking. It is easy to imagine the impact that this structure and repetition would have had on those closest to him, those that were within his immediate circle, as well as to those who listened intently to his speeches in person or on the radio. It is clear that "By 1936, his narcissistic self-glorification had swollen immeasurably under the impact of the near-deification projected upon him by his followers."[22] In his own words, "a worldview needs for its dissemination not civil servants but fanatical apostles."[23] This certainly speaks to his intent.

Ernst Rohm, SA Chief of Staff, in a speech in honor of Hitler, delivered on April 20th, 1934, to mark Hitler's 45th birthday, declared, "On this day when, forty-five years ago, Fate bestowed upon the nation in him its savior."[24] In 1935, Heinrich Himmler, another of Hitler's closest associates, "professed a belief in 'a Lord God

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[19] Domarus, 1219, 2864.

[20] Domarus, 2565, 2618, 2749.

[21] Domarus, 2841, 3007.

[22] Kershaw, *Nemesis*, xvi.

[23] Ian Kershaw, *Hitler 1889-1936: Hubris* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998), 403.

[24] Domarus, 449.

who stands over us, who made us and our Fatherland, our *Volk* and the earth, and sent us our Fuhrer'."[25]

If you may recall, in summarizing Alan Bullock's characterization of Hitler, I had noted that Bullock believed Hitler strove for power with extraordinary persistence, and doubtlessly became a prisoner of his own conceptions. Albert Speer, Hitler's architect and, later, Minister of Armaments and War Production, had the same understanding of Hitler, "I can only explain Hitler's rigid attitude on the grounds that he made himself believe in his ultimate victory. In a sense he was worshipping himself. He was forever holding up to himself a mirror in which he saw not only himself but also the confirmation of his mission by divine Providence."[26]

How the relationship between Hitler and Providence was understood by those outside of his immediate circle is as remarkable. By mid-1921 Hitler's associates had been placed in key positions with the NSDAP's newspaper and "immediately embarked on casting an image of Hitler as someone much more than the chairman of a party- as someone who was divine, the chosen one…[they] started to portray Hitler as a messiah."[27] The results offer a clear reflection of the power of propaganda. The wife of Julius Friedrich Lehmann wrote in her diary in October 1923, "Now more than ever we are waiting for a savior. Here in Munich many deem Hitler, the leader of the National Socialist, to be that man."[28] Winifrid Wagner, wife of Siegfried thought Hitler was "destined to be the saviour of Germany."[29] Another, Robert Ley, believed, "At last through Adolf Hitler I have found my Lord again. Before that, I no longer had a God. Today I believe in a personal God who is near to me…There is nobody more religious and God-fearing than Adolf Hitler. We believe that the Lord sent us our Fuhrer so that he might free Germany from hypocrites and Pharisees."[30]

"According to a newspaper report [out of Munich in January 1923], Hitler was greeted 'like a saviour' ahead of one of his speeches during the first Reich Party Rally'."[31] Likewise, Albert Speer recalled a trip he had taken with Hitler to Nuremburg in which the car that they were riding in was slowed by a great throng of people. "Hitler leaned back to me and exclaimed: 'only one German has been hailed like this: Luther. When he rode through the country, people gathered from far and wide to cheer him. As they do for me today'!"[32]

Adolf Hitler was put on trial and convicted of treason in 1924 for his role in the failed government takeover that took place the year before. The trial became a propagandists' dream. Hitler was able to give speeches in which he accepted responsibility for the coup, moved to action because of his selfless commitment to the German people and the understanding that it would require bold action in order to save them. He was able to win over both the judges and, since the trial was

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[25] Richard Steigmann-Gall, *The Holy Reich: Nazi Conceptions of Christianity 1919-1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 129.

[26] Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich: Memoirs* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1970), 357.

[27] Thomas Weber, *Becoming Hitler: The Making of a Nazi* (New York: Basic Books, 2017), 238.

[28] Weber, 279-280.

[29] Kershaw, *Hubris*, 189.

[30] Steigmann-Gall, 127.

[31] Kershaw, *Hubris*, 193.

[32] Speer, 65.

extensively covered by the local newspapers, the people of Germany as well. "Hitler became almost deified after his trial…Fawning disciples who hung on his every word" came to see Hitler while he served out his sentence at Landsberg prison.[33] "Visitor privileges were expanded to accommodate the incessant pilgrimage of associates, patron[s], and well-wishers."[34] One of these pilgrims, Elsa Bruckmann, recalled her first visit to meet Hitler, saying how "her heart had been 'pounding at the thought of thanking face to face the man who had awakened me and so many others, and shown us once more the light in the darkness and the path that would lead to light'."[35]

 There were those who didn't share this view of Hitler. A citizen of the Stuttgart region reasoned, "It's always claimed that the Fuhrer has been sent to us from God. I don't doubt it. The Fuhrer was sent to us from God, though not in order to save Germany, but to ruin it. Providence has determined the destruction of the German people, and Hitler is the executor of this will."[36] While this unnamed person certainly wasn't the only one to rebuke the appeal of Hitler and his regime, in the end, defectors found their voices drowned out but the masses chanting "Heil Hitler."

 I began this paper with a quote from William Shirer and would like to conclude with another. Before happily departing Berlin in 1940, Shirer remarked, "It is the evil genius of Adolf Hitler that has aroused this basic feeling and given it tangible expression [referring to the expansion of territory and purification of Germany's citizens]. It is due to this remarkable and terrifying man alone that the German dream now stands such a fair chance of coming true. First Germans and then the world grossly underestimated him…Today, so far as the vast majority of his fellow countrymen are concerned, he has reached a pinnacle never before achieved by a German ruler. He has become- even before his death- a myth, a legend, almost a god."[37]

 "Hitler did succeed in proving, in his domestic climb to power, that a gifted orator can indeed harness the support of a people muddled by times of confusion and chaos."[38] In his final radio address, delivered on January 30th, 1945, Hitler declared, "Only He [Providence] can absolve me from this duty who has called on me to take it on."[39] In the end, "His God had forsaken him. The 'Almighty,' the 'Providence,' had failed him and taken no steps to save Adolf Hitler who had remained 'steadfast in the impossible."[40]

Biographical Note

 Alisa Hardy is an independent scholar who earned her Master of Arts in Liberal Studies from Wichita State University, where she engaged in interdisciplinary

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[33] Kershaw, *Hubris,* 223.
[34] Timothy Ryback, *Hitler's Private Library: The Books That Shaped His Life* (New York: Vintage Books, 2008), 63.
[35] Weber, 314.
[36] Kershaw, *Nemesis*, 685.
[37] Shirer, 586.
[38] Domarus, 62.
[39] Domarus, 3007.
[40] Domarus, 3062.

research involving Religion, History, and Art History. Her Master's thesis, entitled *The Interplay of Politics and Piety: Christian Pilgrimage to Rome and the Basilica of San Paolo Fuori le Mura* was a product of this synthesis. She has presented papers at regional and international meetings of the SBL and other venues, speaking on topics such as St. Paul's view of women, the relationship between St. Peter and St. Paul, and apocryphal Acts. She is currently interested in the role that religion played during World War II, particularly in Adolf Hitler's Germany. Alisa lives in Dallas, Texas with her family and works as the Director of Human Resources for a locally-based company.

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Of Floods and Fossils:
The Early Christian Encounter with Deep Time

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Introduction

For those of you who have not encountered Adrienne Mayor's superb book, *The First Fossil Hunters*, allow me to wholeheartedly recommend it to you. Published by Princeton University Press in 2000 and reissued with a new introduction in 2011, the book explores how the world of classical and late antiquity interpreted the remains of prehistoric creatures they found embedded in stone. From these ancient encounters, Mayor argues, were birthed the legends of giants and Cyclopes, griffins and heroes. It is an exciting and illuminating read with much to recommend it and little to detract. As a historian of the Christian world of late antiquity, however, I have just one minor quibble with the text: focused as it is on the classical world, very little of the book is devoted to uncovering the early Christian encounter with deep time. With the notable exception of Augustine's famous encounter with a giant fossilized molar (more on that soon!), Mayor's sources are almost uniformly pagan in origin. This presentation, therefore, is designed to supplement Mayor's insightful book by adding the stories of early Christian interactions with the relics of deep time—fossils—to the mix.

The Pagan Background

Before getting to their accounts, however, we must set the stage by briefly noting the classical context. Pagan writers of classical and late antiquity were, as Mayor demonstrates, well aware of the existence of fossils, and interpreted them in multiple ways. Fossils were often enshrined as the bones of heroes or shunned as the remains of giants. In his work *On Heroes,* for instance, the Greek sophist Philostratus mentions the discovery of the Greek hero Ajax's grave, whose skeleton was "16 feet tall"— reverently reburied by the emperor Hadrian at Troy (7.9; Mayor, 270). Strabo, on the other hand, alerts his readers to the tomb of the half-giant Antaeus near Larache in modern Morocco, whose remains were a jaw-dropping 60 feet long (*Geography*, 17.3.8; Mayor, 280). Classical writers were also aware that shells and fossilized fish bones were often found far inland from the nearest source of water, and formulated their geographic narratives accordingly. "Egypt was once all sea, which is why to this day people find an abundance of mollusc shells in its mines and on its mountains," Plutarch writes in chapter 40 of *On the Worship of Isis and Osiris* (Mayor, 276). Similarly, Pythagoras argued from personal observation that "what was once solid earth is now changed to sea, and lands created out of what was ocean. Seashells lie far away from the ocean, and ancient anchors are found on mountaintops" (in Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 15.259-267; Mayor, 266).

Early Christian writers were well aware of such interpretations. All we know about the "paleontological" views of the pre-Socratic philosopher Xenophanes of Colophon, for instance, comes from quotes embedded in the third-century Christian writer **Hippolytus**: it is from his *Refutation of all Heresies* 1.12 that we learn that

"Xenophanes was of the opinion that there had been a mixture of the earth with the sea... alleging that he could produce such proofs as the following: that in the midst of earth, and in mountains, shells are discovered; and also in Syracuse he affirms was found in the quarries the print of a fish and of seals, and in Paros an image of a laurel in the bottom of a stone, and in Melita parts of all sorts of marine animals." Similarly, **Augustine** quotes Virgil's description of Turnus throwing a stone that "scarce twelve strong men of later mould/that weight could on their necks uphold" to support his contention that the men of ancient times were far larger than at present.

Marine Fossils and the Flood

But early Christian writers also contributed something new to the interpretation of fossils in late antiquity. As Adrian Desmond notes in his article "The Discovery of Marine Transgression and the Explanation of Fossils in Antiquity" (*AJS* 1975, 699), most Greek writers who encountered marine remains in odd places tended to view their presence as evidence of merely local incursions of the sea onto the land. Like Plutarch, Herodotus believed that Egypt was once underwater, offering as evidence "shells which are plain to view on the mountains" (*History*, 2.12)—but he attributes its gradual drying out to the silting effect of the Nile. Early Christians, on the other hand, had another explanation: a worldwide flood. "God," the author of 2 Peter writes, "did not spare the ancient world, even though he saved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood on the world of the ungodly" (2.5). Such a world-altering catastrophe would be expected to leave traces on the physical landscape of late antiquity, as **Tertullian**, one of our earliest witnesses to the new Christian interpretation, attests: "There was a time when the whole earth changed and was covered by all the water that exists. Even today shell-fish and circular shells from the sea stay abroad in the mountains, craving to prove to Plato that even the steeper parts were flooded" (*De pallio*, 2.3). The fourth century church historian **Eusebius** even engages in a bit of light field-work in order to substantiate his belief that the entire world had been inundated: "We observed," he writes, "that in our own times, fish had been found on top of the highest peaks of the Lebanon mountains. Some men, who had gone there to cut out stones from the mountains for building, found various kinds of sea-fish, compacted into the mud in the hollows of the mountains. The fish had survived until the present time, as if they had been artificially preserved, and the sight of them provided evidence to us that the ancient story was true" (*Chronicon*, 1). In an indication of the Eusebian passage's popularity, it is quoted nearly word-for word in an **anonymous** *Hexameron* commentary from the next century (Ps-Eustathius, Pg. 18.752).

In the West, the fifth-century Christian historian **Orosius** was content to appeal to pagan precedent when he wrote in his *History against the Pagans*, a world-chronicle from Adam to the present, that even "those ignorant of the past, at least of its calamitous times.... have learned by conjecture by the evidence from stories which we are accustomed to see on distant mountains scabrous with shellfish and snails, also often hollowed out by water" (1.3). His younger contemporary **Procopius of Gaza**, on the other hand, was not content to rely on hearsay: "It can be shown clearly in many other ways that a universal flood came upon the earth," he argues, "for even today, in

mountains that are lofty and difficult to climb, marine remains are found, that is, shells and fragments of tortoise shells and other such things, which even we ourselves have seen" (*Commentary on Genesis* 9, trans. Young 1995, 26).

We should of course be careful here: what is often called "flood geology" in the modern era has rightly been discredited as the mechanism by which these fossil traces were preserved. But we should not reflect our skepticism back onto these early progenitors of the tradition. What impressed me most about people like Eusebius, Procopius, and possibly Tertullian is their willingness to investigate these relics of a lost world for themselves: like Herodotus, they want to see the evidence firsthand. We can, in other words, respect their observations as legitimate progress in the fledgling study of deep time without necessarily embracing their conclusions.

Giants' Bones

Early Christian and classical authors also exhibited some overlap in attributing larger remains from the deep past to what we would today describe as "mythical" creatures. One of the most intriguing hypotheses of Mayor's book is its claim that classical griffins, those odd gold-guarding combinations of eagle and lion rumored to exist somewhere in Scythia, were probably based on real-life skeletons of beaked dinosaurs like Protoceratops, whose remains are scattered throughout Central Asia (Mayor, ch. 1). More common in Greco-Roman legends is the figure of the giant. "Giant's" bones are known to have been displayed in Olympia (Mayor, 105), Nitria (Mayor, 149), Rome (Mayor, 142) and possibly Carthage (Mayor, 154), among others. Classical mythology differed as to the origins of these remains. While Greek lore posited a "race" of giants distinct from humans who once battled the gods in a titanic "gigantomachy," other writers, such as Pliny, believed that "the stature of the human race is almost daily becoming less and less" (*Natural History* 7.16). The great heroes of old, such as Ajax or Orestes, Idas or Pallas, were thus expected to be much larger than normal humans: and their alleged remains, when disinterred, confirmed this hypothesis.

Like their pagan counterparts, early Christian writers readily conceded the existence of giants. Some Christians, like **Augustine**, were willing to grant Pliny's thesis that *all* humans had once been much larger than their present-day counterparts: indeed, this is how Augustine defends the idea that one man, Cain, might have built a city on his own. To defend this thesis, Augustine alludes to the ongoing phenomena of fossilized remains eroding out of the landscape: "The large size of the primitive human body is often proved to the incredulous by the exposure of tombs, either through the wear of time or the violence of torrents or some accident, from which bones of incredible size have been found or have rolled out" (*City of God* 15.9).

Most Christians, however, found it easier to simply graft "giant bones" into their own gigantomachies. In Genesis 6.4, we read that "Giants were on the earth in those days"—i.e., the antediluvian world—" and also afterward, when the sons of God went in to the daughters of humans, who bore children to them. These were the heroes of old, warriors of renown." In light of this passage, early Christians tended to view "giant

bones" as evidence of either antediluvian beings whose race perished in the flood, or their more recent counterparts whom the Israelites encountered in Canaan. In doing so, they were merely following the trail blazed before them by Jewish writers such as **Josephus**, who already in *Antiquities of the Jews* noted that the bones of the giants whom the Israelites destroyed "are still shown to this very day, which are unlike any credible relations of other men" (5.2.3),[1] The pseudonymous **Clementine Recognitions**, which likely dates to the fourth century, castigates "Greek fables" for their fanciful description of the giants, noting that they were merely "men of immense bodies, whose bones, of enormous size, are still sown in some [presumably pagan] places for confirmation" (1.29).[2]

Of course, one of the most spectacular accounts of the discovery of giant bones in late antiquity, which is rightly emphasized by Mayor in *The First Fossil Hunters*, comes once again from Augustine. In *City of God* 15.9, he qualifies his earlier claim that *all* ancient humans were larger than present-day folk by explicitly affirming that true giants did indeed once exist. "I myself," he states, "along with some others, saw on the shore at Utica a man's molar tooth of such a size, that if it were cut down into teeth such as we have, a hundred, I fancy, could have been made out of it. But that, I believe, belonged to some giant. For though the bodies of ordinary men were then larger than ours, the giants surpassed all in stature." Already by 1618 Jean Riolan identified this "giant's tooth" as the molar of an elephant, a claim reified by Mayor, who suspects that given the presence of Pliocene remains near Utica, Augustine likely found the tooth of either a mammoth or ancient hippopotamus (310, n. 45). Once again, however, we ought not accuse Augustine of credulity: as Mayor notes, this is a reasonable hypothesis given the striking resemblances between the teeth of both creatures and human molars.

Saints' Relics

We even have some evidence that the practice of venerating large-scale fossils as saints' relics, often attested to in medieval and early modern Europe (see Mayor, 77; Sutcliffe, *On the Track of Ice Age Mammals*, 1985, ch. 3), appears to extend back into the Christian world of late antiquity. Mayor cites, but does not elaborate, the tenth-century Byzantine encyclopedia called the *Suda*'s rather obscure claim that during the reign of the sixth-century Christian Emperor **Anastasius I**, "A great pit was found in the church of Saint Menas when it was cleaned, and a quantity of bones of giant men. When the Emperor Anastasius saw these and was astounded, he put them in the palace as an extraordinary marvel" (mu, 949). While these bones do not quite appear to have been venerated as the relics of saints, we do have an intriguing account from **Ambrose of Milan** in the fourth century which *does* seem to fit the bill. During his struggle with the powerful Homoian empress Justina, Ambrose was able to capitalize on the "miraculous" discovery of two skeletons which he identified as the bones of the twins Gervasius and Protasius, who were allegedly martyred during the persecutions

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[1] Mentioned by Mayor in *The First Fossil Hungers*, 265.
[2] Mayor mentions the *Clementine Recognitions* in *The First Fossil Hunters,* 263, but incorrectly attributes the pseudonymous corpus to Clement of Rome.

of Diocletian and Maximian. Ambrose describes the discovery as follows: "We found two men of marvelous stature, such as those of ancient days. All the bones were perfect, and there was much blood" (Letter 22.2). Modern critics have long been suspicious of this account: already in 1907 Salomon Reinach argued on the basis of the "bloody bones" that what Ambrose had really stumbled upon was a Paleolithic burial, the bones having been stained with red ochre (*L'Anthropologie*, 718). I would like to note, however, that we should also pay attention to Ambrose's claim that the bones of these alleged martyrs were "of marvelous stature, such as those of ancient days"—wording like this, as we have already seen, is code for giants' bones. Perhaps Ambrose's saints have more in common with Philostratus's 16-foot body of the hero Ajax than the Milanese bishop would prefer.

Conclusion

What I hope I have demonstrated in this necessarily brief presentation is that early Christians were aware of the flotsam and jetsam of the deep past and utilized these artifacts in ways that both paralleled and diverged from their pagan counterparts, and I hope that it functions as a useful footnote to Mayor's larger project. Allow me to conclude this presentation by relating one final anecdote, one of my favorite descriptions of an early Christian encounter with deep time in late antiquity. Our author is once again **Tertullian**, quoting this time from his work *On the Resurrection of the Flesh*. In the passage that follows, Tertullian is arguing that there is a necessary connection between our mortal bodies which will be laid to rest in our tombs and our resurrected forms which will rise from them. How, his opponents ask, is this possible? Don't the bones of dead humans quickly decay into dust? What's left to be reconstituted at the resurrection? No, says Tertullian: "for no one will deny that even those very ancient corpses of the giants have not been swallowed up, for their skeletons still survive... thus all admit that not only do bones endure, but teeth also continue undecayed, and that both of these are preserved, as it were, as seeds of a body which is to come to fruit in the resurrection" (42). For Tertullian, in other words, the existence of fossils demonstrates the reality of the resurrection of the dead.

Biographical Note

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Religious Convictions & Politics: A Defense of the Consocial Position from Alternatives

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The beginning of John Rawls' *Political Liberalism* presents a question that has revolutionized contemporary political philosophy: "How is it possible that there may exist over time a stable and just society of free and equal citizens profoundly divided by reasonable though incompatible religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines?"[1] On this question, I endorse the following: Nicholas Wolterstorff's "consocial" approach to political discourse—in which any kind of comprehensive doctrine can be used as a sufficient reason for policy action in public contexts within a given constitutional system of laws—is the only framework that adequately respects society's epistemic inability to distance itself from its constituents' comprehensive doctrines in political discourse *and* that respects the fundamentally equal political voice that all citizens share in a liberal democracy. Kent Greenawalt takes an intermediate approach to political discourse that seeks to reconcile Wolterstorff's consocial position with the more restrictive forms of political discourse of liberal theorists such as John Rawls and Robert Audi, but I will argue that this alternative fails—and further reinforces the need for Wolterstorff's consocial position.

First, since Wolterstorff's position was formed in response to the thought of Rawls and Audi, I will briefly explicate their attempts to form a freestanding "public reason/secular rationale" approach to political discourse that is void of all comprehensive doctrines. Second, I will present Wolterstorff's critical responses to those views—which ultimately led him to form his "consocial" position that will be explained in the third part of this paper. Fourth, I will present Kent Greenawalt's "intermediate" approach to political discourse that seeks to reconcile Wolterstorff's position with his opponents'. Lastly, I will show how Greenawalt's alternative position fails to escape the problems Wolterstorff found in the thought of Rawls and Audi, and I will also present several independent arguments of my own on this issue.

I. Rawls & Audi's Restrictive Political Discourse

The thought of John Rawls and Robert Audi has caused a trend toward exclusion of religious beliefs in political discourse, which is evident in their standards for what counts as a justified basis for the enforcement of coercive laws by the state. Audi's view is what Wolterstorff calls the "implausible actualist" interpretation, which is: "If fully rational citizens in possession of the relevant facts cannot be persuaded of the necessity of the coercion…then from the point of view of liberal democracy, the coercion lacks an adequate basis."[2] This means that all people within a liberal democracy must be adequately informed about the premises of the proposed

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[1] Rawls, John. *Political Liberalism*. Columbia University Press, 2005. xviii.

[2] Audi, Robert, and Nicholas Wolterstorff. *Religion in the Public Square: The Place of Religious Convictions in Political Debate*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1997. 16.

coercive law, and they must also all give universal assent to the proposed law—otherwise, coercion is not justified. By a small, yet somewhat significant contrast, "Rawls allows…that people may believe the law to be a good thing for different reasons…from [a] freestanding independent source."[3]Insofar as advocates of a coercive law are using reasons drawn from a secular framework of reasoning, Rawls believes that coercive laws are permissible.

Furthermore, Rawls—and Audi as well—consider "people [to be] unreasonable…when they plan to engage in cooperative schemes but are unwilling to honor…any general principles or standards for specifying fair terms of cooperation."[4] This means that, insofar as people are not willing to engage in a publicly secular source of reasons that can be accessible to all peoples in political discourse, they are acting unreasonably in the eyes of the political community and should therefore be excluded from the political discussion. And of course, purely public secular reasoning will inevitably exclude religious beliefs, which is the subject of Nicholas Wolterstorff's seminal contributions to political philosophy.

II. Wolterstorff's Critique
The effort to drive religious reasoning from forming the basis of political decisions in public discourse has some serious issues. First, what constitutes a secular rationale that is completely devoid of all comprehensive doctrines? What would constitute the Rawlsian "overlapping consensus"? The thought of liberal theorists like Rawls and Audi "presupposes an epistemology theory [and] it is imperative that we have the theory: anybody who claims that we all aspire to rationality cannot be excused from telling us what he means by rationality."[5] Without such a defined epistemology, liberal theorists leave citizens in the dark about how to properly conduct political discourse. How should Bob the Baptist go about advocating against abortion legislation? If he cannot think of any secular reasons, then should he just pack up and leave his pro-life protests?

Furthermore, this objection becomes even more damning when we consider that "…there [is] no secular morality to which all secular parties [appeal to] but instead a variety of different secular moralities to which they appealed: some [are] utilitarians, some [are] self-realization expressivists, some [are] libertarians, and so forth."[6] And if religious reasons are to be excluded from political discourse because they exclude nonreligious peoples, then it is hard to see why other moral frameworks such as Kantian deontology should not also be excluded when consequentialists also exist within society. Quite frankly, "it's an illusion to suppose that there is a standpoint of rational universality whose yield is a common morality…"[7] And insofar as political philosophers pretend that there is a common morality, they will fundamentally exclude all other moral frameworks in favor of their own preferred political positions.

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[3] Wolterstorff, Nicholas. "The Paradoxical Role of Coercion in the Theory of Political Liberalism," in *Journal of Law, Philosophy, and Culture* (Vol. I, No. 1; Spring 2007). 17.

[4] Rawls, *Liberalism.* 50.

[5] Wolterstorff, *Paradoxical Role.* 34.

[6] "Freedom for Religion." *Understanding Liberal Democracy: Essays in Political Philosophy*, by Nicholas Wolterstorff, Oxford University Press, 2016. 303.

[7] Wolterstorff, *Freedom for Religion,* 303.

The second criticism is that it is epistemically impossible to abstract ourselves from our comprehensive doctrines in political discourse. Wolterstorff continues: "One's comprehensive doctrine typically shapes one's judgments about rationality and…about the secular moral principles to which one may appeal [and] about the conceptions of justice to which one may appeal."[8] Let's revisit our friend, Bob the Baptist. His comprehensive doctrine is the content of his Christian beliefs that are rooted in the Bible. Because His comprehensive doctrine leads him to believe that God calls His disciples to serve the poor, Bob will therefore advocate for welfare laws. But on the other side, because Jeff the secular humanist believes that it is simply a self-evident moral good to serve the poor, then Jeff will also advocate for welfare. These lines of reason form the *grounding* for a person's *advocacy*, and the two need not be separated—especially if the person cannot think of a reason not originating from her comprehensive doctrine. And if there really is no clear concept of what the secular rationale is, then this second objection is even more damning, since even if Jeff or Bob could abstract themselves from their individual comprehensive doctrines, they would not have anywhere else to turn.

The last main criticism of the effort to exclude religious reasons from political discourse is that the justifications for coercive laws are impractical—and therefore further reinforces the need for inclusion of comprehensive doctrines in public discourse. In regard to Audi's justificatory principle that all must reach a universal assent to a coercive law before that law is justified *and* Rawls' standard that obligates citizens to use only reason originating from a freestanding overlapping consensus, Wolterstorff argues that this is simply implausible:

> No matter what principles of justice a particular political theorist may propose, the reasonable thing for her to expect, given any plausible understanding whatsoever of 'reasonable and rational,' is *not* that all reasonable and rational citizens would accept those principles, but rather that *not all* of them would do so.[9]

Again, this seems obvious to me. Take the gun debate that has recently intensified since the Parkland shootings in which seventeen students were killed. Republicans and Democrats have been starkly divided in making intense arguments for whether or not restrictive policies will save or endanger more lives, and whether or not gun reform would infringe on the second amendment right to bear arms. Nonetheless, a common argument on this issue has not been, "Scripture demands me to be a pacifist, so we ought to severely restrict or even abolish our right to guns." I am not saying that this is not a possible position to take on gun laws (I personally sympathize with that position), but I am only underscoring the fact that, in recent public debates on gun control, arguments that are usually secular still bear no kind of wholesale solidarity—nowhere close to Audi's demand for universal assent.

III. Wolterstorff's "Consocial" Position

With these issues, we now turn to the third main part of this paper to Wolterstorff's 'consocial' position. The two main tenants of the advocacy are as follows:

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[8] Wolterstorff, *Paradoxical Role*. 37.
[9] Wolterstorff, *Public Square.* 99.

> [First,] …each adult citizen… has a right to full political voice and that everyone's vote counts as equal to everyone else's vote…All adult citizens are *permitted* to exercise full political rights…second.…is that the exercise by citizens of political voice takes place within a distinctive constitutional and legal context…that…protect citizens against serious threats….to their freedom to exercise their political voice.[10]

I take two main tenants from Wolterstorff's explanation: (1) all have an equal political voice, and (2) these political voices are to be exercised in contexts where there are legal constraints that protect individuals from a harm against themselves and their right to equal political voice. So in our liberal democracy, tenant one would be demonstrated in the fact that every citizen's vote holds equal weight, and tenant two would be demonstrated in our constitution that prohibits things such as assault against a person because of her political opinion. Because Wolterstorff's position advocates for a fundamental equality among citizens' political voices, this means that all voices are equally permissible within the public political discourse. If Millie the Muslim wants to advocate for the prohibition of pork-consumption based on her Muslim beliefs, her position is as permissible in public discourse as Jeff the secular humanist's position of following his intuitive belief that all have the right to eat what they please—except for other fellow humans, of course.

Wolterstorff's position, in contrast to liberal theorists such as Rawls and Audi, permits an ideological free-for-all, in which there are no epistemic constraints on reasoning formed out of comprehensive doctrines, so that "…the state…is to take no account of the religion or non-religion of potential recipients."[11] The state must permit religious beliefs in public discourse so that it may "treat everybody equally with respect to his…religion" and give "everybody, regardless of his…religion…equal voice in the personnel and conduct of the state."[12] In this way, religious beliefs—just like any other comprehensive doctrine—is given equal footing in political discourse.

Political equality is granted through state toleration of religion in public political discourse for several reasons. First, toleration of this sort respects those who have a moral *obligation* to use religious reasoning in every kind of consideration.[13] For example, some Christians may take the Apostle Paul's instruction to do all for the glory of God to include how one should vote in political elections. Secondly, whereas religious comprehensive doctrines can easily be detected, "secular perspectives will go undetected."[14] Bob the Baptist's poster at the pro-life rally with Psalm 139 in bold red letters will certainly be a red flag in a Rawlsian society, but Jeff the humanist's poster that reads "Be kind to others—including the unborn!" might not. Lastly, and similar to a point I made earlier, is that the exclusion of comprehensive doctrines is discriminatory toward those who do not agree with this conception of political discourse. Kent Greenawalt—a thinker who I will level a critique against later on this paper—makes this same point when he

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[10] "Liberal Democracy as Equal Political Voice." *Understanding Liberal Democracy: Essays in Political Philosophy*, by Nicholas Wolterstorff, Oxford University Press, 2016. 128.

[11] Wolterstorff, Nicholas. "Why Can't We All Just Get Along with Each Other," in Nigel Biggar & Linda Hogan, eds., *Religious Voices in Public Places* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). 294.

[12] Ibid, 294.

[13] Paraphrase of Wolterstorff, *Public Square.* 105.

[14] Ibid, 105.

writes, "Rawls' own principles of justice adopt a purely distributive view…But he presents no sound reason why someone…with a contrary sense of a moral right…should abandon that position…"[15] What if Lauren the Libertarian believes in a Lockean right to one's own property being produced by one's own labor? What reason is there for her to adopt a Rawlsian difference principle that benefits the worst off? This is unclear.

Now, in order to actualize Wolterstorff's consocial position, we need a political context in which the right to free expression and other safeguards can be enforced through a legal system. To meet these needs, Wolterstorff advocates for a liberal democracy (or a liberal "polity," to adopt his language). For Wolterstorff, "the liberal polity" is a context "in which there is a constitutional-legal framework which guarantees to all its sane citizens due process of law along with the so-called 'civil-liberties.'"[16] Wolterstorff includes the qualification of sanity for citizens because rights are not absolute—a prisoner, for example, gives up her right to vote. This qualification is not the same kind as a Rawlsian conception of reasonability, in which a citizen is considered unreasonable and therefore excluded from political discourse if she does not abide by secular public reasoning that is accessible to all peoples.

Religious peoples may think Wolterstorff's defense of liberal democracy to be a betrayal since this form of government has historically been used as a vehicle of religious exclusion. Bob the Baptist may pipe up, "Yer really gonna defend our government full of a buncha liberal phonies like Hillary Clinton who don't let my boy pray with his football coach on the field? Or talk about my Jesus durin' class?" But Wolterstorff would turn to Bob and reply, "Look Bob, you got it all wrong. To quote my response to another political theorist named Jeffrey Stout, 'A society is a liberal democracy insofar as its members are guaranteed…certain… rights… to not violate persons. It is… respect for the worth of persons, that underlies the right to free exercise of religion, the right not to be tortured, and the like.'"[17] In other words, if a religious person believes that every individual has a certain level of dignity that demands respect for their own religious expression, then Wolterstorff thinks that the only system that can satisfy this is a liberal polity.

IV. Greenawalt's "Intermediate" Position

In the fourth part of this paper, we now turn to Kent Greenawalt's 'intermediate' approach to political discourse, which seeks to reconcile the views of liberal theorists such as Rawls and Audi with the much less restrictive 'consocial' approach of Nicholas Wolterstorff. Greenawalt's thesis is as follows:

> Legislation must be justified in terms of secular objectives, but when people reasonably think that rational analysis and an acceptable rational secular

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[15] Greenawalt, Kent. "Has Religion Any Place in the Politics and Law of Liberal Democracy?" *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, vol. 142, no. 3, 1998, pp. 378–387. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/3152243. 385.

[16] Wolterstorff, Nicholas. "Do Christians Have Good Reasons for Supporting Liberal Democracy?" in *The Modern Schoolman* (LXXVIII, January/March, 2001). 310.

[17] Wolterstorff, Nicholas. "Jeffrey Stout on Democracy and Its Contemporary Christian Critics." *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, vol. 33, no. 4, 2005, pp. 633–647. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/40017990. 646.

morality cannot resolve critical questions of fact, fundamental questions of value, or the weighing of competing harms, they [may] appropriately rely on religious convictions that help them answer these questions.[18]

I find two basic tenants of Greenawalt's intermediate position: (1) on matters that *can* be decided by secular rationale, only secular rationale should be used by citizens—no explanation rooted in a comprehensive doctrine is permitted. Greenawalt is consistent with the Rawlsian overlapping consensus until he also allows for a second tenant: (2) on matters that *cannot* be decided by secular reasoning, citizens may use their own comprehensive doctrines to decide on the matter. To further explain Greenawalt's position—which is not my position nor Wolterstorff's—let's consider Bob the Baptist once again. But this time, his political advocacy has changed to a stance against same-sex marriage. He protests, "Homosexuality is a sin! Have you not read Romans 1?" But given that—according to Greenawalt—secular reasoning[19] seems to be able to give a sufficient account of whether or not someone has the right to their own personal lifestyle, Greenawalt would say that Bob's position is invalid, especially since Bob's advocacy does not respect the plurality of religious views in society that may permit a homosexual lifestyle.[20]

But let's consider a topic that Greenawalt would consider to be outside the limits of secular reasoning, which is also an 'ol favorite advocacy of Bob the Baptist: abortion. There is no obvious secular conception of whether or not a fetus should be treated as a being with human rights. If a baby's rights are non-existent because she is dependent on her mother inside the womb, then why would this baby suddenly gain rights once she exits the womb? Is she not still dependent on her mother for food, water, shelter, etc.? And what constitutes murder? If aborting a baby in the womb is not considered murder because the baby has not fully developed, what is to stop this line of logic from carrying to doctors performing abortions outside of the womb? Can premature babies be aborted but not murdered?

The point is clear: there is no clear answer to this issue when using purely secular reasoning. Thus, Greenawalt's alternative: "If the moral status of the fetus and desirable legal policy are not resolvable on rational grounds, individuals must decide these questions on some nonrational basis."[21] For Greenawalt, that nonrational basis can be one's own comprehensive doctrine, even if the comprehensive doctrine's reasoning is not something that is accessible to all secular peoples. So on the issue of abortion, our friend Bob can say, "Have you not read Psalm 139?"

Greenawalt's allowance of the use of comprehensive doctrines on fringe issues seems to find some overlap with Wolterstorff's political thought, except that the reason why Greenawalt permits comprehensive doctrines is significantly different from Wolterstorff's reasoning. Whereas Wolterstorff argues for no epistemic-religious

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[18] Greenawalt, Kent. "Religious Convictions and Lawmaking." *Michigan Law Review*, vol. 84, no. 3, 1985, pp. 352–404. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/1289007. 357.

[19] I have already made the argument that there is no clear idea of what secular reasoning is, but for the sake of being able to represent Greenawalt's position, I am presuming such a thing exists. I'll revisit the earlier criticism of the ambiguity of secular reasoning in part five of this paper.

[20] Paraphrase Greenawalt, Kent. "Religious Convictions." 360.

[21] Ibid, 379.

constraints in political discourse because he thinks that we all have a fundamental right to political equality within a liberal democracy, Greenawalt loosens these same constraints only because doing so is the last option left—particularly on issues that Greenawalt thinks have no obvious answer via secular reasoning. In other words, there is no moral *ought-ness* in Greenawalt's allowance of religious beliefs in political issues outside of secular forms of reasoning—there is simply no other way to think of these topics.

I have explained the *what* of Greenawalt's intermediate position by doing a brief exposition of the two tenants of his thesis, but before moving on to my critical analysis of his stance, I should explain the *why* of Greenawalt's position. Ignoring the fringe issues where Greenawalt allows the use of comprehensive doctrines in political discourse, *why* is it the case that we should refrain from using secular reasoning in issues that are not outside of secular reasoning? The reason is that Greenawalt's position is premised on the expediency of political discourse; it is easier to reach cooperation with secular reason than with religious reason that excludes nonreligious peoples. Perhaps in a perfectionist society where there is an established religion, "public airing of particular religious views might work well," but because our liberal democracy has such a diverse array of comprehensive doctrines that fundamentally conflict with one another, "non-Christians may feel left out and resentful" if Christians always turn public arguments into a mere hermeneutical debate over whether or not the Bible permits something such as homosexuality.[22] [23] If we are to have effective political dialogue with non-Christian citizens, then we must "[appeal] to grounds that the audience will accept" so that, especially with speaking in front of irreligious folks, "the most effective persuasion will rely on other than narrow religious arguments."[24]

For Greenawalt, this means that "legislators should give greater weight to reasons that are generally available than to those they understand are not" so that "non-Christians may [not] feel left out and resentful."[25] This seems patently clear to me: if Bob the Baptist is a political figure who is rallying against homosexuality in front of his local town hall, he should not expect every attendee to share his strict Southern Baptist view of traditional marriage, and so it would be best for him to appeal to other kinds of broad arguments without such explicit religious appeal. Perhaps there is a peer-reviewed study that shows how children raised by same-sex couples tend to have a lesser-developed psychology than children raised by heterosexual couples. Or, Bob could appeal to peer-reviewed studies that show that homosexual relationships tend to perpetuate life-threatening STD's. The point, of course, is that Bob should not just assume everyone will share his moral framework—he must adapt.

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[22] Ibid, 391.

[23] I want to be clear and note that Greenawalt is the one who thinks the issue of homosexuality is a policy issue that is accessible to secular reasoning—*not* me. I do not think this is the case. I will elaborate on this later in my criticism of Greenawalt.

[24] Ibid, 392.

[25] Ibid, 385, 391.

V. Critique of Greenawalt's Position

But how tenable is Greenawalt's position? Has he really been able to reconcile
Wolterstorff's rejection of religious constraints in political discourse with the Rawlsian effort of inclusion of all peoples by forming a freestanding, overlapping consensus that is void of all religious reasoning? I am not convinced that Greenawalt has successfully done this, and I also think that he is unsuccessful in circumventing the same criticisms leveled at Rawls and Audi earlier in this paper. Thus, I begin my critique:

First, what is secular reasoning? Greenawalts' original thesis fails to provide a basis for this. And insofar as he does not provide a sufficient account of what rationale is, his exception of using religious reasons in cases where rational secular reason does not have a clear answer turns into the normative way we should do political discourse. Again, take Greenawalt's example of homosexuality: there is no clear, secular way of going about this issue. If Bob the Baptist wants to outlaw homosexual behavior because he thinks that it is against his religious beliefs, Greenawalt responds by saying, "… the aim to forbid homosexual acts on this ground is at odds with basic premises of liberal democracy. A liberal society has no business dictating matters of religious belief and worship to its citizens."[26] The latter half of Greenawalt's response is certainly true, and even Wolterstorff would argue against an established religion because it violates the rights of fundamentally equal political voices within a liberal democracy. But nonetheless, the ethical value of homosexuality is not clear on the grounds of same-sex relationships.

Perhaps it is *self-evident* that homosexual peoples should be able to live as they please. "You have no right to determine what people do with their romantic lives!" Jeff the secular humanist might reply to Bob's anti-homosexuality protests. But on what grounds does Bob not have a right to have this advocacy? Bob thinks that he can stand firm on the authority of Scripture, and Jeff thinks he stands firm on another kind of secular basis—but the point is that they reach fundamentally exclusive positions. In a liberal democracy, ideological exclusion is inevitable, and to think otherwise is foolish. If Hitler thought genocide was a moral good, and you disagree, then you *exclude* his worldview. Is that bad? Of course not. So it is with our political discourse. In attempting to reconcile Wolterstorff with Rawlsian public reasoning, Greenawalt fails to provide a sufficient basis for us to be making moral judgments in political discourse, and insofar as there is no clear form of secular public reasoning, then every issue is a fringe issue where religious arguments ought to be permissible.

On the second criticism: Greenawalt fails to account for our epistemic inability to abstract ourselves from our own comprehensive doctrines even on issues that are allegedly accessible to secular reasoning. To revisit the issue of abortion, Greenawalt allows the use of religious reason on an issue with no obvious secular answer because "asking that people pluck out their religious convictions and take a fresh look…is not only unrealistic [but] it is positively objectionable, because it demands that people try to compartmentalize beliefs that constitute some kind of

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[26] Ibid, 360.

unity in their approach to life."[27] I agree! So how does Greenawalt not run into this issue on the issue of homosexuality? Is he not demanding that Bob the Baptist lay aside his firm religious conviction that homosexuality is a moral wrong? Or take another less controversial issue: taxes. If Bob believes that Scripture teaches how it is better to help the poor out of your own will—as opposed to being obligated by the government through its tax system—then he will surely adopt a kind of fiscally libertarian position. If Greenawalt asks Bob to abstract his religious views from his advocacy for tax cuts, is he not fundamentally denying the basis of Bob's vote? Perhaps Bob could resort to a secular utilitarian calculus of which tax plan would better suit the economy, but why think that economic benefit matters most in political discourse?

The implications of this second criticism extend to the realm of the legislator and judge: how are public officials supposed to interpret the law if they are inseparable from their comprehensive doctrines? Wolterstorff writes: "Administration and adjudication are not mechanical processes; both activities require interpretation…beyond a doubt the comprehensive doctrines…play a role in the process…"[28] And notably, Greenawalt recognizes that this is the case for *some* issues when he points out that "Some legal terms, such as 'cruel and unusual punishment' and 'good moral character' seem to refer the judge outward to nonlegal domains."[29] But if it is true that there is an epistemic inescapability from our comprehensive doctrines, how would this not follow us to all of our interpretations? The right to privacy has been extrapolated to justify same-sex marriage, and the right to free speech has been used to justify the distribution of pornography—clearly the use of one's comprehensive doctrine has been used to justify these decisions. And again, if all have a right to fundamental political equality, then why think that this equality does not extend to judges and legislators? Perhaps because there is a standard of objectivity expected out of public officials. But again, this assumes we can achieve a level of epistemic objectivity—and it's quite obvious that we cannot.

"So are we just going to allow any public official to will-nilly vote whatever she *believes* in?" Insofar as her beliefs are within the constraints of constitutional guidelines that protect citizens from violations of their fundamental right to equal political freedom, then *yes*, we are. Liberal democracy has systemic checks on legislators if they are disastrously out of line with the scope of the general populous: citizen votes. If we are to ask which legal interpretations are permissible for lawmakers, Wolterstorff responds that "…the citizens themselves eventually answer that question…on the basis of whatever reasons individual citizens find cogent…"[30] If this objector disagrees with how a certain politician is interpreting laws, then she may vote her out—that's the beauty of a liberal democracy.

My last criticism of Greenawalt is that, even if my previous two criticisms fail, Greenawalt never makes an argument for why we do not have a *right* to public discourse based on explicitly religious reasons, but only that religious reasons are not expedient to use in political discourse. This is clear when he writes on whether or

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[27] Ibid, 380.
[28] Ibid, 117.
[29] Greenawalt, Kent. "Religious Convictions." 399.
[30] Wolterstorff, *Public Square.* 118.

not political discourse should happen among religious clergymen in public: "The question is… not the indisputable right of religious leaders to take such actions, but whether these actions are… such involvement in the political process is unwise, since it tends to link religious leaders and organizations too closely to the government."[31] I think Greenawalt is making a serious mistake here. Why is there such a high price on expediency? It is certainly much more expedient to kill off prisoners than to house them in prisons that absorb tax dollars—I don't see why expediency would function as a reason to therefore commit this mass murder.

And religious people would especially echo this line of thought: what was expedient in all of Jesus' earliest disciples suffering lives of persecution for the sake of spreading the Gospel? What is expedient about, for modern Christians, raising money in order to go on mission trips? Perhaps the Christian knows that her advocacy against abortion will lose her friends and cause her to suffer serious ridicule; nonetheless, her faith convicts her to advocate against abortion anyway.

But has Greenawalt really proven that using religious reasons in political discourse is actually not expedient? I'm not convinced. Along with my previous argument—that Christian politicians can adjust their uses of their own personal comprehensive doctrines depending on their audiences—we should consider a survey of our nation's past presidents: Jimmy Carter was widely known as "a Baptist Sunday School teacher," and was considered to be "the first 'born again' president."[32] George Bush affirmed divine institution when he said, "I believe God wants me to be president."[33] And most notably, Abraham Lincoln "often utilized in religious language and quoted the Bible in public speeches."[34] Even more than just the presidency, religious peoples have also dominated our congressional delegations.[35] So empirically, Greenawalt does not have ground to substantiate a claim that religious persons are engaging in un-expedient methods of political discourse—on the contrary, religious peoples actually seem to do quite well in American politics.

Additionally, article VI of the Constitution has preventative checks on religious discrimination in the political sphere, such that "no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States."[36] This means that the alleged 'disadvantages' for religious peoples that Greenawalt points out are significantly overblown, since religious peoples are actually federally protected from religious discrimination in selection of higher office positions. This is why Bernie Sanders came under fire last Summer for claiming that Russell Vought—

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[31] Greenawalt, Kent. "Religious Convictions." 393.

[32] Merritt, Jonathan. "Which U.S. Presidents Were the Most Religious?" *Religion News Service*, 17 Feb. 2015, religionnews.com/2015/02/16/u-s-presidents-religious/.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid.

[35] A 2017 study from Pew Research Center notes that "The vast majority of the nation's federal lawmakers (91%) describe themselves as Christians, compared with 71% of U.S. adults who say the same…" See: Sandstrom, Aleksandra. "Majority of States Have All-Christian Congressional Delegations." *Pew Research Center*, Pew Research Center, 21 Mar. 2017, www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/03/21/majority-of-states-have-all-christian-congressional-delegations/.

[36] Staff, LII. "Article VI." *LII / Legal Information Institute*, Cornell Law School, 10 Oct. 2017, www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/articlevi.

Trump's nominee for deputy director of the Office of Management and Budget—was "unfit to serve in government" because of Vought's strict affirmation in the fact that "Muslims…do not know God because they have rejected Jesus…"[37] Vought was not alone to defend himself; rather, multiple senators came to his defense, and Sanders' actions were clearly condemned among most present in the hearing. So not only is most of the U.S. government made up of religious peoples, but also there are legally binding checks against the kinds of 'disadvantages' Greenawalt thinks religious persons may face in political discourse.

VI. Conclusion

In our current political climate, comprehensive doctrines are seriously divided, and to think that all in society will reach a common consensus on one particular comprehensive doctrine is foolish. Rawls and Audi—along with many other secular theorists, attempted to completely exclude comprehensive doctrine from political discourse, but their arguments failed. Kent Greenawalt tried to soften this position by making a distinction between issues that are accessible to secular reasoning—in which comprehensive doctrines are excluded—and fringe issues that are beyond secular reason—in which comprehensive doctrines are allowed. This position, as well, has failed. I think that the only tenable position for political discourse in a political society is Wolterstorff's "consocial" position, in which we stop trying to jump through all kinds of epistemic hoops and be consistent with how political discourse really is: we will *always* disagree on comprehensive doctrine, so it is best to allow all an equal political voices in political discourse—insofar as it is within the constitutional constraints of a liberal democracy.

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The Author and the Letter Symbolically Bonded by Death and Grief: A Symbolic Examination of Authored Letters Written After One's Death

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"I wonder if I have ever actually been happy. People have told me, really more times than I can remember, ever since I was a small boy, how lucky I was, but I have always felt as if I were suffering in hell. It has seemed to me in fact that those who called me lucky were incomparably more fortunate than I." (Dazai, 1948/1958, p. 25)

- Osamu Dazai, *No Longer Human*

"I realize what they say about the nobility of misfortune is true. Because misfortune teaches us the truth. Your cancer has opened your eyes to your own life. We humans are so careless. We only realize how beautiful life is when we chance upon death." (Motoki & Kurosawa, 1952)

- Akira Kurosawa, *Ikiru*

Abstract

The Japanese animated series Violet Evergarden (2018), and Violet Evergarden Special (2018), maintain death in addition to grief as main themes of their episodic stories. Both series allow the show's characters to interact with the series theme of death and grief through their writing of letters to the dead or recently deceased. The purpose of this theoretical paper will be to analyze, using the sociological paradigm of symbolic interactionism, the ritual of authoring what will be called "after death letters." The interpretation of written "after death letters" will be situated between the author and their authored letter as the interpretation will examine the following question: How could the authorship of "after death letters" contribute symbolically to the grieving process of an author?

Introduction

In the Netflix series Violet Evergarden, a former child soldier named Violet – who in the first episode was given the last name of Evergarden – takes a career as a scribe articulating emotional letters for people at their request (Ishidate, 2018). Throughout Violet Evergarden the letters that are written by Violet are often pronounced and frozen in a stage of dying that occurs as of the episode. Additionally, throughout the series the letters written and situations that they are written in help to symbolize the spectrum of how death and/or dying interact with people. People's interactions are organized throughout the series by the use of pseudonyms in the form of names of dead relatives, death of family members by

disease leading to an isolated state of living, rekindling the last moments of a son's existence before death, etc. The actions were taken, and the reasons behind those actions given by the series Violet Evergarden are reminiscent of a model of counseling called existential counseling. The existential counseling and psychotherapeutic model originated with Victor Frankl's concept of logotherapy articulated in his, work and again in his book "A man's search for meaning" (1963). This form of counseling draws upon the philosophical movement of existentialism and seeks to improve people lives through the understanding that all problems come from "death, meaninglessness, isolation, and freedom" (Hill, 2019). In addition, the existential model follows a unique perspective echoed from Frankl's "A man's search for meaning" that it is only the person who can change their behavior, not anyone and or thing else (1963). There are many forms that existential therapy can take as its existence is centered around people and their problems of being.

Violet Evergarden (2018) extrapolates themes of existentialism and offers viewers estimated answers to its themes through a form of what could be estimated as existential self-therapy. Apparent in the series of Violet Evergarden is the dichotomy between the death of the individual or a moment witnessed by such an individual and the communication with the metaphorical past as a sign of remembrance. In a similar way, the series acts as a mirror to the actions portrayed within the real world. An example can be found in Gobodo-Madikizela (2004) book, "A Human Being Died that Night: A South African Story of Forgiveness" she writes in her chapter on the language of trauma about a story recounted while she was working at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The story recounts of a woman named Mrs. Plaatje whose son Themba was shot around the time of her son's lunch break just outside their home (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2004). She recounts how after he was shot and killed and she details that the things - toys, dirtied bowls, and utensils - that were left behind after his passing represented his last moments alive thus setting up a representation of the past as it was (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2004). This relationship between death and remembrance – within an author-textual format – has not been researched within the field of sociology and more importantly the paradigm of symbolic interactionism. This paper seeks to move forward towards a theory of the sociological relationship between the author and the texts written by the author. To achieve this, the present essay will use the symbolic interactionism paradigm to observe the phenomena of letter writing in a theoretical capacity as the act of writing letters itself applies to the idea of grief in addition to how writing letters might allow one to interact – as in the case of this study – with an individual.

Literature Review
An Overview of Grief

Freud and Grief.
Freud noted in his 1917 work entitled, Mourning and Melancholia, he wrote that melancholia (depression) and mourning (grief) are different states. Melancholia as a psychological state contains a "morbid psychological disposition" along with feelings of "painful dejection, abrogation of interest in the outside world, inhibition of all activity, and a lowering of the self-regarding feelings to a degree that finds

utterance in self-reproaches and self-revilings and culminates in a delusion expectation of punishment" (Freud, 1917, p.153). Freud (1917), said depression (Melancholia) was unrelinquished feelings of loss that the person still held onto for their lost other thus incorporating them into the mourning person's self (Neimeyer & Harris, 2015). Grief (mourning) on the other hand contains all the same characteristics as depression (melancholia) except for a "morbid psychological disposition" in addition to the fall in self-esteem and thus falls short of melancholia (Freud, 1917). Additionally, grief, as opposed to melancholia, is not dangerous even though its appearance is shown through behaviors that often offer extreme departures from the attitude attached to everyday life – interference in the condition is ill-advised (1917). Neimeyer & Harris (2015), explain that mourning (grief) is a normal phenomenon caused by loss and was thought by Freud (1917) to be caused by a buildup of a person's psychic energy or libido. Freud (1917) thought that people gradually recover from grief through a process called decathexis whereby the psychic energy invested in the lost item or object is gradually released allowing detachment from the thing (Neimeyer & Harris, 2015). This notation of the difference between mourning (grief) and melancholia (depression) provided by Freud (1917) was so significant that it permeated and influenced grief therapies for most of the twentieth century (Neimeyer & Harris, 2015).

Grief theories – Stage Models

According to Maciejewski, Zhang, Block, Prigerson (2007), Bowlby and Parker are generally considered the first psychologists to propose a stage theory of grief for adjustment to bereavement composed of four different stages: "shock-numbness, yearning-searching, disorganization-despair, and reorganization." Psychiatrist Kubler Ross drawing from Bowlby and Parker, in addition, to her own hundreds of interviews with patients near death detailed a stage model of grief in her 1969 book, On death and dying, made up of five stages (Kubler-Ross, 1969; Kubler-Ross, Wessler, & Avioli, 1972; Maciejewski, Zhang, Block, & Prigerson, 2007). The five stages that comprise the stage model of grief are as follows: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance (Kubler-Ross, Wessler, & Avioli, 1972; Mauksch, 1975; Neimeyer & Harris, 2015) According to Neimeyer & Harris (2015), Kubler-Ross typically argued in her work that patients typically went through the stages in the order prescribed in the model. Eventually, the stage model of grief rose to be the primary model taught in medical schools (Neimeyer & Harris, 2015). In addition to the stage models of grief, several other model theories came about during the late part of the twentieth century.

Dual Process Model and other Grief Models

The dual process model formulated by Margret Stroebe and Henk Schut proposes that people dealing with loss fight with bouts of grief when confronted with reminders from whom they had lost (Neimeyer & Harris, 2015; Stroebe & Schut, 1999). The dual process model of grieving was proposed as a response to the "Grief work hypothesis" proposed by Sigmund Freud due to major criticisms (e.g., non-specific definition, lack of evidence, also lack of validation across cultures and historical periods, among other criticisms) (Stroebe & Schut, 1999). The dual

process model identifies two different types of stressors 1). loss and 2). restoration-oriented in addition to a dynamic system which oscillated – at random time increments - between times where people sometimes engage in activities of grieving and at other times try and avoid grieving activities (Neimeyer & Harris, 2015; Stroebe & Schut, 1999). Like many of the contemporary models of grief the dual process model is informed by attachment theory (i.e., a theory based on the work by psychiatrist John Bowlby, which states that "people develop characteristic styles of relating to significant others based
upon their early experiences with caregivers") (Bowlby, cited in Neimeyer & Harris, 2015, p.164).

The two-track model which was formulated by Simon Shimson Rubin in 1999 proposed that people who while grieving rode two different but parallel tracks 1.) a biopsychosocial track and 2.) a relational track (Neimeyer & Harris, 2015; Rubin, 1999; see Zisook & Shear, 2009 for in-depth discussion of the biopsychosocial aspect of grief). The biopsychosocial track is a track that combines the biological, psychological, and sociological symptoms the person deals with conditions such as, "somatic distress" or "burdening emotions" (Neimeyer & Harris, 2015, p. 165). Whereas with the relational track refers backs to the process for which the griever tries to repair their relationship with the deceased.

One final model of grief is known as meaning reconstruction, and this model which takes a constructivist perspective was proposed by Neimeyer and colleagues (Neimeyer, Burke, Mackay, & Stringer, 2010; Neimeyer & Harris, 2015). The constructivism model of grief is based in the postmodern approach to therapy and counseling (Corey, 2013; Neimeyer, 1993). Like its namesake postmodernism, the postmodern approach to therapy and counseling seeks to challenge people's perspective of what reality is. The postmodern approach to counseling seeks to put the client in the role of expert and seeks to additionally promote clients into a more active role in interpreting their own life narrative (Corey, 2013). However, Neimeyer & Harris (2015), additionally discuss that clients who participate in this postmodern therapeutic approach often face two major difficulties during this type of counseling a.) making sense in the processing of events surrounding a death or one's loss b.) providing a backstory to the relationship that occurred before the loss.

Grief and Ritual

At the end of the twentieth century, people's trust in large institutions in addition to the authority of rituals had begun to erode (Sas & Coman, 2016). With this erosion, there was ushered a wave of rituals. Schnell (as cited in Sas & Coman, 2016, p. 558) provided a definition of rituals as, "formalized patterns of actions for constructing meaning from a personally relevant event." In their article, "Designing personal grief rituals: An analysis of symbolic objects and actions," Sas & Coman (2016) discussed the different components of rituals relating to grief. As stated within Sas & Coman (2016), the components of therapeutic grieving rituals fall under four different categories "Structure"; "Sacred symbolism"; "Socialites"; and "Uniqueness" (p. 559). Sas & Coman (2016) note in their article that a successful grief ritual according to Romanoff (1998) acts to accommodate three different functions: 1. "continuation of the connection with the lost loved one" 2. "transition to the new

social role" 3. "transformation of sense of self to accommodate a changed relationship with the lost loved one" (Romanoff, 1998; Sas & Coman, 2016, p. 559). In addition to the other models Reeves (2011) notes several attributes of successful grief rituals gained through advice from an aggregate of her correspondence she describes that grieving or death accepting rituals as having the following qualities: "careful preparation," "importance of symbols," "participation," "inclusion of others", recognition of the difference between past, present, and future (pp. 413-417). The characteristics of therapeutic grieving rituals noted by Sas & Coman (2016) in addition to the three functions proposed by Romanoff's (1998) model to explain successful grieving therapeutic rituals look to be ideal to the activity of writing letters.

Writing itself is a solitary process (Wu, 2018). Writing, however, solitary is still structured through the thoughts and schema (Oatley & Djikic, 2008) of the participants participating in the particular social activity. Bisseker (2018) writes in her article, "Write your mind," that writing as a tool within psychodynamic counseling is really useful because of its structured composition. Many writers use their own structures to reflect upon their own experiences and explore the inner recesses of their being (Bisseker, 2018). Additionally, many people hold sacred select thoughts of their own and will not change without much reflection that is set up in a structure – possibly of their own choosing. People feed their thoughts through writing into a medium like paper (where they can be expressed, internally reflected upon, while also being reflected upon externally) in order to achieve some improvement (Oatley & Djikic, 2008). People, however, do not just explore themselves. Human history as Walter (2015) discusses is largely recorded by the dead and is constantly written by the dead, rewritten presumably by the living, remembered, forgotten, explored, and interpreted by the process of writing.

Inspired by the series Violet Evergarden and its themes of grief the current literature review attempted to provide an acceptable overview of the models of grief. This overview was constructed in order to highlight what were thought to be qualities of grief by scientists and scholars over the historical timeline. Literature on the nature of grieving rituals was also reviewed in order to connect back to the idea study in this article which consists of the composition of after death letters. The groundwork in addition to the actual analysis will take form within the next section of this paper.

Analysis and Elaboration of Concepts

Analysis Groundwork

In order to begin to analyze the main phenomena of this paper, some groundwork must be laid out for the present argument. Within sociological literature, dyads or groups of two people, are recognized as holding the minimum requirement necessary for the formation of what sociologist classify as a group – this article will focus on groups of primary importance to the participant (e.g., family). However, this type of group is very unstable due to the fact that if one person were to leave the dyad falls apart, so communication is critical to maintaining a cohesive group. Normal communication within the dyad takes a basic form of a sender/receiver model where one person acts as the sender of information and the other as the

receiver of that information. Now because the writing of letters happens under the formation of a dyad these rules can still be applied as if the letters being written were a conversation between close members of a dyad.

Analysis

The present paper will be analyzed as a quasi-case study using the paradigm of symbolic interaction along with the groundwork formulated from the prior section the phenomena of authored after death letters will be examined. But in order to do so, it will be necessary to upturn some of the prior groundwork from the last section. So first, in the prior section, the concept of the dyad was introduced as a group that had two members. However, in relaying a definition of the dyad it was never mentioned that both people have to be alive; in fact letters of the kind being analyzed in this paper will work effectively with a dyad that is of one body that is living and the dead relative inhabiting the thoughts of the author's mind known as "intimate memories."

Now that the definition of the dyad has been reestablished through legal manipulation of the given redefinition. Another way that communication can be understood is through a relationship between the recently deceased and author writing the letter, the communication through the authorship of the letter. As the letter is written by the author, the author speaks through the symbols presented in the letter through the form of language which in turn corresponds to different large symbolic figures (e.g., memories, pictures, etc.) In turn with the conversation started via the author's letter the deceased conversates with the living author through the world in which the author lives and derives meaning from how they might interact with and interpret the world around them.

The interaction between the author and the remembered deceased markets on a principle that "relationships teach people." With the living author providing a narrative based on a starting point provided by the deceased. And the deceased influencing that very narrative through their reflected perspective from the view of the living author. Each side of this dichotomy influences their own symbols and as actors each act independently with the resulting influences the interacting within that interdependent space between. Dichotomies that are constructed over the writing of after death letters always are always learning and are in addition, they are always redefining themselves as well as reforming themselves. Through these processes of redefining and reforming symbols used by the author will undergo a shift and change according to new definitions and reformulations they craft for the relationship they crafted with the author's remembered deceased partner.

Conclusion and Implications

Grief research is very pragmatic towards real-world problems, however, from doing research for this paper it seems that this research is more focused in respect to real-world problems towards more traditional physical or medicine-based professions such as counseling, psychiatry, or medical physician. Until around the recent 1960s, grief has neglected to include a true social element to their theories as most theories were influenced largely by professions such as psychiatry and physicians. In the decades since the research in the sixties in the study and

application of grief related therapeutic techniques and rituals has expanded to incorporate disciplines such as sociology and anthropology.

This research like all other grief research deals with the improvement of people dealing with grief and its accompanying symptoms. However, the research conducted for this paper focused more on the application of theory on an ideal type or form of the chosen focus topic for this paper. Additionally, the content of the current research presented in this paper is purely theoretical. If any pragmatic thought was to be viewed in this paper its presence should be understood to be secondhand to the main purpose of this paper. For which the main purpose of this paper was to use the paradigm of symbolic interactionism to understand theoretically the phenomenon of after death letters and how writing them might help the author therapeutically.

The main implication for the research covered in this paper would be that it could be used to improve the symptoms and conditions for grief along with the grieving. These results could potentially be utilized by taking into consideration the nature of rituals and their reality as therapeutic tools. The main point of this paper was to show the dichotomy between the living and the remembered decease create a relationship that has the power to change the reality for both parties involved. As inputs from each side allow a symbolic transformation, change, and inherent human growth to occur from the process.

Biographical Note

Nicholas Elliott graduated from Stephen F. Austin in 2018 with an undergraduate degree in Multidisciplinary studies where his areas of pursuit were psychology, sociology, and anthropology. He is currently attending the University of St. Thomas and is working towards a Master's degree in general psychology within the Master's in Liberal Arts program. Personal interests include watching anime, conducting Internet-based research, as well as playing the guitar. Current research interests are set primarily within the realm of anime and consist of the anime and religion, the sociology of anime, and the globalizing effect of anime in the United States.

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How Native American Origin Stories are a Reflection
of Their Environment

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Abstract

How the world was first created has been a question that many societies have tried to answer, both scientifically or spiritually. Tribes located in North America have tried to answer that question through their oral traditions of their creation stories and were influenced by the land. Using both the natural landscape and the biological activity located in each geographical region, it can be determined as to how the stories were invented. The natural landscape would include mountain ranges, vegetation, and natural resources. The biological activity would be the animals that lived in the area that the tribes hunted. To understand the stories and the culture of the tribes from each geographical area in North America, those wishing to answer the question must combine the two aspects together.

Native Americans have been looked upon in pop culture as these mystical people that communicate with nature and the spirits and have an understanding of the world, despite being culturally different from each other. One unique attribute that all Native American tribes have in common is their tribes' stories about creation, nature, and the way they live their lives. The exact origins of the creation of each tribe in their native folklore can be influenced by the cultural area that the tribes first resided. The area that they live in, the world around them, the animals that they hunt all are present in these stories.

Beginning in the Artic region of North America, the climate that the tribe lives in is determined by the area. According to Sutton there is the "Canadian shield, which consists mostly of exposed granite bedrock…mountain ranges…dominate the western Artic… the Artic coastal plain… [and the] Aleutian Islands"[1], which are located in the Alaska/Canada area. Along this land, there are three main tribes that live in that area, Unangan, Yup'ik, and Inuit. The Inuit are the more well-known tribe that live in that area, but most of the origin stories are unknown, most likely due to missionary invaders from Europe.[2] Even though it is mostly unknown, what is believed is that humans came from nothing, and that animals already existed and shared a special bond with humans, which is supposedly still true today.[3] The peoples of the Artic relied heavily on animals and were grateful when some were found because "[the] Artic has low biological activity and a small biomass"[4], and animals were held in great esteem. The fact "[the] religious beliefs of the Artic

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[1] Sutton, Mark Q., *Introduction to Native North America,* (Routledge: New York, 2017), 51.
[2] Sutton, 76
[3] Sutton, 76
[4] Sutton, 51

groups were quite complex and primarily concerned with maintaining a relationship with the animals to ensure their continued cooperation in being hunted"[5], gave these animals prominence in the tribal stories, such as other geographical areas.

The Subarctic region, given by its name, is in a similar area to the Arctic region and would share some of the same traits as tribes living in the area. The geography would be different, with the Subarctic region made up of the Canadian Shield and Mackenzie Borderlands, the Cordillera, and the Alaska Plateau, which makes it the largest cultural area in North America.[6] There religious outlook was similar to the Artic people, who showed great respect to the animals they hunted, but "did not believe in supreme or overall deities, only general impersonal power"[7], which is different from the tribes in the Arctic. The reason that may explain the importance of animals in their story is because that they needed animals for survival, which made them important in their everyday life. The creation story of the Western Woods Cree, a Subarctic group, is not well known, though there is some information. The Cree believed there was a woman and a dog, the dog became a man and impregnated the woman, then the dog was later killed and torn to pieces by a giant, and those pieces became the animals and the baby of the dog and the woman became the Cree.[8] The dog, because of this story, became an important animal for the tribe, whether it was because of the influence of the story, or before the story was told.

The Plateau area of North America is located "in the north-central portion of western North America…[and] consists of interior highlands and basins extending from the Great Basin north into southern Canada", where other tribes lived.[9] One tribe that lived in the Plateau area were the Nimiipuu, or more commonly known as the Nez Perce. The part of the Plateau that they lived in was mostly mountains and large amounts of forest, with animals such as the Coyote.[10] There are numerous creation stories of the Nez Perce, but the main points of the stories are that the Coyote killed the monster (Its-welx) and used its body to create the Nez Perce enemies and its blood to make the tribe itself, which made them superior.[11] They even believe that Kamiah hill is also the old heart of the monster, which illustrates the ideology of the creation story being influenced by the surroundings.[12] Taking animals and landmarks from their existing surroundings gave credibility to the story, because there was evidence that could actually be seen. Other tribes in parts of North America associated landmarks with their stories, such as the Northwest tribes.

The modern states that make up the Northwest region includes the area of "southern Alaska over 1,500 miles south to far southern Oregon", with a vast ocean

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[5] Sutton, 63
[6] Sutton, 83
[7] Sutton, 90
[8] Sutton, 94
[9] Sutton, 101
[10] Sutton, 111
[11] Sutton, 115
[12] Sutton, 115

environment, mountains, and plenty of rain.[13] The religion system of many Northwest tribes was the belief in many supernatural beings, rather than one deity, and were associated with creation.[14] Tribes that were located in the Northwest region were the Quilleute, Makah, Chehalis, and the Puget Sound people, and they all believed in a spirit called the Changer.[15] The Changer was responsible for defeating the cannibal monsters on the flat earth, and changed the rest into the animals.[16] Then either by chance or by the power of the Changer, human beings came into the world.[17] Their creation story also gives an example of Mt. St. Helens burning the head of Tacoma, which was in fact a volcano.[18] The volcano is an example of how the environment was integrated into the creation, as their ancestors would have needed something to explain the phenomenon. Even though the Northwest tribes did not believe in the one deity, they may have a higher respect for certain spirits, such as the one who gave them the world, though shared with other cultures.

Near the Northwest tribes, the next geographical area of study would be the Great Basin. The Great Basin area is "a large region of interior drainage and a basin-and-range province that includes most of Nevada, southeastern Oregon, southern Idaho, western Utah, and portions of eastern California", and has two major deserts.[19] Tribes in the Great Basin were the few that believed in one supreme being, Our Father, but also had supernatural spirits related to the sky (Sun, Thunder, and Eagle).[20] Tribes that lived in this area include the Owens Valley Paiute, who lived in the Owens River Valley, and had a diverse ecology. The area they lived in was mountainous, with many rivers and forests, which gave them easy access to food and materials for survival.[21] The Owens Valley Paiute creation story (in one version) is that the Coyote impregnated a woman, who put all the children in a basket, and when the Coyote opened up the basket, the children that escaped became the other nationality of Native Americans and the one that was left became the Owen Valley Paiute.[22] The presence of an island in the story was in reference to the many bodies of water they have, which could have formed some type of small island. The coyote was another important animal in the area, and is predominate in that part of North America, so many Native stories would include this spirit, such as the ones in California.

Moving away from the Northwest Coast, the next area of study would be the tribes of California. The environment that inhabits California includes the areas of "the North Coast Range, the Cascade Mountains and the Sierra Nevada, the Central Valley…and southern California…and northern Baja California (in modern Mexico)",

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[13] Sutton, 120
[14] Sutton, 132
[15] Underhill, Ruth, *Indians of the Pacific Northwest,* (The United States Office of Indian Affairs: D.C., 1945), 183
[16] Underhill, 184
[17] Underhill, 184
[18] Underhill, 184
[19] Sutton, 144
[20] Sutton, 155
[21] Sutton, 160
[22] Sutton, 161-162

which is different from modern California's borders.[23] The climate is a Mediterranean climate with extensive rainfall, which would have attributed to the story of humans coming from mud.[24] As many of the regions that have been discussed, "[most] religious systems [of California] did not emphasize a single supreme being… Many animals were powerful supernatural entities, Coyote being prominent character in oral traditions of numerous groups".[25] A tribe that is located in the California area were the Yokuts whose creation story was vague. The myth was that "when the earth was young, it was covered with water. Animal beings who acted like people inhabited the world, and the Eagle was their leader. Eagle directed various birds to dive into the water to get mud to form the earth. Humans then came into being.", which does not use the Coyote spirit, but the eagle which was another important animal to many tribes[26] The eagle is associated with many native tribes and is considered a sacred bird where ever it lived.

Traveling from California, the North American tribes expand into the Southwest region of the continent. The areas of the Southwest include "the Colorado Plateau, the Sonoran Desert, the mountains, and the major river valleys", and has a climate that varies, especially rain, from area to area, going from hot summers and cold winters.[27] In the Southwest region of North America, well-known tribes are the Dine, or more commonly known as the Navajo, and the Hopi. Since both are Pueblo based tribes and live in similar environments, they would have similar creation stories. The Navajo have a creation story that describes the "Four Worlds". The first world was made by Begochiddy, child of the Sun, who created the four mountains, but the first world was abandoned.[28] In the second world, Begochiddy created the clouds and the Swallow and Cat People, but they caused problems, so he sent Man in the Big Reed to the Third World.[29] In the Third World everything seemed perfect, but the Coyote caused trouble, and the world was flooded, killing everything.[30] The next and last world, the Fourth World, was created with the Sun, Moon, and Stars, with new languages and new traditions, which is where the Dine live today.[31] The Hopi have a similar creation story to the Navajo in which the world has four layers. The four different geographical areas that the Southwest had was most likely the inspiration for the Four Worlds, each of the worlds having a similarity between each geographical region. The animals in the story were animals that were important to the tribe and would have played an important role in creation.

After moving away from the Southwest region, the Native American tribes of the Plains would be the next area of focus. The Plains have been stereotyped as having wide open grasslands filled with bison, which is acurate. Most of the western part of the Plains is grasslands, and in the Prairie Plains is "[well-watered] and

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[23] Sutton, 173

[24] Sutton, 174

[25] Sutton, 181

[26] Sutton, 184

[27] Sutton, 195-197

[28] Bruchac, Joseph, *Keepers of the Earth*, (Fulcrum: Colorado, 1995), 11-12

[29] Bruchac, 12

[30] Bruchac, 13

[31] Bruchac, 18

wooded and contains tall grasses with deep roots", a stark difference between the general conception of the Plains.[32] The agriculture success is dependent on the weather, with cold winters in the North and hot summers in the South, with variable rainfall.[33] The most sacred animal to the Plains people is the bison, and most of their ceremonies revolved around their spirit.[34] Plains tribes include the Cheyenne, who live in the center of the High Plains and spent most of their time hunting bison. The Cheyenne did not have an explanation as to how the earth was created, but only about their traditions.[35] The Pawnees were another tribe of the Plains, who lived in what is now south-central Nebraska and northern Kansas. Unlike the Cheyenne, the Pawnee have several stories about the creation of the universe, each different, which "reflect the complicated social history of the Pawnees and their diverse origins", which would have differences because of the areas they lived.[36] In the area they lived, the Pawnees were exposed to which reflects in their story about their ideals of heaven which created people using stars and storms to create the environment of the earth.[37] The ideology of storms creating the earth is the reliance of the rain to bring life to crops, as the Pawnees were farmers as well as hunters.

After the Plains Indians, the stories take place next in the Northeast region of North America. The environment of this area includes the "Coastal Region, the Saint Lawrence-Lowlands Region, and the Great Lakes- Riverine Region", and was accustomed to many lakes, rivers, forests, and mountains.[38] In the Northeast, one of the tribes that live there include the Abenaki. The Abenki have a creation story called "The Coming of Gluscabi". In this story, they explain how after the Owner, Tabaldak, created the humans, he dusted off his hands onto the Earth and from there Gluscabi formed himself.[39] Another tribe of the Northeast is the Seneca tribe, located in the area of New York. In the oral story told by Seneca Elder Twylah Nitsch, she describes "A cloudlike substance began to arise and encircle Eternal Land as Great Mystery created the Field of Plenty", the Great Mystery being the supreme being.[40] The Onondaga also had a creation story where the Great Tree was put on the back of a turtle after being pulled out of the water, so that the Sky Woman could come to earth, and when she got here, she planted the seeds of life on the Turtle's back.[41] Each of these stories, in their full description, discuss the extensive detail of the nature that surrounds the tribes, to praise their good fortune.

The final area of study in both the environment and the creation story comparison is in the Southeast region of North America. The area of the Southeast

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[32] Sutton, 245

[33] Sutton, 246

[34] Sutton, 258

[35] Sutton, 264

[36] Sutton, 272

[37] Sutton, 272

[38] Sutton, 280

[39] Bruchac, 3-4

[40] Sams, Jamie and Twylah Nitsch, *Other Council Fires Were Here Before Ours: A Classic Native American Creation Story as Retold by a Seneca Elder, Twylah Nitsch, and Her Granddaughter, Jamie Sams,* (HarperCollins: New York, 1991), 10

[41] Bruchac, 9

"comprises [of]…the Coastal Plain, the Piedmont, and the southern Appalachian", which includes pine forests, hills, mountains and a mild climate.[42] Within each of these regions, their lives certain tribes that have been affected by the environment and it has found its way into their stories and religion. When it comes to the religious beliefs of the Northeastern tribes, they "believed that the world was populated by spirits that inhabited all things, including humans, animals, rocks, water, and so on", and they controlled nature.[43] A tribe that lived in one of these areas was the Cherokee, who lived in the Piedmont and Appalachian Mountains.[44] They believed what most in the Southeast did that there was the Under World, This World, and the Upper World.[45] Beings from the Upper World inhabited This World, giving their images to what would be the people, and the Great Buzzard making the valleys and mountains with its wings and the water-beetle making the earth using mud form the ocean.[46] The Great Buzzard's job would be an explanation for all the mountains that the Cherokee lived in, giving a reason for their surroundings as well as the earth being create from mud from the bottom of the river, as they found them important.

After looking at each geographical area separately, there are similarities between each area that can noted and how each tribe is similar in their beliefs. Each tribal story has either an animal that plays the impotent being that creates them, or in some way influenced the narrative. Along with the animals, the creation stories also involve some aspect of nature that emphasis the tribes' devotion to the world around them. There was also the similarity of how there was not one supreme deity in the tribes, but more spirits that reflected on the natural world, though there were some exceptions to this rule.

Despite that many tribes did not have a creation story of themselves or the universe, there is still a small connection to their origins and the place they lived. The animals that they were surrounded by became symbols of their spirits and their gods. The creation of their rivers and the sky were explained, giving them meaning and purpose. In the final though, it can be determined that at least some of their stories were influenced by their natural surroundings, trying to do what every culture tries, to find the purpose of existence.

Biographical Note

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[42] Sutton, 313-314
[43] Sutton, 291
[44] Sutton, 327
[45] Sutton, 330
[46] Sutton, 331

Women's Roles in a Culture and How these Roles Influence their Intercourse Based Rituals

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Abstract

Women and their rituals are influenced by the culture of their people. The culture determines if a woman will be subservient in their rituals and to do as a man tells them, or if they will utilize these rituals to take back some of the control from man. When a woman is more subservient in their culture, one will see a more submissive role like that of the Family International. Some women use the rituals to take power from men and make it a woman exclusive rite, such as the Aboriginal people. This paper will look at existing literature to examine the different ways women contributed to intercourse-based rituals and how the culture and religion of the people influence the roles women play in these types of rituals.

Introduction

Culture plays a large role in how religion and its rituals are enacted. The interpretive approach to religion states that religion is studied and best understood by its symbols. These symbols are a way for the culture to enforce its way of life, morals, and values unto the society (Stein & Stein, 2011). This approach to religion will be primarily used through this study to better understand how a culture pushes its agenda onto religious rituals and rites in order to better have control over their gender roles and morals.

Women often play specific roles in rituals pertaining to intercourse that are very important to religions. In many small-scale cultures, women will perform fertility rites that will better their chances of having strong and plentiful children during conception. While intercourse is not part of the fertility rituals, it is used to prepare for intercourse, so it has been added to the category of intercourse rituals in the instance of this paper. Other cultures will have specific rites that only women can perform so that women may take back a bit of control they may have lost to men in other ways. Women only holy grounds and sacred rituals performed by strictly women can be a way for them to hold power over men in their society, even if they may play a more subservient role outside of these rituals.

Cultures that expect women to hold a subservient role in society will mirror these actions within their society. Some women that hold these roles in their culture will concoct religious rituals meant only for women to have a reprieve from their male dominant counterparts in their cultures. Matriarchal societies will often have women as the religious leaders to keep hold of their control over the men in their society.

The Roles Women Play

The Family International, formerly known as The Children of God, is an example of women holding subservient roles in religious rituals. David Berg, the

founder of the cult, had preached on free love, and being fishers of men for God. The idea of being "fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19) comes directly from the Bible. He believed that to convert more people to his religious cult, he needed to send the women of his cult out to provide sexual services to men, to increase their chances of conversion. The Family International is across many countries, and not connected to one culture. The cult does isolate itself and thus, makes its own subculture based off of the values of the religion.

While the men were initially sent out to prostitute their body as well, this was soon abolished within the cult due to the AIDs scare as well as the Family Internationals low perceptions of same sex relationships. Women, however, were still subjected to flirty fishing, and escorting despite the risk of contracting sexual diseases as well. These women who were sent out to "fish men" were often mothers and wives. The cult isolated these women from their children, and subjected both the adult women, and the adolescent girls to perform sexual favors for the men in the cult as a tangible manifestation of God's love. Berg's official website claims that this manifestation of love is one of the important keys to the cult and what they stand for.

Rose McGowan spread her story of her time as an adolescent child in the Family International cult. She claims that women were to always be subservient to men. No imperfections were allowed in the cult, because they were children of God (Zuckerman, 2011). McGowan experienced the cult's dedication to perfection first hand. She had grown a wart on one of her fingers and an adult pulled her aside when they saw her. They quickly cut it off with a knife without any medical procedures or formalities. She was then sent on her way with the wart now cut off from her finger. This cultural expectation of women being perfect, and subservient to their male counterpart shows in the cult's values. This religious society constructed itself around the ideals of women taking on a servant like role in their sexual religious needs, and thus, these ideals are exemplified through their actions.

The Australian Aboriginals are known as a male dominating society, yet women have their way of taking back control in these situations. One of the ways they accomplish this is through their fertility rites. Preparing for copulation, and insemination has much to do with their totem and holy grounds. The women begin their menstruation and allow their blood to flow free. They isolate themselves in an area from where they live and take this time to dance. They allow the blood to flow down their legs as they dance and pray to their totem animals. This ground beneath their feet that is touched by the blood, then becomes a sacred ichor to the aboriginal people. They also use sacred objects, such as a digging stick, to penetrate the ground and is used as a focus of power. The stick can symbolize a clitoris, which infers the power of female sexuality as well as fertility. This is to ensure that their fertility will be boosted during ovulation. This ritual also ensures that their totem animal will be reborn in the coming generations that will be birthed from the women performing the ritual (Rose, 2007).

The ground where these women bleed and dance, is transformed into holy grounds that is kept by women for women. It is a place where women take back the control that is usually lost in their culture. in the Australian Aboriginal culture blood is

seen as a magical and sacred ichor that retains the life after being shed. This idea of sacred blood is what retains the idea that culture affects the types of roles women play in the religions. Women take the advantage of their cultures ideas of sacred blood and use it to their advantage to take control of their situation.

While this is seen in a few Aboriginal people, there are many aboriginal tribes that keep the status quo of male dominating all aspects of the culture. The sacred bleeding grounds are occasionally taken from the women after they have bled on it and kept by the men. The reason for this is because the ichor is seen as a sacred item used in many rituals. The digging sticks used in the male dominated fertility rituals also no longer symbolize the clitoris, but instead the penis (Rose, 2007). This sacred ground that women use for their fertility rituals being kept by men only enforces that cultures' influence heavily on their religions for the cultures' needs. The power that the Aboriginal men hold is used to influence how women must perform their rituals in the sites where the sacred grounds are kept by men.

Among the native tribes of New Guinea, the males are the dominating gender of the cultures. Many of the religious rituals performed are by men only, or if the women are present, they have very insignificant part to play. There are a few exceptions to this though, such as fertility cults. The Kiwai have both males and females participate in the crop fertility rituals for their fertility cult religion. The two genders get together in the village cult-house to sing, dance, and copulate together. They switch multiple partners and have intercourse over the period of the festival. This festival does not end until a large bowl has been filled completely with both male and female genital fluids. This bowl of sexual fluids becomes a sacred artifact that is then used on the soil of farming areas and gardens to help plants grow and flourish (Whitehead, 1986).

The culture of these New Guinea fertility cults impacts the fact that women are allowed to participate in these intercourse rituals. The people of the Kiwai believe that a man and woman are both needed in order for fertility to begin. The fluid of both genders allows for human fertility, therefore, is needed for crop fertility. Women are then needed in these crop fertility rituals due to the fact that the people of the culture believe both genders are necessary. This, however, is not for all of the native tribes in New Guinea. Many of the native people exclude women from the religious rituals and rites due to their lower status and insignificance to the cultural values.

The last culture that will be assessed is that of the Amazon people. The Amazons are openly sexual people that utilize sex in stories, action, and religion. Men once again are the dominating gender in this culture, yet women are able to hold their own in the Amazon tribes. Women use sex as a tool to help them have a place in the society that is more significant and holds them higher in society.

For a woman to have children, she must begin the ritual of fertility. She must begin with eating roots that look like both male and female genitalia. The roots looking like both genitals will allow the magic of those roots to be associated with the actual genitalia of the sexes. The eating of these roots will open her vagina up for it to "steal" or "snatch" semen from a man. Then the great Grandmother Spirit

Atsikuma lives outside the womb and shapes the semen into a child for birth. Grandmother Spirit will lecture the child in the womb to not make the birth a painful one for their mother (Gregor, 1985). The spirit is the Grandmother Spirit because the women raise and nurture the children in the Amazon tribes. The Grandmother Spirit is well educated in rearing children and will help the mother through her birth with her knowledge. This idea of the spirit being a grandmother stems from the fact that often, in many cultures, the grandmother's role in society is to help her children raise children of their own. Grandmothers also help guide young mothers and help them learn how to properly care for children. She becomes a mentor for the mother and this is reflected in Atsikuma. She looks after the soon to be mother and helps her with the forming of the mother's children. Women play the important role of care taker in the Amazonian culture, and this is then reflected in the care taking role of the Grandmother Spirit molding the child and lecturing it in the womb.

Conclusion

All of these cultures previously mentioned reveal that the beliefs and values of a culture will directly impact the religion that is practiced there. A religion's purpose is to support the values that the people want to be placed in society. Whether those values raise up or put down certain types of people will be revealed through the religion. Occasionally, like with the Australian Aboriginal women, women will go against the culture and use religion to take back some power. However, in the instance of the Aboriginal people, the culture is still reflected through the religion due to their values of blood. The women used their natural power of bleeding monthly to enforce some control over the men.

Intercourse is an important factor to many religions, and a lot can be said about a culture by their intercourse-based rituals. Women play the roles that their culture intends for them in these rituals. More westernized cultures that have many religions in place are harder to place certain cultural values on due to the fact that Westernized countries have many different kinds of people in one place. While all those people have a common culture of living in the same geographical area, there is not a cohesive set of values and morals for the mass of the population. This makes reviewing the religions as cultural facts more difficult in such diverse geographical areas. Despite this, these pockets of untouched cultures that have not been westernized stick to the cultural beliefs that are reflected by their religions.

Biographical Note

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