

# ΛΟΓΟΣ LOGOS

*A Journal of Undergraduate Research*

Volume 3

Fall 2010

*Essays by*

*Missouri State University*

*Undergraduate Students*



**Missouri State**<sup>TM</sup>  
U N I V E R S I T Y

---

© Copyright 2010  
Missouri State University

ISSN 2153-1560 (print)  
ISSN 2153-1579 (online)

*LOGOS*  
Honors College  
Missouri State University  
901 South National Avenue  
Springfield, MO 65897  
[honorscollege@missouristate.edu](mailto:honorscollege@missouristate.edu)

---

# Editorial Statement

*LOGOS: A Journal of Undergraduate Research* is dedicated to the publication of scholarship and artistry by undergraduate students (or undergraduate students coauthoring with faculty) of Missouri State University. It is open to submissions from all undergraduate students at the university and conforms to the highest standards of scholastic integrity in a blind, peer-review process conducted by distinguished undergraduate students and faculty.

LOGOS is sponsored by the Missouri State Honors College, with faculty oversight and governance provided by a Faculty Advisory Board (see membership below). The journal is produced by a managing editor, a chief editor, associate editor(s), and a small student editorial board, all Honors College students (listed below).

LOGOS encourages submissions from all undergraduate students of Missouri State University (or former undergraduate students who did their scholarship as a Missouri State undergraduate) who are seeking a professional venue for publication of their undergraduate research. Prospective contributors may contact the editor and associate editors with specific questions about publication standards and the peer review process at [Logos@missouristate.edu](mailto:Logos@missouristate.edu).

## Faculty Advisory Board

**Art Spisak:** Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs / Director of the Honors College / Professor, Department of Modern and Classical Languages, College of Arts and Letters / Young Honors College Professor 2007–2011

**John Chuchiak:** Professor, Department of History, College of Humanities and Public Affairs / Young Honors College Professor 2007–2011

**Mark Richter:** Professor, Department of Chemistry, College of Natural and Applied Sciences / Young Honors College Professor 2007–2010

**Tracy Dalton:** Senior Instructor, Department of English, College of Arts and Letters

## Editorial Staff

*Managing Editor:* Derek Seevers

*Chief Editor:* Amy Legg

*Associate Editor:* John Connelly

*Associate Editor:* Cynthia Johnson

## Student Editorial Board

Ashley Hoyer

Courtney K. Smith

Courtney Peck

Gemma Bellhouse

Jessica Boykin

Katherine M. Wertz

Mary Dollins

Morgan Grotewiel

Brittany Baldwin

Sarah Riccardi

Heather Messick

Lauren Shassere

Kirsten Ward

Megan Hammer

Carol Nowatzke

Allison Schmitz

Jacob Rickey

Laura Dimmit

Elizabeth Breazeale

Alexandria Robinette

# Table of Contents

Todd Nicoletti

*A Guide to Jack Kerouac:  
The Influences and History Behind His Literature*

I

Catherine Shoults

*Correlating Total Body Electrical Conductivity to Lean Body Mass*

17

Cynthia Johnson

*Post-Emigration: Mental and Emotional Unrest*

24

Mallory A. Nolen

*Granting Forgiveness through Technology:  
An Analysis and Research Proposal Using Face Theory*

31

Katie Helterbrand

*Satisfaction Is Belonging*

51

Bryan Bigger

*Traditional and Contemporary Kabbalah:  
Manifestations of a New Spirituality in the Western World*

57

Sandra Lenz

*Exploring College Students' Perception of the Effectiveness  
of Their Coping Styles for Dealing with Stress*

68

Caleb Bennett

*Click and Clack's Clock: A Look at Diophantine Equations with Constraints*

83

Sarah A. Riccardi

*“Cheerless Asceticism”:*

*How the New York Times Portrayed the Shakers from 1851 to 1899*

102

Laura Dimmit

*Baggage*

110

Stephen A. Welby

*Pod #72*

111

Ashley Hoyer

*German Resistance to Welfare State Reform:  
Voter Blockades, Coalitions, and Unions*

144

Craig Wideman

*Enthusiasm for Peppers*

153

Mandi Reed

*Postmodernism and the Redefinition and Plurality of Gender  
and Sexual Identity in Jude Morgan’s Passion*

158

John de Leon

*Phobeter*

165

Mike Rogers

*Summer of the Spy*

173

Amber Louise Cook

*The Denied Calling: A Look at the Role of Women  
in the Southern Baptist Church*

189

# A Guide to Jack Kerouac: The Influences and History behind His Literature

By Todd Nicoletti

## Abstract

Jack Kerouac attempted to reinvent his life experiences in his literature, and the myth he created about himself ultimately brought on his demise. He was born with humble roots and won a scholarship to Columbia, where he studied with Allen Ginsberg and read Thomas Wolfe. Kerouac decided to model himself after Wolfe by writing directly from his life's experiences. Kerouac experienced years of failures in finding a publisher; however, once he established his unique, spontaneous style, he became an overnight success with *On the Road* in 1957. This book, along with Ginsberg's "Howl" and William S. Burroughs's *Naked Lunch*, built the foundation for the Beat Generation in the early 1960s. Unfortunately, Kerouac's success undermined his true intent and his true self: The Beat Generation quickly evolved into a political movement that he wanted no part of, and the legend he created produced guilt and insecurity in his later life. Kerouac sought peace through religion, such as Christianity and Buddhism, and through alcohol, which led to his death. By incorporating his life into his literature, Kerouac created a fabrication so grand that he could not escape it. The life he depicted throughout his many novels, which he referred to as Duluoze Legend, and his inability to be satisfied with it, brought on his demise. Because this is an extraordinary story of an author, whose character was lost in the beauty of his own fiction, it is one that must be learned and understood by every modern-day reader.

---

## Introduction

Jack Kerouac, a main member of the Beat Generation, was an author most popular in the twelve-year span from 1957 to 1969. Before dying of a tumor caused by chronic alcoholism in 1969, he successfully published fourteen novels, several letters, and poetry. Because he wrote directly from his life experiences, Kerouac's most famous works, *On the Road*, *The Dharma Bums*, and *Big Sur*, chronicle his adventures as a Beat writer, his success, and his breakdown in the life he dubbed the Duluoze Legend. Like the other Beatniks, Kerouac indulged in myths and fabrications about himself, which is why much information about him is contradictory and fascinating. His semi-autobiographical novels were not published in the same order in which the events occurred, causing issues of continuity. Kerouac often showed up to televised interviews intoxicated, and he exaggerated the historical events of his books to impress and agree with the reporters' suggestions. Kerouac's linguistic embellishments and raw, loosely

edited, spontaneous prose posed a challenge to readers more than half a century ago, and yet, enabled his success as a writer through his innovations and originality.

The content of his work promotes the Beats' underground lifestyle of sex and drugs, their political beliefs in changing an economically restrained America, and religious beliefs such as Buddhism and Catholicism. Kerouac was fascinated with the idea of creating a character for himself, and this alter ego, Jack Duluoz, ultimately brought on Kerouac's demise. Initially, the Beat Generation was strictly meant to be a literary movement; however, with Allen Ginsberg's poem "Howl" (dramatized in *The Dharma Bums*) and Bohemians' popularization, their gatherings became political. Kerouac had vocally expressed his disdain for this evolution, yet he could not deny his own involvement—specifically, the American themes within his own breakthrough novel, *On the Road*, and his support for 1960s youth counter-culture groups such as the hippie movements.

Kerouac's role in the Beat Generation, through his work and friendship with Ginsberg, William S. Burroughs, and Neal Cassady, provided a foundation in the early 1960s for the counterculture to American society and a new vision of writing taken for granted in today's literature. More than fifty years after the publication of *On the Road*, there has been a renewed interest in Kerouac's poetic prose; for the anniversary, Viking Press promised to publish an uncensored version of the novel (Cummings), and another unreleased work, *And the Hippos Were Boiled in Their Tanks*, coauthored by Burroughs, has recently been published. Kerouac's influence on the literary world has been profound, and as this generation of readers, over half a century later from his debut, is reintroduced to his Beat writing, it is important that Kerouac is approached in his own terms and in full context. This guide to an author, whose reinvention of himself brought his success and death, is a true cautionary tale for any reader, as well as for any aspiring writer. Because Kerouac's writings still hold relevance for today's readers, they should understand the influences and history behind his literature.

### What to Expect

In this guide, three of Kerouac's novels, *On the Road*, *The Dharma Bums*, and *Big Sur*, will be reviewed for style components and history, and they will be examined for influence by his peers, religion, and alcoholism. This aid to reading Kerouac's literature will present much information on a biographical scale, including his self-fabrications and the truth behind the myths. Because his literature is semi-autobiographical, his history is pertinent to the study of his works. His family, Thomas Wolfe, and the formation of the Beat Generation were direct influences on his literature; Kerouac rewrote these events and people in his life, and the unknown consequences of the creation of the Duluoz Legend were too grave for him to bear.

### History

Born in Lowell, Massachusetts, on March 12, 1922, Kerouac was raised by French-Canadian parents of working-class roots, which subsequently influenced his early work. He was nicknamed "Memory Babe" because of his tremendous ability to remember specific details. This later served him well as an author with his unique, spontaneous style. The early death of his



brother, Gerard, served as the basis of the character-study novel *Visions of Gerard*. Gerard's illness and death left Kerouac with guilt, believing that he should have taken his brother's place. Kerouac found refuge from his obsession with suffering and death in alcohol abuse, and later, Buddhism (Theado 12). On a football scholarship, Kerouac attended Columbia University in New York, where he met Ginsberg, Burroughs, and Cassady, who all became iconic members of the Beat Generation. Ginsberg and Cassady were like brothers to Kerouac; they shared the same passion for writing and a romanticized America. Together with Burroughs, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, and Gary Snyder, they worked for a "New Vision" for literature (Theado 16–17).

### Thomas Wolfe

Kerouac's earliest literary model, Wolfe, inspired him to "make his life into art" (Theado 9). Kerouac's first published work, *The Town and the City*, is much different than his later writings that made him popular, primarily because of the style. *The Town and the City* is grammatically correct and follows the typical sentence structure. It took him six years, beginning in 1942, after he attended Columbia University, to write the final manuscript with several revisions; this is greatly different compared with the rushed and leniently edited, *On the Road*, which followed (Weinreich 18). *The Town and the City* is often looked on as an imitation of Wolfe, and the novel was not well received critically.

Regina Weinreich expresses support for *The Town and the City* in her book, *The Spontaneous Poetics of Jack Kerouac*, stating that Kerouac did not imitate Wolfe's style and approach, yet perfected it:

Wolfe opens Kerouac's eyes to America as a subject and theme in itself. Like the best of Wolfe's work, *The Town and the City* is a romanticization of social realism, a reworking of autobiographical material. But if the America of both Wolfe and Kerouac has a similar resonance of desolation, America also represents quite a different fatherland for each of them, and herein lies the critical point which neutralizes the notion of "imitation" as a condemnation of Kerouac. If anything, the new work must be seen as a perfection of the precursor. (19–20)

Although both Wolfe and Kerouac wrote on a similar topic of America, they had vastly different experiences with the country in background because Kerouac's parents were French Canadian. Kerouac may have imitated the style, but the content of the work is inherently original because Kerouac had a completely different upbringing, lived within a different community—of aspiring Beat writers—and had an outsider's outlook toward life. He had not yet developed a style of his own at this point; however, Kerouac adopted Wolfe's technique to convey his own unique dissent toward the American way of life. Weinreich suggests that Kerouac merely perfected the style in such a way.

### The Beat Generation

Considering the nature of their antiestablishment content, it is no surprise that Kerouac, Ginsberg, and Burroughs had difficulty getting their early work published. Between 1942

and 1956, these men exchanged literary ideas, discussed American ideals, and traveled across the country together. Cassady was the vehicle for much of the action and story in the cornerstone Beat writings of the late 1950s; his character was mentioned as an inspiration in Ginsberg's poem "Howl" and was the hero of Kerouac's *On the Road*, published in 1957, which was the turning point for the authors. With Burroughs's *Naked Lunch*, two years later, these literary works each became part of the gospel for this new generation, nicknamed by Kerouac as the *Beat Generation*, and influenced the following decade's hippie movements and countercultures.

The word *Beat* was coined by Kerouac to describe the type of literature he and Ginsberg discussed and created. In a French-Canadian interview, Kerouac claimed he derived the term from the word *Beatitude*; however, this was denied in an interview with William F. Buckley, Jr. During the latter, Kerouac defined the term as "crushed, beaten" or "poor" (Kerouac interview). In the *Paris Review*, Kerouac continued to play down the significance of the word, stating:

Oh the Beat generation was just a phrase I used in the 1951 written manuscript of *On the Road* to describe guys like Moriarty [Cassady] who run around the country in cars looking for odd jobs, girlfriends, kicks. It was thereafter picked up by West Coast Leftist groups and turned into a meaning like "Beat mutiny" and "Beat insurrection" and all that nonsense; they just wanted some youth movement to grab on to for their own political and social purposes. I had nothing to do with any of that. I was a football player, a scholarship college student, a merchant seaman, a railroad brakeman on road freights, a script synopizer, a secretary . . . what kind of Beatnik is that? (Berrigan 45–46)

Kerouac often expressed dislike for the phrase, *the Beat Generation*, especially years later when the term "spun out of his control" (Theado 24). He found the variation of the word, *Beatnik*, as rather "pejorative" (Kerouac interview). Although he felt it was degrading and offensive to be called a Beatnik, other members, like Ginsberg and Burroughs, promoted the use of the term. Perhaps it was the evolution of the term, from poetic to political, and the philosophical change in the Beat movement that made Kerouac resent the word.

### **Beatnik Evolution**

As the movement grew further and wider, new members began to push for political undertones and ideals, shifting the meaning behind the Beat philosophy away from a completely literary and poetic stance. These authors and poets began writing about postwar political and economic perspectives of American society. For better or worse, Ginsberg and others became interested in the future of America and how to incorporate it into literature in a new way. Kerouac remained as distant as he could from any political involvement that went beyond literary means. Burroughs reflected on Kerouac's political indifference years later in Richard Lerner's documentary, *What Happened to Kerouac?*, saying that Kerouac did not have any desire for political movements, and he stayed "completely apolitical." Burroughs said, "I don't think he ever took part in a demonstration or signed a petition." During an

interview within the same documentary, Kerouac was asked about the Vietnam War, and he replied, "It's a plot between the North Vietnamese and the South Vietnamese, who were cousins, to get Jeeps in their country." Although he was intoxicated, Kerouac expressed his apathy towards politics, disregarding any care or passion from anybody watching on television or in the crowd. Whether Kerouac was ignorant or distressed by Beat's new political fad, his novel, *On the Road*, was still interpreted as political discourse, and the supposed solidarity found in poverty between Beat members, glorified in this novel, was a model for the hippie movements to come.

Kerouac denied the existence of a "Beat crowd" in the *Paris Review* interview. He stated that the community feeling was "inspired by . . . Ferlinghetti and Ginsberg; they are very socialistically minded and want everybody to live in some kind of frenetic kibbutz, solidarity and all that. I was a loner . . . There's no 'Beat crowd' like you say . . ." (Berrigan 46). This was seen as a contradictory statement because the plot of *On the Road* moved along through the characters of this Beat crowd. Kerouac's novels were about this community, and despite being shelved as fiction, he claimed these experiences were real. We now know that Jack Kerouac was a shy outsider in a society of antiestablishment poets; in his literature, however, he depicted himself as an "extroverted 'madman'" (Theado 22). Explanations and misconceptions were created merely by Kerouac's current mood during interviews. Perhaps the blame could be placed on his indifference to reality or his abuse of alcohol. Ann Charters, a biographer of Kerouac, expressed the difficulty of his friendships within any Beat crowd because of his family background:

There was an enormous fellowship between Kerouac and friends like, Burroughs, Ginsberg, and Corso. That, however, was a tricky kind of relationship, because they were all relating to each other as writers, or people who were involved in the adventure of drugs, or a whole kind of feelings of alienation from mainstream American society. But on the other hand, Kerouac's feelings about his own sexuality, or about his own religion, or about his own origins, remained back in Lowell with his mother in the working class background, that he was into emotionally. That's where he lived. (*What Happened to Kerouac?*)

Although Kerouac was an outsider among a community of antiestablishment writers, his literature portrayed him as the man in the center of the action. Sal Paradise, Jack Duluoz, and the other characters supposedly portraying Kerouac within his works were not the catalysts for his adventures, but they were the enthusiastic followers Kerouac had always wanted to be. As Charters suggests, his mentality, in reality, was always rooted in his blue-collar upbringing in Lowell, Massachusetts, yet the character he created for himself fulfilled the desire for acceptance within this community. Although he rejected the notion, his literature reveals he desired this underground society. And because he could recreate the world with his typewriter, Kerouac reanimated the past events of his life to fit a narrative he found more exciting, accepting, and approving.

The concept of this community built a foundation for the hippie counterculture, using the Beat literature as gospel in the 1960s (Johnston 103). The Beatniks glorified the lifestyle created

by Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground*, which they found tantalizing, and they lived and wrote of such an existence outside of mainstream society (Berrigan 7). They were not shy about their enthusiasm for poetry and language, all the while allowing stories to reach legendary or mythical status. Kerouac joined the Beatniks in their indulgence of drugs, sex, and alcohol, as illustrated in *On the Road*, *The Dharma Bums*, and *Big Sur*. Ginsberg wrote of the economical restraints put on by American society and his fear for the future of the country.

Bohemians flocked to hear the Beats read their poetry and writings. According to Kerouac, to be Bohemian is to be lazy, to be a "parasite" to the cultural movement that occurred within the Beat revolution and Greenwich Village, New York. He states that Bohemians did not work, but wore "beards and sandals" and "just sat around watching us" (Kerouac interview). Kerouac was offended by the Bohemians, blaming them for turning the Beat movement from a literary into political one, creating a Beat fad, and ruining his friendship with Ginsberg. It became increasingly obvious that Kerouac was mostly indifferent to political parties, whereas Ginsberg leaned far left of the spectrum. When the Beat Generation adopted a liberal standing, Kerouac's relationship with Ginsberg began to deteriorate.

Although Beat writings became increasingly political and against the mainstream of American society, critics now do not see the Beat lifestyle justified by any restraints formulated by American idealism. Allan Johnston writes in his scholarly article, "Consumption, Addiction, Vision, Energy: Political Economies and Utopian Visions in the Writings of the Beat Generation," of the irony of the Beatnik lifestyle:

Consequently, Beat culture by its very nature lacked the theoretical and social underpinnings to develop the clarified economic or political oppositional stances that appeared in the 1960s counterculture. Only in retrospect, if at all, did the Beats see their lifestyle (including the alcoholism, drug addiction, mental illness, and petty thievery that it often involved) as a reaction against a seemingly aggressive and stifling social ethos. (104)

The founding literature of the Beat Generation, Kerouac's *On the Road*, Ginsberg's "Howl," and Burrough's *Naked Lunch*, were rather ambiguous for direct political interpretation. General issues were proposed within hyperbolic statements regarding suppression of idealists and fears of American fascism. Critics such as Johnston found it difficult to decipher, within the poetry and prose, what the Beatniks stood for politically and what was exactly restraining them from achieving the American Dream. Perhaps this was an issue for Kerouac as well, continually trying to avoid a political formation and overall message that would move the Beat Generation away from its original literary purpose.

Yet Kerouac identified himself with the hippie movement of 1960s, contradicting his pronounced political reluctance and idealism in the Buckley interview. Kerouac agreed that the hippie movement was part of an evolution of the Beat movement, saying, "We're just the older ones. You see I'm 46 years old and these kids are eighteen . . ." He goes on to say, "The Hippies are good kids, they are better than the Beats . . ." (*What Happened to Kerouac?*). Kerouac was clearly proud of inspiring the youth, yet he never discussed any direct political involvement in that same interview. He kept himself completely apolitical and almost non-

sensical when it came to such topics. His resentment toward Bohemians and acceptance of the hippie counterculture is a contradiction yet to be fully explained by any Kerouac scholar. Perhaps he saw Bohemians as the reason for the Beat Generation's political movement, and the hippies as the product. Burroughs and Ginsberg were at the forefront of this Beatnik evolution, despite any reluctance either had, and they had encouraged the Beat Generation's political involvement since its conception. Burroughs stated in the documentary *What Happened to Kerouac?* that the hippies were just following the Beatniks to a "logical conclusion."

Perhaps it was only inevitable that the Beat Generation would become responsible for inspiring the youth, ultimately creating the hippie counterculture of the coming decade. Although Kerouac claimed publicly that he did not want to be involved, he created a character of himself within his novels that encouraged this kind of behavior. His lifestyle, as expressed through his writing, made him appear as a notorious character, which he later rejected in regret. There is no doubt Kerouac left a lasting impression, one that many could idolize, despite the truth that he was an older, less reckless man. Jack Kerouac's "overnight" success in the late 1950s took years in the making, as he struggled to find a publisher. Most of his popular and most influential writings were composed a decade before they were publicly released. Therefore, a large generation gap developed and led to misconceptions about his literature's origins.

## The Duluoz Legend

Kerouac wanted to rewrite the experiences of his life in his literature; however, publishers requested pseudonyms for his characters, out of fear of any lawsuits, and shelved his work as fiction. The most common name for his protagonist is Jack Duluoz. This protagonist was everything Kerouac wanted to be. All Kerouac's flaws and insecurities and his introverted nature in reality were replaced in his literature by the cross-country adventurous Duluoz. Although the events were inspired by Kerouac's real life, the overall excitement and revelry that the Beat Generation engaged in was exaggerated to the limits of belief. He referred to his life, as it is depicted in his literature, as the *Duluoz Legend*. Indeed, it was a legend, a life he wanted to have. This creation of the Duluoz Legend is like the creation of the monster in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*, where Kerouac's alter ego, developed through art, ultimately brings on his own madness.

Publishers released his work for commercial appeal and profit, so there were continuity issues with his fabricated life story. Kerouac claimed to have wanted to bring all of his works together, in an epic manner, so that one could read the entire story of Duluoz. Weinreich emphasizes his late desire for his own heroic history, and his influence from Buddhist teachings (which will be covered in this guide later):

Legend can be an unauthenticated story from early times, preserved by tradition and popularity, and thought to be historical; a chronicle of the life of a saint; the fame of a person or place . . . Even the most superficial reading of Kerouac's individual novels suggest an attempt on Kerouac's part to make a fiction out of historical events, recounted in an ironically "oral" tradition, to canonize a "hero" through

extensive retellings of his adventures . . . Kerouac’s further wish for a single design to all his fiction appears in a handwritten note at the bottom of the manuscript page of a poem entitled “Daydreams for Ginsberg,” dated 10 February 1955, prior to the publication of *On the Road*: “But now I am beginning to see a vast Divine Comedy of my own based on Buddha . . .” (7)

Yet, he could not find any literary technique that allowed these separate books to be brought together in a chronologically coherent whole, packaged together as the Duluoaz Legend. Kerouac’s death in late 1969 kept him from pursuing this goal, and unforeseen errors in his storytelling made the project impossible for any editor to accomplish.

Literary Chart of the Duluoaz Legend

For an example of these continuity issues, the following is a chart of Kerouac’s main novels of the Duluoaz Legend, when they were composed, and when they were published:

Date Composed	Title	Date Published
1946–1948	<i>The Town and the City</i>	1950
1948–1951	<i>On the Road</i>	1957
1951–1952	<i>Visions of Cody</i>	1972
1953	<i>The Subterraneans</i>	1958
1956–1961	<i>Desolation Angels</i>	1965
1957	<i>The Dharma Bums</i>	1958
1961	<i>Big Sur</i>	1963

(Theado, xiii)

What constitutes a main novel, or chapter, in the Duluoaz Legend is subject to debate. Some works are included, while others are not, according to different scholars of Kerouac. *The Town and the City* is much different in terms of style and intent, so it is included in this chart as merely a reference point, being his first published work. *On the Road* took as long as nine years to be published. It was the first novel in the legend to be accepted, causing *The Dharma Bums* to be considered the sequel because it was published the following year. In reality, the events that take place in both novels are six years apart. Although written in 1953, *The Subterraneans* was published after *The Dharma Bums*. *Big Sur* was the next novel released, with its events occurring toward the end of his life; however, there were several more novels published after *Big Sur*, such as *Desolation Angels*, *Visions of Cody*, and others not included in this literary chart.

On the Road

Over a three-year span, Kerouac took a series of trips across the country from New York to the West Coast with Cassady, meeting with Ginsberg and other members of the Beat

Generation along the way. Kerouac was inspired by these trips, and the road started a transition of style, away from the formulated sentence structure of his first published work, *The Town and the City*.

Kerouac had met Cassady through a friend at Columbia. Matt Theado explains the personality and myth of Cassady in *Understanding Jack Kerouac*:

According to legend, Cassady had stolen five hundred cars and been to bed with five hundred women by the time he was eighteen. The son of an alcoholic, he had been in and out of reform school several times. Although he had little formal education, he had a keen natural intelligence and an energetic curiosity. More important to Kerouac, though, was his addictive enthusiasm for life. (19)

Cassady was certainly an inspiration to Kerouac because Cassady was the very person Kerouac wanted his alter ego to be. Cassady was familiar with taking on adventures with his friends; because he had such energy about him, he fit in well with those who would make up the Beat Generation. He may have been responsible for much of the Beat Generation's involvement in criminal acts, drugs, and pleasure seeking. After all, he became a sort of muse for many writers such as Ginsberg and Kerouac. Cassady is seen as the true hero of *On the Road*. As the character, Dean Moriarty, Cassady puts into action the entire plot, removing Kerouac from the depressing house of his mother in New York and out into the world. Kerouac's character, Sal Paradise, is the same as every protagonist in the Duluoz Legend—an observer, not the agent of the action (Theado 29), and in the development of Kerouac's fictional self—in progression from *On the Road*, to *The Dharma Bums*, to *Big Sur*—the reader can see the transformation of Kerouac himself. He learns from Cassady, and through the expanding legend, Cassady/Moriarty's influence on Paradise/Duluoz is the catalyst for all his adventures.

Kerouac wrote this story of his adventures with Cassady during the trip in journals and letters, and several unsuccessful drafts followed in pursuit of the meaning within the story. Kerouac was constantly unsatisfied with these attempts. Because he could type 100 words per minute, Kerouac was continually interrupted by changing the pages on his typewriter and felt restrained by the traditional standards of the English sentence (Shea). He wrote to Ginsberg and Cassady often, complaining about this inability to articulate what he exactly wanted, and his failure at finding a publisher for the past drafts he created. It was not until he made an innovation on his typewriter, allowing him to write continuously, that he produced, in three weeks, the novel he had been trying to write for three years (Shea). *On the Road* was an overnight success, and Kerouac brought a new style and popularity to the Beat Generation.

## Style Development

Kerouac taped pieces of Teletype paper together and modified his typewriter to allow (what became) a 120-foot long roll of seamless, spontaneous poetic prose to be typed within three weeks. The scroll was said to be his final manuscript that was accepted for publication

(Cummings). It has reached legendary status, among scholars and Beatnik readers, and *On the Road* became the first major novel of the Beat Generation. Kerouac continued this approach for *The Dharma Bums* and *Big Sur*. In the documentary *What Happened to Kerouac?*, it is acknowledged that Kerouac prepared for such marathon writing by sleeping all day or running; Allen Ginsberg stated, "He would sit down and write continuously for several days and sleep then write again, maybe for twenty-four hours or eighteen hours, using Benzedrine and coffee." Ann Charters, a biographer of Kerouac, also commented on his untraditional writing process in the same documentary, saying "He chose to do the hardest, most difficult thing, which is fly in the face of convention and write the way he pleased to write . . ." (*What Happened to Kerouac?*).

### The Legendary Scroll

Not only is the content of *On the Road* often the subject of Kerouac's myths, so is the manner in which it was written. There were rumors that in reality, Viking Press, who published *On the Road*, had Kerouac revise the scroll several times before it would accept the manuscript; proponents of this rumor claim that if the actual scroll were unveiled, then, perhaps, this truth would be revealed. However, for its fiftieth anniversary, the legendary scroll was on display, and it was clear that the only changes made to this manuscript were pseudonyms, some censoring, and slight grammatical corrections (Cummings). Kerouac's method of composing *On the Road* should be questioned because of his willingness to fabricate and agree to anything. As Theado explains, "Mythical stories are often more absorbing than the truth. In Kerouac's case, the facts may never entirely be known" (55).

According to some sources, publishers refused to edit the scroll, even after it was retyped onto regular sheets with paragraphs and page breaks, because it reached 450 pages of typescript. It took six years, with Malcolm Crowley for help, to get this story published by Viking Press in 1957. Until his death, Kerouac blamed Crowley for that work, of adding "needless commas and revisions," because Kerouac believed that, "By not revising what you've already written you simply give the reader the actual workings of your mind during the writing itself: you confess your thoughts about events in your own unchangeable way . . ." (Berrigan 4).

On the *Steve Allen Show*, Kerouac misled the audience to believe that the *On the Road* scroll was the first and only draft, claiming that it took him three weeks to write about his seven years of cross country travel with Cassady. This myth is still accepted by some today. John Sampas, Jack's executor and brother-in-law, expresses his concern on the *Steve Allen Show* matter, stating, "This gave the impression that Jack just spontaneously wrote this book in three weeks . . . I think what Jack should've said was, 'I typed it up in three weeks'" (Shea). Paul Marion, a Kerouac scholar, does not believe in his spontaneous writing and acknowledged Kerouac as a traditional writer, telling National Public Radio (NPR), "Kerouac cultivated this myth that he was this spontaneous prose man, and that everything that he ever put down was never changed, and that's not true . . . He was really a supreme craftsman, and devoted to writing and the writing process" (Shea). There is a consensus among scholars that Kerouac had developed his own sort of hybrid spontaneity within work, and that it truly took him years to create the structure of the story, yet only three weeks to type it.



## Poetic Prose

The poetic prose of Kerouac's *On the Road* was another reason it became a bestseller, boosting the Beat Generation's popularity. This free-flowing thought, stream-of-consciousness writing became the core of later Beat literature, which gave fans of *On the Road* an interest in the developing Beat genre. In *The Compact Bedford Introduction to Literature*, Michael Meyer defines stream-of-consciousness writing as a "technique suggest[ing] the flow of thought as well as its content; hence, complete sentences may give way to fragments as the character's mind makes rapid associations free of conventional logic or transitions" (1640). Kerouac uses a variation of this technique in his writing, with a free flow of thought and intent to "give the reader the actual workings of [his] mind during the writing itself" (Berrigan). This is also seen in Allen Ginsberg's most famous poem, "Howl," published a year before *On the Road*; it applies the same long draw of each line, using an entire breath as the measurement in the stanzas, instead of any kind of beat.

With Kerouac's typewriter innovation, his writing was given more freedom for a natural rhythm, and he stretched his prose to fit a total breathing capacity for certain sentences and phrases. Kerouac was indeed a proponent for writing like one speaks, and this was relevant in all of his writings, especially *On the Road*. By applying stream-of-consciousness writing in an extended narrative of prose, such as this novel, Kerouac surpassed his colleague Ginsberg, who could only sustain the style successfully for several short poems. The popularity of *On the Road* stood as a testament to Kerouac's talent and was a textbook example for other Beatnik authors to follow. Stream-of-consciousness became a technique that helped define Beat writing, and it should be rightly attributed to Kerouac's success.

This popular passage from *On the Road* expresses this technique:

But then they danced down the streets like dingedodies, and I shambled after as I've been doing all my life after people who interest me, because the only people for me are the mad ones, the ones who are mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved, desirous of everything at the same time, the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing, but burn, burn, burn like fabulous yellow roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars and in the middle you see the blue center light pop and everybody goes "Awww!" (5–6)

This stretch of offbeat measure can also be referred to as Kerouac's jazz; he was greatly influenced by music, evident in his most popular works. He describes his own method in this musical fashion. Similar to jazz composition, the flow of text in Kerouac's style appears improvised and varied, with a flexible structure to adhere to. Perhaps the phrase *Beat Generation* was coined for its style, the musical repetition, and jazzy beat of a drum. Weinreich explains this jazz influence and how the music relates to his method, stating, "He describes his philosophy of composition, 'blow as deep as you want to blow,' as if he were thinking of a writer as a horn-player" (42). Kerouac's intent was to redefine the structure of a sentence to rhythm open to variation, like jazz. This gives the text that sort of spontaneous feel, as words fell from key to key on Kerouac's continuous roll of Teletype paper.

## The Dharma Bums

Once *On the Road* became a bestseller in 1957, Crowley and Viking Press wanted Jack Kerouac to write a sequel, hoping to continue their success. Despite having other works composed that he wished to release, Kerouac agreed to produce what his publisher demanded. He continued his unconventional writing style for this next work, entitled *The Dharma Bums*, written on a 100-foot roll of paper, single-spaced. In essence, this novel describes events that occurred six years after his trip with Cassady, yet qualifies as a spiritual sequel because of its style and loose basis on Kerouac's life experience. The same characters appear in *The Dharma Bums* as appeared in *On the Road*, but with new pseudonyms, and the hero is another friend of Kerouac, Gary Snyder, who is given the name Japhy Ryder. Like Dean Moriarty of *On the Road*, Ryder is an outgoing "frontiersman, and thus an American hero" (Theado 155), setting up another common characteristic of the two heroes. Kerouac is clearly drawn to these personalities; both stories feature a protagonist who endures a transformation of some kind by following the example of the true hero.

The differences between Moriarty and Ryder lie in the outcome of the characters. Moriarty is never truly satisfied, still chasing his own version of the American dream, but Ryder finds peace within himself, still searching for nirvana. The protagonist, despite his transformation due to the secondary characters, still returns home to write the story.

It was sold to Viking as a "real American book [having] an optimistic American ring of the woods in it." Kerouac's physical and emotional state was a paradox in itself with his oncoming success; he was confident as a novelist, yet he drank profusely because of "his inability to cope with the pressures of fame and notoriety in the aftermath of *On the Road*'s publication . . ." (Theado 152). Despite his continued alcohol abuse, he was able to finish *The Dharma Bums* manuscript, which was accepted by Viking immediately. This book followed *On the Road* perfectly, without Kerouac experimenting further with the English sentence structure, and it was another successful novel, elaborating more on the infamous life of Kerouac, as part of the unfinished library of the Duluoz Legend.

This success, however, brought on more anxiety. Kerouac described himself as a loner and an outsider, and this was his true character by nature; in his novels, he paints a different picture of who he is, which caused further distress, because of the differences between his fiction and reality. He was suddenly in demand, and his struggle to create himself anew through his writing became emotionally self-destructing. Kerouac's confidence in his writing was poised against his inability to be satisfied with *The Dharma Bums*. There were many more works he finished but could not release; his publishers wanted more works similar to *On the Road*. Perhaps Kerouac feared his unconventional style would become conventional, and he was not able to evolve his abilities and talents. Theado explains this contrast between his success and satisfaction:

Kerouac had at least five completed but unpublished novels that he would rather have seen in print—and more than sixty notebooks filled to the margins with his scrawled prose—when he put himself to the task of producing *The Dharma Bums*. Undeniably—and understandably—he was cashing in on his overdue

renown . . . *The Dharma Bums* represents the kind of success Kerouac might have enjoyed had he not sacrificed commercial prosperity for artistic integrity. (153)

### The Six Gallery Reading

Kerouac's novels give light to what was the Beat lifestyle, and many events and occurrences were unknown to the public until his literature. One event in particular, the Six Gallery Reading, was dramatized in *The Dharma Bums*, making the significance of this gathering of poets public. This reading featured Ginsberg, Snyder, and Lawrence Ferlinghetti. Ferlinghetti was a writer, though only associated in the Beatnik circle socially rather than literarily because his works did not fit the true definition of Beat writing (stream-of-consciousness, myth creations, or similar anti-conformity themes). Although he did not read, Kerouac was in attendance at the Six Gallery Reading, where Allen Ginsberg read his infamous poem, "Howl," for the first time. Perhaps the Six Gallery Reading was important to the foundation of the Beat Generation, because Kerouac wrote about it. In many ways, he was the eye of many outsiders to this underground society of poets. Though a modest gathering, *The Dharma Bums* made this event the most significant in Beat history.

### Buddhism

*The Dharma Bums* is famous for Kerouac's first incorporation of Buddhism into a published work. He was Catholic by birth, but was introduced later to Buddhism by Snyder. Kerouac often combined these two religious practices and beliefs in his work and subsequently his life. The integration of these two religions is a common theme in much of his later writings as well. In this part of the Duluoz Legend particularly, Kerouac asserts himself as a wandering "Dharma Bum," attempting to solve the difficulty of communication between people and religion. In amalgamation with his religious revelations, Kerouac focuses on self-reliance—by way of hitchhiking throughout the novel across America—once more. In the beginning of *The Dharma Bums*, Kerouac sets up the theme of the novel (hence the title) with the introduction of Buddhism in his life:

I was very devout in those days and was practicing my religious devotions almost to perfection. Since then I've become a little hypocritical about my lip-service and a little tired and cynical. Because now I am grown so old and neutral . . . But then I really believed in the reality of charity and kindness and humility and zeal and neutral tranquility and wisdom and ecstasy, and I believed that I was an oldtime bhikku in modern clothes wandering the world . . . in order to turn the wheel of the True Meaning, or Dharma, and gain merit for myself as a future Buddha (Awakener) . . . The little bum in the gondola solidified all my beliefs by warming up to the wine and talking and finally whipping out a tiny slip of paper which contained a prayer by Saint Teresa announcing that after her death she will return to the earth by showering it with roses from heaven, forever, for all living creatures. (6–7)

Throughout this novel, the involvement of Buddhism is referenced in respect to Catholicism, and his understanding of religion in general. He tried to blend these two in his real life

to find some inner peace to balance his success. However, this was in vain, and his developing alcoholism took control.

## Big Sur

Published after *The Dharma Bums*, *The Subterraneans* received a lackluster response from critics and fans alike. Kerouac's publishers wanted another novel like *On the Road* and *The Dharma Bums*. They turned down his other completed manuscripts, which were later published as *Desolation Angels* and *Visions of Cody*. The failure of *The Subterraneans* and the pressure by his publishers contributed to his stress and breakdown that was to come. It was speculated that Kerouac also felt guilt about using his friends' lives in his works (Theado 159). His fans contributed to his constant drinking; they were often of a much younger generation, and he was old enough to be their father. This led to his insecurity and fear of disappointment. These kids wanted to impress him, and all of this is dramatized in his novel, *Big Sur*. During this period, Kerouac was interviewed several times, and the topic of discussion always focused on his involvement in the Beat Generation, the speculative nature of the *On the Road* composition, and other difficult times in his life. Kerouac made it a habit to appear at every interview intoxicated and was uncooperative with the interviewer, perhaps because he was uncomfortable with his fabrications and myths. He was not the man in his literature, and yet the interviewers, his fans, and his critics expected him to be that character in real life. This pressure, coupled with his publisher's desires, led him to write *Big Sur*, which describes his breakdown in 1960.

The title, *Big Sur*, is a reference to the location of Ferlinghetti's cabin, under the Bixby Canyon Bridge in California (*What Happened to Kerouac?*). He wrote this novel with the same innovation that afforded him popularity for *On the Road* and *The Dharma Bums*. The difference in this novel is the protagonist, Jack Duluoz, who is actually the true hero of this story. Kerouac left New York for a retreat at Big Sur, to come clean from alcohol, and to avoid his fame that followed his first two major novels. *Big Sur* tells the story of this relief that fails him, because Duluoz has a mental breakdown and returns to alcohol in the end, while returning to his home, his mother's house. Theado's summary of this novel gives an understanding of the vast differences this has from its predecessors:

The task at hand presents a rhetorical dilemma for the writer, for he contends with the nearly impossible task of describing a mental and spiritual crisis—a breakdown in his orderly thinking—in a well structured book. Kerouac unifies the book one way by consistently undercutting the simple joys he finds in his first days at Big Sur with comments that hint at the dark future. (162)

Although he wrote this book on rolls of Teletype paper, there is much more structure, in the sense of content and flow; however, the protagonist is in disarray, struggling harder to find that peace otherwise resolved in *On the Road* and *The Dharma Bums*. He is no longer the character that follows; Duluoz is left to forge his own way and fails. In this story, Kerouac attempts to come clean, not only from alcohol, but to his fans about who he truly is. He admits the absence of reality in his fiction and confronts the youth in this novel.

A recurring theme in *Big Sur* is death and madness. Weinreich argues that Kerouac's mental health is reflected in his writing by the adjoining phrases and scattered thoughts throughout the work. She states, "Very few sentences form thoughts in this book. Instead the book is filled with dash-joined images providing a breathy, impressionistic effect...the writing is encumbered by excessive language" (151–152). Weinreich provides a perfect example from the novel:

But there's moonlit fognight, the blossoms of the fire flames in the stove—There's giving an apple to the mule, the big lips taking hold—There's the bluejay drinking my canned milk by throwing his head back with a miffle of milk on his beak—There's the scratching of the raccoon or of the rat out there, at night—There's the poor little mouse eating her nightly supper in the humble corner where I've put out a little delight-plate full of cheese and chocolate candy (for my days of killing mice are over)—There's the raccoon in his fog, there the man to his fireside, and both are lonesome for God . . . (*Big Sur*, 37)

Kerouac's style and ability to write was affected moderately to dramatically throughout this work, yet it was another financial success for him. Despite his breakdown, Kerouac recovered enough to finish, and it was a remarkable feat. Because of his chronic alcoholism and struggle with oncoming success, Kerouac's religious beliefs, found in *The Dharma Bums*, waned. Most eerily, *Big Sur* foreshadows his own demise and the rushed, unfinished conclusion to his life as well as his works.

## Conclusion

In retrospect, the Duluoz Legend is a story in the same fashion as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*; Kerouac created an alter ego that ultimately brought on his own madness and demise. Among all the speculations of his compositions, the contradictory nature of his character, and the flaws within his myths, Kerouac's talent is mostly evident in his literature. Whether or not the Beat Generation was a tight group of writers, or Kerouac wrote *On the Road* in three weeks, or he was in reality the character he was in fiction, does not change the beautiful prose and the incredible history behind this author. The irony now seen throughout his career, and the paradox of Kerouac as an author and character, has justified his legend. He feared his fans' disappointment in the man he truly was, and the interviews he granted only fueled his insecurities toward his writing and myths. Kerouac sought peace through religion, such as Christianity and Buddhism, and alcoholism, which led to his death. By incorporating his life into his literature, Kerouac created a fabrication so grand that he could not escape it. Theado explains that readers must accept Kerouac's reality with his fiction:

Kerouac lived to write, and he looked into his own life for what he considered the most indispensable material. Essentially, writing justified his life. And his life—for readers—justifies his writing in that it helps explain its stylistic eccentricities . . . Some observers may conclude that Kerouac failed in life—he never maintained a solid home life that he yearned for; he had a child he rarely saw; he was frequently

broke and often depended on his mother; he died an early alcoholic's death—yet his work stands as a testament to his genius. (25–26)

Kerouac created a style that brought together all of his abilities. His speed typing, incredible memory, and his creative mind brought together a generation of writers, inspired a coming counterculture, and absorbed his life experiences into legend. It is a cautionary tale for any aspiring author, a remarkable story for all who love to read. His novels alone have stood out as great American literature, yet together they tell a greater narrative: an author whose self became lost in the beauty of his own fiction. Therefore, the influences and history behind his literature must be learned and understood by today's generation of readers.

## Works Cited

- Berrigan, Ted. "The Art of Fiction: Jack Kerouac." *The Paris Review* 43 (2004): 1–49. *MLA International Bibliography*. EBSCOhost. Missouri State University Meyer Library, Springfield, MO. 2 March 2009. <http://search.ebscohost.com>
- Cummings, Darron. "Uncensored *On the Road* to Be Published." MSNBC 26 July 2006.
- Johnston, Allan. "Consumption, Addiction, Vision, Energy: Political Economies and Utopian Visions in the Writings of the Beat Generation." *College Literature* 32.2 (2005): 103–26. WilsonWeb. Missouri State University Meyer Library, Springfield, MO. 2 March 2009. <http://vnweb.hwwilsonweb.com>
- Kerouac, Jack. *The Dharma Bums* (2nd. ed.). Cutchogue, NY: Buccaneer Books, 1986.
- . Interview. CBC Radio. Canada. 1966. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-r2aOSoRsoE>
- . *On the Road* (2nd ed.). New York: Penguin Books, 2003.
- Meyer, Michael. *The Compact Bedford Introduction to Literature* (8th ed.). New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009.
- Shea, Andrea. "Jack Kerouac's Famous Scroll, 'On the Road' Again." NPR 05 July 2007. 05 March 2009. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=14112461>
- Theado, Matt. *Understanding Jack Kerouac*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2000.
- Weinreich, Regina. *The Spontaneous Poetics of Jack Kerouac*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University, 1987.
- What Happened to Kerouac?* Dir. Richard Lerner and Lewis MacAdams. 1985. Shout Factory Theatre. DVD. 2003. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CD4ofEoUpxE>

# Correlating Total Body Electrical Conductivity to Lean Body Mass

Catherine Shoults

## Abstract

Bats in temperate climates require sufficient lipid deposited before hibernation to survive the winter. Determination of total body fat (TBF) by invasive techniques such as Soxhlet chemical extraction of carcasses is inappropriate in endangered species. Noninvasive techniques, such as total body electrical conductivity (TOBEC), may be useful in estimating TBF without sacrificing animals, but should be validated in non-endangered species or inanimate objects using Soxhlet. TBF measurements of meatballs and big brown bats were estimated by TOBEC and validated by Soxhlet. Lean wet body mass correlated well with TOBEC measurements, enabling TBF to be reliably estimated. However, meatball TOBEC measurements were higher when measured at higher “body” temperatures, and this was more pronounced for larger meatballs.

---

The survival of small, nonmigrating temperate-zone bats depends on their ability to hibernate. During hibernation, heart rate, breathing, and metabolic rate are all markedly reduced in torpor (the physiological state). This allows the bat to live in conditions that would otherwise kill or harm the animal, such as the winter fast. Hibernation depends on the amount of lipid that is stored during the fall. This large fat store is necessary because of arousals, during which the body returns to normal metabolic rates for short periods (1–4 hours). Throughout the winter, bats will arouse periodically, presumably to keep normal body functions active (Dunbar & Tomasi, 2006; Dzurick & Tomasi, 2008). This process consumes around 80 to 90% of the energy that is expended during the hibernation season (Dark, 2005; Dunbar & Tomasi, 2006; Dzurick & Tomasi, 2008). Both frequency of arousals and metabolism during torpor depend on ambient temperature. Hibernation is terminated in the spring, and bats in the summer only enter into shallow daily torpor. In the fall, bats rapidly build up fat stores for the next cycle.

By knowing how many lipids the bat has before and after hibernation, we can better understand hibernation energetics. Conservation of bats, especially endangered species, may depend on this knowledge. With global climate changes possibly affecting cave temperatures and causing bats to arouse more frequently, more fat stores may be needed for the bat to make it through the winter.

Two ways of measuring total body fat (TBF) are chemical extraction of lipids using Soxhlet apparatus during carcass analysis and determining total body electrical conductivity (TOBEC). Soxhlet is inappropriate in some circumstances because it is lethal and cannot be

used on endangered species or in repeated-measures studies. In this study, TOBEC was tested to see if it is an appropriate tool for finding TBF.

TOBEC has been used in a variety of studies attempting to correlate it with lean body mass (LBM) in birds (Scott et al., 1991; Walsberg, 1988), bluegill (Fischer et al., 1996), and small mammals (Walsberg, 1988). TOBEC has also been used to determine muscle mass, fat-free weight, and LBM in humans (Horswill et al., 1989). Recently, Reynolds et al. (2009) used TOBEC as a tool to evaluate body composition of small mammals, including little brown bats. They found that TOBEC was accurate in estimating total body water and lean mass but not as good at estimating total body fat. They also report that TOBEC values were correlated with temperatures of the samples; this conclusion has been drawn in other studies (Robin et al., 2002). Although temperature was studied, the authors did not treat temperature as a continuous variable, nor did they collect readings at multiple temperatures for each animal. My study is designed to quantify the amount of variation temperature causes to the TOBEC results.

The TOBEC technology uses a machine that is composed of a chamber within a solenoid coil. The subject is placed inside the chamber and the interference of the electromagnetic inductance from the solenoid is measured (Walsberg, 1988). This technology is based on the principle that the electrical conductivity of an organism is proportional to its water content, that is, its fat-free mass (Walsberg, 1988). In this study, I hypothesize a direct correlation between the TOBEC measurement and TBF in meatballs (a surrogate for animal carcasses) and in big brown bats (*Eptesicus fuscus*).

## Methods

Meat samples with unknown lipid content were used because they were small enough to fit in the TOBEC machine (EM-SCAN Inc.: model 3044, 55 mm chamber, Springfield, IL) and could replace a live sample. Meatballs were used because we could readily change the temperature of the sample to determine the relationship between temperature and TOBEC results. In addition, they avoided two problems sometimes associated with error in TOBEC measurements: uneven distribution of body fat, and animal movement in the chamber. Cooked meatballs ( $n=5$ ) were obtained from Missouri State University cafeteria and frozen until required.

Big brown bats ( $n=6$ ) were obtained from the houses of residents of Springfield, Missouri. Missouri State University Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee approved the use of live bats for this project (#2006-O). The bats were kept in mesh cages with water and mealworms. When the bats were first procured, they were fed once a day by hand. Once they learned how to feed on their own, mealworms were kept in their cage at all times. The bats were taught where the drinking water was by using a pipette to take water from the dish in the cage and bring it to the bat. This process was repeated until the bats learned where the dish was located.

### TOBEC Measurements of Meatballs

Before scanning the meatballs, the e-value of the standard supplied with the EM-SCAN was measured to calibrate the machine. Meatballs were thawed, weighed to 0.01 g on a bal-



ance (OHAUS), and placed in the TOBEC chamber. As position has an effect on values obtained by the EM-SCAN (Roby, 1991), repeatability of this position was ensured by marks placed on the tray. Each measurement was repeated six times, the most atypical value was deleted, and the rest were averaged. For each meatball sample, mean e-values from the EM-SCAN were recorded at four to seven temperatures between 2.8 and 44.3°C, after heating the meatball in a microwave. Meatball internal temperature was measured using a thermocouple connected to a digital reader (Acu-Rite: model 00891).

### **TOBEC Measurements of Bats**

The calibrated EM-SCAN was also used to measure bat conductivity. Before placing a bat into the EM-SCAN, it was restrained by rolling it in paper. The paper-rolled bat was then placed on a designated spot on the tray. The tray was placed in the same area inside of the EM-SCAN chamber. The bat was scanned six times and the mean was calculated as for meatballs. The EM-SCAN value was converted to an “EM-SCAN index” by adjusting for the animal size (linear measurement of head and body). The following equation was used: [EM-SCAN index = (average E-value x body length w/o tail in mm)<sup>0.5</sup>] (Johnson, 2006).

### **Carcass Analysis**

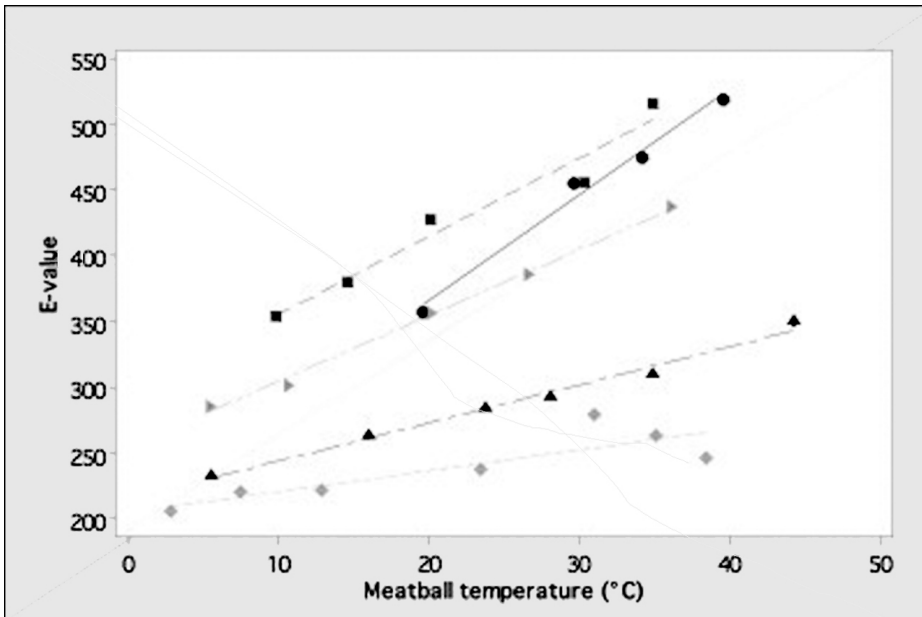
Bats were euthanized by exsanguination under halothane anesthesia. To calculate water content, each meatball and bat carcass was weighed, placed into a weigh-boat, and dried to constant mass in a drying oven at 60°C, approximately five days. Each dried meatball and bat was wrapped in cotton gauze, secured with cotton thread, and placed in a Soxhlet apparatus. Lipids were extracted using ethanol: diethyl ether (3:1). Power to the heating mantle was supplied by a variable autotransformer (Stasco) adjusted to 60% of 120 V. The extraction solvent in the thimble was clear and colorless after approximately 24 one-hour cycles. Each meatball or bat was then removed from the Soxhlet apparatus, placed in a Petri dish and the solvent was permitted to evaporate. The meatballs and bats were then dried to constant mass and lipid content calculated. Lean wet mass (LWM) was calculated using the following equation: [lean dry mass + carcass water content].

### **Statistical Analysis**

Least-squares regressions of TOBEC values and temperature for each meatball and bat were analyzed using Minitab (version 15). The equation of each regression was used to find the predicted TOBEC value of each meatball at 10°C, 20°C, 30°C, and 40°C. These TOBEC values at 30°C were regressed with the lean wet mass.

## **Results and Discussion**

TOBEC values (e-value) were positively correlated with meatball temperature (Figure 1). This suggests that, in addition to keeping the EM-SCAN’s surrounding temperature constant (Walsberg, 1988), the object’s temperature also must be controlled. E-value at 30°C is also correlated to LWM (Figure 2;  $p=0.008$ ). This temperature was selected because it is a

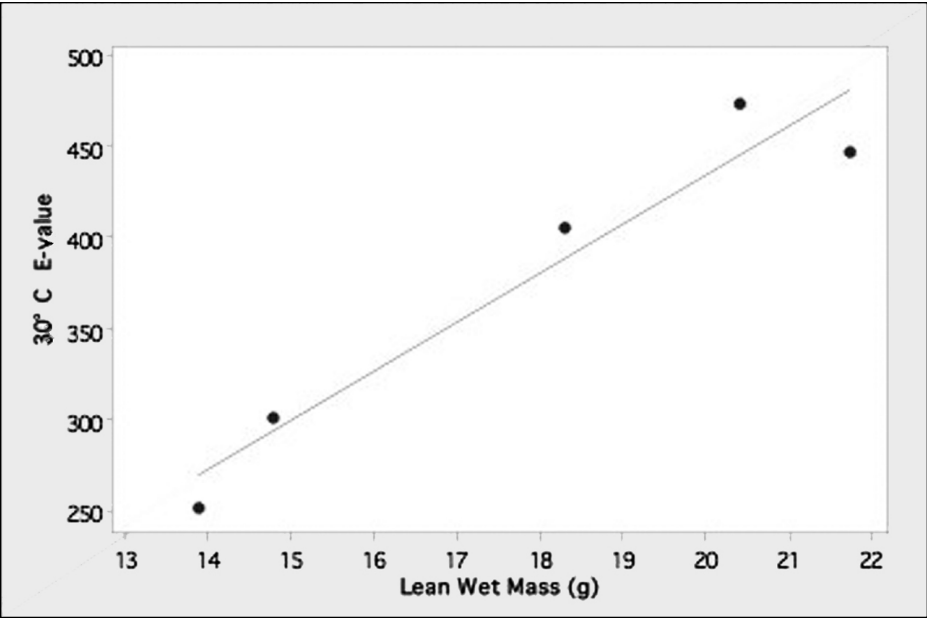


**Figure 1.** EM-SCAN e-value of meatballs (n= 5, each line represents a different sample) at different temperatures

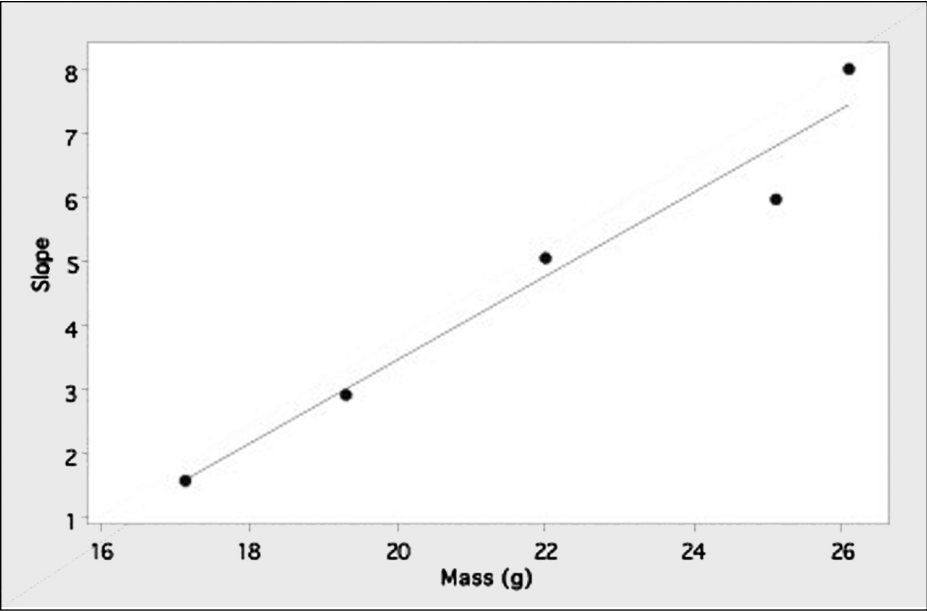
compromise between torpid and euthermic body temperatures. Although other papers (Reynolds et al., 2009; Robin et al., 2002) have found that temperature will affect e-value, this paper is the first to quantify that relationship. An interesting result of this study was the discovery that larger meatballs were affected more by temperature, as shown by a correlation between meatball mass and the slopes of the individual regressions (Figure 3;  $p=0.004$ ).

The data on big brown bats suggest that TOBEC technology may not be usable for these animals. There was no correlation between the EM-SCAN index and LWM (Figure 4;  $p=0.965$ ), even after adjusting the mean e-value for each animal by its head and body length. However, this study employed bats with little variation in body mass (LWM=14–17.5 g) and a small sample size ( $n=6$ ), which could have affected the variance. Live animals may need a larger sample size for several reasons. The bats' movement in the chamber of the TOBEC machine may have affected the e-value. Although the bats were restrained, their movements should have been comparable to animals in previous studies (Walsberg, 1988). In addition, the bats' temperatures may not have been consistent. Although we attempted to arouse all bats equally, they may not have been fully aroused and have been at euthermic body temperatures. Based on the meatball data, a difference in body temperature of 5°C could change the e-value 8 to 40 points (as much as 10%).

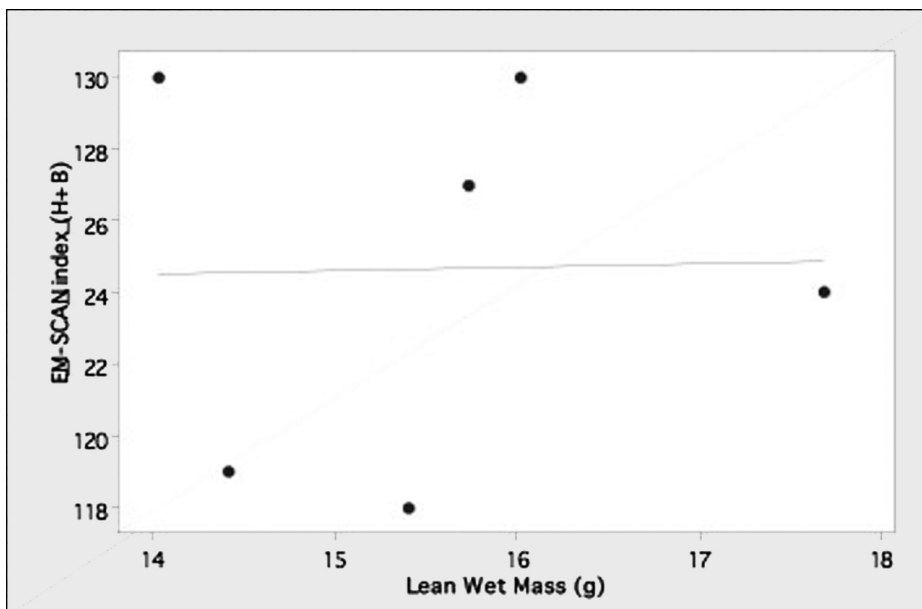
Another limiting factor could be the relative size of the sample (meatball/bat) compared to the volume of the EM-SCAN chamber. A small sample will disrupt the electromagnetic field less than a larger sample will, which could lead to a less consistent e-value.



**Figure 2.** E-values of meatballs (n=5) of different sizes at 30°C



**Figure 3.** Slopes of temperature/e-value regressions for meatballs of different sizes (n=5)



**Figure 4.** E-values, adjusted for body size (head & body length) of big brown bats (n=6) of different sizes

Meatballs (17–26 g) provided a better correlation between e-value and LWM (Figure 2) than the 14 to 18g big brown bats. Mice (30–40 g) measured in the same machine produced the expected correlation (Johnson, 2006).

There are many possibilities for further studies on this subject. TOBEC has only been used on a few species of small animals. An experiment that compared TOBEC measurements and carcass analysis in different types of animals—such as birds, fishes, and mammals—could help determine if other types and sizes of animals can be measured with TOBEC to the same degree of reliability. Another study could compare the effect of humidity, temperature, and pressure on the e-value. This would help researchers know if a machine that uses TOBEC is dependable in the field. This study could also determine what ambient conditions most affect TOBEC. If the science of TOBEC can be perfected, and its limitations more fully understood, it will be a powerful way to learn more about lean body mass without euthanizing the animals.

### Acknowledgements

This paper could not have been written without the guidance and support of my mentor Dr. Tom Tomasi. Thank you also to Katie Day for her help catching and taking care of the bats and Dr. Kerry Withers for his assistance with the Soxhlet apparatus.

## References

- Dark, J. (2005). Annual lipid cycles in hibernators: Integration of physiology and behavior. *Annual Reviews*, 25: 569–497.
- Dunbar, M. B., & Tomasi, T. E. (2006). Arousal patterns, metabolism, and a winter energy budget of eastern red bats (*Lasiurus borealis*). *Journal of Mammalogy*, 87: 1096–1102.
- Dzurick, C. & Tomasi, T. (2008). Ambient temperature and the hibernation energy budget of the endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*). In *Hypometabolism in Animals: Hibernation, Torpor and Cryobiology* (B. G. Lovegrove and A. E. McKechnie, eds). University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, pp. 381–390.
- Fischer, R. U., Congdon, J. D., & Brock, M. (1996). Total body electrical conductivity (TOBEC): A tool to estimate lean mass and nonpolar lipids of an aquatic organism? *Copeia*, 1996(2): 459–462.
- Horswill, C. A., Geeseman, R., Boileau, R. A., Williams, B. T., Layman, D. K., & Massey, B. H. (1989). Total-body electrical conductivity (TOBEC): Relationship to estimates of muscle mass, fat-free weight, and lean body mass. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 49: 593–598.
- Johnson, L. (2006). *The Obesity Epidemic*. MS thesis, Missouri State University: 30–31.
- Reynolds, D. S., Sullivan, J. C., & Kunz, T. H. (2009). Evaluation of total body electrical conductivity to estimate body composition of a small mammal. *Journal of Wildlife Management*, 73(7): 1197–1206.
- Robin, J. P., Heitz, A., Le Maho, Y., & Lignon, J. (2002). Physical limitations of the TOBEC method: accuracy and long-term stability. *Physiological Behavior*, 75(1–2): 105–118.
- Scott, I., Grant, M., & Evans, P.R. (1991). Estimation of fat-free mass of live birds: Use of total body electrical conductivity (TOBEC) measurements in studies of single species in the field. *Functional Ecology*, 5(2): 314–320.
- Walsberg, G. E. (1988). Evaluation of a nondestructive method for determining fat stores in small birds and mammals. *Physiological Zoology*, 61(2): 153–159.

# Post-Emigration: Mental and Emotional Unrest

Cynthia Johnson

## Abstract

Throughout the novels *Lucy* by Jamaica Kincaid, *Dreaming in Cuban* by Cristina Garcia, and *Breath, Eyes, Memory* by Edwidge Danticat, there is a recurring theme of emigration, in which severe distress is experienced by the emigrants, even after leaving the countries they so badly need to escape. Emigration is a very common occurrence, even a necessity, as many are forced to flee their homelands for political, social, and economic reasons. Yet, they leave behind not only their homelands, but also many of their friends, families, and customs. This is clearly exemplified by these three novels, which closely echo the true stories of their authors. The influences of each emigrant's homeland affect her experiences in her new home, suggesting emigration is merely a physical escape, rarely providing mental or emotional peace.

---

In Cristina Garcia's novel, *Dreaming in Cuban*, the character Pilar Puente compares her home in New York to her Cuban homeland, and states, "I know now it's where I belong—not *instead* of here, but *more* than here" (236). As is common with many emigrants, Pilar finds herself struggling with a sense of alienation and isolation in both her American and Cuban homes. Despite the constant emotional presence of Cuba in her life, Pilar is removed from her homeland at a young age, resulting in a greater familiarity with her life in New York. In "A Third Individuation: Immigration, Identity, and the Psychoanalytic Process," Salman Akhtar writes, "Leaving one's country involves profound losses. Often one has to give up familiar food, native music, unquestioned social customs, and even one's language" (1052). Even when leaving at a young age, one must come to terms with the differences between her family's customs and those of her new home. Regardless of these consequences, emigration is a very common occurrence, even a necessity, as many are forced to flee their homelands for political, social, and economic reasons. This proves to be the case in the novels *Lucy*, *Dreaming in Cuban*, and *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, which reflect the true stories of their authors.

Born in St. John's, Antigua, in 1949, Jamaica Kincaid, author of *Lucy*, has firsthand knowledge of the country's conditions during and as an effect of European rule. After centuries of suffering from British colonialism and the exploitation of its residents, Antigua became self-governing in 1967, although it did not become an independent nation until 1981. Unfortunately, independence has not brought improvement as the country continues to experience poverty and the rule of a new, corrupt government. In 1965, however, at the age of 16, Kincaid emigrated from her homeland to work as an au pair for a New York fami-

ly. Adjusting to her new life away from Antigua, Kincaid slowly began to realize her passion for writing, publishing a number of works, including, in 1990, *Lucy*. The novel undeniably mirrors Kincaid's own background as it follows Lucy, a 19-year-old girl leaving the West Indies to work as an au pair in America. Kincaid continues to express her own emotions and experiences through Lucy as the young girl unveils her hatred, yet longing, for life in Antigua. With an unconventional personality and rebellious spirit, Lucy attempts to adjust to the United States, but finds herself caught between two homes in which she is discontent.

In Garcia's novel, *Dreaming in Cuban*, characters also find themselves caught between two worlds. In the novel, Celia del Pino quotes Fidel Castro to her granddaughter, Pilar, "Within the revolution, everything; against the revolution, nothing" (235). This quote describes the major conflict Garcia portrays in her novel set in both Cuba and New York between the 1930s and 1980s. Born in Havana in 1958, Garcia fled to New York with her family when she was only two to escape the communist rule of Fidel Castro, whom she refers to in her novel only as "El Líder." Similar to her own story is that of her character Pilar Puente, a young girl who emigrates from Cuba to New York with her mother and father as revolution consumes her homeland, causing many to flee while others stay in support. Pilar's mother, Lourdes, strongly opposes the revolution and insists the family emigrate from Cuba in favor of U.S. capitalism. Pilar, however, remains ambivalent in her political views and resorts to rebellion, much in response to the longing she feels for the Cuban homeland she romantically remembers. Published in 1992, *Dreaming in Cuban* focuses on the struggles, separations, and oppositions within a family as direct effects of the revolution, even in post-emigration.

Similarly familiar with the struggles of post-emigration is Edwidge Danticat, author of *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, who was born in Haiti in 1969 and raised by her aunt until the age of 12, when she was reunited with her parents in the United States. Her childhood was one influenced by the corrupt governing of Francois Duvalier, who, for fear of being overthrown by the Haitian army, created his own army called the *Tonton Macoutes*, translated as "Boogeymen." The *Tonton Macoutes* consisted essentially of convicts who were granted amnesty for their participation in the army and then proceeded to terrorize the citizens of Haiti. This terror and corruption experienced in Danticat's youth is clearly translated into her novel with her character Sophie, who leaves her aunt and a corruptly governed Haiti at the age of 12 to be reunited with her mother, Martine, in New York. Martine, while struggling to be a good mother and friend to Sophie, is afflicted with memories of the rape by the *Tonton Macoute*, which originally forced her to flee her homeland. Subsequently, as an adult, Sophie finds herself haunted by the unsettling memories of virginal testing administered by her mother, as is customary for many Haitian women. Published in 1994, *Breath, Eyes, Memory* is a story that explores the link between love, memory, and freedom as two women, mother and daughter, emigrate from their homeland to find peace of mind, yet are unable to escape the pasts that plague them.

All of these stories contain many of the same attributes: political upheaval, emigration from the Caribbean to the United States, and a focus on women who experience varying degrees of trauma. Despite this, emigration is experienced by a multitude of people, men and women of all ages, from and to numerous countries, and for many differing reasons. In

addition, the consequences for many emigrants are similar, such as separation from loved ones, difficulties adjusting to a new country, and the permanent loss of a homeland. The process of emigration, no matter the condition of the homeland, can be an unsettling experience, and many emigrants are never truly freed from the existence of their home and its disputes. In *Linking Objects and Linking Phenomena: A Study of the Form, Symptoms, Metapsychology and Therapy of Complicated Mourning*, Vamik D. Volkan discusses the emotional aspects of emigration, stating, "Since moving from one location to another involves loss—loss of country, loss of friends, and loss of previous identity—all dislocation experiences may be examined in terms of the immigrant's or the refugee's ability to mourn and/or resist the mourning process" (65). The socioeconomic living conditions experienced in the homelands of the characters in *Lucy*, *Dreaming in Cuban*, and *Breath, Eyes, Memory* have a lasting effect on the emigrants in their new homes, suggesting emigration provides an escape physically, but not mentally or emotionally.

With a corrupt, uncaring government in control, Lucy's life in Antigua is dominated by colonialism. In the extended essay, *A Small Place*, Kincaid discusses how British colonialism replaced the island's identity by forcing Antiguan to learn the great accomplishments of the English, and nothing of their own people or history. She writes, "You loved knowledge, and wherever you went you made sure to build a school, a library (yes, and in both of these places you distorted or erased my history and glorified your own)" (36). Antiguan were expected to accept this way of life, learning only of English people, history, laws, holidays—even the language. In *A Small Place* she protests, "But what I see is the millions of people, of whom I am just one, made orphans: no motherland, no fatherland, no gods, no mounds of earth for holy ground, no excess of love which might lead to the things that an excess of love sometimes brings, and worst and most painful of all, no tongue" (31). This condition complicates Lucy's search for belonging as an emigrant, for even her homeland is suffering from a harmed identity. Unlike many emigrants who reject their new country's customs because of a loyalty to or familiarity with their homeland, Lucy's homeland holds little to which she can be loyal. Because of this, Lucy is left with a lack of allegiance to either nation, creating in her an air of aloofness and apathy. She follows a path made of her own convictions, but she carries no strong passions or concerns. This translates even in her relationships with others, as is exemplified when she learns of her boyfriend's romantic relationship with her best friend. She simply states, "I only hoped they would not get angry and disrupt my life when they realized I did not care" (163).

In addition to a life of colonialism, Lucy's experience in Antigua is one of poverty. Her familiarity with poverty is reflected as she goes to America and, without complaint, accepts a small maid's room in which to live. Later, when she describes her homeland and how America has affected her concept of luxury, she states:

I had spent my entire life not knowing the luxury of plumbing, hot and cold tap water, the privacy to be had by closing the door and taking off your clothes and stepping into a hot bathtub and staying there for as long as it pleased you. I could very well have gone through my entire life without knowledge of such things, and on my list of unhappiness this would not have made an appearance. But not so anymore. (146–47)



Her familiarity with a lower-class lifestyle additionally affects her early employment in America, as she takes a job as an au pair while studying to be a nurse. These jobs reflect the social expectations of women in her homeland, as well as, more personally, her mother's dutiful mannerisms. When describing her mother, Lucy states, "She was devoted to her duties: a clean house, delicious food for us, a clean yard, a small garden of herbs and vegetables, the washing and ironing of our clothes" (126).

As the story continues, however, Lucy begins to almost despise her mother for her connection to and acceptance of the homeland Lucy so badly wants to escape. In many ways, these feelings begin to shape Lucy's personality, creating an anger and negative outlook. It is clear that Kincaid, in many aspects, modeled Lucy's mother after her own. In an interview with Kincaid, Marilyn Snell describes her as "unloved by an unresponsive and often abusive mother who shipped her off to the United States at 17 to be an au pair (Kincaid insists on the word 'servant' to describe her employment status)" (28). Yet, Lucy's mother is not necessarily the greatest relational influence on her life in America, for it can be gathered that her father equally influences her life. He can easily be seen as a contributing factor in her indifference to relationships, for it reflects his own relationship with her. Lucy is ignored by her father, as are his other daughters from numerous Antiguan women. Furthermore, Lucy develops a habit of promiscuity throughout her youth that echoes her father's promiscuity, a habit accepted by the island society, and therefore seemingly appropriate to Lucy, even in the United States. Lucy's experiences in Antigua shape her being, making it impossible for her to ever fully emigrate from the island.

The inability to fully emigrate is also depicted in García's *Dreaming in Cuban*. As Castro and his revolution sweep the country, political turmoil results in many emigrations to the United States. The country becomes divided into those who support Castro, and those who oppose him. García's novel focuses on the effects the Revolution has on the del Pino family, using the struggles of the family to exemplify what the country is experiencing on a larger scale. When Lourdes Puente, the daughter of Jorge and Celia del Pino, is approached by two soldiers, who the narrator states were "declaring the Puentes estate the property of the revolutionary government," Lourdes attempts to send them away but is overpowered and raped at knifepoint (70). Already disapproving of the Revolution, this convinces Lourdes to flee with her husband, Rufino, and her daughter, Pilar, to America. Once in the United States, Lourdes opens a bakery, eventually two, and flourishes under the capitalist system. Her sudden flourishing is not meant to imply superiority in the capitalist system but, rather, Lourdes' determination to make it seem that way. Proving success in America is her way of revenging her past and the wrongdoings of the Revolution. She begins to overcompensate in her nationalism, as she later becomes an auxiliary policewoman, taking it upon herself to personally protect her new country. Furthermore, her position as a policewoman gives her a feeling of power, a sense of control she lacked during her rape and the overtaking of her country. García writes,

Lourdes enjoys patrolling the streets in her thick-soled black shoes. These shoes, it seems to her, are a kind of equalizer. . . . These shoes are power. If women wore shoes like these, she thinks, they wouldn't worry so much about more abstract

equalities. They would join the army reserve or the auxiliary police like her, and protect what was theirs. In Cuba nobody was prepared for the Communists and look what happened. (127–28)

Not only does Lourdes take control professionally, but she also takes control of both her daughter and husband, a control that ironically reflects that which the Revolution took over an unwilling Cuba. She gives Pilar no privacy or freedom, thus driving Pilar into an even deeper state of confusion. Having been removed from her homeland at such a young age, Pilar is unsure of where she truly belongs and what political views to side with. In response to her confusion and inability to change her situation, she begins to rebel and adopts a punk lifestyle, withdrawing into her music and art, which includes a painting of a punk version of the Statue of Liberty for the opening of her mother's second bakery. Likewise, Rufino also secretly rebels against his wife's controlling demeanor as he begins an affair with another woman. This is regardless of the fact that Lourdes' control over him is essentially in a sexual nature, even to the extent that a ship bell is rigged to summon him from his workshop. This control, however, is not completely deliberate, for Lourdes' emigration to America is not as fulfilling as she may pretend. Fleeing her homeland leaves her with a void, which she attempts to fill with food and sexual activity. Unfortunately, these do not successfully satisfy her, and result only in a significant weight gain. The experiences of Lourdes' homeland are inescapable to her, and they continue to affect her and her family even after their physical emigration to New York.

This is similarly shown in Danticat's novel, *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, which depicts the socioeconomic living conditions of Haiti, including the presence of a corrupt government and a state of poverty. The Duvalier dictators and the existence of the *Tonton Macoutes* from roughly 1959 to 1986 create fear and terrorize the country, as Danticat clearly exemplifies with her character, Martine Caco, who as a young girl is raped in a sugarcane field by a *Tonton Macoute*. Years later, Martine's resulting daughter, Sophie, becomes accustomed to the country's state of poverty while she, after the emigration of her mother, is being raised by her aunt in the village of Croix-des-Rosets. Sophie describes the village:

Here in Croix-des-Rosets, most of the people were city workers who labored in baseball or clothing factories and lived in small cramped houses to support their families back in the provinces. Tante Atie said that we were lucky to live in a house as big as ours, with a living room to receive our guests, *plus* a room for the two of us to sleep in. . . . The others had to live in huts, shacks, or one-room houses that, sometimes, they had to build themselves. (11)

Upon their individual emigrations to the United States, both Sophie and Martine expect to leave behind their experiences in Haiti; however, they soon find their past follows them to their new home. They continue facing poverty in their small, graffiti-covered apartment building and work diligently for a low-class New York lifestyle. Also, although they are no longer in danger of the *Tonton Macoutes*, Sophie suffers a new fear as her mother warns her of the children at school. Sophie states, "My mother said it was important that I learn English quickly. Otherwise the American students would make fun of me or, even worse,

beat me" (51). Despite this obvious motivation for education, when asked what she wants to be when she grows up, she proudly states, "I want to do *dactylo*. . . be a secretary" (56). Similar to Kincaid's Lucy, Sophie does not yet understand that she has set her expectations rather low, for she comes from a country where a position as a secretary is a highly respected career for a woman.

Disproving any belief that it simply takes time to become accustomed to a new home after emigration, Sophie's and Martine's conditions seem to worsen as time passes, and Sophie eventually discovers she is suffering from the eating disorder bulimia nervosa. When hearing this, her mother tells her:

You have become very American. . . . When I just came to this country I gained sixty pounds my first year. I couldn't believe all the different kinds of apples and ice cream. All the things that only the rich eat in Haiti, everyone could eat them here, dirt cheap. . . . In the beginning, food was a struggle. To have so much to eat and not to eat it all. It took me a while to get used to the idea that the food was going to be there to stay. When I first came, I used to eat the way we ate at home. I ate for tomorrow and the next day and the day after that, in case I had nothing to eat for the next couple of days. (179–80)

Sophie's and Martine's behaviors around food originate from their experiences of poverty in their homeland. Yet, even after emigration, they are unable to discontinue the behavior, resulting in serious eating disorders.

In addition to their eating disorders, both women suffer even more greatly from other events in their pasts. Sophie finds herself haunted by a custom called "testing," a practice carried out by many Haitian women, including the Cacos, in which the mother inserts her fingers inside her daughter to ensure her virginity. Because the memory of this Haitian practice follows Sophie throughout her life, she later finds herself unable to enjoy intimacy with her husband despite therapy and her participation in a sexual phobia group. In an interview with Danticat, Mallay Charters states, "Danticat received hate mail from Haitian Americans for outing the custom" (42). Even more traumatizing than Sophie's "testings," however, is Martine's rape. Nearly every night she suffers nightmares in which she is forced to relive the rape and face the *Tonton Macoute*. When she is pregnant with her second child after Sophie has reached adulthood, the nightmares begin to worsen, becoming almost unbearable. She begins to hear voices from the unborn child, and she tells Sophie, "It has a man's voice, so now I know it's not a girl. I am going to get it out of me. I am going to get it out of me, as the stars are me witness. . . . Everywhere I go, I hear it. I hear him saying things to me. . . . He calls me a filthy whore. I never want to see this child's face" (217). It is this madness, this psychological influence from her past, which convinces Martine to stab her stomach seventeen times with a rusty knife, thus killing the child and herself.

As shown in the works *Lucy*, *Dreaming in Cuban*, and *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, many emigrants may physically flee their homeland for political, social, or economic reasons, but they may never be psychologically free from their pasts. Additionally, many suffer from the loss of their true homelands, making it impossible to ever have a true sense of belonging in their

new countries. This, in turn, affects the emigrants' own identities, as exemplified in the novels by Jamaica Kincaid, Cristina Garcia, and Edwidge Danticat. Salman Akhtar captures this phenomenon of identity change with his statement, "The dynamic shifts resulting from an admixture of 'culture shock' and mourning over the losses inherent in migration, gradually give way to psychostructural change and the emergence of a hybrid identity" (1051).

## Works Cited

- Akhtar, Salman. "A Third Individuation: Immigration, Identity, and the Psychoanalytic Process." *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 43:3/4 (1995): 1051–1084.
- Danticat, Edwidge. *Breath, Eyes, Memory*. New York: Vintage Books, 1994.
- Danticat, Edwidge. Interview with Mallay Charters. "Edwidge Danticat: A Bitter Legacy Revisited." *Publishers Weekly* 245.33 (Aug. 1998): 42–43.
- Garcia, Cristina. *Dreaming in Cuban*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1992.
- Kincaid, Jamaica. *A Small Place*. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1988.
- Kincaid, Jamaica. Interview with Marilyn Snell. "Jamaica Kincaid Hates Happy Endings." *Mother Jones* 22.5 (Sep./Oct. 1997): 28–31.
- Kincaid, Jamaica. *Lucy*. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1990.
- Volkan, Vamik D. *Linking Objects and Linking Phenomena: A Study of the Forms, Symptoms, Metapsychology, and Therapy of Complicated Mourning*. New York: International Universities Press, 1981.

# Granting Forgiveness through Technology: An Analysis and Research Proposal Using Face Theory

Mallory A. Nolen

## Abstract

This paper includes a literature review about the forgiveness process, Face Theory, and communication via technology. It also proposes an experiment to study the effects of forgiveness communication conducted via technology, such as text messages and e-mail messages, on the granting of forgiveness. Face Theory is used as a framework for this research with particular attention to the affects of facework on forgiveness communication. The study proposed is both qualitative and quantitative and is conducted through surveys and personal communication with participants. It is predicted that forgiveness is more easily granted in face-to-face communication, as opposed to communication through technology, because of face-saving behaviors that are possible during a face-to-face conversation. The experiment has not been conducted, but is being considered as part of an honors thesis project.

## Introduction

Forgiveness is a recent area of study within interpersonal communication. There have been some interesting advancements in the research and analysis of this phenomenon, but many questions remain unanswered. Although multiple definitions of *forgiveness* exist, I prefer Hawk's (2001) definition: "the granting of pardon and the decision to transcend resentment toward the transgressor" (p. 472). This definition provides the most concise explanation while still encompassing the important components of forgiveness that are relevant to this study. Forgiveness has prevalence in virtually all relationships. We need forgiveness to maintain our interpersonal relationships, as well as to find peace in the world around us. Its ability to heal great damage in wounded relationships makes the process of forgiveness worthy of study and attention by researchers (Waldron & Kelley, 2008).

Aside from interpersonal relationships, forgiveness has shown up as important in many international conflicts, such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa (Tutu, 1999). In his book, Desmond Tutu advocates forgiveness as essential in South Africa's recovery from apartheid. Harvey Langholtz (1998), an assistant psychology professor at the College of William and Mary and recognized around the world as an expert on the psychology of peacekeeping, views forgiveness as essential in international peacekeeping.

Forgiveness, according to Langholtz, releases the ability to gain a new vision for the future and is essential to restoring peace and reducing feelings of victimization (Langholtz, 1998).

Of more importance to this proposal, forgiveness is also needed in smaller-scale, inter-personal conflicts. Every day, romantic couples, family members, friends, and coworkers engage in communication to maintain their relationships, and arguably the most threatening and fragile of these conversations revolve around forgivable offenses. For this reason, researchers are increasingly focused on understanding forgiveness for its ability to increase the well-being of individuals and their relationships (Waldron & Kelley, 2008). An increase in this type of study can yield beneficial results to lay persons who can be taught the process of forgiveness and effective ways to engage in communication revolving around forgivable offenses. We are seeing forgiveness appear more and more in the media. The *Oprah Winfrey Show* has had several episodes about forgiveness over the years, and a message board about forgiveness on her website currently has almost 400 comments (The power of forgiveness, 2008.) Self-help books about forgiveness are also beginning to be more prevalent in today's literature (Waldron & Kelley, 2008). People are noticing the importance of forgiveness.

The depth and complexity of forgiveness make it an increasingly interesting area of study for researchers, and its ability to mend relationships or give people peace makes it an interesting topic for lay persons, as well. The more we know about effective ways to communicate forgiveness, the more productive and peaceful we will be in our individual, group, and global relationships.

In this proposal, I will focus on the topic of granting forgiveness through technology by using Face Theory. I will use the term *technology* to include text messaging and the Internet. I do not include verbal phone conversations because I am mainly interested in technology that lacks the ability to reveal tone of voice, rate of conversation, and so on. I will discuss the process of granting forgiveness, outline Face Theory, and discuss how the two concepts are related. Finally, I will propose a research study involving both quantitative and qualitative data to discover the reasons people grant or withhold forgiveness through technology compared with face-to-face interaction.

## Review of Literature

### Forgiveness

According to Vincent Waldron and Douglas Kelley (2008), the forgiveness episode includes six communication processes: "(1) revealing and detecting transgressions, (2) managing emotions, (3) sense-making, (4) seeking forgiveness, (5) granting forgiveness, and (6) negotiating the relationship" (Waldron & Kelley, 2008, p. 93). The first four processes involve both parties understanding the transgression, dealing with both positive and negative emotions regarding the transgression, exploring the reason for the transgression and the effects it could have on the relationship, and the steps taken by the transgressor to receive forgiveness (Waldron & Kelley, 2008).

In this proposal, I will focus on the fifth process, granting forgiveness. I feel that this process has the most implications when conducted through technology. I am interested in

how forgiveness communication through technology affects the decision to grant or deny forgiveness. Kelley (1998) outlined three main types of granting forgiveness: direct, indirect, and conditional. *Direct* refers to saying “I forgive you,” or something equally straight-forward; *indirect* refers to simply going back to normal interaction or using nonverbal displays to show forgiveness; and *conditional* involves forgiving a person in exchange for a promise of changed behavior in the future. These main categories of granting forgiveness have been broken down even further over the years. Currently, indirect forgiveness is used most frequently (47%), followed by direct forgiveness (42%), leaving conditional forgiveness as the least common form of forgiveness granting (12%) (Merolla, 2008). Waldron and Kelley (2008) have now created subcategories for their original three methods of granting forgiveness.

Direct forgiveness has been broken down into discussion and explicit forgiveness. Discussion is an important process because a forgiver and transgressor must agree to discuss the issue and must remain open-minded for forgiveness to take place. This method is meant to “increase understanding of both partners and the reasons for the problems” (Waldron & Kelley, 2008, p. 119). It can also be intended for the offender to understand the consequences his/her actions had on the relationship. Partners in conversation about a transgression should take time to discuss the whole issue and to truly understand all aspects of the transgression. This is a process more possible and easily facilitated by face-to-face interaction. Communication through technology limits the amount of time and space needed for an effective, in-depth conversation (Vasalou, Hopfensitz, & Pitt, 2008). Explicit forgiveness is another form of direct forgiveness, and usually involves an actual statement of forgiveness, such as “I forgive you” (Waldron & Kelley, 2008). This type of forgiveness is common and usually effective (Waldron & Kelley, 2005).

Indirect forgiveness has been broken down into minimizing and nonverbal displays. Minimizing involves making the transgression situation seem less serious (Waldron & Kelley, 2008). This method of granting forgiveness can downplay the feelings of the offended partner and is often used to avoid conflict and intense emotions. Minimizing is often used when the transgression is not seen as overly severe by either party (Waldron & Kelley, 2005).

People can grant forgiveness through nonverbal displays, as well. This can include hugging, smiling, or even just returning the tone of voice to normal. Vasalou, Hopfensitz, and Pitt (2008) establish that “in face-to-face communication, proximity allows the offender to apologize, to elaborate on his/her intentions and to repair the breakdown, thus paving the way towards forgiveness” (p. 467). Nonverbal expressions by the offender can often take the place of, or at least complement, words in creating a successful forgiveness encounter (Keltner & Buswell, 1997). Emotions—such as embarrassment, which can be seen through blushing—allow the transgressor to reveal a true sense of shame and regret that the offended party could not see out of the context of a face-to-face encounter (Keltner & Buswell, 1997).

Conditional forgiveness is the last main category of forgiveness and occurs when forgiveness is granted only in return for a promise of changed behavior from the offender (Waldron & Kelley, 2008). This method of granting forgiveness is often used when one partner feels he or she needs assurance that the hurtful behavior will not happen again. Conditional

forgiveness is typically not an effective forgiveness method, and relationships often eventually end because of a lack of trust (Waldron & Kelley, 2008).

Although all these categories are important to research, discussion and nonverbal communication have the most impact on forgiveness through technology. Discussion is limited by technology. For example, many cellular phones have a character maximum on text messages, meaning a sender cannot send a text message over a certain number of letters and spaces (usually 160 characters). This restricts the amount of words used by senders and forces them to narrow their thoughts and communication. Also, communication via text messages and e-mails happens at a much slower pace than does face-to-face conversation, so less discussion can take place. Both of these factors limit the amount of discussion between two people, which can make forgiveness more difficult (Vasalou et al., 2008).

Conducting forgiveness through communication lacks any nonverbal cues. Forgiveness conducted through technology also has a time and space restriction. Because text messages and messages sent over the Internet are not always received in actual time, social cues that add meaning to the interaction and lead to conversations are not present (Riegelsberger, Sasse, & McCarthy, 2005). Two people in a relationship become familiar with each other's facial and nonverbal cues that indicate their level of trustworthiness, seriousness, sincerity, and so on. When these cues are absent and communication does not occur in real time, the logical order of interaction is lost and uncertainty is increased. Waldron and Kelley (2005) found that using a nonverbal method of granting forgiveness is positively associated with relationship strengthening after the forgiveness has taken place. The application of this for a transgressor is that nonverbal displays can greatly aid in the quest to gain forgiveness, and that the lack of nonverbal displays could make a forgiveness attempt via technology less successful than a face-to-face attempt.

Another set of forgiveness-granting methods focuses on the interaction between the people involved, rather than on individual processes. A third party can often be introduced to the situation to help two people work through their problems. This person can be requested or not, depending on the situation (Waldron & Kelley, 2008). Sometimes this person is a family member or mutual friend, and sometimes this person is a trained professional. This tactic is not conventionally used through technology because it usually requires a meeting by some or all of the three people involved. Once again, this is another method of granting forgiveness that is not compatible with technology.

Sometimes people in relationships can simply return to normal without having a conversation about the transgression (Waldron & Kelley, 2008). Over time, they realize the value of their relationship and simply return to their old ways of talking and doing things together. This can be seen in the end of a "silent treatment" or can be paired with a nonverbal display, such as a hug, to signal the end of the incident (Waldron & Kelley, 2008). This method is tied closely with resuming relational rituals, which occurs when both parties agree to resume familiar activities with each other (Waldron & Kelley, 2008). These methods also do not always apply to technology. It is hard to notice when people are returning to their normal activities, making their usual facial expressions, or using their old tones of voice when two people are not physically present to observe each other.



Habitual or everyday forgiveness occurs when people in a relationship are accustomed to forgiving each other for everyday, minor transgressions and assume that forgiveness will be a constant aspect of their relationship (Waldron & Kelley, 2008). This is common mostly among long-term married couples.

Finally, interactional sequences and “using time” are methods to grant forgiveness, and occur face-to-face. Interactional sequences occur when two partners engage in a familiar sequence of problem solving in which both parties act somewhat expectedly and take turns discussing the issue and apologizing, when needed (Waldron & Kelley, 2008). Nonverbal actions play a large role in this method because of their ability to regulate interactions. Again, it is difficult to engage in this expected, familiar, back and forth ritual when two people cannot see each other or hear each other to gauge reactions. “Using time” simply means waiting out a difficult situation and allowing each other some space to get over the transgression (Waldron & Kelley, 2008). It also allows both partners time to reflect on the situation and decide what they want out of a renegotiated relationship.

To summarize, many aspects of face-to-face encounters are necessary for certain forgiveness-granting methods to be successful. Nonverbal displays, detailed discussion, third-party intervention, relational rituals, and interaction sequences are made difficult or impossible by trying to communicate forgiveness through technology. It can also be argued that the lost effect of these methods reduces the effectiveness of the others. I suspect that a transgressor is much more likely to build and maintain a positive face in face-to-face communication than in communication mediated by technology. In particular, face-saving behaviors are only made possible through direct contact. A review of Face Theory is needed to fully understand the impact it can have on communication regarding forgiveness.

### Face Theory

Everyday, we must focus on our position in interaction and how we want to enact that position so that we represent ourselves in a positive, socially acceptable way. Through Face Theory, Erving Goffman helps us understand the motivation behind trying to conform our communication in different contexts. We act the way we do to present ourselves the way we want others to view us. This is the idea behind “face.” To understand this concept, it is important to understand how Goffman viewed communication. During his time (1950s–1970s), interpersonal communication was viewed largely through the lens of psychology, particularly concerning the individual (Metts & Cupach, 2008). Goffman, however, viewed communication as the verbal and nonverbal messages we use to create and maintain identity (Metts & Cupach, 2008). He thought communication was made up of “syntactical relations” that, when enacted according to plan, help us maintain face (Goffman, 1967). These syntactical relations refer to “ordered sequences of messages between people” (Metts & Cupach, 2008).

*Face*, as defined by Goffman himself, is “the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact” (Goffman, 1967). In other words, *face* refers to the way a person wants others to see himself or herself in an interaction. This is done by adopting a certain culturally acceptable role in interaction that other interactants will positively recognize and understand. “Line” includes

both verbal and nonverbal elements that a person chooses to enact to view himself or herself, others, and the situation in a certain way (Goffman, 1967).

Face Theory is studied through an interpretivist paradigm (Metts & Cupach, 2008). Basically, this means that our public self develops through interactions with others. We develop who we are and decide who we should be through conversations with those around us. Face Theory also falls within the framework of Symbolic Interactionism, which states that our communication in conversation reflects our realization of the cultural elements that serve as a framework for interaction (Metts & Cupach, 2008). We recognize that there are certain rules, specific to contexts, that we should follow so our behavior and our identities can be positively evaluated by others. We do not interact with others in a way that is unique and unknown to others; we follow a cultural script of sorts, and the deviation from this script can cause problems and identity confusion (Metts & Cupach, 2008).

Another feature of Face Theory that characterizes Symbolic Interactionism is that the self is a symbolic construction (Metts & Cupach, 2008). Who we are in public, and to some extent in private, is shaped and maintained through our adaptation and accordance with cultural rules. Without these, we would not know embarrassment, shame, or other feelings that are a result of our blunders in interaction.

Face theorists use “drama” as a prevailing metaphor and claim that interactions between people (“actors”) can be a performance in which each individual acts out a specific role that is appropriate for the context and that is designed to present a specific, positive self image, or face (Metts & Cupach, 2008). Goffman took this metaphor even farther to suggest that all individuals have a front part of themselves and a back part of themselves that serve different purposes in performances (Goffman, 1959). The front is the “expressive equipment of a standard kind intentionally or unwittingly employed by the individual during his performance” (Goffman, 1959, p. 22). The front basically includes all aspects of the actual performance itself and can include both physical and personal characteristics of the speaker. There are two main components of the front: the setting and the personal. The setting includes the actual room or environment of the interaction and any physical objects within that area. The personal front includes the appearance and manner of the speaker (Goffman, 1959).

The back is also an important aspect in interaction, but is not present at the time of interaction. The back includes the area and materials that are used in preparation for interactions (Goffman, 1959). Sandra Metts and William Cupach (2008) suggest that this is where the “props for the performance” are stored, and is usually our home or office or a place where we would feel awkward if a stranger were to enter unexpectedly (p. 205). In considering these concepts as part of our performance, it is easy to understand why we feel confused and threatened when our interaction does not play out the way we anticipated or when someone else fails to respond in a way that is congruent with our cultural scripts. These things could lead to our face being threatened because we are forced to react and proceed through unfamiliar territory in interaction.

Luckily, for the most part, partners in interaction tend to support each other’s face in the hopes that this support will be reciprocated and both parties will interact in a non-face threatening way (Goffman, 1967). This is referred to as an “expressive ritual” (Metts & Cupach,

2008). When someone's face is projected in a more positive way than expected, that person feels good, according to Goffman (1967), but if his or her face is projected in a more negative way, hurt or bad feelings could result. Sometimes, though, we have to engage in interactions that create negative face and do not follow the scripts we expect. When this happens, we are said to "lose face" and become involved in a "ritual disequilibrium" (Goffman, 1959).

It only takes one person to cause everyone in an interaction to feel face threatened (Goffman, 1959). When interactions cease to proceed according to scripts or expectations, all members of an interaction suddenly lose assurance of what to do and say to present themselves in a face-maintaining way and thus become threatened. There are two main kinds of losing face. One is to be in the "wrong face," which occurs when information about an individual is not evident in his or her performance (Goffman, 1967). For example, a person who is said to be a great teacher is "in wrong face" when his or her students are consistently confused and behind the learning curve of others. This kind of face loss means that someone is trying to enact a role that is not appropriate or true for him or her. A person can also be "out of face" when he or she does not enact a particular performance that is expected in the situation (Goffman, 1967). This can occur when a person is caught cheating on a test or doing something he or she knows is wrong. That person may not have a social script about how to deal with that situation appropriately because they weren't expecting to get caught or because there is not an effective way to maintain a positive face in such a situation.

When face is threatened and ritual disequilibrium occurs, Goffman (1967) suggest that we go through four stages to correct the threat: a challenge, an offering, an acceptance, and a thank you. In a challenge, we mention the deviation and draw attention to it. An offended party may have experienced a face threat when a friend called him or her absent-minded. An offering involves the offender taking the responsibility to correct his or her actions. This can be done by claiming the misconduct was a joke or that the offender was influenced by outside forces to act in a way he or she normally would not act. Following this example, the offender may mention that his or her comment about the friend being absent-minded was a joke and ask for forgiveness. A third strategy is acceptance in which the offering is accepted and is deemed worthy of restoring face and maintaining order. The offended friend may accept the apology from the offender. Finally, a thank you can be given by the offender to those who accepted his or her apology. The offender in this example might thank his or her friend for the friend's forgiveness. Emotion plays a large role in this process, as well (Goffman, 1967).

We use facework to manage threats to face. Facework involves anything we do to attempt to restore our positive face. It can be used to "resolve a conflict, exacerbate a conflict, avoid a conflict, threaten or challenge another person's position, protect a person's image, and so on. (Oetzel, Ting-Toomey, Yokochi, Masumoto, & Takai, 2000). Facework can be confused with conflict style. We engage in facework to restore face, but we often have the sub-goal of restoring our relationship with the person who threatened our face. The way we manage our relationship is through our conflict style, and the way we manage the face threat is through facework. Oetzel and colleagues (2000) claim that the two are different in that conflict style involves "a general pattern of behavior" to resolve issues in the relationship,

whereas facework involves specific behavior that focuses on images that extend the specific conflict incident (p. 401). Further, Oetzel and colleagues (2000) identified 13 categories for facework involving three main factors: dominating, avoiding, and integrating.

*Dominating* involves aggression and self-defense and is characterized by defending one's own face even when it involves threatening someone else's (Oetzel et al., 2000). This happens when one person is insulted and then responds with an insult about the other person to make himself or herself look better. *Avoiding* happens when someone decides to "avoid, give in, involve a third party, or pretend" (Oetzel et al., 2000, p. 413). All of these strategies can be used to save the face of the other in conflict or to manage both faces at once. For example, a friend may consult a third party to more objectively restore the friendship and not cause any intentional face threat to the other person. Finally, *integrating* involves someone deciding to "apologize, compromise, consider the other, hold a private discussion, and talk about the problem" (Oetzel et al., 2000, p. 413). This could happen when a friend decides to talk through a conflict and apologize for threatening the face of another. Handling facework appropriately is important to relationships, because if unsuccessful, the relationship may face serious damage or termination (Hodgins, Liebeskind, & Schwartz, 1996).

Other research has examined facework as related to managing one's own face, another's face, or both. Hodgins, Liebeskind, and Schwartz (1996) give several examples of facework such as concessions and excuses that help restore or bolster the other's face while damaging one's own. Justifications have the opposite effect in that they attempt to restore one's own face while damaging the other's face. Refusals are the worst form of facework from the other's point of view because they do the most damage to the other's face (Hodgins et al., 1996). Whether one is concerned with his or her own face or that of the other person depends on "the degree of threat to one's own face" and the "motivation to maintain the relationship" (Hodgins et al., 1996). Someone who doesn't care about the status of the relationship with another person is more likely to engage in hurtful behaviors toward the other's face in an attempt to restore his or her own. However, if someone's main priority is to maintain a friendship with the person he or she is in conflict with, he or she may be more likely to consider the other's face in dealing with the conflict.

Randall Rogan and Mitchell Hammer (1994) created a three-dimensional model to explain facework. They proposed that all facework can be broken down into two "loci of concern": self and other. Basically, they categorize all facework according to whether the individual is more concerned with his or her own face or with the face of the other(s) in conflict. Within these categories are "face valences" that represent the function of facework. These are threat, honor, and neutral. A threat includes any messages that act as a threat to either the self's face or the face of the other. Honor includes any messages that honor the face of the self or other. Honor messages can either defend face or restore a threatened face. Neutral messages neither threaten nor honor face. This model creates seven types of facework management that people use in conflict (Rogan & Hammer, 1994). This framework will become useful in further analysis of facework.

I plan to use Face Theory to examine the role of face in granting forgiveness via technology. Communication via technology seems to be growing in popularity, especially among

younger generations, and the occurrence of apology/forgiveness is not a process independent of technology. Several aspects of Face Theory suggest that granting forgiveness would be easier and more common if forgiveness communication took place in a face-to-face context. The way we develop and maintain the face we want others to see is through regular, in-time, face-to-face interaction with others. If this is the way we gain maximum control of our face, why do we approach conflict through technology?

Referring back to Goffman, when we use “lines” in conversation to control our face, we use both verbal and nonverbal elements. All of the nonverbal displays we use to regulate our face are lost in conversation through technology. In an apology situation, an individual’s facial expressions and other nonverbal activity shows honesty and trustworthiness that is lost in conversation through technology. An individual’s “front” involves the person’s physical and personal characteristics that cannot be controlled outside a face-to-face interaction. A speaker’s manner, facial expressions, and so on, are not helpful resources when both parties are physically absent during the interaction. The expressive ritual is an aspect of face that a transgressor would want to use if possible in conflict, but that is also useless unless an in-person conversation is taking place. To correct ritual disequilibrium, individuals must go through the process of a challenge, an offering, an acceptance, and a thank you that is difficult without the time and space to have a long discussion. With all these aspects of Face Theory missing in conversation through technology, it seems logical that forgiveness would be difficult to grant through technology.

### **Technology**

Technology is on the rise today as more and more people rely on it to function in their everyday lives. More than 2.5 billion text messages a day were sent last year, and the number continues to climb (Reardon, 2008). There are currently 1.4 billion e-mail users in America, and that number is expected to grow to 1.9 billion by next year (Brownlow, 2009). Within the last week, I noticed two public apologies on Facebook, and received a request for forgiveness via text message. Websites, such as [oopsimsorry.com](http://oopsimsorry.com) even provide an electronic portal for people to apologize over the Internet (Oops . . . I’m sorry, 2009). People can create accounts on this website and use their accounts to make apologies. [Postsecret.com](http://Postsecret.com) is also full of apologies from anonymous people (Post secret, 2009). Still more sites like [textmessages.com](http://textmessages.com) provide suggestions of poems and sentiments for transgressors to send via text in the quest for forgiveness (Sorry SMS, 2009). People are taking advantage of technology, and the trend is going to keep increasing. As communication scholars, we need to focus on growing patterns in communication and conduct research to improve communication in the face of global changes.

I suspect that forgiveness requested through technology is not as widely accepted as forgiveness requested in person, and I hope to support that with my research. I also hope to understand the reasons why individuals choose to grant or not grant forgiveness requested through technology, and I believe using Face Theory as a framework for this research will provide useful insight into this interpersonal phenomenon. For these reasons, I have developed the following questions to guide my research:

RQ1: What factors influence individuals to forgive or not forgive a transgressor through technology?

H1: Forgiveness is more readily granted in face-to-face communication than in communication through technology.

## Methods

### Participants and Design

I propose a qualitative and quantitative study for this research to gain better-rounded, more complete results. I am interested in understanding the likelihood of forgiveness through technology as well as the reasons behind this likelihood. I will also be using two different participant samples for each type of research. I believe that much information would be lost through a strictly quantitative study because I would miss rich information in my narrow search for likelihood. Others have found that studying the topic of forgiveness through qualitative research has yielded the most beneficial results (Waldron & Kelley, 2008). The importance of quantitative data can also be seen in forgiveness measurement scales that adhere best to quantitative data such as the Tendency Toward Forgiveness scale (Brown, 2003) and the Transgression Narrative Test of Forgiveness scale that I will use in my quantitative study (Berry, Worthington, Parrot, O'Connor, & Wade, 2001).

Forgiveness is not easily observed. It is a private communication process between individuals that most are unwilling to let others observe. Even if observation were allowed, the process would most likely be altered by the third party, and a natural progression of the event would be impossible. Parties in conflict do not always know when forgiveness will take place, as well. For these reasons, I chose to use self-reports about past forgiveness episodes for my qualitative data. Self-reports are narratives told by participants about events from the past (Waldron & Kelley, 2008). Waldron and Kelley (2008) outline the possible negative effects of self-reports. Participants may not remember past events clearly, they may generalize or create content for gaps in the narrative that they have forgotten over time, they may make their behavior seem more positive so they will not paint a negative picture of themselves, and they may tell the story in a way that favors themselves over other individuals (Waldron & Kelley, 2008). Others support these ideas, stating that cognitive gaps can occur in the recollections of events involving feelings, and that these gaps are often filled with what a person thinks probably happened (Ericsson & Simon, 1993). Self-report data does have advantages. It is helpful in understanding the feelings and events that participants have taken away from the forgiveness episode and in analyzing the lasting effects of the episodes. Self-report data is even more useful when used with Ericsson and Simon's (1980) guidelines for this type of research, which I plan on using.

To gain useful data, I wish to interview anybody who has been asked forgiveness via technology. I will not discriminate among gender or age, so that I can judge only the affects of technology without having to consider the affects of individual characteristics. I also wanted to keep my search broad so I could gather as many participants as possible. My goal for participants is 25 people. I plan to recruit participants by sending out a mass e-mail to

everyone in my university contacts. I also plan to post fliers inside the student unions of several Midwest universities, asking students and faculty for their involvement. I will include my contact information and set up all meetings by phone. These participants will all be Midwest residents, which will help with convenience, expense, and time. I do not see geographical location as a factor in my results because the use of cell phones and the Internet is prevalent in most areas of the United States (Brownlow, 2009).

### **Experimental Procedure**

Once my participants are gathered, I plan to schedule interviews to ask one-on-one questions about their experience. If possible, I will hold interviews in the homes of my participants. I feel that this will lead my participants to feel more comfortable discussing the details of their experience. Other researchers have found this helpful, as well (Waldron & Kelley, 2008). Before the interviews, I will hand each participant an informed consent and confidentiality notice adapted from a sample form from Hamilton College (see attached) (Participant consent form, 2009). I chose my interview questions to foster communication about how individuals felt in a forgiveness episode involving technology. My focus is on granting forgiveness and Face Theory, so I devised some questions that I hope will help me to understand the reasons participants chose to forgive or not forgive via technology.

I adapted my interview questions based on the questions Waldron and Kelley (2008) used for their study on communicating forgiveness. I researched other scales that have been tested for validity and reliability, but like Waldron and Kelley, I found these scales too specific to serve the purpose of my research. For example, Brown (2003) developed and tested the Tendency to Forgive Scale, which is reliable and valid but has little relevance to the reasons people seek forgiveness. This scale is mainly intended “to create a brief, coherent measure of dispositional forgiveness” (Brown, 2003, p. 761). Many of the scales I researched were inappropriate for my topic, so I chose to adapt questions from the research of Waldron and Kelley (2008) for my qualitative interviews. I also chose to keep the questions to a minimum and focus on broad questions to promote narrative style answers rather than short, succinct responses. Those questions are attached.

I chose to select a different participant group for my quantitative study because I did not want interviews about past technological forgiveness experiences to influence the reporting in the surveys. I also do not want to exclude any participants who have never experienced forgiveness via technology. I expect these students will be mostly 18- to 25-year-old individuals, although I will not discriminate against age or gender.

To gain quantitative data, I chose to hand out two copies of a survey, each adapted from the Transgression Narrative Test of Forgiveness (TNTF) developed by Berry et al. (2001). I chose this test because it is valid, reliable, and tests the tendency to forgive without being too specific to be useful. The scale uses five scenarios that participants read and respond to according to how likely they feel they would forgive the transgressor in the situation. I simply altered the scenario on half the surveys to include the transgressor asking forgiveness via technology. I altered the other half of the surveys to include the transgressor asking forgiveness in a face-to-face manner. Each participant will only fill out one survey, and I plan to

hand out 50 of each survey to students in the student unions of Midwest universities. Through the use of both of these surveys, I will be able to judge the likelihood of granting forgiveness via technology against the likelihood of granting forgiveness in a face-to-face interaction. I felt the TNTF was the most easily adaptable to my purposes. This scale was also tested for effectiveness on university students, which is my participant population. Both copies of the surveys are attached.

I feel that recruiting university students for both aspects of my research will be helpful, because virtually all university students rely on technology for many aspects of their lives such as coordinating activities, school presentations, using Blackboard, and e-mailing professors and classmates. My hope is that these students will rely on technology enough to understand how forgiveness could be communicated through technology. Although these seem to be two different research studies, I feel as if one would be incomplete without the other. I feel that it is important to know how likely people are to grant forgiveness via technology as well as to know why. The understanding that comes from both is important to understanding my entire research topic. It does little good to understand the reasons why someone might not forgive, without understanding if they actually would. It also seems incomplete to know that somebody would theoretically withhold forgiveness via technology without judging whether those reasons had anything to do with losing face or not being able to witness positive face in their transgressor.

I believe this is an important topic to research based on the growing popularity of technology. Face Theory suggests that people are motivated to behave in ways that give themselves a positive face, but asking forgiveness through technology actually restricts the resources individuals have to create a positive self-face. This positive face is needed most in conflict conversations between two people, and it is important to understand why individuals choose to put their face, and relationship, at risk by trying to have these conversations through technology. The more we understand this phenomenon, the more we can educate society about positive ways to keep relationships strong.



**Missouri State University**

901 S. National  
Springfield, MO 65807

**Communication Department  
Sample Participant Consent Form**

***Purpose:***

The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of technology on the granting of forgiveness.

***Procedure:***

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do one the following:

1. Participate in a 15–30 minute interview regarding a forgiveness episode from your past.
2. Complete a questionnaire in which you rate the likelihood that you would grant forgiveness based on 5 different scenarios.

***Benefits/Risks to Participant:***

Participants will help contribute to the body of knowledge in communication. Risks include any discomfort you may feel while responding to personal questions.

***Voluntary Nature of the Study/Confidentiality:***

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to complete the study at any point during the experiment, or refuse to answer any questions with which you are uncomfortable. You may also stop at any time and ask the researcher any questions you may have. Your name will never be connected to your results or to your responses on the questionnaires; alias names will be used in the reporting of data. Information that would make it possible to identify you or any other participant will never be included in any sort of report. The data will be accessible only to those working on the project.

***Contacts and Questions:***

At this time you may ask any questions you may have regarding this study. If you have questions later, you may contact Mallory Nolen at [mallory11@missouristate.edu](mailto:mallory11@missouristate.edu).

***Statement of Consent:***

I have read the above information. I have asked any questions I had regarding the experimental procedure and they have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent to participate in this study.

Name of Participant \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(please print)

Signature of Participant \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ (Note: You must be 18 years of age or older to participate in this study. Let the experimenter know if you are under 18 years old.)

*Thanks for your participation!*

Adapted from Participant Consent Form, Hamilton College (2009)

### **Interview Questions**

1. Describe a time when someone asked your forgiveness through technology (such as text messaging, or e-mail). Please describe the situation in as much detail as possible. What elements stand out as most important in this interaction? For instance: How did you feel? How did you respond? Did you forgive them? Why or why not? What was the response from the other person?
2. If applicable, describe a time when you asked forgiveness through technology. Please describe the situation in as much detail as possible. What elements stand out to you as most important in this interaction? For instance: Did the other person forgive you? Why or why not? What words did you use? What occurred within the relationship after the incident?
3. Describe a time when you believed that you *needed forgiveness from someone*. Please describe the situation in as much detail as possible. What elements stand out as most important? For instance: What happened? How did you let the other person know you needed/wanted forgiveness (or did you let them know your desire)? How did you decide how to apologize? What was your strategy and thought process?

Adapted from Waldron and Kelley (2008)

### Forgiveness Survey #I

#### Transgression Narrative Test of Forgivingness (TNTF)

Below are a number of situations in which people might find themselves. People respond in different ways to these situations in terms of what things they will forgive. We would like you to read each situation and imagine it has happened to you. Then we would like you to use the scale below to indicate how you think you would respond to the situation:

- 1 = definitely not forgive  
2 = not likely to forgive  
3 = just as likely to forgive as not  
4 = likely to forgive  
5 = definitely forgive

1. Someone you occasionally see in a class has a paper due at the end of the week. You have already completed the paper for the class, and this person says he or she is under a lot of time pressure and asks you to lend him or her your paper for some ideas. You agree, and this person simply retypes the paper and hands it in. The professor recognizes the paper, calls both of you to her office, scolds you, and says you are lucky she doesn't put you both on academic probation. A few days later, your classmate stops you outside your classroom to apologize. Imagine yourself in such a situation and mark how likely you are to forgive the person who borrowed your paper.  

12345
2. A fairly close friend tells you that he or she needs some extra money for an upcoming holiday. You know a married couple who needs a babysitter for their 3-year-old for a couple of nights and you recommend your friend. Your friend is grateful and takes the job. On the first night, the child gets out of bed and, while your friend has fallen asleep watching television, drinks cleaning fluid from beneath the kitchen sink. The child is taken by an ambulance to the hospital and stays there for 2 days for observation and treatment. The married couple will not speak to you. Your friend comes to your house one night to apologize. Imagine yourself in such a situation and mark how likely you are to forgive your friend.  

12345
3. A friend offers to drop off a job application for you at the post office by the deadline for submission. A week later, you get a letter from the potential employer saying that your application could not be considered because it was postmarked after the deadline and they had a very strict policy about this. Your friend said that he or she met an old friend, went to lunch, and lost track of time. When he or she remembered the package, it was close to closing time at

the post office and he or she would have to have rushed frantically to get there; he or she decided that deadlines usually aren't that strictly enforced so he or she waited until the next morning to deliver the package. He/she tells you this over coffee and asks for your forgiveness. Imagine yourself in such a situation and mark how likely you are to forgive your friend for not delivering the application on time.

1            2            3            4            5

4. You just started a new job and it turns out that a classmate from high school works there, too. You think this is great; now you don't feel like such a stranger. Even though the classmate wasn't part of your crowd, there's at least a face you recognize. You two hit it off right away and talk about old times. A few weeks later, you are having lunch in the cafeteria and you overhear several of your coworkers, who do not realize you are nearby, talking about you and laughing; one even sounds snide and hostile toward you. You discover that your old classmate has told them about something you did back in school that you are deeply ashamed of and did not want anyone to know about. The next day at lunch, your friend sits next to you to apologize. Imagine yourself in such a situation and mark how likely you are to forgive your old classmate for telling others your secret.

1            2            3            4            5

5. A distant cousin you haven't seen since childhood calls you one day and asks if he can stay with you while he looks for work and an apartment. You say it will be fine. He asks you to pick him up from the bus station that night and you do so. Your cousin is just like you fondly remember him; you reminisce for several hours. The next morning you give him some advice on job and apartment hunting in the area, then you go about your own business. That night you come home and witness an angry argument in front of your residence between your cousin and a neighbor. Your cousin is obviously very drunk, cursing, and out of control. You ask what's happening, and without really taking the time to recognize you, your cousin throws a bottle at you, cutting the side of your head. The police arrive and, with some scuffling, take your cousin away and take you to the emergency room where you have stitches put on your cut. The next afternoon, you meet your cousin at the police station. He says he is really sorry about the whole scene and that it was not like him but he was upset about being turned down for three jobs that day. Imagine yourself in such a situation and mark how likely you are to forgive your cousin.

1            2            3            4            5

Adapted from Transgression Narrative Test of Forgiveness (Berry et al., 2001).

**Forgiveness Survey #2**

**Transgression Narrative Test of Forgivingness (TNTF)**

Below are a number of situations in which people might find themselves. People respond in different ways to these situations in terms of what things they will forgive. We would like you to read each situation and imagine it has happened to you. Then we would like you to use the scale below to indicate how you think you would respond to the situation:

- 1 = definitely not forgive
- 2 = not likely to forgive
- 3 = just as likely to forgive as not
- 4 = likely to forgive
- 5 = definitely forgive

1. Someone you occasionally see in a class has a paper due at the end of the week. You have already completed the paper for the class, and this person says he or she is under a lot of time pressure and asks you to lend him or her your paper for some ideas. You agree, and this person simply retypes the paper and hands it in. The professor recognizes the paper, calls both of you to her office, scolds you, and says you are lucky she doesn't put you both on academic probation. A few days later, your classmate leaves you a message on your social networking site apologizing for the incident. Imagine yourself in such a situation and mark how likely you are to forgive the person who borrowed your paper.  

12345
2. A fairly close friend tells you that he or she needs some extra money for an upcoming holiday. You know a married couple who needs a babysitter for their 3-year-old for a couple of nights and you recommend your friend. Your friend is grateful and takes the job. On the first night, the child gets out of bed and, while your friend has fallen asleep watching television, drinks cleaning fluid from beneath the kitchen sink. The child is taken by an ambulance to the hospital and stays there for 2 days for observation and treatment. The married couple will not speak to you. Your friend logs on to instant messenger while you're online and apologizes for what happened. Imagine yourself in such a situation and mark how likely you are to forgive your friend.  

12345
3. A friend offers to drop off a job application for you at the post office by the deadline for submission. A week later, you get a letter from the potential employer saying that your application could not be considered because it was postmarked after the deadline and they had a very strict policy about this. Your friend said that he or she met an old friend, went to lunch, and lost track of time. When he or she remembered the package, it was close to closing time at

the post office and he or she would have to have rushed frantically to get there; he or she decided that deadlines usually aren't that strictly enforced so he or she waited until the next morning to deliver the package. The next day, you receive a text from your friend saying he/she is sorry for the mistake. Imagine yourself in such a situation and mark how likely you are to forgive your friend for not delivering the application on time.

1            2            3            4            5

4. You just started a new job and it turns out that a classmate from high school works there, too. You think this is great; now you don't feel like such a stranger. Even though the classmate wasn't part of your crowd, there's at least a face you recognize. You two hit it off right away and talk about old times. A few weeks later, you are having lunch in the cafeteria and you overhear several of your coworkers, who do not realize you are nearby, talking about you and laughing; one even sounds snide and hostile toward you. You discover that your old classmate has told them about something you did back in school that you are deeply ashamed of and did not want anyone to know about. A few days later, you receive an apology e-mail from your old classmate about the transgression. Imagine yourself in such a situation and mark how likely you are to forgive your old classmate for telling others your secret.

1            2            3            4            5

5. A distant cousin you haven't seen since childhood calls you one day and asks if he can stay with you while he looks for work and an apartment. You say it will be fine. He asks you to pick him up from the bus station that night and you do so. Your cousin is just like you fondly remember him; you reminisce for several hours. The next morning you give him some advice on job and apartment hunting in the area, then you go about your own business. That night you come home and witness an angry argument in front of your residence between your cousin and a neighbor. Your cousin is obviously very drunk, cursing, and out of control. You ask what's happening, and without really taking the time to recognize you, your cousin throws a bottle at you, cutting the side of your head. The police arrive and, with some scuffling, take your cousin away and take you to the emergency room where you have stitches put on your cut. The next afternoon, your cousin texts you to say he is really sorry about the whole scene and that it was not like him but he was upset about being turned down for three jobs that day. Imagine yourself in such a situation and mark how likely you are to forgive your cousin.

1            2            3            4            5

Adapted from Transgression Narrative Test of Forgiveness (Berry et al., 2001).

## References

- Berry, Worthington, Parrot, O'Connor, & Wade (2001). Dispositional forgiveness: Development and construct validity of the transgression narrative test of forgiveness. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 27, 1277–1290.
- Brown, R. P. (2003). Measuring individual differences in the tendency to forgive: Construct validity and links with depression. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, 29, 759–771.
- Brownlow, M. (2009). Email and webmail statistics. *Email Marketing Reports*. Retrieved December 9, 2009, from <http://www.email-marketing-reports.com/metrics/email-statistics.htm>
- Ericsson, K. A., & Simon, H. A. (1993). *Protocol analysis: Verbal reports as data*. Cambridge, MA: Bradford Books/MIT Press.
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York: Doubleday.
- Goffman, E. (1967). *Interaction ritual: Essays in face-to-face behavior*. Chicago, IL: Aldine Publishing Company.
- Hawk, G. W. (2001). Transcending transgression: Forgiveness and reconciliation. In W. Wilmot & J. Hocker, *Interpersonal conflict* (pp. 293–318). Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Hodgins, H. S., Liebeskind, E., & Schwartz, W. (1996). Getting out of hot water: Facework in social predicaments. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 71, 300–314.
- Kelley, D. L. (1998). The communication of forgiveness. *Communication Studies*, 49, 255–271.
- Keltner, D., Buswell, B. N. (1997). Embarrassment: Its distinct form and appeasement functions. *Psychological Bulletin*, 112, 250–270.
- Langholtz, H. J. (1998). *The psychology of peacekeeping*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.
- Merolla, A. J. (2008). Communicating forgiveness in friendships and dating relationships. *Communication Studies*, 59, 114–131.
- Metts, S., & Cupach, W.R. (2008). Face theory. In L. A. Baxter & D. O. Braithwaite (Eds.), *Engaging theories in interpersonal communication: Multiple perspectives* (pp. 203–214). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Oetzel, J. G., Ting-Toomey, S., Yokochi, Y., Masumoto, T., & Takai, J. (2000). A typology of facework behaviors in conflicts with best friends and relative strangers. *Communication Quarterly*, 48, 397–419.
- Oops . . . I'm sorry. (2009). *Oops . . . I'm Sorry*. Retrieved December 9, 2009, from <http://www.oopsimsorry.com/>
- Participant consent form. (2009). Hamilton College. Retrieved December 9, 2009, from [academics.hamilton.edu/psychology/home/SampleConsentForm.doc](http://academics.hamilton.edu/psychology/home/SampleConsentForm.doc)
- Post secret. (2009). *Post Secret Blog*. Retrieved December 8, 2009, from <http://postsecret.blogspot.com/>
- Reardon, M. (2008). U.S. text usage hits record despite price increases. *Wireless*. Retrieved December 10, 2009, from [http://news.cnet.com/8301-1035\\_3-10038634-94.html](http://news.cnet.com/8301-1035_3-10038634-94.html)

- Riegelsberger, J., Sasse, M. A., & McCarthy, J. D. (2005). The mechanics of trust: A framework for research and design. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, 62, 381–422.
- Rogan, R. G., & Hammer, M. R. (1994). Crisis negotiations: A preliminary investigation of facework in naturalistic conflict discourse. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 22, 216–231.
- Sorry SMS. (2009). *Sorry Text Messages*. Retrieved December 8, 2009, from <http://www.textsmsmessages.com/sorry-sms/>
- The power of forgiveness (2008). *Oprah*. Retrieved December 6, 2009, from <http://www.oprah.com/community/community/spirit/foregiveness;jsessionid=ac11087830d58962cd5cff454ab5aeba9cad51790705.e38LaxmSb3qRe34Kay0?start=0>
- Tutu, D. (1999). *No future without forgiveness*. New York: Doubleday.
- Vasalou, A., Hopfensitz, A., Pitt, J. V. (2008). In praise of forgiveness: Ways for repairing trust breakdowns in one-off online interactions. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, 66, 466–480.
- Waldron, V. R., & Kelley, D. L. (2005). Forgiving communication as a response to relational transgressions. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 22, 723–742.
- Waldron, V. R., & Kelley, D. L. (2008). *Communication forgiveness*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.



# Satisfaction Is Belonging

Katie Helterbrand

## Abstract

Novels often have a wonderful way of showing and teaching their readers things they may not be able to understand if left to their own devices—one must simply dive deep enough into the story to find the reasoning behind it. In this paper, three novels are looked at to help understand some of the reasons why people immigrate. *Lucy*, written by Jamaica Kincaid; *Dreaming in Cuban*, by Christina Garcia; and *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*, by Julia Alvarez all bring to light the difficult process of immigration and show the great extent to which this process affects the immigrant's entire life. These three novels show how it is necessary for everyone to have a sense of satisfaction and belonging, and they demonstrate how it is important for immigrants to find a place to belong in the new world they immigrate to.

---

*Immigration* is defined as “migration out of a place; the movement of human population, other than temporary movements such as those of casual visitors or travelers, across national borders” (Immigration 1). Some of the reasons people decide to immigrate are politics, economic hardship, professional advancement opportunities, persecution, and oppression, and all of these are good reasons to leave one country for another. However, despite all the good reasons to immigrate, arriving and adjusting to life in a new country is often a process that leaves much to be desired. Even when people immigrate to leave behind negative aspects of their homeland, upon their arrival in the new country, they often find themselves remembering the positive aspects of their homeland and wondering if the decision to immigrate was the right decision. Such indecision over which country they belong in makes immigrants both unable to fully enjoy life in the new country and unable to comfortably return to their homeland. Such indecision about where he or she belongs may hinder the immigrant from achieving a satisfying life. This scenario is one that accomplished authors Jamaica Kincaid, Christina Garcia, and Julia Alvarez incorporate into their novels as they write about girls who write letters and even visit their homelands in a whirlwind of indecision over which country to remain a part of.

Through their novels, Kincaid, Garcia, and Alvarez bring to light the difficult process of immigration and show the great extent to which it affects the immigrants' lives. Through the lives of Lucy, Pilar, and Yolanda, readers are provided with a closer look at the struggle immigrants experience when they are unsure of in which country they belong. Their stories show

that to be satisfied with his or her life, the immigrant must first be certain that he or she belongs more in the new country than in the homeland.

The underlying themes in these three novels are similar because the three authors are so similar. All three authors write their novels from a large base of personal experience—experiences that do not differ too much from one another. Kincaid was born in 1949 as Elaine Potter Richardson on the island of Antigua. She lived with her stepfather, a carpenter, and her mother until 1965 when she was sent to Westchester, New York, to work as an au pair. In her novel *Lucy*, which was published in 1990, the protagonist, Lucy, also leaves Antigua to work as an au pair in New York. Lucy, although originally thrilled to leave her homeland for the United States, does not, upon her arrival in the new country, find the contentment she had been seeking. Instead, she finds that to be satisfied with her life, she must first decide where she truly belongs.

Similar to Lucy's situation is the situation Pilar finds herself in, in Garcia's novel *Dreaming in Cuban*, which was published in 1992. Not unlike Garcia herself, who was born in Havana but left at the age of two and a half to live in New York City, Pilar left Cuba with her parents at age two for life in Brooklyn. The novel focuses on Pilar's extended family, which has been split apart by political differences during the time of the Cuban revolution. Furthermore, the novel hones in on Pilar's inner turmoil over whether she belongs in Cuba with her beloved grandmother or in the United States where she has grown up.

Yolanda, the protagonist in Julia Alvarez's novel *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*, which was published in 1991, must also decide if she belongs in her homeland or in the United States. In this novel, Alvarez, who spent her early years growing up in the Dominican Republic before moving to New York and being forced to integrate into American society, tells the story of four sisters who find themselves in America, specifically in 1960s New York, after their family is forced to flee the Dominican Republic. The four sisters spend their lives splitting their time between their homeland and the United States. Eventually, the sisters must each decide which country they will call home, and Alvarez focuses on Yolanda's struggle to decide which country she belongs in.

In *Lucy*, the protagonist Lucy arrives in the United States with high expectations. She alludes to these high expectations by saying, "In a daydream I used to have, all these places were lifeboats to my small drowning soul . . ." (Kincaid 3). However, she quickly realizes that the United States is not the fantasy land she once dreamed of, and says of the same places she mentioned before: "Now that I saw these places, they looked ordinary, dirty, worn down by so many people entering and leaving them . . ." (4). In her article "Gendering Time in Globalization: The Belatedness of Other Woman and Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy*," Betty Joseph says that Lucy's struggle is created by a "'temporal maladjustment' where her past expectations do not smoothly slot into the everyday life of her employer's" (Joseph 80). Experiencing the overwhelming feeling that most people feel upon entering a new place—let alone a new country—Lucy says, "At first it was all so new that I had to smile with my mouth turned down at the corners" (Kincaid 4). Despite being overwhelmed, Lucy does not begin to miss her homeland until the next day. The morning of her first day in the United States, the sun was shining. However, it was January and cold. Seeing the sun, Lucy "got up and put on a

dress, a gray dress made out of madras cloth—the same sort of dress that I would wear if I were at home . . .” (5). Upon stepping outside and realizing that although the sun is shining, the air is cold, Lucy states, “Something I had always known . . . ‘the sun is shining, the air is warm,’ was not so” (5). This new information forces Lucy to face the fact that she is no longer in a tropical climate, and she says:

This realization now entered my life like a flow of water dividing formerly dry and solid ground, creating two banks, one of which was my past—so familiar and predictable that even my unhappiness then made me happy now just to think of it—the other my future, a gray blank, an overcast seascape on which rain was falling and no boats were in sight. I was no longer in a tropical zone and I felt cold inside and out, the first time such a sensation had come over me. (5–6)

When Lucy says, “Even my unhappiness then made me happy now just to think of it” (5–6), she puts into words what immigrants who are suffering from doubts about the future and longing for the security of the past often feel once they are in a new country.

For the first time Lucy suffers from homesickness, a feeling that she had criticized in others many times before, feeling that if she were given the opportunity to leave her homeland, she would never long to return. However, she then concedes, “I, too, felt that I wanted to be back where I came from. I understood it, I knew where I stood there” (6). Even though Lucy says that if she had been asked to draw a picture of her future while in Antigua “It would have been a large gray patch surrounded by black, blacker, blackest” (6), she was willing to ignore the negative aspects of her homeland that had driven her to leave, choosing instead to remember only the positive, saying, “I understood it, I knew where I stood there” (6). Although she had made the choice to immigrate to and live in the United States, she was now uncertain that the decision to immigrate was the right one. This indecision over which country she belongs in causes Lucy to be unable to find satisfaction in her life.

During her first year in the United States, Lucy seeks satisfaction through sexual experimentation. Lucy makes a friend named Peggy who is also an immigrant, and eventually enters into a homoerotic relationship with her. Lucy then goes on to have sexual relations with several different men, some adults and some teenagers. Furthermore, Lucy’s quest for satisfaction shapes her attitudes towards life and people. When Lucy meets a boy that seems perfect for her, her attitude is one that will not let her fall in love with him. She states, “I could tell that being in love would complicate my life just now. I was only half a year free of some almost unbreakable bonds . . .” (71). She even goes as far as doing drugs in an attempt to feel happy, at one point pointing out, “I had smoked quite a bit of marijuana and was feeling quite otherworldly” (99). In the article “Jamaica Kincaid’s *Lucy*: Cultural ‘Translation’ as a Case of Creative Exploration of the Past,” Edyta Oczkiewicz states, “Though abandonment of her former self is the necessary condition for Lucy’s liberation, the consequent exploration and appropriation of her past and present are the vital formative determinants in the process of inventing her new self” (144). After countless experiments and futile attempts at finding satisfaction, Lucy begins to accept her life in the United States. When news of her father’s death reaches her, Lucy sends a letter to her mother along with money she had been saving.

In the letter, she chooses the United States as her home and makes the decision final by telling her mother that she “would not come home ever” (128). With this decision made, Lucy finally begins to find her way to a satisfying life: she quits her job as an au pair, stops attending night school, decides to follow her own dreams, whatever they turn out to be, and, for the first time since arriving in the United States, she is able to say, “I was not afraid. Somehow I was not afraid” (157).

Similar to Lucy’s situation is the situation Pilar experiences in *Dreaming In Cuban*. After immigrating to the United States with her parents, Pilar maintains a connection with her maternal grandmother who lives in Cuba. Pilar writes to her Grandmother Celia occasionally, but she says, “Mostly I hear her speaking to me at night just before I fall asleep” (Garcia 29). Pilar’s dissatisfaction with the United States is shown to the reader early in the novel. When Pilar sees her father with another woman she says, “That’s it. My mind’s made up. I’m going back to Cuba. I’m fed up with everything around here” (25). She then proceeds to take money out of the bank and buy a bus ticket to Miami. However, when her plan falls through and she finds herself at the home of some of her father’s relatives, her parents are soon alerted and she is sent back home to them. Pilar explains why she wants to return to Cuba by saying, “Even though I’ve been living in Brooklyn all my life, it doesn’t feel like home to me. I’m not sure Cuba is, but I want to find out. If I could only see Abuela Celia again, I’d know where I belonged” (58).

This indecision over where she belongs keeps Pilar from finding satisfaction in her life. She rebels against her mother by refusing to work in her mother’s bakery, painting abstract images, and listening to punk music, all things her mother detests. After she gets kicked out of school, her mother takes her to visit a psychiatrist named Dr. Vincent Price. The doctor asks Pilar why she has an “urge to mutilate the human form” (59). Pilar realizes that her mother must have told the doctor about her paintings, yet she doesn’t know what to tell him. She asks, “But what could I say? That my mother is driving me crazy? That I miss my grandmother and wish I’d never left Cuba? . . . That a paintbrush is better than a gun so why doesn’t everybody just leave me alone?” (59). When Pilar’s mother asks her to paint a mural for an outside wall of her new bakery, Pilar decides to paint a picture of the statue of liberty. After the initial picture is completed, Pilar decides that it still doesn’t look right, and paints bugs in the background, a safety pin through Liberty’s nose, and the words “I’M A MESS” (141) on the bottom of the statue. Later, the night before the reveal, she feels guilty and wishes she could warn her mother by saying, “Look, I wanted to do it straight but I couldn’t, I just couldn’t” (143). Her lack of satisfaction would not allow her to paint a normal, pretty picture. Instead, it drove her to add an element of unrest to the originally peaceful scene.

Eventually Pilar and her mother return to Cuba to visit Celia, the very thing Pilar wants to do to find out where she belongs. While in Cuba, Pilar reconnects with her grandmother. Pilar spends much of the visit sitting with Celia on a wicker swing that faces the sea, listening to stories of her grandmother’s life. She paints a portrait of Celia while they talk, and she learns many things about both Cuba and her grandmother. Pilar begins dreaming in Spanish and says, “There’s a magic here working its way through my veins” (235). She continues to say that she could “happily sit on one of those wrought iron balconies for days, or keep my

grandmother company on her porch . . ." (236). However, although Pilar admits that she is "afraid to lose all this, to lose Abuela Celia again" (236), she also realizes, "Sooner or later I'd have to return to New York. I know now it's where I belong—not *instead* of here, but *more* than here" (236). Although she dreads breaking the news to her grandmother, having decided where she truly belongs, Pilar is finally able to have satisfaction in her life.

Yolanda, the protagonist in *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents* is also forced to decide where she belongs. Yolanda's family immigrated to the United States in the 1960s, when she was a young girl. Unlike Lucy and Pilar, however, after her family's immigration, Yolanda and her sisters continue to visit their homeland. Yolanda spent her summer vacations at home on the island with her family. Although it was nice to be able to frequently visit her family, these yearly trips to her homeland presented Yolanda with a unique problem. The Dominican Republic and the United States are two very different places. They have very different cultures, vastly different traditions, and extremely different standards for young women such as Yolanda. These differences cause Yolanda to split herself into two different people: the American Yolanda and the Dominican Yolanda. Split into two separate and conflicting people, Yolanda struggles to be content with her life. In the article, "Walking Backwards: Coming of Age in *My Antonia* and *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*," Stephanie Lovelady points out that "Yolanda's childhood nickname, Yoyo, recalls a toy which reels back and forth, just as she does" (Lovelady 35). To find satisfaction, Yolanda first has to find who she is and which country she belongs in.

Yolanda realizes that she feels split apart when she decides to leave her husband. In a note she leaves to explain where she is going, she writes "*I'm needing some space, some time, until my head-slash-heart-slash soul . . .*" before scribbling that out because she "didn't want to divide herself anymore, three persons in one Yo" (Alvarez 77). This indecision over who she is and where she belongs drives Yo to have an emotional breakdown. She loses herself entirely, even her own words, and speaks only by quoting others: "She quoted Frost; she misquoted Stevens; she paraphrased Rilke's description of love" (78). Furthermore, when her parents take her to see a psychiatrist, "She quoted to him from Rumi; she sang what she knew of 'Mary Had a Little Lamb,' mixing it up with 'Baa Baa, Black Sheep'" (78). The psychiatrist, Dr. Payne, admits Yolanda to a private facility where he can monitor and treat her. Here, Yolanda begins to heal. One day while looking out the window, Yolanda, who was once a writer, begins playing with words again and decides to try writing. She then realizes how far she has come when "Deep within her, something stirs, an itch she can't get to" (81) and she realizes "perhaps it is a personality phenomenon: the real Yolanda resurrecting on an August afternoon above the kempt green lawns of this private facility" (81).

In an effort to decide once and for all where she belongs, Yolanda returns to her homeland after being gone for five years. Her family greets her with cries of "Here she comes, Miss America!" (4). Her family points out that she looks very American, thin and unkempt. However, despite her American looks, Yolanda "is not so sure she'll be going back" (7) to America. When she arrives home, her family greets her with a cake in the shape of her homeland. Yolanda's desire to know which country she truly belongs in is shown when she makes a wish before blowing out the candles on the cake. She thinks to herself:

It's hard to single out one wish. There have been too many stops on the road of the last twenty-nine years since her family left this island behind. She and her sisters have led such turbulent lives—so many husbands, homes, jobs, wrong turns among them. But look at her cousins, women with households and authority in their voices. (11)

The wish Yolanda decides on is one that all immigrants wish. She wishes for the one thing that would allow her to finally find satisfaction in her life when she wishes "Let this turn out to be my home . . ." (11).

In each of these three novels—*Lucy*, *Dreaming In Cuban*, and *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*—a leading female character faces one main problem: She doesn't know where she truly belongs. This indecision over whether she should remain in the country she immigrated to or return to her homeland puts an undercurrent of unrest in all aspects of the woman's life. Not knowing where she belongs keeps the woman from finding true satisfaction in her life and often drives her to lose control of herself. In the article "Belonging and Inclusion," the author states that a sense of belonging "will enhance people's sense of personal control and lead to greater safety, security, well-being, contribution and citizenship" (Belonging 1). Only when she is able to decide where she belongs and feel good about her decision is the leading female character in each of these novels able to find satisfaction in, and move on with, her life. This same principle is one that applies to all cases of immigration. It is necessary for all immigrants, whether they struggle with their decision to immigrate once establishing their lives in their new country or not, to be sure they are where they belong. As seen through the stories of Lucy, Pilar, and Yolanda, to achieve a sense of satisfaction with life, people must first be sure they are where they truly belong.

### Works Cited

- Alvarez, Julia. *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*. New York: Penguin Group, 2005.
- "Belonging and Inclusion." *PHILIA*. 2005. *PHILIA*. 28 Apr. 2009  
<[http://www.philia.ca/cms\\_en/page1342.cfm](http://www.philia.ca/cms_en/page1342.cfm)>.
- Garcia, Christina. *Dreaming in Cuban*. New York: The Random House Publishing Group, 1992.
- "Immigration." *Webster's Online Dictionary*. 28 Apr. 2009 <<http://www.websters-online-dictionary.org/definition/immigration>>.
- Joseph, Betty. "Gendering Time in Globalization: The Belatedness of Other Woman and Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy*." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 21.1 (2002): 67–83.
- Kincaid, Jamaica. *Lucy*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1990.
- Lovelady, Stephanie. "Walking Backwards: Coming of Age in *My Antonia* and *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*." *Modern Language Studies* 35.1 (2005): 28–37.
- Oczkowicz, Edyta. "Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy*: Cultural 'Translation' as a Case of Creative Exploration of the Past." *MELUS* 21.3 (1996): 143–57.

# Traditional and Contemporary Kabbalah: Manifestations of a New Spirituality in the Western World

Bryan Bigger

## Abstract

Beginning as an esoteric Jewish mysticism, Kabbalah has undergone many significant changes in recent history. Although depicted as a timeless tradition, texts and public status for Kabbalah did not occur until the twelfth century. The truly formative years of this ambiguous mysticism occurred during the Middle Ages when the *Zohar* was produced and soon became the most important text within Kabbalah. *Tikkun* became an emphasized practice that involved repairing the cosmos of its brokenness that resulted from Adam's failings. *Sefirot* also become recognized as divine emanations that allow one to grow more fully into the character of God. Contemporary Kabbalah has developed into an entirely different tradition that resembles more of a New Age spirituality than a tradition rooted in ancient Jewish practices. Sacrificial commitment is no longer necessary, and anyone can practice Kabbalah by purchasing various books and objects to benefit one's spiritual life. General terminology allows contemporary Kabbalah to appeal to the masses, avoiding any exclusivity. "God" has even been replaced with "Light" to avoid any negative religious stereotypes. Some believe this new Kabbalah will make the Jewish faith more attractive. Unfortunately, Kabbalah does not resemble many Jewish traditions and could create an inaccurate portrayal of Judaism as a religious system. Because of its drastic changes, Kabbalah has become its own tradition that does not resemble any of its former roots.

For centuries, different civilizations have been attempting to explain the origins and purposes of the earth. Countless spiritualities and mysticisms have sprouted and died off while others have flourished for centuries and show no symptoms of attenuation. *Kabbalah* is a spiritual practice composed of different disciplines and doctrines that are prescribed in hopes of better connecting with the perceived creator of the universe. Originating from Jewish texts and oral traditions, Kabbalah has developed into a significant compilation of teachings that reach beyond its Judaist roots. It has even taken form as a pop-culture mysticism that attracts Hollywood actors and countless followers by appealing to contemporary sensibilities. But some are concerned Kabbalah has become a modern fad instead of a deep and profound spiritual commitment that requires a more substantive approach to connecting with God. Jewish identity is becoming less and less affiliated with this formerly esoteric practice, potentially resulting in Kabbalah becoming a mere secular self-help commodity. A historical analysis of Kabbalah and comparisons between its traditional and contemporary

practices reveals that Kabbalah is an ever-changing spiritual endeavor that may redefine perceptions of Jewish mysticism and identity forever.

## Definitions and Origins

Creating a definitive definition for *Kabbalah* is a difficult task considering there are multiple interpretations and approaches to this mystical practice. Like other spiritual endeavors, Kabbalah has been subject to various changes over the centuries and continues to be molded by different teachers and practitioners. Joseph Dan, a foremost scholar in Jewish mysticism, sums up this issue well, writing, "So what is Kabbalah really? There is no answer to this question."<sup>1</sup> Though there may not be a universal definition to use as a reference, it is still possible to create an accurate conception of this practice to better explain its intricacies and development.

The actual word *Kabbalah* can be defined as "the received" or "that which is received," referring to traditions that have been handed down over multiple generations.<sup>2</sup> These traditions are believed by many Kabbalists to have been given to Moses by God and survived through oral transmission<sup>3</sup> until texts were created and accepted as authoritative. Kabbalah is essentially viewed as eternal truth that has always existed, resulting from God's imparting it to humankind through Moses, now stewarded by humans to maintain and reinforce.<sup>4</sup> These traditions are means used to better understand and connect with the Creator God of the universe and to access eternal realities that can be applied to the physical realm. Dan expresses the essence of Kabbalah, explaining, "[The Kabbalah] is never new; it can be newly discovered or newly received, but essentially it is millennia-old divine truth . . . [the Kabbalah is] nonindividual, nonexperiential religious truth, which is received by tradition."<sup>5</sup> There is a profound sense of eternity involving the components of Kabbalah, and though it is transmitted by human means, this does not detract from its value as being self-existent and capable of influencing the material realm.

The early Kabbalah teachings and transmissions were esoteric in nature, and though this divine knowledge was highly regarded, it was protected instead of shared among the masses. Moshe Idel, a renowned scholar of Jewish mysticism writes, "We must remind ourselves that these ideas were meant, from the beginning, to be limited to a small intellectual elite."<sup>6</sup> This is one of the primary reasons why Kabbalah's beginning is so profoundly ambiguous, causing a lot of disagreement about its exact origins. The first texts that are attributed to Kabbalah did not even appear until the twelfth century, which is agreed as the point in history when Kabbalah gained public recognition as a legitimate religious

---

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Dan, *Kabbalah: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 7.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur Green, *A Kabbalah for Tomorrow* (Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2003), 9.

<sup>3</sup> Multiple theories exist involving the inception of Kabbalah but most sources agree that oral tradition is the best explanation for its origins. There is simply not enough room in this paper to discuss the intricacies of Kabbalah's beginnings, and my argument should not be positively or negatively affected by these issues.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph Dan, *The Early Kabbalah* (Nahwah: Paulist Press, 1986), 50–51.

<sup>5</sup> Dan, *Kabbalah: A Very Short Introduction*, 3–4.

<sup>6</sup> Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 20.



practice.<sup>7</sup> This simply complicates things more considering that the essence of Kabbalah is that it is not content specific. It is ambiguous regarding doctrine and essentials of practice, leaving a lot of room for subjective interpretation and various approaches. Nevertheless, there are still foundational texts that have shaped Kabbalah and have even been accepted as canonical within the tradition that are essential in understanding Kabbalah's beginnings and maturation.<sup>8</sup> These fundamental details are crucial to grasping Kabbalah's truly formative years during the Middle Ages and after.

## Medieval and Traditional Formation

The most pivotal years for the development of Kabbalah occurred near the beginning of the fourteenth century. Disagreements arose among different factions of practicing Kabbalists, particularly within Israel and Spain. A Spanish rabbi by the name of Moses de Leon produced the most influential work within Kabbalah, known as the *Zohar*. The *Zohar* can be succinctly defined as “a comprehensive mystical commentary on many sections of the Torah.”<sup>9</sup> This compilation became equal in status with the Torah and Talmud to practicing kabbalists and has shaped their philosophies and approaches to this day. Scholarship increased with the emergence of literature within Kabbalah, allowing more foundational doctrines and a flourishing of ideas within the tradition.

Kabbalists from this era viewed their practices as being supernatural and believed them to have profound significance within the temporal world and heavenly realm. Human deeds and behavior held the capacity to influence the divine world and shape the context of the universe.<sup>10</sup> A lot of the motivation behind the acts of kabbalists was rooted in the conviction that creation and everything it entails is broken and in need of repair. According to tradition and teaching, God's intended creation within the heavenly realm involved many shells that could not contain his glory, resulting in their shattering and becoming trapped within the world of matter. Adam tries to repair the problem, but ends up spilling the divine sparks resulting in his formerly divine body being replaced with flesh and blood.<sup>11</sup> It is now the job of humans, through the methods of Kabbalah, to repair these sparks of light and restore the cosmos to its former self. Traditional practitioners take their responsibility of repairing God's creation seriously and are convinced that “By their [pious Jews] acts of righteous devotion and good works (*tikkun*), they will gradually free the divine sparks from their imprisonment in matter.”<sup>12</sup> Works are emphasized greatly, almost to the point of being ascetic, because of the magnitude

<sup>7</sup> Green, *A Kabbalah for Tomorrow*, 9.

<sup>8</sup> Again, more can be said on these dilemmas, but they are not imperative to this discussion. I do believe however, that is important to at least mention the ambiguities in Kabbalah's early life to better understand it holistically.

<sup>9</sup> David Ariel. *Kabbalah: The Mystic Quest in Judaism* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006), 40.

<sup>10</sup> Dan, *Kabbalah: A Very Short Introduction*, 41.

<sup>11</sup> Robert M. Price, *Top Secret: The Truth behind Today's Pop Mysticism* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2008), 247–248. It is imperative to recognize the dense roots that traditional Kabbalah has within classical Judaistic teachings. This aspect will help demonstrate contemporary Kabbalah's diminished emphasis on Judaism later on.

<sup>12</sup> Price, *Top Secret: The Truth behind Today's Pop Mysticism*, 248.

of the task at hand. Kabbalah is seen as a transcendent tool prescribed by God in which humankind participates in recreating the universe with God to reestablish his original utopian agenda. Dan Coshen-Sherbok complements this premise, saying, "For the mystic, deeds of *tikkun* (cosmic repair) sustain the world . . . Such repair is accomplished by keeping the commandments . . . When this aim is attained, there will be redemption of Israel, humanity, and the cosmos."<sup>13</sup> Emphasis is absolutely placed on the follower's actions. Declaring commitment to Kabbalah assumes that one is going to strive to follow the instructions that God has instituted as a means of philanthropy toward his creation.

Though there is great emphasis placed on human action and responsibility, the Zohar clearly endorses the belief that a messiah will eventually come to redeem the world of all its suffering. This is a view unique to Judaism, and the Zohar describes "Ultimate rectification and redemption of the world through the triumph of the Divine and the utter subjugation and destruction of evil."<sup>14</sup> The entire Zohar is simply a mystical commentary on the Torah, and thus it is impossible for traditional kabbalists to stray away from Jewish traditions and convictions if they desire to stay faithful to their own primary texts.

These mystical interpretations are precisely what make Kabbalah its own particular system of thought within Judaism. The primary goal of kabbalists is to attain a state in which they are "cleaved to God." This doctrine is known as *devekut*, and "The early kabbalists . . . defined *devekut* as the goal of the mystic way . . . *devekut* is a state of mind in which one constantly remembers God and his love."<sup>15</sup> Achieving this state of the soul is held in highest value, and its entire aim is to draw nearer to God and experience his essence that is characterized by love. Perhaps the greatest tool for kabbalists to better connect with the infinite God is through the *sefirot*. The *sefirot* are essentially translated as divine emanations of God, and through the ten different *sefirot*, one can proceed further and further into the character of God. The purpose of the *sefirot* is to "serve as a bridge between the unknowable spiritual God and the God who interacts constantly with the material world and is thus knowable by humans."<sup>16</sup> Along with the other commandments and practices, the *sefirot* were yet another instrument that allowed humans to gain some form of understanding of a God who has no form. There is no way to directly experience or know God completely, so this is designed to gain as much access as humans can possibly attain. Through these unique ten emanations of God, "the Deity manifests himself, emerging from his concealment so that human beings can share in his goodness."<sup>17</sup> God is the absolute end of every approach, and Kabbalah is specifically designed to bring the practitioner into a more profound experience of the God of creation. Every aspect of Kabbalah has the intention of progressing in understanding and actively participating in improving the cosmos. Though some of these foundational princi-

<sup>13</sup> Dan Cohn-Sherbok, *Judaism: History, Belief and Practice*. (New York: Routledge, 2003), 207, 345.

<sup>14</sup> Gabriella Samuel, *The Kabbalah Handbook: A Concise Encyclopedia of Terms and Concepts in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Penguin Group, 2007), 448.

<sup>15</sup> Cohn-Sherbok, *Judaism: History, Belief and Practice*, 207.

<sup>16</sup> Michael Strassfeld, *A Book of Life: Embracing Judaism as a Spiritual Practice* (Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2006), 490.

<sup>17</sup> Cohn-Sherbok, *Judaism: History, Belief and Practice*, 345.

ples still exist within Kabbalah and are used to some degree, the entire purpose of seeking God and seeking the redemption of creation has been compromised for cultural relevance and convenience.

## Contemporary Kabbalah

Kabbalah has changed significantly since its public recognition around the twelfth century, and in many ways, it has become an entirely different practice in itself because of modern developments and approaches. Today, Kabbalah is wrapped up in mainstream culture with the affiliation of famous actors and a desire to gain as many adherents as possible. Esoteric traditions are no longer the shaping elements of this formerly ancient tradition, but a consumer-driven philosophy allows contemporary Kabbalah to spread its message to the ends of the earth. This phenomenon has resulted in many disputes about whether today's Kabbalah is even the same practice as it was centuries ago, with many arguing that it is not. Mara Einstein, a professor at Queens College, writes in her book *Brands of Faith*:

Historically, to practice it [Kabbalah], a person has to be 40, male and an Orthodox Jew. This last requirement entails, among other things, keeping kosher, keeping the Sabbath, learning and debating Jewish law, and forsaking much of modern-day life. A high level of scholarship is necessary because kabbalistic writings are based on Jewish texts, and a person has to achieve a certain level of Judaic knowledge and discipline before taking on the additional rigors of Kabbalah. As one rabbi said to me, "If you really knew what Kabbalah is, you wouldn't want to do it."<sup>18</sup>

This insight into how Kabbalah has become a cultural commodity is why it may be fair to argue that Kabbalah is no longer specific to Jews, but instead looks more like a New Age spirituality than a profound tradition rooted in eternal truths.

Many leaders and scholars within the Kabbalah tradition believe the growing popularity of Kabbalah is a result of its teachings, but the growing popularity really results from the dramatic changes that have taken place, creating a new spirituality all together. Green proudly states, "In this sense the recovery of Kabbalah is a fully Jewish event, a part of the Jewish people's history in this unique time."<sup>19</sup> There is actually little resemblance of any Jewish characteristics within this evolving craze, and many current practitioners would most likely be unaware that Kabbalah has any Jewish roots at all. Instead, it is a trendy self-help guide with practical tips to help better one's self-esteem and attitude. Einstein even mentions how Karen Berg, the wife of Rav Berg, contemporary Kabbalah's founder, initiated the idea of "bringing Kabbalah to the masses by playing down its Jewish aspects."<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately, these Jewish aspects have been so downplayed that there is hardly any essence of Jewish identity within Kabbalah today.

---

<sup>18</sup> Mara Einstein, *Brands of Faith: Marketing Religion in a Commercial Age* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 147.

<sup>19</sup> Green, *A Kabbalah for Tomorrow*, 15.

<sup>20</sup> Einstein, *Brands of Faith: Marketing Religion in a Commercial Age*, 150.

Kabbalah is no longer about connecting more profoundly with the Creator God of the universe, but instead stresses learning trivial advice to enhance one's pleasure in life. Secular themes are more highly emphasized and any potentially intimidating proposals about God or other spiritual matters are avoided to prevent potential customers from fleeing. Kenneth Hanson, a scholar of Hebrew Studies writes, "But the contemporary adventure is not confined to esoteric speculations. It is fleshed out in today's marketplace of ideas with practical advice on how to love deeper, richer, more fulfilling lives."<sup>21</sup> Just like many of the other popular self-help fads that exist today, Kabbalah is entering a shallow realm of spirituality that is generalized to more effectively appeal to the masses. The official Web site for Kabbalah gives a brief outline of the practice that does not mention God in any sense and instead says, "For thousands of years, the great kabbalistic sages have taught that every human being is born with the potential for greatness. Kabbalah is the means for activating that potential."<sup>22</sup> Any person reading this line is going to be intrigued, and the advertisers for this Web site are strategically appealing to emotion and self-interest. Self-actualization appears to be the primary intention, whereas Kabbalah was originally designed to help one experience God and complimentary spiritual realities through unique practices that do not resemble today's methods. In another section of the Web site, where the basic teachings of Kabbalah are outlined, it reads, "By helping us recognize the sources of negativity in our own minds and hearts, Kabbalah gives us the tools for positive change."<sup>23</sup> God is not mentioned once in the entire outline of the basic beliefs, but there are many references to human potential and maximizing it to enhance one's life experience. There is always a large grey area in any religious tradition where new approaches are considered to have lost the original message completely. In this case, it is not as difficult to decipher that Kabbalah has a new message that involves positive feelings and easily attainable advice that anyone can apply.

Contemporary Kabbalah involves many new practices and approaches that are either hardly reminiscent of traditional Kabbalah or are innovative creations that have no similitude with older techniques. The most apparent example is simply referred to as the *red string*. This new craze involves tying a red string around one's wrist to help ward off evil and negative energy. There is absolutely no basis for this practice in traditional Kabbalah, and it has only become popular in recent years.<sup>24</sup> This superstitious string bracelet does not offer any inclination to necessarily devote oneself to studying and progressing in the practice of Kabbalah at all. Yehuda Berg, the son of Rav Berg, and a famous adherent to Kabbalah, even writes in his book *The Red String Book*, "It's important to note that anyone can wear the Red String; they don't necessarily have to be studying Kabbalah."<sup>25</sup> Apparently, the benefits of Kabbalah can be enjoyed without ever having to practice it at all. The esotericism of Kabbalah has been absolutely abolished, and it is hard to even decipher what constitutes practicing Kabbalah.

---

<sup>21</sup> Kenneth Hanson, *Kabbalah: Three Thousand Years of Mystic Tradition* (Tulsa: Council Oak Books, 1998), 243.

<sup>22</sup> Kabbalah Centre International. *Kabbalah*. 2007. <http://www.kabbalah.com/> (accessed November 2, 2009).

<sup>23</sup> Kabbalah Centre International. *Kabbalah*. 2007. <http://www.kabbalah.com/> (accessed November 2, 2009).

<sup>24</sup> Price, *Top Secret: The Truth behind Today's Pop Mysticism*, 253.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted in Einstein, *Brands of Faith: Marketing Religion in a Commercial Age*, 160.

Another innovation within Kabbalah is Kabbalah water. Kabbalah water is a product distributed through the Kabbalah Centre that promises to offer special benefits that normal water cannot. The official Web site for Kabbalah water explains, “Years ago, Rav Berg and the great Kabbalists who were his teachers made an astonishing discovery: a truly sharing consciousness, channeled through certain Kabbalistic blessings and meditations, has the power to return water to its primordial state of completely positive, healing energy.”<sup>26</sup> This particular water has the ability to instill positive energy along with providing healing effects to anyone who consumes it. Traditional kabbalists did not ever consider the prospect of looking to water for giving divine results. This shows how contemporary Kabbalah is increasingly looking to physical products to help people seek effects that kabbalists centuries ago would have sought through study and devotion to tradition.

These examples prove how utterly opposing the perspectives of traditional kabbalists and contemporary practitioners are involving mysticism and spirituality. Dedication is no longer a requirement to reap the benefits of Kabbalah. Green describes the typical practices of kabbalists centuries ago, saying, “Their activities included meditation . . . midnight study vigils . . . fasting, ablutions, the chanting of special hymns, and other activities to foster an intense life of piety . . .”<sup>27</sup> Commitment was valued for these practitioners and they were confident in the rewards that could be obtained through sacrificial dedication. Now, all it takes is a quick swig of water or even a small piece of material worn around one’s wrist to tap into divine power and experience spiritual benefits. It is difficult imagining these two contrasting approaches as the same practice with minor variations in methods. These techniques are so opposing that an entirely new system has been created.

The literature of today’s Kabbalah is another example of how this millennia-old tradition has taken on new forms that are reshaping perceptions of Jewish mysticism. The Berg family members—Phillip, Kay, and their two sons, Yehuda and Michael—all publish numerous books that enjoy significant sales. Many of the titles involve topics that are typical to daily life and would be attractive to anyone seeking practical help in a particular area such as discovering joy or finding a soul mate. Some of the titles read *Tune-Ups: A Day-to-Day Guide for Making Your Life Better*, *The Secret: Unlocking the Source of Joy and Fulfillment*, and *God Wears Lipstick*. These appealing, and sometimes provocative, titles do not mention any palpable spiritual words such as the *Zohar* or *sefirot* that may be discouraging to someone who is a spiritual seeker. This approach is not necessarily shocking because it is an effective way to get new adherents, but the material within the books is what displays Kabbalah’s entirely new identity.

The literature of contemporary Kabbalah presents subject matter that does not resemble its traditional roots in the least. The ideas offered are not necessarily kabbalistic and instead offer simple pious guidelines to improve one’s life. In his book *Beyond Blame: A Full-Responsibility Approach to Life*, Yehuda Berg introduces the term *Light* as a kabbalistic teaching explaining it as, “the flowing, outward emanation of Divine Energy.”<sup>28</sup> *Light* is actually a

<sup>26</sup> *Kabbalah Water*. 2004–2005. <http://www.kabbalahwater.com/> (accessed November 2, 2009).

<sup>27</sup> Green, *A Kabbalah for Tomorrow*, 10.

<sup>28</sup> Yehuda Berg, *Beyond Blame: A Full-Responsibility Approach to Life* (New York: Kabbalah Publishing, 2006), 12.

term that can be found in the Zohar and earlier teachings of Kabbalah. The issue is whether this term has become superficial and has lost its entire original meaning. Michael Bogdanow presents the concept of Light that is present in the book of Genesis, explicating, "According to the Zohar, Adam and Eve were clothed in garments of 'light' befitting their high spiritual nature."<sup>29</sup> This could parallel Berg's statement, and it could easily be justified that the Light that clothed Adam and Eve were outward emanations of Divine Energy. Einstein however, provides interesting insight into the issues of Light in Kabbalah that helps distinguish the changes in meaning Light has taken. She points out, "The [Kabbalah] Centre explains that the word 'God' has too many negative connotations, and so 'Light' is used instead to convey the idea of an all-giving source of energy."<sup>30</sup> An immediate response to Einstein's claim may be that this Light is simply a reference to the concept of *ein sof*. This term is translated as "no end" or "infinite" and is used to describe the supreme entity of the universe. Dan explains, "The most important aspect of *ein sof* in kabbalistic thought is as the ultimate source of the flow of the purest divine light that constantly provides the power to exist in both divine and earthly realms."<sup>31</sup> It is imperative to note that Light is described as an *aspect* of the *ein sof* and not as the object of it. So Berg's use of Light is actually replacing an important doctrine found within traditional Kabbalah to soften the blow of religious terminology. Avoiding the name of God is not out of reverence in this case but is more a marketing ploy and a way to contemporize and even change a tradition all together.

Light is also used within today's Kabbalah to justify sharing. The wisdom of Kabbalah is seen as the Light that must be shared with everyone so that its benefits can be enjoyed by as many people as possible. Einstein notes how the Light has become a reference point for the predominant concept of sharing in contemporary Kabbalah.<sup>32</sup> Sharing is not only a way to further the message of Kabbalah but it is also argued that evangelizing is beneficial for the actual practitioner too. Michael Berg proves this theory in his book *The Secret* when he writes, "The only way to achieve joy and fulfillment is by becoming a being of sharing."<sup>33</sup> He goes on to explain the importance of sharing one's discovery of Kabbalah's wisdom and the prosperity it brings to life. This idea of evangelizing is absolutely contrary to the values of early kabbalists. Esoteric teachings are not even considered anymore, and instead they have been replaced with unapologetic sharing of all that Kabbalah entails. Perle Epstein's words show the contrast between early Kabbalah and contemporary Kabbalah when he says, "No real teacher of Kabbalah will advertise; if you are lucky, you'll hear of him or her by word of mouth."<sup>34</sup> Instead of limiting the practice to a minority of qualified individuals who are well versed in Jewish texts and traditions, this new Kabbalah aspires to convert anyone who is seeking to experience some form of fulfillment in life. The new Kabbalahists are even willing

---

<sup>29</sup> Michael Bogdanow, *Zohar: The Books of Enlightenment* (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1983), 243.

<sup>30</sup> Einstein, *Brands of Faith: Marketing Religion in a Commercial Age*, 151.

<sup>31</sup> Dan, *Kabbalah: A Very Short Introduction*, 40-41.

<sup>32</sup> Einstein, *Brands of Faith: Marketing Religion in a Commercial Age*, 151.

<sup>33</sup> Michael Berg, *The Secret: Unlocking the Source of Joy & Fulfillment* (New York: Kabbalah Publishing, 2004), 22.

<sup>34</sup> Perle Epstein, *Kabbalah: The Way of the Jewish Mystic* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1978), 163.

to change the denotations of terminology to better market to potential customers, thus compromising the entire worldview all together. With new definitions and a philosophy of evangelism, Kabbalah has digressed into a market-driven spirituality that is bent on profit.

## Implications for Jewish Identity

Kabbalah's extensive transformation in recent years creates many questions involving the future of Jewish identity and values. Many different interpretations exist involving the growing interest in Kabbalah as a spiritual practice, but as mentioned earlier, it does not appear to be a Jewish movement at all. David Ariel, President of the Cleveland College of Jewish Studies, is optimistic about Kabbalah's increase and believes that it is connected with Judaism's success, saying, "American Jewry is on the brink of a spiritual revival."<sup>35</sup> Although it may be true that American Jewry is approaching a point of revitalization, this more than likely will not result from Kabbalah's success. Kabbalah resembles the New Age movement more than Jewish tradition in that it does not involve a committed community, but instead is more individualistic in practice.<sup>36</sup> Though there are some strategically located centers for Kabbalah throughout the country, they are not temples or synagogues where people regularly meet to enjoy fellowship. People who pursue Kabbalah will more likely be interested in wearing the red string and reading a few books than converting to Judaism. There is no evidence that the leaders in Kabbalah are trying to reinstate devotion to synagogue attendance and traditional Jewish practices. Instead, they appear to be attempting to conceal ties to the Jewish faith that Kabbalah has to better attract people from a variety of backgrounds. Kabbalah is viewed as a universal spirituality, and to require commitment to a Jewish lifestyle would turn many away.

Practicing Kabbalah was not even typical centuries ago, and most Jews did not adhere to the different mystical convictions it entails. Because Judaism has never been absolutely dissolved within Kabbalah, it will probably not correlate strongly with the success or failure of Kabbalah today. Judaism's countercultural views, and sometimes demanding precepts, do not mesh well with Kabbalah's noncommittal disposition that allows people to come and go as they please. One danger of Judaism being too affiliated with Kabbalah is that outsiders will get the wrong perception of what Jewish identity truly entails. They may assume that red strings and magic water are the primary doctrines of Jewish belief and will either be wrongly attracted or dissuaded. Einstein mentions, "The Kabbalah Center is a business and its mission—like all marketing-oriented organizations—is growth. Unfortunately, this seems to come at the expense of earnest spiritual seekers."<sup>37</sup> Jews could suffer from many misconceptions and lose a lot of their former notoriety for being devoted to God and not being motivated by promises of worldly prosperity. People may see this consumer mentality that appears to consume Kabbalah today and impose those assumptions upon Judaism as a worldview. They will entirely miss the profound history that Judaism entails and potentially

<sup>35</sup> David Ariel, *Kabbalah: The Mystic Quest in Judaism* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006), xii.

<sup>36</sup> Einstein, *Brands of Faith: Marketing Religion in a Commercial Age*, 199.

<sup>37</sup> Einstein, *Brands of Faith: Marketing Religion in a Commercial Age*, 170.

lose an opportunity to commit to a religion that could truly benefit them in ways that practical self-help cannot. Instead of being excited about Kabbalah's resurgence, participating and on-looking Jews should be more concerned about retaining their sense of identity that has preserved them as a people for millennia.

The nature of time assumes change, and throughout history, cultures, people groups, and even religions have experienced the effects of time. Practices and approaches change with the many innovations that surface, and one cannot expect a tradition to undergo no alterations after years and years of development on the earth. The only danger that arises, specifically within religions, is when the worldview has been lost because of too much change. After experiencing many modifications, one must question whether the message has been lost in the ever-adjusting methods and approaches. This tension exists within every tradition, and Kabbalah is one practice that has shown tremendous transformation in the last century. Unfortunately, it appears as though Kabbalah has been so remodeled that it has become an entirely new system. With newly invented beliefs, practices, and even new doctrine, Kabbalah appears to have become a victim of culture, especially the consumerism of America.

With formerly profound and esoteric teachings, Kabbalah is now an all-inclusive trend that may eventually lose itself in trying to create followers. It is hard to predict how earlier kabbalists would respond to contemporary Kabbalah, but it is likely that they would be concerned about their tradition losing all of its foundational principles rooted in seeking God and restoring his creation. Jews may not have to worry about suffering from their diminished affiliation with Kabbalah, and it may be advantageous for them to distance themselves as much as possible. The future of Kabbalah is still in question, but it is certain that it would be a tragedy to see such a remarkable tradition destroy itself because it compromised its entire identity for aspirations it never initially desired.

## Bibliography

- Ariel, David. *Kabbalah: The Mystic Quest in Judaism*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006.
- Berg, Michael. *The Secret: Unlocking the Source of Joy & Fulfillment*. New York: Kabbalah Publishing, 2004.
- Berg, Yehuda. *Beyond Blame: A Full-Responsibility Approach to Life*. New York: Kabbalah Publishing, 2006.
- Bogdanow, Michael. *Zohar: The Books of Enlightenment*. New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1983.
- Cohn-Sherbok, Dan. *Judaism: History, Belief and Practice*. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Dan, Joseph. *Kabbalah: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- . *The Early Kabbalah*. Nahwah: Paulist Press, 1986.
- Einstein, Mara. *Brands of Faith: Marketing Religion in a Commercial Age*. New York: Routledge, 2008.
- Epstein, Perle. *Kabbalah: The Way of the Jewish Mystic*. New York: Doubleday & Company, 1978.



- Green, Arthur. *A Kabbalah for Tomorrow*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2003.
- Hanson, Kenneth. *Kabbalah: Three Thousand Years of Mystic Tradition*. Tulsa: Council Oak Books, 1998.
- Idel, Moshe. *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988.
- Kabbalah Centre International. *Kabbalah*. 2007. <http://www.kabbalah.com/> (accessed November 2, 2009).
- Kabbalah Water*. 2004–2005. <http://www.kabbalahwater.com/> (accessed November 2, 2009).
- Price, Robert M. *Top Secret: The Truth behind Today's Pop Mysticism*. New York: Prometheus Books, 2008.
- Samuel, Gabriella. *The Kabbalah Handbook: A Concise Encyclopedia of Terms and Concepts in Jewish Mysticism*. New York: Penguin Group, 2007.
- Strassfeld, Michael. *A Book of Life: Embracing Judaism as a Spiritual Practice*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2006.

# Exploring College Students' Perception of the Effectiveness of Their Coping Styles for Dealing with Stress

Sandra Lenz

## Abstract

This study examines how stress can physically affect students. Students have various coping styles in how they handle their stress. *Coping styles* refer to how students respond to an issue, so it is important to understand the effectiveness of each of these coping skills. A questionnaire was administered to two classes of students requesting them to rate the effectiveness of coping styles, the frequency of using each coping style, and their demographics. The task-oriented coping style was rated to be the most effective coping style and used quite frequently. The study found a significant relationship between gender and task-oriented coping style and between age and avoidance-oriented coping style. Understanding students' coping styles can help mental health professionals become more culturally competent.

## Introduction

Stress can cause many psychological and physical illnesses. College students are bombarded with demands from their courses, employment, and personal lives, causing them to develop stress-related illnesses. As a result, students have to develop coping skills to deal with this stress. College students use various coping styles based on their experiences, culture, and perceptions, so social workers try to understand these coping styles, so they can help these students. Social work research explores various coping styles students adopt to cope with their stress. However, whether student perspective is important or relevant to the coping styles' effectiveness is not considered by researchers. This study investigates the students' perception of the overall effectiveness of their various coping styles for dealing with stress.

## Literature Review

### Understanding Stress

According to Smith and Dust (2006), stress results when students believe that the obligations they have to fulfill are too arduous and the students perceive that they have insufficient means to cope with the given tasks. Bouteyre, Maurel, and Bernaud (2007) describe how students who attend a university are presented with a plethora of opportunities for personal and professional growth. However, students are compelled to adapt to new demands that

affect every aspect of their lives. Heiman (2004) reports that students feel stress as a result from personal and external expectations. Negga, Applewhite, and Livingston (2007) mention other daily stressors that students have to deal with including time management, family obligations, work, financial matters, class attendance, interpersonal relationships, and low grades. Students are forced to separate from their families, communities, and friends while finding their own paths in life.

### **Stress Management Skills**

Zastrow and Kirst-Ashman (2007) report that because stress induces psychological and physical illnesses along with increased likelihood of making poor lifestyle choices, it is imperative for students to learn how to effectively deal with stress. Stress management can actually repair the damage caused by stress and allow individuals to live satisfying, healthy lives. One way students can manage stress is by practicing coping. Lazarus and Folkman (as cited in Omaru, 2007) define coping as the “personal, cognitive, and behavioral efforts to manage internal and/or external demands in a stressful situation” (p. 944). Goral, Kesimci, and Gencoz (2006) describe coping as a way to control, endure, or assuage a tense situation. Nezu (1986) explains that coping serves as a buffer against psychological and physical problems and making poor lifestyle choices.

### **Coping Styles**

Moreover, Heiman (2004) reports that research indicates there are particular coping styles that students use when they react and handle stress. The first coping style is called *task-oriented coping*. It involves individuals directly confronting and managing the source of their stress. This means that the individuals prefer to deal directly with the stress by confronting, controlling, or managing stressful tasks. For instance, if homework is the source of their stress, these individuals would rather work on the homework than deal with their emotions. They focus on completing the task and not on their emotions. The second coping style, *emotion-oriented coping*, consists of individuals controlling their emotional response to stress. This means the individuals manage the emotional aspect of the stress instead of the task. Then, if homework is the source of their stress, these individuals focus on their anxiety instead of on the homework. They focus on their emotions and not on completing the task. The final coping style is called *avoidance coping*, which deals with evading or distancing oneself from the source of the stress. This means the individuals would rather avoid the stress than deal with it. For example, if homework is the source of their stress, these individuals will avoid doing the homework (p. 507).

Smith and Dust (2006) explicate that students employ these coping styles depending on the situation. For instance, individuals will engage in emotion-oriented coping when they believe that the source of the stress is more serious and uncontrollable. If the source of the stress is threatening, individuals will engage in avoidance coping; however, stressful situations that are perceived as controllable and challenging will have individuals employ task-oriented coping. Students who use task-oriented and emotion-oriented coping are better adjusted than are students who engage in avoidance coping. Sideridis (2006) indicates that students who

engage in emotion-oriented coping increase anxiety and stress but also correlate with long-term anxiety. Omura (2007) argues that avoidance coping did not encourage psychological adjustment but did not stifle students' ability to adjust, and students can use this style of coping when they encounter stressful events with which they do not have the sufficient means to cope.

### **Demographics and Their Influence on Coping Styles**

Smith and Dust (2006) claim that demographics play an important role in determining which coping style college students will use. Ethnicity can influence how a student will respond. Sheu and Sedlacek (2004) find that African American and Caucasian students are more likely to participate in task-oriented and emotion-oriented coping, and Asian American students are more likely to engage in avoidance coping (Smith & Dust). This research indicates that both genders employ different coping styles; female students are less likely to use avoidance coping than are male students, regardless of ethnicity (Sheu & Sedlacek, 2004). Pritchard and Wilson (2006) indicate that female students use emotion-oriented coping throughout their college years whereas male students increase their use of the emotion-oriented coping style. Moreover, older college students are more likely to employ task-oriented coping, and younger students are more likely to use emotion-oriented coping (Heiman, 2004). Heiman and Kariv (2004) explain that older students use task-oriented coping more often because they have previous experience with postsecondary education. This student population already has the learning strategies and skills needed to succeed academically. Additionally, unemployed students engage more in emotion-oriented coping than employed students do (Heiman, 2004).

### **Purpose of the Study**

Current research examines the effectiveness of various coping styles and strategies and indicates how students' culture, gender, and experiences influence what they will use to cope and how they will react to the stress. However, the research does not investigate if the college students' perception influences the coping styles and strategies' effectiveness. Similarly, the research does not explore whether students find how they specifically react to stress was more effective than how others react to stress. For example, some students may believe that dealing with the task causing the stress is more effective than avoiding it.

Additionally, the research does not explore whether students deem that certain ways of dealing with stress are more effective than others. This study will investigate the students' perception of the effectiveness of their various coping styles including task-oriented, emotion-oriented, and avoidance. This study will also explore the students' perception of the effectiveness of their coping strategies, which includes using social support systems, consuming a substance, practicing their spiritual beliefs, and seeking formal services. The relationship between coping strategies and coping styles will be investigated.

### **Research Question**

Which coping style is perceived by students to be the most effective in helping them deal with stress?

### Operational Definitions

*Task-oriented coping style*—occurs when students prefer to directly confront and manage the source of their stress (Heiman, 2004).

*Emotion-oriented coping style*—occurs when students prefer to control their emotional response to stress (Heiman, 2004).

*Avoidance coping style*—occurs when students deal with stress by evading or distancing themselves from the source that is causing the stress (Heiman, 2004).

## Methodology

### Design

This study is a descriptive study that uses a cross-sectional, one-group design, which is symbolically represented as follows:

O1

Where:

O1 = Only measurement of the dependent variable, effectiveness of coping styles and strategies.

One threat to internal validity is the history of the students' coping skills. An event may occur and cause students to change their coping styles or strategies. Furthermore, college students may use new alternative coping styles or strategies that they do not typically use, and the coping styles or strategies may prove to be very effective for that one instance. This threatens the internal validity by influencing the students' decisions. This does not mean that the new alternative coping styles are effective all the time, but the students may assume that because these styles were effective at first, they will be effective in similar situations. To counter this problem, the Perception of the Effectiveness of Coping Styles questionnaire (PECS) includes questions about how often the students employ their coping styles or strategies. This helps ensure that the research is testing the effectiveness of coping styles and strategies students typically use. See Appendix A for details.

In addition, another threat to internal validity may be selection bias. The participants in the study are strictly volunteers, who received extra credit for participation. Moreover, this threat cannot be controlled. Finally, the threat of maturation can also affect the internal validity of this study. Older students employ different coping styles and strategies than younger adults do. Therefore, PECS asks the students to identify their age range.

### Sampling

This study used the purposive and convenient sampling technique; college students attending psychology classes were selected to take the questionnaire. Permission from a professor who taught the psychology courses was obtained to survey her classes. Questionnaires with cover forms were administered to college students attending psychology courses (see Appendix A for a copy of the questionnaire and cover form). The population consisted of undergraduate students attending Missouri State University in Springfield, Missouri, who were at least 18 years old, and seeking a degree either part-time or full-time. The respondents for

this study were undergraduate students who were at least 18 years old, who were seeking a degree, and who were attending a psychology course.

The college students were directed to read the cover form, which explained the purpose and requirements to participate in the study. The college students could decide if they wanted to volunteer, and they must have met the criteria of being at least 18 years old and pursuing a degree. Responses were anonymous; thus, participants were not identified, and only the researchers had access to the data. To protect the students' identity, any information was reported in the aggregate.

### **Instrumentation**

The Perception of the Effectiveness of Coping Styles questionnaire (PECS) is a self-designed questionnaire. Content validity was obtained by having a counselor review and critique PECS to ensure that the content was appropriate and pertained to the purpose of the study. In addition, the counselor validated that the questions supported the definitions of the coping styles and strategies. A research professor validated the content and formatting of the questionnaire.

PECS contains 19 close-ended questions and takes participants approximately 10 minutes to complete. There were 14 questions using a 6-point Likert scale. Seven of these questions ask the participants to rate each coping style or strategy ranging from *least effective*, *somewhat not effective*, *neutral*, *not applicable*, *somewhat effective*, and *very effective*. The other seven questions require the participants to identify how often they utilize each coping style or strategy ranging from *rarely*, *not that often*, *neutral*, *not applicable*, *often*, and *most of the time*. Furthermore, one open-ended question allows participants to identify any other coping style or strategy that was not listed in the questionnaire. Finally, the last four questions ask the participants about their demographics. These particular close-ended questions ask the participants to identify their gender, ethnicity, employment status, and age.

The researcher distributed PECS to a class of college students attending a psychology course; they were instructed to read the cover letter. The cover letter explained the requirements for participating in the study, and it indicated that PECS was anonymous.

Only the researchers had access to the individual results, and only the aggregate was reported. By completing PECS, the students indicated that they were giving consent to participate in this study. After completing PECS, the participants placed their questionnaires in a manila envelope at the front of the classroom. The researcher collected the manila envelope.

### **Data Analysis**

Quantitative data was gathered from a sample of students attending two psychology classes. The ordinal data was analyzed using *Statistical Package for Social Sciences* (SPSS) software program. The frequencies for the three coping styles were compared to identify which coping style students perceived to be the most effective and how often each coping style was employed. The data was analyzed for themes in relations to the students' demographics and coping styles. A chi-square test of independence ( $p < .05$ ) was used because the study included at least 50 participants.

**TABLE 1** Perspectives of the Effectiveness of Coping Styles

Coping Styles	Statistics					
	Least Effective	Somewhat Not Effective	Neutral	Not Applicable	Somewhat Effective	Most Effective
Task	0	1 (2%)	3 (6%)	1 (2%)	28 (56%)	17 (34%)
Emotional	5 (10%)	14 (28%)	3 (6%)	0	21 (42%)	7 (14%)
Avoidance	20 (40%)	18 (36%)	3 (6%)	1 (2%)	6 (12%)	2 (4%)

Note: A total of 50 students rated the effectiveness of each coping style.

**TABLE 2** Actual Reported Use of Coping Styles

Coping Styles	Statistics					
	Rarely	Not That Often	Neutral	Not Applicable	Often	Most Often
Task 2 (4%)	7 (14%)	6 (12%)	0	24 (48%)	11 (22%)	
Emotion	5 (10%)	12 (24%)	4 (8%)	1 (2%)	26 (52%)	2 (4%)
Avoidance	13 (26%)	15 (30%)	4 (8%)	1 (2%)	16 (32%)	1 (2%)

Note: A total of 50 students rated how often they used each coping style.

## Results

*Demographics.* The results illustrated that the sample consisted of 74% females and 26% males. Additionally, 76% of the students were between 20 and 22 years old, 14% of the students were between 23 and 25 years old, 8% of the students were between 26 and 29 years old, and 2% of the students were 42 years old. The results indicated that 98% of students identified themselves as Caucasian, and 2% of the students preferred not to identify their ethnicity. Additionally, 82% of students indicated that they were employed, and 18% of the students reported that they were not employed. Of the employed students, 10% of students worked between 1 and 10 hours, 30% of students worked between 11 and 20 hours, 22% of students worked between 21 and 30 hours, 8% of students worked between 31 and 40 hours, and 2% of students worked more than 40 hours.

*Coping Styles.* (See Table I and Table II for details.) The results revealed that 56% of students indicated that the task-oriented coping style was somewhat effective, and 34% of students found the task-oriented coping style to be very effective. In addition, 48% of students used the task-oriented coping style often, and 22% of students employed this coping

style most often. Furthermore, 42% of students found the emotion-oriented coping style to be somewhat effective, and 28% of students found it to be somewhat not effective. The results indicated that 52% of students often use the emotion-oriented coping style, and 24% of students did not use this coping style often. Moreover, 40% of students found the avoidance-oriented coping style to be least effective, and 36% of students found this coping style to be somewhat not effective. The results revealed that 26% of students rarely use the avoidance-oriented coping style, and 30% of students did not often use this coping style.

### Demographics in Relations to Coping Styles

*Coping Styles and Gender.* The chi-square test of independence compared gender and use of the task-oriented coping style. There was a significant relationship,  $\chi^2(4) = 12.755, p < .05$ . Gender was more likely to influence the utilization of the task-oriented coping style to deal with stress. The chi-square test of independence compared gender and use of the emotion-oriented coping style. There was no significant relationship,  $\chi^2(4) = 5.277, p > .05$ . Gender was independent of the utilization of the emotion-oriented coping style to deal with stress. The chi-square test of independence compared gender and use of the avoidance-oriented coping style. There was no significant relationship,  $\chi^2(5) = 3.338, p > .05$ . Gender was independent of the utilization of the avoidance-oriented coping style to deal with stress.

*Coping Style and Employment.* The chi-square test of independence compared employment and use of the task-oriented coping style. There was no significant relationship,  $\chi^2(4) = 5.435, p > .05$ . Employment was independent of the utilization of the task-oriented coping style to deal with stress. The chi-square test of independence compared employment and use of the emotion-oriented coping style. There was no significant relationship,  $\chi^2(4) = 2.413, p > .05$ . Employment was independent of the utilization of the emotion-oriented coping style to deal with stress. The chi-square test of independence compared employment and use of the avoidance-oriented coping style. There was no significant relationship,  $\chi^2(5) = 7.806, p > .05$ . Employment was independent of the utilization of the avoidance-oriented coping style to deal with stress.

*Coping Style and Age.* The chi-square test of independence compared age and use of the task-oriented coping style. There was no significant relationship,  $\chi^2(36) = 24.584, p > .05$ . Age was independent of the utilization of the task-oriented coping style to deal with stress. The chi-square test of independence compared age and use of the emotion-oriented coping style. There was no significant relationship,  $\chi^2(36) = 40.593, p > .05$ . Age was independent of the utilization of the emotion-oriented coping style to deal with stress. The chi-square test of independence compared age and use of the avoidance-oriented coping style. There was a significant relationship,  $\chi^2(45) = 82.862, p < .05$ . Age was more likely to influence the utilization of the avoidance-oriented coping style to deal with stress.

### Discussion

The results for the coping styles are consistent with their effectiveness and frequency of their usage. The task-oriented coping style is rated to be the most effective and most frequently



used coping style. Because the students rate the task-oriented coping style to be the most effective, students are more likely to use this coping style more frequently than the other coping styles. This suggests that students would rather deal with the actual issue than with their emotional reaction to the issue or to completely avoid the issue. Students have moderate opinions about the effectiveness of the emotion-oriented coping style. Its effectiveness and frequency of its use is normally distributed. Moreover, students find that the avoidance-oriented coping style to be the least effective, and the students rarely implemented this coping style. Smith and Dust (2006) explain that students who use task-oriented and emotion-oriented coping styles are better adjusted than are students who engage in avoidance coping. Because the task-oriented coping style is the most effective, it will make sense for students to use it more often. Depending on the situation, students are selective when employing the emotion-oriented coping style, which explains why they are willing to apply this coping style occasionally. The avoidance-oriented coping style was perceived to be not effective; therefore, it makes sense for students not to use this.

Additionally, gender is more likely to influence whether an individual will employ a task-oriented coping style to deal with stress. Gender does not affect an individual's decision to use emotion-oriented or avoidance-oriented coping styles. The findings do not support the literature because no significant relationship was found. Sheu and Sedlacek (2004) indicate that both genders employ different approaches to the emotion-oriented coping style; female students are less likely to use avoidance coping than are male students, regardless of ethnicity. Next, employment does not influence any coping style, which is contrary to prior research. Heiman (2004) reports that unemployed students engage more in emotion-oriented coping than employed students do. Age does not influence an individual's decision to implement task-oriented and emotion-oriented coping styles to deal with stress. However, age is more likely to influence whether an individual will employ the avoidance-oriented coping style. Heiman and Kariv (2004) explain that older students use task-oriented coping styles more often because they have previous experience with postsecondary education. Younger students are more likely to use the emotion-oriented coping style (Heiman, 2004). The findings do not reflect the results in prior research for task-oriented and emotion-oriented coping styles, but they indicate there is a relationship for avoidance-oriented coping style that was not found in prior research.

The students' ratings of the effectiveness of their coping styles convey to mental health professionals the students' preferences for dealing with their stress. The more a coping style is viewed as effective, the more the students will use that coping style. Mental health professionals can use the task-oriented coping style to supplement and guide treatment planning and interventions. Understanding why gender and age affect whether students will adopt a specific coping style will help mental health professionals understand their clients more thoroughly, leading to more successful treatment outcomes. Mental health professionals can further explain how the students are reacting to their problems. Mental health clinicians can learn how students approach their issues and can then base their interventions on this knowledge. Some coping styles are more maladaptive than others are, so mental health practitioners can teach students better coping skills.

The findings of this study are contrary to prior research; however, mental health professionals have to be very diligent regarding their clients' diverse backgrounds. Being sensitive to how demographics influence coping styles can assist mental health professionals to become more culturally competent. Each student is different in his or her approach to handling an issue, and counseling agencies on campuses must have services that are individualized to address each student's unique needs. Counseling agencies on campuses are concerned about students' success and are creating programs to adapt to students' coping styles. Zaleski et al. (1998) indicate that how a student handles a stressful situation reveals the physical and mental consequences that will happen to the student. Those students who successfully cope with the situation will adapt to college life. Students who lack coping skills may suffer from stress-related illness or quit attending college.

The limitations to this study are that it did not use random sampling and random assignment. No causal relationship can be inferred. Another limitation to this study includes generalization, for the sample does not constitute diversity in the students' ethnicity. The majority of students were Caucasian, and only one student indicated that he or she refused to identify his or her ethnic background. In addition, had the sample size been larger, there may have been a chance that employment may have influenced the effectiveness of coping styles. Moreover, the response rate was not obtained, and no observations were made about nonparticipants. Another limitation to the study was that the professor offered extra credit to all participants, which was not originally planned in the data collection procedures. This could have influenced students to participate in the study. The questionnaire inquired how many hours the respondents worked. If there are more students working full-time, there may be a difference between full-time and part-time employees. Finally, the study was possibly limited by the number of questions on the questionnaire regarding coping styles. The questions were general, so more in-depth questions about each coping style might have changed the results. The study was limited by the number of questions on the questionnaire regarding demographics. More questions about demographics may have increased the scope of this study. The study does not have a high reliability or validity rating.

For improvements, future research will include administering the questionnaire to other ethnic groups. Future research can identify the effectiveness of these coping styles in relation to ethnicity. More demographic questions can be provided such as how many years students have been in school, extracurricular activities, number of classes, parental status, marital status, and other obligations. This information will help mental health professionals understand the relationship between certain characteristics and students' approach to an issue. Finally, future research can include a larger sample size and more in-depth questions to examine if this measure would alter the results and increase the reliability and validity of this study. Other questions that have evolved from this study can include how these coping styles compare with other populations in the community and what coping strategies are employed.

## References

- Bouteyre, E., Maurel, M., & Bernaud, J. L. (2007). Daily hassles and depressive symptoms among first year psychology students in France: The role of coping and social support. *Stress and Health, 23*, 93–99. Retrieved January 16, 2008, from Academic Search Premier database.
- Goral, F. S., Kesimci, A., & Gencoz, T. (2006). Roles of the controllability of the event and coping strategies on stress-related growth in a Turkish sample. *Stress and Health, 22*, 297–303. Retrieved January 16, 2008, from Academic Search Premier database.
- Heiman, T. (2004). Examination of the salutogenic model, support resources, coping style, and stressors among Israeli university students. *Journal of Psychology, 138*(6), 505–520. Retrieved January 16, 2008, from Academic Search Premier database.
- Heiman, T., & Kariv, D. (2004). Coping experience among students in higher education. *Educational Studies, 30*(4), 441–455. Retrieved January 16, 2008, from Academic Search Premier database.
- Negga, F., Applewhite, S., & Livingston, I. (2007). African American college students and stress: School racial composition, self-esteem and social support. *College Student Journal, 41*(4), 823–830. Retrieved January 16, 2008, from Academic Search Premier database.
- Nezu, A. M. (1986). Effects of stress from current problems: Comparison to major life events. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 42*(6), 847–852. Retrieved January 16, 2008, from Academic Search Premier database.
- Omura, K. (2007). Situation-related changes of causal structures and the stress model in Japanese college students. *Social Behavior and Personality, 35*(7), 943–960. Retrieved January 16, 2008, from Academic Search Premier database.
- Pritchard, M. E., & Wilson, G. S. (2006). Do coping styles change during the first semester of college? *Journal of Social Psychology, 146*(1), 125–127. Retrieved January 16, 2008, from Academic Search Premier database.
- Sheu, H. B., & Sedlacek, W. E. (2004). An exploratory study of help-seeking attitudes and coping strategies among college students by race and gender. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development, 37*(3), 130–143. Retrieved January 16, 2008, from Academic Search Premier database.
- Sideridis, G. D. (2006). Coping is not an “either” or “or”: The interaction of coping strategies in regulating affect, arousal and performance. *Stress and Health, 22*, 315–327. Retrieved January 16, 2008, from Academic Search Premier database.
- Smith, M. C., & Dust, M. C. (2006). An exploration of the influence of dispositional traits and appraisal on coping strategies in African American college students. *Journal of Personality, 74*(1), 145–174. Retrieved January 16, 2008, from Academic Search Premier database.
- Zaleski, E. H., LEvey-Thors, C., & Schiaffino, K. M. (1998). Coping mechanisms, stress, social support, and health problems in college student. *Applied Developmental Science, 2*(3), 127–137. Retrieved January 16, 2008, from Academic Search Premier database.
- Zastrow, C., & Kirst-Ashman, K. K. (2007). *Understanding human behavior and the social environment*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Higher Education.

## Appendix A

### Exploring Students' Perception of the Effectiveness of Coping Styles

You are being asked to volunteer to participate in a study, which will explore the effectiveness of various coping skills. There is no penalty or loss of any benefit for participating in this study, and you can withdraw at any time. The questionnaire contains a list of 19 questions and will take approximately 10 minutes to fill out. You must be at least 18 years old and pursuing a degree.

The purpose of the study is to evaluate your perception of overall effectiveness of your coping styles and strategies for dealing with stress. This study is to provide insight of what coping styles and strategies you perceive as effective; and you, as a college student can help colleges and universities reach out to their students and help them deal with their stress more effectively.

This study is not offering counseling or advice on how to cope with stress, nor should you adopt any new coping styles or strategies that are mentioned in the questionnaire. There are no foreseeable psychological or physical risks with taking this survey. If you should feel that you need help dealing with your stress, contact Missouri State University's Counseling and Testing Center at 836-5116.

The questionnaire is anonymous; thus, no one will be able to identify you, and only the researcher will have access to the data. Any information will be reported in the aggregate. By completing this questionnaire, you are indicating that you are giving consent to participate in this study. Upon completion of the questionnaire, please place it in the manila envelope in front of the room.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, please contact Sandy Lenz at Sandra43488@missouristate.edu or Dr. Joan McClennen at JoanCMcClen-nen@missouristate.edu.

### Perception of the Effectiveness of Coping Styles

*Please answer the questions by circling the number that applies to you. You must be at least 18 years old and seeking a degree.*

1. How effective do you find talking to other people (such as friends, family, significant others, etc.) as a means of helping you deal with stress?
  - 1-least effective
  - 2-somewhat not effective
  - 3-neutral
  - 4-not applicable
  - 5-somewhat effective
  - 6-very effective
2. When you are stressed, how often do you use the coping strategy in Question 1?
  - 1-rarely
  - 2-not that often

- 3-neutral
  - 4-not applicable
  - 5-often
  - 6-most of the time
3. How effective do you find your spiritual beliefs (such as religion, meditation, prayer, etc.) as a means of helping you cope with stress?
- 1-least effective
  - 2-somewhat not effective
  - 3-neutral
  - 4-not applicable
  - 5-somewhat effective
  - 6-very effective
4. When you are stressed, how often do you use the coping strategy in Question 3?
- 1-rarely
  - 2-not that often
  - 3-neutral
  - 4-not applicable
  - 5-often
  - 6-most of the time
5. How effective do you find formal services (such as seeking a counselor, therapist, physician, clergy, etc.) as a means of helping you deal with stress?
- 1-least effective
  - 2-somewhat not effective
  - 3-neutral
  - 4-not applicable
  - 5-somewhat effective
  - 6-very effective
6. When you are stressed, how often do you use the coping strategy in Question 5?
- 1-rarely
  - 2-not that often
  - 3-neutral
  - 4-not applicable
  - 5-often
  - 6-most of the time
7. How effective do you find using a substance (such as alcohol, prescription medication, cigarettes, marijuana, etc.) as a means for helping you deal with stress?
- 1-least effective

- 2-somewhat not effective
  - 3-neutral
  - 4-not applicable
  - 5-somewhat effective
  - 6-very effective
8. When you are stressed, how often do you use the coping strategy in Question 7?
- 1-rarely
  - 2-not that often
  - 3-neutral
  - 4-not applicable
  - 5-often
  - 6-most of the time
9. How effective is it for you to deal directly with the source of your stress (confront, control, plan, or manage the source of your stress)? In other words, you complete or handle a stressful task right away.
- 1-least effective
  - 2-somewhat not effective
  - 3-neutral
  - 4-not applicable
  - 5-somewhat effective
  - 6-very effective
10. When you are stressed, how often do you use the coping strategy in Question 9?
- 1-rarely
  - 2-not that often
  - 3-neutral
  - 4-not applicable
  - 5-often
  - 6-most of the time
11. How effective is it for you to manage the emotional aspect of the stress (such as controlling your anxiety or stress levels)? In other words, you target or focus on the emotional aspect of the stress instead of the task.
- 1-least effective
  - 2-somewhat not effective
  - 3-neutral
  - 4-not applicable
  - 5-somewhat effective
  - 6-very effective

12. When you are stressed, how often do you use the coping strategy in Question 11?
  - 1-rarely
  - 2-not that often
  - 3-neutral
  - 4-not applicable
  - 5-often
  - 6-most of the time
13. How effective is it for you to avoid the source of stress (such as deny, ignore, or distance yourself from the source of the stress)?
  - 1-least effective
  - 2-somewhat not effective
  - 3-neutral
  - 4-not applicable
  - 5-somewhat effective
  - 6-very effective
14. When you are stressed, how often do you use the coping strategy in Question 13?
  - 1-rarely
  - 2-not that often
  - 3-neutral
  - 4-not applicable
  - 5-often
  - 6-most of the time
15. What other coping styles or strategies that you use and find to be effective (such as exercising, listening to music, volunteering)?
16. What is your gender?
  - 1-female
  - 2-male
  - 3-Other
17. What is your ethnic origin?
  - 1-African American
  - 2-Native American
  - 3-Native Alaskan
  - 4-Asian
  - 5-Pacific Islander
  - 6-Caucasian (not Hispanic)
  - 7-Hispanic
  - 8-Biracial

9-International

10-Other

11-Don't want to say

18. Are you employed?

1-no

2-yes

If yes, how many hours?

19. How old are you?



# Click and Clack's Clock: A Look at Diophantine Equations with Constraints

Caleb Bennett

## Abstract

Mathematicians can use systems of parametric equations and properties of hyperboloids to solve Click and Clack's original problem of cutting a clock in such a way that the numbers in each segment sum to the same total, as well as to draw conclusions about generalizations of the problem. When only one cut is made across a clock representing an arbitrary number of hours,  $n$ , solvability can be determined for all  $n$ . Half of all  $n$ -hour clocks have solutions when one cut is made and the other half have no solution. When two cuts are made across an  $n$ -hour clock, three cases are formed: two for non-intersecting cuts and one for intersecting cuts. No solutions exist when intersecting cuts are made. Solution families can be found both by inspection of patterns and by using parametric equations. The solution families found encompass roughly half of all numbers and a nonsolution family encompasses one-third of all numbers, leaving roughly one-eighth of  $n$ -hour clocks with no conclusion. When increasing the number of cuts ( $t$ ) made through a clock, the clocks eligible for solvability follow the pattern for unlabeled planar trees with  $t + 1$  nodes. We make a conjecture that in the two-cut case, no families of nonsolutions will be found except for the known family  $n = 3k + 1$ . We also make the conjecture that the limit of the number of solutions to the two-cut clock problem as  $n$  approaches infinity will approach two-thirds of the integers.

---

## Introduction

Mathematicians can use systems of parametric equations and properties of hyperboloids to solve Click and Clack's original problem of cutting a clock in such a way that the numbers in each segment sum to the same total, as well as to draw conclusions about generalizations of the problem. This problem essentially reduces to a system of Diophantine equations, but additional constraints must be placed on solution sets because of the nature of this particular problem.

### The Illustrations in this Paper

At many points throughout this paper, I will provide figures and diagrams to illustrate the concepts I am trying to convey. This paper deals with cutting clocks, so many of my figures will be depictions of various clocks. In the problem we examine, the slices made across the

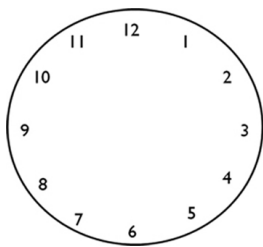
various clocks must be straight lines. For the purposes of illustration, however, many of my figures will have curved lines for slices (see, for example, Figure 6) because the small sizes of the clocks often make it difficult to use straight lines without obscuring the text they contain. In all cases in which I use curved lines for cuts, straight cuts could be made if we consider the numbers around any clock to be points on the clock's edge. Whenever the figures allow, I will use straight cuts across the clocks in my illustrations.

### My History with the Problem

During the summer of 2008, I was fortunate enough to be selected to participate in a Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) program hosted by Missouri State University (MSU). The focus of the particular REU that I attended was mathematics. Once I arrived at the program, I selected Diophantine equations with constraints from a list of available topics and quickly discovered that the problem I would be examining originated on *Car Talk*, a radio show known for phone-in car help. After conducting research for the entire eight-week program, I presented my findings to my fellow REU participants and went on to present at both a Mathematical Association of America chapter meeting and the Missouri, Arkansas, Kansas, and Oklahoma (MAKO) regional math conference. While conducting my research at the REU, I worked directly under the supervision of Dr. Les Reid of the MSU Math Department. Without his help and guidance, this paper would not have been possible.

### The Original Problem

National Public Radio's *Car Talk* has long been known as the place to go for car trouble help

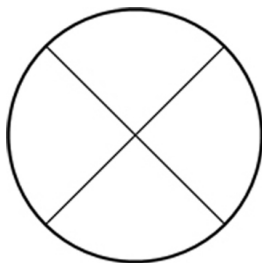


**Figure 1.** A normal, 12-hour clock

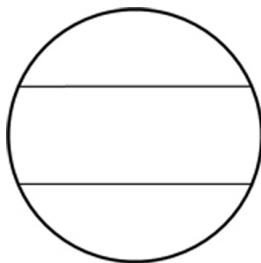
over the radio, but, as it turns out, the show has also cultivated problems of particular mathematical interest. Once a week, the hosts of *Car Talk*, Tom and Ray Magliozzi (nicknamed Click and Clack), pose a puzzle over the air for their listeners to solve. Listeners who submit correct answers online are entered into a drawing to win show merchandise. On August 15, 2005, Click and Clack posed the following question to their listeners: Given a normal, 12-hour clock, how may a person make two cuts across the clock so that the numbers in each segment formed sum to the same number (Car Talk)? Take a moment to try to visualize a solution using the clock shown in Figure 1.

### Solution to the Original Problem

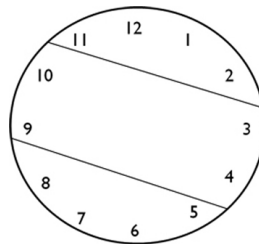
Although a solution may or may not be immediately evident, a few steps can be taken to make the problem more approachable. First, we can determine whether the two cuts being made across the clock will intersect or not. If the two cuts do intersect, a total of four pieces will be formed (see Figure 2), and if they do not intersect, only three will be formed (see Figure 3). If we add all the numbers from 1 to 12, we get a total of 78. Because 78 is not evenly



**Figure 2.** Four pieces formed by intersecting cuts



**Figure 3.** Three pieces formed by non-intersecting cuts



**Figure 4.** Solution to the original problem

divisible by 4, there is no way to make intersecting cuts and find a solution to the problem because four pieces are produced when intersecting cuts are made. Notice, however, that 78 is evenly divisible by 3, producing a quotient of 26. This means that the only way a solution to the problem can exist is if non-intersecting cuts are made across the clock and the three segments formed each contain numbers that sum to 26.

It is also helpful to note that the numbers around a 12-hour clock can be grouped in pairs in such a way that each pair sums to 13, which is conveniently half of 26. The number 12 can be paired with 1, 11 with 2, 10 with 3, and so on to form these pairs.

A solution is now easily forthcoming. By grouping together two of each of the pairs that sum to 13, it is easy to see that the solution to the original problem is as shown in Figure 4.

Although the solution to this problem is relatively simple and can be found by inspection, the problem can be generalized to be made more difficult. The rest of this paper will deal with topics and problems based on generalizations and questions produced from Click and Clack's original problem.

## Generalization of the Problem

The problem we just solved is simple enough that a person could solve it by inspection without the use of any mathematical technique, so let's examine a related, but more complicated, problem. Consider the same problem as earlier, except instead of a 12-hour clock, consider an arbitrary  $n$ -hour clock. In other words, given a clock representing an arbitrary number of hours, we want to be able to determine if there is some way to make two cuts through the clock such that the numbers in each segment formed sum to the same total. Before tackling this problem, it is logical to first consider the case when only one cut is made through an  $n$ -hour clock.

### The One-Cut Clock

Before we try to solve the more difficult problem of making two cuts across an arbitrary  $n$ -hour clock in such a way that the numbers in each segment formed sum to the same total,

let's first consider what can be said if only one cut is made. For any integer  $n$ , we know that the sum of all the numbers from 1 to  $n$  is

$$\sum_{i=1}^n i = \frac{n \cdot (n+1)}{2}$$

When a single cut is made across the clock, we want the two segments formed to each contain half of this total, or  $[n(n+1)]/4$ . We also need  $[n(n+1)]/4$  to give whole number solutions for it to make sense in the context of our problem because the sum of the numbers around any clock will always be a whole number. To consider when this summation will give whole number solutions, we need to look at the integers modulo (mod) 4 because we are dividing by 4. This means we will look at integers of the form  $4k$ ,  $4k+1$ ,  $4k+2$ , and  $4k+3$  for some integer  $k$ . It is easy to see that only two of these four forms give whole number solutions when substituted into  $[n(n+1)]/4$ , as shown here:

$$\frac{4k \cdot (4k+1)}{4} = k \cdot (4k+1), \text{ which must be a whole number.}$$

$$\frac{(4k+1) \cdot (4k+2)}{4} = \frac{16k^2 + 8k + 2}{4} = 4k^2 + 2k + \frac{1}{2}, \text{ which cannot be a whole number.}$$

$$\frac{(4k+2) \cdot (4k+3)}{4} = \frac{16k^2 + 20k + 6}{4} = 4k^2 + 5k + \frac{3}{2}, \text{ which cannot be a whole number.}$$

$$\frac{(4k+3) \cdot (4k+4)}{4} = \frac{16k^2 + 28k + 12}{4} = 4k^2 + 7k + 3, \text{ which must be a whole number.}$$

So we now know that only numbers of the form  $4k$  and  $4k+3$ , for some integer  $k$ , can possibly have solutions when only one cut is made across an  $n$ -hour clock. We must now determine whether solutions actually occur for these two numbers. Consider the  $n$ -hour clock shown in Figure 5. This figure shows an  $n$ -hour clock with a cut from immediately after  $a$  to immediately after  $b$ . For a solution to be found, we need the numbers from  $a+1$  to  $b$  to sum to  $[n(n+1)]/4$ . In other words, we need the following equations to be true:

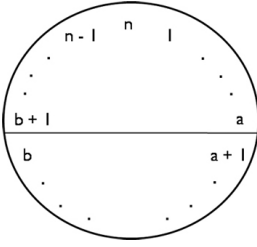
$$\sum_{i=1}^b i - \sum_{i=1}^a i = \frac{n \cdot (n+1)}{4}$$

$$\frac{b \cdot (b+1)}{2} - \frac{a \cdot (a+1)}{2} = \frac{n \cdot (n+1)}{4}$$

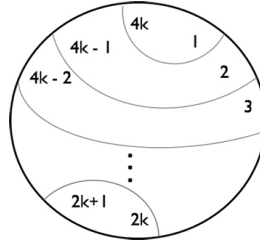
$$b^2 + b - a^2 - a = \frac{n \cdot (n+1)}{2}$$

$$(b-a) \cdot (b+a+1) = \frac{n \cdot (n+1)}{2}$$

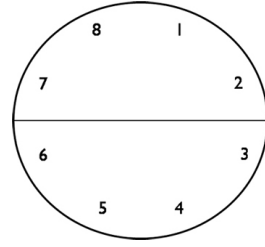
Any potential solutions we find can be substituted into this formula for verification purposes.



**Figure 5.** The one-cut clock



**Figure 6.** The one-cut clock  $4k$  solution



**Figure 7.** An  $n = 4k$  example

**The  $n = 4k$  Case.** Now, let's consider the case when our  $n$ -hour clock has  $n$  of the form  $n = 4k$  to try to find  $a$  and  $b$  that satisfy the equation we just found. The numbers around the edge of such a clock can be grouped into pairs such that each pair contains a sum of  $4k + 1$ , for a total of  $2k$  pairs, as shown in Figure 6. Selecting the first  $k$  of these pairs shows us that  $a = k$ , which implies that  $b = 3k$ . Substituting these values into our equation shows that the equality still holds, as shown here:

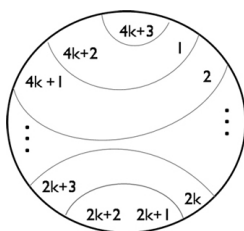
$$(b - a) \cdot (b + a + 1) = \frac{n \cdot (n + 1)}{2}$$

$$(3k - k) \cdot (3k + k + 1) = \frac{4k \cdot (4k + 1)}{2}$$

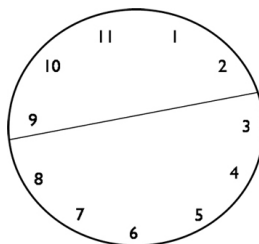
$$(2k) \cdot (4k + 1) = (2k) \cdot (4k + 1)$$

The  $a$  and  $b$  we found satisfy the equation, so we have found a solution set. Any  $n$ -hour clock with  $n = 4k$  can be cut from immediately after  $k$  to immediately after  $3k$  to form two segments that both contain numbers that sum to the same total. In other words, given an  $n$ -hour clock where  $n$  is a multiple of 4, cutting from immediately after  $n/4$  to immediately after  $3n/4$  will give us a solution. For example, if we consider an  $n$ -hour clock with  $n = 8$  (which is of the form  $4k$  for  $k = 2$ ), making a cut from after  $a = n/4 = 8/4 = 2$  to after  $b = 3n/4 = 24/4 = 6$  will give a solution, as shown in Figure 7.

**The  $n = 4k + 3$  Case.** Similarly to the previous case, the numbers around a clock with  $n = 4k + 3$  can be grouped together in sets such that each set sums to  $4k + 3$ , as shown in Figure 8. By doing so, we get a total of  $2k + 2$  sets of numbers that each sum to  $4k + 3$ . Selecting half of these sets, in other words  $k + 1$  of them, will give us a solution to our problem. Because  $4k + 3$  is in a set alone in the diagram, the  $k + 1$  set will correspond to  $a = k$ . Because  $a = k$ , we know that  $b = 3k + 2$  because the pair  $a$  and  $b + 1$  must add to  $4k + 3$ . In other words, any time an  $n$ -hour clock has an  $n$  that is 3 greater than a multiple of 4, cutting from  $a = k$  to  $b = 3k + 2$  will give a solution. For example, consider an  $n$ -hour clock with  $n =$



**Figure 8.** The one-cut clock  $4k + 3$  solution



**Figure 9.** An  $n = 4k + 3$  example

11 (which is of the form  $4k + 3$  for  $k = 2$ ). We know that cutting the clock from after  $a = k = 2$  to after  $b = 3k + 2 = 8$  will give a solution, as shown in Figure 9.

**Conclusion to the One-Cut Clock.** We have concluded that no solutions to the problem exist for numbers of the form  $4k + 1$  and  $4k + 2$ , and have found solutions for all numbers of the form  $4k$  and  $4k + 3$ . Every number is of one of these four forms, so we can now determine whether a solution can be found for any number, as well as find the solution if it exists. Furthermore, because half of all whole numbers are of the form  $4k$  or  $4k + 3$ , we know that exactly half of all  $n$ -hour clocks can be cut with one slice in such a way that the numbers in each segment sum to the same total and the remaining half of  $n$ -hour clocks have no solution.

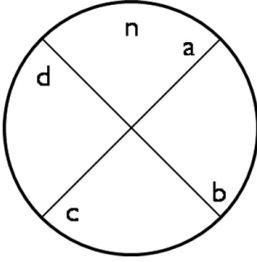
### The Two-Cut Clock

Now that we have determined solvability for all  $n$  in a case where our clock is only cut once, we are ready to examine possibilities when we must make two cuts across an  $n$ -hour clock in such a way that the numbers in each segment sum to the same total. As with the original problem, we need to determine in how many different manners a person can slice a clock with two cuts and which of the clocks produced actually have solutions associated with them.

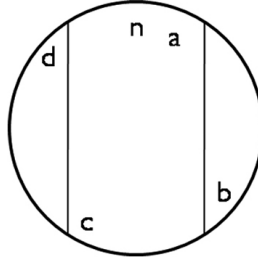
There are two different ways to slice a clock with two cuts: by making intersecting cuts or by making non-intersecting cuts. Because we are dealing with an  $n$ -hour clock, however, we will need to separate the non-intersecting cuts into two separate cases: one case for when  $n$  is contained in the middle segment and one case for when  $n$  is in one of the outer two segments. This ultimately gives us three cases, as shown in Figures 10, 11, and 12.

For each of these clocks, we want to find  $a$ ,  $b$ ,  $c$ , and  $d$  as shown in the figures such that cutting from immediately after each will give us a solution. We will begin by examining Case A, shown in Figure 10.

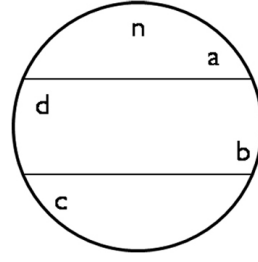
**Case A: Two Intersecting Cuts.** If we make two intersecting cuts across an  $n$ -hour clock (see Figure 10), we obtain four segments. For our problem, we need each of these four segments to contain one-fourth of the total sum from 1 to  $n$ . In fact, simply showing that three segments contain the correct summation is enough because if three segments contain one-fourth of the total, the last segment must as well. Therefore, we need the summation from  $a$



**Figure 10.** Case A: Two intersecting cuts



**Figure 11.** Case B: Two non-intersecting cuts with  $n$  in the middle segment



**Figure 12.** Case C: Two non-intersecting cuts with  $n$  in an outer segment

$+ 1$  to  $b$ , from  $b + 1$  to  $c$ , and from  $c + 1$  to  $d$  equal to one-fourth the summation from 1 to  $n$ . So, we need the following equations to be true:

$$\sum_{i=a+1}^b i = \frac{1}{4} \cdot \sum_{i=1}^n i \quad \sum_{i=b+1}^c i = \frac{1}{4} \cdot \sum_{i=1}^n i \quad \sum_{i=c+1}^d i = \frac{1}{4} \cdot \sum_{i=1}^n i$$

We want to reduce these equations in such a way that we receive expressions in the variables  $a$ ,  $b$ ,  $c$ ,  $d$ , and  $n$ . The three equations are identical except for a change of variables, so we will work with the first equation, and then substitute the other variables appropriately in the reduced equation we obtain. The first equation gives us the following result:

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{i=a+1}^b i &= \frac{1}{4} \cdot \sum_{i=1}^n i \\ b^2 + b - (a^2 + a) &= \frac{n \cdot (n+1)}{4} \\ b^2 + b + \frac{1}{4} - \left( a^2 + a + \frac{1}{4} \right) &= \frac{n \cdot (n+1)}{4} \\ 4b^2 + 4b + 1 - (4a^2 + 4a + 1) &= n \cdot (n+1) \\ (2b+1)^2 - (2a+1)^2 &= n \cdot (n+1) \end{aligned}$$

The summation we started with is similar to the other two equations, so by substituting appropriately, we obtain the three equations:

$$\begin{aligned} (2b+1)^2 - (2a+1)^2 &= n \cdot (n+1) \\ (2c+1)^2 - (2b+1)^2 &= n \cdot (n+1) \\ (2d+1)^2 - (2c+1)^2 &= n \cdot (n+1) \end{aligned}$$

These three equations are four squares in arithmetic progression. To make this evidently clear, let's set  $w = 2a + 1$ ,  $x = 2b + 1$ ,  $y = 2c + 1$ ,  $z = 2d + 1$ , and  $s = n(n + 1)$ . Doing so gives us the following equations:

$$\begin{aligned}x^2 - w^2 &= s \\y^2 - x^2 &= s \\z^2 - y^2 &= s\end{aligned}$$

These three equations show us four squares, namely  $w^2$ ,  $x^2$ ,  $y^2$ , and  $z^2$ , that have a successive common difference of  $s$ , showing that they are four squares in arithmetic progression. According to Fermat's Four Squares Theorem, no integer solutions can be found for equations of four squares in arithmetic progression (Conrad). This makes it impossible for solutions to our problem to exist in Case A.

**Case B: Two Non-Intersecting Cuts with  $n$  in the Middle Segment.** If two cuts are made across an  $n$ -hour clock in such a way that the cuts do not intersect, three segments will be formed (see Figure 11). We will now consider the case in which the break between 1 and  $n$  on the clock occurs in the middle segment that is formed. For there to be a viable solution to such a clock, we need the numbers within the three segments to all add to the same total. Similar to Case A, it is sufficient to show that two of the segments sum to one-third of the total summation. To make our calculations easier, we will consider the two outer segments (the ones that do not contain the number  $n$ ). We need the following equation to be true to find solutions to our problem:

$$\begin{aligned}\sum_{i=1}^b i - \sum_{i=1}^a i &= \frac{1}{3} \cdot \sum_{i=1}^n i \\(b-a) \cdot (b+a+1) &= \frac{n \cdot (n+1)}{3}\end{aligned}$$

We also need the following equations to be true:

$$\begin{aligned}\sum_{i=1}^d i - \sum_{i=1}^c i &= \frac{1}{3} \cdot \sum_{i=1}^n i \\(d-c) \cdot (d+c+1) &= \frac{n \cdot (n+1)}{3}\end{aligned}$$

**Case C: Two Non-Intersecting Cuts with  $n$  in an Outer Segment.** This case is very similar to Case B, the only difference being where  $n$  falls in the three segments formed (see Figure 12). In this case,  $n$  falls in one of the two outer segments. Once again, showing that two segments contain one-third of the total summation is equivalent to showing that all three segments equal one-third of the total. For solutions to exist, we must have the following result:

$$\begin{aligned}\sum_{i=1}^c i - \sum_{i=1}^b i &= \frac{1}{3} \cdot \sum_{i=1}^n i \\(c-b) \cdot (c+b+1) &= \frac{n \cdot (n+1)}{3}\end{aligned}$$



We also need the following to be true:

$$\sum_{i=1}^d i - \sum_{i=1}^a i = \frac{2}{3} \cdot \sum_{i=1}^n i$$

$$(d-a) \cdot (d+a+1) = \frac{2n \cdot (n+1)}{3}$$

You may notice that the right side of the last equation is twice that of the first. This is because the summation from  $a+1$  to  $d$  fully contains the summation from  $b+1$  to  $c$ . For this reason, the summation from  $a+1$  to  $d$  is exactly twice the first summation.

**Finding Solution Families.** Now that we know solutions may exist for Case B and Case C, we need some way to find particular solutions. First note, however, that in all the equations we obtained,  $[n(n+1)]/3$  is a factor on the right side. We also need this value to be a whole number to make sense in the context of our problem. We have the number 3 in the denominator of this fraction, so we will look at numbers modulo (mod) 3. Every integer is of the form  $3k$ ,  $3k+1$ , or  $3k+2$ . When we substitute each of these values into  $[n(n+1)]/3$ , only two of the three produce whole number values, as shown here:

$$\frac{3k \cdot (3k+1)}{3} = k \cdot (3k+1), \text{ which must be a whole number.}$$

$$\frac{(3k+1) \cdot (3k+2)}{3} = \frac{9k^2 + 9k + 2}{3} = 3k^2 + 3k + \frac{2}{3}, \text{ which cannot be a whole number.}$$

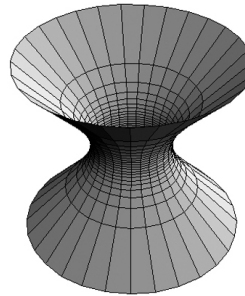
$$\frac{(3k+2) \cdot (3k+3)}{3} = \frac{9k^2 + 15k + 6}{3} = 3k^2 + 5k + 2, \text{ which must be whole number.}$$

These equations show that when  $n$  is of the form  $3k+1$ , there cannot be solutions to the problem we posed. Because every third number is of this form, we now know that one-third of  $n$ -hour clocks will have no solutions.

**Finding Solution Families by Inspection.** Using Wolfram Mathematica, Dr. Reid and I wrote a program that could determine if an  $n$ -hour clock had any solutions, as well as how many solutions (some  $n$ -hour clocks have a large number of solutions), then classified these solutions as either Case B or Case C. Afterward, I created a table listing the number of solutions for each value of  $n$  and looked for patterns within the data. For example, if every sixth  $n$  had a solution, I examined the specific solutions to try to see if the particular solutions for  $a$ ,  $b$ ,  $c$ , and  $d$  also increased by a set amount. By doing this, I was able to find a large number of solution families, but this method is both time-consuming and mistake-prone.

**Finding Solution Families Using Parametric Equations.** If we examine one of the equations obtained from Case C, for example  $(c-b) \cdot (c+b+1) = [n \cdot (n+1)]/3$ , we see that it is the equation of a hyperboloid of one sheet (see Figure 13). Upon inspection, we see that the rest of the equations obtained are of the same form and must be the equations of hyperboloids of

**Figure 13.** A hyperboloid of one sheet  
(source: hyperboloid/wikipedia.org)



one sheet. One convenient property of hyperboloids of one sheet is that every point on the hyperboloid has two lines, still lying completely on the hyperboloid, passing through the point. In other words, if we know one point on the hyperboloid, by using this fact, we are able to find many other points still lying on the same hyperboloid. In the context of our problem, this means that if we find a specific solution, we will be able to find an infinite parametric family containing the solution. For example, in the original problem,  $a = 2$ ,  $b = 4$ ,  $c = 8$ , and  $d = 10$  were a solution when  $n = 12$ . Now, to obtain a parametric solution, we set  $a = 2 + \alpha t$ ,  $b = 4 + \beta t$ ,  $c = 8 + \gamma t$ ,  $d = 10 + \delta t$ , and  $n = 12 + \varepsilon t$ . Using these values, we substitute into the equations obtained from Case C, as shown in Figure 13.

$$0 = (c - b) \cdot (c + b + 1) - \frac{n \cdot (n + 1)}{3}$$

$$0 = \left( -\beta^2 + \gamma^2 - \frac{\varepsilon^2}{3} \right) \cdot t^2 + \left( -9\beta + 17\gamma - \frac{25\varepsilon}{3} \right) \cdot t$$

$$0 = (d - a) \cdot (d + a + 1) - \frac{2n \cdot (n + 1)}{3}$$

$$0 = \left( -\alpha^2 + \delta^2 - \frac{2\varepsilon^2}{3} \right) \cdot t^2 + \left( -5\alpha + 21\delta - \frac{50\varepsilon}{3} \right) \cdot t$$

Setting the coefficients of the two equations we obtained equal to zero and solving for  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ ,  $\gamma$ , and  $\delta$  in terms of  $\varepsilon$  gives us two solutions for each variable:

Two Solutions for Four Variables		
	1	2
$\alpha$	$\varepsilon/6$	$72\varepsilon/312$
$\beta$	$\varepsilon/3$	$121\varepsilon/312$
$\gamma$	$2\varepsilon/3$	$217\varepsilon/312$
$\delta$	$5\varepsilon/6$	$265\varepsilon/312$

This table will actually give us four different parametric solution families after a little manipulation. First, we must choose  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ ,  $\gamma$ , and  $\delta$  in as many different ways as possible. In our original equations,  $\alpha$  and  $\delta$  were paired together, as were  $\beta$  and  $\gamma$ . For this reason, if we choose the first solution to  $\alpha$ , we must also choose the first solution for  $\delta$ . Likewise, if we choose the second solution to  $\alpha$ , we must also choose the second solution for  $\delta$ . The same holds true for  $\beta$  and  $\gamma$ . There are then four different ways of choosing  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ ,  $\gamma$ , and  $\delta$ :

**The Four Different Combinations of  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ ,  $\gamma$ , and  $\delta$**

	$a$	$b$	$c$	$d$
1	$\epsilon/6$	$\epsilon/3$	$2\epsilon/3$	$5\epsilon/6$
2	$72\epsilon/312$	$121\epsilon/312$	$217\epsilon/312$	$265\epsilon/312$
3	$\epsilon/6$	$121\epsilon/312$	$217\epsilon/312$	$5\epsilon/6$
4	$72\epsilon/312$	$\epsilon/3$	$2\epsilon/3$	$265\epsilon/312$

Now, by multiplying each row of our previous table by the least common denominator of that row and substituting  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ ,  $\gamma$ ,  $\delta$ , and  $\epsilon$  into our original parametric equations  $a = 2 + \alpha t$ ,  $b = 4 + \beta t$ ,  $c = 8 + \gamma t$ ,  $d = 10 + \delta t$ , and  $n = 12 + \epsilon t$ , we finally have four families of parametric solutions:

**The Four Solution Families Obtained from Parametric Equations**

	$a$	$b$	$c$	$d$	$n$
1	$t$	$2t$	$4t$	$5t$	$6t$
2	$52t + 2$	$104t + 4$	$217t + 8$	$265t + 10$	$312t + 12$
3	$73t + 2$	$121t + 4$	$208t + 8$	$260t + 10$	$312t + 12$
4	$73t + 2$	$121t + 4$	$217t + 8$	$265t + 10$	$312t + 12$

This table supplies us with many different solutions to a large number of clocks under Case C. For instance, by examining the first solution family and substituting  $t = 3$ , we see that an 18-hour clock ( $n = 6t = 18$ ) has  $a = 3$ ,  $b = 6$ ,  $c = 12$ , and  $d = 15$  as a solution.

The process we just used to find parametric solution families can be repeated for any known solution. By using this method during our research, Dr. Reid and I were able to find a large number of solution families for our problem. Using these families, we determined what portion of all integers  $n$  for which we could solve an  $n$ -hour clock and were able to make educated guesses about where further research might lead us.

**Conclusion to the Two-Cut Clock.** Using the methods discussed, Dr. Reid and I were able to find a large number of solution families for both Case B and Case C during the REU. In the following table, a small sample of the solution families we found is displayed. In the table, the values in each column are the forms of  $n$  for which we can solve an  $n$ -hour clock for some integer  $k$ . The specific solutions for  $a$ ,  $b$ ,  $c$ , and  $d$  are omitted here but can be found in Appendix A and Appendix B, along with the rest of known solution families.

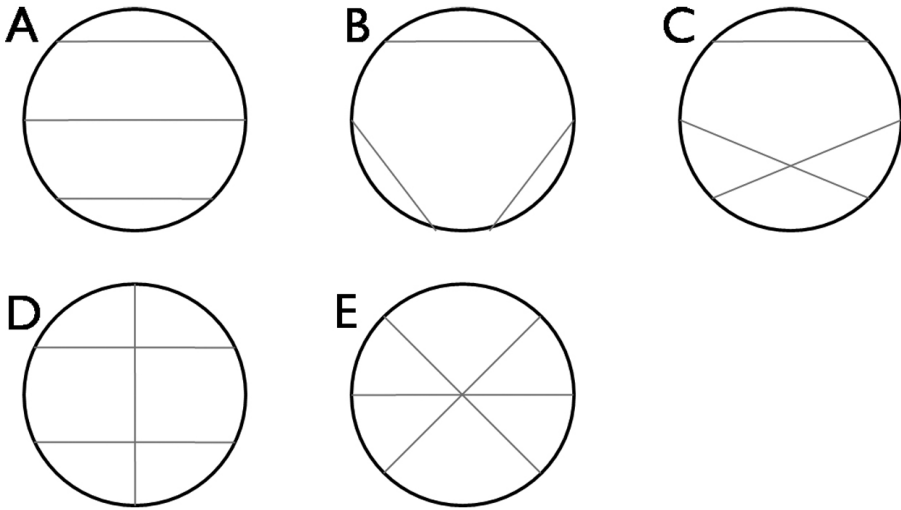
## Solution Families for Case B and Case C

Case B	Case C
$15k + 5$	$6k$
$15k + 9$	$6k + 5$
$36k + 9$	$36k + 9$
$36k + 26$	$36k + 26$
$168k + 20$	$72k + 27$
$168k + 147$	$72k + 44$
$180k + 170$	$90k + 9$
$231k + 98$	$90k + 80$
$288k + 207$	$120k + 44$
$420k + 329$	$120k + 75$

The solution families listed are the largest solution families we found, but are not the only ones we found. If you look under the Case C column of the table, the second entry represents a solution family for  $n = 6k + 5$ . This means that, starting at 5, we can find a solution for every sixth number. We consider this solution family to be quite large because it encompasses one-sixth of all whole numbers. Other solution families were substantially smaller. For instance, we can solve our problem for  $n$  of the form  $n = 82386k + 351$ , which means that, starting at 351, we can find a solution for every 82386th number.

Once our solution families became increasingly small, we wanted to check the percentage of all  $n$  for which we could determine solvability. To do so, we took the union of all of our solution families and checked what portion of the whole numbers they encompassed. In doing so, we discovered that our solution families covered roughly half of the whole numbers. Recall, also, that we showed that  $n$  of the form  $3k + 1$  cannot have solutions. This means that we have found solutions for roughly half of all numbers and have shown that solutions cannot exist for one third of all numbers. Combining these two values shows that we can now determine solvability for about 84% of all  $n$ , leaving just 16% for which we have no conclusion yet.

At this point in our research, Dr. Reid and I decided to stop studying the two-cut case for the time being, but we did make a few conjectures. First, we believe that the only family of nonsolutions that can be found is  $n = 3k + 1$ , which has no solutions because its summation does not produce proper whole number values, as discussed previously. This conjecture mostly developed when, on many occasions, we thought we had found nonsolution families but when we examined increasing large  $n$  within the families, we were always able to find a solution. Our second conjecture, which is related to the first conjecture, is that the limit of the number of solutions to our problem as  $n$  approaches infinity will be two-thirds of the integers. If our first conjecture is true, we believe that for very large values of  $n$ , the only nonsolutions that will be found are those of the form  $n = 3k + 1$ , which encompasses one-third of the integers. In other words, we believe that as a person examines larger and larger  $n$ , he or she will start to be unable to find clocks that have no solutions, other than those of the form  $n = 3k + 1$ .



**Figure 14.** The five ways to slice a clock with three cuts

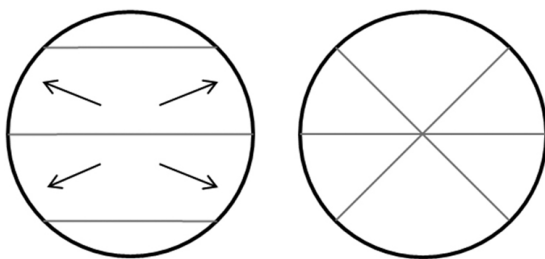
### Increasing the Number of Cuts

Now that we have a conclusion to the two-cut clock, let's consider what happens when we increase the number of cuts being made across an  $n$ -hour clock. We will begin by examining the number of ways of slicing a clock with three cuts and examining each to see if solutions can exist in each case. There are five distinct ways of slicing a clock with three cuts, as shown in Figure 14:

First, note that there are ways to slice a clock and produce a clock with a segment that does not touch any outer edge. Because such a segment does not touch an outer edge, it will not contain any of the numbers around the edge of the clock. For this reason, we will not consider these clocks because we need each segment to contain some of the numbers around the edge of each clock.

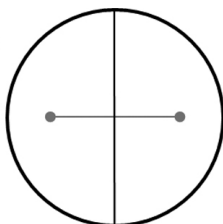
These clocks may seem like a lot to analyze, but, as it turns out, only two of the five clocks shown can have solutions. Previously, when we examined a clock with two cuts across it, we had to rule out solution possibilities for Case A because of Fermat's Four Squares Theorem. Some of the clocks in Figure 14 cannot have solutions for much the same reason. If you examine clocks C, D, and E from Figure 14, you may notice that each has at least three adjacent segments of clock whose sequence of numbers is not broken. In other words, they each contain three adjacent segments that only touch the outside of the clock in one spot. Figure 15 illustrates the difference between a clock with "broken" segments and one with "unbroken" segments. The clock on the left contains "broken" segments (those containing arrows) because the segments touch the outside the clock in two different places (as indicated by the arrows). No such segments can be found on the clock on the right.

When three adjacent segments of clock whose sequence of numbers is "unbroken" occur in a clock, four squares in arithmetic progression is likely to occur, and if it does we will have

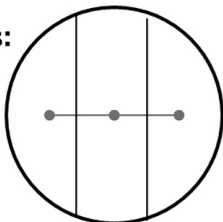


**Figure 15.** A clock with “broken” segments (left) and a clock with “unbroken” segments (right)

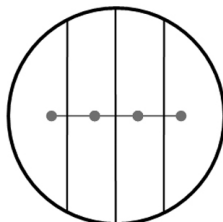
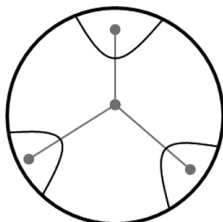
Two nodes:



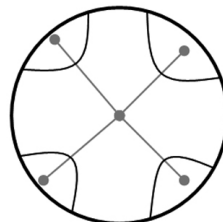
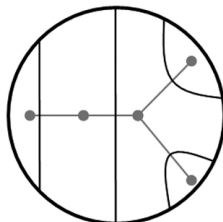
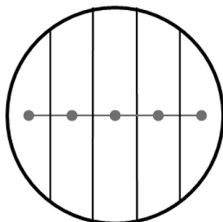
Three nodes:



Four nodes:



Five nodes:



**Figure 16.** Clocks eligible for solutions constructed from unlabeled plane trees

no solutions to our problem because of Fermat's Four Squares Theorem (Conrad). Because of this, we will examine only clocks that do not have intersecting cuts to search for a pattern.

While conducting our research, Dr. Reid and I realized that we could draw out the possible clocks as we increased the number of cuts and simply rule out any clocks that had crossing cuts. Doing so allowed us to examine the clocks to see if any pattern developed that could be used to predict which clocks could have solutions in the context of our problem. We discovered that the number of ways to slice a clock using  $t$  cuts without having intersecting cuts follows the pattern for the number of unlabeled plane trees with  $t + 1$  nodes, as shown in Figure 16.

A plane tree is an embedding of a tree into the plane, and two plane trees are considered equivalent if one can be continuously deformed to the other in the plane (Walkup). To construct clocks from unlabeled plane trees, we simply draw an unlabeled plane tree with one more node than the number of cuts we desire to make. For example, if we want the clocks that can have solutions when three cuts are made, we draw all the unlabeled plane trees with four nodes. After doing so, we draw a clock around the tree and slice the clock in such a way that each node is contained in its own segment of the clock.

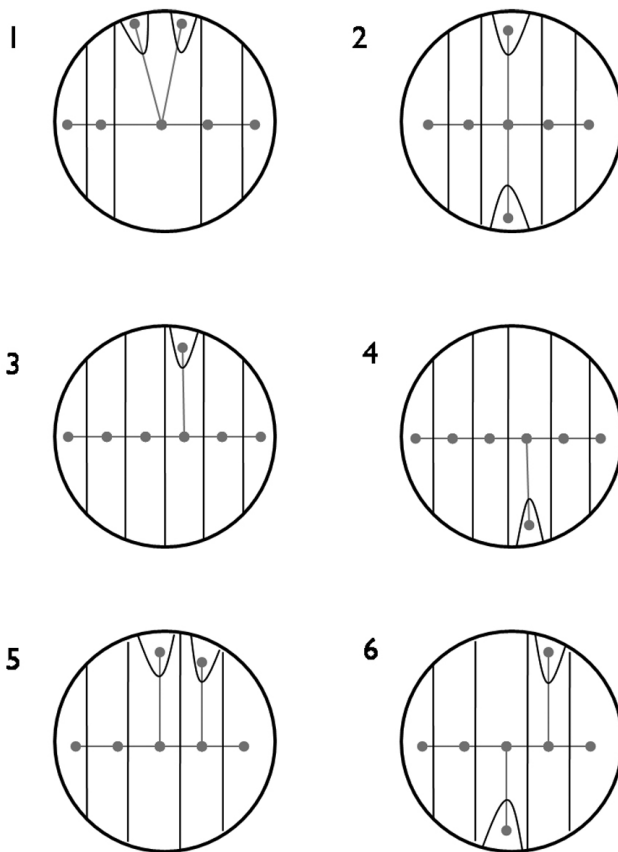
We are able to construct clocks that can have solutions when six cuts are made through the clock by drawing unlabeled plane trees with seven nodes. Fourteen such trees exist, but we will examine just six of these to show why the graphs must be plane trees. The six specific clocks that we are going to examine are shown in Figure 17.

In Figure 17, the tree inside clock 1 and the tree inside clock 2 are abstractly isomorphic as graphs, as are the trees inside clocks 3, 4, 5, and 6. Notice, however, that once we form clocks from these trees, we obtain two distinct clocks from the graphs. If we, then, only considered trees that were not isomorphic as graphs, we would fail to include distinct clocks that may have solutions. By considering all non-isomorphic plane trees—that is to say, all the trees that cannot be deformed into one another inside the plane—we make sure that we obtain all clocks that could possibly have solutions in our problem.

## Summary

We have now examined many facets of Click and Clack's clock-cutting problem, as well as its generalizations, and have many conclusions. I hope this paper has proved to be enlightening and has shown how a simple problem can be generalized to be of mathematical interest. A summary of the results and conclusions of our research is listed concisely here:

- Click and Clack's original problem can be solved by elementary methods.
- An arbitrary  $n$ -hour clock with one cut made through it has solutions for half of all integers and has no solutions for the remaining half.
- An arbitrary  $n$ -hour clock with two cuts made through it has no solutions when intersecting cuts are made through it because of Fermat's Four Squares Theorem.
- Properties of hyperboloids can be used to create parametric solution families for arbitrary  $n$ -hour clocks with two cuts made through them.
- An arbitrary  $n$ -hour clock with two cuts made through it has no solution for roughly 33% of integers and has known solutions for roughly 50% of integers, leaving only about 16% of integers with no conclusion.



**Figure 17.** Clocks formed from unlabeled plane trees with seven nodes

- Conjectures are made that the only family of nonsolutions that can be found is  $n = 3k + 1$  and that the limit of the number of solutions to our problem as  $n$  approaches infinity will be two-thirds of the whole numbers.
- The number of ways to slice a clock using  $t$  cuts while avoiding four squares in arithmetic progression follows the pattern for the number of unlabeled plane trees with  $t + 1$  nodes.

## Works Cited

- Car Talk. "Dividing Time." *Cartalk.com*. National Public Radio, 2007. Web. 1 July 2008.
- Conrad, Keith. "Arithmetic Progressions of Four Squares." Ross Program. Ohio State University, 2007. Lecture. *Math.uconn.edu*. University of Connecticut. Web. 3 November 2009.
- Walkup, David W. "The Number of Plane Trees." *Mathematika* 19 (1972): 200–204. Print.



## Appendix A: Case B Solution Families

During my research, I discovered many solution families for Case B that did not conveniently fit into my paper. All Case B solution families that I found during the REU are listed here for your convenience. Note that some values of  $n$  have multiple solutions (see  $n = 252k + 153$ ).

**All Known Solution Families for Case B**

$n$	$a$	$b$	$c$	$d$
$15k + 5$	$5k + 1$	$10k + 3$	$11k + 4$	$14k + 5$
$15k + 9$	$5k + 3$	$10k + 6$	$11k + 6$	$14k + 8$
$36k + 9$	$3k$	$21k + 5$	$23k + 6$	$31k + 8$
$36k + 26$	$3k + 2$	$21k + 15$	$23k + 16$	$31k + 22$
$168k + 20$	$56k + 6$	$112k + 13$	$131k + 15$	$163k + 19$
$168k + 147$	$56k + 49$	$112k + 98$	$131k + 115$	$163k + 143$
$180k + 170$	$4k + 3$	$104k + 98$	$115k + 108$	$155k + 146$
$231k + 98$	$77k + 32$	$154k + 65$	$157k + 66$	$206k + 87$
$252k + 153$	$21k + 12$	$147k + 89$	$169k + 102$	$223k + 135$
	$44k + 6$	$152k + 92$	$169k + 102$	$223k + 135$
	$84k + 51$	$168k + 102$	$169k + 102$	$223k + 135$
$288k + 207$	$96k + 69$	$192k + 138$	$229k + 164$	$283k + 203$
$420k + 329$	$52k + 40$	$248k + 194$	$251k + 196$	$349k + 273$
$504k + 35$	$3k$	$291k + 20$	$383k + 26$	$481k + 33$
	$88k + 6$	$304k + 21$	$383k + 26$	$481k + 33$
	$168k + 11$	$336k + 23$	$383k + 26$	$481k + 33$
$624k + 584$	$208k + 194$	$416k + 389$	$443k + 414$	$571k + 534$

## Appendix B: Case C Solution Families

During my research, I discovered many solution families for Case C that did not conveniently fit into my paper. All Case C solution families that I found during the REU are listed here for your convenience. Note that some values of  $n$  have multiple solutions (see  $n = 72k + 27$ ).

All Known Solution Families for Case C

$n$	$a$	$b$	$c$	$d$
$6k$	$k$	$2k$	$4k$	$5k$
$6k + 5$	$k$	$2k + 1$	$4k + 3$	$5k + 4$
$36k + 9$	$15k + 3$	$23k + 6$	$31k + 8$	$33k + 8$
	$19k + 5$	$23k + 6$	$31k + 8$	$35k + 9$
$36k + 26$	$15k + 11$	$23k + 16$	$31k + 22$	$33k + 24$
	$19k + 13$	$23k + 16$	$31k + 22$	$35k + 25$
$72k + 27$	$5k + 1$	$11k + 4$	$43k + 6$	$59k + 22$
	$5k + 1$	$24k + 9$	$48k + 18$	$59k + 22$
	$5k + 1$	$39k + 14$	$57k + 21$	$59k + 22$
$90k + 9$	$29k + 3$	$30k + 3$	$60k + 6$	$79k + 8$
$90k + 80$	$29k + 25$	$30k + 26$	$60k + 53$	$79k + 70$
$72k + 44$	$5k + 3$	$11k + 6$	$43k + 26$	$59k + 36$
	$5k + 3$	$24k + 14$	$48k + 29$	$59k + 36$
	$5k + 3$	$39k + 24$	$57k + 35$	$59k + 36$
$126k + 27$	$5k + 1$	$22k + 4$	$76k + 16$	$103k + 22$
	$5k + 1$	$42k + 9$	$84k + 18$	$103k + 22$
$120k + 44$	$43k + 15$	$59k + 21$	$91k + 33$	$107k + 39$
	$43k + 15$	$65k + 24$	$95k + 35$	$107k + 39$
$120k + 75$	$43k + 27$	$59k + 37$	$91k + 57$	$107k + 67$
	$43k + 27$	$65k + 40$	$95k + 59$	$107k + 67$
$126k + 98$	$5k + 3$	$22k + 17$	$76k + 59$	$103k + 80$
	$5k + 3$	$42k + 32$	$84k + 65$	$103k + 80$
$198k + 153$	$67k + 51$	$94k + 72$	$148k + 114$	$175k + 135$
$234k + 207$	$115k + 101$	$142k + 125$	$196k + 173$	$223k + 197$
$240k + 104$	$53k + 23$	$80k + 34$	$160k + 69$	$203k + 88$
$240k + 135$	$53k + 29$	$80k + 45$	$160k + 90$	$203k + 114$
$330k + 44$	$29k + 3$	$46k + 6$	$196k + 26$	$271k + 36$
	$29k + 3$	$110k + 14$	$220k + 29$	$271k + 36$

$n$	$a$	$b$	$c$	$d$
$336k + 104$	$19k + 5$	$83k + 25$	$211k + 65$	$275k + 85$
	$19k + 5$	$112k + 34$	$224k + 69$	$275k + 85$
$336k + 231$	$19k + 13$	$83k + 57$	$211k + 145$	$275k + 189$
	$19k + 13$	$112k + 77$	$224k + 154$	$275k + 189$
$432k + 135$	$115k + 36$	$144k + 45$	$288k + 90$	$371k + 116$
	$115k + 36$	$179k + 56$	$307k + 96$	$371k + 116$
$432k + 296$	$115k + 78$	$144k + 98$	$288k + 197$	$371k + 254$
	$115k + 78$	$179k + 122$	$307k + 210$	$371k + 254$
$720k + 135$	$159k + 29$	$185k + 34$	$455k + 85$	$609k + 114$
$990k + 44$	$87k + 3$	$470k + 21$	$740k + 33$	$813k + 36$
$2574k + 351$	$871k + 351$	$1158k + 158$	$1884k + 257$	$2275k + 310$
$7488k + 351$	$2515k + 118$	$3539k + 166$	$5587k + 262$	$6611k + 310$
$19008k + 351$	$6432k + 118$	$8591k + 158$	$13937k + 257$	$16800k + 310$
$22464k + 351$	$7545k + 118$	$10153k + 158$	$16471k + 257$	$16800k + 310$
$82386k + 351$	$27665k + 118$	$37050k + 158$	$60288k + 257$	$72721k + 310$
	$27665k + 118$	$39105k + 166$	$61568k + 262$	$72721k + 310$
	$27872k + 118$	$38929k + 166$	$61457k + 262$	$72800k + 310$

# “Cheerless Asceticism”: How the New York Times Portrayed the Shakers from 1851 to 1899

Sarah A. Riccardi

## Abstract

This study focuses on celibacy among nineteenth-century Shakers as a boundary, both physical and mental, with an emphasis on how the practice of celibacy affected their relationship with outsider society, specifically the print media. I apply the theories of the late anthropologist Mary Douglas in my exploration of boundaries and purity within Shaker doctrine and practice. I maintain that celibacy created a physical and spiritual boundary within Shaker communities. Primarily, I argue that the *New York Times* delineated its readership from the Shakers by creating a parallel boundary through the use of negative and positive phraseology. In this study, I examine primary sources from the *New York Times* written between 1851 and 1899, as well as documents written by individual Shakers. During the latter half of the nineteenth century, the *New York Times* published a great number of articles pertaining to the Shakers. Although the paper praised the domestic primitivism of Shakerism, it highly scrutinized Shaker theological concepts, especially celibacy. The *Times*' use of critical and biased rhetoric suggests that mainstream Americans viewed Shakers as strange or even dangerous because of their strict views. By exploring the written discourse between the *Times* and the Shakers, we can gain a greater understanding of the relationship and boundaries between nineteenth-century Shakerism and American culture and print media.

---

On August 24, 1887, the *New York Times* published an article regarding a summer visit by an anonymous journalist to the Shakers of Lenox, New York.<sup>1</sup> The article began with an amusing, and perhaps even sarcastic, anecdote concerning the Shakers of New-Lebanon, whose community lay a short distance from Lenox. The *Times* compared the New-Lebanon Shakers to the baking powder they produced: “Next to that baking powder which is guaranteed to be absolutely pure the purest thing on earth is probably a Shaker.”<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that a majority of the *New York Times* articles covering the Shakers during this period were penned by anonymous authors.

<sup>2</sup> “The Shakers,” *New York Times*, August 24, 1887. The *Times* referred to the Shaker community of Mount Lebanon, located in New Lebanon, New York, in several different ways—New Lebanon, New-Lebanon, and Lebanon. Throughout this study, I will use the terms employed by the *Times* in each specific article. It was not uncommon for an article to employ the terms “New Lebanon” and “Lebanon,” in reference to the same community.

As amusing as the analogy might be, the witty reference to purity is just one of many comments and opinions concerning Shakers published in the *New York Times* newspaper from its conception in 1851 to the close of the nineteenth century, in 1899. Over the span of forty-eight years, the *Times* published more than eighty articles pertaining to Shaker life, many of which explored how mainstream nineteenth-century American culture viewed the Shakers. Although the *Times* obviously respected the simplicity and communalism of Shakerism, most journalists highly scrutinized the movement's theology and practices. More than half of the articles published during this period addressed the Shaker practice of celibacy and its relationship to Shaker sexuality and theology. Celibacy clearly captured journalists' imagination, which may reflect the interests of American culture and especially New England culture during the latter half of the nineteenth century. The *Times* also focused on the other aspects of Shaker life, such as seed cultivation, food production, artisanship, legal disputes, converts, and deaths. However, the majority of articles pertained to celibacy, and the journalists varied in their viewpoints. Under the cloak of anonymity, many journalists explicitly expressed their disdain for celibacy. Yet, others praised the Shakers while subtly suggesting that the practice of celibacy was at odds with the American, or *Protestant*, way of life.

The purpose of this study is to investigate how the *New York Times* portrayed the Shakers during the latter half of the nineteenth century, especially in light of their socially peculiar practice of celibacy. This study examines how boundaries created by the practice of celibacy, separated the Shakers from mainstream society, and how the media and the outside world viewed that separation. The practice and doctrine of celibacy became a spiritual and physical boundary separating the Shakers from conventional American society, and served as a catalyst for the rhetoric-based, media-driven boundary formed by the *Times* to separate and delineate its established readership from the Shakers. Although ample scholarship is continuously published on the Shakers, there has never been a definitive study of the relationship between Shakers and the print media of the nineteenth century, and how Shaker celibacy affected both sides of the relationship. This paper focuses on the media side of the relationship and considers *New York Times* articles that used celibacy or sexuality to foster both negative and positive views of Shakers, among its mainstream American readers.

The United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing, derogatorily known as the Shakers by those outside of the communities, started in England as an offshoot of the Quaker movement. Ann Lee became acquainted with the eleven-year-old Shaker movement in 1758.<sup>3</sup> Though the records of early English Shakers are sketchy at best, it is evident from the progression of Shakerism that Lee helped mold the foundational doctrines of the church, doctrines that focused on salvation through celibacy.<sup>4</sup> Mother Ann Lee based the doctrine of celibacy on the ideas of separatism, perfectionism, and the angelic life as a response to the traumatic sexual experiences, intense childbirths, and stillbirths she experienced during her

<sup>3</sup> Richard Francis, *Ann the Word: The Story of Ann Lee, Female Messiah, Mother of the Shakers, The Woman Clothed With the Sun* (New York: Arcade, 2000), 25, 36.

<sup>4</sup> Francis, *Ann the Word*, 35.

marriage.<sup>5</sup> The concept of living an angelic life is based on a phrase attributed to Jesus from the gospel of Matthew in the New Testament regarding marriage in the kingdom of heaven: “They neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are *as* the angels of God in heaven.”<sup>6</sup> Elder Evans, a prominent nineteenth-century American Shaker elder, used the biblical phrase in the *Shaker Compendium* to defend the Shaker revulsion of “fleshly relation[s].”<sup>7</sup> For Shakers, celibacy held the key to being spiritually and physically pure, separated, and perfected.

Understanding celibacy as a constructed boundary between sacred and profane, Shaker and non-Shaker, and perfection and pollution requires looking beyond theological beliefs, and examining the social structure of the participating group. The late Mary Douglas worked extensively with the idea of boundaries, physical and spiritual, spatial and temporal. Douglas explained the concept of external and internal boundaries and argued that societies are made up of “external boundaries, margins [and] internal structure.”<sup>8</sup> Boundaries protect communities from dirt or contamination. “Dirt,” according to Douglas, is anything that is askew and thereby negatively affects the structure of community life. Dirt can be an outside influence on the community or it can begin inside the societal structure, even with individual members of the community. For a society or community to function it must have order, and Douglas posited that, “Dirt offends against order. Eliminating it is not a negative movement, but a positive effort to organise the environment.”<sup>9</sup> In the case of Shakers, “dirt” was sexual activity and bodily fluids associated with sexual acts. It is evident that the Shakers also viewed celibacy as a constructive and positive aspect of their social structure, and they “[found] more pleasure and enjoyment—*real good*—arising from the celibate spiritual union of the sexes and *more of an absence* of the afflictions and annoyances—*real evil*—arising from the generative union of the sexes.”<sup>10</sup>

To keep order within the Shaker communities, Mother Ann Lee established boundaries into the framework of their communities via the doctrine of celibacy. According to the

---

<sup>5</sup> Edward Deming Andrews, *The People Called Shakers: A Search for the Perfect Community* (New York: Dover, 1963), 12–14. Scholarship on Shaker communities and their practice of celibacy is extensive, including, but not limited to the following: Priscilla J. Brewer, “‘Tho’ of the Weaker Sex’: A Reassessment of Gender Equality Among the Shakers,” in *Women in Spiritual and Communitarian Societies in the United States*, ed. Wendy E. Chmielewski, Louis J. Kern, and Marlyn Klee-Hartzell (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1993), 133–149; Lawrence Foster, *Religion and Sexuality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 21–71; Louis J. Kern, *An Ordered Love* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981); Stephen J. Stein, *The Shaker Experience in America: A History of the United Society of Believers* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992); Suzanne R. Thurman, “O Sisters Ain’t You Happy?” *Gender, Family, and Community Among the Harvard and Shirley Shakers, 1781–1918* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2002).

<sup>6</sup> F. W. Evans, *Shakers Compendium of the Origin, History, Principles, Rules and Regulations, Government, and Doctrines of the United Society of Believers in Christ’s Second Appearing with Biographies of Ann Lee, William Lee, Jas. Whittaker, J. Hocknell, J. Meacham, and Lucy Wright* (1859; repr., New York: Burt Franklin, 1972), 59.

<sup>7</sup> Evans, *Shakers Compendium*, 59.

<sup>8</sup> Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), 114–139.

<sup>9</sup> Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 2.

<sup>10</sup> Evans, *Shakers Compendium*, 53.

*Shaker Compendium*, well-defined principles are those “that are perfectly understood and cordially received by all members, constitute the foundation of Shaker government.”<sup>11</sup> By promoting celibacy as the cornerstone of a healthy communal life, Shakers reinforced the social and spiritual aspects of proper decorum and communal structure, thereby creating a pure, separated society free from “dirt.” Although the Shaker boundary is fairly evident, it is the assertion of this study that the *New York Times*, through the use of both positive and negative phraseology, created a parallel boundary that separated the Shakers from the *Times*’ audience, thereby keeping mainstream society pure from influences of Shaker doctrine.

Shakers believed the practice of celibacy made them spiritually and perhaps even socially superior. Naturally, the *New York Times* found this bold concept to be of great interest, and on June 30, 1858, the newspaper published a field research article regarding a meeting held by the Shakers of Lebanon. The author of the article described how six Shaker women and three Shaker men presented their religious views of the organization and proclaimed that procreation “thrives best among the lowest and most unintellectual of the human race, and [it is] not compatible with a high degree of spirituality.”<sup>12</sup> The article contained no biased language, yet still managed to present an overarching theme of tension between the sacred and profane, the secular and the spiritual. In the same article that discussed the New-Lebanon Shakers and baking powder, there are several derogatory passages, including the following: “This gentle but misguided people have discovered that the Bible directs all men and women to live apart. Because the Messiah did not marry they think they should not. There is a slight tinge of transcendental egotism in this reasoning, which, indeed is borne out by their description of their faith.”<sup>13</sup> Using negative phraseology in an othering way, the *Times* sought to portray the Shakers in opposition to the values and beliefs of normative American society.

The relationship between the Shakers and the media allowed the *Times* to create its own version of a boundary, one that was phraseologically driven and that appealed to the late nineteenth-century normative society. The boundary is highly visible as the author of this particular article waxed a bit sarcastic when discussing the environment and living situation of the Lenox community: “The Shaker life, in fact, appears to combine the severity of the monastery with the juicy and joyous freedom of a State penitentiary.” The author continued boldly: “That happiness which can only be described as negative the people enjoy.”<sup>14</sup> The anonymous journalist had opposing opinions of the Shakers, a fact he or she expressed in the final paragraph of the article: “When the universal religion is found, the one which will make men happiest on earth as well as in heaven, the Shaker customs, though they may not have appeared largely, will still play an appreciative part in the general plan.”<sup>15</sup> Yet only a few paragraphs earlier, the author had described the Shakers as fanatics and likened them to

---

<sup>11</sup> Evans, *Shaker Compendium*, 53.

<sup>12</sup> “New York City: The Shakers of Lebanon,” *New York Times*, June 30, 1856.

<sup>13</sup> “The Shakers,” *New York Times*, August 24, 1887.

<sup>14</sup> “The Shakers,” *New York Times*, August 24, 1887.

<sup>15</sup> “The Shakers,” *New York Times*, August 24, 1887.

abnormal case studies. It is evident the journalist valued Shaker ideals, especially equality, productivity, and even communalism, yet still found celibacy to be an impenetrable boundary separating the Shakers from mainstream society. The author best summed up the general outsider view of Shaker celibacy early on in the second paragraph of the article when discussing the difference between the sexual practices of the Mormons and those of the Shakers. Comparing the practices of polygamy and celibacy the article stated, "If in any condition of the post-mortem consciousness it develops that the Mormons were right and the Shakers were wrong, that latter may perhaps regret the cheerless asceticism of their terrestrial stay."<sup>16</sup>

Despite the tension in many of the articles, the *New York Times* fawned over Shaker furniture, seeds, food, and occasionally dancing. Yet among the liberal praise of Shaker productivity, the newspaper still found time to criticize Shaker sexual practices. Such was the case in an article from August 4, 1855, entitled, "Giving City Babies to the Shakers."<sup>17</sup> The content of the article, though not extremely biased, contained unfavorable language that enabled the readership to easily form a negative opinion of Shakers. The article explained that the governor of New York considered granting custody of a group of orphans to the Shakers, who regularly took in orphaned children. The author of the article commented on the decision, by expressing the idea that the governor "probably [thinks] no evil of the celibacy [or] separating the sexes at meal times."<sup>18</sup> The journalist seemed to find the practice of celibacy and separation of the sexes to be odd or perhaps even evil. Shakers were one of very few Protestant groups to practice celibacy, so it is understandable that people outside of the communities would find the practice difficult to understand or comprehend. The tension-filled boundary between the Shakers and the outside world is very much evident in this article. However, the article went on to describe how advantageous it would be for the children to learn how to make woodenware, raise seeds, and make cloth. Torn between ridiculing the Shakers for their doctrine of celibacy and praising them for their contributions to social welfare and industry, the author built up the media-based boundary with negative rhetoric only to lower it by praising Shaker domesticity and communal values. The fluidity of the media-driven boundary allowed it to meld with the Shaker boundary and only to become apparent when the *Times* employed extremely biased rhetoric.

On August 8, 1855, the *Times* published another article concerning the potential placement of the orphaned children from Randall's Island with the Lebanon Shakers. The unnamed author mentioned the children in relation to a visit that he or she had taken to another Shaker compound, Neskayuna, which was about "seven miles northwest of Albany."<sup>19</sup> The journalist ridiculed the physical appearances of the Believers, depicting them as homely and even going so far as to say, "From the prettiest of them all, Cupid would have

<sup>16</sup> "The Shakers," *New York Times*, August 24, 1887.

<sup>17</sup> "Giving City Babies to the Shakers," *New York Times*, August 4, 1855.

<sup>18</sup> "Giving City Babies to the Shakers," *New York Times*, August 4, 1855.

<sup>19</sup> Stephen J. Paterwic, *Historical Dictionary of Shakers*, Historical Dictionaries of Religions, Philosophies, and Movements, No. 87 (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2008), 156. In the nineteenth century, Niskayuna was frequently spelled with an "e". To maintain the historicity of this period, I will use the more historically appropriate spelling of Neskayuna.



run away.”<sup>20</sup> Although the author never mentioned celibacy, he or she used derogatory language concerning the appearance of Shakers to show why they practiced celibacy. Meandering through the world of the Neskayuna community, the article praised their cleanliness, food preparation, and gentle spirits, but ended with two strikingly negative comments. The writer associated the community with “a living tomb for one who has the passions of men and the spirit of the times in his bones.”<sup>21</sup> The *Times* drove home the point that celibacy and, by extension, Shakers were antiquated and mundane. Furthermore, the author of the article was decidedly against the placement of the Randall’s Island children with the Shakers, going so far as to say, “The Christianized Nineteenth Century has a higher destiny for its children—even for its poor—than the lives of recluses.”<sup>22</sup> There is no solid evidence that officials placed the Randall’s Island children with the Shakers of Lebanon, but statistics do indicate an approximately nine percent increase in the number of children living in the New Lebanon community between 1850 to 1860.<sup>23</sup> Whether the article in any way affected the adoption of the children into the community is unclear, but it is a prime example of how the *Times* used divisive language to create a separation or boundary between mainstream society and the Shakers.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the *New York Times* built a relationship with Shaker Elder F. W. Evans. Born to a working-class family in England, Evans eventually became a “member of the North family of New Lebanon.”<sup>24</sup> Evans’s mother died when he was child, and his father and brother eventually took him to North America for a new start, in 1820.<sup>25</sup> After his arrival stateside, Evans became involved in political issues, such as the separation of church and state, and then joined the Shakers of New Lebanon in the early 1830s, and he became “the second elder of the [North] family” on October 4, 1838.<sup>26</sup> A vital member of the Shaker community at New Lebanon, Evans engaged the media, especially the *New York Times*. The *Times* consistently ran corrections penned by Evans and articles regarding his active involvement in proselytizing for his community. In 1887, on Evans’s eighty-fifth birthday, the newspaper published a tribute to him that first appeared in the *Hudson Register* praising the attributes of Shakerism: “These people who dispense with liquor and tobacco, who subsist on grains and fruit and live near to the great heart of nature, practice as well as preach a temperance and religion well worthy of respectful attention.”<sup>27</sup> The kind words regarding Elder Evans are not as interesting as the article’s view of Shakers. This rare article praised the Shakers, not because of their contributions to society or building furniture, but

<sup>20</sup> “The Shakers—A Sunday Among Them,” *New York Times*, August 8, 1855.

<sup>21</sup> “The Shakers—A Sunday Among Them,” *New York Times*, August 8, 1855.

<sup>22</sup> “The Shakers—A Sunday Among Them,” *New York Times*, August 8, 1855.

<sup>23</sup> Priscilla J. Brewer, Appendix B to *Shaker Communities, Shaker Lives* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1986) 225–226, Table B.5.

<sup>24</sup> Paterwic, *Historical Dictionary of Shakers*, 69.

<sup>25</sup> Paterwic, *Historical Dictionary of the Shakers*, 69.

<sup>26</sup> Paterwic, *Historical Dictionary of the Shakers*, 69–71.

<sup>27</sup> “Elder Evans and the Shakers,” *New York Times*, October 18, 1887.

because of their devout theological views. Interestingly, the article did not present an opposing opinion of the Shakers. Most articles balanced criticism of Shaker doctrine with extensive praise of their domesticity. As the laudatory article indicates, later in the nineteenth century the derogatory media-driven tide began to pull back from its negative representations of Shakers.

By the 1880s, articles in the *New York Times* focused on Shaker theology far more than articles from the 1850s and the early 1860s. Journalists began to work with communities' texts to understand concepts such as celibacy, the angelic life, and the earthly kingdom. The *Times* frequently depicted the Shakers as nothing more than an esoteric, eccentric group with unconventional sexual practices. On June 2, 1869, the *Times* published an article titled "The Shakers Again," which portrayed the Shakers as gentle communal group with distinctive religious theories.<sup>28</sup> From the author's perspective, the Shakers appeared harmless: "While their simples and dances continue honest, no one can look upon the most astounding doctrinal prodigies of the Shakers with anything more than good humor."<sup>29</sup> As the nineteenth century came to a close, the *Times* became more interested in the Shakers' production of food, cloth, and furniture. In 1899, the last article omitted negative rhetoric concerning Shaker doctrines, and instead, highlighted the longevity of many Shakers, linking their vitality to their wholesome lifestyle. Surprisingly, the *Times* printed an article devoid of any religious, theological, or spiritual language in reference to the Shakers. Missing from this article was the negative rhetoric concerning the Shaker doctrine and practice of celibacy, which the *Times* used to separate Shakers from mainstream society and which was so present in the majority of the *New York Times* articles published since 1851. The author avoided the tension present between the sacred community and the secular world, and instead expressed a nostalgic longing for simplicity—family life, food preparations, natural health, and communalism. Celibacy took a back burner, as the author romanticized the communal life and its wholesome attributes.<sup>30</sup>

From 1851 to 1899, the *New York Times* published several articles each year regarding Shakerism. Although Shaker theology proved to be a great source of amusement for the media and public, the *Times* continually praised the Shaker's strong domesticity. If the Shakers had not been celibate, one might suppose that the newspaper would have been kinder and more positive in their views of the Shakers, but that might not be the case. Perhaps celibacy allowed the media to find a flaw in what they saw as an otherwise perfect communal lifestyle—a lifestyle that could potentially threaten the theological and social structure and the economy of mainstream American society. In 1871, the *Times* attempted to normalize Shakerism by describing the Shaker way of life as "orderly [and] industrious" and supposed that they led "apparently contented lives."<sup>31</sup> Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, the *New York Times* portrayed the Shakers as capable, hardworking, eccentric people

---

<sup>28</sup> "The Shakers Again," *New York Times*, June 2, 1869.

<sup>29</sup> "The Shakers Again," *New York Times*, June 2, 1869.

<sup>30</sup> "How the Shakers Live," *New York Times*, August 6, 1899.

<sup>31</sup> "The Prophet of Mount Lebanon," *New York Times*, September 16, 1871.

whose theology was clearly askew, but whose community was open and progressive. Although the *Times* lovingly embraced the quaintness of the Shakers' homespun communities, the newspaper still defined the Shakers by the doctrine and practice of celibacy, creating a rhetoric-based boundary between the Shakers and the outside world. In essence, two boundaries existed: the negative, rhetoric-based, media-driven, social boundary created by the *Times* to delineate and perhaps even ostracize the Shakers from normative society, and the spiritual, social, and physical boundary established by the Shakers through their doctrine of celibacy to prevent defilement, or "dirt," and to maintain order in their community. By investigating both complementary and unfavorable articles, this study highlights the fluid media-driven boundary. The media-driven boundary is easily visible in the negative phraseology employed by the *New York Times*. Furthermore, analyzing how the *Times* portrayed the Shakers through both positive and negative phraseology allows the media-driven boundary to become evident and distinctive from the Shakers' theologically and spiritually driven boundary.

## Bibliography

- Andrews, Edward Deming. *The People Called Shakers: A Search for the Perfect Community*. New York: Dover, 1963.
- Brewer, Priscilla J. *Shaker Communities, Shaker Lives*. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1986.
- Brewer, Priscilla J. "'Tho' of the Weaker Sex': A Reassessment of Gender Equality Among the Shakers." In *Women in Spiritual and Communitarian Societies in the United States*, edited by Wendy E. Chmielewski, Louis J. Kern, and Marlyn Klee-Hartzell, 133–149. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1993.
- Douglas, Mary. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966.
- Evans, F. W. *Shakers Compendium of the Origin, History, Principles, Rules and Regulations, Government, and Doctrines of the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing with Biographies of Ann Lee, William Lee, Jas. Whittaker, J. Hocknell, J. Meacham, and Lucy Wright*. 1859. Reprinted, New York: Burt Franklin, 1972.
- Foster, Lawrence. *Religion and Sexuality*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981.
- Francis, Richard. *Ann the Word: The Story of Ann Lee, Female Messiah, Mother of the Shakers, The Woman Clothed With the Sun*. New York: Arcade, 2000.
- Kern, Louis J. *An Ordered Love*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981.
- Paterwic, Stephen J. *Historical Dictionary of Shakers*. Historical Dictionaries of Religions, Philosophies, and Movements 87. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2008.
- Stein, Stephen J. *The Shaker Experience in America: A History of the United Society of Believers*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992.
- Thurman, Suzanne R. "O Sisters Ain't You Happy?" *Gender, Family, and Community Among the Harvard and Shirley Shakers, 1781–1918*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2002.

# Baggage

Laura Dimmit

The clunk of bouncing wheels on airport tile  
is jolting through my fragile calm to say  
that just like out the window taking off,  
a seat will soon be mine to sit it out.  
An hour of patchwork ground and upright trays  
can only take my mind to flames, the sick  
and creeping knowledge brought on TV news  
that buildings fall and our white wings could swerve,  
our plane could be the bomb—and who will fill  
my place while I lie unidentified?  
I board and clutch the armrest, try to breathe  
and find the trees are shrinking, shut my eyes—

We're skirting clouds when I next chance a look,  
no fire, no screams—just clear, unbroken sky.

## Pod #72

Stephen A. Welby

EXT. OUTER SPACE

A large IRON SPHERE hangs in the emptiness of space.

A PIANO plays. Skillful. Grandiose.

Sorrowful.

In Latin, a WOMAN'S LONE VOICE begins to accompany the instrument. The "Dires Irae" of a requiem mass in Gregorian Chant.

ODESSA (V.O.)  
"Dies irae, dies illa  
Solvat saeculum in favilla"

The sphere grows larger. THRUST from a single massive engine rounds it into the shape of an egg.

ODESSA (V.O.)  
"Teste David cum Sibylla.  
Quantus tremor est futurus,"

Small porthole windows form. Rivets along the hull. A spacecraft.

ODESSA (V.O.)  
"Quando judex est venturus,  
Cuncta stricte discussurus . . ."

Despite the apparent force of the engine, the gunmetal-gray orb appears MOTIONLESS.

ODESSA (V.O.)  
"Tuba mirum spargens sonum  
Per sepulchra regionum,"

CUT INTO:

INT. POD #72 — MAIN CHAMBER — LIGHTS ON

The corpse of FORMER CAPTAIN (72) lies in an open metallic casket positioned against a closed hatch on the hull.

On his chest, a dull bronzed badge displays a SHIP'S WHEEL.

ODESSA

“Coget omnes ante thronum . . .  
Mors stupebit et natura,”

ODESSA (32) plays with dramatic yet technically sound motion. With her dark gray uniform rolled back to her elbows, her raven hair drapes over her face.

On Odessa's badge, the comedy/tragedy MASKS stare out.

Over her, the rounding of the hull forms a DOME CEILING.

ODESSA

“Cum resurget creatura,  
Judicanti responsura . . .”

TROY (32), a fair-skinned and soft-eyed man, stands at the head of the casket.

He fights back tears without success.

His badge displays a capital “A.”

ODESSA

“Liber scriptus proferetur,  
in quo totum continetur,”

Mid-casket, JERICHO (32) observes Troy from the corner of his judgmental eye.

He stands well over six feet with a physically IMPOSING BUILD.

Jericho dons a badge in the shape of a COG.

ODESSA

“Unde mundus judicetur . . .  
Judex ergo cum sedebit,”

LONDON (32) slouches deep in thought. A short scruff beard covers his face.

His back rests against a small TREE. It is planted in a circular plot of grass, centered in the otherwise lifeless globe.

ODESSA

“Quidquid latex apparebit:  
nil inultum remanebit.”

SAVANNAH's (32) hand lightly touches the metal coffin.

Her blonde hair tangles in an unkempt mess. A medic's CROSS hangs from her gray uniform.

Odessa finishes her performance in mournful decrescendo.

As she stands to approach the casket, London clicks out of his thoughts, gets up, and follows.

All five crew stand in a moment of silence.

London clears his throat and stands up straight.

LONDON

He was very old. He lived, uhh . . . Forgive me . . . He was always the one to do  
this sort of thing . . .

He gathers himself.

LONDON

This man was like a father to us. I was fortunate enough to have him as my  
mentor, but we were all under his wing in one way or another.

Looking away, Savannah's GLOSSED EYES REVEAL HER MIND IN ANOTHER  
PLACE.

FLASHBACK — CAPTAIN'S CABIN — LIGHTS OFF

Repeatedly SHIP'S WHEEL thrusts forward and falls into place with **CARNAL  
RHYTHM**.

Former Captain's (56) aged hands CLENCH white sheets from on top. He pants in per-  
verse determination.

LONDON (V.O.)

He was a good captain and a great man. Looking out over the crew, over the  
family, I see before me. I know he would be proud.

Lying in white sheets from below, Savannah's (16) body withdraws and returns to place with  
**CARNAL RHYTHM**.

Looking away, Savannah's GLOSSED EYES REVEAL HER MIND IN ANOTHER  
PLACE.

END FLASHBACK

INT. POD #72 — MAIN CHAMBER — LIGHTS ON

LONDON

To know he was a success in his mission . . . It's the most any captain could  
hope for.

After a moment of reverent silence, Troy REMOVES the ship's wheel badge from the for-  
mer captain. He closes the sarcophagus.

London presses a button on the wall.

The hatch opens and the metal box draws into the opening. The door lowers, concealing the  
casket.

LONDON

The last of generation thirty-one passes . . . So that generation thirty-two may  
continue their legacy.

London pushes another button: WHOOSH.

LONDON

(to himself)

Goodbye sir.

He waits a moment.

London pushes one last button. The door raises open and the coffin slides back into the ship.

The crew begins to disperse save for London and Troy.

LONDON

Could you take care of this when you have time, Troy?

Other than his red puffy eyes, Troy has recovered from crying.

TROY

Sure.

Troy hands London the SHIP WHEEL. London hints a smile before walking away.

As Troy disassembles the casket into individual metal plates, we see that it is now EMPTY.

INT. POD #72 — MAIN CHAMBER — LIGHTS OFF

A FLASH of bright BLUE and PURPLE fill the pod as the crisp BOOM of an explosion  
rattles piping.

A sci-fi film plays across a SCREEN composing most of a wall of the main chamber.

Jericho, Troy, and Odessa sit up front in metal folding chairs.

Behind the group London lays in the plot of grass, propped against the base of the tree.

Savannah sits **ALONE** to the side. She focuses on a hand-held screen the size of a license  
plate. Headphones in.

INSERT — ER-PAD

Along the narrow right edge in red block font: "ER-PAD"

BACK TO SCENE

Colorful FLASHES emit from the screen.

JERICHO

Wow. Quite a fiery explosion for oxygen-free space.



London exhales, annoyed.

JERICO  
And oddly loud.

LONDON  
Come on, Jericho. It's a movie.

JERICO  
Sorry, I'm just having a hard time understanding why the properties of physics  
no longer apply.

Troy averts his eyes and purses his lips.

LONDON  
Well, it's science fiction. Fiction. It's not real.

JERICO  
Ah, OK. So when we watched "The Godfather" you would have been alright if  
every person who got shot then exploded, inexplicably, in a flash of blood and  
guts?

Troy looks sarcastically intrigued.

LONDON  
That was fiction based in the real world. This is fiction based in a fantasy  
world.

Savannah TURNS HER BACK. London notices.

JERICO  
Now you're confusing two different things. Fantasy is a mythical place with  
magical forces. It doesn't claim any kind of realism, especially to go so far as to  
call itself "science."

Troy looks sarcastically impressed.

LONDON  
We're trying to watch a movie here and you want to argue semantics right in—  
Deaf to the argument behind her, Savannah GAZES into her personal screen.

JERICO  
It's not just that. Watching this, knowing what we know now . . . it's frustrating.

LONDON  
Frustrating?

JERICO

The hyper-sleep, hyper-space, worm-hole, time traveling bullshit these movies  
embellish in.

LONDON

I fail to see the harm.

JERICO

No? I guess you're okay that top scientists wasted crucial time chasing these  
imaginary notions.

LONDON

Jericho—

JERICO

When they could have refined our fuel to reach a few more distant systems . . .  
Or tuned the engines so our mission would end sooner . . .

LONDON

Jericho, by no means are we forcing you to watch this.

Jericho pauses to think. He stands and walks toward his cabin.

BLUE and PURPLE flash once more.

TROY

Would it make you feel better if we called it Science Fantasy?

Jericho stops.

JERICO

Yeah. It would.

He steps into his cabin. The door slides shut behind him.

Troy turns to Odessa.

TROY

. . . can we rewind it?

Odessa blinks slow as she slides him an annoyed look.

EARTH — MONTAGE

An older man speaks in front of the White House before an endless crowd.

Mothers hold their babies up to see. Signs held high read "For Our Future" and "Live On."

LONDON (O.S.)

(cold)

... and so the Prevention of Destruction initiative was born. Nations around  
the world pooling their greatest minds.

A teacher points into a book. The student studies intently.

LONDON (O.S.)

Resources ...

A welder leads his torch along the seam of a Pod as another supervises.

A physician takes notes in front of an incubation chamber.

The fetus inside hangs weightless in a GREEN LIQUID, sucking its thumb.

LONDON (OS)

Their progeny.

A second physician takes a small vial and stores it in a frosty metal compartment. Inside are  
thousands of vials.

Near a hundred metal compartments fill the room.

INT. POD #72 — MAIN CHAMBER — LIGHTS OFF

A dark figure creeps through the dark past the tree.

It moves toward the light from London's room.

INT. POD #72 — LONDON'S CABIN — LIGHTS DIM

Sitting on the bed, London gazes into his ER-PAD.

The room is plain. One desk, one bed, one sink, one porthole window. On the desk is a solid  
metal console.

INSERT — ER-PAD

Earth from space. Hundreds of Pods orbit like tiny moons.

LONDON (O.S.)

And in the blink of an eye—

The Pods flash and disappear.

BACK TO SCENE

The dark figure appears behind London.

TROY

Christ, you're watching it without sound now?

London's voice turns from cold to friendly and calm.

LONDON

You'll give me a heart attack sneaking up on me like that. Are you trying to kill me?

The ER-PAD continues to flicker light in silence.

TROY

If I really wanted you dead I wouldn't be trying to sneak up on you. I haven't been able to do that since we were sixteen.

On the desk locked into the console is the SHIP'S WHEEL.

LONDON

Very true.

The back of a PISTOL protrudes from an open compartment door beside the wheel badge. A lit RED light and a dim green bulb are located on either side of the hammer.

TROY

I would probably use something like this instead.

Troy slowly draws the pistol.

LONDON

Good luck with that.

TROY

Oh yeah . . .

INSERT — PISTOL

RED light, right of the hammer.

BACK TO SCENE

TROY

OK, come at me like a wild man.

LONDON

(lewd smile)

I would, but I don't think it would have the desired effect.

TROY

Oh ho? Try and find out.

Troy points the gun at London playfully.

LONDON

Keep in mind, Jericho is your next captain if this scheme works.

Troy quickly lowers the weapon.

TROY

That's not funny.

LONDON

He was quite a spectacle tonight . . . though I was a bit more concerned about Savannah.

TROY

You mean like how she was being herself? Yes, it is disturbing.

LONDON

But more . . . herself, than usual . . .

Troy places the pistol back in its compartment.

TROY

No, I know what you mean though. I can talk to her tomorrow if you like.

LONDON

Would you do that? You really are better at that sort of thing.

TROY

Well I am the Auxiliary. Helping people is what I do.

INSERT — ER-PAD

An Engineer on his back extends from the waist down out of an opening in the ship.

An Auxiliary hands him a wrench.

TROY (O.S.)

Some people need a tool while their head is in a hole . . .

BACK TO SCENE

TROY

. . . others need to vent a lifetime of unhappiness onto anyone who will listen.

Troy smiles with charm.

LONDON

What would I do without you?

TROY

Probably kill yourself.

Troy turns off the desk lamp. DARK now except for the GLOW from the ER-PAD.

LONDON

(re: ER-PAD)

You are our hope, our memory, our very existence. You are the seed of Earth.

Prosper.

ILLUMINATED by the ER-PAD, Troy appears over London's shoulder.

He leans in to kiss London's neck as the device DIMS TO BLACK.

INT. POD #72 — MAIN CHAMBER —LIGHTS ON

Jericho holds a makeshift soccer ball made from tape. On the large screen, he shuffles through a catalog of game titles under the heading UEFA 1978.

Troy emerges from London's room and walks behind Jericho toward the Cryo Chamber.

JERICHO

(not looking away from screen)

Come to watch the game?

TROY

Oh . . . no. I don't really understand soccer.

Troy enters the stairway to the Cryo Chamber.

JERICHO

What's to understand?

Jericho looks over his shoulder at an empty room.

JERICHO

(trailing)

It's two goals and a ball . . .

INT. POD #72 — CRYO CHAMBER — LIGHTS ON

FROST and sparse FOG linger over a porthole window. And everything else in the chamber.

Savannah sits at a metallic desk. Like a ladder in a library, the desk appears able to slide and elevate. Behind her are five incubators filled with DARK GREEN LIQUID, as seen in the propaganda video.

Savannah studies a long shelf. It extends out of the wall from an open porthole window.

Down a set of stairs and through a doorway, Troy enters.

The chamber forms a HALL. ROWS OF PORTHOLE WINDOWS cover the walls: ceiling to floor, front to back. They wash the room in a soft white-blue GLOW.

Troy HUMS as he dallies his way toward Savannah at the far end. He stops and looks into a porthole.

Countless tiny vials.

TROY

I forget how incredible it is down here.

Troy's BREATH fogs the glass. He draws a smiley face before continuing on.

SAVANNAH

Really? . . . give it a decade. You might feel differently.

Hands in pockets, Troy resumes his HUMMING.

He arrives at Savannah's desk. Her head sits MOTIONLESS over a microscope.

SAVANNAH

What brings you to my humble laboratory?

TROY

I'm here to help!

SAVANNAH

Help? I think after twelve years I've gotten the hang of it.

Savannah returns a vial to the shelf.

She TAPS her ER-PAD twice as she pulls the next to examine.

TROY

OK, so I'm bored then.

SAVANNAH

Where's your toy? Isn't he usually your cure for that?

Savannah returns a vial to the shelf.

She taps her ER-PAD twice as she pulls the next to examine.

TROY

He's on his period, I think.

Savannah SMILES through her veil of hair and microscope.

SAVANNAH

Oh really? Because I'm pretty sure we always snip that possibility.

She pulls the vial away from the microscope and holds it up.

TROY

You don't believe in miracles?

Savannah looks up from her microscope still smiling.

SAVANNAH

Would you shut up already and help?

TROY

Oh, sorry. Yes mam.

Troy pulls on the bottom of the desk. A bench lowers and hangs. He sits.

TROY

(randy)

I like it when you boss me around.

Savannah returns a vial to the shelf.

She taps her ER-PAD twice before handing it to Troy.

SAVANNAH

I'll read you the serial and say "normal" or "compromised." You—

TROY

Tap the button. I might not be the doctor here, but I think I got it.

SAVANNAH

Fair enough . . .

She pulls the next vial.

SAVANNAH

E, dash thirty-seven, dash two-thirteen . . . normal.

Troy taps the ER-PAD twice slowly.

SAVANNAH

E, dash thirty-seven, dash two-fourteen . . . normal.



More quickly Troy taps the ER-PAD twice.

His face and posture read sarcastic confidence. Master of his new trade.

SAVANNAH

E, dash thirty-seven, dash two-fifteen . . . normal.

Taps once.

Dramatically raises his hand.

Taps once again.

SAVANNAH

E, dash thirty-seven, dash two-sixteen . . . normal.

Troy looks around the chamber.

He looks at Savannah.

His eyes grasp the monotony of her life . . .

Taps twice.

SAVANNAH

E, dash thirty-se—

TROY

Savannah . . .

She looks up.

TROY

What the hell are we doing?

SAVANNAH

See, this is why you need to listen.

(pointing at the PAD)

I read the serial, you push—

TROY

This. I mean . . . this. What are you doing, exactly?

SAVANNAH

. . . you have known me for 32 years. Your social circle consists of five people.

And you don't even know what I do with my life.

Troy waits for an answer.

SAVANNAH

We are forever within shouting distance!

Troy waits for an answer.

Savannah points to two portholes at the end of the hall. DARK.

SAVANNAH

That's what I do . . . Over time some of the embryos become damaged. So they are discarded.

Troy shakes his head, unclear.

SAVANNAH

After awhile we clear enough to power down a chamber.

She points again.

TROY

. . . to save energy?

SAVANNAH

Basically.

TROY

The engine alone must be burning a million times that!

Savannah thinks to better explain.

SAVANNAH

OK . . . the tree. London has you prune it every so often. You're a gardener.

TROY

Horticulture is one of my skill sets, yes.

SAVANNAH

You clip away the damage before it takes life from the tree.

TROY

I don't prune the tree every day for hours on end.

SAVANNAH

The tree also doesn't contain the future of the human race . . .

TROY

But this . . . you can't do this to yourself.

Troy looks back to survey the Cryo Chamber.

TROY

We're all trying to do our jobs, but this is some loopy-loo, spank the nanny  
shit.

SAVANNAH

... and that's why you're here, right? London thinks I'm losing my marbles and  
he wants you to help me find them.

TROY

He cares about you. Is that so terrible?

SAVANNAH

He cares about the mission . . . His job is to make sure I do mine, so don't bull-  
shit me.

TROY

OK, so forget London. You've been torturing yourself down here for so long  
that I don't even think you realize it anymore.

Savannah considers his words. Her posture wilts.

TROY

You need a break.

SAVANNAH

I take breaks.

TROY

Watching surgical footage is not a break. There's only so many ways to suture a  
cut or apply a cast.

SAVANNAH

Sadly . . .

TROY

You could start working out in the Rec.

SAVANNAH

Any time Odessa or I step foot in there, Jericho immediately shows up with his  
shirt off.

TROY

Oh, that's right . . .

SAVANNAH

It's really not worth it.

Troy walks past Savannah to take a closer look at the DARK GREEN incubators.

TROY

How long before we heat up the hatcheries? Five new tots tumbling around  
and—

SAVANNAH

(harsh)

Eight years and three months . . . or so.

TROY

OK, yeah. That's not much of a solution I guess . . .

Troy takes a moment to think again.

TROY

Hm . . . oh! You should get Odessa to teach you piano! She's teaching me guitar  
right now.

SAVANNAH

Yeah, maybe . . . I'm not very gifted musically.

TROY

That doesn't matter. I'm absolutely woeful and I've been practicing for weeks.

Savannah forces a smile.

TROY

Then we can get Jericho leading vocals, and form the worst band pod seventy-  
two has ever seen!

Troy takes a rock and roll pose. Savannah manages to laugh.

EXT. SOCCER STADIUM — DAY

THE PLAYER in a red and white uniform sets down the ball for a corner kick. The grassy  
field past him is immense and lush green.

The stands packed with a massive showing of FANS in red and white JUMP AND  
CHANT IN UNISON.

FANS

Oooooohhhhhhhh . . .

INT. POD #72 — MAIN CHAMBER — LIGHTS ON

Jericho jumps and chants in unison with the fans on the screen.

... alone in the chamber.

JERICHO  
ooooohhhhhhhh...

FANS (V.O.)  
ooooohhhhhhhh...

His large size sends VIBRATIONS through the metal floor paneling as he jumps. The soccer ball on the ground shifts around in response.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
The English really need this. It could put them back in it.

Troy emerges from the Cryo Chamber stairwell.

Seeing Jericho immersed in the game, Troy sneaks past to his room unnoticed.

INSERT — MAIN CHAMBER SCREEN

The Player at the corner raises his arm, signaling his team in front of the goal.

BACK TO SCENE

Jericho and the fans crescendo their chant in anticipation of the kick.

JERICHO  
ooooOOOHHH!

FANS (V.O.)  
ooooOOOHHH!

INSERT — MAIN CHAMBER SCREEN

The Player steps into his KICK and sends the ball SOARING toward the goal. The ball makes it through the defenders.

PLAYER 2 KICKS the ball still in mid-air, redirecting it into the goal. The GOALIE dives: too late.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
Oh, and that'll do it!

The Player and Player 2 run toward each other, then embrace in celebration. Player 2 points up at the fans. The rest of the team PILES on top of them.

The fans GO CRAZY, jumping on top of each other, hugging, and high-fiving. Their organized chant, now a chaotic mash of random shouting.

BACK TO SCENE

Jericho SHOUTS and throws up CLENCHED FISTS in excitement. He turns and looks around in celebration.

Returning to reality, his shoulders drop and eyes widen.

Still looking to express his joy, he KICKS his makeshift soccer ball HARD. It FLIES past the tree and high into the far wall.

It hits a collection of pipes, causing them to RATTLE.

Jericho fist pumps in excitement.

London pops his head out from his room.

LONDON

Please take it easy. You're going to break something.

London retracts into his room.

Jericho rolls his eyes.

JERICO

Yes sir.

CUT TO:

INT. POD #72 — MAIN CHAMBER — LIGHTS ON — LATER

Jericho sits at the base of the tree, brooding. Volume low on the main chamber screen: teams shake hands as the score shows the English have won 3–2.

Jericho continues to brood. Almost menacing.

FADE TO BLACK

INT. POD #72 — ODESSA'S CABIN — LIGHTS ON

Odessa forms a miniature of "The Thinker" out of a clay-like substance, nearly complete. Stunning attention to detail.

She sets down her tool, and stares at it.

She sighs. SMOOSHES the statue down, and rolls the clay into a ball.

Savannah appears in the open doorway.

SAVANNAH

Hi. Um, I was talking—

ODESSA

Hello.

SAVANNAH

... so I was talking to Troy and he was thinking I might enjoy learning the piano?

Odessa maintains focus on her ball of clay.

ODESSA

Sure. We'll start tomorrow, OK?

Savannah nods, uneasy as she notices Odessa won't see.

INT. POD #72 — MAIN CHAMBER — LIGHTS ON

Knocking in perfect tempo: CLOCK, CLOCK, CLOCK, CLOCK.

Odessa lays on the piano bench, staring at the ceiling.

Through the tree's BRANCHES, the hull forms a DOME shape.

A metronome atop the piano bobs to and fro: CLOCK, CLOCK, CLOCK, CLOCK.

In REVELATION, Odessa sits ... then stands, still staring up.

She extends a hand, grabbing the metronome, stopping it.

She walks to the large screen and touches it. A menu appears. She scrolls past History, Geography, Science, to **ART**. Music, Film, to **STILL**. Period, Style, **ARTIST**.

INSERT — MAIN CHAMBER SCREEN

Each letter fills in a search bar: MICHELANGELO.

BACK TO SCENE

The statue of "David" appears.

The image on screen dwarfs Odessa.

BEEP, scrolls to "Fall and Expulsion of Adam and Eve." BEEP, scrolls to "Pietà."

Odessa's face glows from the screen. BEEP ... She stares, and extends out HER HAND to touch the screen.

Ticking in perfect tempo: CLICK, CLICK, CLICK, CLICK.

Odessa's gaze turns away toward the sound's source: a cabin, door open.

INT. POD #72 — JERICHO'S CABIN — LIGHTS ON

Odessa appears in Jericho's doorway. CLICK, CLICK, CLICK, CLICK.

Jericho places a tool into desk drawer and pushes it closed.

He slides loose cogs, springs, sprockets, into a pile. He pushes the pile into a zip-lock baggy.

On his desk sits a metal CUCKOO CLOCK: CLICK, CLICK, CLICK, CLICK.

ODESSA

Busy?

JERICHO

(trying too hard)

Not unless you count waiting for the ship to break . . . What can I do for you,  
Odessa?

ODESSA

I had an idea for a new project. I was wondering if I could raid your supply  
closet.

JERICHO

Sure! I mean . . . I guess I owe you from the other night, right? I kinda ruined  
the movie.

Odessa turns to leave.

ODESSA

Uh, huh. Don't mention it.

JERICHO

(to empty doorway)

Let me know anytime you need anything!

Jericho sighs and stares at his clock. CLICK, CLICK, CLICK, CLICK.

The aged wooden CUCKOO BIRD pops out.

CUCKOO BIRD (V.O.)

Coo – coo . . . coo – coo . . .

Jericho SMASHES the clock with his fist.

Repeatedly.

It breaks into pieces.

Silence.

Jericho opens his drawer, and pulls the tool back out.

A baggy of cogs, screws, and sprockets flops onto the desk.

POD #72 – MONTAGE

Odessa opens a floor panel in the main chamber. She digs through countless canisters,  
boxes, and tubes found in the cavity. She pulls out a box and sets it down. She grabs a canis-  
ter and reads the label.



In the Cryo Chamber, Odessa chats inaudibly with Savannah whose eyes and posture appear hesitant, yet she points to a floor panel.

Odessa roots through countless boxes, packages, and large bottles. She pops open a bottle: red pills. Another: white pills.

She SNAPS at Troy in the main chamber who follows into her cabin.

Troy crushes pills in a METAL CUP with the handle of a screwdriver. PILES of colored powder cover Odessa's floor.

Four metal TUBES extend from the wall and down, an etching on each. The first three: the SUN above, then on, then below a horizontal line. The fourth: A DROPLET.

Troy flips a switch on the second tube. A BROWN PILL falls into hand and he puts it in his mouth. He looks into the cup. He lowers his head and drinks water directly from the fourth tube.

Troy flips the switch on the second tube repeatedly and a handful of pills fall into the cup. CRUNCH as the screwdriver inserts.

INT. POD #72 — MAIN CHAMBER — LIGHTS OFF

London and Odessa stand in front of the large screen. London touches it: selects POD #72.

INSERT — MAIN CHAMBER SCREEN

Lights, Log, **MANUAL OVERRIDES** . . . Engines, **GRAVITY**, Temperature.

BACK TO SCENE

LONDON

I'm fine with this. Just only at night, after everyone's asleep.

London rolls his finger along the screen. 100% drops to 0%.

Odessa's hair rises off her shoulders. London plants a boot against the wall and pushes his weightless body past the tree, and across the room.

He pulls himself into his cabin.

INT. POD #72 — LONDON'S CABIN — CONTINUOUS

The door shuts and London THUDS down to the floor.

INT. POD #72 — MAIN CHAMBER — CONTINUOUS

ODESSA

At "night" . . . Never gets old.

Odessa grabs a plastic box beside her, pushes off the floor, and FLOATS up to the ceiling. She CRACKS open the weightless box and pulls out one of many containers. She pops it open, reaches in and grabs a handful of white paste.

She smears it on the metal hull.

FADE TO BLACK

The entire surface of the ceiling now shows WHITE. The lights FLASH ON.

Empty containers and lids float around the room.

Odessa glides back to the ground. Her eyes are low, hair a mess and holding clumps of white paste.

She rolls her finger along the screen. Gravity returns: the box and canisters all fall.

She meanders to the box and picks it up.

Her hand picks a canister off the ground and drops it into the box.

She looks up at the other canisters littering the floor. Her shoulders droop.

INT. POD #72 — ODESSA'S CABIN — LIGHTS ON

Odessa drops the box to the floor and empty canisters bounce up and settle.

She makes her way to the bed, careful to avoid the cups of colorful liquid lining the floor.

Her head flops face down into her pillow, exhaling loud.

A KNOCK KNOCK, on the door.

SAVANNAH

(muffled through the door)

Odessa? Are you ready for my lesson?

Odessa lays still.

ODESSA

... Yeah! Yeah ... one second.

CUT TO BLACK. FULL BEAT

INT. POD #72 — MAIN CHAMBER — LIGHTS ON

RIPENED ORANGES cover the tree as acoustic GUITAR PLAYS up tempo.

Past the lush branches, part of the ceiling reveals some of Odessa's fresco: GOD EXTENDING HIS HAND, as in Michelangelo's "Creation of Adam" in the Sistine Chapel.

Troy STRUMS away, sitting at the top of the Rec stairs.

Sitting at the base of the Rec stairs, Jericho picks at a slice of orange, then CHOMPS down.

He hums to the music as he chews.

Odessa joins in on PIANO as Savannah swats a TAMBOURINE, dancing along.

London stands leaning in his doorway. A dopey grin plastered across his face.

INT. POD #72 — MAIN CHAMBER — LIGHTS OFF

London stands arms crossed gazing out a porthole window.

JERICO

Don't do that, London.

Jericho approaches him.

JERICO

Can't you feel it? . . . every time I look through one of these my soul drains a little.

LONDON

It's been a good day. Could we not ruin it?

Jericho places his thumb nail against the glass, over a star.

JERICO

Black... with a few white points of reference scattered out. Just so when we look  
into it we understand its depth, and our own insignificant pace.

The star has crawled from his nail just enough to see a black SLIVER.

Jericho lowers his hand.

JERICO

. . . like the sand of some infinite hourglass. Taunting us.

LONDON

Jericho, you ever think maybe all this turmoil is just an invention of your imagination?

London saunters into the darkness of the pod, leaving Jericho gazing out.

LONDON

Try to hang on to your soul.

INT. POD #72 — SAVANNAH'S ROOM — LIGHTS OFF

London picks up the tambourine.

He furrows his brow confused.

INT. POD #72 — CRYO CHAMBER — LIGHTS OFF

Bluish-white BEAMS emitting from the portholes form a **WALL OF LIGHT**. It cuts through the dark of the room.

LONDON  
Savannah?! Hello?

London paces into the light.

As the light hits, he tries to block it with his right hand.

A few steps more.

He raises his left.

A hint of green slips through the wall of light.

LONDON  
Anyone here?

Pacing forward.

London's eyes squint hard through the beams.

GREEN light fills the end of the hall.

A few steps more.

A figure sits on the floor at the base of BRIGHT GREEN LIGHT.

Savannah is drowning in the heavy GREEN GLOW pouring from the incubator.

LONDON  
Savannah?

SAVANNAH  
London, look! Isn't she beautiful?

The GREEN GLOW illuminates Savannah's face.

LONDON  
Wha . . .

Inside the green liquid is a FETUS. Its left arm TWISTS in deformation.

LONDON  
Savannah . . .

SAVANNAH

There's some tissue damage—

LONDON

How could you do this?

SAVANNAH

It's OK! I can take care of her . . .

LONDON

(trailing)

I can't . . .

FADE TO BLACK

**A SHRILL SCREAM.**

INT. POD #72 — MAIN CHAMBER — LIGHTS OFF

CLAWING, pleading.

SAVANNAH

Stop!

Troy restrains her. Odessa embraces her. Jericho looks on with disbelief.

London holds the SMALL FETUS in his hands, still DRIPPING GREEN FLUID.

Places it into the disposal.

Presses a button. WHOOSH.

SAVANNAH

Noooo!!

London breaks down and sits at the base of the disposal.

Savannah HEAVES, weeping.

POD #72 — MONTAGE

Troy snug in bed, fetal position.

Jericho stares out the porthole window in his room.

A door etched with a cross indicated locked by a red light.

London lies motionless in the grass below the tree.

Odessa sits against a cryo porthole.

FADE TO BLACK

INT. POD #72 — MAIN CHAMBER — LIGHTS OFF

Empty.

Beat.

FADE TO BLACK

INT. POD #72 — MAIN CHAMBER — LIGHTS ON

London's door SLIDES open. He steps in sipping from a metal cup.

He glances up.

The cup CLINKS against the floor, water spilling.

The TREE lies HORIZONTAL. Cut at the base. A few oranges on the floor.

CUT TO:

His fist BANGS over "A" etched into a metal door.

His fist BANGS over comedy/tragedy masks.

His fist BANGS over cog.

CUT TO:

London stares down at his ER-PAD.

Troy, Odessa, and Jericho gather before the tree.

London looks up.

LONDON

Who did this?

TROY

Why would anyone do this?

London holds up his ER-PAD.

LONDON

According to the log, Savannah hasn't unlocked her door in twenty-eight hours. So whoever did, is standing right here.

London picks a leaf.

With contempt, his eyes catch Jericho's.

JERICH0

You don't need this show. You can just say it.

LONDON

Say what?

JERICO

You accused me as soon as you saw this. So save the coy bullshit.

LONDON

Well was it you?

JERICO

Fuck you.

LONDON

Jericho—

Jericho steps up to London.

JERICO

What does it matter? All that really matters, is what you plan to do about it.

LONDON

Engineer Jericho, I advise you to step down or—

JERICO

Or what?

LONDON

Or I will be forced to detain you as per article five, sect—

Jericho forces a hearty laugh.

JERICO

You will detain me? How can you detain someone already in a prison?

Jericho looks to the ceiling of the pod.

JERICO

I think Savannah had the right idea. Why don't you go ahead and lock me up.

Looking back down.

JERICO

Then at least I would be free from the company of this sorry group of people.

LONDON

I'm not detaining anyone until—

Jericho SNAPS A JAB. His fist SMASHES onto London's nose.

London reels back several steps.

JERICO  
How about now?

Jericho passively extends his hands, ready for cuffs.

London gather's himself and lifts his head to reveal a BLOODY nose.

JERICO  
Take me away?

Beat.

London roars as he CHARGES wildly at Jericho.

Jericho grips the cloth over London's chest and TOSSES him into piping along the wall.  
The pipes SHUDDER.

Troy BLINDSIDES Jericho to the ground. Troy UNLEASHES vigorous but ineffectual swats.

Jericho kicks him up and onto his back.

Troy hits his head on the stump, leaving a smudge of BLOOD behind.

Odessa sits at the end of her piano bench. Disinterested.

London stands in his doorway. PISTOL pointed at Jericho.

LONDON  
Stand. Down.

JERICO  
Heh, you gunna shoot me Lond?

Jericho slowly rises.

LONDON  
I am taking control of the situation.

JERICO  
You. Are going to shoot me. That's very amusing.

London takes a few steps in.

JERICO  
See, I think maybe this has been our problem all along. You don't understand.  
Jericho points at London, eyeing down the barrel.



JERICO

You.

Jericho points at Troy, sitting on the floor, holding his head.

JERICO

And you.

Jericho points at Odessa, eating an orange near the tree, back turned. OBLIVIOUS.

JERICO

And you.

Looking back to London.

JERICO

You are pointless . . . For this iron maiden to make it from point A to point B,  
I'm the only one who actually needs to be here.

LONDON

The success of the mission depends on the unity of the crew.

JERICO

It depends on me! The rest of you are here to chat me up, and sing songs . . .

Jericho aims his hand like a gun at London.

JERICO

And point fucking guns at my head.

LONDON

Are you ready to calm down?

Jericho lowers his head and chuckles. He paces toward London.

Jericho raises his head and stops. Face inches from the barrel.

JERICO

No. So shoot me. Captain.

Beside the hammer shines the RED light.

JERICO

Oh, right. The little lie detector.

Jericho throws a right HOOK, sending London tumbling back onto the ground. London raises the pistol, TREMBLING.

PISTOL (V.O.)

Target. Harm intended.

GREEN LIGHT.

JERICO

There we go.

Jericho motions to strike once more. BANG, without recoiling. The sound reverberates.

The pistol lowers.

RED LIGHT.

RED crawls past Jericho's fingers, holding his stomach, laying on his back.

SPARKS and STEAM pour from broken pipes near the ceiling.

The bullet embedded in the unharmed hull.

Jericho cocks his head up. Shock and amusement cross his face.

JERICO

Captain?

London sits against the wall looking down between his legs, pistol loose in hand. The lights FLICKER then FAIL.

A dim hue BLEEDS in through the portholes.

Sparks sporadically FLASH from the pipe.

The PEEL from an orange lands at Odessa's feet.

Odessa saunters past a FRANTIC Troy to her bench. She licks her fingers.

TROY

... Savannah.

Troy scurries to the door marked with a CROSS. A red light still indicates locked.

Troy POUNDS the door.

TROY

Savannah!

He looks toward the center of the pod.

Troy POUNDS again.

TROY

Please! ... We need you.

Troy waits a moment before turning back again to stare at Jericho.

The door behind Troy WHOOSHES open. Savannah emerges, poised and focused.

She glides over to Jericho, medical kit in hand.

Savannah kneels beside him. Fog from the pipe rolls over them.

SAVANNAH  
Shh, shh, sh. It's OK.

Savannah opens the med kit.

JERICO  
Doc, it's good to see you again.

Savannah appears BEFUDDLED.

SAVANNAH  
Oh, Jericho . . . You must be confused.

FLASHBACK — POD #72 — MONTAGE

Shears trim tree.

Casket enters disposal.

SAVANNAH (V.O.)  
I'm not the Doctor . . .

Hand discards vial.

London holds fetus.

END FLASHBACK

INT. POD #72 — MAIN CHAMBER — LIGHTS OUT

SAVANNAH  
I'm the Gardener.

Savannah takes a scalpel and DRAWS IT ACROSS JERICO'S NECK.

Troy places his hands on his head.

Savannah wipes the blade off on her leg and places it back in her medical kit.

As she stands, Troy collapses to his knees in the grass.

Savannah glides back to her room.

Troy stares in disbelief at Jericho BLEEDING OUT.

London looks up from between his legs, and stands. He walks into his room, gun in hand.

Beat.

Beat.

PISTOL (V.O.)  
(barely audible)  
Target. Harm int—

BANG and FLASH through the doorway.

Troy looks into grass nearly hidden by the STEAM.

He plucks a blade.

Studies it.

He notices his breath in the cold air. He EXHALES hard to exaggerate it.

ODESSA  
I cut down the tree.

Troy looks to her, calm.

TROY  
Why would you . . .

Odessa points up.

ODESSA  
It was blocking the view.

Troy looks up and falls to his knees on the grass. Fog THRASHES away before rolling over him.

The full fresco dim on the ceiling, but in FULL VIEW. God over blue sky, extends his hand, as in Michelangelo's. Adam over BLACK STARRY SKY however, REACHES IN DESPERATION, as he seems to fall . . . or be pulled away.

Troy lays down into the grass. Unable to look away from the fresco.

A BWONG sounds as Odessa lowers her head onto piano keys.

She caresses the ivories with her right hand.

A NOTE.

ANOTHER.

A few more and a familiar MELODY forms.

Slow, sorrowful, sincere.

ODESSA

“Dies irae, dies illa  
Solvat saeculum in favilla”

A PORTHOLE WINDOW. The stars outside.

EXT. OUTER SPACE

A PORTHOLE WINDOW. The darkness inside.

ODESSA (V.O.)

“Teste David cum Sibylla.  
Quantus tremor est futurus,”

The full POD comes into view.

ODESSA (V.O.)

“Quando iudex est venturus,  
Cuncta stricte discussurus . . .”

The pod begins to shrink.

ODESSA (V.O.)

“Tuba mirum spargens sonum  
Per sepulchra regionum,”

The pod becomes lost in the stars.

ODESSA (V.O.)

“Coget omnes ante thronum . . .  
Mors stupebit et natura,”

FADE TO BLACK

ROLL CREDITS

ODESSA (V.O.)

Cum resurget creatura,  
Judicanti responsura . . .  
Liber scriptus proferetur,  
in quo totum continetur,  
unde mundus judicetur . . .”

CREDITS ROLL IN SILENCE

END

# German Resistance to Welfare State Reform: Voter Blockades, Coalitions, and Unions

Ashley Hoyer

## Abstract

Germany, like every other major world economy, faced a recession in 2009. More than most countries, however, gross domestic product (GDP) shrunk more than 5 percent (Central Intelligence Agency 2010). With negative GDP growth, an ageing population dropping out of the workforce, and consistently high unemployment rates exceeding 30 percent in some eastern German regions and 8 percent countrywide, it seems that more than ever, an efficient welfare state is needed. With social security payouts far outreaching contributions, an efficient system will not exist without reform. Yet, indications of welfare reform since reunification in 1990, including retrenchment and revision of policies, have been hard-pressed and lagging compared with Germany's neighbors.

Rising rates of unemployment, exacerbated by globalization and the reverberations of reunification, add stress to a welfare system already plagued by an increasingly ageing population retiring out of the workforce. I argue that significant reform is lagging because of a graying electoral blockade, artificial coalition governments comprising incongruent political and social ideologies, and strong social organizations and unions. As a result, if Germany seeks to establish effective reform, leaders should focus on path-shaping discourse that alters the German perception of the welfare state.

## Understanding Welfare States

Although nothing is more controversial today in the United States, many countries within the European Union (EU) have successfully implemented welfare systems covering health care, job security and training, and education. Though actual implementation of a welfare state in the United States is doubtful in the near future, lawmakers should be vigilant of the experiences of those EU countries that now face the daunting task of reforming such systems. Of particular interest is the case of Germany—starkly different from its neighbors in its inability to successfully reform through welfare retrenchment.

To gain an understanding of the problems with Germany's welfare state and what prevents its reformation, a working definition must first be established. A *welfare state*, in simple terms, can be defined as “a nation in which the government undertakes various social insurance programs such as unemployment compensation, old-age pensions, family allowances,

food stamps, and aid to the blind or deaf” (Garner 1999). Welfare states are often characterized as social nets that protect citizens from risks. Robert Cox (2001) explains that after World War II, the idea of a welfare state shifted from the stigma of aiding the poor to an idea that public assistance was a right to all citizens. Furthering this idea, countries developed states in which citizens were provided with resources to survive, as well as with additional amenities that allowed citizens to actively participate in society.

Achim Goerres (2008) writes that there is a “life-cycle” in welfare states where “first, there is the education phase, then a phase of work and taxpaying, and finally the phase of retirement and economic inactivity” (p. 135). The idea then, is that citizens are more dependent during youth and old age—the education and retirement phases—and make up for their dependence by contributing to the system during the work and taxpaying stage. Goerres’ stages hold fast in looking at the German case. With an increasing population of retirees and fewer young workers contributing to the system, it is easy to understand the increasing imbalance of the German system. When governments seek to reduce social policies in an effort to regain balance, they often enforce retrenchment policies. Retrenchment, or reduction, in policies is often defined in terms of social transfers, policy transfers, and unemployment limits and has been the recent trend among several welfare states (Korpi 2003).

The German welfare state can be classified as a state-corporatist model. Walter Korpi (2003) classifies the state-corporatist model as one based on earnings-related benefits where “public programs tend to safeguard accustomed standards of living among the middle class, thereby decreasing the need for private solutions” (p. 599). The de-emphasis on private solutions has led to a considerable challenge in attempting to privatize some aspects of government—in Germany, this is particularly true with pensions. As discussed later, the German system was only able to reform pensions through an incentive program that encouraged private insurance.

German resistance to change can be illustrated through the notion of path dependency—in particular, the emphasis of the welfare state as a measure of security over all other factors. Path dependency can prohibit meaningful, transformative reform because institutions that favor the specific path, Angelika von Wahl (2008) writes, “shape the range of choices policy makers have, and policy legacies are important drivers of political processes because of the ways in which they shape later decisions” (p. 27). Germany’s emphasis on income security above all other notions of citizenship rights has restricted the government to reforming only those areas that can be demonstrated as either promoting further security or exhibiting no harm to security programs already in place (Cox 2002). Consequently, German policy is formed around the principle of risk aversion, which inevitably leads to policy that does not provide the significant reforms needed to transform an overburdened system.

The German emphasis on income security makes proposals that introduce work requirements and unemployment limits on benefit collection, or work-for-welfare, largely unpopular because these proposals reduce the guarantee of income if one is unable to work. Cox (2002) argues that risk-aversion in the German model “places little emphasis on participation in the work force, since imbedded in the system is the assumption that people

run serious risk of being unable to work" (p. 179). Perhaps one of the most recent examples of German resistance to welfare reform occurred in Gerhard Schröder's Agenda 2010, which made joblessness more painful and encouraged those who were actively seeking jobs. Though unemployment dropped from 5 million in 2005 to 3 million in 2008, Germans found Agenda 2010 unsettling and Schröder's Social Democratic Party (SPD) paid politically when the SPD was ousted from power in 2005 ("Older and Wiser" 2010). Accordingly, the German welfare state continues to struggle in comparison with its neighbors because of the continued resistance to the implementation of programs based on the work-for-welfare system. Cox (2001) states, "Welfare reform stands out in Denmark and the Netherlands because it represents a *qualitative* change in the character of public policy, a change that amounts to reconsideration of the social rights of citizenship" (pp. 464–465). The German prioritization of income security above all other social rights becomes particularly burdensome with high levels of unemployment and no mechanism to encourage an active labor force.

## Challenges to the Welfare State

### Unemployment

One of the indicators that a welfare state will be under stress is the presence of an increasing unemployment rate. The situation is worsened as German labor policies continue to be based on high wages and high tax rates that discourage firms from creating jobs. Christopher Flockton (1998) argues, "Rising unemployment burdens the system of welfare provision in the form of a rise in charges, which subsequently feeds back on costs and generates a further rise in unemployment" (p. 79). Demands for high wages negotiated through the German neo-corporatist structure combine with high tax rates—established to finance a welfare system in times of high unemployment—force employers to raise prices and become less competitive. As a result, these firms need less positions and unemployment continues to rise.

Wage competitiveness, however, is not Germany's only problem in solving unemployment. German unwillingness to acknowledge immigrant qualifications and welfare dependency has left industry desperate for qualified help. An estimated half a million immigrants whose skill is not acknowledged by German industry are left to absorb long-term unemployment benefits. With extended long-term unemployment among immigrants who constitute a large portion of Germany's population, national GDP per capita is expected to drop 8 to 15 percent by 2035 ("What a Waste" 2010).

Though women constitute the majority of university students, most women only work part-time while parenting. Although the West German ideology of "one breadwinner" has been updated to "1 ½ breadwinners," most women agree that family life is sacrificed when a woman works full time ("What a Waste" 2010). As a result, Hartz IV, a welfare program based on protection of those with long-term unemployment, supports 5 million people considered capable of working while only 1.4 million actually contribute to the workforce ("Steady as She Goes" 2010). In addition to labor policies, Germany continues to be plagued by the reverberations of reunification and globalization.



## Reunification

German reunification in 1990 has led to significant stresses on the current welfare state and has only led to an increased population of unemployed citizens. Compared with 8 percent nationwide, eastern Germany continuously faces unemployment rates exceeding 30 percent (Central Intelligence Agency 2010). Cox (2001) writes,

Germany . . . failed to implement welfare reform because of the peculiar burden of unification. The need to rebuild the industrial infrastructure in the eastern part of the country, to create a common currency and regulatory apparatus, and to cushion a population with poor skills from the social effects of the transition to an industrialized economy absorbed time and political energy that might otherwise have been directed to rethinking the welfare structure. (p. 471)

The overwhelming number of low skilled workers from the east has significantly increased unemployment rates as Germany continues to demand high-skilled workers.

Implementation of western policies, however, has not been the only burden. Eastern dependency on the western system has continued to drain the initial welfare state structure. In 1989, before unification, the German federal budget operated at a surplus. By 1996, however, the federal budget was operating at a deficit of 3.9 percent of GDP, state debt had nearly doubled, and state expenditures as a share of the GDP went from 45.8 percent to 50.5 percent (Flockton 1998, p. 81). Though Germany experienced strong growth in 2007, the eastern region of the country still depends on an annual transfer of nearly €80 billion from the west (Central Intelligence Agency 2010). Within two decades, Germany has transferred almost €1.6 trillion (“Getting Closer” 2010). With overwhelming levels of unemployment in the east, the German government faces a significant challenge in reforming the welfare state to meet an increasing number of dependents—largely unemployed—in the eastern region. Unless German legislators successfully implement measures that include work requirements for welfare benefits that also include requirements for women, the east will continue to drain a system originally established to operate for only half of Germany’s current population.

## Globalization

Globalization has also contributed to unemployment in Germany’s uniquely specialized industrial sector. Particularly menacing to the German case is the impact of technological development through globalization. The idea of globalization’s effect on technological development leading to higher rates of unemployment is derived from the assumption that technological development has caused an escalated need for highly skilled workers (Korpi 2003). Although Germany has no problem producing highly skilled workers, the problem lies with the lack of job positions for the unskilled. Reunification with the east—comprising largely of unskilled workers—has only intensified this problem. The demand for high-skilled workers has caused unionization, which discourages high levels of employment in an attempt to maintain high wages for skilled workers while producing cost-effective goods that are competitive in foreign markets.

Unemployment, intensified by reunification and globalization, is a cause of an overburdened welfare state and a major factor in the German case. Like most other European welfare states, retrenchment is a logical choice because taxation of individuals and businesses in Germany seems to be reaching a threshold (Clayton and Pontusson 1998). Unlike other European welfare states, however, Germany faces the additional challenge of encouraging a system that rewards citizens for remaining in or returning to the labor force (Cox 2002). Germany's reformation process, however, faces a significant set of unique circumstances that prohibit significantly transformative reform.

### **Ageing**

With the number of ageing citizens dropping out of the workforce on the rise, more people depend on the system without contributing to it. Germany's ageing population—more than 20 percent of the population compared with 12.8 percent in the United States—has started to take advantage of early retirement and consequently, the government has lost a major source of revenue in tax contributions while distributing more services. The overwhelming workforce reduction coupled with an increased need for government assistance among the ageing population establishes significant concerns about pensions and health-care demand (Flockton 1998, p. 88). Cox (2002) summarizes the dilemma in arguing, "High wage costs make employers cautious about expanding their work force, and high benefits make it easy for older workers to exit early from the labor market. The result is a poor record of youth employment and a high rate of early retirement" (p. 190). The benefits of early retirement are particularly appealing to the ageing population and consequently, reform that threatens benefit distribution is highly unpopular. Although Germany continues to be underemployed and its citizenry seeks early retirement, the *Economist* suggests, "The unfunded future cost of [welfare] programmes pushed up public debt from 65% of GDP in 2007 to an implicit 250% of GDP ("Steady as She Goes" 2010). These numbers are staggering to young individuals faced with the burden of providing social services to its older population.

## **Resistance to Welfare Retrenchment**

### **Germany's "Graying" Electoral Blockade**

Germany faces significant challenges in reforming its welfare system because of a large majority of the electorate benefiting from the status quo. Korpi (2003) writes "resistance to welfare-state cuts comes primarily from categories of benefit recipients, such as retirees, the unemployed, the handicapped, and health-care consumers" (p. 598). Voters tend to mobilize when their right to promised entitlements is being threatened. This is particularly true with the older block of voters in Germany who resist changes to pensions and retirement age as well as the implementation of work requirements. Older voters in Germany are an influential voice in the German electorate, and numbers of active voters in that block are increasing. The number of voters aged 50 and older increased from 21.7 million (46.2% of the electorate) in 1990 to 24.1 million (49.7% of the electorate) in 2005 with an overall

increase of 3.5 percent (Goerres 2008, p. 134). Consequently, Germany is very close to reaching a gray majority.

A gray majority, estimated to reach Germany in 2015, has been predicted to be the end of hope for pension reform and will give Germany's older population a considerable role in skewing policy making (Goerres 2008). Germany faces the significant problem of an overwhelming majority of its electorate creating an imbalance in the system that makes reform highly unpopular and politically costly (Clayton and Pontusson 1998). That older voters will pose a threat to transformative welfare reform is without question. Though the grand coalition was able to push back the pension age from 65 to 67, it required a promise that pensions would remain constant despite changes in wages ("Steady as She Goes" 2010). Because older voters and younger voters have divergent interests, the window of opportunity for reform of senior citizen entitlements is closing. Goerres (2008) writes, "Within the group of those who want to maintain the size of the welfare state, older people were clearly more in favor of shifting resources from the young to the old" (p. 137).

This idea reflects the path dependency of Germany's system on the notion of income security in conjunction with the welfare-state life cycle. It is only logical to infer that having contributed to the system in the "working and taxpaying" phase, older voters, in attempting to maintain income security over other factors including equality, will vote to retain a system that may not be equitable to all parties involved. To reform, then, Germany must present legislation that is appealing to the older generation of voters and may consequently be a "watered-down" version of what is actually necessary for change.

### **The Character of Political Coalitions**

Though citizen resistance to welfare reform contributes largely to Germany's lack of reform, its history of incongruent coalition governments can also be cited as why substantial reform has been prevented. Piecemealed coalition governments, comprising two or more parties with inherently different ideologies, will lead to policy making at the "lowest common denominator," which results in governments that are highly unproductive (von Wahl 2008, p. 29). In attempts to reform, Germany is unlike other European countries because debate on important issues remains polarized instead of unidirectional (Cox 2001). Piecemealed government coalitions prevented both Helmut Kohl's and Gerhard Schröder's governments from obtaining anything truly transformative because of a consistently divided and chaotic parliament (Cox 2002). Newly reelected Angela Merkel, in indicating a coalition change for her new government, expressed frustrations with the lack of progress that the previous "grand coalition" caused (CNN 2009).

Perhaps most frustrating is that although divided party government undoubtedly inhibits reform, this is not because parties irrevocably disagree on the need of reform on issues such as work requirements and tax reform. Rather, reform is inhibited by the disagreement over who gets the credit or, in some cases, the blame (Cox 2002, p. 190). Unfortunately, individual party attempts at reform seem to be just as futile. Because parties are often ideologically different from one another and often claim to be defenders of the welfare state, it is difficult for one party to enact unpopular, albeit necessary benefit cuts without other

parties generating blame that challenges the legitimacy of the party pursuing reform (Hering 2008). Merkel's current challenge, then, is to provide policy reform that insists on coalition agreement or informal support by other parties.

### **Social Organizations and Unions**

The final challenge to German reform can be seen in the unique character of unions and social organizations that provide both bargaining and blockading measures to advance income security for their groups. Social groups can encompass interests ranging from environmental protection to retirees. The unique state-corporatist model in the German system has provided for powerful unions that regularly negotiate employee needs with firms, larger sectors, and government policy makers. Clayton and Pontusson (1998) attribute welfare resilience to "successful mobilization by well-organized groups representing the interests of consumers of welfare benefits . . . as well as employees of the welfare state" (p. 68).

Germany is unique to European counterparts such as the Netherlands and Denmark in the unusual bargaining strength of its unions. Cox (2001) argues, "Differences in the character of corporatist representation and wage bargaining in Germany [compared with the Netherlands and Denmark—both highly successful reformed welfare states] . . . explain why reform fails" (p. 470). As a result, welfare states with a weak union voice have high occurrences of decentralized wage bargaining and a weaker sense of corporatism that ultimately leads to greater government autonomy (Cox 2001). Strong social organizations and unions have been seen to both increase unemployment through high wage demands and prevent reform through strong bargaining power in the interest of those that are employed.

### **Path Shaping**

Although the previous discussion shows that Germany's future success in reforming welfare policies relies largely on the government's reaction to the inevitable "gray majority," its formation of congruent political coalitions, and its relationship with powerful social organizations and unions, ultimate legislative success depends on path shaping that revolves around Germany's emphasis on the principle of income security. A social constructivist approach argues that rather than continuing along the path dependency route, governments should "create discourse that changes the collective understanding of the welfare state" (Cox 2001, p. 475).

Social constructivism is based on the idea that preferences are formed by a person's social environment influenced by other members of their community, which could include government officials and the overarching presence of a government in general. Korpi (2003) writes "major welfare-state institutions are likely to be of relevance for the formation of values, attitudes, and interests among citizens in ways that are of relevance for patterns of collective action" (p. 598). By the creation of a new understanding of the welfare state, governments are able to diverge from the dependent path and participate in path shaping. This is essential when noting that as reported in 1997, nearly 70 percent of all Germans expressed favor toward their existing welfare system (Cox 2001, p. 493). Because such a high percentage of Germans favor the current system, political leaders have failed to implement policy reform because they have failed to shape a path for major opponent groups

such as the “gray” voting block, opponents within coalitions, and influential organizations and unions.

Perhaps the best example of the potential of path shaping in achieving significant reform can be found in the German pension reforms of 2001. German legislators sought to change the pension system from a defined-benefit model to a defined-contribution model. The policy was largely contested because workers did not accept the idea of paying into the system of retirees while contributing to their own (Korpi 2003). The proposal failed in Kohl’s government and out of fear of electorate backlash, Schroeder’s government took nearly a year to develop a proposal. The government worked closely with union leaders because previous union opposition had been a major contribution to the death of previous proposals. Failure to cooperate among members of parliament also prevented timely negotiations. When the successful agreement for gradual reduction of income-replacement coupled with incentives for private pension savings was finally revealed to the public, German legislators were careful in presenting the plan. The plan ensured long-term stability that would continue to protect income security while reducing the burden on the government (Cox 2002).

By shaping the discourse that accompanied the proposal, pension reform was implemented without significant political backlash. Path shaping in Germany has proven to be successful in both obtaining reform and reconstructing citizen perception of the welfare state. Accordingly, as Germany faces the need to reform major sectors of its labor system, governments should attempt to form a discourse surrounding reform as the ultimate measure of continued security for the German people.

## Conclusion

Although pension reform is a definitive example of reform in Germany, it remains clear that the welfare system faces significant overhauling to remain effective for the German people. With increased stress on the German system caused by high levels of unemployment and an increasingly ageing population, legislators face significant challenges in creating transformative welfare policy that can navigate beyond voting blockades, artificial coalitions that prevent substantial, transformative change, and unusually strong social organizations and unions. For significant labor reform, Germany must implement key reforms that promote work requirements for public assistance and unemployment security as well as policies that urge a reduction in duration of unemployment (Cox 2002). Hope for meaningful reform can be aided through government implementation of discourse that offers a path-shaping alternative to the path-dependent system that Germany currently maintains. Reform, regardless of the means, is truly the answer to German income security in the coming decades.

## References

- Brady, David, Martin Seeleib-Kaiser, and Jason Beckfield. December 2005. “Economic Globalization and the Welfare State in Affluent Democracies.” *American Sociological Association* 70 (6): 921–948. *JSTOR* (accessed October 12, 2009).

- Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Factbook—Germany*.  
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gm.html>  
 (accessed April 9, 2010).
- Clayton, Richard, and Jonas Pontusson. October, 1998. "Welfare-State Retrenchment Revisited: Entitlement Cuts, Public Sector Restructuring, and Inegalitarian Trends in Advanced Capitalist Societies." *World Politics* 51 (1): 67–98. JSTOR (accessed October 11, 2009).
- CNN. September 28, 2009. "Merkel Eyes New Coalition after Victory."  
<http://www.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/europe/09/28/germany.merkel.victory.coalition/index.html?iref=newssearch#cnnSTCText> (accessed October 18, 2009).
- Cox, Robert H. April, 2001. "The Social Construction of an Imperative: Why Welfare Reform Happened in Denmark and the Netherlands but Not in Germany." *World Politics* 53 (3): 463–498. JSTOR (accessed October 11, 2009).
- . January, 2002. "Reforming the German Welfare State: Why Germany Is Slower Than Its Neighbors." *German Policy Studies/Politikfeldanalyse* 2 (1): 174–196. *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCOhost (accessed October 18, 2009).
- Flockton, Christopher. May, 1998. "Germany's Long-Running Fiscal Strains: Unification Costs or Unsustainability of Welfare State Arrangements?" *Debate: Review of Contemporary German Affairs* 6 (1): 79–93. *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCOhost (accessed October 18, 2009).
- Garner, Bryan A. *Black's Law Dictionary, Seventh Edition*. Minneapolis: West Group.
- "Getting Closer." March 2010. *Economist* 394 (8673): 12–13.
- Goerres, Achim. May, 2008. "Reforming the Welfare State in Times of Grey Majorities the Myth of an Opposition between Younger and Older Voters in Germany." *German Policy Studies/Politikfeldanalyse* 4 (2): 131–155. *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCOhost (accessed October 18, 2009).
- Hering, Martin. June, 2008. "Welfare State Restructuring Without Grand Coalitions: The Role of Informal Cooperation in Blame Avoidance." *German Politics* 17 (2): 165–183. *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCOhost (accessed October 18, 2009).
- Korpi, Walter. 2003. "Welfare-State Regress in Western Europe: Politics, Institutions, Globalization, and Europeanization." *Annual Review of Sociology* 29: 589–609. JSTOR (accessed October 12, 2009).
- "Older and Wiser." March 2010. *Economist* 394 (8673): 3–5.
- "Steady as She Goes." March 2010. *Economist* 394 (8673): 13–15.
- von Wahl, Angelika. September, 2008. "From Family to Reconciliation Policy: How the Grand Coalition Reforms the German Welfare State." *German Politics & Society* 26 (3): 25–49. *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCOhost (accessed October 18, 2009).
- "What a Waste." March 2010. *Economist* 394 (8673): 10–12.

# Enthusiasm for Peppers

Craig Wideman

The park appeared to be empty. Only the ducks to my back were showing any indication of acknowledgment that I was even present. They watched me patiently. The park bench was in front of me. I'd been thinking about this park bench for some time. Five years ago a park bench would not have bothered me so. A lot can happen in five years. I could walk five years ago; nowadays, not so much.

*It's just a public park bench, nobody cares if you sit on it,* I kept telling myself. But yet I could not get over the thought that kept creeping around in the back of my mind. The thought that it would look positively absurd for a man in a wheelchair to be sitting on a park bench. After all, I already had a seat. All I would be doing is taking someone else's, perhaps some jogger or pregnant woman. God forbid I would take the seat of a jogger carrying a pregnant woman.

What if two people were going to meet here? Perhaps two secret agents from different factions were meeting at the park bench to discuss some crazy plan of some crazy terrorist to attack some crazy Americans. Could I put American lives at risk? That would be unpatriotic. There was no way I could be the direct cause of precious innocent American children losing their happy unspoiled innocent American lives. I would not sit on the bench.

I turned my wheelchair around and came to look upon the ducks as they too were looking upon me. I had forgotten about them. They were expecting something of me and I would hate to disappoint them. Those ducks were wasting their time that could be used scamming precious innocent American children into giving them breadcrumbs. I would feel cruel and callous if I wasted the ducks' time like that. *Quit making ridiculous excuses regarding whether or not to sit on the bench, people will start to think you're crazy. It's preposterous to think that spies would meet here to discuss matters of national security anyways. For that matter, ducks won't care about what you do. They're just ducks.*

How would I feel if someone were to take my seat from me? I'm a nice guy and probably wouldn't be too upset, but other people might not be so forgiving. Plus, they would have to be a very mean person to take my wheelchair from me when I wasn't sitting in it. The world was full of mean people, just look at Dick Cheney. Better not risk the chance of losing my chair; I'll just stay where I am.

How did that one saying go? Nice guys finish last? Well, I guess if I wanted to get ahead in this world I had to be just as inconsiderate as those who would take a chair from a useless cripple. Screw the whole lot of them; I'm taking the park bench seat.

That's the right decision. I needed to get out of this chair. For too long it seemed that when people saw me, they saw the chair as a part of me. If I had to go to the bathroom, I needed the chair. If I wanted to watch a movie, I needed the chair to help me put the movie

in. *It ruined Rocky. You'll never get your chance to run up the steps of that museum now, you'll have to settle for rolling up the ramp really fast.* That damn chair represented everything that I had lost; my legs, my way of life. Everything I had. *Best not think about that now. Either sit on the bench or don't.*

All right. Here I go. Carefully now. Out of the chair. Onto the bench. That's it. Easy does it. And . . . there we go. Nothing to it. I'll just set my wheelchair next to the bench. It feels good to feel somewhat normal again. I feel better. I feel happy.

I sat at the end of the bench within arm distance of the chair in case I needed it unexpectedly. *Forget about the chair. Just sit here and take in the fresh air. Try to remember how good it is to just sit and breathe.* I need to start relaxing more or I'm going to give myself an ulcer, or worse I'll start having hair loss. Now that's a depressing thought.

"Excuse me." A woman's voice startled me. "Does this wheelchair belong to you?"

Naturally, this would happen to me. I finally feel right and someone has to ruin it. What was it they say? When life gives you lemons make lemonade? "I don't know whose that is. It's been here all day. Think someone forgot about it," I replied.

"Good," she said as she plopped down onto my wheelchair.

It was the littlest of motions, her plopping down in my chair like she did, but even so I could feel the flush of heat rise in my face. She was invading my space. That wasn't just a chair; it was a part of me. It was my seat. It represented who I was. I needed it. It was my livelihood, how was I supposed to get around if this woman was sitting in it? Did she expect me to wait here until someone really does leave a wheelchair here? I took her in from head to toe and noticed some things that would have been obvious from the start if this were any other time.

(1) She was panting like she had run a marathon. (2) She was all disheveled as if she hadn't showered for days. (3) She was wincing as if she were in pain. (4) She was wearing a jogging suit. (5) She was pregnant, and not just regular pregnant but going to pop any second pregnant. *Control yourself. Dealing with an expectant mother here, a dangerous creature to say the least. Be a gentleman and try not to say anything to set her off.*

"What do you think you're doing?" I asked.

"Excuse me?" she said.

"I don't think the owner of that wheelchair would appreciate a stranger using it without his permission," I said.

"How do you know it belongs to a guy?" she said.

It was just an honest question, but I felt a sense of panic that she had seen through my lie and knew the chair was mine. "I don't, it could belong to any gender. Male or female," I said.

"As to that, I would say it's most definitely a girl's chair; I can smell the perfume on it. Either way, I suspect that whoever owns it decided to leave it here. It's not like a wheelchair is an umbrella and you just forget to grab it. It's an item that is used for only one rea—Ow! Guess my child doesn't share my enthusiasm for peppers," she said.

Did my chair really smell that strongly of perfume? I only wear the stuff when I go to mass on Sundays. *Need to look into that later, for now just make small talk.* "What's your name?" I asked.



"Why?" she said.

"They say not to talk to strangers so I figured I'd ask just to be safe," I said.

"Oh, okay. My name is Jaclyn," she said.

"Interesting," I said.

"Why?" she said.

"I don't know," I said.

"And what's your name, stranger?" she said.

"Gavin," I replied.

"You don't get out much, do you Gavin?" she said.

"Why do you ask?" I was starting to regret talking to her.

"Five reasons: (1) The skin on your face is all pale. (2) You're wearing a business suit while it's 91° outside. (3) It's Saturday so you couldn't be on a lunch break or anything. (4) You look as if you haven't shaved in a month. (5) The spot on your head where your hair is thinning looks to be getting sun burnt.

"What are you doing walking around by yourself?" I said eager to change the subject. My hair's not thinning, I would have noticed it. *Denial's not just a river in Egypt.*

"Well, I live in those apartment complexes across the street over there and it was such a beautiful morning that I deci—Ouch!" she placed one hand on belly and the other on her lower back. "I think . . . I think I'm having contractions. Before I just thought my muscles in my stomach were cramped but it's too frequent now for that. But I'm not due for another week," she said.

Please God just let her go away; I don't need this right now. I just needed to coax her out of my chair and send her on her way. The way my luck was running, she'd probably have the baby right here and now if I didn't hurry her up. "You should probably head on home. I know from experience it takes hours of labor to deliver and that's after your water breaks," I said.

"You have experience giving birth? That's amazing," she said.

"You know what I mean. Anyway, I wouldn't worry about it too—"

"There's another one, they're getting shorter," she said.

Wow. Of all the park benches in all the world, why did she have to sit next to this one? In my own wheelchair, nonetheless! Should I laugh or should I cry? I had a hunch this sort of thing would happen today. Those damn ducks knew it too, and they tricked me into sitting on this bench.

I pulled out my cell phone. "I'll call an ambulance," I said.

"No need, my boyfriend is at my apartment. If you could just walk me there, I can meet him and be on my way. I don't think the owner of this chair will mind if I have it, considering my urgent need for it right now. Plus she just left it here," she said.

*If you could just walk me there, I can be on my way.* "How about I call your husband and he can come get you?" I said.

"Or better yet you could just quit horsing around and walk me," she said. *Quit horsing around and walk me.* I tried to tell myself that it was the fact she would be giving birth soon that made her agitated towards me. I tried to remind myself that she didn't know that the wheelchair belonged to me or that I couldn't walk. Even so, I couldn't stop my palms from

sweating, or my heart from beating faster in anger. *Calm down. Just start over at the beginning and tell her your dilemma. There is no shame in apologizing and letting her keep the chair. Control your breathing and calm down. She'll understand. After you explain yourself she won't mind if you call her husband and tell him what's going on. He'll probably be thrilled that she's going to give birth today and might even suggest buying you a new wheelchair. He's probably a man of chivalry. Just start over and apologize to this woman.*

"You know what? I'm sitting here and you're sitting there, all pregnant and whatnot, trying to ruin my day. Not that it matters to you that this is the first time I've felt somewhat normal since my accident." My calm state of mind had left me completely. "Don't you see? National security is at stake! The spies have had to cancel their meeting! This is public property damnit and I can sit wherever I feel like it and you can't stop me! Do you see me feeding breadcrumbs to the damn ducks?! Do I look like a precious innocent American child snorting from my crack pipe, and hell bent on catching as many S.T.D.'s as possible?! So don't you judge me because I happen to bag it up lady! Which looking at your present state, that seems to be something that you have not practiced any time recently. Terrorist lives are at stake! Not that you care, all you can do is say 'Pray excuse me, kind sir, but could you push me around half of town because I seem to be giving birth here. Oh dear,' as if millions of babies aren't born every day. What makes you and yours so damn special?! Sweet Jesus of Jamaica! Lives are at stake here lady!" I said.

"Timeout! Why are you so pissed off and what the hell are you babbling about?" she said.

"That's it! I'm going home," I said as I tried to stand up. I didn't move. There was no movement from the waist down, and no slight jolt of pain ran up through my spine in protest. There was no feeling. Nothing happened. I didn't move.

This was to be expected after five years of paralysis. This was to be expected from a man who had grown accustomed to having all activity stop from the waist down. Yet at this moment, at this park bench, sitting next to this sweaty pregnant lady, nothing happening was the least expected thing in the world.

I had felt absolutely normal again. This is what I had been searching for. Oh God on high I felt great! I could feel the unique effects that only my endorphins could bring me. My senses were heightened; I could taste, hear, and see every blade of grass, every feather on every bird. Their chirping was like Mozart in my head. My arms were lighter and the tension that had been steadily gathering unknowingly over the past couple years in my shoulders, was lifted.

I studied her face and what stared back at me were eyes greener than the hills of Ireland and denser than the Amazon. I placed my hands on her belly and I could feel the baby's life pulsating through her. I lowered my eyes to her shoulders and noticed the tip of a burn scar on her skin. It showed itself from out under her clothes in the same way that an iceberg is visible from the ocean waves. *It's the imperfections that make us perfect.* I slowly raised my hands up to her face and when I cupped her cheeks she stiffened. "I love you," I said.

She avoided my eyes, looking off this way and that way, anyway but my way. "I'll um . . . just be going my uh . . . way then," she said quietly. Her voice stole me out of my nirvana and by the way her head was trying to wrest itself away from my hands, I realized how terribly

confused and awkward she must be feeling right now. *Nice job. You somehow managed to make an expectant mother going into labor look like a selfish woman with no concern but herself, and to top it off you told her you loved her. And you wonder why you have no friends.* I quickly released her and did my best to look abashed. She started to roll herself away.

“Would you like me to call your boyfriend?” I said.

“Oh, no thank you. I can manage from here on out,” she said quickly. She didn’t meet my gaze.

How nice it was watching her roll away in my wheelchair. *Not your chair anymore. Her chair.* That brought a smile to my face. “What sex is the child?” I said.

She stopped, returned my smile mistaking it for something else, and said “A girl. She’s going to be quite the spoiled little princess, if all the gifts her father’s gotten her are any indication.”

“Interesting,” I said.

I pulled out my cell phone to call my brother. She started to roll herself away again. I looked at the chair itself, I noticed the rust on the wheels and how close the sagging chair was to the ground when someone was sitting in it. It was soothing to think about how that chair would no longer be mine. I had had it for five long, miserable years. It was my first and only wheelchair to date. Now I would have to get a new one. I started to undue my tie.

# Postmodernism and the Redefinition and Plurality of Gender and Sexual Identity in Jude Morgan's *Passion*

Mandi Reed

## Abstract

This essay is an examination of Jude Morgan's postmodern novel, *Passion*, from a gender studies perspective. *Passion's* thought-provoking postmodernistic structure not only serves as a departure point for its readers to absorb the indeterminate, changing, and sometimes overlapping sexual identities it presents—it also becomes the vehicle that allows the text to showcase that complexity of gender identity. The novel's use of multi-vocality presents readers with a paradox of multiple empathies for its various characters that offers no "right" way of feeling; this paradox lends itself to the acceptance of *Passion's* kaleidoscopic interpretations of gender definition and sexual identification that are offered within the text. Research in the field of gender studies for this essay's treatment of the topic includes parallel arguments by known gender critics.

---

Jude Morgan's *Passion* reads as a valuable postmodern text, one that quietly offers its readers a fresh take on gender hegemony and the validity of heteronormative relationships. The novel's thought-provoking postmodernistic structure not only serves as a departure point for its readers to absorb the indeterminate, changing, and sometimes overlapping sexual identities it presents—it also becomes the vehicle that allows the text to showcase that complexity of gender identity.

*Passion* uses decidedly postmodern techniques to tell the life stories of three of Romanticism's most influential figures (George Gordon Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and John Keats) through the eyes of the women who loved them. Presented through multiple points of view, the text often slips into passages of direct free thought to create a story line that is full of holes—which its readers are encouraged to fill—that introduce uncertainties and multiple sympathies in the minds of its audience. In the same way that readers unquestioningly identify with and accept the postmodern aspects of Morgan's writing, they are also compelled to simultaneously accept the range of acceptable gender/sexuality definitions offered within the text. The postmodern techniques Morgan employs in the novel should be seen as subversive to classic gender hegemony, and therefore must also be seen as potentially liberating for those gender and sexual identities found outside the boundaries of the traditional heteronormative power structure. Readers are given the opportunity to jettison them-

selves from traditional, accepted beliefs on marriage and happiness as *Passion's* players demonstrate that “happily ever after” is itself a narrative fiction, even as the characters’ lives empower readers to determine their own definitions of happiness, marriage, relationships, faith, and so on. The complexities in these characters’ relationships, illustrated through Morgan’s postmodern writing style, become the template by which to accept *Passion's* challenging views of gender and the validity of traditional, heteronormative relationships.

### Postmodern Writing and Its Effects

Morgan’s distinctly postmodern storytelling techniques work to unsettle readers’ foundations on multiple levels. *Passion's* narrative, as stated earlier, is woven together from multiple points of view to form a multiple-voiced discourse. This form of storytelling is advantageous to the novel’s ambiguity as a whole; in a close reading, the multi-vocality of the text does a few different things. First, as Mike Cadden has said, a multivoiced text “represents voices as equal and provides alternative interpretations that offer . . . no single and final answer for the reader” (quoted in Doyle and Stewart 193). This lack of absolute “truth” in the text brings the reader to a sense of uncertainty in respect to the factual events of the story. In the case of *Passion*, this tool of multivoiced discourse is especially useful in creating multiple empathies, as is clearly showcased in the fallout presented between Lord Byron and Lady Caroline Lamb. When their affair turns sour, readers are given both sides of the story with equal narrative weight; as a result, though we understand Byron’s desire to be rid of the antics of Lady Caroline (as told to his sister, Augusta Leigh) that could ruin his reputation as an English gentleman, we also empathize with Lady Caroline: after all, she is a woman scorned. More importantly, however, because we are given the opportunity to hear her thoughts (as discussed later), it becomes more difficult to objectify her actions simply as those of a mad-woman: she is a character we know—and on a certain level, understand. And, as Doyle and Stuart point out in reference to another postmodern novel, *Ender’s Shadow*, this approach of multivoiced discourse “leads to a vision . . . that offers no clear-cut ‘right’ way to see things” (193). Morgan allows slightly different versions of the same story (such as the break-up of Byron and Lady Caroline’s relationship) to run parallel throughout the novel, thereby widening the gap between fact and supposition. As earlier summarized, this uncertainty of truth is essential in readers’ empathies with multiple characters.

As a simultaneous effect of the creation of multiple empathies, the postmodern technique of multivoiced discourse constructs a delicious paradox of feelings for the reader—a paradox in which, according to some critics, there is wisdom in getting lost. Susanne V. Knudsen states, “By placing [herself] within the paradox,” she is able to “twist around in it and find several possible solutions in the enigmatic and unsolvable aporia” (106). I postulate that the same “twist[ing] around” in paradoxical situations in the text works to create an even deeper level of empathy for the opposing viewpoints of *Passion's* key players. To clarify: here, a paradox “contains and expresses something that contains common sense, something that seems contradictory and absurd” (Knudsen 103). Although it may seem to “contravene common sense” to sympathize with both Byron and Lady Caroline, the paradox of multiple

empathies contains a reader's "absurd" feelings and works to validate them, regardless of their contradictory nature. *Passion* uses its multiple points of view to offer a "both/and" (103) paradox of knowledge, especially in the relationship between Byron and Lady Caroline. This concept of plurality of emotion also works to parallel the gender and sexual identity paradoxes that the novel presents.

Morgan's text also frequently uses the postmodern technique of direct free thought. As defined by Seymour Chatman, direct free thought "uses narration [which] excludes quotation marks and tags, uses present tense, and even employs first-person comments" (quoted in Doyle and Stuart 196). These techniques are employed continually through the pages of *Passion* to create more instances of connection with its characters. In a move that adds irony and intensity to readings of Morgan's text, "readers are guided in and out of the protagonist's consciousness" and are thereby allowed to know "precisely what the protagonist is thinking" (197) without authorial intrusion that could historicize or psychoanalyze those thoughts. For example, we are given insight into Mary Shelley's thoughts within the pages of *Passion*, when her relationship with Percy Bysshe Shelley has cooled:

Again a silence; and Mary thinks, as Shelley must be thinking, that at least Byron has known what it is to be admired: unlike Keats, and unlike Shelley. *Curious how you can still divine your lover's thoughts, even across gulfs of estrangement. The mind outlasts the heart.* She glances back, impatiently, at the walls and red roofs of the city steeped in yeasty light. (Morgan 492, emphasis mine)

In the italicized section, the narrative seems to slip into Mary's voice, and this brief moment of indirect discourse momentarily closes the psychic distance from her character. The narrative then effortlessly returns to the simpler third-person point of view, describing her physical actions, and thus restores the degree of distance that was momentarily erased. Because of this slip, however, and the resulting intimacy it creates between reader and character, it is easier for readers of Morgan's text to feel the hopelessness and acute loneliness Mary feels. By looking directly into a character's thoughts, readers are again encouraged to empathize with that character; as this happens with more than one character in the text, it is yet another way Morgan encourages his readers to accept multiple views of the same story. As mentioned earlier, *Passion* gives its readers a "both/and" paradox of knowledge (Knudsen 103), thereby tacitly asking them to accept a multiplicity of possibilities outside the structure of the text itself. Understanding that the novel itself is ambiguous—that no single viewpoint can be considered the absolute truth—the text works on a deeper level to help the reader grasp its views on gender plurality and sexual identification.

### The "Slippery" Slope of Sexual Identity

Mark S. Graybill states, "Postmodernism, driven by its antifoundational impulses, strives to pull up the deepest roots of linguistic and cultural hegemony" (240). As Graybill notes, then, postmodernism can be used as a template for the deconstruction of language itself. I posit that this arm of deconstruction can extend not only to texts, but to other social constructs as well, such as those of marriage and gender definition. If postmodernism undermines the

hegemony of linguistics and culture, then we must see the parallels in *Passion's* attempt to destroy the hegemony of traditional marriage relationships and gender identities. In his essay, Graybill goes on to say, "Postmodernism . . . necessitates a movement away from static absolute, or essentialized conceptions of genre and gender toward unstable, pluralistic ideas of these once solid categories" (240). In other words, through the lens of postmodernism, gender itself becomes something nebulous.

This concept of amorphous gender is most clearly defined in the sexual desires of the characters of *Passion*. To illustrate my point, I first turn to the character of Lady Caroline Lamb. Throughout Caroline's life in the novel, her gender seems to be delicately ambiguous, even to herself: "Folding her arms across her small breasts, Caroline tightened her stomach and buttocks, met her own mournful speculative eyes. There. Now she might be a young girl, or a boy" (Morgan 111). This is only one example of Caroline's ambiguity of gender: even as a child, she shows an affinity for cross-dressing—as well as grasps at phallic symbols—as evidenced in a conversation with her mother:

"Who are you today, Caroline?"

"A boy—my name is Charles."

"I see. That is why you have your brother's clothes on, I suppose. And that—good God, that's a knife! . . ."

"It's only a butter knife. Boys are allowed to have knives" (Morgan 45).

The interesting elements in this passage of Morgan's text are, of course, the aforementioned elements of cross-dressing and phallus appropriation that destabilize Caroline's gender. As stated by Joseph Harris (in reference to a similar effect created by French poet Vincent Voiture), "The conjunction of cross-dressing and desire thus destabilizes . . . sexual identity" (70). Accordingly, Morgan uses cross-dressing in his text to "destabilize" the definitions of his characters' genders. Throughout Caroline's life, this habit of cross-dressing blurs the lines of her heterosexuality; even the language used by Morgan to describe her acts while in male attire pander to masculinization: "It is relatively simple [for Caroline] to disguise herself in a workman's greatcoat and *penetrate* the sanctum through that musty-smelling brick passage" (Morgan 243, emphasis mine). Though she dresses as a male on many occasions (even during sexual encounters with Byron and her husband, William Lamb) and repeatedly masculinizes herself through the appropriation and attempted use of a phallus (as when she threatens Byron with a knife in the midst of a house party—thereby turning the phallic symbol against him and reversing the male/female binary), Caroline never expresses any sexual desire for her own gender. She does, however, exhibit intense passion for members of the opposite sex, thereby demonstrating how "sex roles and gender, undefined by apparel, [become] dangerously slippery" (Giuliano 796). As noted earlier, the identity of Caroline's sexuality has become quite difficult to define; it could even be considered a gender identity that is a hybrid of traditional gender roles.

Furthermore, in an attempt at what has historically been called a move to "[a]ssume masculine authority and authorship," Caroline "appropriate[s] the text of Byron's life . . . as revenge for his treatment of her" (Giuliano 789). In *Passion*, the publication of Caroline's

novel *Glenarvon* (a thinly masked account of the life she shared with Byron) proves to be the end of their relationship. The self-masculinization evidenced in the act of this authorship also emasculates Byron, as she has assumed power in the relationship by “shaping” his character in a way he has no control over. This particular reversal of the male/female power structure is also an interesting example of Potter’s claim that “the control of information establishes power [in] relationships” (261). As an answer to this transfer of power, Byron is finally and definitely finished with caring for Caroline in any way.

This response to emasculation gives readers of *Passion* an example of Lord Byron’s ever-changing gender identity, which is by far the most difficult to define in the novel by conventional standards. Though he is not among the characters whose voices make up the narrative of *Passion*, Lord Byron nonetheless stands as the novel’s central, unifying character, one that continues to blur the edges of gender definition. In her article “Batlike Souls and Penile Tempresses: Gender Inversions in a Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,” Laurie Teal says that author James Joyce “plays with gender inversion as a uniquely powerful tool of characterization” (Teal 64). Morgan does the same with *Passion*; though this “gender inversion” is evidenced in almost every character in the novel in some way or another, it is most strongly seen in Lord Byron.

It has been said that Byron was “actually attracted more strongly to women who embodied unconventional gender identities,” possibly because they allowed him “to release homoerotic energies” (Giuliano 787). This is seen in *Passion* through his “unconventional” attractions to his half sister Augusta; to Lady Caroline (whose exhibited gender ambiguities have already been noted), and to Annabella Milbanke, who is seen in the novel as an almost sexless, calculating individual (evidenced by her affinity for mathematics, a decidedly male vocation in Romantic-era England). Ironically, in history Byron strived to “stabilize his own poetic identity as masculine” (785) through his attempts to mask the gender of female characters in his poems *Lara* and *The Corsair* “to disempower the phallic woman who threatened to emasculate him” (786), even as he was sexually drawn to other men. This could be an example of what Teal calls “self-policing,” which she says (in paraphrase of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick) in turn “creates a perpetual state of [what Sedgwick] calls ‘homosexual panic’—the obsessive impulse to . . . suppress all manifestations of male homosexual desire in oneself” (65). In a reading of *Passion*, we see this “self-policing” multiple times in Byron’s character. It was plainly unacceptable to have homosexual relationships or preferences in Regency England (Giuliano 787); though Byron had multiple trysts with boys at his various schools (even admitting to Augusta his love for a male classmate at Cambridge) and took part in orgies and the like in Italy, his “attraction to women was strong, even when his interest in boys was paramount” (Giuliano 787).

It would seem, then, that the basis of Byron’s attraction, in both history and in the pages of *Passion*, had nothing to do with gender: his affections are motivated by a passion for the individual, regardless of gender. However, Byron is aware of the implicit societal danger of his sexual choices. In the text, Byron tells Augusta, “Here [in London], law and society between ’em will chew you up and spit you out for the vice of *wrong loving*.” He goes on to say, “You can imagine it must be a powerful temptation indeed if men will risk so much for it” (Morgan



203). It is interesting to note that this conversation takes place only hours before Byron and Augusta (who share the same father) begin their sexual affair, thereby engaging in the strictest of social taboos. Here, the expression of Byron's sexual ambivalence is at its peak. In *Passion*, the sexual relationship he shares with his sister is presented as the truest, purest love in the book; the act of sex seems to be nothing more than an extension of Byron and Augusta's profound love for one another. (Though Byron does eventually bow to convention and form a respectable marriage with Annabella, the relationship he shares with Augusta is the enduring one, even after their sexual affair ends. It is interesting to note the fact of Byron's conventional marriage in the midst of his decidedly unconventional relationship with Augusta and his aforementioned attraction to women even while his attraction for men was at its peak. These small-scale paradoxical instances form yet another parallel adjacent to the large-scale instances of paradox created by Morgan's employment of a multivoiced discourse.)

According to Eric C. Walker in his book *Marriage, Writing, and Romanticism*, "the catalogue of antimarriage writing swells volumes" (7). Though *Passion* does not fit neatly into the category of antimarriage writing, it does offer multiple possibilities of relationship choices that discredit heteronormative marriage in general. Within the pages of Morgan's text, the passionate and lasting relationships are those found outside of marriage, while the marriages themselves are portrayed as cold and full of decaying disillusionment. Three of the four "heroines" of the book (Augusta, Caroline, and Mary Shelley) experience passionate romances in their girlhoods, all of which fall flat upon entering into matrimony. (Fanny Brawne, the fourth heroine of the book, is the exception to this rule—not because her love for John Keats survives the institution of marriage, but because his death prevents them from ever being married to begin with.) Therefore, the definite slant against the validity of heteronormative marriage is read as a challenge to the power structure implied by traditional relationships.

Byron and Augusta's love is represented as the truest and most lasting in the novel; it is also the ultimate flout of convention in the text. In striking contrast, the marriages of Byron and Augusta are presented as the collective worst in *Passion*: Augusta's marriage to George Leigh is lifeless and full of hardship, and the volatility of Byron's marriage to Annabella results in a legal separation and the utter defamation of Byron's character (as Annabella takes an active role in spreading the rumors of Byron's affair with his sister, as well as his other sexually "deviant" practices, in what seems to be an act of revenge). Accordingly, though the relationship between Percy Bysshe Shelley and Mary (Godwin) Shelley is depicted as one of the more fiery romances in the novel, it cools to the point of nothing more than coexistence after they are married. These are prime examples of Walker's theory that "anticonjugal theory continues to protest against marriage in vigorous style . . . even as the matrimonial engine purrs along, unfazed" (23). Though many of the characters in the book are averse to the social construct of marriage (Byron, Mary Shelley, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and even Caroline Lamb, to an extent), they are still forced to be reconciled with it in some manner or another. This reconciliation, as shown earlier, is generally met with negative results in their personal lives, thereby promoting and validating the bounty of love found outside traditional marriage relationships.

By reading *Passion's* postmodern views on gender definition and sexual identity with an eye turned toward the redefinition of these terms, it is possible to see the way "history bleeds itself into a supposedly enlightened present" (Steinberg 468). Could Morgan's postmodern techniques be pointing to this statement? Though we who live in the 21st century may consider ourselves advanced far beyond our ancestors' prudish beliefs of gender and sexual identity, it would seem that these beliefs still govern our behaviors (same-sex marriages are not legally recognized and we continue to refer to gay and lesbian practices as "queer")—effectively allowing the narrow views of history to "bleed [themselves]" into our "supposedly enlightened present." At any rate, Morgan's text, by its postmodern structure, leads the way for its readers to accept untraditional views on marriage, gender, and sexuality, even as they accept the postmodern writing techniques themselves and challenge the hegemony of traditional culture.

## Works Cited

- Doyle, Christine and Stewart, Susan Louise. "Ender's Game and Ender's Shadow: Orson Scott Card's Postmodern School Stories." *The Lion and the Unicorn*. 28.2 (2004): 186–202.
- Giuliano, Cheryl Fallon. "Gulnare/Kaled's 'Untold' Feminization of Byron's Oriental Tales." *SEL: Studies in English Literature, 1500 – 1900*. 33.4 (1993): 785–807.
- Graybill, Mark S. "Reconstructing/Deconstructing Genre and Gender: Postmodern Identity in Bobbie Ann Mason's *In Country* and Josephine Humphrey's *Rich in Love*." *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*. 43.3 (2002): 239–59.
- Harris, Joseph. "What Butler Saw: Cross-Dressing and Spectatorship in Seventeenth-Century France." *Paragraph: A Journal of Modern Critical Theory*. 29.1 (2006): 67–79.
- Knudsen, Susanne V. "Gender Paradoxes and Power—Theoretical Reflections with Empirical Awareness." *NORA: Nordic Journal of Women's Studies*. 12.2 (2004): 102–12.
- Morgan, Jude. *Passion*. New York, New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2006.
- Potter, Edward T. "The Clothes Make the Man: Cross-Dressing, Gender Performance, and Female Desire in Johann Elias Schlegel's *Der Triumph der guten Frauen*." *German Quarterly*. 81.3 (2008): 261–82.
- Steinberg, Marc. "Inverting History in Octavia Butler's Postmodern Slave Narrative." *African American Review*. 38.3 (2004) 467–76.
- Teal, Laurie. "Batlike Souls and Penile Tempresses: Gender Inversions in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man." *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*. 29.1 (1995): 63–78.
- Walker, Eric C. *Marriage, Writing, and Romanticism: Wordsworth and Austen After War*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2009.

# Phobetor

John de Leon

## Abstract

“Phobetor” was written by John de Leon, an undergraduate at Missouri State University. The work was created for the purposes of submission to a section of ENG 315. The author first began toying with the idea of Phobetor as a character after seeing the artwork for the Them Crooked Vultures album. The intent of the piece was to comment on the human need for companionship through the interactions of the title character and the protagonist.

---

I first saw him roughly two months ago. It was the damndest thing, having a vulture perched out in the backyard. I’d look up between pieces of dinnerware and watch him, not because he was doing anything interesting—he was just sitting there staring back at me—but because it was such an unusual sight. How many people do you know that can say they’ve had a vulture in their backyard? He stayed there, almost immobile, for the entire time it took me to clean, dry, and stack a week’s worth of dishes, including a pan that had a large portion of attempted lasagna still on it. I passed it off as an interesting coincidence, nothing more. Yes, there was a vulture in my backyard, but I’ve seen them picking sun-baked road kill off of the I-10 plenty of times.

I was sitting in the living room, with a bowl of ramen, watching *Cops* on truTV. The sun had moved down enough so that it was shining right through the blinds into my face. I got up to adjust them, and as I was up there fiddling with the strings I looked through the window. He was out there again, perched in a different tree. So I stood there for a bit with the blinds half closed looking at him trying to rationalize it. It was unlikely that my yard would get visited by two different vultures on the same day, but some people get lucky, right? Some people win the lottery. I remember thinking that he looked pretty old: kind of ratty around the edges, and he had some gaps in his plumage and some scarring on his face. So I thought maybe he was getting ready to die, just looking for somewhere to go out peacefully.

“Do vultures eat each other when they die?” I asked myself.

The only thing to do was to quit thinking about it, so I shut the blinds and sat back down. My ramen was cold, and cold ramen might be the most unappetizing thing this side of cabbage, so I went into the kitchen to heat it up. While I was watching the ramen rotate in the humming microwave, I caught something move in my peripheral vision. The vulture was sitting in a tree in my backyard again. That’s when I realized he might be following me.

I work out of my house, so I'll be the first person to admit that I don't get out a lot, and occasionally I catch myself getting a little stir-crazy. Sometimes I make card-castles. Once I turned my living room floor into a replica of the Eiffel tower done in dominoes. However, I've never been paranoid like this before. I felt like this bird was following me, outside my own home. It was uncanny. Any time I would settle down in a room for a few minutes, the bird would relocate so he could watch me through the nearest window. He would do this even when he couldn't see through the windows. I know, because I peeked through the blinds. He was always there.

One night there was a big storm, a real nasty piece of nature's handiwork. Tree limbs were down, people were without power, and small animals were reported missing. The local news station took about five minutes of footage and replayed it for hours. The day after the storm hit, I had to go shopping. I was down to half a box of graham crackers, a package of hotdogs with no buns, and assorted condiments. I got back to the house from the grocery store, gathered my things in both arms, and headed toward the door. My vision was obscured by some celery leaf and a box of raisin bran, but I managed comfortably, right up to the point that I tripped over an oak limb. I lay face down on my cement walkway trying to hold the blood in my nose and watching a plastic jar of mayonnaise roll across the lawn. I vaguely remembered stepping over the limb earlier and making a mental note to move it.

"Not quite. Try again." A voice said.

I assumed I had a concussion. The reason I thought that was because a vulture was speaking to me: actually, physically, impossibly speaking to me. Imagine a parrot that smokes, drinks whiskey, and has a hangover, and you'll have an idea of what a vulture sounds like when they speak English. It's horrible.

When I could focus again, I got up slowly. I kept the vulture in my sights—because how was I supposed to know that the thing wouldn't pull a gun on me or something, it had just spoken for Christ's sake—and backed toward my door. It looked away for a moment to peck at a wing, but made no other threatening movements. When I got inside I locked the door behind me. It took me two hours to remember that the groceries were still in the front yard.

That night I didn't get a lot of sleep. Animals don't talk. I went on a solid regimen of denial. There was no vulture, there never had been a vulture, and if I looked outside, I wouldn't have seen a vulture. The best way to stay in denial is not to test any of your assumptions, so I stayed in the house, with the blinds closed, for a week.

Then I had to get food again. It was the single most excruciating trip to the grocery store that I have ever made, including that time that I backed into a police cruiser in the parking lot. I stared at my feet the entire way to my car. When I got back to the house I unpacked my groceries in a furtive scurry, eyes down. Nothing spoke to me. Nothing large moved in the trees, no winged shadows crossed my path. I made it into the house with my last parcel and locked the door behind me.

"Welcome back."

I jumped so hard I ran into the door and fell backward into the entryway. From the floor, I could see that the bird was perched on one of the bar stools in the kitchen. The window behind him was open.

"You've been avoiding me."

I pushed myself up from the floor and then backed up until I was pressed against the door again. I pointed an accusing finger at the vulture.

I mustered my conviction as I said. "You can't be real."

In response, he clenched a taloned foot against the stool, gouging out a furrow of wood. "Real enough?"

"How do I know that really happened?"

The vulture ruffled the feathers on his shoulders and gave a single shake of his head. I would come to understand that this was a sign of avian exasperation. "As much fun as it might be to sit here and debate the philosophy of existence, how about we just take it for granted that I exist? Let's try that, shall we?"

It was one hell of a suggestion.

"Then what have you been doing in my kitchen? Why have you been watching me?"

The bird turned a miserly eye in my direction. "Waiting, on both counts."

"For what?"

My question elicited a cackle from the old bird. He responded in his unearthly drunken-parrot drawl. "What does my kind always wait for?"

The temperature of my house seemed to drop a few degrees.

"Death?" My hand unconsciously groped across the door toward the door handle.

"Don't be silly. I'm not here to kill you." If the beak was an organ that could allow for the smile, I'm sure the vulture would have. "Although it's flattering that you think a bird in my condition could accomplish such a feat."

"What condition? Being a figment of my imagination?"

The vulture cackled again. "Being so old. Look at me! I'm half dust as it is. I can't keep up with the young scavengers anymore."

"Then why are you in my kitchen? Shouldn't you be dead? That would save me a lot of trouble."

"I've learned. I've adapted to find weakness in things that are not as obvious as the desperate crawl through the desert, or the shallow breathing of those on their 'last leg.'"

I was in my early thirties. I was healthy. Sure, maybe I didn't get a lot of exercise, but I wasn't sick. I wasn't dying. I told the bastard as much.

Again he emitted his avian laugh. "You are. You just don't know it."

I went to bed telling myself that vultures don't break into houses, tell the occupants that they are dying, and then wait around for it to happen. But he did. He was still in the kitchen, sleeping on the stool, when I woke up the next morning. It never occurred to me to try and kick him out then.

"What am I supposed to call you?" I asked him one morning over the last spoonful of Cheerios. He was staring across the counter at me.

His wings went up in a little shrug. "Whatever you want. Names are a human conceit."

"I'll call you Phobeter."

"Phobeter?"

"Look it up." I dropped my spoon in the empty bowl and stood up to take it to the sink.

As I finished making my appointment with a nearby psychologist, I wondered if the receptionists for these places always assumed that the person on the other line was crazy. How often do sane people need to talk? I've never been much for speaking to people. They don't seem to understand very often, or care. But this was too big not to talk to someone.

I put the phone down and looked at the bird. There was an awkward moment of silence between us. He was perched on a speaker column in my living room.

"You still don't believe that I'm real."

"No."

"Would you like me to take another piece out of this simulated wood grain?"

"No."

He did anyway.

"You're slowly ruining all of my furniture."

"Don't think of it as *ruining*, Avery. Think of it as antiquing. I'm giving it some character."

"Do you think you could do a little less antiquing? The sofa looks like it's been hit with buckshot." I poked my finger into one of the offending holes.

"I know. I thought it would enhance the overall feel of the room."

"Oh really? And what feel is that?"

"I like to call it: 'Area Littered with Dead Buffalo.'" He said this without cackling or cawing. Occasionally he was so committed to being sarcastic that I couldn't tell if he was being serious.

"That's unfair. If the furniture was any color beside brown you wouldn't be able to say that." He hooded one eye and left the other wide open. It was his equivalent to the arched eyebrow. I had to admit, he had a point. The living room furniture does have a bovine quality to it.

"Phobitor, how is it that you speak English?"

He gave me the exasperated little bird shrug again. "How is it that you speak English, Avery?"

"My parents spoke English."

"So you learned it from them. No different from how I came to speak it."

"You learned it from my parents?"

"Don't be sarcastic, Avery. I learned it by listening to it."

"By just listening to it?" I was skeptical.

"Of course. I'm a special bird." He sounded smug.

"Or a special hallucination."

Phobitor hooded his eyes slightly and looked at me in what I can only describe as a sour glare. We didn't speak much for the rest of the day.

Dr. Samuels' office was designed for comfort: big cushy leather chairs, lighting that wasn't too harsh and yet not too dim, tissues, and coffee aroma. Everything was in rich earth tones. All of it beckoned for me to slow down and take a minute to relax, maybe open up a little. Samuels was no exception. Smile lines and a salt-and-pepper beard framed his face.

"I understand that you've been hallucinating about birds, Avery. Can I call you Avery?" He balanced a notebook on one knee and uncapped a pen sheathed in mahogany.

"Avery is fine. And it's just one bird, really."

"Ok, just one. What kind of bird is it, Avery?"

"A vulture." I settled a little deeper into my chair.

"And it's always a vulture?" Samuels scratched at his notepad and chewed on his lip a little. I had the feel that he suddenly found me much more interesting, like he was an entomologist who had found a peculiarly deformed insect.

"Yes."

"And what is it doing when you see it?"

"At first it was just staring at me, but recently it's been talking to me."

"The vulture has been talking to you?" Samuels looked up from his notes to make eye contact with me. "Speaking? Just like we're speaking now? In English?"

"Yes. You know I found that rather peculiar myself, hence my visit."

"Well of course. I'm sure if a bird spoke to me I would seek medical attention myself. Does the bird remind you of someone? Sound like someone you know perhaps?"

"Well . . . I had an uncle who drank a lot, and the bird sort of sounds like a heavy drinker. But not particularly like my uncle."

"Did your uncle touch you?" He said this like it was the most obvious answer.

"What? No."

"Alright, just checking." He replied with a friendly smile. "Why do *you* think he is bothering you, Avery?"

"He says he's waiting for me to die. That's my best guess. You're the expert; shouldn't you be able to tell me?"

He chuckled. "No one is an expert on avian hallucination." Abruptly his tone became serious and a salt-and-pepper eyebrow inched up. "Do you think you're going to die, Avery?"

"No, I don't. I feel fine."

"Have you entertained any thoughts of suicide recently?"

My stomach sank. "No. Of course not. I'm fine."

"Has there been a lot of stress in your life recently, Avery? Has anyone close to you passed away, perhaps? Or did you recently break up with a loved one?"

I hadn't been out on a date in almost two years, but I wasn't about to admit that. Why in the hell would that have anything to do with me seeing a talking bird? "No. Nothing like that."

It went on like that for a while, just Samuels asking inane questions about my parents, or my job, or how I felt about being an only child. Occasionally he would offer a slightly creepy explanation, like that I had an intense fear of bowel movements, but I shot most of those down.

"Well, Avery, obviously it's going to take us some time to get to the root of why you're seeing these things. However, I can assure you that there is, more often than not, some experience that is triggering these episodes. Unfortunately we're out of time for today, but I'd like you to see Michelle on the way out and schedule another meeting with me, okay? I want to help you, Avery." Samuels stood with me and guided me toward the door.

I made the appropriate noises to assure him that I would follow through with scheduling a return visit, but then I just gave Michelle a friendly wave on my way out of the office. I crumpled up the appointment slip and left it in the center console of my car.

Phobetor was waiting when I returned. "So, did he give you some magic words to make me go away?"

"I thought being an asshole was just a 'human conceit.'"

Phobetor picked at a wing before replying. "If I'm just a figment of *your* imagination, why can't I be an asshole?"

I went to the refrigerator and made like I was looking for food in order to avoid answering his question. Something had been picking at my lunchmeat.

"Have you been in here?"

"You're taking longer than I had expected. I had to eat something."

He made a good point.

"I'm not sure I appreciate you tearing through my refrigerator like this."

"I'm not sure I appreciate you taking this long to keel over, it's like watching the Titanic sink."

"How do you know about the Titanic?"

"You left the television on the last time you went shopping. It was stuck on the History channel. As I don't have the faintest idea how to manipulate the remote, I just watched that. There is the added complication of the remote always being trapped in the couch cushions. I would extract it myself, but then I would have to listen to you whine about how much damage I've done in the process."

"Why can't I whine? It's my property you're destroying."

"Do you know how hard it is to touch anything without marring it when you're equipped with talons?"

"I can't say that I do."

"Have you seen the movie *Edward Scissorhands*?"

"Yes. When did you watch *Edward Scissorhands*?"

"You leave the TV on a lot. That's not the point. I'm trying to give you some insight on my predicament."

"What does Johnny Depp have to do with being a hallucination?"

Phobetor ruffled his feathers. "You're impossible to talk to when you deliberately misunderstand what I'm trying to say."

"Well who else are you going to talk to?" I questioned.

"I could ask you the same thing."

When the psychologist made no progress fixing my considerable problem, I went to my physician. I hoped maybe this whole experience had a simple explanation, like a brain tumor. After an uneventful series of tests, I left the doctor's office with less hope than I had before, she said I was fine.



The entire way back home I debated living the rest of my life with an imaginary bird in the house. Maybe it wouldn't be so bad, I thought. It was someone to talk to. Life wouldn't be so lonely anymore. He wasn't too terribly messy. Actually if I could just get him to stop tearing the hell out of my furniture, it wouldn't be so bad. But then I thought about the implications of talking to an imaginary bird for the rest of my life, and I began to feel sick. Normal people don't have imaginary friends. I would've given anything to be normal.

Of course he was waiting for me when I arrived. He looked like he had been snoozing on the arm of the couch. He snaked his head out from under a wing and blinked at me wearily when the door closed.

"Pack your bags, bird, the doctor said I was fine. Not dying anytime soon." I walked past him into the kitchen.

It took him three wing strokes to follow me: one to slow his descent from the couch to the floor, and two to accompany his leap onto the counter. I'd stopped leaving anything sitting on tables or the kitchen counter, since these were his preferred perches, and he frequently scattered everything upon landing.

"Avery, you've been holding on rather valiantly so far, I'll grant you that. Longer than I had anticipated. Perhaps I should go elsewhere." His talons clicked on the Formica as he paced the length of the counter.

"Maybe you should. Then I could get back to my life in peace."

Phobeter cawed at me. "What a life it is. Microwave dinners and prime-time television. Dishes, more television, maybe some dessert before you sleep. Wake up early to get work done on your computer, lunch, and we're back where we started. The biggest events in your life involve going to the grocery store, Avery."

I was cutting an apple into slices, so I vaguely threatened him with the paring knife. "You can go somewhere else if you don't like it."

"And miss the excitement? Avery, if you don't die soon, you might kill *me* out of sheer boredom."

I didn't have anything to say to that, so I went back to slicing my apple. I heard Phobeter glide into the face of the refrigerator and thrash his wings about until he wrestled the door open. I had started leaving him a plate of meat on the lowest shelf so he didn't make such a mess when he ate. He was kind enough to nudge the door closed with his beak when he finished. I had the sudden urge to say something before he left. I didn't like leaving the silence between us.

"You know, Phobeter, you're probably the most remarkable thing that has ever happened to me."

He stopped hopping toward the doorway to turn and face me. "Everyone gets eaten in the end, Avery. You're not special."

I frowned. "That's not what I meant."

"I know, but I'm not your friend, Avery. You're my buffet. Try to remember that."

A day later he disappeared. I was headed into the kitchen to tease him about being bald, I had found a stray feather in the hall. But, he was nowhere to be found. At first I didn't think

much about it because he left often enough to relieve himself outdoors. He was always polite about that. However, minutes stretched into hours, and he didn't return. I worried that maybe he'd just taken my advice and left. I worried that perhaps he'd died. He was old, after all. Then I worried, a little, that my sanity was returning.

I loitered in the kitchen for a while that day. I cleaned some dishes that didn't need cleaning. Before I heated up a box of sweet-and-sour chicken, I made sure there were some fresh scraps on his plate. There wasn't a lot on T.V., so I went to bed early and put the feather on my nightstand. I left the porch light on and a window open, just in case.

The damn bird has been gone for four days. He's not coming back. I bought a gun today on the way home from the grocery store. It's a revolver. I thought about shooting birds in the backyard but I can't bring myself to. I went through the house and looked at all the furniture that Phobetor had torn up. I never thought to have anyone look at it, to see if the scratches were really there. Then again, I don't really have anyone to ask. He was right; it really isn't much of a life. Now that he's gone, it isn't much of one at all. I don't even know what made him show up in the first place, I can't recreate that. I can't make him come back. Whoever finds this, do me a favor: check. If there are scratches on my furniture and a feather next to this note, just make sure one of the windows is open. He'll take care of everything else.

# Summer of the Spy

Mike Rogers

INT. DARK HALLWAY — NIGHT

Moonlight pools softly on the floor of a grandiose and elegant hallway.

A gentle breeze reveals a single open window at the end of the hall.

MALE SPY (V.O.)

Breaking in had proven to be easier than I thought. The window locks hadn't been changed for years.

A TACTICAL BOOT steps INTO FRAME. A spy, dressed in black with a ski mask and night vision goggles.

MALE SPY (V.O.)

For a moment, I let myself relax. This was my lucky day. The job was going to be a piece of cake and the president would get his stolen documents back before morning.

Suddenly, a FLASHLIGHT BEAM illuminates the wall. Footsteps approach.

The spy freezes and looks around. A potted plant. Paintings. An expensive rug. Bare walls.

Crouching, he flattens himself against the wall, using the potted plant for what little cover it's worth.

MALE SPY (V.O.)

Careless.

A GUARD appears at the end of the hallway. His flashlight reveals the open window.

GUARD

Huh?

MALE SPY (V.O.)

Really careless.

Without hesitation, the spy grabs the RUG and WHIPS it out from under the guard's feet. He hits the floor hard, the flashlight spins out of reach.

The spy is on top of him instantly, fist raised, but the guard is out cold.

He pauses. Listens. Crickets.

MALE SPY (V.O.)  
But it's my lucky day.

The spy hurries off into the house.

INT. STUDY — NIGHT

The door swings open revealing the spy holstering a lockpick. TILT DOWN to the desk.  
Laying on top is a FOLDER stamped "TOP SECRET."

He reaches for it—

MAGGIE (V.O.)  
(crackling through headset)  
I KNEW I would find you here!

The spy whirls.

A FEMALE SPY is already in the room. Leather-clad, her night-vision goggles illuminate her face in an eerie green.

The spy's voice cracks in surprise, it's now JOSH.

JOSH  
(through headset)  
Ah! Jeez, Maggie, you scared me.

The female spy picks up the folder.

JOSH  
Wait, Maggie, don't—

ALARMS blare throughout the house.

He snatches the folder from her and turns to leave. SHOUTS can be heard upstairs.

JOSH  
Come on!

INT. DARK HALLWAY — NIGHT

They sprint around the corner and nearly collide with the now-conscious guard. He raises a POLICE BATON and swings directly at Josh's head—

HARD CUT TO:

INT. JOSH'S BEDROOM — DAY

JOSH, 11, sits at a computer wearing a headset. He grimaces and looks away. Sam Fisher and James Bond posters grace his walls.

JOSH

Maggie! I almost had it that time!

MAGGIE (V.O.)

(through headset)

Oh come on, you'll have plenty of time this summer to play your game. Have you had a chance to try out that new Spy-O-Scope your parents bought for you yet?

Josh reaches off screen and picks up a small pen-like object.

JOSH'S POV — SPY-O-SCOPE

It looks like a pen at first glance, but Josh opens it to reveal a fully functional telescope.

BACK TO SCENE

He holds it up to his eye and peers around the room.

JOSH

Not yet. I'm waiting for my neighbors to get home.

MAGGIE

You're so weird.

JOSH'S MOM (O.S.)

Josh!

He closes the scope.

JOSH

Gotta go—my mom's calling.

He yanks off his headset and turns off the computer.

SERIES OF SHOTS

Josh peeks around the corner of his bedroom door.

Tiptoes down the hallway, shoulder pressed against the wall.

Sneaks down the stairs.

Peeks into the kitchen, quickly jerks back. The FAMILY CAT prances by, entirely unaware. Josh grins.

He sprints into the kitchen, slides across the tiles into the living room.

Josh's smile instantly vanishes.

INT. LIVING ROOM — DAY

MOM and DAD are giddy with delight. Mom, face streaked with suntan lotion, wears a lei. Dad has a safari hat and travel brochures. Both are adorned in shorts and flip-flops.

Josh's mom greets him with already-packed suitcase.

Josh's eyes go wide with shock.

JOSH  
(silently)  
No!

INT. KITCHEN — DAY (SLOW MOTION)

Eyes wide with horror, Josh turns to escape to his bedroom.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HALLWAY — DAY (SLOW MOTION)

Josh sprints toward his room, mouth gaped in an inaudible scream.

His parents follow close behind, grasping for him.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JOSH'S BEDROOM — DAY (SLOW MOTION)

Josh's arms flail.

He is dragged screaming from his room.

At one point, he manages to free himself, but is quickly restrained again by his father.

He hoists Josh over his shoulder and marches out of the room.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. FAMILY CAR — DAY

Josh sits stony-faced in the back seat watching out the window.

Asphalt roads turn to gravel.

Rows of houses are replaced by pastures of cattle.

Power lines transform into picket fences.

He lets out a sigh.

EXT. GRANDMA'S FRONT PORCH — EVENING

GRANDMA bursts from the screen door of her quaint prairie-style home, her arms raised in excitement. An apron complements her denim dress.

EXT. GRANDMA'S DRIVEWAY — CONTINUOUS

The car has barely stopped moving by the time she pulls Josh from the car, nearly suffocating him with a gigantic hug.

GRANDMA

Joshie-poo! I'm so glad to see you! We're going to have such fun while your parents are away for the summer. The bingo gals can't wait to meet you!

Josh peeks around his grandma and notices a chicken coop in her back yard.

He closes his eyes and takes a deep breath.

INT. GRANDMA'S KITCHEN — EVENING

Utensils are scattered about on the table, a half-rolled piecrust awaits completion.

GRANDMA

I'll be happy to give you the grand tour soon, but I have to finish this pie first!  
If you want to help out, there's an apron—

JOSH

Uh . . . that's ok, I can explore on my own a little.

GRANDMA

Well alright then, you'll be in the spare room, up the stairs at the end of the hall . . .  
By the time she says "room," Josh is already gone.

GRANDMA'S HOUSE — MONTAGE

Josh opens several doors in quick succession revealing:

Grandma's "library." Several bookshelves of Agatha Christie novels and cookbooks.

The master bedroom. A cross-stitch wonderland, the bed is neatly made and doilies adorn the furniture.

The bathroom. Complete with miniature lighthouses and seashells.

A broom closet. Some dusty coats are draped on old wire hangers.

A sewing room. Josh sees the first electronic item in the house: a brand new Singer sewing machine.

The spare bedroom. The walls are bare, but the bed is neatly made and there is a picture of Josh on the dresser.

INT. SPARE BEDROOM — CONTINUOUS

Josh plops down on the bed, mimes turning on an invisible TV and pretends to watch it for a moment.

He pulls the SPY-O-SCOPE from his pocket, stares at it longingly.

He lets out a long, drawn-out sigh.

CUT TO:

INT. GRANDMA'S KITCHEN — NIGHT

Josh wears an apron and a scowl, rolling dough for the pie.

Grandma watches over his shoulder, pleased.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. GRANDMA'S FRONT PORCH — MORNING

Josh barges from the house wearing a pair of Oakleys.

MALE SPY (V.O.)

I survived the first night. It was time to explore the perimeter.

He struts around to the back of the house and studies the chicken coop. One SQUAWKS.

MALE SPY (V.O.)

The back yard was empty, except for a makeshift chicken coop preventing five  
hens from terrorizing the world.

A line of trees marks the edge of the property.

MALE SPY (V.O.)

And trees. Trees are great for two things: shade and climbing.

Josh grabs a branch and pulls himself up.

MALE SPY (V.O.)

It was time to do a little surveying.

EXT. TREETOP — DAY

Josh reaches the top of the tree and scans the ground below. There is nothing for miles.



JOSH

(muttering)

I've had more fun in a waiting room.

THUNDER RUMBLES in the distance.

Huge clouds form on the horizon.

He climbs down . . .

EXT. GRANDMA'S BACK YARD — CONTINUOUS

. . . and is greeted by his grandmother.

GRANDMA

There's my little climbing monkey!

Josh rolls his eyes.

GRANDMA

I need to go into town today for some supplies. Do you want to come along for the ride?

Josh shoots a glance at the chicken coop.

He nods frantically.

GRANDMA

Well go get your raincoat, then. It looks like a storm's brewin'!

EXT. STORE FRONT — DAY

Light rain begins to fall as Grandma's car pulls into town. It's tiny, the shops snuggle together on the lone street through town.

The car stops at a building called KNITS R' US.

INT. KNITS R' US — DAY

Grandma heads straight for a display of crochet needles.

Josh starts to follow, then changes his mind. He approaches the counter.

JOSH

Excuse me, where is your electronics aisle?

An elderly woman looks at him over horn-rimmed glasses.

ELDERLY WOMAN

I'm sorry?

JOSH

Your electronics aisle. You know, batteries, flashlights, that sort of thing?

ELDERLY WOMAN

I think you might be mistaken, son. This isn't that kind of store.

JOSH

(disheartened)

Oh. Well can you point me in the direction of the nearest TV, then?

The woman just laughs.

EXT. STORE FRONT — DAY

Josh slogs out into the rain, eyes glued to the sidewalk. It's pouring, but he sits down on the curb, rests his chin in his hands, and waits for Grandma to finish shopping.

EXT. GRANDMA'S BACK YARD – MORNING

The rain has stopped, the sun blazes overhead again.

Josh pockets the Spy-O-Scope as he walks to the tree.

EXT. TREETOP — CONTINUOUS

Josh hoists himself up.

MALE SPY (V.O.)

It was an awful pl—

Josh coughs.

JOSH

Ugh, that voice hurts.

JOSH (V.O.)

It was an awful place. I didn't know how much longer I could bear living in the Stone Age.

He raises the Spy-O-Scope to his eye.

POV SHOT THROUGH SPY-O-SCOPE — BACK YARD

The chicken coop slips into view.

JOSH (V.O.)

The lack of electricity was really getting to me.

The flower beds.

JOSH (V.O.)

I knew the enemy might be testing me. But I didn't care anymore.

The roof.

JOSH (V.O.)

This was going to be the worst summer ever.

Something glints on the rooftop.

An antenna, half-hidden behind the chimney!

BACK TO SCENE

He leans forward to get a better view.

GRANDMA (O.S.)

Joshie!

Josh's fingers slip.

He flails as he topples off the branch.

EXT. GRANDMA'S BACK YARD — MORNING

WHUMP! Josh hits the ground hard.

GRANDMA

Good morning! What are you doing down there?

Josh groans.

GRANDMA

No matter. Today is going to be so much fun. I've made a list of all the things  
you can help me with around the house!

Josh glances anxiously back at the tree.

GRANDMA

Don't worry—we'll have a great time. We get to spend the whole day together,  
you know!

JOSH

Grandma, I—

GRANDMA

I've got a bag of chicken feed all ready for you.

She takes him by the hand and leads him toward the house.

GRANDMA

Just be careful when you open the pen because they will try and run. They're  
the most free-spirited little things I've ever laid eyes on . . .

FADE TO:

INT. SPARE BEDROOM — NIGHT

Josh rips off an apron as he enters. Grandma passes by behind him, heading for bed.

GRANDMA

Goodnight, honey.

JOSH

'Night.

Josh closes the door, pressing his ear against it.

Grandma's FOOTSTEPS grow quiet. Her bedroom door CLICKS shut.

Josh quickly tiptoes to his closet, pulls out a flashlight.

Strains as he quietly pries open the bedroom window.

Hoists himself up the side of the house.

EXT. ROOFTOP — CONTINUOUS

Josh approaches the chimney on all fours, an inch at a time. Shingles tear away in his grasp.

Hidden behind the dilapidated chimney is a small cluster of bright, shiny antennae. They  
contrast significantly against the old, worn-out house.

Josh flicks on his flashlight, illuminating a half-hidden cable under the shingles.

He follows it toward the side of the house, peeps over the edge.

JOSH'S POV

It snakes into a window on the second floor.

BACK TO SCENE

Josh looks puzzled.

JOSH  
That's weird.

He looks at a window to his left.

JOSH  
There's the bathroom . . .

The window on his right.

JOSH  
. . . and the sewing room. That should be the closet. But there's no window in  
the closet.

INT. HALLWAY — NIGHT

Josh's door creaks open. He peeks his head out. Listens.

It's quiet. He closes the door behind him and creeps toward the closet.

INT. CLOSET — NIGHT

Josh pushes through the coats to discover:

A hidden door!

Green light and strange, muffled HIGH-PITCHED NOISES seep through the cracks.

He tries the handle. Locked.

He squints his eyes in thought.

INT. GRANDMA'S KITCHEN — NIGHT

Josh grabs a pair of scissors, then sneaks out.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRANDMA'S BACK YARD — NIGHT

Josh snips a small section of chicken wire out of the bottom of the coop.

CUT TO:

INT. GRANDMA'S KITCHEN — NIGHT

The scissors drop back onto the counter where they came from.

CUT TO:

INT. CLOSET — NIGHT

Josh closes the closet door behind him as he twists the wire into a makeshift LOCKPICK.  
With a CLICK, the door swings open. Lights flood his face.  
His jaw drops.

INT. SECRET ROOM — NIGHT

A RADIO WHINES on a desk cluttered with PAPERS and COMPUTER EQUIPMENT. MAPS decorate the wall space between file cabinets. A rack of clothes ranging from janitor coveralls to dinner dresses rests in the corner.

Josh picks up a paper stamped in bright red letters: (TOP SECRET).

JOSH  
It's in Russian?

He spins around to the clothing rack.

JOSH'S POV

The Russian flag is embroidered on several sleeves.

JOSH  
No. It can't be.

Suddenly, the TOILET flushes.

BACK TO SCENE

Josh's head whips around toward the noise. He bolts for the door.

INT. CLOSET — CONTINUOUS

Josh closes the door to the secret room behind him.

INT. HALLWAY — CONTINUOUS

Josh pulls the closet door closed and bolts for his room. The sound of RUNNING WATER masks his footsteps.

INT. SPARE BEDROOM — CONTINUOUS

Josh shuts the door behind him and leaps into bed, pulling the covers over his head.

His chest heaves. Each heartbeat echoes through the room like a cannon.

THUD. THUD. THUD.

The door creaks open.

Josh squeezes his eyes tight.

GRANDMA

Josh?

He is as still as a mouse.

THUD. THUD. THUD.

She stares at his bed.

THUD. THUD.

Finally, the door shuts.

THUD.

Josh lets out a deep breath.

INT. CAR — MORNING

Josh presses his head against the window.

GRANDMA

I really don't understand how those chickens got out. I replaced that wire last week!

She glances at Josh.

GRANDMA

I'm just glad I was able to catch them all before they wandered off. You didn't hear anything suspicious out there last night, did you?

JOSH

Huh? No! I was asleep. Yeah, I was sleeping all night long. Didn't wake up at all. Not even once.

GRANDMA

Well no matter. We'll pick up some more wire just as soon as we're done at the grocery store today.

She shoots him a glance out of the corner of her eye.

EXT. GROCERY STORE — MORNING

The car pulls into JERRY'S GROCERY. Josh dives out of the car and races toward the entrance. Grandma follows.

INT. GROCERY STORE — CONTINUOUS

The motion sensor bell RINGS.

Josh dashes for the candy aisle.

The bell RINGS again.

Grandma stands in the entrance and watches him go. She heads to the meat section at the back of the store.

Josh pretends to investigate the candy. A CONVEX MIRROR hangs from the ceiling.

Grandma's reflection stares back at him.

He diverts his eyes out the window.

A BLACK MERCEDES squeals to a stop in the parking lot.

EXT. GROCERY STORE — MORNING

THREE MEN dressed in suits and dark glasses exit the Mercedes. They briefly pause and look around while one kneels to perform an emergency polish of his shoe.

INT. GROCERY STORE — MORNING

Josh picks up a box of Twizzlers, but keeps his eyes fixed on the newcomers.

The motion sensor bell RINGS. RINGS. RINGS.

Sunglasses still on, two of the men immediately walk toward the back of the store.

A big man with a scar across his cheek stays behind, picks up a magazine. He walks in Josh's direction.

Josh frowns.

Putting down the Twizzlers, he heads for the door.

He rounds the corner just as the two men approach his Grandma.

He squints. The men reach into their pockets . . .

JOSH  
Grandma, look out!

She whirls.



They reach her, she ducks.

POW!

Grandma punches one of them hard in the stomach.

Josh cocks an eyebrow.

RUNNING FOOTSTEPS approach him from behind.

He turns as the third man tackles him.

JOSH

Oof!

Josh tries to punch his attacker, but the man is too strong. He quickly pins Josh, revealing a familiar patch on the inside of his sport coat.

JOSH (V.O.)

They were Russians. I should have seen it coming.

Josh twists as far as he can, searching for his Grandma.

JOSH (V.O.)

But why would they attack Grandma?

Grandma tosses the second man to the ground.

WHUMP.

He lands on top of his unconscious friend.

JOSH (V.O.)

So many questions. So few answers.

Grandma looks up and sees Josh pinned.

She snatches a nearby BOTTLE from a wine display and heaves it at his assailant.

It EXPLODES upon impact with his head. He slumps to the floor.

Josh clammers to his feet, soaked with wine.

JOSH (V.O.)

Grandma couldn't be a Russian spy. She just saved my life. She had to be working for someone. But who?

Grandma races up to him. Josh stares at her, slack jawed.

She flashes an apologetic smile and pulls a CIA BADGE from her purse.

JOSH

I . . . You mean . . . You're a . . .

She cuts him off and gestures to the door.

Another BLACK MERCEDES pulls into the parking lot.

JOSH (V.O.)

I couldn't believe it. She's a spy.

Josh grins at his Grandma.

JOSH (V.O.)

There were more of them, but I wasn't worried.

They crouch into martial arts poses.

JOSH (V.O.)

It was my lucky day.

Josh's face breaks into a huge smile.

JOSH (V.O.)

This was going to be the best summer ever.

CUT TO BLACK.

# ***The Denied Calling: A Look at the Role of Women in the Southern Baptist Church***

**Amber Louise Cook**

## **Abstract**

Over the years, the roles of women have evolved in society to allow women equal opportunities in many areas of civilization. However, despite this evolution, the Southern Baptist Convention has a long, uneven history in relation to the proper roles of women within the church, constantly giving women leadership rights only to take them away again. In 1984, the Convention established a resolution that restricted women from serving in certain leadership roles, and this resolution continues to dictate doctrine. Although many Southern Baptist women seem to be unaffected by these restrictions, other Southern Baptist women are forced to choose between following their denominational beliefs and following their hearts. In extensive interviews with women both inside and outside of the Southern Baptist Church, women express their views on the proper roles of women. In addition, women in leadership express their personal calls to ministry and the discrimination faced as a result of this calling. Interviews with these women highlight the oppression hidden in the shadows of a denomination that claims to bring freedom to all and demand action both for the oppressed and by the oppressors.

---

## **Introduction**

“Wherever He leads, I’ll go. Wherever He leads, I’ll go. I’ll follow my Christ who loves me so. Wherever He leads, I’ll go” (McKinney, 1936). Every Sunday, Southern Baptists from all across the United States meet in church buildings and homes to worship, hearing sermons that demand action and singing songs of dedication. Women and men alike are taught to take a stand for Christ, surrendering their personal hopes and desires for the promise of salvation and a meaningful future. Children attend Bible school and Sunday school classes in which they are told that God loves them and that with God all things are possible. From a young age, children are given opportunities to give back to the community through mission trips and service activities. Youth are given opportunities to teach classes and sing special music, and adults are challenged daily to step out of their comfort zones and put action to the teachings of Jesus. The young and old alike are encouraged to seek God’s calling for their lives and to have the courage to act on that calling. At the same time, women in Southern Baptist churches are often refused the opportunity to act on their callings in serving as deacons and pastors, and wives are instructed to submit to their husbands’ authority. Because of

these conflicting messages, many Southern Baptist women are left searching for their places within the church.

### ***The Current Stance of the Southern Baptist Convention***

According to Southern Baptist doctrine, each Southern Baptist church is an autonomous body, free to serve God as best it can while remaining faithful to the Scriptures (Southern Baptist Convention, 2000). The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) is not a governing body meant to serve as the dictator of official Baptist doctrine. Instead, the Convention is meant to serve as a coalition of like-minded believers who come together in an effort to effect greater change. Although the SBC often takes a stance on issues related to the ministry of the church, each individual church is in no way required to submit to any particular decision (Southern Baptist Convention, 1999). However, choosing not to comply with the resolutions of the Convention could result in a vote by the Convention to discontinue membership of the church or organization, on both a state and national level (Hagerty, 2009). This has been evident in relation to the issue of the role of women in church. Each year, a few Southern Baptist churches allow women to serve in ways unapproved by the Convention. Upon this decision, the women involved and their congregations are pressured to no longer affiliate with the SBC. If the congregation does not withdraw its membership, it runs the risk of being “disfellowshipped—kicked out of the convention” (Hagerty, 2009).

Despite the Convention’s history of “disfellowshipping” churches, the SBC states that men and women are equal. According to the *Baptist Faith and Message* (SBC, 2000), the official statement of the SBC’s doctrines and beliefs, husbands and wives are considered equal in the eyes of God because both were created “in God’s image.” However, the passage continues by qualifying the term *equal*. By describing men and women as equal, *The Baptist Faith and Message* does not seem to suggest that women and men are capable of doing all the same tasks. Instead, it is meant to suggest that although men and women have very different skills and values, their roles are of equal importance and complement one another’s weaknesses:

The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation. (SBC, 2000, Section XVIII Para. 3)

As this applies to a woman’s role in the church, women are allowed to serve in an array of ministries. Women in Southern Baptist churches are not restricted from serving as Sunday school teachers, missionaries, Bible school directors, musicians, and janitors, as well as counselors, volunteers, and secretaries (SBC, 2000). In each of these roles, women are under the direct supervision of a male, namely the pastor of the local congregation. However,

according to the *Baptist Faith and Message* (SBC, 2000), the role of pastoral leadership in the church is restricted to men. The *Baptist Faith and Message* (SBC, 2000) states, “While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.” Interim President Mike Whitehead described the decision in 2000 as “a clarification of what we have always believed. . . . For most Southern Baptists, the committee’s report is not news that God assigned roles in the home and in the church. This principle is not a cultural relic, but the divine order. Most Baptists are pretty squeamish about tinkering with the words of God” (As quoted in Ledbetter, 2000).

### **Historical Approach: The History of Baptist Women in the Church**

The history of women in the Southern Baptist Church is not one of steady improvements. Rather, the progress of Southern Baptist women has been one of radical swings from side to side, depending on the culture, the convention leadership, and scriptural interpretations. As early Baptists emerged in Western and Central Europe, women played a crucial role in the denomination’s beginning. According to Sarah Frances Anders and Marilyn Metcalf-Whittaker (1993), women served as pastors, deacons, and hostesses for house meetings. In fact, Baptists were often the subject of criticism for having “she-preachers.” Because of their active involvement in the denomination, women were also subject to unlawful imprisonments and beatings (pp. 202–203).

As colonists began to escape the religious oppression of England, many individuals with various religious beliefs began to migrate from England to America in the early 1700s. Among them were two groups of Baptists: the Regular Baptists and the General Baptists. The General Baptists allowed women to preach and serve as deaconesses, and the Regular Baptists supported a male-only ministry, remaining theologically tied to Calvinism<sup>1</sup> and the Anglican Church from which it split. As the two groups began to take root in America, the General Baptists’ views regarding the proper roles of women began to spread. Women in America were voting in the Baptist churches as well as serving as deaconesses and elders. As the denomination began to grow, it seemed that the role of women in the Baptist church was truly taking hold (Anders & Metcalf-Whittaker, 1993).

However, in the mid-1700s, the influence of women in the church began to bother many Baptists, especially the Regular Baptists who exerted great influence over New England and the middle colonies. Quickly, the opportunities for women to serve in leadership roles began to diminish. Nonetheless, this movement too was short-lived. During the eighteenth century, an explosion of religious activity and revival spread throughout the colonies as society entered what is now known as the First Great Awakening (Hoyle, 2005).

During the Awakening, a new group of Baptists, the Separates, emerged. This group of individuals spread across the South and was open to the “spiritual enthusiasm and emotional-

---

<sup>1</sup> Calvinism is a religious perspective known for its strict adherence to scriptural interpretation and predestination. Calvinism can be described by presenting the perspective’s five major points: original sin, God’s election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and perseverance of the saints (Dabney, n.d.).

ism” of the revivals. Among this group, women were given prominent leadership roles. Once again, women were ordained to be deaconesses and eldresses, and some women began to gain recognition as excellent pastors. However, at the close of the eighteenth century, the Separates began to merge with the more conservative Regular Baptists in an effort to create a unified Baptist denomination. After the merge, the newly formed group decided to hold to the Separatist notion of a warm and informal evangelistic style, yet follow the doctrines of the Regular Baptists. Consequently, the public roles of women were once again diminished (Hoyle, 2005). According to Lydia Huffman Hoyle (2005), the current SBC grew from this union.

The Baptist denominations continued to change throughout the nineteenth century. As the United States entered the Civil War, the Baptists found themselves on opposing sides of the issue of slavery. Consequently, the Baptists split into Northern and Southern Baptists (Anders & Metcalf-Whittaker, 1993). The Southern Baptists were in support of continuing slave practices, whereas the Northern Baptists, who later became known as American Baptists, were in favor of abolishing slavery. After the split, each group of Baptists began to form its own specific doctrines. In relation to the role of women in leadership, the American Baptists grew more open to the possibility. However, Southern Baptists grew increasingly conservative, steering clear of female involvement (Anders & Metcalf-Whittaker, 1993).

Despite the denominational split, Baptist women, like women nationwide, experienced great amounts of change throughout the Civil War. As men entered the military, women were allowed the opportunity to serve in roles that traditionally had been reserved for men. Women began working in the fields and factories. This newfound freedom also allowed women the opportunity to become socially active in their communities (Tice & Perkins, 2002). On a religious level, women all throughout Christianity began seeking ways to become involved in ministry. Many women began to serve as teachers in the Sunday school movement. Other women became involved in social and moral reform efforts, fighting for the rights of women, children, and minorities. Still others formed missionary organizations and began traveling worldwide. Although according to church doctrine Southern Baptist women were precluded from serving in pastoral ministries, women also became increasingly involved in children’s moral and religious education, as well as vacation Bible schools and mission opportunities.

Through these venues, women began to gain leadership and ministry skills, which slowly began to open the doors to women in ministry within other denominations as well as the American Baptists. By the end of the 1800s, six Free Will Baptist churches and at least one American Baptist church had called women to serve as their senior pastors. However, the Southern Baptists continued to restrict the roles of women and began to lag behind in providing equal opportunities for both men and women to preach and serve in other leadership positions (Hoyle, 2005).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, war, factories, industrialization, and urbanization began to cause major disruptions in family roles (Tice & Perkins, 2002). The war ended, and men returned home from the military. Men began to return to work in factories, leaving women to once again work inside the homes and on the farms. Nonetheless, women continued their active involvement in society. Women began a number of movements, fighting for social reform regarding suffrage, abolition of slavery, child labor laws, temperance, and educa-

tion. By the 1960s, women had also begun to move out of the home and into traditional workplaces, fighting for equal wages and opportunities (Tice & Perkins, 2002). This period marked a time of rejuvenation for the women's rights movement.<sup>2</sup> Women once again began to defend themselves against the sexism in society. However, according to Anders and Metcalf-Whittaker (1993), these advances sent Baptist women on a "rollercoaster—in and out of higher education, to and from the labor force, and up and down from the pulpit" (p. 204).

As the women's movement began to take hold in American society, Southern Baptists were slow to address the topic. Although Southern Baptist churches began ordaining women as ministers in 1964, this decision was met with much suspicion and controversy. On August 9, 1964, at Watts Street Baptist Church in Durham, North Carolina, Addie Davis became the first Southern Baptist woman to be ordained (Pierce, 2005). However, despite her strong sense of calling from a young age to "spread the gospel," Reverend Davis received dozens of letters expressing strict disapproval of her ordination. One writer wrote that she should simply "learn from her husband" even though Davis had no husband from which to learn (Pierce, 2005).

In addition to the controversy of ordaining women for ministry, Southern Baptist literature failed to reflect the changing roles of women within society. Although women's issues began to be addressed in the literature and services of other denominations, Southern Baptist literature refused to address the issue. Conferences and books discussing the equality of women did not appear in Southern Baptist literature until the mid-1970s. However, slowly Southern Baptist women began to hold state and national offices within the denomination, and in 1978, the percentage of women in these roles reached its peak at 13 percent. That same year, the convention held its first conference regarding the status of women titled *The National Convocation on Women in the Southern Baptist Convention* in Nashville, Tennessee. Only a few years later, in 1983, a group of Southern Baptist women formed "Women in Ministry" to act as a support group for Baptist women who felt called into the ministry (Hoyles, 2005; Shaw, 2008).

However, as women began to make advances within the Southern Baptist denomination, the Southern Baptist Convention began to take a turn toward fundamentalism. Although women across other denominations including the Disciples of Christ and United Methodists continued to make huge strides toward equality through encouraged general participation and ordination of women within the church, Southern Baptists began taking steps in the opposite direction. According to Hoyle, a year after "Women in Ministry" was formed, the Convention passed a resolution that restricted women from serving in pastoral functions (Hoyle, 2005). The resolution stated,

Therefore, be it resolved, that we do not decide concerns of Christian doctrine and practice by modern cultural, sociological, and ecclesiastical trends or by emotional factors; that we remind ourselves of the dearly bought Baptist principle of the final authority of Scripture in matters of faith and conduct; and that we encourage the

---

<sup>2</sup> The women's rights movement began in the 1840s but was suppressed by the Civil War and the abolitionists.

service of women in all aspects of church life and work other than pastoral functions and leadership roles entailing ordination. (Kell & Camp, 1999, p. 79)

In 2000, the *Baptist Faith and Message* strengthened these views stating, “While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.” Today, most Southern Baptist churches refuse to ordain women as either deacons or pastors, and females involved in ministry are often referred to as “directors” rather than “ministers.” According to historian William Leonard, “Many fundamentalists [see] any action to ordain women as a direct contradiction of the biblical teaching regarding the subordinate role of women. . . . Ordination violates the teaching of Holy Scripture and upsets the order of creation” (Kell & Camp, 1999, p. 79–80).

### ***The Role of Scripture in the Southern Baptist Convention***

To adequately discuss the stance of the Southern Baptist Convention on women, one must first understand the Convention’s doctrine regarding the authority of Scripture. According to the *Baptist Faith and Message* (2000), “The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God’s revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy.” Because the Scriptures are considered to have God as their author, the words of the Bible have divine authority within the Convention. Consequently, any words written within the Scriptures are considered the Word of God, free from error, and completely true (SBC, 2000).

This emphasis on the importance and truth of the Bible plays a significant role on the current stance of the Southern Baptist Convention regarding the role of women. The Convention is much more concerned with God’s will for women as portrayed by the Scriptures than it is concerned with the moral issue of equalitarianism. After reading certain passages within the Bible that address the role of women, members of the SBC have come to the conclusion that leadership within the church is not an appropriate role for women in the church.

### ***The Traditional Argument of the Southern Baptist Convention***

First Timothy 2:11–14 states, “Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor” (New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]). Paul<sup>3</sup> continues his instructions in 1 Timothy 3 by giving qualifications for both bishops and deacons. In these qualifications, the author states, “An elder must be a man whose life is above reproach. He must be faithful to his wife” (NRSV). The Southern Baptist Convention cites these verses and additional

---

<sup>3</sup> The actual authors of Titus and 1 Timothy are disputed among Bible scholars, but that discussion lends itself to a completely different topic.



similar verses when addressing a woman's proper role in the church. Through these passages, the SBC concludes that a woman is unable to lead a congregation because she does not meet the qualification of "man"; instead, woman is the weaker gender, the one "first deceived," and inherently unfit to serve in the role of pastor or deaconess (Kell & Camp, 1999, p. 80).

In addition to the qualifications of bishops and deacons, Paul also addresses the role of women in his letter to Titus in Crete. According to the NRSV, Titus 2:3–5 gives direction for how older women should mentor younger women:

Tell the older women to be reverent in behavior, not to be slanderers or slaves to drink; they are to teach what is good, so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be self-controlled, chaste, good managers of the household, kind, being submissive to their husbands, so that the word of God may not be discredited.

A third time the role of women is addressed in 1 Corinthians 11:3, which states, "Christ is the head of every man, and the husband is the head of his wife, and God is the head of Christ." Later in 1 Corinthians, 14:34–35 addresses the qualifications of orderly worship: "Women should be silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as the law also says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church" (NRSV). In all of these cases, the proper role of women is to be submissive to their husbands, teaching their children, and remaining quiet in the church. Denominations such as the Southern Baptist Convention interpret these descriptions of who women are and who they should be as in direct conflict with women in leadership because women in leadership would not be silent in church and might assume authority over their husbands, at least in the area of Biblical interpretation.

Despite passages in the New Testament that suggest women should not serve in leadership roles, especially those of pastors and deacons, other denominations have ordained women into ministry throughout history. However, former SBC President James Merritt describes these decisions as "unbiblical" ("SBC Moves to Limit Office of Pastor to Men," 2000, p. 641). After passing the resolution restricting women from pastoral functions in 1984, the current SBC president, Paige Patterson, stated that the proposal is "a statement from Southern Baptists that our positions and our perspectives are not going to be dictated by the culture. They're going to be dictated by scripture. If we stand alone, we'll stand alone" ("SBC Moves to Limit Office of Pastor to Men," 2000, p. 641). Despite criticisms from other denominations, newspapers, theologians, and even well-regarded members of the Convention such as former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, the Convention has held to its stance, stressing that it represents "what the vast majority of Southern Baptists believe" ("SBC Moves to Limit Office of Pastor to Men," 2000, p. 641).

## Opposition Builds within the Convention

*"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: For ye are all one in Jesus Christ."—Galatians 3:28*

After the 1984 resolution, opposition began to build both within and outside the Southern Baptist Convention. Scriptures opposing the views presented by the Convention were cited, and women's organizations began to research the issue. Longtime member, Jimmy Carter, even chose to leave the SBC:

I have been a practicing Christian all my life and a deacon and Bible teacher for many years. . . . So my decision to sever my ties with the Southern Baptist Convention, after six decades, was painful and difficult. It was, however, an unavoidable decision when the Convention's leaders, quoting a few carefully selected Bible verses and claiming that Eve was created second to Adam and was responsible for original sin, ordained that women must be "subservient" to their husbands and prohibited from serving as deacons, pastors, or chaplains in the military service. (Carter, 2009)

Carter (2009) continued his explanation in an article titled "Losing my Religion for Equality," addressing the strategies used regarding the Convention's decision. "It is simply self-defeating for any community to discriminate against half its population. . . . The truth is that male religious leaders have had—and still have—an option to interpret holy teachings either to exalt or subjugate women. They have, for their own selfish ends, overwhelmingly chosen the latter" (2009).

In response to the tension, the First Baptist Church of Columbia, South Carolina appointed a special committee to research and report on the issue. On November 9, 1993, the committee published a special report titled "The Role of Women in the Church." In this report, the committee outlined three basic principles based on Scripture regarding the role of women: human beings were "both and equally created by God and in His Image," "Male and female are both equal in 'personhood' and directly responsible to and under the authority of their creator," and each individual congregation decides "what offices are needed and what officers shall serve the Lord" in the congregation (Kell & Camp, 1999, pp. 82–83). According to the report, these principles were drawn from passages found in Genesis 1:26–27, Matthew 10:6, and Galatians 3:28 (Kell & Camp, 1999, pp. 82–83).

### **Response to the Southern Baptist Convention: The Role of Women in the Bible**

Although the Southern Baptist Convention has maintained its stance regarding the role of women since its 1984 resolution, opposition both outside and within the Convention has developed regarding the appropriate interpretation of the role of women in the Bible. Although the Southern Baptist Convention has focused its argument around selected passages in the New Testament, other denominations and Bible scholars plead that the argument constructed by the SBC neglects many other passages within the Bible that seem to suggest that women did have and can have leadership roles within the body of believers. The active role of women in the Bible is evident in biblical stories in both the Old and New Testaments. Despite the overt sexism present in biblical times, religious women in the Bible seemed to be treated as equals by both God and Jesus and served crucial roles in the early church.

### The Old Testament

Throughout the Old Testament, the roles of women are portrayed within the cultural context. Women had little authority in a patriarchal society and were unable to receive an education or study the scrolls. Nonetheless, specific women including Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, Esther, and Ruth are mentioned as having specific callings from God to ministry (cf. Exodus 2, 15:20; Micah 6:4; Judges 4:1–24, 5:1–30; 2 Kings 22:14; 2 Chronicles 34:22; Esther 1–10; and Ruth 1–4). Deborah was a prophetess and judge for the nation of Israel, leading her people to victory against the Canaanites, and Esther stands up to King Xerxes to save her people from death. In addition to these women, the entire content of Proverbs 31 is devoted to the characteristics of a “Noble” woman (Kell & Camp, 1999, pp. 83–84).

### The Gospels

Like the Old Testament, the Gospels (the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) are showered with stories in which women were given a great deal of authority (Oduyoye, 2008). At a young age, Mary was asked to deliver baby Jesus and serve as his mother (Matt. 1; Luke 1, 2:1–20). In addition, according to Matthew’s account of the gospel, Mary Magdalene, instead of the twelve disciples, was the last person at the cross and the first person to see the risen Jesus (Matt. 27:55–56; 28:5–10). Other women including the Prophetess Anna; Mary, the sister of Lazarus; and the woman at the well played significant roles in the life of Jesus (cf. Luke 2:36–38; 10:38–42; and John 4:28–29).

When looking at Jesus’ interactions with women throughout the Gospels, it is increasingly difficult to believe Jesus, the Son of God, would not support the leadership of women within the church. “It would come as a surprise to Jesus that the office of pastor should be limited to men,” commented Reverend Julie Pennington-Russell to the *Orlando Sentinel* (“SBC Moves to Limit Office of Pastor to Men,” 2000, p. 641). In an era of direct sexism, “Jesus uttered no specific teaching directed to or for women” stated the South Carolina committee. “This is irrefutable evidence that his words and work were equally applicable to both men and women” (Kell & Camp, 1999, p. 84).

### New Testament Writers

Even the writings of Paul, writings often used to negate the leadership of women in the church, describe strong women who served in leadership roles within various congregations. In Romans 16:1–2, Paul introduces Phoebe as a “diakoneo,” which is translated “deacon” or “minister,” and in Romans 16:7, a woman named Junia<sup>4</sup> is referred to as a great apostle. In addition, Priscilla is noted throughout the New Testament as an influential woman who worked alongside her husband Aquila in church leadership (Kell & Camp, 1999, pp. 85–88; cf. Acts 18:2–26; Rom. 16:3; 1 Cor. 16:19; and 2 Tim. 4:19). Even though the social convention at the time dictated that the woman’s name follow the man’s, Priscilla and Aquila were always referred to with “Priscilla,” the woman’s name, mentioned first.

---

<sup>4</sup> Early translations of the text changed Junia’s name into a man’s name; however, the original name in Greek is clearly meant to refer to a female.

Throughout the Bible, accounts of women are mentioned and discussed even despite the intense sexism of the first century A.D. According to the Old Testament, women such as Esther saved an entire group of people with the support of her uncle because she was strong in her faith. Women continued to play a huge part in the Bible during the life of Jesus. Women served alongside men during Jesus' ministry, remaining devoted followers even when the disciples denied their connections with Jesus. And women played an active role in the life of the early church, serving as missionaries, prophetesses, and deaconesses (Kell & Camp, 1999, pp. 85–88).

### ***The Life of Southern Baptist Women: A Struggle for Independence***

In "Women as Lay Leaders and Clergy," one of very few studies regarding the role of women in the Southern Baptist Convention, one woman states, "I'm so tired of walking into a meeting and being an issue" (Anders & Metcalf-Whittaker, 1993, p. 214). According to Anders and Metcalf-Whittaker (1993), at least 53 to 57 percent of the Southern Baptist Convention membership is women. However, until the 1980s there were no women serving as faculty in any of the Southern Baptist Seminaries. As of 1993, 90 percent of Southern Baptist women who were involved in ministry had received a seminary degree, which is double the percentage of men ordained to the ministry (Anders & Metcalf-Whittaker, 1993). Despite their religious education, women only made up 20 percent of the denomination's workforce in 1991 (Anders & Metcalf-Whittaker, 1993). Anders and Metcalf-Whittaker (1993) also stated that at the time, 59 percent of Southern Baptist clergywomen reported that they "frequently have experienced prejudice because of their ordination" and 14 percent believed there was a "general attitude of hostility" (p. 214). In the same study, 84 percent of SBC women in ministry reported that they had considered leaving the Convention because of the hostility expressed by others in the denomination regarding their roles in the church. Throughout the struggle for equality, women have been denied tenure as professors, equal pay, and the request for ordination (Anders & Metcalf-Whittaker, 1993, p. 214). Even twenty years after the study was conducted, women who insist on fighting for their rights to serve in church leadership continue to be screamed at, humiliated, and even physically abused (See "Perspectives of Women in Leadership" for more specific examples).

In a speech given to a group of women during the summer of 2009, Reverend Julie Pennington-Russell tells the story of her first day as pastor: "On my first Sunday as pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Waco, my family and all of the other worshipers had to pass through a line of 30 picket-waving protesters in order to enter the church building. I remember our son Taylor, who was seven at the time, squeezing my hand and whispering, 'Mom—who is Jezebel and why are they calling you that?'" (Julie Pennington-Russell, Personal Communication, November 26, 2009). This encounter speaks volumes of the constant struggle Reverend Pennington-Russell and other women in similar situations must face to follow God's calling. Reverend Pennington-Russell has been the recipient of years of hate mail. She has been invited, and then rejected, to speak at Golden Gate Theological Seminary, her alma mater, multiple times. And, according to her statement, her congregation has been forced to give up its seat at the state Southern Baptist Convention.

## ***The Future for Women in the Southern Baptist Convention***

Although many women continually struggle to find their roles within the Southern Baptist church, others take little notice of the issue. Although some women live a life struggling to follow a “denied calling,” many Southern Baptist women do not see the doctrines as oppressive or limiting at all. Rather, the doctrines provide a set identity for women, a role for women to play. There is something comforting about knowing what is expected of you and being able to fulfill those expectations. The question Southern Baptists must ask themselves is “Who is this Jesus whom we claim to serve, a deliverer of freedom or a captive to tradition?”

Not so long ago, during the American Civil War, Southern Baptists received their names because of their stance on slavery. The Southern Baptists, as we know them today, were established because of their willingness to treat slavery as an acceptable treatment for persons (Anders & Metcalf-Whittaker, 1993). However, most Southern Baptists today would cringe at the suggestion that slavery is a biblical practice that should be continued in society throughout future generations. Despite the current disapproval of slavery, the biblical interpretation of the acceptance of slavery was not criticized by the slaveholders or even some of the slaves during the war. Many slaves fought for the South in the Civil War and even stayed with their masters after slavery was declared illegal. We cannot take these facts to mean that slavery is an acceptable treatment of persons. Instead, we can only conclude that slaves themselves did not understand what it meant to be free.

Although slavery is now deemed immoral, it was comfortable in that slaves knew what was expected of them. However, a role that is comfortable is not necessarily acceptable morally, legally, or scripturally. The Southern Baptist Convention must not mistake what is traditional with what is ethical. The churches must remember the message of the freedom Jesus brings that is so often taught in church services. “I’m not a betting Baptist,” stated Wade Burleson, pastor of a Southern Baptist church in Oklahoma. “But if I were, I would put money on the table that 50 years from now, Southern Baptists will look at women and the role of women the way we now look at slavery” (Hagerty, 2009).

Unfortunately, the Southern Baptist Convention has shown no signs of demonstrating Jesus’ example of freedom for all. Leon McBeth (1987), a Baptist writer, voices his belief that the Southern Baptist Convention will not change its ways until women in the Convention begin to recognize the limitations placed on them and redefine the appropriate roles of women within the Church. McBeth writes,

For generations, men have defined [women] and defined [women’s] role. Men have interpreted the Scripture passages about you; men have passed the laws that determine your rights in society; men have interpreted your place in history; men have decided what you should do, say, wear, or own. Men have pronounced the verdict on whether God can call you and if so, to what; men have decided if you could serve as deacons, teachers, or ministers. [Men] have jello-molded you to what we think you ought to be. I feel very deeply that the time has come for a moratorium of men making authoritative pronouncements about women. You must do your own speaking. You must define your own roles. You must become

Biblical scholars and interpret for yourselves, and for us, what it means to be a woman . . . you and only you can determine your proper response to God's call. (Para. 41-42)

According to McBeth, the current resolutions regarding the roles of women in the Southern Baptist Convention are merely men's interpretations of who women need to be. He believes that it is time that women define for themselves their proper roles within the church. He argues that unless women begin to represent themselves, the doctrines of the Southern Baptist Convention will never change.

### **Interviews with Religious Women**

To get a better understanding of how Southern Baptist doctrines that limit the roles of women affect women in today's society, eight religious women, consisting of women both inside and outside the Southern Baptist Convention, were personally interviewed in the fall of 2009. The eight women were selected using convenience and snowball sampling and ranged in age from early 30s to upper 60s. Although most of the interviews were conducted on women in or around the Springfield, Missouri, area, one interviewee currently resides in Southeast Missouri and another resides in the state of Georgia. Most of the interviews were conducted through face-to-face interaction; however, e-mail and telephone interactions were also used. A typical interview lasted approximately one to two hours depending on the depth of the interviewee's responses, and each interviewee was asked a series of open-ended questions.

Each of the participants was asked about her perception of the appropriate roles of women within the church. In addition, each woman was given the opportunity to explain her views and describe how being a woman has affected how she has been treated in various phases of her religious life. Within the Southern Baptist Convention, four women were interviewed. One of these women is an ordained Southern Baptist minister and another serves as the minister of discipleship in a Southern Baptist Church. Although the other two women do not hold any official positions within a Southern Baptist Church, both are active members in their local congregations. Outside the Southern Baptist Convention, four women in ministry were interviewed. One of the women serves as head pastor in the Disciples of Christ congregation, and another currently serves as an associate pastor within the same denomination. One woman serves as the director of Christian education in a Presbyterian USA congregation, and the final woman serves as the associate pastor in a United Methodist church. Despite these women's current affiliations with other Christian denominations, one of the Disciples of Christ ministers and the Presbyterian director both had former Southern Baptist affiliations. In addition, the other Disciples of Christ minister was raised in the religiously conservative Church of Christ denomination.

### **The Perspectives of Southern Baptist Women**

"Personally, Christ was the head of the Church and he was a man, and I think a man should be the pastor and head of the church," stated one Southern Baptist woman in her 60s when

asked about her views regarding the roles of women in the church (personal communication, November 25, 2009). She continued by addressing the concern that many women advocate for roles within the church just to be defiant, just to prove they can (personal communication, November 25, 2009). To women in leadership, this woman offers a word of advice: "In everything [you] do, [you] should seek God's guidance first, not [your] own desire" (personal communication, November 25, 2009). According to her understanding of the Scriptures, the women play a supporting role in daily life and in the life of the church. However, according to her, this role is the most crucial one in a child's life. "In all cases, the mother is the first role model. A female role model for the children to relate to first is essential, if we mess up there . . ." (personal communication, November 25, 2009).

For many women in the Southern Baptist Convention, their role has been cast, and it is a role that they willingly play. The possibility of leadership in the church never occurs to them, nor do they view the current doctrines as discriminatory. As one Southern Baptist woman in her 30s stated, "I've been indoctrinated that women can't be preachers" (personal communication, November 25, 2009). When asked if she had ever felt that the church had held her back from God's calling, she stated with confidence, "No. God's never called me to dance on the street or drink alcohol. If I felt God call me to that, I'd know it wasn't Him" (personal communication, November 25, 2009).

The Presbyterian Church of another woman interviewed is currently in search of a pastor. This woman, who has served her congregation for several years, currently serves as the director of Christian education and has consequently been told by several members of the congregation that she should apply for the position. "No, I could never do that," she confided in me. "I don't feel like I would be 'holy' enough" (personal communication, November 11, 2009). Later in the conversation, she returned back to this dilemma. "I think it's probably my Baptist roots," she mentioned. "I don't think I could ever do those things" (personal communication, November 11, 2009).

### **The Perspectives of Women in Leadership**

Although Southern Baptist women seemed to view women in leadership within the church as women who are following their own desires rather than God's and incapable of performing such a task, the women actually in leadership conveyed a very different message. "I would have loved any other road," states the Methodist minister. "I did not choose this for me. God chose this for me. If God's calling you, he won't leave out the details" (personal communication, December 4, 2009). A Disciples of Christ minister also shared the belief that it was not her choice: "It's not a choice I make. It's not an option. The church is different from work, clubs, and organizations. It's a part of every fiber of my being. . . There won't be a time in my life when there won't be a wrestling with this God idea" (personal communication, November 2, 2009).

Despite their dedication, the road many of these women have traveled has been less than ideal. When asked about a point in their lives when they felt the church had held them back from following their dreams or God's calling, the stories of pain, hurt, and rejection poured from their lips. One Disciples of Christ minister referred back to her experiences

with Southern Baptists. She discussed how her parents had always taught her that she could be anything she wished to be. However, upon beginning her studies in music education at a Southern Baptist theological seminary, the church gave her “a slap in the face” (personal communication, October 20, 2009). Attending seminary during the 1980s, this woman remembers the discrimination she faced daily on campus. She explained that women would frequently be called disrespectful names by male students and were told to go back in the home, where they belonged. Once she even witnessed a woman get shoved off the sidewalk by a male student and told that she did not belong in seminary. After her ordination in a Southern Baptist church, a communitywide letter-writing campaign began to circulate to stop her ministry, and, at this point, the woman was only serving as the music minister of the church.<sup>5</sup> One couple in her choir even refused to come to the ordination service (personal communication, October 20, 2009).

Another Disciples of Christ minister discussed her calling to attend seminary. She explained that she was not even considering the possibility of serving as a pastor when she began seminary. Instead, she simply wanted to know more about the “God idea” (personal communication, November 2, 2009). However, to attend seminary, she needed a recommendation from her pastor in the Church of Christ congregation where she held membership. She still remembers his response after she gained the courage to ask him: “You think I’d write you a letter of recommendation to study for ministry? . . . You’re female!” (personal communication, November 2, 2009). A minister of discipleship in a Southern Baptist church shared similar stories of a conservative childhood where she was not allowed to go to the pulpit to pray. There was an “unspoken set of expectations, but I didn’t realize that,” she stated. “Now, looking back, I realize that” (personal communication, November 16, 2009).

Despite their painful pasts marred with discrimination, each of these women had nothing but encouragement to offer other women who may be dealing with a calling in the ministry. The Southern Baptist minister states, “God is God and He rises above all denominations. If a woman wants to preach, she should ask questions. . . . Our true worship of God is to find our purpose in Him. [If you are being called,] you won’t be able to rest until you pursue it . . . . However, it may be outside the realm of the Southern Baptist Convention” (personal communication, November 16, 2009). Similarly, the Methodist minister encourages young women and men alike to explore their callings. Referring to the scriptural passages regarding fruitfulness, the Methodist minister suggests that if the ministerial work performed by the young men and women is beneficial and impactful to those whom they serve, the young men and women should continue to pursue their callings: “If they’ve stepped out and there was fruit, they need to explore that more” (personal communication, December 4, 2009). In the end, the message is simple: “There’s a place for you,” one of the Disciples of Christ ministers reassures. “Listen to your heart and the call from God, not a human institution. Even if that means breaking ties, there’s a place for you (personal communication, October 20).”

---

<sup>5</sup> Becoming a music minister does not typically require ordination and is not a position typically refused to women in the Southern Baptist Convention.



### **To Whom It May Concern: Words Offered to the Convention**

When asked what they would say if given the opportunity to speak to the Southern Baptist Convention, the women interviewed expressed a range of responses. For some of the women, there is little hope of change within the Convention or within religious institutions in general for that matter. One of the women, referencing outspoken feminist Mary Daly, stated, "As long as God is male, male is God. There is no future for change if you worship that God." For this woman, there is nothing to say. "I don't see the change. I see women doing music, youth, and skits, but I don't see overt, owned power" (personal communication, November 2, 2009). The woman continues to discuss that this is not only a male problem. She sees the real problem underlined in the women's desire for covert power, the ability to move people by appealing to an authority other than one's self.

She explained that although many women do not appear to have an overt sense of power through which they can openly express their views in their churches, marriages, and careers, many women continue to have their views heard by exercising their covert power. With covert power, women exercise their own beliefs and wishes by manipulating those around them with overt power. In an effort to clarify what she meant, the minister gave an instance of covert power from her childhood. After explaining that the women in her childhood congregation had no official authority to make congregational decisions, the minister stated that the women of her congregation "ran the church" (personal communication, November 2, 2009). Although no woman was allowed to speak during church business meetings, each woman's voice was heard through her husband's recommendations. Although this minister recognizes the influence women can have "covertly" on their husbands, she does not believe that every woman should be denied overt, owned power. She states to the Convention, "For those of us who can't embrace [the covert power], it would be good to make room in your life for that (a more overt power) too" (personal communication, November 2, 2009).

Although some women responded with frustration and dismay, others responded with hope and motivation. "There's a lot I could say out of anger or resentment, but it would not be beneficial," stated one of the women (personal communication, October 20, 2009). She continued by addressing the Convention's tactics of playing God: "Let God decide who is called and who isn't because it is really not the church's place. . . . [Instead,] it's the church's role to nurture and help those called to ministry, no matter who they are" (personal communication, October 20, 2009). "You have to take a stand on some things," states the Baptist minister, "but [forbidding women from serving as pastors], that's not a stand I'm willing to take" (personal communication, November 16, 2009).

### **The Conclusion: A Road with Many Questions**

Despite years of conversation regarding the roles of women within society, the issue of women in church leadership within the Southern Baptist Convention continues to leave women with only a limited ability to serve. Throughout Southern Baptist history, women have been granted rights only to be stripped of them again. Although some of the Southern Baptist women interviewed seemed to be unaffected by the restrictions placed on them,

other women both inside and outside of the Southern Baptist Convention are constantly forced to justify their callings. This denied calling leaves some women uncertain of what it means to be a Christian woman, following God with all her heart yet subject to the confines of Southern Baptist doctrine.

Because of this dissonance, some women choose to forgo their calling into ministry. Other women bade farewell to the faith that has shaped them into the religious person they currently are and continue their journeys of faith with another denomination. "There will always be a part of me that will be Baptist," stated a graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. "But stepping into the future means going into another denomination. While I have been given a rich heritage as a Southern Baptist, it's not home anymore. It does not reflect who I am or where I want to be" (as cited in Ledbetter, 2000).

Interviews with these women have highlighted some of the potential disadvantages to the Southern Baptist Convention's restricting policies, but the complete effects of the resolutions remain unknown. The interviews have shown women both intensely affected and seemingly unaffected by the Convention's current stance. Nonetheless, these interviews raise crucial concerns about how the doctrines could affect career options and self-efficacy among young Southern Baptist girls and boys. In addition, the interviews draw attention to the underlying impact this resolution could have both on women's views of themselves and men's views toward women both inside the church and within society. On a macro level, the interviews also expose potential power and tradition struggles within the Convention that draw into question the Convention's complete dependence on the Bible, creating serious consequences for Southern Baptist churches as they continue to minister to both men and women in today's society.

To better understand the true and lasting effects of these resolutions, further research must be conducted on the women, men, and children affected by the Southern Baptist Convention's doctrines. Until then, congregations throughout the Southern Baptist denomination will continue to prepare lessons and sing hymns that compel individuals to follow God wherever He leads. And it is this dedication to God that, in practice, sometimes leads to the discrimination and oppression experienced through the act of seeking a denied calling.

## References

- Anders, S. F., & Metcalf-Whittaker, M. (1993). Women as lay leaders and clergy: A critical issue. In N. T. Ammerman (Ed.), *Southern Baptists observed: Multiple perspectives on a changing denomination* (pp. 201–221). Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press.
- Carter, J. (2009, July 15). Losing my religion for equality. In *The age*. Retrieved August 27, 2009, from <http://www.theage.com.au/opinion/losing-my-religion-for-equality-20090714-dk0v.html>.
- Dabney, R. L. (n.d). The Five Points of Calvinism. In *Spurgeon*. Retrieved May 14, 2010, from <http://www.spurgeon.org/~phil/dabney/5points.htm>.
- Hagerty, B.B. (2009, July 24). Baptist leaders face challenge on women's roles. In *National Public Radio*. Retrieved April 1, 2010, from <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=106932178>.

- Holy Bible: The New Revised Standard Version*. (2007). Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers.
- Hoyle, L. H. (2005). *Trends in Baptist polity: Baptist women in ministry*. Retrieved December 10, 2009, from the Baptist Heritage and Historical Society: <http://www.baptisthistory.org/contissues/huffman.htm>.
- Kell, C. L., & Camp, L. R. (1999). *In the name of the Father: The rhetoric of the new Southern Baptist Convention*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Ledbetter, T. R. (2000, October). SBC and women pastors, comprehensive report does not sustain inflated statistics. In *SBC Life*. Retrieved April 1, 2010, from <http://www.baptist2baptist.org/b2barticle.asp?ID=228>.
- McBeth, L. (1987). Perspectives on women in Baptist life. In *Baptist heritage and historical society*. Retrieved December 10, 2009, from <http://www.baptisthistory.org/womeninbaptistlife.htm>.
- McKinney, B. B. (1936). "Wherever He Leads I'll Go." *Falls Creek*. Retrieved December 14, 2009, from <http://home.fuse.net/rust/130.html>.
- Oduyoye, M. A. (2008). Women's presence in the life and teaching of Jesus with particular emphasis on his passion. *The Ecumenical Review*, 60(1/2), 82–89. Retrieved December 10, 2009, from Google Scholar.
- Pierce, J. (2005). Addie Davis, first woman ordain as Southern Baptist pastor, dies at 88. In *Associated Baptist Press*. Retrieved May 14, 2010, from <http://www.abpnews.com/content/view/831/118/>.
- SBC moves to limit office of pastor to men. (2000, June). *Christian Century*, 641. Retrieved December 10, 2009, from Google Scholar.
- Shaw, S. M. (2008). *God speaks to us, too: Southern Baptist women on church, home, and society*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.
- Southern Baptist Convention (1999). Why a denomination? In *A closer look*. Retrieved April 1, 2010, from <http://www.sbc.net/aboutus/clwhydenomination.asp>.
- Southern Baptist Convention. (2000). Baptist faith and message. In *Southern Baptist convention's Baptist faith and message*. Retrieved December 15, 2009, from <http://www.sbc.net/redirect.asp?url=%2Fbfm%2Fbfm2000%2Easp>.
- Tice, C. J., & Perkins, K. (2002). *The faces of social policy: A strengths perspective*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

