



*Scientia et Humanitas:*  
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### **Submission guidelines**

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

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## Letter from the Editors

This semester has been stressful for us all. Between the tornadoes that devastated our state and the pandemic that has devastated the world, we have all struggled with trying to find the resolve to make it from one day to the next with our sanity intact. For the editorial staff at *Scientia*, this journal has been our bright spot and safe place to land this semester. Through the papers we received, we were transported from our own very real and uncertain world to worlds unknown and incredible. Whether we were in a world grappling with pilot shortages or in the world of *Doctor Who*, our lives were enriched and made better by the hard work and research of the scholars who shared their worlds with us. *Scientia* has, since its first issue, strived to highlight both the highest quality of research at Middle Tennessee State University and the perseverance required of a scholar. Not only does this edition feature the high standards of scholarship from diverse disciplinary background for which *Scientia* has become known, but it also shows the perseverance required of a scholar who lives both within a single discipline and within an uncertain world.

In the pages of this journal, we are able to look at ways to prevent a crisis while understanding the very elements which create it in “Analysis of the Airline Pilot Shortage.” We take a step back in time to understand the ways in which slaves were silenced through advertisements in “Humanizing the Dehumanized: The Complex Connections between William Lloyd Garrison’s Preface and Fugitive Slave Advertisements” before taking a ride on the TARDIS and asking ourselves, “How has the portrayal of women on the television series *Doctor Who* evolved from 1963 to 2019?”. We fall into “The Authorial Sublime” and experience the trials of what it means to live by “The Soldierly Code.” We collect buttons while “Pinning Down the Historical Significance of Button Collecting” and search for “Rhyme and Revolution” in the works of William Wordsworth. Finally, we delve deeply into the metaphor of “Shin Gojira: Return of the Angry God” as a reflection of Japan before losing ourselves in conversation with Kant, Hegel, and Sellars unpacking “The Structure of Knowledge.”

The works in this edition, produced from backgrounds ranging in philosophy to aerospace, seem to reflect and acknowledge something uncertain and give it a concrete space. Each work reaches out to the reader and presents not uncertainty but a level of understanding and knowing.

This edition would not have been possible without the hard work of the authors who took a leap of faith in sending us their work. This edition also would not have been possible without the staff who worked through a sense of loss and constant transition and adaptation because of the Covid-19 pandemic. For the hard work from both, the editorial staff can only say thank you.

Thank you to the administration at the Honors College. You all have been such a joy to work with, and we could not have done this work were it not for you.

We would also like to thank Marsha Powers, who believed in and supported us through-

out this entire process. Without her, this edition would not be possible. She has championed this journal and led the editorial staff as our advisor through a very challenging semester. She has been an indispensable source of knowledge and comfort for us all.

We would like to thank Dr. John Vile and Dr. Philip Phillips from the Honors College, without whom we would be lost.

We would also like to thank you all, the readers. We hope you enjoy this edition of *Scientia et Humanitas* as much as we do. We hope you will see the scholarly vigor and rigor, and we hope you will be transported as we have.

Jenna Campbell Field  
*Editor in Chief*

Gabriella Morin  
*Managing Editor*

Jameson Baldwin  
*Section Editor*

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# **Humanizing the Dehumanized: The Complex Connections between William Lloyd Garrison's Preface and Fugitive Slave Advertisements**

*Micah Hallman*

## **Abstract**

*By connecting nineteenth-century slave advertisements and the preface provided by William Lloyd Garrison to Frederick Douglass's Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself, this article argues that Garrison's preface provides a moment in history when the voice of a specific person, speaking for a group of people who were frequently silenced, is recovered. Examining particular slave advertisements published around the time of Douglass's 1845 narrative, it is possible to see that these advertisements tend to highlight the lack of voice provided to slaves while being focused on the body and the kinds of work that the slave was capable of doing. Other types of writing, such as the authenticating preface written by Garrison, also serve as advertisement, which recognizes the implicit silencing of African American humanity while also acknowledging slaves as authorities to tell their own stories.*

**\* Winner of the Deans' Distinguished Essay Award**

The publication of runaway slave advertisements was far from unusual in the mid-nineteenth century. These publications were published by southern slaveowners who hoped to recover their property—slaves—that had run away. These kinds of publications frequently appeared in newspapers throughout the United States and utilized a specific kind of rhetoric that sought to call attention to the body of the slave. These advertisements were frequently published in both the North and the South and utilized language that would provide slave catchers with physical information about the missing slave. The slaves who managed to obtain their freedom by running to the North, and especially those who were able to become literate during or after their journey (like Frederick Douglass), would have been knowledgeable about both the plight that slaves faced in the South and the publication of these advertisements, which made them knowledgeable voices to speak for those who were kept historically silenced.

While these advertisements were being published, fugitive slave narratives were also becoming increasingly popular among the American public. One such narrative that gained prominence in the American mindset was Frederick Douglass's *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself* (1845), which included different prefaces that serve a variety of different purposes, such as the authentication of the former slave's story for a skeptical white audience. One of the prefaces to the 1845 version of Douglass's narrative was written by William Lloyd Garrison. His preface to the *Narrative* accomplishes important work for Douglass. From the beginning of his preface, Garrison attempts to highlight the uniqueness of Douglass's narrative and the importance that it offers to both the abolitionist movement and the construction of historical narratives. Garrison's preface provides verification for a nineteenth-century audience who might have been skeptical of the ability of a former slave to write effectively about his experience while at the same time provides a voice to a historically ignored group of people. Garrison's preface should be put into conversation with the slave advertisements, and perhaps even as an advertisement, in and of itself, albeit with a different purpose. Garrison's work recognizes the implicit silencing of African American humanity that occurred in slave advertisements and made those traits explicit in his preface. From this, I argue that these two different kinds of texts are in conversation: slave advertisements are focused on the body while Garrison is focused on the mind and contributions to historical narratives.

The relationship between Garrison and Douglass has been the subject of much critical debate since the publication of the *Narrative*. Robert Levine's book, *The Lives of Frederick Douglass*, discusses their relationship and their break, mentioning that Garrison "did much more than see the book through the press" since he supplied one of the



“paratexts’ of the antebellum slave narrative. . . which served to legitimize the black text for white readers” (46). At the same time, though, Levine also mentions the ways in which scholars have thought of Garrison’s preface as paternalistic, particularly in regard to “his account of Douglass’s speech at the August 1841 Nantucket meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society” (49). The preface, according to Levine, also shows Garrison “portraying himself as the teacher of a black man” who was “uncertain” of taking on the role of the abolitionist speaker (49). Thinking in this way, the preface written by Garrison is important because it would have provided a sense of creditability for the nineteenth-century audience because of Garrison’s posturing of himself as a teacher; he is, in the Garrison-Douglass relationship, a paternalistic person — someone in a position of power who restricts the freedom of others, like slaves. In this light, Garrison, as a white person, is capable of exposing Douglass’s story to a white audience and by suggesting that Garrison served as a guide for Douglass as he became integrated into abolitionist society. At the same time, though, it may also be suggested that Douglass’s credibility should be taken a step further and that Garrison is suggesting that slaves like Douglass who are fortunate enough to write narratives are doing so to insert their voices into an overarching historical narrative.

John Sekora mentions the relationship between the prefaces and the narrative as being parallel to the relationship between Garrison and Douglass, as well as the master and slave. He claims that “white sponsors compel a black author to approve, to authorize white institutional power. The black message will be sealed within a white envelope” (502). Sekora’s argument focuses on the power relationship between the works of Douglass and Garrison. Rather than simply seeing Garrison’s preface as trying to acknowledge that Douglass has written a narrative that provides a necessary voice to the American narrative, however, Sekora argues that the preface helps to provide authentication and authority to the text. Instead of it only providing authority, though, it does so in a way that still legitimizes white dominance; with this understanding, there is a paternalistic relationship between the two texts.

The construction of historical narratives tends to accommodate dominant voices, and, at times, purposefully excludes the voices of different groups of people. According to Michelle Ballif in her introduction to *Theorizing Histories of Rhetoric*, and utilizing framework provided by Victor Vitanza, certain voices are commonly excluded, where writers and historians have “an obligation to search for ‘the third man’ or ‘the third woman,’” as well as “for that which has been ‘systematically excluded’” from historical archives (3). Employing the framework provided by Vitanza, Ballif makes this claim because “to write *any history*... demands ‘systematic exclusions’ of figures, of events, of artifacts, of

whatever cannot be accounted for or synthesized by the historical narrative” (3). Certain archives, or collections, like the published slave advertisements of the nineteenth century, leave out specific voices or people, and it is necessary for scholars and historiographers to actively look for the “third man” rather than continue to construct a historical narrative that leaves out these voices. Fugitive slave advertisements tend to focus on specific traits and, unlike Garrison’s preface, do not allow for slaves to have authority over their bodies or voices. As Garrison encourages his audience to recognize the importance of Douglass’s narrative, he is recognizing a gap in the American historical narrative and attempting to include other voices.

Garrison’s work seeks to authenticate and provide a voice to a man, and a group of people, who might have been excluded from American historical narratives. Instead of adhering to a white, male understanding of history, Garrison encourages Douglass’s audience to examine the narrative for the voices of African Americans as a part of the abolitionist movement and as a part of the larger American historical narrative. As they tried to actively combat the gaps in historical narratives and thinking specifically of the African American experience and historiography, V.P. Franklin suggests “African American historians were interested in documenting the fact that ‘we were there too’ for a variety of different historical events, such as the Civil War (214). African American historians were also concerned with altering “the pervasive distortions and misrepresentations about Africans and African-descended people in the historical literature and popular media” by “[setting] the record straight and [documenting] the numerous and significant contributions” of African Americans (214). It might also be contended that Garrison’s preface is attempting to provide Douglass’s audience with further knowledge of who Douglass was as a person.

The structure of the preface also suggests Garrison’s attempt to help the readership know Douglass, as much as is possible. Garrison engages in a kind of “stranger humanism,” as posited by Lloyd Pratt, which allows him to suggest that Garrison is working to provide Douglass with an authoritative selfhood that is built on the concept of the “semi-private room” (1). Pratt suggests that this room

is a space both rhetorical and material, [where] people discover their difference from one another, but they are barred from trying to appropriate or penetrate those differences. This discovering of difference facilitates the coming-into-selfhood of those who elect to enter the room. (1-2)

Garrison recognizes the differences between himself, Douglass, and their audience, but at the same time appears to recognize that they all have voices that contribute to an American historical narrative. Pratt also contends that “This discovering of difference

also forms the groundwork of democracy” (2). Garrison’s preface also helps to fill in the gaps of the historical narrative rather than playing into African Americans’ “elliptical subtraction” from historical narratives (22).

Garrison’s preface, in this way, counteracts the archival silences that might have surrounded slave experiences by providing access to what might have been ignored if he had not emphatically highlighted the importance of it. The slave narrative, as Sekora acknowledges, deals with issues of power and how that power might appear in writing, particularly in regard to the relationship between master and slave: “Slavery and the language of slavery are virtually coextensive. Of the slave narratives, one must ask: Who is entitled to claim, to possess these lives? In whose language do they appear? What historical conditions permit or demand their appearance?” (485). These questions regarding the power relationship between slaves and masters, which Sekora considers for slave narratives, are at work in the interrelationship between Douglass’s 1845 *Narrative* and Garrison’s preface. The traditional reading of the interrelationship between these texts is that “Most white northerners were as indifferent as Garrison believed them to be; for them slavery was remote, abstract, and inconsequential” (Sekora 495), and it also became more apparent that “Not black storytelling but white authentication made for useable narrative” (497). While he does valuable work by noting the power relationships involved between the two texts, Sekora’s article continues to view Garrison as paternalistically authenticating Douglass’s work, since white authentication is what made for “useable narrative.”

While Douglass was publishing his 1845 narrative, slavery was still in existence, meaning that fugitive slave advertisements were a common form of writing and utilized specific word choices to dehumanize slaves and remove their archival authority. These advertisements were focused almost solely on the body of the slave, as pieces of personal property. Focusing on advertisements for runaway slaves in the eighteenth century, Tom Costa’s work focuses on these pieces of writing as “[following] a kind of formula” because of the “very detailed descriptions of the runaways” provided by owners (38). These advertisements mention specific literacies that they might have, such as an eighteenth-century slave’s ability to play an instrument, as Robert Winan describes in his book chapter, and the different languages they might speak, as Mark Loudon discusses in his article, “African Americans and Minority Language Maintenance in the United States.” Advertisements, Winan notes, also highlight “how well or how badly the runaway speaks English and what other languages he speaks” and the ability to read, write, and “cypher’ or ‘do accounts” suggest their occupation as house servant (198). Although they might highlight the ability to speak, these advertisements also suggest that these are skills that can be used by owners to their benefit. These advertisements, despite their mentions of the ability

to speak a specific language, do not try to provide a voice directly from slaves. Instead of thinking about how the stories and voices of these slaves might contribute to a united overarching narrative, advertisements for runaway slaves purposefully eliminate the voices slaves might be given. They are put into newspapers for the recovery of property, not to emphasize the importance or contributions of these runaways. These advertisements focus solely on the body and traits, rather than the voices of the individual.

Garrison's preface provides Douglass with authority; these are his experiences, and he should be given the privilege of being able to write about them. Garrison's preface before Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of a Slave* relies heavily on specific punctuation, including many exclamation points, which suggests an emphatic attempt to make the voices of slaves, voices who might be ignored by a white audience, heard. Garrison's preface should be juxtaposed against fugitive slave advertisements, since his preface is almost an advertisement of its own, although instead of focusing on the physical, it is focusing on the humanity of Douglass. Garrison's material does important work to contribute to the missing archive of slaves' voices by utilizing punctuation and language that other printers, particularly those who would have been writing and printing runaway slave advertisements, would not have had the space to include in their writing.

Throughout both the South and the North, slave advertisements frequently appeared in newspapers. These advertisements were written to serve a specific purpose, which was to help owners of slaves recover what they considered lost property: escaped slaves. These advertisements focused on the physical aspects of slaves, such as their clothing or other physical traits, like their hair or specific scars. Patricia Hunt-Hurst discusses the prominence of the clothing noted in Georgia fugitive slave advertisements, mentioning that "Most of these notices... focused on the clothing worn by the fugitive rather than on his or her occupation on the plantation. Yet such descriptions of clothing can shed light on the value of the slave, which was generally based more on that occupation... than on any other factor" (729-30). David G. Smith in his discussion of slavery in the south-central portion of Pennsylvania notes that advertisements, even those run in areas farther north, tended to follow a particular pattern: "The advertisements generally followed a similar style: an account of when and where the slave escaped, the slave's name, a description of the slave and his or her clothing, and the reward offered" (23). Focusing on the physical, albeit physical aspects that could potentially be changed given the time and space to do so, these advertisements gave the people searching for slaves' tangible aspects to look for.

Partially because of their purpose and partially because of their genre, the advertisements that were being published around the time that Douglass was making

his own escape and writing his narrative in the late 1830s and mid-1840s, neglected to mention the voices of their distinct group of people, nor their contributions to an overarching American historical narrative. Because of the amount of space provided for advertisements and the amount of information that slaveowners deemed necessary to the recovery of their property, advertisements were only able to convey certain, tangible traits and to use an authoritative, and at times imploring, tone. Since advertisements were usually confined to relatively small spaces in newspapers, they could provide only a certain amount of information.

Looking at various advertisements from throughout the United States during the mid-1840s, around the time that Douglass was writing and publishing his *Narrative*, it is possible to see that there is still a specific kind of language, or “formula” used, as Costa and Smith both suggest. One advertisement, offering a reward of twenty-five dollars from the Georgia newspaper, the *Milledgeville Federal Union*, states:

RANAWAY from the subscriber on the 15th of January last, my negro man POLDORE—he is about fifty years of age, 5 feet 8 or 10 inches high, black complected, and weighs about 150 lbs., walks very erect, and speaks quickly when spoken to; he has a very notable scar I think on his left thigh, caused by a burn; he will doubtless deny any knowledge of me. I will give the above reward for his apprehension and delivery to the Jailer of Baldwin county, or \$20 if lodged in any safe Jail so that I may get him.

O.H.P. Bonner.

(1 April 1845)

This advertisement places emphasis on the specific traits of Poldore. By focusing on this kind of language, the owner is providing the general outline of a physical body; from this advertisement, we know that he is about fifty years old, stands at almost six feet, and has a notable scar, which would help to differentiate him from other fugitive slaves. The owner notes that Poldore does have a specific way of speaking, but does nothing to elaborate on Poldore’s thoughts, feelings, and opinions—presumably because of space in his advertisement or to better suit his purpose of property recovery. The advertisement made for Poldore shows that he has been dehumanized and, for his master, is just a body meant for work, rather than a person with an intellect and a voice to speak for himself.

Another advertisement from Tennessee suggests a similar focus on physical traits. One advertisement, published in the *Nashville Union* and offering a twenty-dollar reward, focuses on a slave named Henry:

RANAWAY from the subscriber on the twenty-eighth day of January last. . .  
He is about thirty-five years old, dark complexion, five feet six or eight inches

high; he speaks quick when spoken to; walks very erect and steps short. He will, I presume, write himself a free pass of some sort, and attempt to get to a free State. The above reward will be given to any person who will deliver said negro to me in Habersham, Georgia, or confine him in some safe Jail so that I can get him. (14 April 1842)

While this advertisement comes from a different state and another date, although around the same time period, similar dehumanizing language is being used. Again, both the slave's possible age and height are described, along with his speech; both of these statements are almost identical between advertisements. The advertisement's focus on the way in which he walks is also suggestive of a draft animal, with the emphasis being on his posture and the way in which he steps, possibly in the same way the gait of a horse is observed. Tonally, the owner, like Poldore's own, comes across as authoritative, particularly with his assurance that there will be a reward involved and with his presumption that Henry will not acknowledge his ownership if asked. Like the advertisement placed for Poldore, this advertisement for Henry strips him of his humanity and neglects to claim that he is anything other than an almost empty vessel, capable of completing work and being subservient.

Looking at yet another advertisement, the pattern of language that is being used becomes clearer. Published in the New Orleans *The Daily Picayune* is another advertisement, this time focused on a girl named Mary Anne:

\$20 Reward.—Ran away from the subscriber the Yellow Girl MARY ANNE, aged about thirty years; about five feet two inches high very black hair, rather straight; black eyes; large mouth; well and strongly built, without being stout; has a little of an Indian look. The above reward will be paid to any person who will bring her to the Jail of the Second Municipality.

Evarist Blanc, New Basin.

(25 May 1845)

The owner, in this instance, focuses on a woman, but the language that he uses is still similar to the other two advertisements examined. Instead of focusing on her posture or way that she talks, though, the owner chooses to emphasize her physical looks; instead of physical markers, like a scar or burn, he comments on what might have made her attractive to her owner, or eye-catching to someone who is looking for her. The focus on physical traits, like the hair and the mouth, suggests stereotypical traits on which a white audience might have focused. Yet again, her humanity is removed in this advertisement because he pays little to no attention to anything other than how she looks.

While these are only three of thousands of other slave advertisements that are

available from both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, by only examining a few, it is possible to see that there is a common language and tone among them. They focus on the physical; by virtue of who the advertisements are mostly written by — white southern men — and their purpose, which was to recover lost property, at the least cost to them, the ads do not try to provide a voice for the slaves. It would not serve their purposes to humanize their “lost property.” It could be assumed from these advertisements that the owners were hoping to convey just enough information to recover their slaves, while at the same time, continuously stripping away the humanity of their slaves by following a pattern of language that helped to maintain a sense of historical dominance. Putting slave advertisements in conversation with a preface to Douglass’s *Narrative* allows for a discussion of what traits are being suppressed in the advertisements but highlighted by the Preface.

At the same time that the voices of slaves were being silenced through the advertisements, slave narratives sought to actively prevent the silencing of slave voices. By 1845, Douglass’s publication had caused a stir among the public. Because of this, he left for Europe. Some newspapers like the *American Republican and Baltimore Daily Clipper* made the general statement that Douglass “the fugitive Maryland slave, who spoke in New York last May, was among the passengers in the *Cambria*, which sailed for England last week” (“Gone to Europe”). By going to Europe, Douglass avoided backlash and threats of being recaptured and returned to slavery that he would have faced if he had remained in the United States, therefore silencing him.

Throughout his preface to Douglass’s 1845 slave narrative, Garrison attempts to advocate for and suggest that Douglass’s voice is essential to the development of an inclusive American narrative. The preface, placed at the beginning of the *Narrative*, serves its own kind of advertisement, which is both similar to, and different from, the fugitive slave advertisements published at the same time. Jeannine Marie DeLombard discusses the lack of personhood provided to slaves, and, focusing on the confessional works of E.D.E.N. Southworth, she notes that where white citizens who descended into criminality can be charted, the same traits “could also plot the black print subject’s extraordinary ascension from the civil death of the slave... into legal personhood” (92). She also suggests that “At times, first-person articulation of individual black selfhood could even fill out this meager guilty legal personhood with an incipient civil personality. To be the narrator of one’s own historical life is to claim responsibility for and authorship of that life” (92). These early criminal confessions recognized the humanity of fugitive slaves because, at a basic level, they participated in the judicial system of the United States, and, as DeLombard claims, “the black print persona attained the requisite civic presence to authorize his



reemergence in the slave narrative as African American protocitizen” (93).

Throughout his preface, Garrison refers to how fortunate he was to hear Douglass speak. Garrison also claims that Douglass was “fortunate for himself, as it at once brought him into the field of public usefulness, ‘gave the world assurance of a MAN,’ quickened the slumbering energies of his soul, and consecrated him to the great works of breaking the rod of the oppressor, and letting the oppressed go free” (Douglass 1164). Garrison’s claims that Douglass has brought him into the “field of public usefulness” has not been ignored by critics and is typically read as Garrison suggesting that Douglass has made himself useful for the purposes of Garrisonian abolitionists (Levine 49). While it is feasible to read his statement in this way, with Garrison serving as the more restrictive figure, striving to highlight his own purposes instead of Douglass’s, it is also possible to think of Garrison as suggesting that Douglass is making himself useful to the collection of historical voices and that Garrison wants for people like Douglass to have the power to contribute to the historical narrative that might have otherwise excluded them.

Also, Garrison places emphasis on Douglass’s ability to move his audience with his speech. He claims that Douglass began to speak with “a hesitancy and embarrassment, necessarily the attendants of a sensitive mind” and “After apologizing for his ignorance, and reminding the audience that slavery was a poor school for the human intellect and heart, he proceeded to narrate some of the facts in his own history as a slave, and in the course of his speech gave utterance to many noble thoughts and thrilling reflections” (Douglass 1164). Again, in this instance, it could be easy to see Garrison as being paternalistic, claiming that it was shocking and moving to see a former slave, someone that nineteenth-century thought would consider of lower intellect, make such complex and revealing statements about slavery. At the same time, it is worth thinking about Douglass, via Garrison’s preface, as revealing to his audience the existence of other narratives with which they are not familiar. Unlike the lack of authority given to slaves’ voices and the dehumanization that takes place in slave advertisements, by including this moment in his preface, Garrison is advertising that Douglass is worthy of being listened to and that he has a valuable story to add to the American historical narrative.

Douglass’s first speech is almost a revelatory experience for his audience and for Garrison, to the point that Douglass is able to make his audience reflect on slavery and to be so moved that they later emphatically claim that they would be willing to intertwine Douglass’s history with their own local Massachusetts’s history. When Garrison asks the audience after the speech, “Will you succor and protect him as a brother-man—a resident of the old Bay State?” his audience eagerly responds “YES!” (1165). The choices that Garrison makes here, like the choices that the slaveowners made in their advertisements,



shows him consciously linking the runaway slaves who have escaped to the North, like Douglass, and their narrative, with the history of the North. Garrison, at this moment, chooses to display the emphatic response of the audience, suggesting with his all capitals and the choice of punctuation that the audience would be receptive to the inclusion of the excluded voice of slaves into the American narrative.

The concept of excluded voices in the historical narratives comes up as Garrison addresses the cruelties of slavery. He claims that “Nothing has been left undone to cripple their intellects, darken their minds, debase their moral nature, obliterate all traces of their relationship to mankind, and yet how wonderfully they have sustained the mighty load of a most frightful bondage, under which they have been groaning for centuries!” (1166). Garrison, at this moment, could again be perceived as exhibiting paternalism toward slaves. However, at the same time, it could also be seen as Garrison openly acknowledging the cruelties of slavery, the strength with which the slaves have resisted domination, and their worthiness of having their voices and their stories listened to. Instead of focusing on the physical toll of slavery, like advertisements tend to, Garrison utilizes language that will garner the sympathy of his reader by using words that recall extremes, like “cripple,” “debase,” “obliterate,” which allows him to highlight the plight of slaves, while at the same time pointing out that there is a group of people who have not been listened to, despite their “groaning for centuries!” (1166).

The preface also mentions that Garrison recognizes slaves as human, unlike the dehumanized image presented in slave advertisements. He laments, “O, how accursed is that system, which entombs the godlike mind of man, defaces the divine image, reduces those who by creation were crowned with glory and honor to a level with four-footed beasts, and exalts the dealer in human flesh above all that is called God!” (1167). Instead of the focus on the physicality of slaves, Garrison appeals to the audience’s sense of religion. All men are created in God’s image, which appears to include slaves, who are frequently related to animals rather than other humans. By focusing on the inequality Garrison sees involved in the institution of slavery, he is able to suggest, subtly, that there should be equality in the historical narrative. The conscious choice of language here suggests equality, which means that if all people are equal, then perhaps there should not have to be an excluded group of people who get left out from the historical narrative.

Punctuation also plays an important role in how Garrison’s preface material is received. He makes several emphatic statements, most of which conclude with an exclamation or question mark. He structures his material in such a way that he is constantly asking his readers questions and then emphatically providing a response, which he might hope is similar to his audience’s response. Toward the middle of his preface, for

example, Garrison points out that while Douglass had a comparatively better slave experience than if he were further South, “Yet how deplorable was his situation! what terrible chastisements were inflicted upon his person! what still more shocking outrages were perpetrated upon his mind!... and how signal have been his deliverance and preservation in the midst of a nation of pitiless enemies!” (1167). The section, like other sections of his preface, is structured in a way that calls attention to the series of abrupt, forceful descriptions of Douglass’s treatment in slavery. But, again, it places emphasis on the treatment and Douglass’s mind, rather than on just Douglass’s physical body. Garrison’s work is attempting to show that Douglass is unlike the other slaves with whom the readers might be familiar; he is unique and important to the historical discussion that is going on, rather than just another body that is sacrificed to the toils of slavery.

Garrison’s refrain from utilizing the physical descriptions that are seen in slave advertisements suggests a different kind of advertising: Douglass is attempting to put something forward that will have a lot of significance to history, as it is remembered. It also suggests that, instead of simply using Douglass to suit his own abolitionist needs, Garrison recognized that Douglass’s work would have an impact and that he needed to use language that would help support the work that Douglass is accomplishing for the American historical narrative.

From the opening of Garrison’s preface, the reader is drawn into his relationship with Douglass and Garrison’s rhetorical choices. He almost immediately claims the importance, and good fortune, for the audience to read the following narrative and for Douglass to have written the narrative, which emphasizes Douglass’s thoughts and capabilities. By calling attention to the humanity of both Douglass and other slaves, Garrison is able to create an expanded advertisement. He is not advocating for Douglass to be returned to slavery, but instead advertising the plight of those in slavery and left out of the historical narrative. Garrison’s advertisement contends that the audience should concern themselves with what Douglass has to say.

Both the audience and Douglass are benefitting from the publication of the *Narrative*: the audience has the opportunity to read and listen to a former slave share his experience, and Douglass has the opportunity to have his voice heard as a part of the American historical narrative. The relationship between Douglass and Garrison, then, becomes a moment in which recovery is occurring, where the voice of a specific person or group of people is looked for, found, and ultimately included in the historical narrative of the United States. Garrison’s work, instead of being restrictive or adversarial, should be seen as being helpful and inclusive because he is putting forward the work of Douglass as important.

The comparison between nineteenth-century fugitive slave advertisements and Garrison's preface to Douglass's *Narrative* is beneficial. This kind of comparison provides a look at two kinds of writing, one that focuses on preventing the agency of a group of people while the other actively suggests the equality and importance of making sure that minority groups of people are included and listened to as a part of the American historical narrative. Although of different genres and styles, both use different kinds of language, which helps to demonstrate how the inclusion of slaves' voices into historical narratives was both accepted and resisted by different groups of people.

The kind of work being accomplished with Garrison's preface also suggests that the historical narrative is constantly under revision and subject to any number of preferences from a time period or dominant group of people. He suggests that the historical narrative should not be completely dominated by the voices of white men by putting forward the work of someone who would typically be excluded, and emphatically suggests that the American public is fortunate enough to have access to and to read what others, like Douglass, have to contribute to our historical narrative.

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# **The Soldierly Code: War Trauma and Coping in Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried***

*Jenna Campbell Field*

## **Abstract**

*Tim O'Brien's The Things They Carried is sometimes portrayed as a work about soldiers that shows the brotherhood created in war and the ways soldiers struggle once they heroically return from a warzone; however, through a postmodernist narrative framework, the episodic novel becomes not a glorification of war but a denigration of it. O'Brien's work is steeped in the negatives that come from war and shows how those negatives impact the lives of soldiers both during and following their time in combat. Further, O'Brien's novel takes the romanticized notions of war and gives them an upside-down quality to illustrate how patriotism can create isolation, the concept of duty can create murder, and following orders can make it impossible to cope with the things soldiers do in the name of survival. Because the novel is fundamentally grounded in the soldier's experience, reading O'Brien's work as a glorification of the soldier is easy, but by reading it as a denigration of the soldierly code, which privileges silence and duty over personal health and well-being, the novel expands into a search for methods of coping with trauma and perpetrator's guilt. The postmodernist view then cements each of "the things they carried" as a thing that has removed O'Brien's soldiers from their humanity and community. Through this understanding, this paper seeks to describe the impact of the soldierly code of silence, isolation, and duty and the way each act to dehumanize O'Brien's soldiers.*

**\* Winner of the Deans' Distinguished Essay Award**

*“The conflict between the will to deny horrible events and the will to proclaim them aloud is the central dialectic of psychological trauma.”*

*Judith Lewis Herman*

## **Introduction**

The effects of war on the psyche present several obstacles for the mental and emotional health of soldiers, and these are the very areas in which Tim O'Brien<sup>1</sup> takes his audience in his fact-based fictive work, *The Things They Carried*. As each character is reduced to something like a shadow self, O'Brien forces the narrative's perspective on the ways his characters are dealing with the war by stripping away any romantic notion the soldier “hero” once carried. Instead, O'Brien focuses on the soldier not as a hero or idol but as a human who, because of war, is damaged irreparably, and his focus lies not in one aspect of war but in the entirety of it—deployment and return. By focusing his work on the entirety of the individual—body and mind—and the whole of war, O'Brien can delve deeper into the traumas of war and uncover the tangled knot that renders those traumas inseparable. For O'Brien's soldiers, the effects of war are present in the ways they attempt to communicate both in the midst of and after returning from the warzone in their inability to communicate meaningfully during verbal exchanges. The inability of so many characters to communicate, however, highlights an important aspect of postmodern literature: how to communicate when there is no objective truth. What O'Brien shows is that through a certain amount of psychological resilience<sup>2</sup> and a dependency on the aspect of silence as a part of speech as well as living with perpetrator's trauma<sup>3</sup>, a true soldier does not celebrate the war from which he or she has returned—war is not beautiful—nor does a true soldier live freely once he or she has reemerged from earthly hell only to live in isolation as a means of coping—survival is just another thing they carry.

## **Illusory Living and Survival**

O'Brien's work offers a great deal to the field of trauma and the soldier because he refuses to color the experiences of war in anything but honesty, regardless of

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<sup>1</sup> Both author and character are named Tim O'Brien; however, because they seem inextricably linked even if the novel is coined as a fictive work, I will refer to both by the same name without quotation marks of differentiation between the two. If attention needs to be drawn to one or the other, it will be marked within the essay.

<sup>2</sup> Psychological resilience for the purposes of this paper refers only to the bounce back mechanism which is inherent within an individuals to cope in a social environment for which they are disadvantaged.

<sup>3</sup> According to research conducted by the Whitney Humanities Center at Yale, perpetrator trauma is “The pain associated with damage to one's moral identity as the result of having committed an act of violence” which is the working definition used for this paper. Although perpetrator's trauma can be attributed to any act of violence, here it will be attributed only to soldiers.



his fictional medium. Despite Alex Vernon's<sup>4</sup> argument that O'Brien's episodic novel is allegorical to the resurrection of Christ and exemplifies salvation through storytelling, this argument narrows the reading and ignores exactly what both author and characters are telling the audience—war does not bring salvation, nor can a person rise from the ashes of what was. Despite the seemingly hopeful ending, according to O'Brien, in storytelling, "there is the illusion of aliveness" (O'Brien 230). The word "illusion" here is important as it shows that storytelling is only an escape from a reality that cannot be in the same way as Ted Lavender's tranquilizers created a reality that did not exist. The stories show the mental, emotional, and psychological struggle of soldiers who had to forget living for the sake of surviving, and despite the men's best efforts, they are only surviving in the world. For the soldiers, truth remains only in the form of memory. For O'Brien's soldiers, the dope and booze represent the men's preference "to bury their own memories in silence or conceal what, in psychiatric terms, would be called their post-traumatic stress disorder," because memories hold only more pain and existing but not living (Eyerman et al. 32-33). In the lie, however, there is something of a brief reprieve that allows the characters to move outside of the pain of the war. Hope, therefore, is overshadowed by the overwhelming sense of loss that the surviving soldiers must carry with them and that constantly reminds them of the "twenty-seven bodies altogether, and parts of several others. The dead were everywhere. Some lay in piles. Some lay alone" (O'Brien 242).

When the soldiers return home, they do not then return to a world which is made better, as Christ's death and resurrection did, but to a world of which they are no longer a part. Furthermore, the men must return to a world that is ignorant of the realities of war and to a world that does not and cannot understand their newly learned reality of death and survival, which follows them back from Vietnam.

Unlike the soldier heroes of earlier literature, like Odysseus or Achilles, O'Brien's modern soldiers in *The Things They Carried* are purposefully and poignantly average. The men are not trekking over rolling scenic landscapes as they fight for love and country, because war does not necessitate love. Instead, Jimmy Cross and Alpha Company dig into "the darkness" and look onto "the sullen paddies" that surrounded them (O'Brien 11-12). Despite the dangers that surround the men, none of them at first are disillusioned to war. Instead, they are preoccupied with the lives they left behind when they left to fight in Vietnam and are exemplified in the items each man carries with him in his rucksack. The tokens of home are meant to act as an anchor for the soldiers; however, the items act only

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<sup>4</sup> In his article, "Storytelling, Salvations, and Pilgrimage in Tim O'Brien's 'The Things They Carried,'" Alex Vernon asserts that O'Brien's story is about finding salvation through storytelling and that the novel suggests a Christlike allegory which begins with the trek to the cross, the death, and the resurrection.

to isolate the soldiers further.

Each of the soldiers uses their personal effects to temporarily escape the Vietnam jungle; however, this escapist mentality contributes to the inability of each member to communicate or connect with another member of the unit, which is detrimental to the individual psyche. Each member attempts to grasp the world that he left behind. Despite the military's insistence that "families and friends should be encouraged to write letters to loved ones, even if they do not receive replies" in an effort to maintain troop morale, there is no such insistence for soldiers to write home (Ursano et al. 10). Soldiers are expected to shoulder "a kind of emptiness, a dullness of desire and intellect and conscience and hope and human sensibility" but to maintain momentum by thinking of those things that they protect (O'Brien 15). For Jimmy Cross, Martha is the only thing present. Although O'Brien makes the preoccupation of love important to the story for Jimmy Cross in the titular episode, this preoccupation is seen both as a weakness and a failure in his character, ultimately leading to the death of one of his soldiers, Ted Lavender. In his mind, before Lavender's death, Jimmy's imaginary world of love is founded on a mixture of silence and a psychological resilience that has sheltered him from the realities of war. With the loss of the security and safety of that fantasy world following the death of his soldier, Jimmy Cross is transformed from a friend of the soldiers into the man leading the soldiers who "would accept the blame for what happened" (25).

The love between Mark Fossie and Mary Anne is shown similarly—as a destructive rather than a positive force. As Mary Anne joins her fiancée in the jungle, she transforms from a "pretty young girl" into something "utterly flat and indifferent" (O'Brien 110). Unlike the relationship of Jimmy Cross and the invisible Martha, Mary Anne is real and only fades into nothingness when she unsuccessfully attempts to transition into a world in which she does not belong. Further, as Mary Anne struggles to connect to the soldiers of Alpha Company and to the Greenies, her psychological resilience takes over as social constructs fall away, and results in a survival tactic that creates further isolation for both the soldiers of Alpha Company and herself. O'Brien shows this isolation and silence as "dangerous [...] ready for the kill" (116). Like Mary Anne, the soldiers are forced further into isolation and further from the social constructs which initiate a survival mechanism within the mind and the necessity to use non-verbal communication in an attempt to connect and communicate.

By stripping away the social constructs that surround a soldier during and after returning from the war, *The Things They Carried* suggests something of the way those constructs are part of that which reduces meaningful connection and communication to a rigid, militaristic standard. As O'Brien shows, the soldiers are unable to process the

world that surrounds them. The two primary examples of what should be true relationships are devolved into memory and myth rather than something that is substantial and active. These moments are the very same in which O'Brien highlights the necessity of psychological resilience to cope with the changes of their reality as well as the silence and isolation imposed on the men during wartime. In an interview O'Brien gave to Larry McCaffrey, O'Brien admits that "most people fighting there—the ordinary grunts like me—didn't think much about issues of good and evil. These things simply didn't cross their minds most of the time. Instead, inevitably, their attention was on the mosquitoes and bugs and horrors and pains and fears" (134). Ironically, the same social constructs that were altered for survival during wartime are the ones that tell the men to be silent and bear the pain and trauma of war. Men especially are expected to behave like men, strong and sure, and soldiers are expected to defend their country and its identity. In this way, "the period of silence, exclusion, and oblivion, is not only a period of being 'on hold'; such prevention of more public narrations may become part of a more social trauma itself" (Eyerman et al. xix).

Despite the negative connotations associated with the words silence and isolation, silence must be understood not as something in opposition to speech but as part of speech (Gere 206). The novel presents the reader with seemingly stock dialogue—a trait that is taught to members of the military in order to main classification and confidentiality for a mission objective. Isolation becomes a way of life, and silence, or non-verbal communication, becomes the only language in which a soldier is fluent. The nods and gestures the men use throughout the text in order to communicate connect them to a community despite the fact they are entirely alone in their individual pain. Similarly, the isolation and silence act as a means for the men to protect themselves from the "allegiance to obscenity and evil" (O'Brien 69). By adhering to the code of silence and isolation and by understanding silence as a part of speech, the members of Alpha Company are thus able "to eliminate the 'truth' of speech and the 'lie' of silence" (Gere 207). Similarly, the lack of necessity tied to speech and the importance placed on isolation allows the men the opportunity to maintain their identity throughout the experience.

### **The Psychology of the Soldier**

The novel also does not shy away from the psychological resilience of his characters once they return from battle; however, rather than saving this important aspect of soldier survival for the end of the novel, O'Brien gives his audience the first true encounter with that resilience in the second episode of the novel, "Love," ensuring that its power strikes with absolute potency and urgency. As Jimmy Cross and Tim O'Brien, the character, sit staring at "a hundred old photographs" and "neither of [them] could think of much to

say,” both characters uncomfortably display their uncertainty of how to proceed in social situations. Both men similarly portray the disconnectedness from the world where their shared military experience has excluded them. Although the men try to forget the days of their time in Vietnam, “atrocities [...] refuse to be buried” (Herman 1). Despite both men’s desire to move beyond what happened, it sits at the forefront of their silence and in all the things which neither of them says. Their agreement, “not to mention anything about—” war and the deaths of the men, shows their psychological resilience to acknowledge the horrors of war while being disadvantaged on how to discuss those horrors.

This idea of psychological resilience, though present in each of the stories within the novel, is similarly powerful in a later episode, “Field Trip,” in which Tim O’Brien, the character, returns to the field where Kiowa was killed. Although O’Brien is with his daughter at the time, his mental and emotional isolation within the story suggests a kind of dissociative moment in which internally rather than external fragmentations of his time as a soldier come back. While his daughter begs to leave, O’Brien loses himself in the past as he tells her to “stay put” while he swims in a marsh searching for the areas where Kiowa had been (O’Brien 186). In O’Brien’s traumatized memory from his time in Vietnam, he searches not just for what was but a way to unmake the present in which he lives. By revisiting the site of Kiowa’s death, he shows a wavering psychological resilience that allows him at once to function—a strong resilience—within his present reality but lose himself in his past—a faltering resilience.

Through the protagonist, O’Brien shows that the effects of war trauma on an individual can vary; however, one of the markers that the individual is coping and progressing toward strong mental health is the very resilience mechanic is one in which the novel seems deeply interested. Although the two stories mentioned above show much stronger markers of this resilience, the novel itself acts as a testament to the psychological state of the characters. Just as there is an illusion of aliveness, the fragmented and disordered presentation of the episodes presents an illusion of mental stability. What O’Brien gives the audience is an incomplete photo because it “is difficult for an observer to remain clearheaded and calm, to see more than a few fragments of the picture at one time, to retain all the pieces, and to fit them together. It is even more difficult to find a language that conveys fully and personally what one has seen” (Herman 2). These are the very struggles with which O’Brien appears to fight; however, the mark of the work’s overall psychological resilience to the effects of war is that he “had something to say: [he] had witnessed things, smelled things, imagined things which struck [him] as startling and terrifying and intriguing in all sorts of ways,” and he shared them (McCaffrey 131). Rather than shrink into hopelessness and despair and rather than remain a silent soldier,

O'Brien's work tackles those very traumas, real or imagined, which continue to plague soldiers following a war.

### **Wartime Guilt and Perpetrator's Trauma**

Although perhaps most prominent, psychological resilience and silence are not the only major traumatic elements that the novel examines. One of the more difficult traumas comes in the form of perpetrator's guilt. Most research into war trauma or violent, traumatic experiences seeks to understand the victim's trauma and experience; however, in "The Man I Killed," O'Brien tries to understand the trauma felt by the perpetrator of the violence. Despite the conversation between the men, the voice of O'Brien is not heard physically. Instead, O'Brien's feelings come through in the account of the details of the dead man. O'Brien imagines an entire life for the man and holds those ideas close to him (O'Brien 128). Because a soldier should compartmentalize the deaths of casualties of war and of "tangos,"<sup>5</sup> the introspection of O'Brien's character is moving as it shows that no amount of military training can prepare a person for the outcome of skirmish. Further, O'Brien's internalized feelings demonstrate his guilt in taking the life of another human.

O'Brien also portrays perpetrator's guilt in the character of Mary Anne as a bastardized reflection of his own experience. Returning to the episode "Sweetheart of the Song Tra Bong," Mary Anne's perpetrator trauma synthesizes in what can only be described as a mental break in which hung "at the girl's throat was a necklace of human tongues" (O'Brien 110). Rather than attempt to humanize her victims, Mary Anne equates them to objects that can be bought and sold. She retreats farther into isolation and farther from her own humanity as a means of escaping the trauma that comes with taking a life. Rather than feel remorse, Mary Anne's reveling in the atrocities she commits should not be seen as a true enjoyment of the acts she has committed but as a psychological reactionary response to those acts she has committed. The primary difference that separates Mary Anne from Tim O'Brien and the other men is a lack of military training and preparation for the atrocities of war on her part. This key difference enables Mary Anne's trauma to break through her limited psychological resilience in war to distort and dehumanize her and her actions.

The perpetrator's trauma O'Brien highlights is not simply for the actions that the men have committed but also embodies the inactions of the men. Jimmy Cross, whose failures as a leader culminate in the death of Ted Lavender, exemplifies perpetrator's trauma, and the trauma acts as a transformative catalyst which propels him and the men to return to the military norm (O'Brien 24-26). Although O'Brien uses the idea of perpetrator trauma sparingly, its effects are no less evident in the impact it has on the

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<sup>5</sup> A general term for targets used by the United States Armed Forces.

different characters throughout the text. Perpetrator trauma, like silence and isolation, should not be viewed as a negative reaction to one's actions but instead as a transformative reaction to one's own actions. O'Brien's displays of varied reactions show a lack of objectively true results for dealing with the atrocities a person commits and suggests that each individual experience will ultimately reflect the level of psychological resilience a person has and the level of isolation to which a person has been subjected, voluntarily or otherwise. Through the reactions, a person—in this case, a soldier—will either reconnect to humanity or reconnect to one's animal nature. Neither, however, is wrong.

The final piece of O'Brien's coping puzzle comes in the form of isolation. Although the idea of isolation is tied to each of the other ideas, silence, psychological resilience, and perpetrator's trauma, it should be explored as an entity of its own. Isolation in O'Brien's episodic novel is evident throughout. Through isolation, the men are viewed not as a whole, nor as a unit, but as individuals. The description of the items the men physically carry with them into the jungles of Vietnam suggests something of the individuality that the military struggles to banish (O'Brien 14). As O'Brien shifts the frame of his narrative from an organized military unit to that of an individual with only the purpose of survival, the isolation of the men becomes the central focus of the work and the basis of his search for truth within his own experience.

The episode "How to Tell a True War Story," which details O'Brien's attempt at connecting with another through the understanding of an experience, describes the necessity of isolation both in the guise of objective truth and in the reality of subjective truth. Through a search of "what happened from what seemed to happen," O'Brien seems to describe himself not as a narrator but as an observer of his own life (71). Because of influences of the mind, O'Brien is ultimately isolated even from his own experiences and must rely on his understanding of those experiences in an attempt to form meaningful connections with his present reality. Further, O'Brien is unable to translate his understanding of his experience to those who have not been trained in a militaristic sense, because "[they weren't] listening" (85). There is an impossibility for soldiers, which is created through training, to describe in concrete terms the events and effects of life in a wartime situation. What O'Brien shows is that it is not only a lack of understanding in interpreting those events but also in communicating the experiencer's truth. In isolation, there is no "final and definitive truth" (76). Isolation is an "inescapable experience," which separates all people (Chen 80). Despite the author and the character's best intentions, truth is lost in both telling and understanding, and isolation is all that can remain from such an exchange.

## **Conclusion**

The power of O'Brien's narrative to move the reader is undeniably rich, but to read *The Things They Carried* outside of the context of the postmodernist framework is to miss the arguments O'Brien brings about speech, isolation, trauma, resilience, and truth. O'Brien's text is rich with trauma theory, but it is the ways in which the different aspects of trauma and coping combine to reduce the ability to form an objective truth on these abstracts that move the text outside of the space of allegorical representations and into a space of searching and understanding. The novel's preoccupation with the intersection of these elements, which alter the ways in which the soldiers communicate and connect to the world, highlights one aspect which the postmodernist movement strives to illuminate—redefining reality in the absence of objective truth. Although O'Brien shows the soldiers as a part of a community, the military and the unit, they are separated by individual experiences and reactions to those experiences. Because of the postmodern framework and his search for truth, O'Brien is able to draw conclusions about his time in Vietnam. Those conclusions serve not only as an attempt to communicate with the rest of the world his truth but also as a means of understanding and coping with his personal reality. O'Brien's understanding appears to suggest that coping is inextricably tied to finding meaning in isolation, silence, psychological resilience, the trauma one experiences from his or her own actions, and individual truth.

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# **How Has the Portrayal of Women on the Television Series *Doctor Who* Evolved from 1963 to 2019?**

*Sophia Watts*

## **Abstract**

*This essay examines the question, "How has the portrayal of women on the television series Doctor Who evolved from 1963 to 2019?" First, the universe of Doctor Who and all its complexities are established, explaining how the show has lasted as long as it has with a revolving cast of characters. In addition, this essay defines the portrayal of a character and what that entails. This essay then delves into the lives and personalities of six major female characters on the show. They include Susan Foreman, Sarah Jane Smith, Ace, Rose Tyler, Amy Pond, and the Thirteenth Doctor. Their actions, words, and character developments are all scrutinized and examined in this essay. Eventually, it becomes apparent that the role of women in the series has evolved and expanded. Over time, they are given more chances to be independent and have storylines outside of their relationships with male characters, especially the Doctor. They make decisions for themselves and challenge the Doctor on his actions and views on the universe. Eventually, women on the show take the lead, which is made apparent by the recent casting of the show's first female Doctor. By the end of this essay, the conclusion is reached that the role of women on Doctor Who has evolved by allowing these characters to have bigger parts and more complex backgrounds. Furthermore, women on the show can carry their own storylines and are not controlled by other characters' decisions or relationships with them.*

## Introduction

“An Unearthly Child” — the first episode of *Doctor Who* — premiered on 23 November 1963. It was advertised as “an adventure in time and space” in British TV listings, starring William Hartnell as The Doctor.<sup>1</sup> It was met with generally favorable reviews and was given a “Reaction Index of 63” out of 100. This was close to then-current averages for the premieres of television dramas (sixty-two) and children’s television shows (sixty-four). Additionally, it was described as a “cross between Well’s Time Machine and a space-age Old Curiosity Shop, with a touch of Mack Sennett comedy” as well as praised for being “written imaginatively enough to appeal to adult minds and would, no doubt, prove to be quite intriguing as it progressed.”<sup>2</sup>

These findings proved that the BBC was headed in the right direction with *Doctor Who*, so the company acted accordingly. However, no one could have predicted just how far the show would go. Today, the show reaches millions of people with every episode. In fact, the premiere of the reboot-series’ Season 11 – on 7 October 2018 – averaged about 8.2 million viewers alone.<sup>3</sup> In addition, as of 2006, it holds the Guinness World Record for being the longest-running science fiction television show.<sup>4</sup>

This is all possible thanks to the unique traits of the show’s main character, the Doctor. He is part of the alien race Time-Lords from the planet Gallifrey and possesses the ability to regenerate into a new person instead of dying.<sup>5</sup> As a result, the show can continue with an ever-changing cast of characters. The one constant, however, is the Doctor’s spaceship called the TARDIS, which stands for “Time and Relative Dimension in Space.” In essence, it can travel anywhere in all of time and history, which allows the Doctor to go on many wild and daring adventures. Furthermore, he often has companions that travel with him—usually female ones. These companions change along with the Doctor, sometimes leaving him and other times getting left behind. This unique aspect then allows for the show’s longevity.

Consequently, over the years, *Doctor Who* has gone through quite a few changes. As society evolves, so does its culture, which includes television shows. The role of its female characters has arguably changed the most, made especially apparent with the

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<sup>1</sup> “Radio Times’ TV listing,” *The Radio Times*, November 23 1963, [www.bbc.co.uk/archive/doctor-who/6405.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/doctor-who/6405.shtml).

<sup>2</sup> “An Audience Research Report,” *British Broadcasting Company*, 30 December 1963, [www.bbc.co.uk/archive/doctorwho/6406.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/doctorwho/6406.shtml).

<sup>3</sup> Hannah Mays, “Jodie Whittaker’s Doctor Who debut is most watched launch for 10 years,” *The Guardian*, 8 October 2018, [www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2018/oct/08/doctor-who-jodie-whittakers-debut-is-most-watched-launch-for-10-years..](http://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2018/oct/08/doctor-who-jodie-whittakers-debut-is-most-watched-launch-for-10-years..)

<sup>4</sup> Beth McLoughlin, “Doctor Who named longest-running sci-fi TV show,” *Campaign*, 29 September 2006, [www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/doctor-named-longest-running-sci-fi-tv-show/595605..](http://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/doctor-named-longest-running-sci-fi-tv-show/595605..)

<sup>5</sup> Jason Lohorik, *Doctor Who: Character Encyclopedia* (London: DK Publishers, 2013), 4.

recent casting of Jodie Whittaker as the first female Doctor.<sup>6</sup> Character portrayals depend on various factors, but they are most influenced by the society within which they are created.

By definition, a portrayal is “the way that someone or something is described or represented in a painting, film, book, or other artistic work.”<sup>7</sup> Therefore, analyzing the portrayals of various female characters from *Doctor Who* would allow for one to see how they have, or have not, changed over time. This would then lead to a deeper understanding of the show’s place and purpose within today’s culture.

### **The Beginning: Susan Foreman**

From 1963 to 1964, Susan Foreman was the First Doctor’s first companion and his granddaughter. She was played by Carole Ann Ford and was typified as an ordinary teenager, meant to give younger viewers someone with whom to identify.<sup>8</sup> Beyond that, her character did not have much of a personality. Ford even complained that she was a frustrating character to play because Susan was never allowed to develop or grow.<sup>9</sup> This was mostly because she played the role of the damsel in distress, waiting for the Doctor to rescue her, having “little to do other than look pretty and frightened.”<sup>10</sup>

After fifty-one episodes, Susan Foreman left the Doctor, or rather, the Doctor left her. She fell in love with a man named David Campbell, a resistance fighter from the 22nd Century.<sup>11</sup> She wanted to be with him but also desired to stay and take care of her aging grandfather. The Doctor, on the other hand, believed that it would be selfish of him to let her do so. In order to let her live her own life, as he believed was best, he locked her out of the TARDIS. After a tearful farewell, the Doctor left, and Susan remained on Earth to begin a new life with David.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, it is clear that, at least at first, female characters did not have much of a role to play in *Doctor Who*. Susan Foreman was more of an audience stand-in at best or a one-dimensional, token sidekick at worst. The fact that, in the end, she did not even get to choose to leave, the Doctor is supportive of this interpretation. In essence, he took away her agency, deciding he knew what was best for her, while she did not. Thus, the portray-

<sup>6</sup> Camilla Turner, “Doctor Who: Jodie Whittaker becomes 13th Time Lord, urging fans ‘not to be scared by my gender,’” *The Telegraph*, 17 July 2017, [www.telegraph.co.uk/tv/2017/07/16/doctor-jodie-whittaker-replace-peter-capaldi-time-lord-regeneration/](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/tv/2017/07/16/doctor-jodie-whittaker-replace-peter-capaldi-time-lord-regeneration/).

<sup>7</sup> “Portrayal,” *Cambridge Dictionary*, Cambridge University Press, [dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/portrayal](http://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/portrayal).

<sup>8</sup> James Chapman, *Inside the TARDIS: The Worlds of Doctor Who* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 23.

<sup>9</sup> Benjamin Cook, “Who on Earth is... Carole Ann Ford,” *Doctor Who Magazine*, December 2010, [web.archive.org/web/20140322111800/http://benjamincook.net/writing/doctor-who-magazine/interviews-and-articles/who-on-earth-is/carole-ann-ford/](http://web.archive.org/web/20140322111800/http://benjamincook.net/writing/doctor-who-magazine/interviews-and-articles/who-on-earth-is/carole-ann-ford/).

<sup>10</sup> Chapman, *Inside the TARDIS*, 23.

<sup>11</sup> Chapman, *Inside the TARDIS*, 23.

<sup>12</sup> Lobarik, *Doctor Who: Character Encyclopedia*, 173.

al of Susan Foreman shows that female characters were not vital contributors to *Doctor Who*'s storyline early on in the series.

### **The Redefinition: Sarah Jane Smith**

The next major female character came in the form of Sarah Jane Smith, played by Elisabeth Sladen from 1973 to 1976. She was a companion to the Third and Fourth Doctors and quickly became a huge fan favorite.<sup>13</sup> This is in part because she broke from the traditional female companion role; instead of being yet another damsel in distress, Sarah Jane was a feisty investigative journalist.<sup>14</sup> After her first meeting with the Doctor, she sneaked onto the TARDIS and followed him to the Middle Ages in order to discover the whereabouts of several missing scientists.<sup>15</sup>

This firecracker spirit often led her into more than a few sticky situations, but she and the Doctor always managed to make it out, forming a strong bond along the way. They were so close, in fact, that Sarah Jane never quite recovered after the Doctor left her on Earth with no explanation or warning.<sup>16</sup> This would not be the last people saw of her, though. The character's popularity eventually led to a lead role in one of the rebooted series' episodes, "School Reunion," alongside David Tennant's Tenth Doctor. Not long after, she earned a show of her own with *The Sarah Jane Adventures*.<sup>17</sup>

This expanded universe brought with it added praise and analysis of the character. Elisabeth Sladen felt that Sarah Jane "was the kind of character that [people] needed at that time. So she took on the companion that had to be for the series and the companion that [people] wanted."<sup>18</sup> Another explanation offered up to explain the character's popularity is that her "jolly-hockey-sticks good nature" made her the most beloved of all.<sup>19</sup> In fact, even one of the show's writers admitted that Sarah Jane was his favorite. In an interview, Toby Whithouse noted that she "redefined the role of the companion. And there are elements of Sarah Jane Smith that you can see in every companion afterward... She changed the companion from being a rather helpless hysteric to being a feisty, opinionated, strong equal to the Doctor."<sup>20</sup>

Overall, these elements all help to typify Sarah Jane Smith. This character

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<sup>13</sup> Martin Barber, "Doctor Who: Elisabeth Sladen talks," *BBC*, 22 August 2006, [www.bbc.co.uk/norfolk/content/articles/2006/04/19/film\\_doctor\\_who\\_lis\\_sladen\\_interview\\_feature.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/norfolk/content/articles/2006/04/19/film_doctor_who_lis_sladen_interview_feature.shtml).

<sup>14</sup> Daniel Martin, "Doctor Who: the five best and worst companions," *The Guardian*, 28 March 2007, [www.theguardian.com/culture/tvandradioblog/2007/mar/28/doctorwhothefivebestandw](http://www.theguardian.com/culture/tvandradioblog/2007/mar/28/doctorwhothefivebestandw).

<sup>15</sup> Loberik, *Doctor Who: Character Encyclopedia*, 153.

<sup>16</sup> Loberik, *Doctor Who: Character Encyclopedia*, 153.

<sup>17</sup> Martin, "Doctor Who: the five best and worst companions."

<sup>18</sup> Barber, "Doctor Who: Elisabeth Sladen talks."

<sup>19</sup> Martin, "Doctor Who: the five best and worst companions."

<sup>20</sup> Kevin Wicks, "Interview: Toby Whithouse on Cast Changes for 'Being Human,' 'Doctor Who,'" *BBC America*, [www.bbcamerica.com/anglophenia/2012/02/interview-toby-whithouse-on-cast-changes-for-being-human-doctor-who/2/](http://www.bbcamerica.com/anglophenia/2012/02/interview-toby-whithouse-on-cast-changes-for-being-human-doctor-who/2/).

broke down barriers in terms of what it meant to be a companion, which has especially resonated with audiences even to this day. Her adventures continued even after her tenure on the original series ended, adding more stories to the continuously expanding *Doctor Who* universe. Boundless admiration for Sarah Jane shows that her influence expands further than almost any other character's, besides the Doctor himself.

Thus, with all this evidence, it is clear that the role of female characters on *Doctor Who* changed during the time of Sarah Jane Smith. Gone were the days of helpless companions, and in came a new era of independent, strong-willed women. However, it is important to note that there were still some similarities between her and previous characters. Sarah Jane did not choose to leave the Doctor, but was instead left behind, just like Susan Foreman; things were not as starkly different as they appeared to be. Nevertheless, this should not detract from the progress made by Elisabeth Sladen's portrayal of the iconic Sarah Jane Smith.

### **The Modernization: Ace**

Towards the end of the original series of *Doctor Who*, another female companion was introduced who would become especially popular with audiences. Her name was Ace, and she was portrayed by Sophie Aldred from 1987 to 1989. Ace also proved to be a break from the traditional companion template, often being cited as the "first companion [audiences] all either knew, could be, or could spot on the street."<sup>21</sup> In addition, her background was particularly unique; Ace had a rough relationship with her mother and lost a friend at a young age. This later resulted in her developing an intense, rebellious streak and a penchant for blowing things up.<sup>22</sup> Up until this point, characters like Ace had never been placed in the public eye before. As Sophie Aldred put it, "there were no equivalent young female roles on television who were doing realistic, down-to-earth, tomboyish things," which made the character particularly revolutionary during that time.<sup>23</sup>

One moment that best exemplifies Ace's unique personality is when she is confronted by Daleks, machine-like aliens that are the Doctor's worst enemy. Instead of running away scared, or screaming for help, she takes matters into her own hands and beats up one of them with a baseball bat.<sup>24</sup> No character on the show had done this before or has since, marking a truly distinctive moment in *Doctor Who* history. Moreover, Ace is the only arsonist to have traveled with the Doctor; she even created her own special

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<sup>21</sup> Andrew Younger, "Doctor Who: how Ace set the template for modern companions," *Den of Geek*, 5 January 2015, [www.denofgeek.com/tv/doctor-who/33496/doctor-who-how-ace-set-the-template-for-modern-companions](http://www.denofgeek.com/tv/doctor-who/33496/doctor-who-how-ace-set-the-template-for-modern-companions).

<sup>22</sup> Martin Barber, "Doctor Who: Ace visitor in Norwich," *BBC*, 4 February 2008, [www.bbc.co.uk/norfolk/content/articles/2008/02/04/doctor\\_who\\_sophie\\_albred\\_20080204\\_feature.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/norfolk/content/articles/2008/02/04/doctor_who_sophie_albred_20080204_feature.shtml).

<sup>23</sup> Barber, "Doctor Who: Ace visitor in Norwich."

<sup>24</sup> Loborik, *Doctor Who: Character Encyclopedia*, 7.

explosive, which she named Nitro-9.<sup>25</sup> Despite these differences, she and the Seventh Doctor proved to be an explosively-dynamic team, being viewed as more of “a double act” than the typical “Doctor and [his] assistant” pairing audiences had become so accustomed.<sup>26</sup>

Furthermore, the introduction of Ace brought other firsts to the television screen. This character enabled the show to bring up themes of “teenage angst, racism, and eventually sexual awakening... a notable first for not only *Doctor Who*, but all genre TV of that age.”<sup>27</sup> Additionally, while other female companions had been “a bit glam [and] girlie, [with] lots of screaming,” Ace got to wear Doc Martens and a bomber jacket, and hold her own during adventures.<sup>28</sup> She slowly became a separate entity from the Doctor, growing to be more than just his companion. Over the course of her time on *Doctor Who*, Ace embarked on a journey of her own, transforming from an “immature and emotionally scarred teenager... into a confident young woman.”<sup>29</sup> This evolution, however, extended beyond Ace’s character development.

The introduction of such a distinctive character as Ace marked the beginning of an era of more realistic, modernized characters on *Doctor Who*. Audiences began to see more and more of themselves in the people on their television screens, especially for those on the fringes of society. Ace not only laid the groundwork for later companions in the series but also displayed a maturity and fearlessness that was truly ahead of its time. She was allowed to develop in ways previous characters were not, could make decisions for herself, and progressed beyond what the Doctor wanted her to be. Thus, with Ace, the show entered a new era of storytelling that would change the portrayal of female characters on *Doctor Who* forever.

### **The Revival: Rose Tyler**

After its almost two-decade-long hiatus, *Doctor Who* started up again in 2005. With it came an all-new cast, including the Ninth Doctor and his latest companion Rose Tyler, played by Billie Piper from 2005 to 2006. Meant to act as an audience surrogate to help introduce a new audience to the show, lead writer Russell T Davies chose the name because he felt it was “the most British name in the world” and wanted to subvert a recent trend of companions with boyish names, like Ace.<sup>30</sup> For many people on the show, it was important to showcase a truly authentic, quintessentially female character. Piper once said

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<sup>25</sup> Loborik, *Doctor Who: Character Encyclopedia*, 7.

<sup>26</sup> Simon Brew, “The Den of Geek Interview: Sophie Aldred,” *Den of Geek*, 14 February 2008, [www.denofgeek.com/tv/doctor-who/19406/the-den-of-geek-interview-sophie-aldred..](http://www.denofgeek.com/tv/doctor-who/19406/the-den-of-geek-interview-sophie-aldred..)

<sup>27</sup> Younger, “Ace set the template for modern companions.”

<sup>28</sup> Barber, “Doctor Who: Ace visitor in Norwich.”

<sup>29</sup> Younger, “Ace set the template for modern companions.”

<sup>30</sup> Benjamin Cook and Russell T. Davies, *The Writer’s Tale* (London: BBC Books, 2008), 24.



that “[Rose is] both strong-willed and vulnerable... that is a really healthy representation of women. Instead of showing a female character endlessly striving towards perfection, here, we saw a range of genuine female reactions. The show seemed to say, it is OK to cry [and] it is OK to question yourself.”<sup>31</sup> This furtherment of genuine representations of female characters on the show also creates compelling role models for young girls. Christopher Eccleston, who portrayed the Ninth Doctor, added that “[s]o far there has been no heroine out there for eight to 12-year-old girls, but [Rose] is one... [Billie Piper] carries the series with me.”<sup>32</sup>

Additionally, *Doctor Who* allowed Rose to be the Doctor’s equal. At one point, she absorbs deadly energy in order to save the Doctor from a huge fleet of Daleks.<sup>33</sup> In an analysis of this scene, script editor Helen Raynor felt it gave Rose a chance finally to match him with a gesture that is so noble, and strong, and heroic, and clever.” Russell T Davies also believed that this moment helped typify the character as being “braver than brave and more loyal than anyone else in the universe.”<sup>34</sup> She was willing to die in order to save his life. All of these characterizations proved to audiences that a female character is more than her pretty face, and can be a hero in her own right.

What really made Rose different, however, is that she started a trend of the Doctor’s companion developing a romantic interest in him. This especially came to the forefront of the show when the Doctor regenerated into his Tenth self, played by David Tennant. In an interview, Piper commented that there was a “different kind of energy” between the two characters, with Tennant adding that “the audience would get to see the Doctor-companion relationship [develop] and [become] something that it maybe [hadn’t] before.”<sup>35</sup> By the end of their series together, Rose admits to the Doctor that she loves him, but he does not get the chance to confess to her in return. In a commentary on this scene, writer Julie Gardner declared that she would “confirm to the world” that the Doctor was going to “say it back.”<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, despite their relationship never coming to fruition, Rose and the Tenth Doctor set a precedent that remained throughout the

<sup>31</sup> “Doctor who? The Time Lord’s companions since 2005 have their say,” *The Guardian*, 28 September 2013, [www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2013/sep/28/doctor-who-companions-billie-piper-catherine-tate-karen-gillan](http://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2013/sep/28/doctor-who-companions-billie-piper-catherine-tate-karen-gillan).

<sup>32</sup> Tom Bishop, “Revitalized Doctor Who takes off,” *BBC*, 9 March 2005, [news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/4331559.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/4331559.stm).

<sup>33</sup> Lobarik, *Doctor Who: Character Encyclopedia*, 150.

<sup>34</sup> *Doctor Who Confidential*, series 1, episode 13, “The Last Battle,” directed by Gillane Seaborne, narrated by Simon Pegg, featuring Russell T. Davies, Christopher Eccleston, and Billie Piper, aired 18 June 2005, in broadcast syndication. BBC, 2012, DVD.

<sup>35</sup> “Q&A: David Tennant and Billie Piper,” *SFX*, 31 March 2006, [web.archive.org/web/20060428090917/http://www.sfx.co.uk/features/q\\_and\\_a\\_david\\_tennant\\_and\\_billie\\_piper](http://web.archive.org/web/20060428090917/http://www.sfx.co.uk/features/q_and_a_david_tennant_and_billie_piper).

<sup>36</sup> *Doctor Who*, series 2, episode, 13, “Doomsday Comemntary,” directed by Graeme Harper, written by Russell T. Davies, featuring David Tennant and Billie Piper, aired 8 July 2006, in broadcast syndication, BBC, 2009, DVD.

rebooted *Doctor Who* – of romance being a central theme of the show.

Altogether, Rose is arguably one of the best companions to create for the revival of *Doctor Who*. She was, like Ace, a realistic human being who did not need the Doctor to define herself to the audience. The Doctor and Rose were allowed to be equals, complementing each other in ways other companions were not quite able, due to the romantic subtext lining their interactions. Moreover, Rose became a role model for young girls in an era that lacked such characters. With all this to consider, it is clear that Billie Piper's distinctive portrayal helped cement Rose as one of the best companions of all time.

### **The Entanglement: Amy Pond**

Amelia "Amy" Pond was portrayed by Karen Gillan from 2010 to 2012 and was introduced alongside the Eleventh Doctor in the fifth series of the rebooted *Doctor Who*. Right from the beginning, it is clear that this companion will be different from the rest, as the Doctor first meets Amy as a spunky seven-year-old girl. He has to leave not long after but assures her that he will be right back. In a way, he does keep this promise, though for the Doctor, it is five minutes, for Amy, it is twelve years. Throughout her childhood, she insists that the Doctor is real, but no one else believes her, leading to her treatment by several psychiatrists.<sup>37</sup> Thus, the Doctor does not influence Amy's life solely during their time together, but as she grows up as well. Gillan once noted that "[the audience is] really seeing her life pan out... [and watching] her grow up before [his or her] very eyes. She starts off as a little girl, then a young woman."<sup>38</sup> Amy goes through much more than her previous counterparts, with the Doctor affecting her worldview and beliefs into adulthood. She is much less trusting and more cynical than other people, developing a tough exterior as a result.<sup>39</sup> Thus, Amy became the first companion to be so all-encompassingly influenced by the Doctor.

Additionally, Amy was engaged by the time she started exploring time and space. With previous companions, their romantic relationships became secondary concerns once the Doctor entered their lives. However, Amy's relationship with her fiancé Rory strengthened, once he started traveling with them; eventually, the audience even saw them get married.<sup>40</sup> As a result, Amy began to break the mold of the Doctor's

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<sup>37</sup> *Doctor Who*, series 5, episode 1, "The Eleventh Hour," directed by Adam Smith, written by Steven Moffat, featuring Matt Smith and Karen Gillan, aired 3 April 2010, in broadcast syndication, BBC, 2010, DVD.

<sup>38</sup> Todd VanDerWerff, "Karen Gillan," *The A.V. Club*, 25 August 2011, [tv.avclub.com/karen-gillan-1798227152](http://tv.avclub.com/karen-gillan-1798227152).

<sup>39</sup> *Doctor Who Confidential*, series 5, episode 1, "Call Me the Doctor," directed by Gillane Seaborne, narrated by Alex Price, featuring Steven Moffat, Matt Smith, and Karen Gillan, aired 3 April 2010, in broadcast syndication, BBC, 2010, DVD.

<sup>40</sup> Chris Haydon, "Doctor Who: the evolution of Amy Pond," *Den of Geek*, 7 September 2011, [www.denofgeek.com/tv/doctor-who/20937/doctor-who-the-evolution-of-amy-pond](http://www.denofgeek.com/tv/doctor-who/20937/doctor-who-the-evolution-of-amy-pond).

companions, developing a romantic interest in him. She even had a child with Rory, named Melody.<sup>41</sup> However, the Doctor still impacted Amy's life, despite her creating one outside of his travels. For one, since Melody was conceived on the TARDIS, she became a Time-Lady in her own right, with regeneration powers akin to the Doctor's. Melody was also kidnapped and brainwashed to kill the Doctor, losing contact with her parents. Furthermore, since she also changed her appearance when she regenerated, it was eventually revealed that Melody was River Song, another traveling companion of the Doctor's that Amy and Rory had met before.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, when Amy and the Doctor met when she was a child, there was a crack in the space-time continuum in her bedroom, which he investigates. By the end of the fifth series, it turns out that Amy is connected to the cracks, with them being formed in an explosion on her wedding day.<sup>43</sup> Thus, it becomes clear that Amy is also unique in that her connection to the Doctor is further-reaching than either of them could have guessed.

Furthermore, Amy's personality is rather unique. Gillan has said that she did not want to "conform to what works - or what has worked - in a companion... the whole, likeable, girl-next-door business."<sup>44</sup> She is also "feisty and outspoken and a bit of a number," arguably the wildest companion the Doctor has traveled with thus far.<sup>45</sup> As such, Amy stands out as a wild card and free spirit throughout her time on *Doctor Who*.

Overall, Amy Pond is more unique than she seems at first glance. She is the first companion to meet the Doctor as a child, before later traveling with him as an adult; her wild personality was also influenced by this impromptu visit. Additionally, her relationship with Rory does not deteriorate over time, as has happened with other companions' relationships. Furthermore, her life is incredibly entangled with the Doctor's in ways that no other character's ever has. It is with this information that one can conclude that Amy Pond is a clear departure from the typical female character found on *Doctor Who*.

### **The Metamorphosis: The Thirteenth Doctor**

In 2017, it was announced that Jodie Whittaker would take on the role of the Doctor, becoming the first woman on the show to do so. This revolutionary moment was

<sup>41</sup> Lobarik, *Doctor Who: Character Encyclopedia*, 15.

<sup>42</sup> *Doctor Who*, Series 6, episode 8, "Let's Kill Hitler," directed by Richard Senior, written by Steven Moffat, featuring Matt Smith, Karen Gillan, and Alex Kingston, aired 27 August 2011, in broadcast syndication, BBC, 2011, DVD."

<sup>43</sup> *Doctor Who*, Series 5, episode 13, "The Big Bang," directed by Tony Haynes, written by Steven Moffat, featuring Matt Smith, Karen Gillan, and Arthur Darvill, aired 26 June 2010, in broadcast syndication, BBC, 2010, DVD.

<sup>44</sup> "Doctor Who star Karen Gillan defends 'too sexy' Amy Pond," *The Telegraph*, 15 June 2010, [www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/tvandradio/doctor-who/7828765/Doctor-Who-star-Karen-Gillan-defends-too-sexy-Amy-Pond.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/tvandradio/doctor-who/7828765/Doctor-Who-star-Karen-Gillan-defends-too-sexy-Amy-Pond.html).

<sup>45</sup> Daniel Martin, "Doctor Who: why we will miss Amy Pond," *The Guardian*, 31 August 2012, [www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/tvandradioblog/2012/aug/31/doctor-who-farewell-amy-ponds](http://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/tvandradioblog/2012/aug/31/doctor-who-farewell-amy-ponds).

met with praise and criticism alike, but ultimately, Whittaker was deemed perfect for the part.<sup>46</sup> Once audiences met her, she was described as being “intensely moral, a little distracted and bursting with energy... both the Doctor we know and a new version of the Time Lord.”<sup>47</sup> Thus, she is a distinct departure from previous female characters since *Doctor Who* began.

While only two seasons with Whittaker as the Doctor have been released, there is plenty to unpack in terms of her portrayal of the iconic character. One fan noted that she is “channeled the best elements of recent Doctors (Matt Smith’s whimsy, David Tennant’s frenetic energy, Peter Capaldi’s wry humour...), but above all she’s made the role her own.” Another remarked that “[Whittaker’s] Doctor is a whirlwind of likeability and energy,” becoming a powerhouse of a character in her own right.<sup>48</sup> Here, it becomes evident that the Doctor is now more than her gender, with audiences reacting more to her as a character than as a woman. In addition, the new series showrunner Chris Chibnall has said this Doctor is “incredibly lively, warm, funny, energetic, inclusive – she’s the greatest friend you could wish to have as your guide around the universe.”<sup>49</sup> As such, while this Doctor may be different from past ones, she is not so dissimilar to previous companions. Ace was a force of nature, making explosives to get herself in and out of trouble. Rose had a warmth and compassion that brought a human touch to the Doctor’s alien whimsy. Amy’s spirit provided many humorous and exciting moments to the show. With Whittaker’s Doctor, while she may not be human, her personality brings reminders of companions past along the way. Her portrayal is not as unique as one might first assume.

However, as Jodie Whittaker’s tenure as the Thirteenth Doctor has only just begun, audiences have much more to anticipate. For now, her character is an explosive enigma, both familiar and original. Her portrayal is also drastically different from and similar to past female characters on the show. As the Doctor, Whittaker has become what no other actress has before; nevertheless, her personality is also reminiscent of prior portrayals of female companions. Overall, one can conclude that Jodie Whittaker’s Thirteenth Doctor shows that great progress has been made in terms of how *Doctor Who* treats its female characters. Things had significantly changed since the days of Susan Foreman back in 1963.

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<sup>46</sup> Turner, “Jodie Whittaker becomes 13th Time Lord.”

<sup>47</sup> “Doctor Who: Everything we know about Jodie Whittaker’s new Doctor,” *The Radio Times*, [www.radiotimes.com/news/2019-01-07/doctor-who-jodie-whittaker/](http://www.radiotimes.com/news/2019-01-07/doctor-who-jodie-whittaker/).

<sup>48</sup> “Doctor Who half-term report – how is Jodie Whittaker’s first series doing so far?,” *The Radio Times*, 11 November 2018, [www.radiotimes.com/news/tv/2018-11-11/doctor-who-half-term-report-how-is-jodie-whittakers-first-series-doing-so-far/](http://www.radiotimes.com/news/tv/2018-11-11/doctor-who-half-term-report-how-is-jodie-whittakers-first-series-doing-so-far/).

<sup>49</sup> “Everything we know about Jodie Whittaker’s new Doctor.”

## Conclusion

A staggering number of characters have entered the world of *Doctor Who* since its inception in 1963. This has helped transform it into a staple of British culture, with children “born knowing what a Dalek [and] a TARDIS [are].”<sup>50</sup> Thus, the show is able to provide them with many role models to follow, showcasing the different types of people living around the globe. As times change, these portrayals tend to do the same; they reflect the culture and ideas they were created in. As *Doctor Who* has existed for over fifty years, it makes for an excellent case study. One can examine how character representations have evolved, which prevents other factors – such as genre and medium – from interfering in that analysis.

Female characters are especially fascinating because their role in society has transformed substantially since the 1960s, which is then reflected in the media. For *Doctor Who*, this is made apparent by the casting of Jodie Whittaker as the first female Doctor. This is a far cry from the days of Susan Foreman when she was only needed to be attractive and cry for help.

Therefore, one can easily conclude that the portrayal of female characters on *Doctor Who* has evolved from 1963 to 2019. However, that is not the question needing an answer; the real query is how these characters have been altered.

With Susan Foreman, she was not given much in the way of character development, instead of being used as a way to advance the plot. This became a staple of the companion character until Sarah Jane Smith crushed that stereotype. Instead, the companion became someone who challenged the Doctor and forced him or her to view the universe in a new light. Ace then took the role a step further, having a storyline of her own and defining herself beyond her relationship with the Doctor. This then became a trend with later companions, including Rose. She had a life outside the Doctor’s traveling but eventually fell in love with him, setting another precedent on the show. Amy was ever more intertwined into the plot, becoming more than the ordinary girl she initially seemed. Finally, the Thirteenth Doctor was given the green light to headline the show in 2017; this also reflects a growing trend within the series where women get to take the lead. Overall, these facts show how the role of women on *Doctor Who* has evolved to let them be more powerful and capable. They can hold their own in the face of danger, and grow from these experiences. Thus, *Doctor Who* has become a show where its female characters accurately reflect the modern world and how far it has progressed.

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<sup>50</sup> VanDerWerff, “Karen Gillan.”

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*How Has the Portrayal of Women on the Television Series Doctor Who Evolved from 1963 to 2019?*



# Rhyme and Revolution

*Nash Meade*

## **Abstract**

*William Wordsworth's poetry stands as a reflection of the sociopolitical landscape of his time. His focus on the natural landscape instead of the sculpted is one of the best examples of artistic revolution in history, as Wordsworth uses his natural landscape focus as a way of protesting the rapidly developing Industrial Revolution in England. Beyond anything Wordsworth could have expected, however, this focus on natural landscapes, combined with his concern with a person's individuality, turned him into the progenitor of a new era of poetry and literature: the Romantic period. Thus, Wordsworth's poetry and ideals stand as a revolution of both the contemporary poetic style and sociopolitical ideals of his time.*

William Wordsworth is one of the most revered poets of the last few centuries. His works both revolutionized poetry and defined many of the motifs of the Romantic period all on their own. But, this revolution was a revolution on many fronts. William Wordsworth is often considered a gateway into a new era of poetry not only because of his new style but also because of the ideas that he explored. Although nature was not an unheard-of source of imagery for poetry before Wordsworth, he most certainly changed the way in which many looked at it. To Wordsworth, nature became a bastion of beauty and harmony in a world that was being upended by the Industrial Revolution. As the masses flooded into the cities, looking for work and leaving behind the lush greenery of the more rural lifestyle, Wordsworth fled from them, grasping to a beauty that was quickly becoming obsolete. Just as nature was becoming a source of beauty and rest for some, it became threatened by the looming Industrial Revolution. Thus, he stands as a revolutionary poet who worked to change the minds of his time towards a new way of thinking: one who upheld the beauty of nature as something higher than the works of humankind and saw boundless creativity as the true path of the artist. Beyond his interest in nature, though, Wordsworth also worked to change the political and religious spheres of England. In the glowing words of William Hazlitt in his *The Spirit of the Age*: “He takes the simplest elements of nature and of the human mind, the mere abstract conditions inseparable from our being, and tries to compound a new system of poetry from them; and has perhaps succeeded as well as anyone could” (Hazlitt 232).

Before breaking down how his writing was so revolutionary, however, it would be good to get a sense of the person behind the words. Wordsworth was born in 1770 in Cockermouth, Cumberland. His childhood was rural and comfortable until the deaths of both of his parents: one when he was eight and the other when he was thirteen. Although life became chaotic for some time after his parents’ deaths, he started writing poetry in grade school. He wrote throughout his schooling, often drawing on experiences he had had in nature and in his travels around most of Western Europe. He co-published *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798 with Samuel Taylor Coleridge. His poetry was radically political while he was young, but he became more conservative as he grew older. Upon the release of many of his earlier works, including *Lyrical Ballads*, he had many critics, who, although agreeing with his belief in making the language of poetry more common, disagreed with his use of imagery (Davies, ch. 8). But, soon enough, he became known and revered as a master of the craft, and most of his critics went mute. He died in 1850.

A comparison of Wordsworth’s poetic style to that of Alexander Pope highlights how revolutionary Wordsworth’s poetry was. Pope, much like Wordsworth, also championed a form of poetry: the heroic couplet. Pope brought the heroic couplet to its

peak, publishing many poems in this form, such as the *Essay on Man* or *Essay on Criticism*. Although the form allows for long-form poetry, it is also rigid and leaves little room for experimentation, especially in comparison to the variability of form and rhythm found in Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads*.

Where the two men differed the most, however, was in their themes. Pope's most famous works often focused on two things— the Great Chain of Being and landscaping—although his extensive poetic career leads to many other critical works and themes to be explored. Pope believed in the philosophical belief system known as the Great Chain of Being, which suggests that all of Creation is ordered in a specific way, and for any one thing to attempt to leave its station would be to upend the whole system. Wordsworth, on the other hand, saw nature as its own harmonious system created to be beneficial and self-sufficient, with man as a sort of outsider or as something which had fallen out of harmony with the rest of nature. This thought is characterized by a single phrase repeated twice in his poem "Lines Written in Early Spring": "What man has made of man" (Wordsworth, lines 8, 24). Unlike Pope, Wordsworth saw humankind as a force that often succeeds in destroying its own harmony and the harmony of the nature around it. This change in tune around humanity's place among the natural world was most likely brought on by the Industrial Revolution, a time which Pope never experienced and which Wordsworth lived through. During the Industrial Revolution, Wordsworth saw a side of humankind that Pope did not often see, if at all: the side of humanity that sees nature as nothing more than a place to develop and from which to extract resources. In Pope's time, although there was some manufacturing development, it was small-scale and limited to the largest cities and port towns. Wordsworth, however, watched in horror as humankind completely stripped the natural world, replacing it with massive industrial stonework and the black smoke of factories in almost every city in England.

Another concept that shows Wordsworth's radical change from previous poets is that of the landscape garden. Landscaping was a popular practice in Europe, and especially Great Britain, from the seventeenth through the early nineteenth centuries. Landscaping was a way for human beings to subdue and manipulate the unruly wilds of nature into something more valuable, or, at least, that is how many saw it. Pope said this in his poem "To Richard Boyle, Earl of Burlington": "To build, to plant, whatever you intend,/ To rear the column, or the arch to bend,/ To swell the terrace, or to sink the grot,/ In all, let Nature never be forgot" (Pope, lines 47-50). Through the manipulation of nature in these landscape gardens, many, like Pope, thought that they were making nature more beautiful and more useful. This sentiment eventually slipped away into the Industrial Revolution, where making nature more beautiful was replaced with the idea

of transforming nature into a resource. Wordsworth stood against these ideas, along with many of his contemporaries at the time.

During Wordsworth's time, landscape gardening had changed radically. Instead of manipulating nature, the point was to capture it in its most untouched form. Landscape gardening went from trying to create something pleasing to the eye to an attempt to capture its natural beauty. The landscape garden, however "natural," was, to Wordsworth, artificial. That said, he was himself a committed gardener. Some have even argued that he should be viewed as one of the greater landscape architects. In his article "William Wordsworth, Landscape Architect," Ian H. Thompson says: "I believe it is appropriate to think of Wordsworth as a landscape architect, or at least as one of the spiritual and intellectual precursors of the profession, a view supported by the range, scale and depth of his interests in landscape beyond the boundaries of the garden" (196).

Although Wordsworth was a committed gardener, he never reconciled his views about nature with landscaping as, in almost all of his poetry, he uses naturally occurring landscapes as the sources of his imagery, not gardens. Consider the third stanza of "Lines Written in Early Spring": "Through primrose tufts, in that green bower,/ The periwinkle trailed its wreaths;/ And 'tis my faith that every flower/ Enjoys the air it breaths" (Wordsworth, lines 9-12). In most of Wordsworth's poems, there are descriptions like the one in "Lines Written in Early Spring": descriptions of nature, without human influence or human works, in its most natural and simplistic beauty. Wordsworth, unlike Pope, saw landscaping as a perversion of nature, not a way of making it more beautiful. This view is often seen as one of his most distinguishing features. In an essay by Linda R. Jeffrey, which is one of twelve essays in the book *Creative People at Work: Twelve Cognitive Case Studies*, she says, "A key feature of William Wordsworth's poetry is its naturalism. He was among a few poets of his epoch who made the first break with previous poetic tradition—by trying to write in natural language about natural things. He was also a nature poet because he literally went into 'Nature' in order to describe it" (71). The "natural language" is also something that sets him apart and is one of the most significant changes in form in English poetry.

Before Wordsworth, poets were often concerned with using "poetic" or lofty language in order to convey meaning. The use of a more common tongue was seen as a debasement of the artistry of poetry. This was most certainly an effect of the desire to imitate the Greek poets as well. Wordsworth, however, saw the loftiness of the language as quite the opposite. He thought it defeated the point of poetry, and that the use of a more common tongue actually added depth to the beauty of a poem instead of debasing it. William Christie argues this in his essay "Wordsworth and the Language of Nature":

“It [meaning the language of rustic life] approximated to, and represented [to Wordsworth], this paradisaical ideal in which all ‘conceptions’ are denoted ‘adequately,’ in which word and object come together in a way that differed radically from the licentious poetry of the previous century. What annoyed Wordsworth was the perversity with which his eighteenth-century predecessors had refused to call a spade a spade... ” (31).

The use of lofty words to accentuate images in poems was, to Wordsworth, a show of arrogance in the poet. He felt that it did nothing for the image or, in the worst cases, detracted from it. Instead, Wordsworth felt that common language better captured the beautiful and was comprehensible by every person instead of only the highly learned. Much like the ways in which landscaping nature was a way to make it more beautiful was egregious to Wordsworth, the manipulation of language to bring out the beauty in an image was artistically egregious.

These three elements of change that Wordsworth effectively pioneered do not necessarily make one a genius or a true revolutionary, however. What makes Wordsworth so potent and so important is how he stood in relation to the world of his time, and how much his challenges to the traditional shaped the next century of English poetry. In the words of Hazlitt: “Mr. Wordsworth’s genius is a pure emanation of the Spirit of the Age. Had he lived in any other period of the world, he would never have been heard of” (Hazlitt). There is a reason why Wordsworth is seen as the turning point into the English Romantic Period, and this reason goes far beyond just his style of poetry, going all the way down to his very soul.

Wordsworth’s “spirit,” for lack of a better term, took two revolutionary forms, one political and the other philosophical. Wordsworth was known to be a political radical, some of which was brought on by his traveling to France during the French Revolution (Davies, ch.4). He became a pro-democratic writer, which was seen in many of his letters, and some of his poetry as well. In “The Leech-Gatherer,” Wordsworth’s showing of a decrepit and poor older gentleman as wise and peaceful was something completely unheard of before-hand due to the hierarchal structure of British society. This can even be seen in the other name of this particular poem: “Resolution and Independence.” His “leveling spirit,” as Hazlitt says, along with his pro-democratic beliefs, made the showing of any person as intelligent and unique a necessity. In the poem, after meeting the leech-gatherer, the narrator says: “I could have laughed myself to scorn to find/ In that decrepit Man so firm a mind” (Wordsworth, lines 137-138). The leech-gatherer, who is a poor and destitute old man, would have never been shown as intelligent by many of the poets and novelists during or before the time of Wordsworth, as this worked against the strict hierarchal structure of British Society. Although Wordsworth was not the first to work

to bring about a change in how many viewed the poor or “lower classes,” his influence crafted through his poetry made the most impact. When he first showed the poor as intelligent, however, many seemed unsure or even upset at such an elevated and intimate view of someone of lower stature. In Gary Lee Harrison’s book, *Wordsworth’s Vagrant Muse: Poetry, Poverty, and Power*, he writes: “Wordsworth’s contemporaries’ reactions to his depiction of the rural poor—disbelief, mockery, and scorn—indicate that his audience was not fully prepared to grant the marginals and outcasts of their society a sense of character and history, a known and knowable self, and a place within the privileged space of the lyric poem” (71). What is most interesting, however, is that Wordsworth became a radical on both ends of the spectrum of the day.

In the mid-1790s, Wordsworth read the book, *Political Justice*, by William Godwin. Upon reading this book, he became a believer in the philosophy of Necessitarianism, which was a radical, although not uncommon, philosophical belief at the time (Chandler 258-263). William A. Ulmer, in his article “William Wordsworth and Philosophical Necessity,” says about Godwin’s form of philosophical necessity that “if Wordsworth believed in philosophical necessity as *Political Justice* formulated the idea and articulated its implications, he would have believed that human cognition and behavior were ultimately rational, that an impersonal obligation to the betterment of the whole remained our leading ethical obligation, that social progress was triumphantly inherent in the nature of existence” (176-177). Godwin believed and wrote that superior responses to problems would automatically prevail in any given situation, leading to optimism, which Wordsworth was unable to embrace. In fact, soon after being a convert, Wordsworth slowly distanced himself from Godwin’s works. By the time he published *Lyrical Ballads* a few short years later, he had all but abandoned the idea for something nearly opposite, with the preface to the second edition of the work, which was produced in 1800, acting, in many ways, as a critique of the belief he once held. Although Wordsworth’s political views were important and most certainly helped shape how many used poetry after him, it was his view of nature that became his crowning revolutionary achievement.

Wordsworth lived through the brunt of the British Industrial Revolution. Wordsworth, of course, rejected this, but his rejections go deeper than just him liking the outdoors. For Wordsworth, nature was a way for humankind essentially to return to its inner self. Wordsworth saw cities as a place where people were around other people so much that they, ironically, slowly lost their ability to be human. As trees fell for fuel and rivers were polluted with wastes, Wordsworth saw the sanity of humankind flowing down the creek as well. This firm belief in the healing power of nature and the “necessity” of getting away from humankind for itself would quickly be picked up by poets and writers



alike in the years after him. In no uncertain terms, Wordsworth could be considered one of the first major environmentalists, although he never became explicitly political with his beliefs about nature. This view soon became influential in the works of the Transcendentalists in the United States, along with it being a preliminary version of existential aesthetics, or, in other words, finding meaning in the beautiful.

The change towards a belief in the meaning of the beautiful and the use of feeling as a poetic device is part of the reason why he is considered the gatekeeper to the Romantic period. Most of Wordsworth's poems were based upon feeling (something which many of his critics opposed), and this poetic motif of feeling bled into love, beauty, and passion. This change, more than any other, is what cements Wordsworth as a revolutionary. The change from rigid and imitative poetry to free-flowing style based upon subjective and fleeting feelings is what led to the English Romantic Period and is why he is considered the gatekeeper to it. More than his politics, his philosophy, or even his use of language, his change towards fleeting feelings created by the observation of nature changed the way many thought about poetry.

William Wordsworth is a name above many in the realm of poetry. As the hallmark of age, he completely changed the way many thought about both poetry and the world around them. As a political activist, he brought thoughts of individualism and the freedom of thought to a country that had been stifling it. As a poet, he changed both its style and themes towards something that the world had effectively never seen outside of the realm of some of the Greek tragedies. In theory, he changed how one thought about human nature and tied this view to the importance of aesthetics. Wordsworth was, and still is, the epitome of a genius: one who has the heart to feel the smallest things, the intellect to turn those feelings into ideas, and hands which can turn those ideas into something beautiful.

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# The Authorial Sublime: Text and Apotheosis

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## Abstract

*By definition, the sublime is unknowable, and therefore similarly unachievable. This essay, however, challenges the notion of sublimity as unattainable by comparing the literary criticisms of Roland Barthes and Hélène Cixous. In comparing their works and analyzing the dual significance each puts on the importance of “audience” as contributor, the very transformative characteristic of the sublime becomes apparent in the author. Writing is an uncanny act, and reading becomes a reimagining of what constitutes the sublime for and within each person who engages with a text. Roland’s famous “The Death of the Author” elevates the author to a perpetual liveliness when read in conjunction with Hélène Cixous’s concepts of self, text, and the Third Body, therefore transcending the author from death to sublimity, even as the author’s works forever incur the uncanny responses of their perpetually-shifting audience and contextualization. Writing, thus, acts as a way by which one may surpass the limits of independent humanity and achieve the status of sublime.*

The concept of sublimity is fantastical in that it is incomprehensible beyond knowing it cannot be fully comprehended. Often, the sublime is brought into focus by metaphors of the ocean: its tumultuous waves, its endless expanse to those watching it—the sublime is the observer’s knowing that they can never know what they are seeing or experiencing in its full capacity. Sublimity is an admittance of the inferiority of the self when faced with something perceivably, infinitely beyond one’s capacity. By that very notion, becoming sublime is, by definition, impossible, as it is characterized strictly by the experience of “transformation... vigorously resist[ing] perfection in the sense of ontological completion” (Morgan 83), and, therefore, any supposed perfection of it would negate the very transformative property that characterizes it.

That is not to say, however, that attempts cannot be made to attain as close to sublimity as is possible. Axiomatically, sublimity—even through uncanny pursuit—is unattainable, lest it no longer be sublime. That is, with one exception, what I intend to explore. By exploring the concept of text and authorship presented by H el ene Cixous and Roland Barthes, while the sublime author may still be an impossible goal as an individual, the author figure is capable of becoming sublime through their reception by others.

If sublimity is the acknowledgment of inferiority in comparison to incomprehensible greatness, then the attempt at becoming so (however futile) is through the uncanny. Mike Kelley and Thomas McEvelley compare the uncanny to intentionally and dangerously riding a motorcycle: to be going “a hundred miles an hour at night to *deliberately* [emphasis added] feel the terror and wonder of the sublime” (202). I chose to emphasize “deliberately” in this context because the sublime is by definition qualitative of the experience it evokes—seeing a mountain or gazing at the stars, “Milton’s descriptions of hell, and infinity” (Kelley 201)—and being reminded of one’s minuscular position. The uncanny, however, is the pursuit of recreating that feeling, to get as close to that unknowable sensation as possible. Sublimity, sensation, uncanny, recreation— “the sublime [as] primarily by way of trying to shadow forth the formless,” whereas with “the uncanny [,] you’ve reversed the direction” (203). The viewer shifts from being a passive recipient of the sublime subject to active involvement in the process, which incites that very metaphysical response.

Cixous formulates the majority of her notion of the sublime on Freud’s foundation, in which he describes the Uncanny as the

old, animistic conception of the universe, which was characterized by the... narcissistic overestimation of subjective mental processes; by the belief in the omnipotence of thoughts and the magical practices based upon this belief...by all those other figments of the imagination with which man...strove to fend off the inexorable prohibitions of reality. (Freud 93)

Freud's uncanny operates in such a way as to extend one's self beyond the bodily constraints and experience emotions that "[fulfil] the condition of touching those vestiges of animistic mental activity within us" (93), however inaccessible those visceral feelings may be. To Cixous, however detrimental to the self the act may be, writing creates this window to the sublime through which a person may become closest to the uncanny experience.

"Writing," writes H el ene Cixous, "comes from deep inside...some call it hell" ("Three Steps" 118), and this hell (similar to the example of Milton that Kelley earlier provided) operates as a metaphor for the internalized de-sublimation of thought. She articulates that "[hell] is deep in my body, further down, behind thought. Thought comes in front of it and closes it like a door. This does not mean that it does not think, but it thinks differently from our thinking and speech" (118). To Cixous, the hell—the "it" to which she refers—inside people is not a repository of individual thoughts, but more of the thoughts-of-our-thoughts, the primal, reactionary responses we experience when witnessing something sublime that is unable to be articulated. This is reiterative of Freud's declaration that "an uncanny experience occurs either when repressed infantile complexes have been revived by some impression, or when primitive beliefs which have been surmounted seem once more to be confirmed" (Freud 97), though she deviates from the association of these thoughts as almost exclusively that of youth.

Cixous holds the act of writing in exceptionally high regard. Cixous presents writing not merely as a scrawling of words onto paper, the transference of words to materiality, but as an impartation of oneself: "the portrait of the artist done by himself or herself" ("Three Steps" 27). To be a writer is to "institute immurement" (27) of the self, to take part of one's self, and separate it. One must utilize their facilities to write as a means to "put herself into text—as into the world and into history" ("Laugh" 1869), to immortalize both thought, presence, and being. Thus, writing becomes not a separate act, but an active separation and transference of parts of oneself into text. The inherent dissection of self is similar to the comparison made to Frankenstein, wherein the act of writing acts as a creation of a "golem" (Kelley 203) of the inner thoughts, tearing apart the self, reorganizing it, and attempting to recreate these thoughts through writing.

The process of writing then trivializes the emotion the artist is attempting to convey. In doing so, such an act subsequently removes the internalized experiences from the previous quality that rendered it sublime: its incomprehensibility. If thoughts, according to Cixous, originate in the depths of a self-sustained hell, and Hell is quintessentially sublime, then the act of writing is the employment of the uncanny that—instead of achieving sublimity—removes it from the creator: "the voice loses its origin" (Barthes 1268). Once thoughts are put to words, the thoughts and emotions they represent have therefore been removed from the categorization of sublime. For the uncanny to be

considered such, it must “exceed the present and the familiar”; Matt Ffytche describes the uncanny as “disturbing but also generative, existing beyond representation” (70). This draws forth Barthes’s concept of the author as equally sublime, “not because [the text] is created by an author but it is the language which gives it sound and meaning” (Ahmadi 2670). The “dead” author Barthes explores, instead, begins to exist among various times and people in direct relation to the readers’ language(s). Once a text is written, it no longer exists exclusively as the author’s intention, but within and beyond its time for having been represented as best it can by the author through the language to which the author was bound.

Cixous further describes reading as an act of “changing eras, changing families, changing destinies” (“Three Steps” 22), and if reading is the catalyst to do so, then the author is the creator of such a catalyst. While Barthes argues that “the text is henceforth made and read in such a way that the author is absent” (1270), with one’s writing as inseparable from the self, then reading is to unavoidably live (even if temporarily) in the life of another. While Barthes posits the “book and author stand automatically on a single line divided into a before and after” (1270), Barthes does not consider how this separation acts as a combination of the two through the time and lens of the reader. This process can otherwise be described as “experimental becoming” (Bray 65) in which one uses “[one’s] own body as a form of transport” for “journeying through the world” (Cixous, “Three Steps” 64). This is true of both the reader and the writer. The author imparts their being via thought into their work, which transports the reader into a separate mentality, into a world that existed before the reader, and reconstructs the text and the author.

The reader internalizes this metaphysical “experimental becoming” and brings the author’s world to them, subjecting it to scrutiny and interpretation through their thought processes. This very notion of an author’s “death” “restores the position of the author by saying that it will be very difficult to eliminate the author from criticism” (Di Leo 125). According to Cixous: “All great texts are prey to the question: who is killing me? Who am I giving myself to kill?” (“Three Steps” 15). To put words unto page is to allow someone else access not just to the physical work, but to the very meaning those words hold, and by proxy, access to the writer. The author and their work then become comparable to “the resuscitation of a corpse” (Kelley 203): thoughts of theirs once sublime, rendered not by the author’s uncanny processes, are now reintroduced to sublimity by the reader’s interpretation. By having been read, the author’s thoughts (and therefore, the author) return to sublimity by reentering the process of enigmatic transformation (Morgan 83) necessary to qualify as such, becoming “generative” (Ffytche 70) once more.

Cixous explores this notion of Ffytche’s generative, eternal uncanny by the pre-



scription of “textual effects” (“Three Steps” 145) unto authors. Textual effect is the means by which an author’s name is the only way that a particular style of writing or evocation of feeling can be described, mimicking the literary technique of “synaesthesia,” in which “a stimulus applied to one sense involuntarily elicits a response from one or more others” (Oboussier 115). The name, in this case, is operating as the indicator for whichever specific reaction is expected. This usage of a name in regard to an effect does not necessarily mean one has to be “attracted by the authors whose names are at work in the language but simply that there aren’t any names which don’t produce such effects” (145). Cixous herself exemplifies this point in her works: she draws upon former theorists by name, describing her positions as framed either by Freudian, or Lacanian, or Derridean influences on numerous occasions—the “author’s name...the author function...offers instructions on how the text should be read” (Ahmadi 2672). With sublime defined as the acknowledgment of experiences or thoughts beyond one’s self, to have a name become synaesthetic as the indicative of a particular mode of expression, theory, or other decisive orchestration of thoughts is to elevate that name as similarly sublime in its self-reliant explanation.

By this vein, an author’s name itself becomes similar in nature to that of the word “sublime,” in that any other attempt to describe it comparatively would render its explanation less axiomatic. The sublime’s very definition is evident in its quality as a “willing loss of self” (Kelley 202), similar to Cixous’s declaration that “the only book that is worth writing is the one...that hurts us” (“Three Steps” 32), the book in which one [author] willfully pours oneself, regardless of what must be done or experienced to do so. This reiterates once more that writing is a sublime performance. Understanding writing as self-sacrificial, the act (though not the result) becomes sublime as an attempt at both synaesthetic and uncanny recreation: “Who am I giving myself to kill?” Writing is equal parts writing one’s self as it is permitting an outsider to interpret (and reconstruct) not just the words, but the author.

Horror author H.P. Lovecraft is an exceptional example of both synaesthesias in writing and authorial authority. To focus on the prior point, in his short story “Beyond the Wall of Sleep,” he writes in a fashion that emulates Cixous’s conceptualization of an individualized, self-contained hell:

As I gazed, I perceived that my own brain held the key to these enchanting metamorphoses; for each vista which appeared to me, was the one my changing mind most wished to behold. Amidst this elysian realm I dwelt not as a stranger, for each sight and sound was familiar to me; just as it had been for uncounted aeons of eternity before, and would be for like eternities to come. (Lovecraft 25)

Lovecraft writes of the uncanny in a way similar to its explanation by Kelley, having

“depart[ed], into that hypothetical beyond... showing the small formed reality into which the sublime is ingressing” (203). Lovecraft’s protagonist is experiencing a projection from his reality, which can only be described in terms of familiar and not-familiar, exemplifying the human condition in which our “understanding [of] what constitutes the mysterious... precedes our confrontation with the other.... It is not the product of an intimate connection with the other” (Bray 182) that shapes our understanding of it, but our cognizance of self that allows us to then approach and process the information.

Note how only the familiar is described definitively: “sight and sound” and the protagonist’s “own brain,” whereas the unfamiliar, previously unexperienced sensations, are described in the most recognizable though simultaneously inexplicable means possible: “enchancing metamorphoses,” “elysian realm.” These statements indicate only the vaguest process of knowing something is occurring and being unable to enunciate it—the sublime. His grasp of what is being seen is limited to what his “changing mind most wished to behold,” illustrating his limited discernment of the uncanny and similar barrier between it, “underscore[ing] the shortcomings of the humanistic mode of subjectivity upon which the sublime is predicated” (Ralickas 365). Were people not restricted in comprehension, the sublime could not exist. Not only does Lovecraft encompass the sublime in his minimalist presentation of it, he similarly expresses the uncanny as “a disturbance apprehended via the affects of a subject that has not yet elicited the terms of what disturbs it” (Ffytche 79) through his protagonist’s attempt at perceiving the ether before him.

Following this, Lovecraft equally showcases how the expulsion of the uncanny occurs. His protagonist once more transcends consciousness, this time encountering an otherworldly being who speaks to him, whereas previously, the understanding was strictly through limited and inaccurate projections. This entity speaks to him: “I am an entity that which you yourself become in the freedom of dreamless sleep... it is not permitted me to tell your waking earth-self of your real self, but we are all roamers of the vast spaces and travelers in many ages” (Lovecraft 27), and in doing so, eliminates the sense of the sublime that existed before explanation. The uncanny is inherently limited to its being beyond finite understanding, “the subject or individual will never arrive at such terms, for this would be to dissipate the uncanny” (Ffytche 79). The uncanny “in this story reaches its peak at the nonverbal speech of the entity through the dead peasant, which the narrator retells in words” (Ghodrati 42) and therefore robs of its sublimity.

Furthermore, the designation of this style as being characteristic of his writing—the very denotation as “Lovecraftian”—is indicative of the synaesthetic effects of his style. He has managed to capture in this story the sheer awe, majesty, and terror (Kelley 202) characteristic of the uncanny so well that the idea of recreating such a cosmic effect again

can only be done in comparison to his namesake. It is this ascension of name that Cixous reveres, the encapsulation of “names...that produce signifying effects (“Three Steps” 145). While Barthes would put forth this level of interpretative involvement as the death of the author for lack of creative autonomy, this instead elevates the author to a figure that continues to live well beyond their time of writing.

Cixous enunciates time and again that text offers transport, that writing is “journeying through the world” (“Three Steps” 64); she says the same of dreams, except “you are not transported, you are already in the other world” (79). If dreams offer insight into the depths of one’s psyche, then dreams represent the sublime, and writing the uncanny—this she later addresses in stating “the dream’s enemy is interpretation” (107), and “the sublime, which thought consumes, is transformed into utilities” (Irigaray 79). As Barthes puts forth, “the voice loses its origins, the author enters his own death, writing begins” (1268), and it is now the reader who has power over the author’s meaning: “it is the language which speaks, not the author” (1269). Because of this dichotomy, the aforementioned prejudices of Lovecraft become relevant: regardless of his intentions through text, he has no voice with which to argue, defend, divert, or justify.

However, when viewed through the lens of the authorial sublime, Cixous’s position becomes paradoxical by analyzing what she refers to as “the third body” (“Coming to Writing” 53):

Here, this body opens up another way of thinking through corporeality as something which is not simply anchored in the presence of the flesh but which is nomadic, moves beyond the body, and yet is part of the body. The third body is that which is created through the exchange. (Bray 63–4)

This creation of the “third body”—this “golem,” as referred to earlier by Kelley—is the reader existing both physically as they are, but temporally in the thoughts and time of the author as they process what is being communicated. The third body is not so much an actual body, but the manifestation of the translation of ideas between author, reader, and time(s)—a “form of writing which exchanges representations of the other...and creates a ‘limitless language’ which will ‘perpetuate us’” (Bray 64). With “us” being the combination of both the author and reader through this constructed body of thought, the perpetuation of such permits not only that the author never dies, but that the author will continue to live through the lives of those that encounter and project its work.

However, this then opens a new avenue through which the author figure may be perceived. If the life of the author is then continued through the reader(s), that can only mean multiple versions of the author exist at any given time. With “the text [as] a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture” (Barthes 1270), the

author and their text act as a vessel to a time in which those previous influences of culture conglomered. Cixous posits that a “text can have begun before us” (“Three Steps” 99), meaning that just as the author’s writing may influence others, so too has their writing been influenced by those before them. In this case, we may view writing and text not as the “death of the author,” but instead as “a gift[,] because it destroys old conceptions of the self and the world and makes room for a new life, new ways of being” (Bray 68). These ways of being, however, must be constructed by the reader—dead authors cannot rewrite themselves.

Despite language’s fluidity, it “continues to be seen as a medium through which we gain access to the real substance of ideas, feelings, events” (Belsey 201). For Barthes, this remains true until an author is prescribed, at which point such an association does little more than “impose a limit on [a] text” (1271). For Cixous, however, this variation is not the death it is for Barthes, but the “death of death itself... a multiplicity of new selves” (Bray 68) being born with each new reading and iteration. To follow Cixous’s position, “to write against death is to continuously pursue and challenge the limits of identity” (Bray 69) imposed by individualism, which “seeks explanations...negating the influence of culture and society in the construction of themselves” (Belsey 201). For her, the application of the author to meaning—this “textual effect” of hers—which can then be deconstructed, analyzed, and reconstructed by a reader, is a complete inversion of the implications Barthes provides.

Cixous is instead in favor of the communal construction of text because it allows the writer to surpass death. If the “death of the author must be understood as the birth of the text” (Di Leo 125), then through Cixous’s analysis as sublime, this may be re-envisioned as the birth of a text being the subsequent and multiple rebirths of the author. Death is merely “another term for limit” (Bray 68) that Cixous seeks to surpass through writing. Despite her approach being rooted in Freud’s interpretation of the uncanny, Cixous’s opinions of the uncanny and literature are drastically different:

Cixous focuses on the aspect of literary creation, which is linked to power, liberty, and life. The power of the creative writer, so envied by Freud, is of a different nature than the power of society or science. It is a power that not merely transgresses but transcends the laws of reality and society. Fiction entails a victory over death not because it abolishes death, but because it refuses death as the absolute limit. It ignores death. (Masschelein 120)

While Cixous views literature as a vessel through which the uncanny can be explored, transcending reality, Freud instead believes writing to act as a limit. Instead of a means towards ascendance, his opinion is that a person’s sublime experience “cannot be transposed

on to the uncanny in fiction without profound modification; for the realm of phantasy depends for its very existence on the fact that its content is not submitted to the reality-testing faculty” (Freud 97), reiterated earlier by Irigaray (79).

However, Cixous’s uncanny extends beyond its mere reiteration in textual form, but as a physical embodiment of the author. This focus on faculty that “the story-teller has this license among many others, that he can select his world of representation so that it either coincides with the realities we are familiar with or departs from them” (Freud 97), Cixous acknowledges and then deepens it, “revers[ing] the direction” (Kelley 203) of focus from the exploration of the writing itself to the reader’s internalizing of the writer. Something written cannot die. Reading is the exploration of the past, interpreting it the sublime, and writing the uncanny, “and anyone who does not go down into the abyss [death] can only repeat and retrace the ways already opened” (Irigaray 79) by writers before them. It is in this way that authors achieve sublimity—while not through their own uncanny efforts, but the internalization of them by and through others that engage with their works by inviting the reader to explore a time unfamiliar.

Here, the uncanny of fiction bleeds into writing as a whole when Cixous’s interpretation of the uncanny is applied to Barthes’s construction of the author figure. Through the amalgamation of the two, Barthes’s assertion that “the author is never more than the instance writing” (1269) is dispelled and instead replaced with being simultaneously every instance that their work is being read. Writing no longer acts as simply “composing words upon a page,” but as “a mode of living in the world” (Bray 69–70)—both the world of the work’s conception and the interpretation by every world that succeeds it. Instead of “writing [as] the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin” (Barthes 1268), this perpetual invitation of interpretation is exactly what gives the author a voice! Rather than a writer being exclusively bound to their book, existing as a phylactery of their former self, to be continually engaged in dialogues is the very continuation of the author’s life. If writing were never read, processed, interpreted, shared, well—what point would there be in writing for it to then be forever shelved?

Barthes’s criticism that interpretation causes a voice to “lose its origin” (1268) completely ignores the very nature of language. “While the world has meaning that a person assigns to it, [the] contribution to its meaning is only one half of the reciprocal relationship that takes place between subject and object” (Sullivan 67), drawing Barthes’s argument into question—maybe the author has the chance to be misunderstood by the reader, but true death arrives when there is no longer an additional party to contribute to their works’ meaning. While the “subject or individual [the author] will never arrive at such terms” (Ffytche 79) as to constitute the sublime, for to do so “would be to dissipate

the uncanny” (79), the attainment of so can be done vicariously through the reader, “conflat[ing] questions of interpretation with those of identity” (Di Leo 126).

So, if writing is thus uncanny as an (attempted) expression of one’s most primordial thoughts as expressed by Freud, but that “some forms of writing do take something from us” (“Three Steps” 115) in such expression, then through writing and reading “each person and all things rest in one another, flow into the other unconfined” (Irigaray 80). For Barthes, the structure “imposed by language on reality which determine our perception of it [leads to] the text of art amount[ing] to nothing more than a set of codes which control its production” (Di Leo 128). However, Cixous views this attribute of language much more positively, as an “endless oscillation on the limit between life and death” (Mas-sachelein 122) in which the author has the capacity to fluctuate between time, place, and persons. Rather than subject the author to death, such reception elevates them to sublimity by the perpetual abstraction and reconfiguration by inhabitants of times inconceivable to the writer. Barthes’s author–death, revisited with the understanding of dialogue as inseparably transactional, reaffirms Cixous’s proposition of the author as perpetually alive through their work: “Who dreams you?” (“Coming to Writing” 55).

This sublime dream, to writing, to reading, to being read is a transformation of the self into a figure “no longer constituted of preordained ideas; words meet and infiltrate each other, exceeding the fixed repertoire of language” (Oboussier 122). Dreams and text are inextricably linked for Cixous, propositioning that people “are not having the dream, the dream has us...even if the dream is in the author in the way the text is assumed to be” (“Three Steps” 98). Writing creates an inversion of ownership of text to the dependence on others and their perception of the text. Even after the author dies, the text lives, and the author’s dialogue is capable of “achieving unprecedented intersubjective economies” (Oboussier 127) through its constant and ever-evolving interpretations.

While the sublime is defined by its inability to be obtained, an analysis of Barthes and Cixous suggest the possibility that sublimity may still be prescribed by both time and the uncanny processes of the inevitable audience. The elevation to inconsistency and variation of meanings constituted in the Third Body between the reader and writer create an uncanny author not by the author’s own recreation of self, but their recreation by the reader. The author then acts as an avatar of their time through the perception of the reader, no longer “the instance writing” (Barthes 1269), but every and all instances of that writing read and interpreted by every audience thereafter. This transcendence of time and corporality is the very characteristic of the sublime—beyond a concrete and inarguable definition. So long as the text circulates and impresses into the minds of others, the author becomes a sublime surrogate in correspondence with, by, and through the deci-

phering of the audiences' uncanny processes. By achieving death according to Barthes, and then surpassing it according to Cixous, the dead author achieves a synaesthetic, a liminal and limboid authorial sublimity through their infinite interaction with and among times.

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# *Shin Gojira: Return of the Angry God*

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## **Abstract**

*Shin Gojira returns to the original themes of horror and cultural commentary that were the foundation of the original 1954 film. It works as a running analogy to many of the most pressing issues on the mind of Japanese society at the time of this film's creation. It serves also as a window into these pressing issues and a medium through which we can look and understand these issues.*

Anno Hideki and Higuchi Shinji's 2016 film, *Shin Gojira*, literally translates as "the New Godzilla." It stands out as one of the few Godzilla films that could be called a horror film. *Shin Gojira* harkens back to the original with its tone and presents us with a slow film that is terrifying and touching through a conservative but effective portrayal of action and a graphic depiction of the human toll of the monster.

Apart from its novel and immersive blend of cinematography, the film is unique for how it packages its politics by being upfront about its key points but tactful in their presentation. It is not about the monster, but rather about Japan reminiscing on the success of the Japanese Economic Miracle or the optimism of 1954 when it was the success story of Asia. Now, Japan faces challenges to its very survival. At home, it has to cope with a geriatric government, economic stagnation, and a military with a questionable ability to defend the country. Abroad, it has growing enemies who are long-standing rivals and overbearing allies who are sometimes no better. All these things are made manifest in a film that takes us back to a Godzilla that is an angry god and not just a monster. It presents us a question of identity: as the old way of doing and being comes to an end, what identity will Japan make for itself? In trying to understand Japan and how it struggles with and will answer this question, analyzing *Shin Gojira* and its symbolism creates a window for us into the psyche of the Japanese people.

#### **A Chip on its Shoulder: Domestic Politics, Foreign Relations, and Military**

*Shin Gojira* is often more political drama than *Kaiju* film. The monster is used carefully, and large stretches of screen time are devoted to the government's attempts to respond to the crisis, or its relations with other countries. Japan's government appears cautious and bureaucratic, and the other nations of the world equally help and hinder Japan. Even the Japan Self-Defense Force (JSDF) is criticized in the movie for its inability to counter the monster. How the government, military, and foreign powers are portrayed tells us how anxious Japan is about its state of affairs.

##### *Domestic*

Japan would not be the first country to make a film critical of its government; neither is *Shin Gojira* the first Godzilla film to be critical. However, in *Shin Gojira*, criticism of government stagnation and bureaucracy is front and center.

Japan is an aging country. Those in power are old and getting older and want to do what is safe and conventional. This is what we see in *Shin Gojira's* critical depiction of the Japanese government. Throughout the film, the Prime Minister (PM) and the members of his cabinet are depicted as capable, if not exceptional, administrators during normal times. During exceptional times, like those in the film, they are inflexible and cling to procedure.

Before they even know what Godzilla is, or that he is the cause of the current crisis, our protagonist, Yaguchi, and a fellow aid are discussing what to do since the PM is not in.<sup>1</sup> This frames the story as a political one, dealing with two types of people, the young and able like Yaguchi, and the old and incompetent. The leader of the country is

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<sup>1</sup> *Shin Gojira*, directed by Hideaki Anno and Shinji Higuchi (2016, Tokyo: Toho Co. Ltd., 2017), DVD.

absent during a crisis. Even once the elderly PM arrives, his image does not much improve. He is not presented as unqualified; however, he is incapable of dealing with a crisis of such a monumental scale. A giant, constantly evolving monster may be something with which even the most exceptional leaders would struggle. However, a monster can easily be replaced with invasion by a foreign power, an unprecedented natural disaster, or a historic nuclear catastrophe.

The Fukushima Dai-ichii Nuclear Disaster was the worst in history. It was a part of a string of events that began with a magnitude 9.0-9.1 earthquake. This, in itself, was a tragedy, but Japan often experienced them and was prepared for one of this magnitude. Even the fifteen-meter tsunami that followed, which was large enough to sweep over seawalls, was a possibility they had prepared for.<sup>2</sup> No one was prepared for the subsequent failure at the Fukushima Dai-ichii nuclear plant.

When the tsunami hit, power and cooling were lost at three of the reactors. Further damage to the roads made access difficult. Non-essential personnel was evacuated, and a skeleton crew struggled to prevent a catastrophic meltdown and control any radiation leaks. Over the next few days, the situation became progressively worse as the reactors experienced explosions, leaks, and further damage. Eventually, a zone of evacuation was established around the plant. Four of the six reactors would suffer damage, and the presence of large amounts of spent—but still hot—radioactive fuel, as well as in-use fuel rods, complicated the situation.<sup>3</sup>

Most of the radioactive material that escaped from the plant went into the atmosphere and was primarily composed of elements with a half-life of only a few days.<sup>4</sup> and <sup>5</sup> Small amounts of contaminated water were vented into the ocean. Exactly how much radiation was released into the environment can only be estimated since most sensors were destroyed by the quake. A mandatory evacuation was extended out to a twenty-kilometer radius around the plant, which was later turned into an exclusion zone. Hundreds of thousands of people were evacuated from the area around Fukushima. It is considered the worst nuclear disaster since Chernobyl in 1986. The Fukushima Dai-ichii Disaster was an evolving and complex problem, only made more difficult by having to deal with quake and tsunami damage. Despite mitigating circumstances, it was not handled well. Later, the full scale of the incompetence with which the disaster was handled came to light.

Tokyo Electric Power Company (Tepco), the operators of the plant, failed to properly prepare for such a disaster. The government regulators were also complicit. The Japanese courts ruled that Tepco was negligent for the failure to make proper preparation for a quake and tsunami of such magnitude in a country prone to them. The government

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<sup>2</sup>“Fukushima Daiichi Accident,” *World Nuclear Association*, October 2018, <http://www.world-nuclear.org/information-library/safety-and-security/safety-of-plants/fukushima-accident.aspx>.

<sup>3</sup>“Fukushima Daiichi Accident,” *World Nuclear Association*.

<sup>4</sup>“Fukushima Daiichi Accident,” *World Nuclear Association*.

<sup>5</sup> Author’s note: half-life is a term used to refer to the time it takes for a radioactive element to break down and lose its radioactivity.

was ruled negligent for failing to regulate Tepco and ensure the safety of the plant.<sup>6</sup> There were accusations of collusion between government regulators and the industry that created the lax standards, but this was not the end of controversy.

While the disasters—both the natural and nuclear—were still an ongoing crisis, the Japanese government was already facing accusations over lax regulation and their handling of the disaster, despite having dealt with preceding natural disasters well.<sup>7</sup> Their response to Fukushima was disorganized. Over the several-day attempt to get the reactors and radiation under control, the government struggled to deal with constantly evolving problems. There was a lack of communication between the different offices and teams trying to deal with the disaster. The PM at the time was not notified of the disaster until an hour after it had begun. There was a severe lack of cooperation between Tepco and the government.<sup>8</sup> Tepco was reluctant to cooperate and was defensive and lacked transparency. Instead of taking swift action, NISA (the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency) was relatively passive. It did not send a representative to communicate with Tepco.<sup>9</sup> Centers set up close to the disaster area to help with quick crisis response were hindered by personnel failing to arrive.<sup>10</sup>

At first, the government personnel in *Shin Gojira* believe the monster to be a strange natural phenomenon, and they handle it in an orderly and professional fashion.<sup>11</sup> The events begin strangely but not outside the limits of standard operating procedures. It is only when the monster comes ashore that he becomes a disaster. Throughout the film, the monster is a constantly evolving threat. The monster changes his form during different acts of the film, in parallel to the Fukushima disaster, and the incompetence with which he is handled is an equal parallel. The PM and his cabinet are consistently portrayed as indecisive and inept. Often they wait too long to make decisions because they do not have the stomach for hard choices. They spend so much energy trying not to make mistakes that they seem to fall into them. Early in the film, the PM and his cabinet members dismiss the idea that what is happening in the bay could involve a creature. In the same scene, the monster causes them to appear comically incompetent.<sup>12</sup> Nothing significant is achieved by the cabinet or the PM. The work that led them to the defeat of Godzilla does not come from firm leadership at the very top but from driven and innovative thinking from lower levels. The real change is driven by young and ambitious citizens who are beginning to become politically active and are eager to create

<sup>6</sup> Motoko Rich, "Japanese Government and Utility Are Found Negligent in Nuclear Disaster," *The New York Times*, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/17/world/asia/japan-fukushima-nuclear-disaster-tepco-ruling.html>.

<sup>7</sup> Daniel Kaufmann and Veronika Penciakova, "Japan's Triple Disaster: Governance and the Earthquake, Tsunami and Nuclear Crises," Brookings Institute, 2011, <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/japans-triple-disaster-governance-and-the-earthquake-tsunami-and-nuclear-crises/>.

<sup>8</sup> Akiyama Nobumasa, et al., *The Fukushima Nuclear Accident and Crisis Management*, The Sasakawa Peace Foundation, 2012, [https://www.spf.org/jpus/img/investigation/book\\_fukushima.pdf](https://www.spf.org/jpus/img/investigation/book_fukushima.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> Nobumasa, *The Fukushima Nuclear Accident*.

<sup>10</sup> Nobumasa, *The Fukushima Nuclear Accident*.

<sup>11</sup> *Shin Gojira*, Anno.

<sup>12</sup> *Shin Gojira*, Anno.

change.<sup>13</sup>

This criticism is from, not just the directors of this film, but the Japanese people. In the wake of the mishandled Fukushima event, a downward trend in government trust only accelerated.<sup>14</sup> Japan is a country that has a chronic problem of public mistrust of the government, and the Japanese government's handling of Godzilla, like its handling of Fukushima, is a clear criticism coming from public discontent.

### **Japan and its "Military"**

The JSDF is not a military; it is a self-defense force. The important difference is that a self-defense force is limited to only possessing those arms and equipment with defensive value and not those with primarily offensive value. This JSDF has tanks, helicopters, and enough artillery to repel an invasion. It does not have long-range bombers, true aircraft carriers, or sufficient offensive weaponry and logistics to be an aggressor. For Japan, especially with the pacifist sentiment that has dominated for the last few decades, this has not been a problem. While under the protective umbrella of the Cold War-era American military, and not facing any real challengers in the region, there was no reason to change the status quo. But in recent years things have changed. American military dominance is not what it used to be, even if the American commitment to Japan is no less now than it was twenty years ago. New threats have risen in the area, not just military threats in a nuclear-armed North Korea and strengthening of China, but economic threats as well.

In *Shin Gojira*, the JSDF does not make a good show of itself. The government is hesitant to let them do anything that might bring about civilian casualties, and so is the JSDF. The politicians are shown to be inflexible and overly cautious. It is clear that that JSDF is playing politics as well to guard its reputation. In other Godzilla films, the JSDF is sometimes instrumental in Godzilla's defeat, Godzilla does not even notice them in this film, even when they are ordered to act.

The JSDF is not thought of as military by many in Japan; it is considered more akin to a well-armed search and rescue service.<sup>15</sup> After WWII, the Japanese were afraid of a military as strong as the Imperial Army and Navy. They feared the political power of the military, which had led to the disastrous war and how a return to military strength would be perceived internationally. For decades, the people were willing to accept the pacifist constitution given to them by Occupying U.S. forces after the war. Japan has kept its defense force close to home and tried to avoid anything that resembled a show of force. Although the JSDF is respected for their high professionalism in humanitarian efforts, they are a small force that depends on the U.S. to make up for the firepower they lack.

The last time the JSDF is featured prominently is when they attempt to stop

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<sup>13</sup> "Students finally find their voice," *The Japan Times*, 2015, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2015/08/15/editorials/students-finally-find-voice/>.

<sup>14</sup> Kerstin Lukner, et al., "Japan's Political Trust Deficit," *Japan Forum* 29, no. 1 (2016): 1–18, doi:10.1080/09555803.2016.1227349.

<sup>15</sup> John Traphagan, "How Japan Sees its Military," *The Diplomat*, 2012, <https://thediplomat.com/2012/08/how-japan-sees-its-military/>.

Godzilla from reentering Tokyo after he returns. The JSDF throws everything it has at Godzilla—tanks, artillery, bombs, missiles, guns—but nothing works. A brilliant display of firepower becomes a spectacular display of impotence. The monster is not only unharmed but unfazed.<sup>16</sup>

In other Godzilla films, they at least get the monster's attention. In this film, Godzilla's utter disregard makes them look particularly useless. In contrast, although the American assault still fails to kill Godzilla, they wound him badly with considerably less effort.

The JSDF is a well-trained and equipped force, with some of the most advanced technology available. However, Japan is surrounded by some of the largest militaries in the world and by many countries that are much more militant. China, Russia, and North Korea have historically confrontational relations with Japan, dating back to WWII or farther. Most of its neighbors still hold lingering resentments over 20th-century wrongs, even among allies. The image of a Japan surrounded by enemies is not hard to understand. Their display of firepower shows us that the JSDF is a capable force. The quality of its men and equipment make it the equal of any military, but what it does not have puts it at a disadvantage. It lacks offensive weapons like intercontinental missiles, heavy bombers, and nuclear weapons, which have the power to actually hurt Godzilla. Yet surrounding countries such as China and Russia do possess intercontinental missiles and nuclear weapons and the ability to deliver them.

Every year, the JSDF conducts live-fire drills called the Fuji Firepower Demonstration near Mt. Fuji. Similar to the scene from *Shin Gojira*, it is a well-orchestrated and impressive display, but some commenters argue that, as is seen in the film, it would only be a grand but ineffective show against a real enemy. In the face of fundamental flaws in the JSDF, well-orchestrated drills mean little.<sup>17</sup> In recent years, Japan has faced a number of threats from other countries. The firing of North Korean missiles over Japan helped bring current prime minister, Abe Shinzo, and his more hawkish policies to the forefront. This chain of events was already building in the background when *Shin Gojira* premiered. At that time, and arguably today, the much greater threat lies in China and its aggressive push to become a regional naval power to contend with the U.S.<sup>18</sup> These threats, and rising nationalism that PM Abe fosters, suggests that a more expansive and capable JSDF is called for.

PM Abe, when he was elected in 2014, made it clear that one of his goals was to change the constitution, article 9 in particular, and strengthen the JSDF's position, allowing for it to be deployed abroad if necessary. He upgraded the Defense Agency to a

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<sup>16</sup> *Shin Gojira*, Anno.

<sup>17</sup> Grant Newsham, "Japan's Military Has Some Serious Problems (As China's Military Gets Stronger)," *The National Interest*, 2016, <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/japans-military-has-some-serious-problems-chinas-military-17613>.

<sup>18</sup> Ronald O'Rourke, *China Naval Modernization: Implications for U.S. Navy Capabilities – Background and Issues for Congress*, Congressional Research Service, 2018, <https://fas.org/spg/crs/row/RL33153.pdf>.



ministry and has taken other steps towards his goal of a more powerful JSDF.<sup>19</sup> Looking at current events, and back on the film, we can see the beginning of current trends already being illustrated in the weakness of the JSDF.

Japan is not fully committed to turning the JSDF into a military. Although the memories of WWII are no longer fresh, the lesson is still hard to forget, especially for Japan's elderly population. For this reason, it may be too soon to say that the film points to the beginning of an inevitable remilitarization. In recent years, however, Japan has started acquiring technologies and capabilities that are questionable under Article 9.<sup>20</sup> It is clear that Japan recognizes its relatively weak military posture. It is falling behind its neighbors and remains dependent on the U.S. China has already overtaken it economically, and recent events point to its continued dependence on the U.S. to supplement its defense. The filmmakers present a Japan critical of the JSDF and, through this, point to some of Japan's shortcomings.

### **America and the International Community**

It is easy to see this film as anti-American with the U.S. portrayal. The U.S. fluctuates between being Japan's closest friend or biggest bully from scene to scene. When one looks more closely at the criticism and the context, it is not directed as much at America, as it is at Japanese dependence on America and the position of "tributary" that this attitude has left the country.<sup>21</sup>

The U.S. is the most actively involved foreign nation in the film, and its military power is featured prominently. Apart from the mention of countries like China, or organizations like the U.N., there are two scenes where countries besides Japan or the U.S. are shown contributing. In one we see a German computer lab and the other the French ambassador.

One of the main supporting characters is a Japanese-American representative from the U.S. named Kayoko. In her first appearance, she is a stereotypical assertive American. She makes a John Wayne-esque arrival, wearing an aviator's jacket and immediately takes control of the conversation, presenting Yaguchi with a deal for information exchange that seems non-negotiable.<sup>22</sup> Next time, after the JSDF has failed to stop Godzilla, the United States informs the Japanese government that it plans to use conventional high-power bombs against Godzilla while he is in Tokyo. The film takes the time to tell us the bombers are carrying Massive Ordnance Penetrator, one of the largest non-nuclear weapons in the U.S. arsenal. The U.S. government does not request permission. The Japanese government can only make a chaotic attempt to save face and respond to a potentially wide-area urban bombing—a sly reference to the WWII carpet bombings so heavily symbolized in the 1954 film. The next time America appears is to tell

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<sup>19</sup> Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan, "Where is Japan in Its Military Under Abe?" 2018, *The Diplomat*, <https://thediplomat.com/2-18/03/where-is-japan-in-its-military-push-abe/>.

<sup>20</sup> "Long-range cruise missiles for the SDF's arsenal," *The Japan Times*, 2019, <https://www.japan-times.co.jp/opinion/2017/12/19/editorials/long-range-cruise-missiles-sdfs-arsenal/>.

<sup>21</sup> *Shin Gojira*, Anno.

<sup>22</sup> *Shin Gojira*, Anno.

Japan that the U.S. is ready to use nuclear weapons to kill Godzilla. A closer look at these two scenes reveals some enlightening context.

America's role in the film, though often incredibly helpful, is usually that of a schoolyard bully, telling Japan what it should do or dictating what it will do to Japan. Before the bombing of Godzilla by B-2 heavy bombers (a weapon the JSDF cannot possess), the Americans have been helpful. They are not selfless but did not extort anything in exchange. Earlier in the film, a cabinet member even asks if the government can just have the Americans kill Godzilla to avoid a controversial deployment of its own forces.<sup>23</sup> In this scene and several others, we see references to the long-standing security arrangement between the U.S. and Japan. During the Economic Miracle, relying on the U.S. for defense allowed Japan to put all their resources into an economic recovery, and it worked. The old leaders of recently pacifist Japan are unwilling to break that mold and take action. It is still trying to shift its security burden onto the U.S.<sup>24</sup>

Bombing the middle of Tokyo without permission seems like a callous move by the Americans. When considering the long-standing security partnership between the two, it is not surprising that the Japanese government does not seem upset. The PM and his subordinates are merely insulted; they had so little warning or input, not that the Americans intervened. During the bombing scene, Yaguchi and several others are apparently excited by American success. This is the only point in the film where Godzilla is actually wounded.<sup>25</sup> Even in the final showdown, when he is defeated, no blood is ever drawn. At no point is the American attack condemned. In fact, the attack forces the monster into hibernation and gives the film's heroes time to find a way to defeat Godzilla. This scene may seem like American overbearing, but it only comes after the Japanese fail to stop the monster.

The next noteworthy moment for the Americans as the bully is when they tell the Japanese that, on behalf of the U.N., they intend to launch a nuclear missile at Godzilla before he wakes up, despite the resultant destruction of Tokyo.<sup>26</sup> This decision is condemned throughout the film, and many characters are clearly emotional at this apparent betrayal. Many not only come to accept this fact but also begin to rationalize it as the only correct decision. In one scene, a character tries to convince Yaguchi that, due to the building economic and humanitarian crisis from the monster, the only way to save Japan from imploding is with international aid promised in return for Japan's cooperation with the nuclear strike.<sup>27</sup>

The nuclear option was not, originally, an American plan. Kayoko tells Yaguchi that it was not Americans, but the Russians and Chinese, who pushed forward the plan.<sup>28</sup> Both countries have long-standing disputes with Japan, and in the case of China, it is

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<sup>23</sup> *Shin Gojira*, Anno.

<sup>24</sup> *Shin Gojira*, Anno.

<sup>25</sup> *Shin Gojira*, Anno.

<sup>26</sup> *Shin Gojira*, Anno.

<sup>27</sup> *Shin Gojira*, Anno.

<sup>28</sup> *Shin Gojira*, Anno.

becoming an active challenger in the region.<sup>29</sup> At this first mention of the plan, there is little to suggest that, with the backing of the U.N., the U.S. will be taking the lead against Godzilla.

The international community's decision to nuke Godzilla seems callous. It is important to note that the focus is never solely on the Americans in this respect, but often on the U.N., and surprisingly, Japan. The Japanese would consent to make Godzilla a U.N. problem, with America at the lead. The only people who can be said to be acting strangely are the Japanese, who are consenting to being the victims of a third nuclear attack. It is not unusual to see Americans taking the lead in multi-national military actions. Japan is a long-standing junior security partner to the U.S. The Japanese response is, unfortunately, not out of keeping with one of the major approaches to Japanese foreign policy, which is to simply follow the American lead. It is a strange parody to see Japan, a victim of nuclear war, trying to justify something it finds so appalling. This scene is not simply critical of the rest of the world; it is critical of Japan. Japan continues to do as it always has—follow the American lead and consent to American wishes.

This reflects on two of the major political divides in Japan—the conservative approach of keeping closely tied to the U.S. security and foreign policy in Asia, and the anti-clientelist who want Japan to carve its own path.<sup>30</sup> These ideologies roughly correspond to the LDP (Liberal Democratic Party,) and the former DPJ (Democratic Party of Japan,) two of the largest parties in Japanese politics at the time. The competition between the young officials striving to make change and the older leaders looking to follow convention illustrates the competition between the LDP and the DPJ. In this case, the directors are clearly taking the anti-clientelist perspective, portraying Japan as a country that lacks the determination to solve its problems on its own terms, or the resolve to fight America and the other world powers. It is a tributary, but only because it acts like one. If Japan stands up for itself, it can carve its own path instead of the one America, China, or the U.N. creates for it.

### **What Does the Future Hold?**

At the film's climax, humanity has won this time. But, we are warned that there may be more monsters, and we are shown that there are with every new Godzilla film. At the end of *Shin Gojira*, the constantly evolving monster Godzilla is shown to have been on the brink of splitting into thousands of smaller firms, which may have made it unstoppable.<sup>31</sup> This time, they barely managed to stop the monster. But will they be able to next time?

This is the question the movie leaves us with, and the question those seeking to understand a changing Japan must ask themselves. All that we see in the film have

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<sup>29</sup> Andrew L Oros, "Japan's Relative Decline and New Security Challenges in a Multipolar Asia," in *Japan's Security Renaissance: New Policies and Politics for the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 66-95.

<sup>30</sup> Margarita Estévez-Abe, "Feeling Triumphant in Tokyo: The Real Reasons Nationalism Is Back in Japan," *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 3 (2014): 165-71, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24483416>.

<sup>31</sup> *Shin Gojira*, Anno.

been on the minds of the people of Japan as they tackle the metaphorical monsters of government, security, or economy the country must decide what new identity it will create. Since *Shin Gojira* premiered almost four years ago, and the concepts struggled within the film are starting to coming to fruition. You could call this monster North Korean aggression or China's increasing political, military, and economic power in Asia. It could be the rising number of natural and man-made disasters that call into question the health and safety of the Japanese.

Now, almost four years after the film's release, we can see some of these images coming to fruition. Japan has quietly and carefully acquired new weapons systems or adapted what it has. For a country facing challenges on all sides, this is not surprising. However, it is still divided over the question of the military. Even if it has offensive capability in practice, the principle of it still has great symbolic significance and divides the nation, perhaps now more than it has since WW II.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, the generational gap between the old and careful and the new and hopeful has manifested in a variety of social movements regarding gender, sexuality, immigrants, and more. Japan is a country in transition. Through films like *Shin Gojira*, we can see the stresses of transition come alive the sources of fears, the possible solutions, and the monsters of daily life turned into something real that people can face and tackle through film.

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<sup>32</sup> William Sposato, "Shinzo Abe Can't Afford to Rest on His Laurels," *Foreign Policy*, 2019. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/12/24/japan-shinzo-abe-2020-prime-minister-rest-laurels/>.

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# Kant, Hegel, Sellars: The Structure of Knowledge

*Benjamin Standifer*

## **Abstract**

*This paper examines the refutation of skepticism elaborated by G. W. F. Hegel in the introduction to his Phenomenology of Spirit. This refutation is motivated by what Hegel sees as a fundamental incoherence in modern philosophy initiated by Descartes and culminates in the 'subjectivist' conclusions reached by Kant. More specifically, the incoherence concerns the inability to categorically represent the thing-in-itself. He approaches the problem by articulating Kant's original unity of apperception as a kind of transcendental comparison of knowledge and being. This, along with a Fichtean elaboration, allows him to frame the distinction of phenomena and reality as a distinction internal to consciousness itself. The thing-in-itself is realized as not some detached, external reality, but a point of orientation, a functional role, against which consciousness of this being is brought into relief. By positing a theoretically inaccessible standard for what counts as knowledge, skepticism is revealed as misunderstanding the very nature of knowing.*

The shockwave that was Kantian philosophy left several pivotal epistemological issues unarticulated and, in some cases, unresolved. The chimerical thing-in-itself, as well as the true nature of apperception, was left to be elaborated by a generation of thinkers bearing the moniker of “German idealism.” In a broadly transcendental framework, J. G. Fichte, F. W. J. Schelling, and G. W. F. Hegel all set out to articulate and, at times, repudiate critical aspects of Kant’s epistemological doctrine. The most critically successful was Hegel, who, in the introduction to his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, posits a sharp ultimatum: we must either establish that the detached, unreachable thing-in-itself is an incomprehensible notion or admit a fundamental separation between ourselves and the absolute, inevitably leading to skepticism. In this paper, I will outline Hegel’s refutation of this path toward skepticism. I will argue that Hegel frames the notion of an epistemological standard, a standard by which knowledge gauges its validity, as a by-product of the always-apperceptive process of conceptualization. Finally, I will trace the intellectual trajectory of such a view to the 20th-century philosopher, Wilfrid Sellars, whose anti-foundationalist views helped usher analytic philosophy into its “Kantian stage” (Sellars 3).

To understand why Hegel felt this refutation necessary, one must first examine Kantian epistemological doctrine, particularly the notion of apperception. For Kant, the ability to represent to oneself an object of perception rests on the ability to subsume a sensuous intuition under a number of categories, conditions for the possibility of objects of experience. Further, correlated with each category is a logical form of judgment. These forms of judgment are forms that propositions must take, insofar as they elicit, a categorical determination. For instance, the category of “being” corresponds to propositions of the form “A is B.”

Now, a crucial aspect of Kant’s system is that judgment, the elementary unit of thought, is fundamentally self-conscious. Kant makes this aspect explicit by describing his notion of judgment as “nothing but the manner in which given modes of knowledge are brought to the objective unity of apperception” (B141). Kant’s point is that to judge is not just to make the judgment but to accompany the judgment with the fact *that* one is doing the judging. This means that for a judgment to count as such requires not only that it be itself an act but also that it be the object of a higher-order level of awareness. This level of higher awareness is the apperceptive “I think.” For judgments or thought determinations to be taking place, an “I” must be present that is always already the nexus of all these thought determinations, otherwise, these determinations do not seem to be made *by* anything. Insofar as judgments are taking place, “I” am the one doing the judging, and insofar as “I” am always doing the judging, the thinking, judging “I” is itself a synthetic unity, a one-in-many. It is the “I”s *being there for all these thought determinations* that constitute

its unity. In this way, knowledge of how one has determined something to be is also the knowledge *that* one has made the determination, and vice versa. A concept, as abstraction, is a determinate expression of the “I think” that is a priori present in all representation.

What Kant is arguing is that all conceptualization is an exercise of the *original* synthetic unity of apperception, that a concept is itself an abstraction on the same order as the “I think.” He all but confirms this with statements like, “The synthetic unity of apperception is... that highest point, to which we must ascribe all employment of the understanding. Indeed, this capacity is the understanding” (B134). Additionally, he writes, “The synthetic unity of the manifold of intuitions, as given a priori, is thus the ground of the identity of the perception itself, which precedes a priori all my determinate thinking” (B134). With this crucial statement, Kant solidifies what before might have been merely implied; determinate thought is grounded in the power of apperception.

Now, it is not without importance to probe briefly the mediating role played by Fichte in facilitating Hegel’s refutation. Fichte, for his part, is often recognized as a transitional figure between Kant and Hegel. This role is at least in part because of his clarification of the nature of apperception as well as its implications for transcendental philosophy. He saw the thing-in-itself as not simply an abstraction from all forms of representation but also the exact thing one is thinking of when one is determinately thinking. In his “Attempt at a New Presentation of the Wissenschaftslehre,” Fichte writes, “of all possible thoughts I could be thinking, I am [always already] thinking precisely of the thing-in-itself. I have freely made myself into such an object” (84). For Fichte the thing-in-itself was not to be distinguished from the purely abstract ego located at the nexus of all thought determinations. In self-consciousness, one is always thinking of this thing-in-itself just because one is always thinking of *oneself as making the determination*.

This is, to be sure, a crucial development in the chain stretching from Kant to Hegel. In his essay titled “Critical Philosophy” Hegel points out, “[concerning Kant’s categories] Fichte has the great merit of having called attention to the need of... *deducing* them” (31). In this way, “the determinations of thought... would no longer be merely taken from observation and so only conceived empirically, but deduced from [the nature of] thought itself” (31). We can see that for Hegel to have reached such an uncompromising view regarding epistemological frameworks required this pivotal Fichtean contribution. Without it, the notion of a self-supplanting standard for knowledge would not be understood for what it is: an *aspect* of the apperceptive self-positing present in all determinate thinking.

Hegel was willing to accept the significance of the self-relating nature of apperception as presented by Kant but, like Fichte, was in no way committed to the

arbitrary set of categories advanced by Kant nor the ontological implications of a thing-in-itself beyond categorical determination. Hegel begins the introduction to the *Phenomenology* by admitting the natural tendency in philosophy to investigate the medium or instrument of knowing as opposed to directly investigating what there truly is. This admission is aimed at philosophers like Kant who attempted to circumvent tedious ontological classification by formulating epistemic conditions that must be valid of any possible object, whatever. For Hegel, this presupposition by Kant of certain arbitrary categories is unwarranted. He does not deny that we bring to the table forms of thought determination but rather that one cannot simply presuppose these as objectively given themselves. As commentator Robert Pippin writes, “Hegel charges that Kant did not realize that knowledge of the conditions for knowledge could not be appropriately obtained within these conditions” (42). They must be worked through dialectically. The fundamental categories of thought are later worked out in Hegel’s *Logic*; in the introduction to the *Phenomenology* he is merely pointing out the necessity for a system of science that does not itself presuppose blunt, given conditions of possible objects or, correlatively, conditions on *what counts as knowledge* of possible objects. Hegel thinks that the presupposition of such a blunt, given standard for what counts as knowledge is precisely what is at work in the positing of the thing-in-itself. He proposes a system of epistemology that sees such a theoretical standard for what it is: a recurring, functional role in the process by which consciousness moves through higher forms of knowledge.

Another way of framing the issue would be to say that the standard by which knowledge’s validity is gauged cannot be an utterly detached, external thing-in-itself, for this would lead to an absurdity. Such a standard would not be capable of serving as a criterion for what counts as knowledge about it. Any attempt to examine the standard itself would yield only what the standard is *for me*—it would yield yet more knowledge of it, as opposed to what it is in itself. This leads to what Robert Brandom refers to as a “gulf of intelligibility.” For Hegel, squashing skepticism about an external, detached reality depends on the task of demonstrating the internality of the distinction between what the thing is for me and what the thing is in itself. He does this by invoking the fundamentally recursive nature of apperception as a self-relating process by which consciousness establishes higher and higher standards of what constitutes knowledge. Hegel writes, “Consciousness is, on the one hand consciousness of the object, and on the other, consciousness of itself... Since both are *for* the same consciousness, *this consciousness is itself their comparison*” (54, emphasis added).

This last statement cannot be overemphasized as it concisely sums up Hegel’s notion of consciousness as consisting of *moments*. The moments of this self-relating pro-

cess establish what only appears to be a hard distinction between knowledge and reality. The distinction formed between what the object really is and how it is for consciousness is a *comparison* made simply in virtue of the fact that consciousness has an object at all. Consciousness, in having an object, also has an implicit awareness of itself as being the one who has this object, being the one *for whom* the object is. This, of course, leads us straight into the body of the work itself where Hegel begins navigating the different shapes of knowing. Starting with what simply is, he establishes the inadequacy of such a model of being-in-itself by moving out and framing that first level of being as simply for consciousness, a consciousness that was always already there but not yet brought into relief.

One might ask, “[H]ow is it that these ideas have matured over time?” What has been made of them in the time since German Idealism?” The mid-century, analytic philosopher Wilfrid Sellars concludes our story by picking up the intellectual trajectory initiated by Kant and developed by Hegel. Sellars’s project involved exposing certain dogmas held by empiricists, both of the classical Humean variety and the 20th-century logical variety. Empiricism relies on basic, observational vocabularies for forming statements about sensations or qualia, vocabularies that can then be used to construct more general, conceptual vocabularies. In this framework, propositions or reports concerning what is *given* in sensation are considered the ultimate court of appeals. In contrast, Sellars essentially argued that non-inferential reports that come as the result of sense data (immediate sense certainties in Hegelian parlance) do not constitute an autonomous stratum of language. He writes in section VIII of *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*, “the metaphor of foundation [or ‘givenness’] is misleading... in that it keeps us from seeing that if there is a logical dimension in which other empirical propositions rest on observation reports, there is another logical dimension in which the later rest on the former” (78). Observational vocabularies simply cannot stand on their own. Any proposed empiricist observational vocabularies that might serve as the vanguard for subsequent inferences already rely on their semantic content on background conceptual capacities, given that propositions draw directly on conceptual capacities. Even the recognition of something as simple as the color red cannot be recognized *as red* until red already plays a role in a conceptual space. Like Hegel, Sellars advances the radical notion that what is seemingly given in immediate, sensory awareness is, in fact, mediated by evolving conceptual frameworks or shapes of consciousness.

Sellars is perhaps most in lockstep with Hegel when he writes near the end of section VIII of *EPM* that, “empirical knowledge... is rational, not because it has a *foundation* but because it is a self-correcting enterprise, which can put *any* claim in jeopardy,

though not *all* at once" (79). It is the dynamic nature of rational knowledge that makes that knowledge immediately *about* an object, for it is the processes of conceptual change that render certain conceptual shapes more or less *adequate*. Only a changing, self-correcting process can allow knowledge to be *about* something outside itself; it is the scrutiny that a concept undergoes which whittles it into an adequate representation. For Sellars, as for Hegel, there is no immediacy without mediacy, no direct contact with an object of inquiry without self-correction. Whatever immediacy amounts to, it does so in virtue of changing conceptual frameworks. This is Sellars' crucial advancement on the Hegelian notion of "consciousness implies self-consciousness." Our consciousness of an object is always already employing structures of knowledge.

To conclude, Hegel demonstrates that skepticism about the in-itself is a misunderstanding about the nature of knowing. Skepticism hypostatizes a merely internal comparison into an actual, external difference between knowing and reality. Hegel shows that this move is simply incoherent, leading to an infinite regress by which we never actually encounter the object. It is, ironically, through this argument for the incoherence of the detached thing-in-itself, that Hegel avoids commitment to any kind of subjective idealism. Rather, as stated above, he is only committed to the view that a detached thing-in-itself cannot serve as a standard for what counts as knowledge about that thing. He does not deny that there are external, enabling conditions (empirical reality), but it is mistaken to take these conditions themselves as determinative of what makes thoughts about them true or false. As Sellars would help show, truth is a notion that corresponds to and appears in virtue of rational processes, processes of conceptual change. Skepticism is revealed as missing the point of knowing entirely. By not fully developing the notion of apperception with its momentary character, the skeptic leads herself into absurdity. As Richard Dien Winfield puts it, "In a sense, all we can acquaint ourselves with is what necessarily holds true of all our representations."

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# **Analysis of the Airline Pilot Shortage**

*Victoria Crouch*

## **Abstract**

*The pilot shortage in the United States currently affects airlines and pilots drastically. The airlines have been forced to implement new solutions to recruit and retain pilots. These solutions include dramatic pay raises and cadet programs. One of the most significant causes of the pilot shortage is the aviation industry's rapid growth. Other factors include the aging pilot population and high flight training costs. In addition, regional airlines, a major source of pilots for major airlines, have a historically low pay rate, which deters pilots from wanting to work for them. This situation is compounded by a lack of hiring in the 2000s for various reasons. The effects of the pilot shortage include decreased flights, loss of revenue, and closing of some regional airlines. Airlines have implemented various solutions aimed at increasing the number of pilots. These include an increased pay rate, job pathway programs through universities, and guaranteed interviews or jobs. The solutions proposed will likely prove their effectiveness in minimizing the pilot shortage over the next decade.*

**Note:** This research was correct prior to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has affected the airline industry.

A global pilot shortage currently affects not only pilots but also their employers. As a result, commercial airlines are forced to ground aircrafts because there are not enough pilots to fly them. Analysts project that the airlines will be short 8,000 pilots by 2023 and 14,139 pilots by 2026 (Klapper and Ruff-Stahl, 2019).

A shortage of 8,000 pilots translates to 835 grounded aircraft, and over 61 million passengers lost since 2016 (Klapper and Ruff-Stahl, 2019). As a result of these substantial numbers, the airlines have implemented several new incentives and programs, including dramatic pay raises and cadet programs designed to fast-track new pilots into commercial airline pilot positions.

The purpose of this report is to analyze the pilot shortage in the airline industry. Report topics include:

- causes of the pilot shortage
- effects of the shortage on the airlines and pilots
- proposed solutions

The report concludes that airlines must find ways to hire new pilots if they are to keep up with the projected industry growth. The significant need for new pilots in the airlines will result in better opportunities for airline pilots to begin their professional pilot careers sooner and to make more money.

### **Causes of the Pilot Shortage**

Several factors contribute to the pilot shortage, including the aviation industry's rapid growth.

#### *Aviation Industry Growth*

Among the most significant causes of the pilot shortage is the aviation industry's rapid growth. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reports that over 16 million flights are handled yearly in the United States alone, and this number is expected to grow (FAA, 2019).

From 2017 to 2018, the number of yearly passengers grew to over 1 billion, an increase of over 4.8% (FAA, 2019). The growth of the number of seats occupied in flight directly reflects the growth of the industry. In 2000, aircraft capacity reached an average of 66% per flight. In 2015, aircraft capacity rose to an average of 83% per flight (Nikle and Bjerke, 2018).

In 2016, 42% of domestic flights in the United States were flown by a regional airline, indicating a significant number of pilots are continuously needed for the regional airlines (Nikle and Bjerke, 2018). If this growth continues throughout the airlines, more aircraft and pilots will be needed.

### Lower Fuel Prices

Contributions to the growth of the aviation industry include low oil prices (Nikle and Bjerke, 2018). From 2014 to 2015, average jet fuel prices dropped from \$2.92 per gallon to \$1.53 per gallon. This decrease in fuel prices increased net profits by \$18.1 billion in only one year (Schipper, 2017). Figure 1 shows the relationship between greater operating revenue to lower fuel costs.

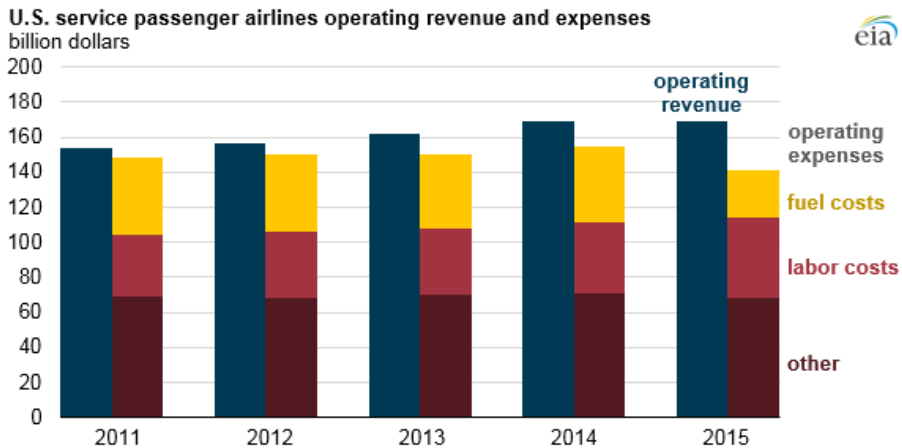


Figure 1: Graph of U.S. Service Passenger Airlines Operating Revenue and Expenses 2011-2015

**Source:** U.S. Energy Information Administration, based on [Bureau of Transportation Statistics](#). *Note.* Graph 1 above shows the decrease of jet fuel costs over time, as well as the increase in labor costs and operating revenue at U.S. airlines.

**Source:** Adapted from “Lower airline fuel costs reduce U.S. airlines’ operating expenses, increase net profits,” by Mark Schipper, February 17, 2017, p. 1. Retrieved from <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=30012>

### Economic and Population Growth

Economic and population growth in the United States over the past several years have also contributed to industry growth in terms of increasing demand for commercial airline travel (Nikle and Bjerke, 2018). In the United States, the real gross domestic product (GDP), or the market value of goods and services, increased by 2.9% in 2018 (Duffin, 2019). During the economic recession in 2009, the real GDP decreased by -2.5% (Duffin, 2019). Since 2009, the real GDP has an overall increasing trend. This increasing GDP indicates more money is available for air travel (Duffin, 2019).

### Aging Pilot Population

Another factor contributing to the pilot shortage is the aging pilot population. This situation is because of several factors.

### *Retirement Age Limit*

For one thing, commercial airlines in the United States mandate the pilot retirement age at sixty-five (Klapper and Ruff-Stahl, 2019). Thus, a pilot's flying life in the airlines is limited. Between 2017 and 2028, an average of 500 pilots per year is expected to retire because of the mandatory retirement age (Thompson, 2018).

### *Retirement and Medical Losses*

Other factors contributing to the loss of pilots include retirement and medical grounding as pilots retire within the next fifteen years or are grounded due to losing medical certification, the need for pilots increases (Lutte and Mills, 2019). The average age of US airline pilots is 50.6 years old, and almost half of airline pilots are over 50 (Lutte and Mills, 2019).

There is no estimated number of pilots losing medical certifications. However, the mandatory retirement age and the current average age of pilots translates to half of the current airline pilots retiring in the next fifteen years.

### *High Training Requirements*

An additional problem contributing to the pilot shortage involves the costs in time and money to train new pilots. In 2014, the FAA issued 7400 airline transport pilot (ATP) certificates versus only 5300 ATP certificates in 2018, a decrease associated in part with the time and money required to obtain certification (Lutte and Mills, 2019).

### *Flight Training and College Degree Costs*

Many certificates and ratings are required by the airlines, including private pilot, instrument, commercial, multi-engine, flight instructor, flight instructor-instrument, and airline transport pilot (ATP) (Thompson, 2018). The flight training cost for all these ratings can be \$50,000 to \$100,000, in addition to the possible costs of a higher education degree (Lutte and Mills, 2019). This historically high flight training cost is exacerbated by federal caps on undergraduate student loans of \$58,000, requiring student pilots to find private sources of funding for the remainder (Lutte and Mills, 2019).

In addition to the required ratings, a college degree is preferred, although not required. Furthermore, a college degree increases the already high cost to become an airline pilot. A four-year degree at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University costs \$256,000. This cost can be offset by pilots instructing other pilots for money; however, the overall high cost incurs a large amount of debt for student pilots (Thompson, 2018). These high training and college costs can discourage people from pursuing a pilot career.

### *Required Flight Hours*

Along with spending large amounts of money on training, pilots must build flight hours before they can legally fly for the airlines. In 2013, the Federal Aviation Ad-

ministration cited a new flight hour regulation. The United States requires a minimum of 1500 flight hours for an airline transport pilot certificate (ATP), although there is an hour reduction for a restricted ATP (R-ATP) (Klapper and Ruff-Stahl, 2019).

The R-ATP is awarded through military flight time or higher education. In 2013, 17% of regional airline pilots had an R-ATP. This translates to 83% of regional airline pilots required to gain a full 1500 hours before being certified to fly for the airlines (Klapper and Ruff-Stahl, 2019).

These extra required hours take more time to gain, and sometimes more money, directly delaying pilots' careers in the airlines and the airlines' ability to hire new pilots when they are needed.

#### *Decreasing Number of Military Pilots Transitioning to Commercial Airlines*

The commercial airlines have traditionally relied on military pilots to fill their numbers since they typically have earned required certificates and flight hours through military service. However, the number of military pilots transitioning into the airlines is dropping because of a pilot shortage in the military. This decrease of military pilots suggests the airlines need to hire more pilots with a degree and R-ATP to sooner meet the desired number of pilots (Klapper and Ruff-Stahl, 2019).

The Department of Defense expects the pilot shortage to get worse over the next ten years as fewer pilots join the military. As of 2018, the Marine Corps was short 238 fixed-wing pilots (Thompson, 2018), and the Army was short 731 helicopter pilots. As of 2016, the Air Force was short 1,544 total pilots (Thompson, 2018). These military pilot shortages are caused by several reasons, including low quality of life for military men and women, high military flight operations, and uncertain military budgets (Thompson, 2018).

#### *Historically Low Pay*

Another cause of the shortage includes historically low regional airline pay rates (Lutte and Mills, 2019). Pilots are given a guaranteed minimum number of flight hours per month, which is used to estimate a yearly salary (Bjerke and Nikle, 2018). According to Bjerke and Nikle (2018), in 2012, a first-year first officer at a regional airline received about \$22.00 per flight hour or \$19,800 a year, with 75 flight hours guaranteed. In 2007, the lowest pay rate for a first-year first officer was only \$16 per flight hour (Bjerke and Nikle, 2018), or only \$14,400 per year (Bjerke and Nikle, 2018).

In comparison to the pay rate at major airlines, a first-year first officer at a major airline in 2012 received an average of \$59 per hour or \$49,560 a year, with 70 flight hours guaranteed. The large pay gap between the regional airlines and major airlines grew when comparing contracts and pilot seniority (Bjerke and Nikle, 2018).

### *Lack of Hiring During the 2000s*

Other causes of the pilot shortage include the 9/11 attack in 2001 and the economic recession in 2008. The terrorist attack on 9/11 created a general fear of flying, despite new federal safety regulations. Increased oil prices caused a rise in flight costs for passengers and operating costs for the airlines. Therefore, people were not flying enough for airlines to earn the revenue needed to hire more pilots.

As a result of the lack of revenue, regional airline pilots' careers stagnated because the major carriers were not hiring. This career stagnation proved its long-term effects when the major airlines finally hired the regional pilots, leaving the regionals short of pilots (Bjerke and Nikle, 2018).

### **Effects of the Pilot Shortage**

The effects of the shortage are widespread, affecting the regional airlines the most since their revenues and operating margins are smaller than those of large commercial airlines (Klapper and Ruff-Stahl, 2019). Regional airlines are smaller airlines that fly to smaller airports that large air carriers do not service (Bjerke and Nikle, 2018).

### *Loss of Pilots at Regional Airlines*

Regional airlines traditionally hire new pilots who need to earn more commercial flight hours before they are eligible to apply for large commercial airlines. Thus, the regional airlines supply a large number of pilots to major airlines.

As the major air carriers such as Delta Airlines or American Airlines take pilots away from the regional airlines, the pilot shortage can drastically affect the regional airlines. A study was done in 2019, analyzing how different pilot deficit numbers impact aircraft parked and passengers lost. The study, involving three different scenarios using various pilot deficit numbers, revealed that regional airline passenger and revenue losses increased when fewer pilots were flying, due to more flights being grounded (Klapper and Ruff-Stahl, 2019).

### *Loss of Revenue at Regional Airlines*

The loss of pilots at the regional airlines contributes to the loss of revenue at the regional airlines. The regional airlines earn revenue by agreements and contracts with major airlines, so the regional airlines are legally required to meet a certain number of flights under a major carrier (Klapper and Ruff-Stahl, 2019).

In more extreme circumstances, this loss of revenue can lead to bankruptcy. In 2016, for example, Republic Airways filed bankruptcy because it was unable to meet the required flights because of a lack of pilots. Thus, the lack of pilots required Republic Airways to ground more aircraft. This was a difficult situation, but it was a situation that directly resulted from the pilot shortage. Furthermore, regional airlines that are unable



to make their required flights impact the major airlines, who received revenue from the regionals based on flight numbers (Klapper and Ruff-Stahl, 2019).

To recruit more pilots for the shortage, airlines have to spend more money. Airlines offering incentives like higher pay and sign-on bonuses can create a loss of revenue compared to the investments they are making. These large investments toward pilot hiring and retaining were a contributor to Republic Airways' bankruptcy in 2016 (Klapper and Ruff-Stahl, 2019).

**Proposed Solutions for the Pilot Shortage**

In response to the pilot shortage, commercial airlines adopted several approaches, including increased pay rates and pathway programs.

Regional Airline Effective Wage	2007 (1)(2)	2011 (1)(2)	2014 (1)(2)	2016 (1)(2)(3)	2017 (1)(2)(3)	Effective Wage % Change (2007-2017)
Air Wisconsin	\$22,077	\$23,427	\$24,498	\$31,500	\$76,977	249%
Compass	\$20,862	\$22,032	\$22,698	\$32,634	\$54,400	161%
Commute Air	\$17,100	\$21,051	\$27,000	\$43,886	\$55,319	224%
Endeavor	\$18,657	\$23,328	\$22,527	\$57,000	\$55,144	196%
Envoy	\$21,519	\$22,905	\$23,256	\$56,210	\$56,210	161%
ExpressJet	\$20,835	\$20,745	\$20,907	\$34,650	\$48,400	132%
GoJet	\$19,320	\$20,504	\$20,815	\$44,160	\$44,546	131%
Horizon	\$29,535	\$30,364	\$31,192	\$32,135	\$63,924	116%
Great Lakes	\$14,400	\$14,616	\$14,616	\$28,582	\$29,082	102%
Mesa	\$17,526	\$20,183	\$20,183	\$30,183	\$57,759	230%
Piedmont	\$23,022	\$24,426	\$25,533	\$50,398	\$50,956	121%
PSA	\$20,196	\$21,357	\$21,618	\$53,517	\$53,868	167%
Republic	\$20,655	\$20,655	\$20,655	\$48,860	\$52,979	156%
SkyWest	\$17,408	\$19,895	\$19,895	\$36,757	\$37,418	115%
Trans States	\$20,061	\$21,447	\$22,428	\$40,215	\$55,201	175%
<b>Average</b>	<b>\$20,212</b>	<b>\$21,796</b>	<b>\$22,521</b>	<b>\$41,379</b>	<b>\$52,812</b>	<b>161%</b>

Table 1: US regional airline pay scale changes.

**Note.** Table 1 above demonstrates that the average effective wage for a first-year first officer at multiple regional airlines grew 161% from 2007 to 2017.

**Source:** Adapted from *US regional airline pay scale changes*, by Elizabeth Bjerke and Alex Nikle, 2018, p. 9. Retrieved from <https://commons.erau.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1233&context=ijaaa>

*Increased Pay Rate*

Increasing pilot salaries has been recognized as an essential solution to the pilot shortage. For one thing, regional airlines increased pay rates and bonuses starting in 2016. In December of 2017, a first-year First Officer at a regional earned an average of \$38.33 per hour, with the highest pay rate of \$50.16 per hour at Endeavor Airlines (Bjerke and Nikle, 2018). Other pay incentives include sign-on bonuses and the company paying for hotels when pilots have a layover overnight. If pilots are already certified to fly a specific regional jet aircraft, then they can receive a bonus (Bjerke and Nikle, 2018).

The average effective wage, which includes bonuses and incentives for the first

year at a regional airline in 2017, was \$52,812, in contrast to 2007, when the average effective wage was \$20,212. Because of the pilot shortage, the effective wage increased by 161% in only ten years. Table 1 shows the different wages among various regional airlines over the last ten years (Bjerke and Nikle, 2018). Since first-year officer pay at major airlines is around twice that of regional airlines (Klapper and Ruff-Stahl, 2019), these pay increases encourage people to spend the money to train and become pilots to fly for the airlines, as well as help pilots decide which airline they want to fly for.

#### *New Pathway and Recruiting Programs*

Another solution involves new recruiting programs that promote hiring through regional pathway programs as well as direct flow hiring by major carriers (Klapper and Ruff-Stahl, 2019).

#### *Regional Airline Pathway Programs*

Some major commercial airlines have partnered with regional airlines to make it easier to transition directly to the major airlines. For example, after a specified time at PSA (not to be confused with Pacific Southwest Airlines) and Envoy regional airlines, pilots can move directly to American Airlines mainline as a first officer.

Other regional airlines offer guaranteed interviews to a mainline air carrier (Klapper and Ruff-Stahl, 2019). Many regional airline pathway programs offer financial bonuses like tuition reimbursements for flight instructor training and retention bonuses for staying past their promotion time.

#### *Major Airline Pathway Programs*

Another innovative program pairs major airlines with universities and colleges that provide aerospace programs. The major airlines work with universities or higher education institutions through their pathway programs, such as Delta Propel, through Delta Airlines, and Southwest Airlines Destination 225 (Lutte and Mills, 2019). These programs at the regional airlines and major airlines, referred to as “cadet pathway programs” (Lutte and Mills, 2019), provide mentor pilots who guide new pilots through their training and give exposure to the airline experience.

Student pilots at these higher education institutions enroll in cadet programs in specific airlines, and these cadet programs are a large contributing factor to which airlines graduating pilots will pick for a job. In fact, some pilots pick schools based on the availability of partner programs at the university (Lutte and Mills, 2019).

Many student pilots can participate in more than one cadet pathway program, allowing them to interact with more airlines. These interactions can help pilots ultimately decide which airline they want to fly for (Lutte and Mills, 2019).

The Airline Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) looked at some of the most

recent pathway programs implemented in colleges and universities across the United States. United Airlines partnered with the Metropolitan State University of Denver, which allows students to interview at United Airlines prior to meeting the minimum flight hour requirement. Students who are participating in this program will fly at one of United's regional airlines, and, within five to seven years after their initial employment, the pilots will flow into United without an intermediate interview (Tullis, 2019).

JetBlue partnered with Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University to invest students in an air charter company to build time. After four years, Embry-Riddle graduates will fly A320s, a large aircraft that major air carriers fly. This program allows students to gain experience and the required time without going through the regional airlines. This program could exclude any hesitancy towards flying for a regional airline (Tullis, 2019).

Major airlines are not the only major air carriers that are implementing pathway programs. Both UPS and FedEx started programs within the last few years. UPS Airlines started an internship program with a small cargo carrier called Ameriflight, where pilots can build time at Ameriflight and advance sooner to UPS. Fed Ex partnered with Delta State University, just one of many universities, for their program Purple Runway. Student pilots will fly for feeder cargo carriers to FedEx to build time (Tullis, 2019).

American Airlines partnered with several flight schools with their cadet program to accelerate students' flight training. Students at these flight schools interview at Piedmont, PSA, or Envoy, who all have direct-flow into American Airlines. This program does not guarantee a job, but it does provide resources to progress faster (Tullis, 2019). The only difference between this program and only the direct-flow program is the timeline.

One of the most significant cadet programs is the Delta Propel program through Delta Airlines. Delta is currently partnered with eight universities, including Middle Tennessee State University. In this program, students follow one of three pathways:

- Flying for a regional connection airline
- Job-share as a flight instructor for the student's university and Delta Private Jets
- Flying for the Air National Guard

After forty-two months at one of these three pathways, the student is given a qualified job offer to fly for Delta mainline, provided they meet federal hour minimums (Delta, 2019). This program accelerates the timeline between graduation at a higher education institution and the major air carriers at a rate no other pathway program advertises. Delta Propel even offers private student loans at the lowest rates available through Wells Fargo, another feature other pathway programs do not offer (Delta, 2019).

#### *Bypassing Regional Airlines to Major Airlines*

A question currently up for discussion in the airline industry is whether or not

the regional airlines are an adequate investment to make and if the major airlines should have their own aircraft to fly the smaller routes.

Instead of contracting a regional airline, Delta Airlines bought older, smaller aircraft with low operating costs to make those regional flights. With this solution, the initial investment is larger than that of a regional airline, but major airlines would not worry about regional airline reliability. This method of regional flying would likely increase the major airlines' ability to recruit more pilots (Klapper and Ruff-Stahl, 2019).

### **Conclusion**

The pilot shortage has forced airlines to find solutions for recruiting and retaining pilots (Lutte and Mills, 2019). The causes of the shortage include the mandatory retirement age, the high flight-hour requirement, flight training costs, and the lack of pilot hiring in the 2000s. Furthermore, pilots moving from the regional airlines to the major airlines leave the regional airlines short of pilots. Thus, the shortage affects both the regional airlines and major airlines by causing grounded aircraft and passengers and revenue losses. As a response to the pilot shortages, the airlines have created solutions that include higher pay-rates and innovative recruitment and training programs.

Overall, these solutions, especially the cadet pathway and direct-flow hiring programs, are likely to prove their effectiveness in minimizing the pilot shortage over the next decade (Klapper and Ruff-Stahl, 2019). Over 95,000 pilots are expected to be hired within the next 20 years (Nikle and Bjerke, 2018), and, with these new incentives and programs, all airlines should have a fairly easy job recruiting qualified pilots.

Pilots aspiring to fly for the airlines will not have to worry about finding a job over the next several years. The airlines will find them.

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# **The Relationship between Religion and Politics in a Globalizing World**

*Elizabeth K. Baggett*

## **Abstract**

*Religion plays a powerful role in modern politics, and the relationship between the two is ever-changing. The governing of a state cannot be separated from the religious views of its people that affect the leaders and lawmakers of a country. Law mirrors society. This paper explores the ways that religious beliefs, practices, and communities shape and are shaped by the political expectations and necessities of a nation by using examples from major world religions. Readers will be presented information regarding each religion's perception of the relationship between religion and politics and how religious adherents have upheld or opposed the relationship. Because religion and politics are always changing and adapting, the foundational ideologies of the relationship between these two entities are continually challenged, reimagined, modified.*

## **Introduction**

According to Robert Swierenga, “People act politically, economically, and socially in keeping with their ultimate beliefs. Their values, mores, and actions, whether in the polling booth, on the job, or at home, are an outgrowth of the god or gods they hold at the center of their being” (Wald 2018: 39). Swierenga presents an overarching theme of how religion holds significant influence over every aspect of life. Religion has the power to affect individuals’ everyday decisions, which in turn affects how they act politically, economically, and socially. The focus of this paper will be on the relationship between religion and politics. Both religion and politics are “living” entities, which means they function as independent beings that adapt and change to their environment just as a human being does. Together the two have an overwhelming effect on individuals, communities, countries, and even the globe. Religion and politics function as a symbiotic relationship that both have the potential to benefit or harm one another mutually. This paper will use seven world religions to show the history and infusion of politics into modern religion.

## **Application of Terms**

Before one can understand the relationship between religion and politics, one must have an understanding of the concepts themselves. The words “religion” and “politics” can mean something uniquely different to each and every individual. Understanding the relationship between religion and politics is challenging, considering that both have dynamic definitions. According to the *Cambridge Dictionary*, religion is the belief in and the worship of a god or gods, or any such system of belief and worship. While it is common to define religion simply as a system of belief, religion is infinitely more than that. Religion is a way of life that has the power to its every aspect. Religion is an identifier that connects individuals to the community around them, individuals across borders, their ancestors, and an imagined world existential to Earth. With that, one can see how religion can have such an instrumental hand in politics. The *Cambridge Dictionary* defines politics as the activities of the government, members of law-making organizations, or people who try to influence the way a country is governed. This definition is much broader than common definitions of politics. The definition includes branches of politics that are not specifically involved in the government. For example, the definition allows readers to place non-governmental organizations and military regimes into every day political action.

## **Political Globalization**

Over time, religion and politics have changed and adapted in order to accommodate the needs of society better. Modernization and globalization have been the main facilitators of changing societal needs. Globalization is yet another word that is difficult to define. A broad definition of globalization is a complex web of social processes that

intensify and expand worldwide economic, cultural, political, and technological exchanges and connections (Campbell 2010: 4). In relation to religion, globalization can be better defined as the process in which people, ideas, and goods spread throughout the world, spurring more interaction and integration among the world's cultures, governments, and economies. As globalization and religion have intertwined, religions have increased their influence on political systems, both global and local. Religions have extended their influence by spreading globally, constructing a variety of religious sacred places and institutions across the globe, and becoming global actors in the efforts to facilitate social change. The term political globalization can describe the expanding reach of political systems. Political globalization can be described as the advancement of a borderless political system. The system is constructed with influence from national governments, their governing organizations, IGOs, NGOs, and other social movement organizations. Political globalization has promoted the importance of global actors in politics rather than leaving the governing to individual nation-states. In addition to political systems that identify as global, individuals themselves are now identifying as "global citizens." Global citizens are individuals who think of themselves as having citizenship of the world rather than a specific nation. In *Global Citizen – Challenges and Responsibility in an Interconnected World*, Seyla Benhabib is referenced as stating that global citizens are flexible citizens. They are national and transnational at the same time (Sterri). Political globalization and global citizens have further facilitated the interaction of global religions in world politics.

### **Human Diagnosis of Religion Expressed in Politics**

Now that a foundation has been laid for the different interpretations of the terms religion, politics, and globalization, let's shift the focus to the relationship between religion and politics in a globalizing world. The discussion will be approached by using seven major world religions as a framework to explain the dynamic relationship. The eight world religions as identified by Stephen Prothero in *God's Not One: The Eight Rival Religions that Run the World* in order of influence are Islam, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Yoruba Religion, Judaism, and Taoism. With the exception of Yoruba Religion, all religions will be referenced in this paper. According to Prothero, each religion offers its own diagnosis of the human problem and its own prescription for a cure (Prothero 2010: 333). In Islam, the problem is pride, and the solution is submission (Prothero 2010: 27); in Christianity, the problem is sin, and the solution is salvation (Prothero 2010: 68); in Confucianism, the problem is chaos, and the solution is propriety (Prothero 2010: 113); in Hinduism, the problem is wandering, and the solution is devotion (Prothero 2010: 136); in Buddhism, the problem is suffering, and the solution is awakening (Prothero 2010: 177); in Judaism, the problem is exile, and the solution is

to return (Prothero 2010: 253); in Daoism, the problem is lifelessness, and the solution is flourishing (Prothero 2010: 313). Humans use these solutions as answers to their earthly problems. Furthermore, humans apply the solution to the human diagnosis offered by their religion to the problems in politics. Religion is used as a tool in politics in a variety of ways. These ways range from social change to political advancement. More specifically, four of these ways go as follows: political movements in the name of religion, religion as a platform for political advancement, religious reaction to political injustice, and religious suppression in the name of politics. By examining specific examples in seven major religions, one will clearly see how religion and politics have become incredibly intertwined in this globalizing world.

### **Islam and Islamophobia**

According to Prothero, Islam is the most influential of all world religions. Islam is a religion that has faced a magnitude of controversy. To its adherents, the religion is a way of life. Others view the religion as dangerous. More specifically, it is viewed as dangerous by the American people. Islam has played an influential role in modern American politics, largely due to the terrorist attack in New York in 2001, commonly referred to as 9/11. The attack came from Islamic terrorists from Arab nations. It was funded by the Al-Qaeda terrorist organization of Osama bin Laden (“9/11 attacks”). The motivation for the attacks is allegedly the retaliation for America’s support of Israel, its involvement in the Persian Gulf War, and its continued military presence in the Middle East (“9/11 attacks”). The actions of 9/11 instilled a sense of fear about the religion of Islam in the American people and other individuals around the world. These Islamic extremists used religion as a platform to express their dissatisfaction with American political decisions. Since the attack, American Muslims struggle to practice their religion without persecution. Persecution was further promoted by media stereotypes and the reaction of the American government. Americans’ response to the attacks further ingrained the presence of religion into American politics.

### **Christianity in American Courts**

After Islam, Christianity is considered the next most influential religion. Throughout history, Christianity has had a pattern of political indifference. Political indifference stems from religious differences among Christian followers. Varying human interpretations of Christianity and its beliefs have led to numerous splits in how Christianity is practiced. Examples include the disputes between Roman Catholics and Orthodoxy in the Middle Ages and Protestants and Catholics in the sixteenth century (Prothero 2010: 75-76). The United States was founded out of religious disputes among Christians. Critics of the Church of England decided to separate themselves from “an unregenerate

government which persisted in maintaining a corrupt church” by leaving England and sailing across the Atlantic Ocean to establish a new state that would honor God in the right way (Wald 2018: 40). Since this event, Christianity has played a fundamental role in American politics.

Religious images, symbols, and statements are constantly used in American political culture. This provides evidence of what is referred to as a civil religion (Wald 2018: 51). Previously the term civil religion was referred to as a public theology or political religion (Wald 2018: 51). The goal of civil religion is to align the states’ views with particular religious views that are seen as fit by the state. By projecting a sacred meaning to the nation, civil religion enables people of diverse faiths to integrate their religious and political beliefs (Wald 2018: 51). The idea of civil religion is both appealing and unappealing at the same time. To a majority of the individuals who believe in Christianity, aligning the states’ agenda with Christian views allow Christians to better support state action. However, for non-Christians, this idea creates an imbalance in their political and religious views. Critics argue that Americans view international politics as a clash of moral opposites (Wald 2018: 56). By loosening legal constraints on issues such as abortion, school discipline, sexual behavior, drug use, and sex roles, a multitude of Americans think the government has abandoned its Christian foundations (Wald 2018: 59). While the state is taking steps towards more secular laws, Christian roots still remain in modern politics.

The presence of religion in politics is seen most through how the American courts and presidents promote their political agendas. Civil religion is especially evident in America through the speeches and writings of political leaders (Wald 2018: 51). Forty-four presidents have referred to God in their Inaugural Address (Newcombe). Presidents use God as a platform to relate to over a third of the American people. Even presidential candidates use language about America’s tie to God to “activate a sense of group-based attachment” between themselves and the electorate (Wald 2018: 57). The goal of using this language is to get the Christian vote, which is typically considered a majority voting group. The recent election with candidates Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump proves to be an example of practicing civil religion. Shortly before the 2016 election, Capitol Ministries expressed the belief that the Christian vote should go to presidential candidate Donald Trump. The site offers political advice to Christians who were torn between the two candidates. Capitol Ministries’ Ralph Drollinger and Frank Sontag discuss why Trump should get the Christian vote. Drollinger identifies Trump as the correct individual because he “believe[s] that God might be answering our prayers and raising up a great leader in Donald Trump” (*Why Trump Should Get the Christian Vote*). In addition, Drollinger has been sending Trump weekly Bible studies that he teaches

in Washington, D.C., and says that Trump had responded favorably with written notes. This further promotes the view of Trump as a Christian leader. Drollinger concluded by encouraging Christians to vote for Trump and asks for prayers on election day.

### **Confucianism and Chinese “Civil Religion”**

Following Islam and Christianity, Confucianism is considered the third most influential religion. Confucianism promotes a social order that values respect for elders, love, and harmony. Confucianism is built on an ancient religious foundation to establish the social values, institutions, and transcendent ideals of traditional Chinese society. Confucianism has always played a role in Chinese society, although in today's times, Confucianism has a unique relationship with the state of China. Recent events in China have portrayed conflicting views on the relationship between China and Confucianism, for example, the placement and disappearance of a Confucius statue and the Qufu Church Controversy. Over time, China disassociated from Confucianism to create a more established state. However, now China has reassimilated Confucianism in Chinese society to present Confucianism as a religion that aligns with the political and cultural agendas of the state (Sun 2013: 177). It has the potential to serve as a cultural symbol and political tool but is free from any actual religious organizations that the state would have to handle (Sun 2013: 177). The closest thing to a Confucius religious organization that could potentially oppose the state is Confucius nationalists. Confucius nationalists have voiced their stance on both events stated above: the placement and disappearance of a Confucius statue and the Qufu Church Controversy. Furthermore, Confucianism in another religion that has been addressed as a civil religion. Confucianism, as a civil religion, seems to hold great promise for a “moral reconstruction” of China (Sun 2013: 178). The Chinese government approaches Confucianism as a philosophy allowing for the government to discuss Confucianism in a non-religious context. By focusing on philosophical Confucianism, religion is emphasized as a moral, cultural, and political force (Sun 2013: 178). Disputes will continue as China explores the idea of molding Confucianism into a form of “State Confucianism” (Sun 2013: 178). Future Chinese politics will not appease individuals who wish for Confucianism to remain out of the government.

### **Hinduism and Indian Nationalism**

Hinduism has been a platform for politics in India for quite some time. The actions of current prime minister Narendra Modi have created the concern of growing Hinduism nationalism. The claims stem from the prime minister's campaigning efforts for the 2019 election. Modi, who is a part of the Bharatiya Janata Party, was recently seen campaigning in India's holiest place for Hindus, Varanasi, which contains more than 20,000 temples (Ray 2019). The prime minister's decision to campaign from Varanasi

highlights the issue of the rising Hinduism nationalism. In addition, Modi has done little to stop the violent acts by Hindu nationalism. Two examples are the “cow protection” gangs and discrimination against women in temples. The “cow protection” gangs are a part of a violent campaign against the trade and consumption of cattle (Ray 2019). Because cows are viewed as sacred in Hinduism, these gangs have killed individuals who participate in the trade and consumption of cows. Under Modi’s watch, the gangs have become more active and tolerated (Ray 2019). Another example is the riots at a major Hindu pilgrimage site, Sabarimala temple. In 2018 the Supreme Court lifted the seven-hundred-year ban of women entering the temple (Ray 2019). BJP representatives were seen protesting their own government’s decision. Hinduism nationalism is present and alive in Indian politics of today. Modi has also used his presence at temples as propaganda for the campaign. Modi is indirectly projecting Hinduism in the state of India.

### **Buddhism and Socially Engaged Buddhist**

Buddhism is the next world religion that has had a substantial impact on the world of today. Typically, Buddhism is perceived as a religion that maintains its distance from politics. This notion is confirmed by Ian Harris in *Buddhism in the Modern World*, Buddhism promotes the opposition to the spirit of politics (McMahan 2012: 178). However, in modern times Buddhist followers are taking a stand in politics, largely in Southeast Asia and Tibet. Despite the doctrinal rejection of politics, Buddhism and its founder have had a considerable impact on modern political thought (Ichikawa: 247). Modern states in Southeast Asia have sought to infuse political ideologies with Buddhist meanings to locate the power of the secular state within a Buddhist framework (McMahan 2012: 21). Except for socialist Vietnam, the constitutions of all Buddhist-majority states in South and Southeast Asia have given Buddhism a special statue of recognition (Ichikawa 1979: 149). Buddhist practices continue to empower the imagination of political futures in Southeast Asia (McMahan 2012: 24). Socially Engaged Buddhists have promoted Buddhist involvement in local problems. When the local problems stem from political injustice, religion and politics merge for Socially Engaged Buddhists. Aung San Suu Kyi, who promotes Buddhist Nationalism, has stated, “To be Burmese is to be Buddhist” (McMahan 2012: 183). San Suu Kyi’s alliance with Buddhism is seen in her political party: National League for Democracy (McMahan 2012: 203). For a religion against violence, the presence of Buddhism’s role in war and reform movements is controversial. In addition, Buddhist political organizations have even formed (McMahan 2012: 190). It does not appear that Buddhism will fade from the political sphere anytime soon as many Southeast Asian citizens remain suppressed by the government. Buddhism truly provides a platform for social and political reform.



## **Judaism and the Nation-State of Israel**

The next most influential world religion is Judaism. Judaism is considered one of the world's oldest religions and the root of the two largest religions in the world today: Christianity and Islam (Prothero 2010: 247). While Judaism has been instrumental in the religious development of the modern world, its followers continue to be persecuted. The most prevalent persecution of Judaism in modern times is present in the state of Israel. The state of Israel has become the home for over half of the world's Jewish population. Recently the state of Israel officially declared itself the nation-state of the Jewish people in a constitutional law titled "Basic Law: Israel: The Nation-State of the Jewish People." The Jewish Nation-State Law begins by declaring that "Israel is the historic homeland of the Jewish people in which the State of Israel was established...in which the Jewish people fulfill its natural, religious, and historic right to self-determination" (Harkov 2018: 32). The law continues by declaring Jewish holidays as official days off and stating Israel's continuous commitment to supporting Jews around the world (Harkov 2018: 32). In addition, Israel's openness to Jewish immigration and the gathering of the exiled is another key aspect of the new bill (Harkov 2018: 32). As a nation, Israel is directly aligning itself with Judaism in the form of a legal document.

While the law strengthened Jewish Nationalism, minority groups in Israel expressed their concern with the new bill. Within the bill, Hebrew is named the official language of the state, and Arabic has a "special status" (Harkov 2018: 32). Making Hebrew the official language even further elevates the role of the Jewish people in Israel. However, arguments have been made that the state is not infringing on the rights of Israel's minority groups. Officially the law does not add any individual privileges for Jewish Israelis or take away minority returns, but it absolutely places the Jewish people as the focus of the state's agendas. The largest concern comes from Arabic Israelis. To some, the conflict is so vast that it calls for a two-solution. The two-state solution involves creating an independent state for Palestinians and an independent state for Jews. The strongest argument for two independent states is the idea that if the Jews and Palestinians do not separate, the Arab majority will take over, which would mean Israel would not be Jewish or democratic (Harkov 2018: 35). The conflict is still prevalent in today's time.

## **Taoism and Global Security**

Last, Taoism and global security are discussed. Global security refers to the promotion and protection of state sovereignty by military and diplomatic means. This aspect plays a role in politics, especially when the military controls the state. In addition, global security refers to the wellbeing of individuals, firms, social movements, social classes, non-whites, wageworkers, women, indigenous peoples, the poor, post-colonials, and



planetary ecosystems (Pettman 2005: 61). While global security cannot be read in a sacral context, Taoism offers instructions on how to implement global security. Scholars like Stephen Lukashevich and Chad Hansen define Taoism as “a highly structured system of pain-avoidance” and “individuals reaching inward to tap some fundamental insight about the universe” (Pettmann 2005: 66) Taoism is seen to promote a particular aptitude for living life. That aptitude is one for living in such a way that self-conscious responses get replaced by ones that feel at least like the “natural structure of things” (Pettmann 2005: 67). Taoism provides an alternative view to rationalism. By following Taoism beliefs, leaders can naturally make decisions to better the political world.

### **Conclusion**

After examining specific examples in seven major religions, the relationship between religion and politics in today’s globalizing world is made clear. Religion has the power to affect how people act politically, economically, and socially. The focus of this paper is to display just how powerful religion can be in modern politics.

Religion is an identifier that connects people to other individuals in the community around them, to individuals across borders, to their ancestors, and to an imagined world existential to Earth. Politics are the activities of the government, including national governments, global political organizations as well as military regimes and non-government actors. Lastly, globalization is the process in which people, ideas, and goods spread throughout the world, spurring more interaction and integration between the world’s cultures, governments, and economies. As globalization and religion have intertwined, religions have increased their influence on political systems, both global and local. The eight world religions as identified by Stephen Prothero in *God’s Not One: The Eight Rival Religions that Run the World* in order of influence are Islam, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Yoruba Religion, Judaism, and Taoism. All of these religions, except for Yoruba Religion, were used to display the interaction between political and global religions. According to Prothero, each religion offers its own diagnosis of the human problem and its own prescription for a cure. These cures are extracted from their religious meaning and implemented in politics to better govern a changing world. Political globalization and global citizens have further facilitated the interaction of global religions in world politics. Religion is used as a tool rather than a belief system. The tool is used in a variety of ways ranging from social change to political advancement. In today’s time, it will be difficult to separate religion from politics and globalization from religion. The relationship between religion and politics will continue to change as the world comes to globalize. Overall, globalization is good for religion and politics because it allows for growth and more freedom. Examples throughout seven different world religions have

affirmed Swierenga's statement that "[p]eople act politically, economically, and socially in keeping with their ultimate beliefs" (Wald 2018: 39).

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# **Pinning Down the Historical Significance of Button Collecting**

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## **Abstract**

*Political buttons were once a must-have item for any political hopeful running a campaign. For more than a hundred years, buttons have been used by many people and organizations to spread messages and gain support for a cause. This article aims to discuss not only the history of buttons but also the history they help to preserve. As a mass-produced item, buttons are an easy way to delve into the many movements and events that have become significant moments in the history of our nation and lives. However, since the turn of the century and with the technological boom that followed, the use of buttons has begun to fade. The purpose of buttons is evolving from large movements to smaller organizations and personal use, but their ability to encapsulate a small piece of history remains.*

Political buttons have been around from the earliest days of American politics when some of George Washington's supporters sewed specially crafted buttons onto their clothing to celebrate his inauguration and help identify themselves as belonging to a larger group. Although buttons and other pendants continued to be used throughout the 1800s, they remained small run items due to the high costs required to manufacture them. It was not until the end of the nineteenth century that technological advancements led to a revolution in button making and made it possible not only to use buttons to reach the masses but for buttons to be used for a variety of other causes and reasons.

The main technology that would lay the groundwork for modern buttons came in 1868, when two brothers, John and Isaiah Hyatt, who was attempting to find a substitute for ivory in billiard ball manufacturing, created celluloid: the first commercially successful plastic. The next advancement did not come until 1893 when a Boston woman named Amanda M. Lougee filed a patent for covering a textile button with a thin layer of celluloid.<sup>1</sup> Although this button did not look like the modern campaign button, the idea being used was very important, and the patent was bought by the Whitehead and Hoag Company of Newark, New Jersey. The head of the company, Benjamin S. Whitehead, had worked on different forms of campaign memorabilia for years. Whitehead and Hoag not only acquired patents but also created their own, including one filed in 1896, which included the addition of a pin anchored to the back of the button in order to allow it to be easily attached and removed from clothing.

Combining both their own patents and the ones they had acquired, the Whitehead and Hoag company created what can clearly be seen as the forerunner of the modern political button, and the company saw great success as they were the main producer of buttons until their patents expired.<sup>2</sup> With these innovations, a cheaper and more quickly produced item was available. Candidates seized upon the opportunity that very same year, and both presidential hopefuls, William McKinley and William Jennings Bryan, made a variety of buttons for their campaigns.<sup>3</sup> Since then, buttons have become a mainstay of political campaigns as millions of buttons have been produced for thousands of different candidates. Buttons, however, have also grown out of this large initial primary use to become a cheap tool used by many groups and organizations trying to create identities, movements, and history.

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<sup>1</sup> Roger A. Fischer, *Tippecanoe and Trinkets Too: The Material Culture of American Presidential Campaigns 1828-1984* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 144.

<sup>2</sup> Patricia Scarmuzzi, "McKinley first to use campaign pins to spread message," *Tribtoday*, accessed April 25, 2019, <http://www.tribtoday.com/news/local-news/2017/04/mckinley-first-to-use-campaign-pins-to-spread-message/>.

<sup>3</sup> Elizebeth King, "The Long Story Behind Presidential Campaign Buttons and Pins," *Time*, accessed April 10, 2019, <http://time.com/4336931/campaign-buttons-history/>.



Most people run into buttons throughout their everyday lives. Whether it is from crossing paths with people giving out buttons for an event or finding buttons from our past buried in the back of a drawer or attached to a backpack, most of us can think of a button we own or have seen, and some of us can recall the pain of being pricked by the pin on the back. Despite the fact that pin back buttons are a ubiquitous item in life, most people never think about their place in the world or what significance buttons might hold. Even from a scholarly standpoint, there is a great void in the discussion about what place buttons have in history and how they help us interact with it. The largest body of literature about buttons comes from collectors, and this is the first important accomplishment of collecting.<sup>4</sup> Were it not for the collecting world, there would be no robust documentation of the large variety of political buttons made each year. My goal in this essay is to discuss what I see as the three broad types of buttons and explore the historical significance of buttons and what they can teach us about history. By addressing the historical significance of buttons, we can also address the important role collecting has played in preserving these pieces of history.

For the purpose of understanding the ways in which buttons interact with history, I divide them into three different groups based on how they interact with history. The first group includes buttons from the past that interacts with the present. These are buttons that can be used by people in the present to study past events. I use political buttons to represent this group. The second group includes buttons from the present that interact with the past. These buttons are ones specifically created so that they make the observer think about the past by referencing it whenever they are seen. I use the Middle Tennessee State University's (MTSU) Women's History month buttons to depict this group. The final group includes buttons that attempt to create their own history by instilling a sense of identity for a group or commemorating an event. For this group, I use the MTSU mini buttons.

### **Past Interacting with the Present**

Since their creation, pin back buttons have become an important part of politics and campaigning. Buttons are a great tool for displaying pictures of candidates, campaign slogans, and hot button issues.<sup>5</sup> Because of this, they are an excellent tool for understanding past campaigns: how the campaigns were run, what issues were important,

<sup>4</sup> Ted Hake, *Encyclopedia of Political Buttons, United States, 1896-1972* (New York: Dafran House, 1974); Theodore L. Hake, *Political Buttons, Book II 1920-1976* (York, PA: Hake's Americana & Collectibles 1985); Jordan M. Wright, *Campaigning for President: Memorabilia from The Nation's Finest Private Collection* (New York: Smithsonian Books/Collins, 2008); Marc Sigoloff, *Collecting Political Buttons* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1988).

<sup>5</sup> A term that developed independently of pin back buttons during the 1960s and was used by advertisers to describe a desire that helps motivate consumers to choose among goods. Defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

and as, Dr. John Vile, a professor of political science, pointed out, “buttons can help in remembering the simple facts of a campaign like vice presidential candidates and the year a campaign took place.”<sup>6</sup> For many private collectors, this is one of the key reasons for starting and maintaining a collection—the ability to hold a piece of history. Although buttons cannot contain a multitude of information about a campaign, they can, as Mark Byrnes, the Middle Tennessee State University Provost, and Kent Syler, a professor of political science, put it, “be a great conversation starter”<sup>7</sup> and “spark an interest in campaigns.”<sup>8</sup>

Buttons also have multiple advantages over other forms of memorabilia that make them better suited for collecting and, therefore, a better source of the preservation of history. Buttons are durable, which means they are more likely to last, and they are made in large quantities, which means they are more attainable than things like posters or pieces of clothing. This abundance also means that most buttons are easily obtained for only a small fee. Buttons from campaigns that took place over a century ago, for example, can be purchased for as little as twenty dollars. Perhaps, the greatest benefit of campaign buttons is their size. Even a large collection of buttons can be displayed in a small amount of space, especially when compared to an item like campaign dolls—a campaign item utilized far more than you might think.<sup>9</sup>

Private collectors are not the only ones interested in political buttons. As I did the research for this paper, I was, on multiple occasions, steered towards the Albert Gore Research Center, a unit of the College of Liberal Arts at MTSU, which contains an archive of political papers and artifacts.<sup>10</sup> Upon entering the archives, I was surrounded by rows of large cabinets, and in each cabinet was drawer after drawer of political memorabilia. Some of these drawers contained only one or two buttons lying by themselves amidst other pieces of political memorabilia. Other drawers contained whole groups of buttons, some pinned to pieces of paper and others resting in tiny compartments of larger boxes filled entirely with buttons. As I looked through the drawers, the archivist, Donna Baker, and I discussed why the archive would want to dedicate so much space to buttons.<sup>11</sup> Although she agreed with the points raised by the other

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<sup>6</sup> John Vile (professor of political science and button collector) in discussion with author, April 2019.

<sup>7</sup> Kent Syler (professor of political science and former campaign manager) in discussion with author, April 2019.

<sup>8</sup> Mark Byrnes (MTSU provost and professor of political science and button collector) in discussion with author, April 2019.

<sup>9</sup> Wright, *Campaigning*.

<sup>10</sup> “Albert Gore Research Center,” accessed April 25, 2019, <https://www.mtsu.edu/gorecenter/index.php>.

<sup>11</sup> Donna J. Baker (archivist) in discussion with author, April 2019.

people I interviewed, she also added that buttons allow us to study art history and the way in which imagery has been used in campaigns over time. She mentioned an exhibit, which was created in 2016 by the Al Gore Center and titled “Politics, Persuasion and Propaganda: Influence by Design,” that used buttons along with a variety of other pieces of political memorabilia to discuss this very point.

The artistic aspect of campaign buttons is an important part of the collecting world because collectors are typically drawn to more colorful and interesting buttons. As noted by Ted Hake in his *Encyclopedia of Political Buttons*, there was a downturn for buttons in the 1930s and 40s. Although many buttons were still being produced, the color scheme became almost entirely red, white, and blue, and the ability to acquire “attractive buttons” for collections was made difficult.<sup>12</sup> Buttons from this time period typically only contained the names or portraits of candidates; however, a small portion of buttons used humor or more complex imagery. Hake claims that the button revival of the 1960s changed these trends as the artistic and political revolution impacted the design and variety of buttons. Although I agree that the 60s and 70s made a clear contribution to the evolution of buttons, I think Hake is overlooking one of the root causes of the shift in how buttons looked.

During the 60s and 70s, button trends shifted with more and more buttons containing humor and a variety of images, although many buttons still used names and portraits. An artistic and political revolution is not the only cause of this change. In fact, the main event that started the evolution of buttons seems to be the runaway success of Dwight D. Eisenhower’s 1952 campaign slogan “I Like Ike.” In the lead up to the 1952 election, hundreds of different buttons were made for the Eisenhower campaign, many of which simply contained this easy and short slogan. The most famous of these buttons was a red, white, and blue striped button with “I Like Ike” printed in the middle. This button was so popular that the same style was used on dozens of different buttons, and each button used a different language ranging from Arabic to Yugoslavian. Slogan buttons were not a new idea; they had simply always been in the minority of buttons used by campaigns. But, upon seeing the popularity of a slogan button outshining the traditional portrait and name buttons, subsequent campaigns attempted to recreate this campaign’s success by pushing their own slogan buttons.

The 1960 election between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon saw both candidates attempting to create popular slogans. Kennedy had slogans like “Let’s Back Jack” and “Kennedy is the Remedy,”<sup>13</sup> while many of Nixon’s slogans attempted to use the nickname Dick in order to make him seem more approachable; this led to great slogans

<sup>12</sup> Hake, *Encyclopedia*, 6.

<sup>13</sup> White, *Campaigning*, 223.

including “They Can’t Lick Our Dick.”<sup>14</sup> Neither candidate’s slogans found the same success as Eisenhower’s. Both candidates appear to copy another button trend used by Eisenhower, making buttons that celebrated the first lady. Only one or two candidates had ever done this before Eisenhower—the 1940 Republican candidate, Wendell Willkie, who made one button that had a portrait of his wife and stating, “For First Lady Edith Willkie.” The Eisenhower campaign, on the other hand, made multiple buttons for first lady Mamie Eisenhower. These buttons were reminiscent of the president’s buttons but had a photo of the first lady. The campaign even made buttons with both the first lady and second lady, Pat Nixon, on them like the buttons that had both the president’s and vice president’s portraits. Nixon continued this trend during his campaign by having buttons depicting both he and his wife on them. The Kennedy campaign also had a button for Jackie Kennedy. As we have seen, buttons have given us an opportunity to observe how successful campaigns can impact future campaigns, and we can start to see how beneficial buttons can be to studying history. The buttons discussed also show another opportunity to study history given to us by button collecting—studying women’s history.

Although there are many buttons from the women’s suffrage movement, it is interesting to note that candidates in the 1916 election did not address the movement with their campaign buttons. This seems to be because both candidates intended to give women the right to vote.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, the candidates felt that there was a far more pressing subject to discuss, World War One. Although buttons for the election before the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment did not address women’s rights to vote, the 1920 election took some advantage of the fact that this was the first election in which women would be voting. Although the candidates attempted to woo women by giving out some memorabilia to them, most often small purses, only Warren G. Harding made a button for women. It was a simple yellow button with black lettering declaring “Under The 19th Amendment I Cast My First Vote Nov. 2nd, 1920.”<sup>16</sup> This lack of buttons oriented towards female voters, both leading up to and immediately after they gained the right to vote, would set a precedent for the following decades. Between 1920 and 1952, there is a lack of any type of button aimed towards female voters, or if there were, they are so scarce that they have not survived in great quantity. Eisenhower’s 1952 opponent, Adlai Stevenson, did not seem to make a button depicting his wife as the first lady, but he does seem to have made one of the first buttons directly aimed at female voters: a small white button depicting a high heel shoe and stating “Walk to Victory With Stevenson.”<sup>17</sup> Even

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<sup>14</sup> White, *Campaigning*, 225.

<sup>15</sup> Wright, *Campaigning*, 134.

<sup>16</sup> Hake, *Encyclopedia*, 106.

<sup>17</sup> Hake, *Encyclopedia*, 202.

after this button, it would not be until the button revolution of the 1960s and a heavy influence from the Women's Rights movement that we start seeing buttons for female voters. We can see a good example of this in the 1964 presidential race between Lyndon B. Johnson and Barry Goldwater when buttons were made that had slogans including "Ladies for Lyndon" and "Young Women's Republican Club of Goldwater." Some later buttons, like the 1972 McGovern button, even incorporated the female gender sign. McGovern's button simply had his name on the button, and the O was replaced by the female gender sign and an equal sign in the middle.<sup>18</sup> After the 70s, campaign buttons aimed exclusively at female voters became part of the norm and has continued to the present day.

Women's history is just one example of a subject that can be examined from the viewpoint of buttons. Views on minority representation, war, and even views on budgetary issues can all be looked at and studied through buttons. Buttons can also show, as noted by Mark Warda in *100 Years of Political Campaign Collectibles*, that issues of past campaigns share many similarities with modern issues and concerns.<sup>19</sup> In the very first campaign to use buttons, people used them to call for "sound money." Those same people would likely be terrified by today's national debt. Franklin Roosevelt's campaigns all revolved around social programs, issues like Free Healthcare and College are debated, something to which modern Americans can relate. Buttons can even be used to study the way that campaign operations change over time.

The 1930s and 40s were not the only button slump to occur. Multiple articles have come out over the past couple of decades, lamenting the decline of the campaign buttons.<sup>20</sup> Although buttons have always had an advantage on other forms of memorabilia, they cannot compete with the continued growth of T.V. advertisement, because many politicians feel that their campaign money is better spent towards media advertisement. Although buttons are a physical form of advertisement, they cannot reach as large an audience as television.

Some politicians have started using lapel stickers instead of buttons in order to be more cost-effective. Although stickers use similar methods as buttons to convey their message, they lack the durability of a button and, therefore, are less likely to be easily collected and saved as artifacts of history. Some have even pointed out that the continued production of buttons may only be occurring because of the collecting world; politicians

<sup>18</sup> Hake, *Book II*, 195.

<sup>19</sup> Mark Warda, *100 Years of Political Campaign Collectibles* (Clearwater, FL: Galt Press, 1996), 9.

<sup>20</sup> The Associated Press, "Are campaign buttons a thing of the past?: What politician wants to pull funds from T.V. for buttons?," *Charleston Daily Mail*, December 7, 1998; Brian Hicks, "Ideas that stick; An endangered artifact, the campaign button says it all," *The Post and Courier*, January 17, 2009.

want to appease this small group of people while at the same time creating a “legacy” item to cement their place in history.<sup>21</sup> This may very well be one of the biggest contributions made by collectors; their collecting has not only saved buttons from the past but has likely contributed to the continued use of buttons as a campaign tool. Buttons being made to appease collectors may have helped keep buttons alive long enough to see their purpose transformed into something new. As advertising becomes a bigger and bigger aspect of campaigning, buttons seem to be finding a new role to play. While buttons were once given away for free, many modern campaigns are starting to charge small fees for buttons or asking for donations when they hand them out. Buttons have become one of the best fundraising tools for the masses in order to pay the ever-ballooning cost of advertisements.<sup>22</sup>

Another thing to note is that the popularity of buttons varies with the popularity of the candidate. Although the past few decades have seen an evolution in the way buttons are used and a decline in their production, there have also been spikes in their popularity because of popular candidates and historical moments. The 2008 presidential election of Barack Obama is an excellent example of the boost that can occur because of the popularity of a candidate and people wanting to have a little piece of history.<sup>23</sup>

Political buttons are no longer the ubiquitous item that they once were, and although a popular candidate or slogan may boost the use of buttons for a particular year, the popularity of this piece of memorabilia has become far more unpredictable as time has gone on. Although the golden era of campaign buttons has passed, button collecting and its ability to interact with and preserve history is far from over. As the role of buttons changes, it makes it all the more important to look at the other two types of buttons and the role they have to play in interacting with history.

### **Present Interacting with the Past**

The benefits that make buttons a great tool for political campaigning can also make them a great tool for making a call directly to the history and historical figures. The buttons in my first example interact with history by becoming a part of it; the buttons in this second example interact with history by referencing it—buttons created for the present in order to connect to events or people from the past. The MTSU Women’s History Month buttons are a prime example of this. The oldest Women’s History Month button to be archived in the Albert Gore Research Center on campus is from 1989. It is

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<sup>21</sup> Kent Syler.

<sup>22</sup> Megan Kathleen, “Pushing Their Buttons: Presidential Campaigns Want Money For Something They Used To Give Away,” *Tribune Business News*, February 15, 2008.

<sup>23</sup> Paul Higgins, “Hot political buttons: Obama campaign prompts collector enthusiasm,” *Tribune Business News*, November 17, 2008; Audrey Parente, “THE OBAMA BOOST Historic presidency aids local shops,” *Daytona Beach News*, January 20, 2009.

a colorful green and teal button but seems to have simply been used to mark the occasion. However, two years later, someone realized the opportunity the buttons presented, and in 1991, the Women's History Month button marked the celebration by printing the portrait of a woman from history on it. The 91 buttons highlighted Prudence Crandall and, in addition to the image of Mrs. Crandall, her importance to history as the "Champion of Antebellum Black Education." Here, we start to see the call back to history being made as this button asked present observers to think about a woman from the past. The buttons were no longer simply an advertisement or conversation piece around an event but were now a conversation piece oriented around the women from history listed on the button. This style of focusing on one woman from history for each button has been used in every subsequent year, with the exceptions of 1993 and 1996 when three women's names appeared on the button instead: Mourning Dove, Zora Neale Hurston, and Kate Chopin for 1993, and Anne Dallas Dudley, Marry Church Terrell, and Sue Shelton White for 1996. The 1999 button was also used to mark the 151st anniversary of the women's rights movement and depicted an image of Lady Justice rather than a real woman from history. Even here, we can see the conversation being oriented around the women's rights movement. The use of the buttons, as a tool for a conversation about women in history, has continued to evolve.

One great improvement over time has been the artistic style of the buttons. The first buttons were typically two-toned, and although some contained one or two bright colors, many of them had simple white backgrounds. This has changed over the past two decades as more colorful backgrounds and bold patterns are being used. The image of Aretha Franklin on this year's button was surrounded by a colorful purple and green paisley, making the button even more eye-catching and effective.

The conversation starter has been taken even farther as the buttons now come attached to a small piece of paper, giving a brief history of the woman and the contributions she made to the world. We can see the same techniques being used here that we saw with campaign buttons. Portraits and bright imagery are used in the hope of getting someone to pick up the button and use it. Whether they collect only that year's button or try and collect one for each year, the buttons are on campus with the goal of creating a conversation about the past and how history has been achieved.

### **Creating a History**

Creating a conversation about history is not the only thing buttons can be used to create. They can be used to create a social identity, to create a trigger for memories, and by doing all of this, buttons can be used to create a history. On the MTSU campus, there are small 7/8-inch buttons whose sole purpose is to be collected. These buttons are



typically given out at events. Although these buttons are simply used to mark the event, in doing so, they help to establish that event in an individual's personal history with the button now becoming a tool for remembering that event and what took place in that individual's life. These buttons are attempting to commemorate the event, so it is better established and more easily recalled later. There are buttons like this for sporting events and on-campus activities, and the button creates a direct tangible connection for that person to the event in their past.

There are other collectible buttons given out by the different departments to their students. Many departments require that a student talk to a professor or declare their major in that department in order to obtain the button. These buttons are being used to form a small sense of identity. In the same ways that political buttons help to create a social identity around a political figure or party, these buttons help to create a social identity around a department or campus organization. Identity is an important aspect of both an individual person's history and an organization's broader history. The way in which the button is acquired and what the button depicts are components in creating this identity and history. Ultimately, the goal is to create a group in which the individual identifies with, and later in life will be able to recall. This is the simplest form of history. The button, again, also helps with this ability to recall because there is now a physical piece of evidence to trigger the memory or if the individual no longer has the button at the very least adds one more piece from the past for the person to remember and by doing so hopefully makes it easier.

### **Conclusion**

Buttons may be a small item to which many of us give little thought, but when one analyzes them and looks deeper into the ways in which they are used, it starts to become clear what role they have to play in helping create our history. Collecting buttons is an inextricably linked aspect of both creating this history and helping preserve it. We can use buttons from our past as evidence to help study our history and gain a better understanding of past events and people; we can use buttons to start conversations about people and events from history, and we can use buttons to help create our own history. Whether a person is actively collecting buttons from the past or simply saving a few from events in their life, every button has a story to tell and memories attached. At the end of the day, stories and memories are the foundation of history.



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