

2001

Gardner-Webb Review, Volume 3, 2001

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Gardner-Webb --- Review

VOLUME III



2001

BOILING SPRINGS, NORTH CAROLINA

GARDNER-WEBB REVIEW

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AN ANALYSIS OF GOD IN HEBREWS

MICHAEL STONE

An elderly woman hunches over a young child in India. He is missing an arm. She has rescued him from an inhumane death in a slopbucket. For fifty years she has dedicated her life to saving such children, aliens in their own society. The people of India see her not as a hero, but as unclean, a defiler of the way of the gods. Her requests for help have gone unheeded, her work unnoticed and unrewarded. Now, as the government of India threatens to close the orphanage, the product of her life's work, she cries to God, "If you still move, do something!"

A family of four had their own special pew in the church. For sixteen years, they had attended church faithfully, every time the doors were open. The parents served as nursery workers, Sunday School teachers, and youth workers while the children committed their lives to God at an early age. The family had grown quite close to one another. On the way to the eldest son's high school graduation, a tragic wreck occurs, killing both adults as well as their younger child. The elder child was spared only because he had to be present early for the ceremony. When his name is called, he stares into the crowd to find his beloved family. He begins to fret when he fails to see them, but notices a figure clad in black approaching. The officer informs him of the loss of his family. This young man, who had lived a blameless life, rushes to a corridor, falls on his knees, and screams, "Where are you God!"

The two characters above share a question that has been asked throughout the ages, "Does God still speak?" The Old Testament is full of miracles, full of prophets, and even angels bear the words of God to men. But what about now? An answer lies in a place seldom visited by many Christians: the book of Hebrews. Hebrews, an anonymous exhortation, paints an inspiring picture of God that is living and speaking hope. This paper will analyze the conception of God in Hebrews: a speaker, Father Savior, and judge.

In the first two verses alone, Hebrews testifies to God's speech. Verse one even begins with the assertion that God has spoken to our ancestors. And not

just with words, but through signs, miracles, gifts, prophets, angels, and even the Holy Spirit.¹ Yet verse two offers even greater news: God has spoken through a Son. To speak through a stranger or even a friend is one thing, but God sent His very Son. The author of Hebrews goes to great lengths to illustrate the superiority of Christ, His Son, to all previous revelations of God. For one thing, He is superior to the angels and even Moses in that though all were faithful messengers, Christ is the very Son. His status is higher by necessity.² Christ was not only the Son of God, but the heir to all things. It was through the Son that God created the world and now sustains it. What is more, the Son is God's glory and the image of God's very substance. Most importantly, the Son has the place of honor: the right hand of God in heaven – He is superior.³ This revelation surpasses all of the previous ones: it is God's final, complete revelation.⁴ God, though His revelation is complete in His son, continues to send signs, wonders, miracles, and, greatest of all, the Holy Spirit to His people, as seen in 2:4.⁵ In the fourth chapter, Hebrews testifies (verses 12-13) that God's message has not dried up, but is dynamic.⁶ This dynamic Word of God is not just the Son, nor the Spirit, nor the prophets, nor the Old Testament, but it is all of these. The Word of God was powerful enough to create the worlds and it is certainly enough to speak to man. It confronts every aspect of a man with the reality of God and is a message to the past, present and future.⁷ The book of Hebrews makes it very clear from the beginning that God still speaks.

While it is assuring to know that God still speaks, it is equally important to know what God says. Just as the first two verses establish a new communication or revelation of God, so do they establish a new and better message from God. First of all, God has proclaimed a new covenant with God's people. This covenant is predicted in the Old Testament, such as in Jeremiah 31.⁸ The author of Hebrews uses the passages of the Old Testament to help establish both the need and the existence of this new covenant. The first question that may be asked is, “Why was a new covenant even needed?” To one familiar with the Old Testament, the answer is clear: people were failing to abide by the Mosaic law. After all, it is written in Psalm 14: 1-3, “There is not one righteous, not even one” (NIV). The Old Testament makes clear God's

¹ Fred P. Craddock, “The Letter to the Hebrews” in *The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary Volume XII* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 35.

² Barnabus Lindars, *The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews*, J. D. G. Dunn, ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 48.

³ J. P. Meier, “Structure and Theology in Hebrews 1:1-14.” *Biblica*, no. 66 (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1985), 177- 180.

⁴ Kenneth Barker, ed., *The NIV Study Bible*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985), 1857.

⁵ Leon Morris, “Hebrews,” in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary Volume 12*, Frank Gaebelin, ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 22.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 44

⁷ Craddock, 11.

⁸ Craddock, 117.

aversion to sin: God cannot abide it. Atonement was therefore necessary if the people were to be redeemed and set free from the curse of the law--its bondage.⁹ The new covenant allows the followers of God a new freedom: the ability to enter into the very sanctuary of heaven, both now and in the world to come. This new covenant, initiated by God, shows the trustworthiness of God as well as God's love. The believer can now approach the very throne of God with confidence in perfect communion.¹¹ Even greater, Hebrews points to the possibility of admission of the believer into both friendship and sonship of God.¹² This new covenant is as complete and final as God's message through His Son.¹³

Hebrews chapter seven verse seventeen testifies that in the new covenant of God, Christ acts as the high priest. Just as in the case of the priests of the Old Testament, Christ stands as the mediator, the intercessor between God and man. Since Christ was Himself a man, He is intimately associated with man, becoming more than an intercessor, according to Hebrews 5: 7-10, but also an advocate.¹⁴ Yet Christ was also an untraditional priest. The author of Hebrews goes to great pains to establish Christ as a priest outside of the Levitical order. Christ is instead presented, in chapter seven verse seventeen, as a priest in the order of Melchizedek. Since the priesthood is removed, so is the law and its curses.¹⁵ Instead of turmoil and toil without end, people are now freed to do the will of God, operating under salvation.¹⁶ The dead works of the past, iterates Hebrews 9:13, have been swept away. The new works of God are the sacrifice of praise, prayer, the Eucharist, good deeds, and sharing.¹⁷ Hebrews therefore not only offers excitement in the fact that God still speaks, but also in the contents of this message. God has established a new covenant because of God's love for man through the sacrifice of God's very Son. Hebrews, in an awesome testament to God, notes that this salvation is "befitting of God" in chapter two, verse eighteen (NRSV).

The message of the new covenant is quite amazing and is easily met with skepticism. The author of Hebrews goes to the trouble, therefore, to present the authenticity of this message. In chapter six, verses seventeen and eighteen, the book speaks of immutables: God's oath and God's promise. These appear simple enough, but are actually colloquial terms. The passage more likely

⁹ Donald G. Miller, "Why God Became Man," *Interpretation*, vol. XXIII no. 4, James Mays, James Martin, Patrick Miller, eds. (Richmond: Union Theological Seminary, October 1969), 415.

¹⁰ Dahl, N. A., "A New and Living Way," *Interpretation*, vol. 5 (Richmond, John Knox Press, 1957), 409.

¹¹ Miller, 411-413.

¹² Lindars, 93.

¹³ Scot McKnight, "The Warning Passages of Hebrews: A Formal Analysis and Theological Conclusions," *Trinity Journal*, iss.13, Spring 1992, 55.

¹⁴ Dahl, 405.

¹⁵ Robert P. Lightner, "A Dispensational Response to Theonomy," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, (Andover: Draper, July- September 1986), 243.

¹⁶ Lindars, 98-100.

¹⁷ Dahl, 408.

refers to God as the oath-taker and the oath-witness, both present in the Greek court system. In court, a challenge was often issued to prove one's innocence: the taking of an oath. If a litigant would agree to do so a case could many times be ended on the spot. It was, therefore, no small thing to take an oath. Oaths were thought to be true as the gods, watching from on high, and were thought to be just and honorable. If one were to swear a false oath, he would likely be damning himself to suffering. God not only takes an oath in the sixth chapter of Hebrews, but maximizes it by swearing in the name of a great one. This great one is, indeed, God, as there are none greater than God. Yet, as aforementioned, God functions not only as an oath-taker, but also as an oath-witness, observing God's own oath, granting it even greater authenticity. Hebrews chapter six exemplifies God's dependability in keeping His oath, and the truth of God's testimony in oath-taking. It is the oath of God that declares the intentions of God: a new, better covenant featuring Jesus as the high priest who will reign forever and will mediate on a daily, not yearly, basis. The recipients of the letter are, in fact, chided for their disbelief of God's oath which, as is stated above, is reinforced and given much gravity in the book of Hebrews.¹⁸

The new covenant is not just a promise of new and improved relations with God in the present, however, but also a promise of entering God's rest in the future. The Old Testament is full of references to God's rest.¹⁹ The most well known is likely that of the Sabbath day. After creating the world for six days, God "rested" on the seventh. This provides most of the setting for the Old Testament understanding of God's rest. The Sabbath rest is similar to the Word of God: dynamic and multi-faceted, seen in creation, heaven, eschatology, and many other ways.²⁰ The establishment of the Sabbath in Hebrew law was a celebration of this rest. The picture is partially completed with a vision of the Garden of Eden, in which man did not toil, was removed from pain, and fellowship with God Himself. This picture is completed when, after years of wandering in the desert, the Israelites finally enter into Canaan to rest, free from wandering.²¹ Yet Canaan must be only a shadow of God's final rest. In Canaan, the Israelites were still faced with a struggle against the natural inhabitants and denied the fellowship of God attested to in Genesis.²² God's

¹⁸ David R. Worley, "Fleeing to Two Immutable Things, God's Oath-Taking and Oath-Witnessing: The Use of Litigant Oath in Hebrews 6:12-20," *Restoration Quarterly*, no. 36 (Ablene: Restoration Quarterly, 1994), 223- 233.

¹⁹ Ann Hoch Lowdrey, "Hebrews 4:1-13," *Interpretation*, vol. XLVIII no.3. Jack Dean Kingsbury, ed. (Richmond: Union Theological Seminary, July 1994), 286.

²⁰ Khiok-Khng Yeo, "The Meaning and Usage of the Theology of Rest," *Asia Journal of Theology*, no. 5 (Singapore: Republic of Singapore, April 1991), 16.

²¹ Von Kooten, 30-31.

²² *Ibid.*, 31. Von Kooten also proposes that, just as there was an obstacle to the Garden of Eden in the form of a flaming sword, there was also an obstacle to entering into the totality of God's rest, a living sword. This sword was the law, cutting down every man who attempted to enter the rest of God due to their unrighteousness. Only Christ could face this sword and survive. Yet the rest of God is not unguarded, but now guarded differently. This new sword is the living word of God which, as seen in 4:12-13, leaves man naked before God. It is only through man's faithfulness to the new covenant that he may be seen as acceptable when stripped by the new sword, the Word of God. This would be yet another function of the dynamic Word of God: guardian. Since the

rest, then, is the presence of God in the present and the future. It will be perfect communion with God, not in man's space, but God's (i.e., heaven).²³ Hebrews may be seen as presenting life as a pilgrimage and offers union with God at death.²⁴ However, the rest of God is not merely existent in the future. If life is indeed a pilgrimage, God's rest may also be seen as a daily reality. It is peace in persecution, a time of refreshing. Amazingly, the status of Jesus as eternal high priest as testified to in Hebrews means that this rest is available from day to day and even moment to moment.²⁵ Hebrews not only testifies to a new covenant with God as a fulfillment of the old, but also to a new rest of God as the fulfillment of the old ideal. The promise of rest still remains today.²⁶ So far, the vision of God in Hebrews has been that of a loving, forgiving grandfather, but the book does not stop here. Throughout the entire book there are stern warnings, occurring even as early as the third chapter. While it is important to admit that each warning is followed by an exhortation, a word of encouragement, the warnings still stand. The author of Hebrews uses a powerful analogy to help the reader understand the severity of the warning passages: the Israelites and Canaan. After a period of wandering in the wilderness, the fourteenth chapter of Numbers asserts that the Israelites stood at the gateway of the Promised Land, God's rest, the fulfillment of their covenant with God. Yet though this was God's Promised Land, the people were afraid. Ten of the twelve spies sent to check out the land declared that even though it was wonderful, so were its obstacles: walled cities and giant warriors. The other two spies argued vigorously that, though these men were big, their God was bigger. They argued that God was faithful in God's covenant and in God's promises, but the people went with the majority viewpoint. From fear, they followed the testimony of the ten spies and decided not to enter into the Promised Land that day, but to continue to wander.

This blatant rebellion against the promise of God would seal their fates as, after forty more years of wandering, the bones of that generation were strewn about the wilderness. These people even attempted, at a later date, to try and enter the Promised Land on their own, without the support of God. Needless to say, they failed, as recorded in Numbers 14: 41-45. This story is used very persuasively in the book of Hebrews to illustrate that when the covenant of God is violated, death is the result. Hebrews 3: 16- 19 confirms the story of Numbers 14: a whole generation died out, missing the opportunity of a Promised Land because they were "stiff-necked." But this is not a mere story from the past. Hebrews chapter ten verse twenty-nine asserts that if those people were punished for violating the old covenant, for disobeying God and His commands, then how much more would they be punished for violating the

²³ Yeo, 11.

²⁴ Lowdrey, 283.

²⁵ Yeo, 8, 18.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

new and better covenant!²⁷ After all, just as the Word of God is dynamic, so are His covenants: they require interaction, relations, and ongoing obedience.

The author of Hebrews, in light of passages in chapters 3, 6, and 10, is definitely worried that the recipients of his letter were straying from their faith, preparing to walk away from the gate of the Promised Land. According to Isaacs' dating of the book, several tragedies had occurred preceding the letter that would likely increase the probability of the people doing so. For one, war had broken out between the Jews and the Romans in the year sixty-six CE.²⁸ Secondly, with the ascension of Nero to the Roman throne in sixty-four CE, a persecution of Christians had begun that saw men lose their lives and the lives of their families. Thirdly, Jerusalem had been captured by the Romans and its temple, dedicated to God, was destroyed in 70 CE. All of these events preyed heavily upon the minds of these believers. There was the threat of death at the hands of the Romans, a questioning of God's presence after the destruction of the temple, and a longing to fight against the Roman oppression with the Jews. The people of Israel dealt with similar issues on the doorstep of Canaan and failed the test, excluding them from God's rest. It is in fear of greater judgement under the superior covenant that Hebrews warns the people throughout chapter eight.²⁹

What happened to the God of love attested to earlier? The author of Hebrews makes it crystal clear that the new covenant does not annul God as judge, but rather intensifies his role. Since it is a superior covenant, it will have superior consequences if unheeded, even for the "backslider."³⁰ This judgement is not just a shadow of things to come, but a reality in the present.³¹ After all, the new covenant establishes daily remission and mediation for the repentant. Would it not, therefore, be logical that it will also provide wrath, even on a daily basis, for those who fail the provisions of the new covenant? While this is not a comforting view of God, it is awe-inspiring, leaving the reader a new respect for God.³²

The judgement of God must be reserved for those who not only forsake His new covenant, but actively rebel against it. For some of the readers, especially in light of the aforementioned persecution of Christians and political uneasiness, returning to the faith of Judaism was a viable option. After all, it was not the Jews who were initially persecuted by the Romans, but the Christians. This imminent desertion of the Christian faith is precisely why the author spends so much time in the book of Hebrews championing Christ over the prophets and angels, as well as the new covenant over the old.³³ It is clear, both in the Old Testament story of Canaan and in the warning passages of

²⁷ F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), xix.

²⁸ Marie E. Isaacs, "Hebrews," in *Mercer Commentary on the Bible*, Watson Mills, Richard Wilson, eds. (Macon: Mercer Press, 1995), 1267.

²⁹ McKnight, 35.

³⁰ G. W. Trompf, "The Conception of God in Hebrews 4:12-13," *Studia Theologica*, no. 25 (Oslo: Universitetsforlag, 1971), 126.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 123.

³² *Ibid.*, 127.

³³ Brian Dornan, "Hebrews 1:2 and the Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen," *Expository Times*, vol. 100 no. 10 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, July 1989), 372.

Hebrews, that apostasy is the sin of both covenants.³⁴ This would also explain why the heroes of the Old Testament, from Abraham to Enoch to even Samson, are given so much attention in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews: they listened to God and now serve as warnings to the unfaithful.³⁵ The sixth chapter of Hebrews notes that a hardened, evil heart of unbelief, open and public defiance before God, and rebellion characterized this unfaithfulness, this apostasy. As a result, God declared to the Israelites, seen in Hebrews 6:26-31, “May I not be God if you do enter My rest!”³⁶ It is clear, in Hebrews 3:16-4:5, that to desert the Christian faith for pagan religion is apostasy, but what of Judaism? The author makes the case in the sixth chapter of Hebrews that to revert to Judaism is to deny Christ publicly, to walk away from the gate of Canaan. The sixth chapter of Hebrews, in verse six, also declares that if this is acted upon, if these people fall away, there is no coming back. Another description of God relevant to the warning passages is that of action. Chapter four, in verses twelve and thirteen, declares that the Word of God is living and active while chapter ten verse thirty-one warns of the terror to fall into the hands of the living God. Just as Jesus exclaimed to the Sadducees in John 8:58, God is alive and is a force to be reckoned with. The gods of the Canaanites were dead, non-existent. The fact that God is alive and active is indeed terrifying to the disobedient. Finally, chapter twelve echoes the Deuteronomic assertion that God is a consuming fire. The flames of God will consume all impurity of belief in a process of refining, but will consume the unfaithful entirely.³⁷

Hebrews follows each warning passage with an exhortation in an attempt to see a maintenance of perseverance. It is clear from the above section and Hebrews 12:1-5 that faithfulness to the covenant is an essential to remain in the faith.³⁸ Just as God forgets transgression through Christ, so will His constancy remember the live works of His people, their faith and perseverance, fairness and sharing: the new sacrifices of God.³⁹ The warnings themselves are also an encouragement as they display clearly the promise of God and the right response.⁴⁰ For example, Hebrews 3:12-16 warns the reader not to harden his heart to the voice of God. At the same time, it promises that if the believer will believe and encourage others, he will share in Christ Himself. Hebrews even goes so far as to describe the disciplinary role of God the Father, seen in Hebrews 12:1-13. It argues that the discipline of God is to bring about a right attitude in God's children. Discipline is the proof of sonship. If biological fathers condition their children through discipline, then God will surely discipline His children in an effort to bring about a right attitude and enhanced

³⁴ McKnight, 58.

³⁵ Craddock, 160.

³⁶ Yeo, 6.

³⁷ Bruce, 384.

³⁸ Dahl, 409.

³⁹ Morris, 57.

⁴⁰ Lowdrey, 284.

relationship.⁴¹ It is vital for the believer to see the sufferings of discipline not as punitive, but as signs of care and of education.⁴²

At the beginning and end of all Christian thought is God.⁴³ The letter to the Hebrews makes very calculated assertions about this God throughout its thirteen chapters. First, it establishes that God still speaks to His people in ways even greater than those of the Old Testament: His Son and the Holy Spirit. The Son is superior to all signs and wonders before Him because He is the Son, the representative and heir of God. Hebrews also presents what God now has offer: a new covenant, far greater than the last, in which God adjusts for the failures of the old covenant. He is a loving and merciful God for this new offer, but the stakes have risen completely. A greater, more merciful covenant will be accompanied by a greater judgement, a stricter consequence. The reader should respect and trust God, persevere, and delight in the sonship of God. Throughout, God is dynamic, living, and active.

This picture of God is not, however, germane only to the original readers of Hebrews, but is quite valuable today. As Hebrews 1:1-4 demonstrates, the search for God has not been quenched since the days of the Old Testament, but still lingers, especially in a world full of suffering. For one, it asserts that God still speaks. A large percentage of Christians take this fact for granted today. They may pray to God for an answer, but doubt that God will answer. This often turns in to a cycle: a problem arises, prayer is given, God doesn't seem to answer. As a result, many doubt that God still speaks and, even if God did, they wouldn't be listening. The book of Hebrews makes it very clear that the voice of God is still audible, not only through signs, wonders, and miracles, but through the very Son and Holy Spirit of God. Chapter four testifies that the Word of God is indeed living and active: it is dynamic, challenging, and definitely present and real in the world today. Too many times, Christians are spoon-fed and accept the words of their minister over the Word of the living God. Hebrews makes it very clear that this Word is superior to the angels, the pastors, the Focus on the Family Institute, and even Billy Graham. It is, therefore, about time Christians focus on the former and not the latter.

Not only do many Christians today neither expect God's voice nor listen for it, but most even doubt that their prayers will be answered. Hebrews decrees in chapter four, verse sixteen that we can approach the throne of grace with confidence, a confidence that God will hear and answer. The reality is that the same God that sent Jesus as atonement reigns in heaven and hears the cries of His people. It is this doubt in God that leaves the Christian of today with a weak faith that only shows up for Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights. It is this lack of trust that results in the falling away warned of throughout Hebrews, but especially in chapter six. What modern Christians take for granted more than anything, however, are the warnings of God. Due to Sunday School and Vacation Bible School indoctrination, even non-Christians know

⁴¹ Bruce, xxii.

⁴² Isaacs, 1280.

⁴³ Craddock, 42.

that God is love. What they don't know, however, is that God is still just and wrath exists for those outside of God's love. As a result, people both in the church and outside the church fail to consider the ramifications of their actions. After all, if grace is unconditional, God can forgive them. The book of Hebrews portrays a different image of God. The God in Hebrews will actively forgive those who will repent and seek God's way, seen in Hebrews 12:1- 3, but actively punish those who do not, as seen in Hebrews 12:25. This includes those who turn away from God after experiencing God, the warning of chapter six. Indeed, if the Israelites, who stood on the doorstep of the Promised Land were not spared for disobedience, neither shall those who rebel against God. Hebrews especially portrays its image of God by its Old Testament references. Contrary to popular opinion, Hebrews announces that the God of the Old Testament is the same God in the New Testament. God is loving and is to be trusted, but also to be feared and respected. Hebrews demands an active faith in an active God.

Another modern problem is that people are drawn to God in hopes of material gain. They suppose that if they are good and go to church, that God will spare them from disaster. This problem emerges from the notion that God the Father will not allow anything terrible to happen to God's children. Hebrews is clearly opposed to this idea. While it admits that the rest of God is present in this life, it also confesses that God disciplines God's children to enhance their education and growth. Like a good parent, God is concerned for God's children, but if they disobey, if they touch the hot stove, then they will reap the fruits of their actions, they will be burned. Finally, the book of Hebrews asserts that God is in charge. It was God who willed Christ's sacrifice and allows Christ's mediation. Furthermore, it is God who forgets the sins of God's children and authors the new covenant. Instead of devoting all prayers and thanksgiving to Jesus alone, maybe it is time the church recognizes God as the author and perfecter of salvation.

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AFRICAN LIBERATION THEOLOGIES

A Study of Southern and Eastern Africa

MELISSA BROWN

Introduction

From the outside looking in, the picture of African Liberation Theology is quite difficult to discern. It is a theology filled with complexities and enigmas, mysteries and myths, one entrenched in the past yet hoping in the future. It is a theology that screams for attention and demands to be heard by all, especially by those who are not in the habit of listening. This theology of liberation is as diverse as the continent itself, yet finds a common strand in its focus on community. In Africa, much damage has been done. The people and their land have been exploited in the name of “development” and “Christianity.” And because theology is tied to oppression, there must be a redemptive process, which seeks to set it free. For years colonialism and apartheid were preached in the name of God and supported through Biblical texts. Now African countries are left to rebuild, and this process must involve Africa dreaming its own dream. From the outside looking in my goal is to give a glimpse of the dream now forming in Africa’s liberation theologies. In this pursuit we will see the need for liberation theologies by examining early sources on African exploration and missiology, and then will turn to two distinct models found in South and East Africa. In South Africa, the model of liberation that will be seen is one that is still seeking to heal and restore the oppressed. It has been a rallying cry for the victims and an alarm for the dictators. In East Africa the goal is restoration. Most East African countries are more removed from Western oppression, yet still are in the process of “africanizing” their Christianity. In this process they are concerned with making a contribution to the church universal. The uniqueness of their thought has been too long overlooked. Our goal is not only to listen and learn from those who are demanding our attention, but perhaps to be liberated ourselves. For liberation is not only for the oppressed, but also for the oppressor who must release long held myths and misconceptions. For perhaps in our silence we have all been oppressors.

The Legacy of Oppression

Oppression in Africa came with the entrance of the white race. Although the “scramble for Africa” began in the 1880’s, the legacy of exploitation began long before that. For more than four hundred years prior, Africa had been exploited through slave trades, imperialism and colonialism. At the end of the nineteenth century, the African continent was divided between Britain, France, Germany, Belgium and Italy. By this time there was a prevailing stereotype that Africans were uncivilized, pagan and heathen. These attitudes were left over from the era of slavery. In the pre-slavery era, Africans were considered equal in trade and civilization. Much exchange was done between Africa and other countries. Basil Davidson, a leading historian on Africa, notes that “men in Europe believed they had found partners and allies and equals in Africa.”¹ What happened? The slave trade. Douglas Waruta, in his research on racism, has proposed that in order for one people to enslave another, they must begin to see the people they enslave differently. These people must become “weird” or subhuman.² As we all know, racism dies hard. And when Colonialism was brought to Africa, the continent’s indigenous peoples were seen to be in need of social and spiritual help.

The west invaded in great force. Some came to exploit; others came to get a new start, some to explore or even to bring Christianity. Although many came with good intentions, nearly all came with a mindset of superiority towards these new “natives.” Explorers and missionary travel narratives were often derogatory at best. Their treatment of indigenous people was lacking in respect and even in humanity. An example is found in an account of explorer H.M. Stanley’s encounter with one African community:

[Stanley’s] appearance at the first village caused a tremendous uproar of excitement. Naked men and women came pouring out, yelling, fighting, quarreling and making a perfect Bable around Stanley, who was very much annoyed. To one of the soldiers requesting them to desist, the only reply was “shut up,” as unworthy to speak to the Wagago.³

Pay special attention to the imagery that is used in the description. The picture created is one of absolute chaos. One should also note the use of the capitalized word “Bable.” Reference is made here to the biblical account of God confusing languages. The Tower of Bable account was used as support for racial

¹ Basil Davidson, *The African Slave Trade* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1961), 26.

² Douglas Waruta, *Class Notes*, University of Nairobi, Nairobi, Kenya (10 Nov 99).

³ A. H. Godbey, A. M., *Stanley in Africa: the Paladin of the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: Donohue & Hennenberry, 1889), 68.

superiority in South Africa's apartheid.⁴ Such writing only reinforced the racial stereotypes of the slavery era. As the above narrative continues, Stanley is a bit disturbed by the sultan's request for homage.

Passing these curious hordes, the next day's march of eight miles brought him to the sultan of the district. ...Stanley shook the dust off his feet as a testimony against them.⁵

Again we see the biblical imagery of this passage. Reference is made to Jesus' command to the disciples to go out, and if they are not welcomed to "shake the dust off [their] feet as a testimony against them."⁶ The picture which was received by the religious community in Europe when reading such passages was one of the white disciple being unwelcome by the black "pagan." As the account continues it only worsens. Again, pay particular attention to the persuasive language of the account:

Passing the forest, they came to the Nyambwa where excellent water was found. With shouts and yells the villagers crowded around, finally becoming so insolent that Stanley seized his whip and administered a sound thrashing to one of the number. This enraged them, and they walked backward and forward, shouting, "Are the Watogo to be beaten like slaves?" Stanley would again have recourse to his whip, which always cleared the way for them, thus proving the excellency of Solomon's recipe, "a rod for the fools' back."⁷

The injustice in this passage is obvious. All of us who claim allegiance to human rights are quick to jump up in protest. But those of us who cling to Christianity hold a deeper response as we beg for the Bible to be used in correct context. As Stanley justifies racism with scripture, we begin to see the need for the liberation of an oppressed people. God does not promote the elevation of one people over another on the basis of color. Yet here a person was beaten and the justification was the "higher intelligence" of the oppressor. Jacob Wasserman gave minor criticism to Stanley's view as he said:

Like all Europeans, [Stanley] stated, and with good reason, from the fundamental assumption that the white man has higher intelligence than the black. In those days intelligence was still of a comprehensive value, and was highly prized. He spoke of the (Intelligence which

⁴ Derek Morphew, *South Africa: The Powers Behind* (Cape Town: Struik Christian Books, 1989), 113-116.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Luke 9:5, NIV.

⁷ Ibid, 71.

brings blessings in its train.’ ...His honest endeavor was to protect them, for the very reason that he was endowed with a ‘higher intelligence...’

Although Wasserman notices a bit of arrogance in Stanley, he supports and proclaims his conquests. He goes on to comment on the conquest of African lands by Europeans as he asserts that the arrogance of others was worse than Stanley’s:

...What disastrous results that higher intelligence was destined to bring in its train remained hidden in the future. Yet all too soon, [Stanley’s] beloved free state was to become the arena for consciousness, exploitation and oppression.⁸

Wasserman’s assessment was painfully correct. The West continued its oppression based on the concept of supreme “White” intelligence and the comparative barbarity of blacks. Stanley was not the only European with this mindset. Following is an example by Daniel Streeter. (Interestingly, this explorer was a vegetarian!)

We now witnessed a prehistoric orgy, in which men became beasts. At the sound of Gregg’s whistle, stripped to the skin, the black scavengers leapt on the carcass with ghoulish eagerness. Immediately it became invisible beneath half a hundred savages lusting for meat. Knee-deep in filth, they plunged and staggered, hacking off such bits as they could lay hold on. Meat! Raw, red meat! They had degenerated into animals fighting for filthy scraps. It was naked savagery. Not a single element of humor relived its dreadfulness. Save for its bony structure, the elephant had been trodden flat. The sun blazed down. The erstwhile peaceful glade became an inferno filled with things that had once been men, covered with blood and sweat. Rolling eyeballs looked out of grimacing faces. The primeval blood lust held them in its grip.⁹

In my personal reading of this account I had to check twice to see if the author was really talking about humans. This sensationalized account as well as others dehumanized Africa and her people. Streeter’s book had an adjacent picture illustrating this script, and in it the people looked less than human. To further demean, there is a picture of vultures devouring meat underneath this picture. Streeter himself turns these “men into beasts” as he writes this account from the background of his white superiority.

This view of superiority was built on the evolutionary assumption that

⁸ Jacob Wasserman, *Bula Matari: Stanley Conqueror of a Continent* (New York Liveright-Inc-Publishers, 1993), page number not available.

⁹ Daniel Streeter, *Denatured Africa* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1926), 262-263.

Europe was the pinnacle of the evolutionary process. Sir Samuel Baker indirectly describes this mindset as he speaks of an encounter with more civilized Africans. “The people here were superior to the naked savages of Latooka and Obbo. They were modest and well clothed; their pottery was of a high order; and they were good blacksmiths.”¹⁰ Baker was not alone in his surprise. Dr. Georg Schweinfurth expressed the same shock when telling his account of Munza, a “tribal” king in Central Africa, “I could not help but marveling at the composure of this wild African, and wondering where in the world he could have learned his dignity and self-possession.”¹¹ To these Europeans, it seemed as if the African ground was not rich enough to produce a degree of civilization and composure. In the European opinion, he must have been taught – by Europeans!

As if these accounts were not degrading enough, our own Christian heritage provides us with a vast array of missionary endeavors which did little more than wreck African cultures. Archbishop Desmond Tutu laughs about missionary endeavors as he says “When the white man first came here, he had the Bible and we had the land. Then the white man said to us, Come let us kneel and pray together. So we knelt and closed our eyes and prayed, and when we opened our eyes again, lo! – we had the Bible and he had the land!”¹² Tutu’s humor only briefly covers the irony of the situation. The missionaries who came to share, stole more than they gave. Jomo Kenyatta, the first president of Kenya, once said that the imperialist and the missionary were one in the same.¹³ There was no difference. With the colonialist state came the colonialist church and the two were so interwoven that they became indistinguishable. Even more shocking is the that with the missionary or patriot came more prejudice and racism than Africa had ever seen.

In the Heart of Savagedom was written in the early 1900’s by Rachel Stuart Watt and her husband who were missionaries from Great Britain. Watt’s book is an account of the couple’s mission work in Central Africa. She frequently uses words such as “pagan”, “rude”, “savage”, or “heathen” to describe the people and their customs. Although it is apparent through her narratives that she and her husband loved the people, their love was parallel to that of a parent toward a wayward child. They loved them; they just wished them to be different. The Christianity they preached could be found only through a process of westernization. Without understanding that many of these people groups are closely aligned with Old Testament peoples, they preached a New Testament religion while overlooking the basis for Christianity, which was already present. The Watts were quite offended by the hygiene of the “natives.”

¹⁰ Charles H. Jones, *Africa: A History of Exploration and Adventure* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1875), 309.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 444.

¹² Desmond Tutu, as quoted in Michael Battle, *Reconciliation: The Ubuntu Theology of Desmond Tutu* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1997), 31.

¹³ Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya*.

In fact, when they asked people to work for them they first made them wear clothing and wash up, not realizing that the ochre they so hated held religious significance. Watt describes the account by saying,

When their names were written down for employment the first thing we did was to hand them a piece of soap and send them to the river to wash themselves from head to foot and scrub off the ochre and castor oil with which they had been painted. When they returned from the stream with their black, glossy skin shining brightly, there was given to each man a shirt and knickers of unbleached calico...¹⁴

She goes on in this dialogue to speak of the work ethic she was instilling in these African men who did not “work.” In her mind, the gospel was so tied to Western society that the two were inseparable. Many people still claim the missionaries of this time period did a great deal of good, but if they did it was at the expense of the culture. They were not able to separate Christianity from their Western tradition. The stereotypes were too deep, and in the mind of missions, the people were too pagan to be heard.

For five hundred years, Africa lived with the stigma of being considered second-class. Her children were sold into slavery, her land was stolen and exploited, and finally in the name of God and country, the Westerners came to civilize and evangelize.

A Defense of African Religion

The irony of the matter is that Africa has never been as pagan or heathen as the West. The continent of Africa finds a commonality in its reliance on community. Within this rich community is found deep spirituality. This spirituality is not separated from everyday life. In the rich oral traditions of Africa, a love for God is found that dares not deny the Creator. African religion has often been described as animism, ancestor worship and witchcraft. There is nothing more contrary to the truth. As a whole, Africans are monotheistic in their beliefs, worshiping one God, and holding many of the same names for God that we use in the West. Their traditions, though difficult to understand by Westerners, were far from pagan but were symbolic. The West could not understand this culture so far removed from their own. And since they linked Christianity with their own culture, they felt African culture must be heathen.¹⁵

¹⁴ Rachael Stuart Watt, *Into the Heart of Savagedom* (London: Pickering and Inglis), 210. -No dating is given but based on the maps and events recorded, the book can be dated somewhere soon after 1912.

¹⁵ For a more detailed treatment of African religion see John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1969). This book is by far the leading book in East Africa for discussing African religion. It is used in secondary schools as a textbook and is widely taught by college professors as well. Mbiti is considered to have articulated African religion for the outside world.

The Case for Liberation

African identity was clearly abused and misunderstood by Europeans. We can also see how Africans were for so long held under a yoke of mental, spiritual, and physical oppression. But where does that leave us today? In light of the cross shouldn't we "forget all that is behind" and find a unity in Christ? Or should we still remember this past as a means of healing? The truth is that the past cannot be forgotten. It is not so simple. Racism has become so deeply engrained in our societies that we all still suffer from it. Some suffer as the oppressed, some suffer as oppressors, but both are held captive to racism's demands. Although many wounds have been healed in Africa, many more are still fresh. Many people in Africa still look to the West to set the pace for the world. The fact is that even though the "Patriots"¹⁶ of colonialism have left, their evidence still remains. America and the West still drink coffee and tea more cheaply because Kenyans or Tanzanians get paid less than a dollar a day to farm it. We still use foreign labor to cheaply manufacture goods and to produce crops. What we call aid is not aid at all; it never evens out the scales. For example, Germany makes approximately eight dollars off of every dollar they send to Africa.¹⁷ The "have's" still have and the "have-not's" are always without.¹⁸ In light of this there is a very real need for a liberation theology, not just to even out the score politically and socially, but to free scripture from the racism that has held it captive in Africa.

Liberation in Southern Africa: Desmond Tutu and Ubuntu Theology

Southern Africa is one of those places where scripture has been enslaved. For years the oppressing British and Afrikaners¹⁹ carried out apartheid in the name of God and the Bible. Between 1948 and 1990, racism was legal in Southern Africa under the laws of apartheid. Michael Battle points out that Afrikaners saw themselves as descendants of seventeenth century Calvinists. Their thinking led them to see the white race as chosen and the black race, rejected.²⁰ Battle continues by saying, "Non-Europeans were thought to be abnormal and

¹⁶ The word "Patriot" was used to name those who came from Britain to colonize Africa, particularly Kenya.

¹⁷ Mugambi, Jesse, Conversation with author, 2 November 1998, at Mugambi's home, Nairobi, Kenya.

¹⁸ For discussion of the terms "have's" and "have-nots" see Daniel Quinn, *Ishmael* (New York: Bantam Books, 1995).

¹⁹ Afrikaners were white Dutch descendants who settled Africa in the 1500's. They were oppressive toward the indigenous people. The British arrived after the Afrikaners no longer held a privileged status but had to prove that they too were white. After the most British left South Africa, the Afrikaners intensified their oppression of Africans through the laws of separation, better known as apartheid.

yet somehow part of the will of God. Africans were monsters. The presence of apes as particular to Africa only increased this notion that Africans were not quite human”²¹ Although we see such ideas as ludicrous, imagine the thoughts of an African born into this system. The worst part is that the God these people had spent their whole lives loving was now being used as the premise for prejudice.

The Shackled Scripture of Apartheid

In Southern Africa God was stolen from the black community. Primeval stories such as the mark of Cain and Tower of Babel were used to reinforce God-laid racial divisions. According to the Afrikaner, Cain’s race was the race from which the black people descended. This black color was marked by sin, ignorance, and by God’s displeasure. Scripture such as I Peter 2:9, “you are a chosen race,” was used to validate their claim, along with scripture in Exodus that showed evidence of God’s choosing a people based on race. The dominant belief was that the Afrikaner was chosen by God and therefore had the God-given right to rule.²² Such thinking could be found throughout the province. An Afrikaner farmer once said, “You must be committed to the concept of race...If you read the Bible you will see that people were created with differences.”²³ What was seen on the farm was seen in government. Daniel Malan summarizes apartheid by saying:

Our history is the greatest masterpiece of the centuries. We hold this nationhood as our due, for it was given us by the Architect of the universe. [God’s] aim was the formation of a new nation among the nations of the world. The last hundred years have witnessed a miracle behind which must lie a divine plan. Indeed the history of the Afrikaner reveals a will and determination which makes one feel that Afrikanerdom is not the work of [human beings] but the creation of God.²⁴

Of course, painting Afrikaners as oppressive monsters filled with hatred would result in an unfair picture. Like the African, the Afrikaner was also “deeply religious.” Morphew says that “if one could remove the entire origin and history of apartheid with a magic wand, one would be left with a great number of family, social and national characteristics which few would fail to admire.” With Morphew we ask the question: How could Afrikaner culture produce apartheid? Afrikaner theology proclaimed racism as right.²⁵ Because of the silence of the church against racism, the Afrikaans were able to support apartheid through the church-state system.²⁶ In this system, Africans were

²⁰ Battle, 18-19.

²¹ Ibid, 20.

²² Ibid, 18-30.

²³ Schalk Vorster, as quoted in Battle, 21.

²⁴ Daniel F. Malan as quoted in Battle, 23.

²⁵ Morphew, 120.

²⁶ Ibid, 19-33.

below par and “deserved” to be subjected to white rule. It was as if God had given the responsibility of this lesser people to the white race. Black Africans were held captive in their own country by those who claimed to serve the same God Africans had known for years.

What was the reaction to this oppressive system? There was much fighting, much death, and much loss. Black people and coloreds (mixed race) were denied land, dignity and peace. Only 13% of the land was owned by indigenous peoples.²⁷ Laws were put into effect where blacks could not buy land and they were even forced to carry passbooks to show where they were going when in urban, white areas. Rules were passed that said whites and blacks could not worship in services together.²⁸ The police enforced these ludicrous laws through violence and cruelty against Africans. Although there was much rebellion, most South Africans will tell you that the situation would have been worse without Archbishop Tutu. He and other clergy became the stabilizing force in this volatile society.²⁹

The Liturgy of Liberation

Tutu placed a remarkable spin on the issue of race through his ubuntu Theology. Although one could argue he has a right to be bitter, we quickly see that he is not. His laughing manner is said to make everyone in the room feel at home. His theology does much of the same. It creates a place for everyone.

Ubuntu refers to the person who is welcoming, who is hospitable, who is warm and generous, who is affirming of others, who does not feel threatened that others are able for and good for [this person] has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing they belong in a greater whole, and know that they are diminished when another is humiliated, is tortured, is oppressed, is treated as if they are less than who they are. What a wonderful world it can and will be when we know that our destinies are locked inextricably into one another's....³⁰

Ubuntu theology ushers in the kingdom of God by saying with Paul, “In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female.”³¹ In the Ubuntu vision, black and white live together in a society of equal representation for people.

The word “ubuntu” comes from the word “*bantu*” meaning human-ness. Ubuntu is essentially the quality of being human, separating humanity from

²⁷ Battle, 14, see endnote 7.

²⁸ Ibid, 14-16.

²⁹ Ibid, 1, see opening quote by Peter Goodwin.

³⁰ Desmond Tutu. *The New World Order*, 1992 as quoted in Battle, 35-36.

³¹ Galatians 3:23, NIV.

skin color. It is fully reliant on the African concepts of community and inter-relatedness. According to ubuntu, it is the responsibility of the community to sustain life. Close observation of African society reveals many traditions come from this deep spirit of community. Greetings are of utmost importance. When walking through the rural areas, one must stop to shake hands and greet everyone, extending invitations for a cup of tea. Hospitality is essential and the African world is built on relationships with others. Tutu affirms this culture by saying that a person who is alone is subhuman. Your humanity is defined in relationship to other people rather than your skin color.³² In a commencement address to Morehouse Medical School, Tutu challenged the graduates to live out this community of ubuntu.

We say a person is a person through other persons. We don't come fully formed into the world. We learn how to think, how to walk, how to speak, how to behave, indeed how to be human from other human beings. We need other human beings in order to be human. We are made for togetherness, we are made for fellowship, to exist in a tender network of interdependence. That is why apartheid and all racism are so fundamentally evil for they declare that we were made in separation, for enmity, for alienation, and for apartness.... This is how you have ubuntu-you care, you are hospitable, you're gentle, you're compassionate and concerned. Go forth as a new doctor, conscious that everybody is to be revered, revered as created in God's image whether inner-city, or rural areas; go forth to demonstrate your ubuntu, to care for them, to heal them especially those who are despised, marginalised. Go forth to make the world a better place for you can make a difference. The task is daunting, of course, but it is our necessary struggle.³³

Tutu broadens his context by extending the invitation of ubuntu to African Americans at Morehouse. In Tutu's opinion, ubuntu is for everyone, not just Africans. Tutu's gospel is one of "non-racialism."³⁴ This non-racialism is necessary to live in peace. It allows the African to live according to his or her culture and the European or American to do the same. Under apartheid, the African was not allowed to be "African." Battle terms this concept as a "religious schizophrenia."The Christianity known by Africans was a white Christianity which made no application to their everyday experience.³⁵ In ubuntu there is no shame in being African. Because the concept centers on community, it exalts the most important part of being African, relation to the community.

³² Battle, 35, 39, 46.

³³ Desmond Tutu, handwritten speech, Morehouse Medical School Commencement, May 15, 1993 as quoted in Battle, 66.

³⁴ According to Battle, this term was used in the Freedom Charter of the African National Conference which was composed of 3000 delegates in June of 1995, Battle, 82.

³⁵ Battle, 123.

Because ubuntu theology centers on social interaction and political change, one might question whether or not it is a theology. In order to answer this question, we must first take into account African culture. This is a world where religion is in no way separated from everyday life. Because of this culture's deep reliance on oral tradition, religion is something inseparable from daily life. Dr. Douglas Waruta summed it up by saying this tradition was not a "book you could leave at home." Instead, it is "written on your heart, and it is always with you."³⁶ Africa is by nature religious and communal, which means that every aspect of life is also spiritual. With this in mind, we understand more clearly how important ubuntu is to the South African.

But ubuntu does not stop with its demand for social change. It calls the silent South African church to action:

We should so order the life of our churches so that others do not feel they are God's stepchildren and that God's home-language is English, and that the British parliamentary procedure is necessarily the best way of doing our business....Our church structures should reflect the reality that blacks form 80 percent of our church population. We are indigenised in the bad sense of being conformed to the ways of the world we inhabit. Our churches, whilst seeking to move away from the ways of the past, have been bastions of the very policies for which they have condemned the government."³⁷

Archbishop Tutu is not alone encouraging the church to stand on the side of right; many others have joined with him in his cause. The Kairos Document was considered to be one of the most important rallying cries in the years before apartheid crumbled. This document, written in 1985 during a state of emergency, began its first chapter with the "arrival of truth." The authors were determined that this crisis would reveal what was wrong with the South African church.

What the present crisis shows up, although many of us have known it all along, is that the church is divided. More and more people are now saying that there are in fact two Churches in South Africa – a White Church and a Black Church. Even within the same denomination there are in fact two Churches. In the life and death conflict between different social forces that has come to a head in South Africa today, there are Christians (or at least people who profess to be Christians) on both sides of the conflict and some who are trying to sit on the fence!³⁸

The time of silence was finally over for the church. But the Kairos Document

³⁶ Waruta, Class Notes (5 Nov. 98).

³⁷ Tutu, *Spirituality: African and Christian*, as quoted in Battle, 89-90.

³⁸ *The Kairos Document, Challenge to the Church* (Cape Town: Blackshaws (pty) Ltd., 1986), 1.

was not the only one to proclaim it. In November of 1991, 230 church leaders representing more than 80 denominations gathered at Rustenburg for a National Conference. This conference produced many confessions, which are now known collectively as the Rustenburg Declaration. This document was characterized by a lively hope for the future of post-apartheid Africa with the end of apartheid in the same year. Included in this document were confessions from the oppressed and the oppressor, from those who had been silent and those who had been vocal. There was a sense of unity and an encouragement to press on for continued liberation. The confession contained a series of statements beginning with “some of us...” or “those of us...” In this section each group took their blame for the wrong that was done during apartheid. Section 2.10 of that confession shows a new unity that was unique to this race-torn country.

With a broken and contrite spirit we ask the forgiveness of God and of our fellow South Africans. We call upon the members of our Churches to make this confession their own. We call upon the Government of South Africa to join us in a public confession of guilt and a statement of repentance for wrongs perpetrated over the years.

What was happening at the conference would soon spread to the government. After Nelson Mandela was elected president a process of healing began. But it was far from quick in coming. The Truth and Reconciliation Committee was recently formed to investigate crimes of racial violence from 1960 to 1994.³⁹ This committee is very African by nature. When certain sins are committed in an African community, there must be a process of restoration before that person is accepted back into that community. This restoration ritual is key to the reconciliation of the person to the community. The Truth and Reconciliation Committee was true to African tradition. More than 21,000 victims were given amnesty in exchange for testimonies.⁴⁰ Crimes of rape, murder and theft were reported and forgiven. Tutu’s comment on the committee was “we needed to acknowledge that we had a horrendous past. We needed to look the beast in the eye, so that the past would not hold us hostage anymore.”⁴¹ Tutu was right. We all know the value of truth, and that is what liberation is all about. This process of remembering our past is essential in order to forget. We have asked the question before: should this past be remembered? Is it not forgotten under the cross? Perhaps part of the healing is in the uncovering, and part of the unity is in celebrating diversity. Such is the case in East Africa where liberation theology is found in the desire to contribute to the church universal as well as in making Christianity “African.”

³⁹ Tim Clodfelter, *Journalnow.com*.
[<http://www.journalnow.com/news/local/arts/television/tvweb271.htm>] 27 March 1999.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Tutu, in review with Bill Moyers, as reported by Tim Clodfelter.

Liberation Theology of East Africa: “Africanizing” Christianity

In East Africa the picture of liberation theology is a bit different. Like South Africa’s ubuntu, East Africa’s theology also takes place within the context of community. But in East Africa, the oppression is now gone for the most part, and the community is left with the task of reconstruction.⁴² This process of reclaiming Africa is taking place in two ways, first in the attempt to contribute to the global Christian community and secondly to free Christianity from Western culture by africanizing their faith.

The East African intellectual community is seeking to be heard. In their opinion, theology has too long been dominated by the West. Although they are grateful for the contributions of many Western thinkers, they are beginning to realize that now it’s time for the world to listen to them. According to many professors at the University of Nairobi, interest in Africa is growing. People are beginning to listen to what they have to say, and East Africans are ready to talk. What are they saying? Christianity does not belong to the West alone. Alward Shorter holds this view as he writes on Africans Contributing to the World Church. “African Christians are in the shackles of a ‘White Church’, in the grip of forces that are not of their own making. A church has been created in Africa which can only be sustained in strict bondage – organizational, cultural, financial – to the white world.”⁴³ These scholars are reminding the world that Christianity has thrived in Africa for centuries. Jomo Kenyatta calls the world to attention by telling the West that Jesus drank at the banks of the African Nile long before the missionaries came to tell Africans about him.⁴⁴ Kenyatta was not the only person in Kenya to feel this way. The predominant thought among Kenyans and Tanzanians is that Christianity has always been a part of East Africa, and that it was here from the start and was not brought by the West.⁴⁵ But East African theologians are not only interested in changing others perception of their world, but also in africanizing their own Christianity. To understand the need for this process, a quick look at Christianity’s history in Africa will help.

Africa’s first experience with Christianity came between the first and fifth centuries in the Mediterranean. Mary and Joseph fled to Egypt with Jesus, the Ethiopian eunuch was converted by Philip, and Simon of Cyrene carried Jesus’ cross. Later on church fathers such as Augustine, Origen, Tertullian and

⁴² Dr. Jesse Mugambi believes that the time of liberation is past and now East Africa is faced with the task of reconstruction. However, all East African scholars do not hold this view. Many, such as Dr. Douglas Waruta, feel that now is the time where liberation and reconstruction go together hand in hand. In this paper I will be taking the stance that reconstruction is the most widely held view in East Africa especially when contrasted with the political liberation of South Africa.

⁴³ Alward Shorter, *The African Contribution To the World Church* (Kampala: Gaba Publications, 1972), 1.

⁴⁴ Kenyatta, page number not available.

⁴⁵ This information is from a personal research project where I conducted ethnographic interviews with Kenyans and Tanzanians. Every person I asked throughout the semester felt Christianity was

Donatus had links to Africa. The Coptic Church was thriving in Ethiopia and Egypt, but gradually the church in Rome and the African church began to separate. Africa kept causing trouble for the church at Rome. In 1054 there was a formal split between the East and West. The Coptic Church continued in an africanized form of Christianity. This church was the most successful of all Christian movements. From the 15th to 17th centuries, the Portuguese missionary movement sailed around Africa, starting Christian churches. However, this Christianity was never rooted within African culture and the movement failed. This brings us to the era of Colonialism, which took place between the 19th and 20th centuries.⁴⁶ As we discovered earlier, this movement carried with it the prejudice of the slave trade. Since the churches in East Africa were “Christianized” without the consideration of African cultures, many Africans turned to Christian sects, other religions or returned to traditional religion. In the post-colonial era, East Africa was left with a Christianity that was not fully theirs. Many assert that the failure of Christianity to africanize led to the rise of Islam in Africa. Africans were seeking to find salvation beyond the bounds of a white oppressive religion, and as a result found themselves in a system even more foreign to their cultural traditions. This might leave one asking why both Christianity and Islam still thrive in Africa. Their success is primarily attributed to their attempt to become African.

John Mbiti was one of the first to gain global recognition for dispelling myths about Africa. This theologian approached liberation from the perspective of africanizing the faith. He believes that although “Christianity may have christianized Africa, Africa africanized Christianity.”⁴⁷ Mbiti’s books helped to convince Western audiences that Africans were not “pagan” as once imagined. He was one of the first to create an “African theology” which defended the African people. He was taken seriously, and as a result he is highly acclaimed through much of Africa. He helped to articulate what many people had always believed but never been given the chance to say. His theology of liberation is very East African in nature, focusing on freeing Christianity from its Western affiliation. His major emphasis is community and his most famous quote is “I am because we are and because we are, therefore I am.” This correctly defines African community and African spirituality. Mbiti uses the Swahili word “ujamaa” to describe this state of being. Ujamaa is of Tanzanian origin and is much like South Africa’s ubuntu. The Swahili word “jamaa” means family and “ujamaa” centers around the interwovenness of all peoples. But ujamaa is not given the same precedence in East Africa as ubuntu is in South Africa. Ujamaa is one of many words used to describe community. This unique sense of community is what makes African culture so uniquely different from the Western emphasis on individualism. But John Mbiti is not the only one to articulate these concepts. Another leading voice in East Africa is Jesse Mugambi.

⁴⁶ Waruta, Class Notes, 17 November 1998.

⁴⁷ Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophies*.

Mugambi has served in many roles at the University of Nairobi and is teaching this semester at University of Toronto. He has published over 23 books on African theology, and would assert that in light of a completed liberation, now is the time for reconstruction. Greatly influenced by the liberation movement in South Africa, Mugambi encourages East Africans to make Christianity relevant to the African experience. In doing this, Mugambi points out some of the failures of the missionary movement. "More often than not, the Christian missionary enterprise in Africa has failed because the African cultural and religious heritage was dismissed as heathenism and paganism. When you dismiss the cultural and religious heritage of a people, you have no right to convert that community."⁴⁸ By dismissing the African cultures, these Christian missionaries were essentially asking new converts to "become white."

One of the most disturbing ironies of the modern missionary enterprise, was that the missionaries were biblical literalists, yet they did not take cognizance of the resolution of the first ecumenical council of Jerusalem which declared that it was not necessary for a Gentile to become an 'honorary Jew' in order to become a Christian. Most missionaries insisted that an African must become an 'honorary white', as a precondition for becoming a Christian. This was a gross theological error.⁴⁹

As in South Africa, scripture and Christianity were tied to a white culture. Mugambi speaks for many Africans as he asserts that African spirituality was not understood by the West.

Political and economic might has been popularly viewed as a demonstration of God's favor bestowed on the benefactors and beneficiaries of imperial domination. Thus the slave trade was for centuries viewed by the churches of Europe as God's ordained way to ensure the supply of free labor, which, in turn, provided the fuel for the Euro-American economy before the advent of the internal combustion engine and fossil fuels. As the twentieth century draws to a close, this same fallacy prevails. The exploited peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America are portrayed in the Euro-American press as lazy, helpless, beggars who are unable to repay their debts at exorbitant interest rates. Their cultural and religious heritage is measured against the standards of those who believe that Heaven is north of the Equator and Hell is another word for the southern hemisphere.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Jesse Mugambi, *From Liberation to Reconstruction* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers Ltd., 1995), 21.

⁴⁹ Mugambi, *African Christioan Theology* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers Ltd., 1989), 56.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 35.

Mugambi believes this image will only be dispelled when Africa is allowed to speak. In light of reconstruction, the image of Africa must be transformed. “The old colonial image of Africa as the ‘sleeping question mark’ has to be replaced by a new one, of Africa as the ‘waking answer.’ The old image of the ‘dark continent’ has to be replaced by a new one-of Africa as the ‘bright continent’ where the sun is overhead all year round.”⁵¹ This quote clearly reflects the idea of East Africa’s new theology. Africa must be heard and Africa must dream for itself. It is necessary for this community to contribute to the world and to redefine its churches in light of African culture. Africa must be allowed to contribute in its own way to the church universal and this new dialogue will help to reconstruct Africa and will help liberate the West.

Michael Kirwen, a Catholic missionary to Kenya, admitted that “We were walking in on a full blown religious tradition, perhaps the first religious tradition, and we had no idea.”⁵² Fortunately Kirwen began to understand the intricate nature of African religion. As a result, he has been an effective force in the development of a Catholic theology of inculturation. Alongside Mugambi’s model of reconstruction lies the Catholic model of inculturation. This theology has been a popular model for Catholic missions in Africa. Its premise is that the Gospel made relevant to indigenous peoples through the use of ethnic languages, customs, and cultural values. Defined by Alward Shorter, this concept is “the on-going dialogue between faith and culture or cultures. More fully, it is the creative and dynamic relationship between the Christian message and a culture or cultures.”⁵³ Inculturation make the Gospel applicable within a specific culture. But Mugambi notes that although Catholic missionaries use this model, it is not so popular among African Catholic Theologians. Instead of allowing the Gospel to merely change cultures, they would rather it be liberated from all cultural confines.⁵⁴

Regardless of the disagreement, the common understanding is that the church must do something and it must be done in an African way. Each theology attempts to liberate in its own way, through changing the views of outsiders or through re-establishing pride in the African culture. Each approach is based on the knowledge that one can never get away from the core values of being African. Like the Coptic Church in Ethiopia and Egypt, Christianity must become African or it will fail to impact and eventually die. Mugambi, Mbiti, Shorter and others are all still searching for ways to indigenize Christianity as they watch the world begin to listen to the black voices that were so long ignored.

⁵¹ Mugambi, *From Liberation to Reconstruction*, 49.

⁵² Michael Kirwen, Lecture, 18 November 1998, Koplring Guest House, Nairobi, Kenya.

⁵³ Aylward Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1988), 11.

⁵⁴ Mugambi, *From Liberation to Reconstruction*, 24.

Conclusion

In Africa it is always important to find a moral to your story. Here, the story is long, and many morals can be found. Now that the story has been told, it must never be forgotten. Now that Africans are speaking out, we are compelled to listen. These theologians excitedly anticipate a future for Africa. Perhaps one day the scores will even out. But for now we must remember the moral - Africa cannot be ignored. The beauty of ubuntu has surfaced and eagerly calls all races and all genders to unite for common goals. One day, genocide and war in Africa will cease. One day, Africa will enjoy the prosperity that has been stolen by the west. But until that day we will fight alongside the suffering and the poor to free scripture from its shackles, and to develop a new theologies, which are relevant to the many "rainbow people of God."⁵⁵ In doing so, perhaps we will experience our own liberation as we let go of the myths of race and difference, which have always held us captive. Let us remember that these problems can not be solved quickly or hurriedly, they took centuries to build and they will take time to unravel. But let us be diligent in the struggle, for that is our duty to humanity. We as Americans should never be content with our own freedom as long as people are oppressed. And if there's nothing we can do we must remember. For by forgetting the destitution of the world, we have allowed the oppressors "to sin for us."⁵⁶

⁵⁵ This phrase is used extensively by Desmond Tutu and is the title of one of his books.

⁵⁶ The Rustenburg Declaration, Confession 2.6, as found in Alberts and Chikane, ed., 278.

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PROCRASTINATION: THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN EXPERIMENTAL ACADEMIC PROCRASTINATION SCALE

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Introduction

Procrastination is neglecting to complete an assigned or required activity within a certain time limit.¹ Tuckman and Sexton defined procrastination as the tendency to delay completion of an activity under one's control.² Solomon and Rothblum defined it as "the act of needlessly delaying tasks to the point of experiencing subjective discomfort."³

No matter how procrastination is defined, it is a growing problem for many people, especially college students. Ellis and Knaus estimated that only 5 percent of college students are not affected by procrastination.⁴ Semb, Glick, and Spencer found that seniors procrastinate the most and freshman, the least.⁵ Tuckman hypothesized that college students might experience high levels of procrastination because of the changes in responsibility many undergo during the college years.⁶

¹ Caroline Senecal and Richard Koestner, "Self-regulation and Academic Procrastination," *Journal of Social Psychology* 135 (1995): 607-619.

² Bruce W. Tuckman, "The Development and Concurrent Validity of the Procrastination Scale," *Educational and Psychological Measurement* 51 (1991): 474.

³ Laura J. Solomon and Esther D. Rothblum, "Academic Procrastination: Frequency and Cognitive-behavioral Correlates," *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 31 (1984): 503.

⁴ Solomon and Rothblum

⁵ Solomon and Rothblum

⁶ Tuckman

Evidently, numerous people struggle with procrastination, but what causes it? Solomon and Rothblum speculated that possibilities include “evaluation anxiety, difficulty in making decisions, rebellion against control, lack of assertion, fear of the consequences of success, perceived aversiveness of the task, and overly perfectionistic standards about competency.”⁷ As cited in “Trait and Situational Factors in Procrastination,” several other researchers have found that the majority of academic procrastination stems from a fear of failure.⁸ According to Solomon and Rothblum’s study, the fear of failure factor results from evaluation anxiety, extreme perfectionism concerning one’s performance, and low self-confidence causing “students in this category [to] procrastinate because they cannot not meet their own or others’ expectations or because of concerns about poor performance.”⁹

Several studies have been conducted on procrastination and its relationship with other characteristics. In a study by Senecal and Koestner, students’ procrastination level was significantly associated with self-regulation of their academic behavior.¹⁰ Another study went further and found a positive correlation between anxiety and procrastination and a negative relationship between procrastination and grades.¹¹ It was also determined that persons with high self-efficacy tend to procrastinate less and vice versa.¹²

In addition to the studies conducted on procrastination, a few tests of measurement have been developed. The Procrastination Assessment Scale—Students (PASS), developed by Solomon and Rothblum, is one such test.¹³ PASS is a self-report test that has two parts which are both measured on a 5-point Likert scale. The first part measures procrastination in six different academic areas, while the second section measures the effect certain reasons have on causing a student’s procrastination. The level of procrastinating behavior of participants in Solomon and Rothblum’s study was also assessed. Subjects were given self-paced quizzes and the opportunity to choose between three experimental sessions scheduled throughout the semester. At the completion of the study, significant positive correlations were identified between the number of quizzes taken in the last third of the semester and self-reported procrastination in several areas including studying for tests and

⁷ Solomon and Rothblum

⁸ Caroline Senecal, Kim Lavoie, and Richard Koestner, “Trait and Situational Factors in Procrastination: An Interactional Model,” *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality* 12 (1997): 889-903.

⁹ Solomon and Rothblum, 508

¹⁰ Senecal and Koestner

¹¹ Anthony M. Owens and Ian Newbegin, “Procrastination in High School Achievement: A Causal Structural Model,” *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality* 12 (1997): 869-887.

¹² Laurel A Haycock, Patricia McCarthy, and Carol L. Skay, “Procrastination in College Students: The Role of Self-efficacy and Anxiety,” *Journal of Counseling and Development* 76 (1998): 317-324.

¹³ Solomon and Rothblum

writing papers. In addition, self-report of procrastination on administrative tasks was significantly greater in those students who went to the last session. Therefore, it was concluded that the PASS was a good measure of procrastination.¹⁴

Another test developed to measure procrastination is Tuckman's Procrastination Scale (PS). The PS measures procrastination levels using a 4-point Likert scale. A study was conducted to determine the reliability of the test. In addition to taking the test, participants (college students) were given the opportunity to participate in a Voluntary Homework System (VHS). The VHS allowed students to submit work in an effort to earn extra credit in their Educational Psychology class. The VHS was used in this study on the basis that it is a reflection of a student's tendency to procrastinate. The PS was found to have a .90 alpha reliability coefficient and a negative correlation (-.54) with the amount of VHS extra credit points obtained.¹⁵

Seeing as there are only a few tests that have been developed to measure procrastination, the purpose of this present study was to develop an academic procrastination scale and test its validity and reliability. According to Tuckman, "being able to accurately measure and predict the tendency to procrastinate may be useful in helping those students who may have a tendency to overcome procrastination before it overcomes them."¹⁶

Methods

Participants

Participants were 22 Gardner-Webb University students. Seven of the 22 participants were male and 15 of the participants were female. No extra credit or any other reward was given to any of the subjects.

Materials

The Experimental Academic Procrastination Scale (EAPS) was constructed by the four experimenters. The items were designed on the basis of personal and past experiences. The test consists of 16 questions, half of which deal with characteristics common to procrastination and the other half dealing with qualities that are representative of people who do not procrastinate. The EAPS uses a 5-point likert scale, with the answer of five being the tendency to procrastinate on an extreme level and the answer of one equating to non-procrastinating behavior.

A comparative procrastination scale was given along with the newly formed experimental academic procrastination scale, as a means for comparison. The original procrastination scale was devised by Bruce W. Tuckman as a means to measure procrastination. Tuckman's scale contained 35 questions. The possible answers were selected from a four-level scale

¹⁴ Solomon and Rothblum

¹⁵ Tuckman

¹⁶ Tuckman, 474

(A: That's me for sure, B: That's my tendency, C: That's not my tendency, D: That's not me for sure).

Procedure

Participants were randomly selected from students on the Gardner-Webb University campus. The participants were asked to read and then sign a consent form that informed the subjects of the type of tests they were about to take and the purpose of the research. The consent forms also discussed the fact that the surveys were anonymous and that the subject could quit at any time. Then the survey was given to the participants. It contained the two tests; the first, the Experimental Academic Procrastination Scale, and the second, the procrastination scale by Tuckman. The order was standardized on all surveys distributed. After taking the survey, the participants were orally debriefed and once again reassured of their anonymity on the survey. The participants were thanked for their time and asked to contact the researchers for the final results of the study.

Results

The descriptive statistics were calculated for each individual test item in both the EAPS and PS. The mean and standard deviation for each test item in the EAPS is displayed in Table 1. The mean scores ranged from 1.9545 to 3.6818. The mean and standard deviation for each test item in the PS is displayed in Table 2. These mean scores ranged from 1.2727 to 3.3182. In addition, the scores on each test item were correlated with other test items in that particular test. These correlations are displayed in Table 3 and Table 4.

For total test scores, the EAPS had a mean of 45.5455 and a standard deviation of 9.0645. In comparison, the PS had a mean of 81.8636 and a standard deviation of 14.9230 for total test scores. (See Table 5).

A reliability analysis was computed and both tests had high reliability values.¹⁷ However, the PS had an alpha value slightly higher than the EAPS. The EAPS had an alpha value of .8744, while the PS had an alpha value of .9068. (See Table 6). Also, a Pearson Product Moment Correlation was calculated, and a moderate correlation was revealed between the two tests ($r=.67$).¹⁸

¹⁷ SPSS (1999)

¹⁸ SPSS (1999)

Table 1

Experimental Academic Procrastination Scale Descriptive Statistics

<u>Question #</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>
1	3.5455	0.8579
2	2.8636	0.9902
3	2.7273	0.9351
4	3.4091	1.0538
5	3.6818	0.8937
6	2.0909	0.8679
7	2.0455	0.9501
8	1.9545	1.2141
9	2.2727	0.9351
10	3.2273	0.9726
11	3.5455	0.7385
12	3.3182	1.0861
13	2.2273	0.9726
14	3.2273	0.8125
15	2.5909	0.9591
16	2.8182	1.0527

Table 2

Tuckman's Procrastination Scale Descriptive Statistics

<u>Question #</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>
1	2.5000	0.9129
2	3.0455	0.7854
3	2.5909	0.9081
4	2.2727	1.0320
5	1.9091	0.7502
6	1.6364	0.5811
7	2.4091	0.8541
8	2.8636	0.8335
9	2.5455	1.0568
10	2.1364	0.8888
11	2.3182	0.8387
12	2.2273	0.8125
13	2.3636	0.9535
14	2.7727	1.0204
15	1.8636	0.9409
16	1.4545	0.5096
17	2.2727	0.9351
18	2.2273	1.1519
19	3.1818	0.9580
20	1.2727	0.5505
21	1.9091	0.9715
22	1.9545	1.0455
23	2.2727	0.9351
24	2.3636	0.7895
25	2.0000	0.6172
26	3.3182	0.6463
27	2.3636	0.7895
28	2.4091	0.9591
29	2.8636	0.6396
30	2.0000	0.9258
31	2.4091	0.8541
32	2.8182	0.8528
33	2.3636	0.9021
34	2.4545	1.0108
35	2.5000	0.8018

Table 3

Correlation Matrix
Experimental Academic Procrastination Scale

Question #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1	1.0000															
2	0.5402	1.0000														
3	0.4911	0.4722	1.0000													
4	0.6896	0.4211	0.3119	1.0000												
5	0.7340	0.4867	0.6320	0.5999	1.0000											
6	0.4419	0.4030	0.4427	0.4781	0.5916	1.0000										
7	0.3187	0.1081	0.1754	0.3135	0.2422	0.2835	1.0000									
8	0.2078	0.1926	0.2402	-0.1337	0.2055	0.1397	-0.1220	1.0000								
9	0.5180	0.4535	0.6337	0.7029	0.6216	0.4961	0.1998	0.2631	1.0000							
10	0.2439	-0.1146	-0.0857	0.2767	0.1967	0.2000	0.1944	0.2915	0.1380	1.0000						
11	0.5603	0.2368	0.5015	0.4951	0.4919	0.4390	0.3702	0.4538	0.6017	0.4159	1.0000					
12	0.6226	0.3965	0.6521	0.5050	0.6489	0.5741	0.4007	0.3004	0.6607	0.2438	0.8419	1.0000				
13	0.4151	0.1821	0.2285	0.3696	0.4707	0.5385	0.4521	-0.2328	0.1904	-0.0069	0.1507	0.1988	1.0000			
14	0.1553	0.4547	0.2108	0.1087	0.1699	0.5771	0.2327	0.0110	0.2279	-0.1890	-0.0577	0.1300	0.4739	1.0000		
15	0.2262	0.5903	0.0821	0.3619	0.3409	0.3328	0.2827	-0.0576	0.3427	0.2065	0.1956	0.2223	0.3086	0.4916	1.0000	
16	0.2205	0.2035	0.3826	0.1561	0.3911	0.1753	0.2467	0.0677	0.2463	0.3213	0.2561	0.2612	0.2283	-0.0607	0.0171	1.0000

Table 4
Correlation Matrix
Tuckman's Procrastination Scale

Question #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1	1.0000																
2	0.5645	1.0000															
3	0.5066	0.7617	1.0000														
4	0.5560	0.2190	0.2264	1.0000													
5	0.4172	0.2498	0.0826	0.5256	1.0000												
6	0.1795	0.3510	0.1456	0.3321	0.5760	1.0000											
7	0.2136	0.6093	0.4716	0.2456	0.0608	0.2181	1.0000										
8	0.0313	0.3006	0.4261	0.0453	-0.1731	0.0894	0.3496	1.0000									
9	0.2468	0.4880	0.3428	0.2501	0.2457	0.2608	0.3213	0.0344	1.0000								
10	0.2054	0.1953	0.3674	0.3205	0.0903	0.3772	0.2361	0.0596	0.5254	1.0000							
11	-0.2799	-0.1676	-0.5712	-0.1050	0.1238	-0.0444	-0.1904	-0.6842	-0.1514	-0.3803	1.0000						
12	0.4815	0.2065	0.3256	0.6041	0.2693	0.1834	0.2022	0.0224	0.0706	0.5486	-0.3208	1.0000					
13	0.6565	0.5492	0.5650	0.3764	0.1150	0.3360	0.2764	0.3649	0.4081	0.3882	-0.3896	0.3800	1.0000				
14	0.1769	0.1323	0.2346	-0.0288	-0.0283	0.1452	-0.0522	0.5217	-0.1445	0.0356	-0.5235	0.2376	0.3337	1.0000			
15	0.1386	-0.0557	-0.1241	0.6286	0.5213	0.3405	0.1033	-0.2070	-0.0653	0.1941	0.1783	0.4785	0.0048	-0.0834	1.0000		
16	0.2047	0.1839	0.1122	0.4774	0.6114	0.5847	0.0995	0.0408	-0.0402	0.1722	0.0911	0.1986	0.0358	-0.0666	0.7312	1.0000	
17	0.3905	0.5010	0.3619	0.1660	0.3085	0.2788	0.0326	0.1722	0.1314	-0.0466	-0.1156	0.1652	0.3107	0.1180	0.3145	0.3270	1.0000
18	0.5661	0.4617	0.6849	0.3860	0.1904	-0.0841	0.2398	0.3810	0.3627	0.4334	-0.5713	0.5527	0.5715	0.1676	0.1178	0.0590	0.2934
19	0.1634	0.1151	0.3633	0.3328	-0.1084	0.2100	0.3122	0.6289	-0.0656	0.1373	-0.5495	0.0056	0.2891	0.2875	0.0816	0.1153	0.1546
20	0.1895	0.0801	0.0433	0.5334	0.6395	0.3246	0.0552	-0.0169	0.3051	0.2123	-0.0938	0.3871	0.1650	-0.0540	0.4430	0.3856	0.0336
21	0.2685	0.3177	0.2257	-0.0216	0.3802	0.1917	0.0470	0.1016	0.1434	0.0702	-0.1966	0.2084	0.0888	-0.0218	0.0800	0.2798	0.7100
22	0.6237	0.4666	0.6817	0.3210	0.1766	0.0495	0.2883	0.3740	0.2390	0.3144	-0.5801	0.5733	0.5906	0.3023	0.1386	0.0406	0.5493
23	0.4463	0.3713	0.3616	0.7581	0.3085	0.2786	0.3903	0.3554	0.3323	0.4687	-0.2881	0.6039	0.4710	0.0581	0.3149	0.2271	0.3465
24	0.5946	0.5864	0.6158	0.3983	0.3801	0.1981	0.2833	0.3684	0.0934	0.1974	-0.3269	0.6073	0.5118	0.4621	0.0699	0.1614	0.3108
25	0.3381	0.4911	0.4248	0.2990	0.4114	0.3983	0.1807	0.2777	0.1460	0.2604	-0.2760	0.5697	0.4046	0.3025	0.1640	0.3026	0.4125
26	0.3632	0.4392	0.5566	0.0779	0.0626	-0.0576	0.2706	0.3495	0.1521	0.0038	-0.5470	0.0371	0.1124	0.1871	-0.0819	0.1183	0.0856
27	0.0661	-0.1047	-0.1811	0.1063	-0.0219	-0.0094	-0.4430	-0.3552	0.0363	0.0617	-0.4665	0.0135	0.0690	-0.1290	0.1340	0.1614	0.0526
28	0.6255	0.6063	0.7480	0.2666	0.5257	0.1942	0.1348	0.2518	0.2961	0.3783	-0.4665	0.5472	0.5566	0.4888	0.1175	0.0886	0.3068
29	0.3670	0.2025	0.3913	0.2755	0.0722	0.1165	0.1070	0.5887	0.0343	0.3374	-0.7142	0.3374	0.3194	0.7529	-0.0324	0.3020	0.2234
30	0.2254	0.1965	0.3398	0.2990	-0.1371	0.0885	0.2406	0.1851	-0.0487	0.5208	-0.2453	0.5064	0.3776	0.0504	0.4373	0.3026	0.1660
31	0.0916	0.4675	0.2674	0.1375	0.0095	0.3140	0.2819	0.2819	0.2666	0.1112	-0.0574	0.1341	0.0425	0.1118	0.1320	0.3183	0.1518
32	0.4893	0.3684	0.6372	0.0590	0.1216	0.1485	0.1724	0.4994	0.2209	0.0971	-0.7807	0.6626	0.3780	0.3333	-0.2688	-0.0196	0.2443
33	-0.3468	-0.1586	-0.0423	-0.2651	-0.1595	-0.0991	0.0443	0.1957	0.0316	-0.0054	-0.3491	-0.1181	-0.3271	-0.0094	-0.1071	-0.1695	-0.0103
34	0.7723	0.6925	0.8348	0.3320	0.3083	0.1327	0.3260	0.3597	0.3809	0.2987	-0.5157	0.4481	0.6109	0.2896	0.0683	0.1346	0.4672
35	0.0976	0.2647	0.1635	0.6331	0.3167	0.4086	0.5911	0.3206	0.3372	0.3007	-0.2478	0.4020	0.2492	0.0291	0.4724	0.3496	0.1270

Table 4 (continued)
Correlation Matrix
 Tuckman's Procrastination Scale

Question #	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35
1																		
2																		
3																		
4																		
5																		
6																		
7																		
8																		
9																		
10																		
11																		
12																		
13																		
14																		
15																		
16																		
17																		
18	1.0000																	
19	0.2197	1.0000																
20	0.2731	-0.0985	1.0000															
21	0.2747	-0.1681	0.1376	1.0000														
22	0.7998	0.2464	0.1880	0.4846	1.0000													
23	0.4702	0.3144	0.4037	0.2807	0.5491	1.0000												
24	0.6902	0.0973	0.3088	0.2934	0.6554	0.5042	1.0000											
25	0.5356	0.0000	0.2803	0.4765	0.4428	0.4125	0.7817	1.0000										
26	0.4739	0.2867	0.0122	0.0483	0.3043	-0.0716	0.2290	0.1194	1.0000									
27	-0.1476	-0.3434	-0.0195	-0.0165	-0.2098	-0.0117	0.0065	0.0000	-0.5175	1.0000								
28	0.7308	0.1743	0.1394	0.2974	0.7792	0.4006	0.7374	0.5631	0.3946	-0.1424	1.0000							
29	0.3572	0.5087	0.1107	0.0557	0.5600	0.3836	0.4801	0.2412	0.4555	-0.4624	0.5610	1.0000						
30	0.3572	0.2146	0.0934	0.0000	0.3930	0.3850	0.1303	0.0000	0.0796	0.0000	0.3218	0.0804	1.0000					
31	0.1430	0.0212	0.3591	0.1617	0.0751	0.0325	0.3335	0.2710	0.2705	0.1925	0.1925	0.0198	0.0000	1.0000				
32	0.4803	0.3921	0.1107	0.2665	0.5776	0.1249	0.3150	0.1805	0.7147	-0.4628	0.4446	0.6508	0.0000	0.1070	1.0000			
33	0.0542	0.0852	-0.0174	0.1482	0.2203	-0.1232	-0.1945	-0.2566	0.2821	-0.3951	-0.0700	0.2551	0.0000	0.1668	0.3995	1.0000		
34	0.8068	0.2097	0.3657	0.3351	0.8316	0.4168	0.7377	0.4580	0.4970	-0.0976	0.7815	0.4687	0.3053	0.3811	0.6528	0.0712	1.0000	
35	0.2836	0.3720	0.4316	0.0611	0.3692	0.6351	0.2257	0.1925	0.1376	-0.3008	0.1548	0.3250	0.3208	0.3129	0.1383	0.3292	0.2350	1.0000

Table 5**Descriptive Statistics
for Total Test Scores**

<u>Test</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>
EAPS	45.5455	9.0645
PS	81.8636	14.9230

Table 6**Reliability Analysis**

<u>Test</u>	<u>Alpha Value</u>
Experimental Academic Procrastination Scale	0.8744
Tuckman's Procrastination Scale	0.9068

Discussion

In this study, an academic procrastination scale was developed and its reliability and validity was tested. In order to test the newly developed scale, the EAPS was correlated with Tuckman's Procrastination Scale. Tuckman's scale has been proven to have good concurrent validity, displaying a negative correlation with the General Self-Efficacy Scale and a behavioral measure of self-regulated performance.¹⁹ A moderate correlation was found between the two tests proving the experimental test to have construct validity. However, the expected high correlation was not found. This could possibly be a result of the fact that the experimental test was focused more towards academic procrastination, whereas, the PS was used to measure procrastination on a more general scale.

Although a high reliability value was found for the EAPS ($\alpha=0.8744$), Tuckman's scale revealed a higher value ($\alpha=0.9068$). An explanation for these results could vary directly with test length. Tuckman's scale consisted of 35 items, while the EAPS consisted only of 16 items. A revision of the experimental test should include additional items in an effort to increase its reliability.

In order to further prove the reliability and validity of the EAPS, additional testing should be conducted. A possible method would be through the use of test-retest reliability procedure. Since pilot testing was only conducted with 22 college students, further testing should incorporate a larger number of participants at various academic stages (middle school, high school, etc.) or with differing socioeconomic levels.

Identifying one's level of procrastination could be a helpful aid to many students. By taking the EAPS, students can determine their level of procrastination, and in turn, develop techniques to better manage and control their time management deficiencies.

The EAPS was only a measure of academic procrastination. It is also evident that there are several other types of procrastination such as procrastination involving work, health issues, finances, household chores, etc. Supplementary tests should be researched and constructed to measure these other areas of procrastination leading to the development of sub-tests that could be given together to assess one's total procrastination tendency.

¹⁹ Tuckman

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Appendix A

Experimental Academic Procrastination Scale & Tuckman's Procrastination Scale

Circle your class status: freshman sophomore junior senior

Circle your gender: Male Female

Read each statement carefully and then circle the appropriate number.

1. I tend to wait until the last minute to complete assigned tasks.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Hardly Ever	Sometimes	Often	Always

2. I feel my work is better completed when my time is limited.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Hardly Ever	Sometimes	Often	Always

3. I allow myself ample time to ensure my tasks are completed thoroughly and correctly.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Hardly Ever	Sometimes	Often	Always

4. I feel that I have trouble with procrastinating on certain tasks.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Hardly Ever	Sometimes	Often	Always

5. I begin to complete my tasks as soon as they are assigned.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Hardly Ever	Sometimes	Often	Always

6. I feel that my life is in control when I finish my task in a timely manner.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Hardly Ever	Sometimes	Often	Always

7. My confidence level in my ability to complete tasks causes me to procrastinate.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Hardly Ever	Sometimes	Often	Always

8. I tend to put off assignments in hope that the due date will be postponed.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Hardly Ever	Sometimes	Often	Always

9. It is important to me to prioritize my activities.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Hardly Ever	Sometimes	Often	Always

10. I feel waiting until the last minute to complete an assignment will negatively affect my grade.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Hardly Ever	Sometimes	Often	Always

11. If something better comes up, I tend to put my homework off.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Hardly Ever	Sometimes	Often	Always

12. I am disciplined in time management and prefer to get my work done as soon as possible.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Hardly Ever	Sometimes	Often	Always

13. I begin to feel pressure when my time is limited.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Hardly Ever	Sometimes	Often	Always

14. I feel I do a better job when I work under pressure.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Hardly Ever	Sometimes	Often	Always

15. I tend to be hard on myself when a deadline is near and I haven't used my time wisely.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Hardly Ever	Sometimes	Often	Always

16. I feel my lack of knowledge of the subject matter often causes me to procrastinate.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Hardly Ever	Sometimes	Often	Always

Indicate how you feel about each statement by placing the appropriate letter in the blank.

A = That's me for sure

B = That's my tendency

C = That's not my tendency

D = That's not me for sure

- _____ 1. I needlessly delay finishing jobs, even when they're important.
- _____ 2. I postpone starting in on things I don't like to do.
- _____ 3. When I have a deadline, I wait till the last minute.
- _____ 4. I delay making tough decisions.
- _____ 5. I stall on initiating new activities.
- _____ 6. I'm on time for appointments.
- _____ 7. I keep putting off improving my work habits.
- _____ 8. I get right to work, even on life's unpleasant chores.
- _____ 9. I manage to find an excuse for not doing something.
- _____ 10. I avoid doing those things which I expect to do poorly.
- _____ 11. I put the necessary time into even boring tasks, like studying.
- _____ 12. When I get tired of an unpleasant job, I stop.
- _____ 13. I believe in "keeping my nose to the grindstone."
- _____ 14. When something's not worth the trouble, I stop.
- _____ 15. I believe that things I don't like doing should not exist.
- _____ 16. I consider people who make me do unfair and difficult things to be rotten.
- _____ 17. When it counts, I can manage to enjoy even studying.
- _____ 18. I am an incurable time waster.
- _____ 19. I feel that it's my absolute right to have other people treat me fairly.

- _____ 20. I believe that other people don't have the right to give me deadlines.
- _____ 21. Studying makes me feel entirely miserable.
- _____ 22. I'm a time waster now but I can't seem to do anything about it.
- _____ 23. When something's too tough to tackle, I believe in postponing it.
- _____ 24. I promise myself I'll do something and then drag my feet.
- _____ 25. Whenever I make a plan of action, I follow it.
- _____ 26. I wish I could find an easy way to get myself moving.
- _____ 27. When I have trouble with a task, it's usually my own fault.
- _____ 28. Even though I hate myself if I don't get started, it doesn't get me going.
- _____ 29. I always finish important jobs with time to spare.
- _____ 30. When I'm done with my work, I check it over.
- _____ 31. I look for a loophole or shortcut to get through a tough task.
- _____ 32. I still get stuck in neutral even though I know how important it is to get started.
- _____ 33. I never met a job I couldn't "lick."
- _____ 34. Putting something off until tomorrow is not the way I do it.
- _____ 35. I feel that work burns me out.

Appendix B

CONSENT FORM

I, _____, voluntarily give my consent to serve as a participant in a questionnaire study conducted by Jennifer Crumpler, Laura King, Kristi Rudasill, and Mandy Stevens. I have received a clear explanation of the general nature and purpose of the questionnaire. I have been informed of the kind of questionnaire I will be taking and how the results will be used.

I realize that it may not be possible for the examiner to explain all aspects of the questionnaire to me until it has been completed and the results have been calculated. It is also my understanding that I may terminate my participation in the questionnaire at any time. I grasp the fact that the results will be used as data in the examiner's study and will remain anonymous.

Signature: _____

Appendix C

Debriefing Statement

The survey you have taken today is a combination of two surveys. The first survey is one that was developed by my partners and me. The second survey is the Procrastination Scale developed by Bruce Tuckman. Our survey was designed to measure procrastination levels, too. We are going to use the scores on Tuckman's test to verify that our test is valid. If you would like to know more about our test and its validity, after the study is completed, you may contact Kristi Rudasill, Mandy Stevens, Laura King or Jennifer Crumpler.

“THIS IS MY STORY”:

KATHLEEN NORRIS WRITES THEOLOGY

MARYDEAN JONES

“God made man because he loves stories.” – Elie Wiesel

As a child, I often questioned whether or not I was saved, whether God was truly in my life just as much as my parents were. As a pastor’s daughter, I was surrounded by stories of conversion, most of which did not sound much like mine. In my tradition, “being saved,” was portrayed as a one-time event, a divine revelation, an epiphany. I heard about lives changed dramatically in one rapturous moment. They had seen the light, or had been drawn to the altar by some mysterious force, like magic. Now they were saved and were living their lives for God. I had “asked Jesus into my heart”; I remember lying in my bed when I was about five and saying some sort of prayer of acceptance and then telling my parents the next morning, but I did not always feel saved or even holy. Then there was the time when I was in fifth grade and I went up the aisle, just to make sure. I confused my parents, and probably the lady who was counseling me. Sometimes I “asked Jesus into my heart” several times a day out of fear of endless flames and gnashing teeth, but I continued to feel that somehow I was missing something. I got that ecstatic feeling I thought I should have sometimes, but it was not always there. My life was pretty normal. My life of faith has been different from many of the stories I’ve heard. Sometimes I seem to progress and other times I feel distant from God, in the dark. On some days I feel like I am just meeting God for the first time. What does it mean to be saved? What does it look and feel like? Am I normal?

I doubted the validity of my salvation experience until even college where I met a friend who was honest enough to admit she could not pinpoint the date and the hour of her conversion either. However, she believed that did not negate her salvation. Her story encouraged me, and as I began to share my story I found other people with similar experiences. When I read Kathleen Norris’s account of her conversion as a process rather than an immediate change, I found my story! I am learning that my experience of God is just one of many ways to come to know Him.

My response to Norris’s work, of connection, comfort and acceptance, is

echoed in reviews, interviews, and readers' responses to her writing. But why would I and other readers find such a connection to this author? Kathleen Norris grew up attending a Presbyterian church, but in her teens, she left the church and her faith. She became a poet, and not until she moved from New York to Lemmon, South Dakota, to take care of the house and property left by her grandmother, did she rediscover the faith of her family. In Lemmon, she began to attend her grandmother's small church. She also chanced upon a Benedictine monastery and later spent two nine-months terms at the Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research at St. John's Abbey in Minnesota. Both encounters with religion nurtured her growing faith in God. Norris was originally a poet, and has written collections of poetry including: *Falling Off*, *The Middle of the World*, and *Little Girls in Church*. Her nonfiction works are collages of different genres including memoir, spiritual autobiography, storytelling, essays, hagiography, and narrative theology. These include *Dakota: A Spiritual Geography*, *Cloister Walk*, written in reflection of time Norris spent at St. John's Abbey, and *Amazing Grace*, an examination of the words of the Christian faith and Norris's encounter with them.

How would a woman poet in her forties who has no post-college education, is well-versed in feminism, spends time in monasteries, and quotes the Bible and 4th century desert mothers and fathers as readily as Thomas Merton and Emily Dickinson, manage to gain acceptance outside the mainstream Christian audience? According to an editorial review, "Norris is a feminist, a theological conservative, a sophisticate, and a country bumpkin" and her work a "thoroughly original investigation of faith" (Editorial Reviews: *Amazing Grace*). *The Cloister Walk* was a New York Times Notable Book of the Year, and remained on the newspaper's bestseller list for eight weeks. *Mirabella*, a popular magazine similar to *Glamour* or *Cosmopolitan*, named Norris one of the 25 smartest women in the United States in 1991. According to the article's author Lisa Shea, Norris:

has assumed the mantle of a thinking woman's guide to the modern-day exigencies of belief. Employing neither the language of self-help nor the old-fashioned idiom of fire and brimstone, Norris charts her own course—one that is personal, liturgical, and beautifully plainspoken. (par. 8)

Shea writes that Norris has written of her conversion "for women whose idea of belief is neither stuck in the paternalistic past nor wallowing in the present-day mire of quick fixes and pious bromides" (par. 9). *The New York Times* reviewer Robert Coles wrote in a review of *The Cloister Walk* that Norris's works are about "the biggest subject matter possible: how one ought to live a life" (Coles). Popular mainstream Christian writer Philip Yancey said of Norris: "I find her eloquent, honest, and invariably stimulating. She has strengthened and warmed the faith of old-timers like me, and made many readers take Christianity seriously for the very first time" (Lion Publishing).

Explanations for the success of Norris's work require an examination of

the way Christian theology, the study of God, has been written in the past, and the way in which Norris works within this tradition to reach the modern audience. This modern audience has been influenced by the feminist movement and greater equality among the sexes. Norris's writing must also be examined for ways she shows the ideas of female spirituality, or the concept that women view and relate to God in distinct ways. Norris must also meet the needs of an audience searching for ways to move beyond gender roles.

Molly McQuade, in the *Chicago Tribune*, wrote of *The Cloister Walk*, "I was struck by her apparent reinvention of nonfiction. Little writing that is published now can truly be called new. . . . Yet Norris reminded me then, and still reminds me now, that some things may remain to be done with facts and words" (*The Cloister Walk* cover). Norris reinvents nonfiction, and in particular the writing of theology. James McClendon, in his book *Biography as Theology: How Life Stories Can Remake Today's Theology*, says that theologians need to "do better work," evident in the intimidation most people feel about theology (89). In a review of *Amazing Grace* in *People Weekly*, the author writes, "Rather than knock readers over the head with dictionary definitions or constant references to God and the Bible, she combines an impressive understanding of theology with personal experiences, making her essays read like letters from a highly literate friend" (31). Irene Stoud, in *Women's Review of Books*, writes that in *Amazing Grace*, Norris "dusts off these dryseeming words and tells stories about them, rescuing them from deadly abstraction with accounts of the life-changing, life-giving experiences they can represent" (par. 2).

The theology these reviewers found so inviting in Norris's work is narrative or story theology, a theology that incarnates beliefs and doctrines in stories. Doctrine or dogmas analyze and spell out the ideas of faith in precise definitions or creeds. According to Terrence Tilley, author of the book *Story Theology*, a theology made up of doctrine--propositional theology--"has difficulty showing how the faith enters into the lives of believers" (4). The ideas are there, but how they work in everyday life is harder to grasp.

In an article on Christian autobiography, Gregory Jones writes that stories are essential because they incarnate doctrine, showing how the words and metaphors of the faith are lived out in real life. This is fundamental since Christian beliefs are not words only, but truths embedded in every part of life (31). In his book, *What's So Amazing About Grace*, Philip Yancey explores the Christian idea of grace. He writes:

To borrow E.B. White's comment about humor, "[Grace] can be dissected, as a frog, but the thing dies in the process, and the innards are discouraging to any but the pure scientific mind." I have just read a thirteen page treatise on grace in the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, which has cured me of any desire to dissect grace and display its innards. I do not want the thing to die. (Yancey 16)

Rather than dissect or pick apart the intricacies of ideas, stories "contextualize"

or place them in real life, demonstrating their often multiple meanings (Tilley 5,11-12).

Tilley asserts that to tell the stories of Christians who try to demonstrate or live out the life of Jesus, is to keep telling the story of Jesus (xix). Norris's view of writing theology corresponds to the aims of narrative theology. She writes of this concept in the introduction to *Amazing Grace*:

Faith does not conform itself to ideology but to experience. And for the Christian this means the experience of the person of Jesus Christ, not as someone who once lived in Galilee but who lives now in all believers. It is this faith in Christ as a living person that is most inexplicable outside of the experience of faith, and also most fragile, in that the church as an institution has often seemed bent on preserving a dead idol. (4-5)

The importance of stories is that without writing new stories that bring the life of Jesus into the lives of people living now, Jesus threatens to become a “dead idol,” a mythical figure shut in the pages of the Bible—a comfortable distance removed. There one can avoid the implications of the “mystery” which is “Christ in you” (Col. 1:27 NIV).

Norris writes narrative theology most explicitly in her book, *Amazing Grace*, and also in her other works. In *Amazing Grace*, each chapter is titled after a key word or idea in the Christian faith, such as “incarnation,” “heresy,” “unchurched,” and “faith.” Some chapters contain Norris's reflections, experiences, or stories that flesh out the meaning of these words. In the introduction to the book Norris states:

My book might be seen as a search for lower consciousness, an attempt to remove the patina of abstraction or glassy-eyed piety from religious words, by telling stories about them, by grounding them in the world we live in as mortal and often comically fallible human beings. What follows is an exploration and a record of my engagement with some of the words in the Christian lexicon that most trouble and attract me. I hope that the reader will indulge me as I try on my scary words for size, as I wiggle them around on my tongue, as I play with them, and let their odd stories unfold. (*Amazing Grace* 8-9)

Norris's purpose is therefore not to nail down concrete definitions for words and beliefs—libraries are full of books of theology on any subject from incarnation to heresy—but to show possible meanings of those words and ways to live them.

Norris calls this way of finding meaning a “poetic way of knowing.” She experienced this “way of knowing” in her experience in the monastery, where readings of the liturgy, or scripture, set a rhythm of life. Ideas were not preached, but soaked in—from the way of life, fellowship with others,

contemplation, prayer, and reading of the scripture. She writes that Benedictines "value image and symbol over utilitarian purpose or the bottom line; they recognize the transformative power hiding in the simplest things" (*Cloister Walk* 146). She finds that in this way of knowing, or finding meaning, there is room for the largeness of God, the mystery. She writes, "God-talk is a form of idolatry, a way of making God small and manageable" (*Amazing Grace* 213). Narrative theology, by not seeking to define God or concepts of the faith in strict terms, lets readers find meaning in the way Norris did at the monastery. It also avoids "God-talk" by showing His life in the life of His creation.

A chapter titled, "Unchurched," in *Amazing Grace* provides a pithy example of narrative theology. Norris tells of a pastor who asked a local grocer to prepare food for a meeting of ministers, who, the pastor explained, have a "special outreach to the 'unchurched.'" Norris compares the word "unchurched" to "deplaned." She writes, "My favorite days are those in which I am a thoroughly "deplaned" person (*Amazing Grace* 311). When the pastor received the deli plate from the grocer, "he was startled to find that the centerpiece was a cross constructed out of slices of bologna" (*Amazing Grace* 311). This story questions the self-righteousness of the "churched," and the church's ability to judge whether people have been "churched" or not. Norris implies the superficiality of the distinction. Christian concepts of cultivating humility, and not judging others lie embedded in this story.

Michael A. King, in his article, "Flesh on Dry Bones: Combining Doctrine and Story," explains that traditionally doctrine has stood above story, but people respond to stories more actively than to doctrine. If Tilley's argument that stories show how doctrines and ideas are lived out and if King's assertion is correct that people respond more readily to stories, then narrative theology is more important and "fundamental" than propositional theology (Tilley 11). This theology explains in part the success of Norris's works—they connect to readers and offer a theology that enters into everyday life.

Doctrine is not discarded in narrative theology. King explains that doctrine and story need each other: "The skeleton of doctrine . . . helps structure and interpret the story of our lives" (39). The two "hold each other accountable" and are both needed (40). Norris's works are grounded in the basic doctrines of Christianity, but she explores how this doctrine enters everyday life. Stories also help to clarify what King calls the "gray areas," where doctrine does not answer certain questions (King 41). For example, what does it mean to love your neighbor? To answer this question Jesus told a story of a Samaritan, a race despised by Jews, who helped a helpless Jewish man he found beaten on the side of the road. Similarly Norris tells the story of meeting a gay hairstylist in New York. As the man cut her hair and discovered she had spent time with Benedictines, he explained how he found love and acceptance among a church of Trappist monks: "They don't preach at you, they let you experience it for yourself," said the man, "You know, I've never felt so close to God before or since. It blew me the f— away." Norris responded, "Yes, . . . I know what you mean" (*Cloister Walk* 70). She too had experienced the acceptance of the

monastery while still guarded by doubt and distrust of God and the church. Norris answers the question of who is my neighbor—in this case a man alienated from his family and much of his society because of his lifestyle. The story also suggests that, more than preaching, the witness of faith lived out ministers to people.

Stories then, become examples of how we should act and live (Jones 35). Tilley outlines three types of stories: myths, parables and actions. Myths create a new reality, or place, while parables “upset worlds” (39). For example, the story the prophet Nathan tells David about a rich man who killed the poor man’s beloved sheep functions as a parable that allows David to see his own sin in another’s life. Action stories are real stories that can be either factual or fiction (Tilley 51). Norris write factual stories—both autobiography and biography. Norris also continues the tradition of the church by writing hagiography, or the sometimes fictionalized stories of saints’ lives (Jones 35). She writes about Jerome, grumpy and difficult; Therese, who struggled with doubt even at her death; the prophet Jeremiah, who bore the burden of sorrow for his people; and Mechtild of Magdeburg, a mystic, poet, and sharp and outspoken critic of the church. She tells the story of Mary of Egypt, a woman who prostituted herself from the age of twelve, until she repented and spent the rest of her life a hermit in the desert. These stories become examples of how the Christian faith can be lived out (Jones 35).

The story that laces together Norris’s books is her autobiography. Her stories of her process of conversion show the doctrines of salvation and transformation played out in her life. Her story falls into the genre of spiritual autobiography, or autobiography focused on “narrating how [one’s] life has been located in the story of God” (Jones 34). This genre developed even before the works of Paul in the Bible and Saint Augustine, whose spiritual autobiography remains the standard (Mandelker and Powers 16). According to Amy Mandelker and Elizabeth Powers, editors of a collection of spiritual autobiographies, the spiritual autobiographies of writers since Augustine, including Norris, follow the pattern he set with his *Confessions*. Augustine’s pattern consisted of an account of life before awakening to God, a description of the events that led to the encounter with God, an account of the actual conversion, and then a description of new life with God (Mandelker and Powers 16). On careful examination, it becomes clear that Norris diverges from this pattern in specific ways that can be explained by her gender.

Ann Graff, in an article on theology and naming women’s experiences, calls theology “a conversation” that needs to include women’s experiences (232). The idea that women’s experiences are unique is based on the concept of “gender constructs,” separate from “sexual identity,” that prescribe what it means to be male and female (Graff 218). Gender is distinct from sex because it is not inborn characteristics, but characteristics expected of the sexes by society and culture (Graff 218). Note that I am not attempting to distinguish which characteristics can be attributed to nature or to nurture, but would simply like to make readers aware of what some writers have argued were traits common in most women. I emphasize most *women*—none of these traits can be

said to be common of *all* women. The experiences of women are hard to generalize, since they differ with race, social situation, nationality, and culture (Graff 219).

Because men and women have been subject to different expectations, argues Josephine Donovan in her article, "Towards a Women's Poetics," women have developed their own culture with its own values, and writing with an "ordering or structural principle . . . derived from women's culture and women's epistemology" (Donovan 105). The view that women and their lifestyles and roles should be regarded as a separate culture is called "cultural feminism" (Donovan 100). Traditionally, women's poetics, which can include Norris's creative non-fiction, has been judged by androcentric criticism, based on a male-dominated culture. However, female culture and writing, which carries its own set of values, needs to be judged in view of "women's ways of seeing, a women's epistemology," which shapes "gynocentric criticism," or criticism from the view or in view of female culture (Donovan 98). Under the lens of cultural feminism, Kathleen Norris's work shows the threads of women's epistemology, or "ways of knowing" (Donovan 98).

Ann Graff, in her article, "The Struggle to Name Women's Experience: Assessment and Implications for Theological Construction," states that the experiences that have shaped early theology ("mid-twentieth century and during many centuries prior") have been those of the people writing theology—mostly men, and mostly white. Only including narratives dominated by male experiences and patterns is problematic for women. According to Carolyn Heilbrun, author of *Writing a Woman's Life*, "We can only retell and live by the stories we have read or heard. We live our lives through texts" (37). Texts, or scripts, are the stories we are told, whether through the lives we see, the movies we watch, the literature we read, or what we see on television. They give us examples of how lives are lived. Without texts for spirituality that go beyond the ones already written, such as the one established by Augustine, people do not find acceptance because the texts offered don't resound with their lives. In particular, if women do not find their experiences represented in theology, they feel estranged from it (Ochs 144).

Thus, Norris's work is important and finds connection not only because she uses story theology, but because she incorporates into theology a woman's experience of faith. Norris develops a narrative theology that expands the scripts written for Christian believers, both men and women. Her writing is saturated with the branch of cultural feminism called female spirituality, the theory of women's unique experience of and relationship to God. According to these ideas, women have different ways of being spiritual than men, although these characteristics are not strict and may apply to some men and not apply to all women. The ideas of female spirituality are based on the assumption that women's experiences, as mothers, wives, and sisters, are unique and influence their spirituality (Ochs 140).

Feminist theology developed along with the feminist movement in order—among other goals—to uncover ways in which sexism, and the exclusion of women from theology, influenced talk about God. This movement includes

uncovering how women view or relate to God in a way different from men, and the ways in which sexism distorts views of God and religion, and excludes women's experiences. Elizabeth Johnson, in the introduction to her book *She Who is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*, explains that "patterns of spirituality" and "speech about God" have been established by men's culture (4-5). She defines feminist theology's purpose as asserting that women are equal in the sight of God "while uncovering and criticizing its persistent violation in sexism, itself an omnipresent paradigm of unjust relationships" (Johnson 8).

Graff states that "to fail to bring women's experience into the theological task is no less than a refusal to seek the face of God, and a refusal to pursue the truth" (230-31). Rebecca Chopp, in "Writing Women's Lives," asserts the need for new stories on what being a woman means, or "ways to be a woman" (5). Chopp also argues that without new narratives, women are actually harmed because traditional narratives "that exalt women in the traditional family make her vulnerable and unarmed in the world in which she lives today" (7). They fail to provide women with ways of coping with reality and lack "openness, with assertiveness, with power, with courage, and with strength" (Chopp 8).

Norris does not try to combat "unjust relationships" overtly (a characteristic of narrative theology); rather she subverts gender roles by telling stories that break through boundaries set for both genders. Norris writes new stories that push the limits of the stories written for both men and women and that empower them to cope with everyday life. She writes of her encounter with God as a woman, and accomplishes a "rewriting of mythic narratives" (Graff 221).

One such "mythic narrative" is the pattern set for spiritual autobiography or what Robert Coles calls "this searching expedition within herself." Coles in a New York Times review writes that Norris "is one of history's writing pilgrims but also a contemporary American one, boldly willing to forsake any number of cultural fads, trends and preoccupations in favor of this 'walk,' this searching expedition within herself, courtesy of her Benedictine friends." The traditional pattern for telling one's story has been "the journey" or "the quest." Carol Ochs defines the journey metaphor: it has a specified length, "requires preparation," has "various stages or landmarks," and has a "clearly defined destination" (117). The journey model is seen in John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. The main character in Part I, Christian, must pass through various stages on his way to the Celestial City. His goal is the Celestial City, and each obstacle overcome takes him farther along the path. Christian meets God only at the end of the journey after he dies. His salvation is not assured until then, and he must journey alone to God, rather than experience God dwelling within him. The journey model for spiritual autobiography was established by Augustine's *Confessions*, which recounts his spiritual struggle between "two wills, one new, and the other old, one carnal, the other spiritual" (42). After a period of rebellion, and then conviction, he opens the Bible to a verse, and he recounts, "by a light as it were of serenity infused into my heart, all the darkness of doubt vanished away" (Augustine 46). Each step from darkness to

salvation is linear and defined.

Among the problems with the journey model is discounting spiritual experience that does not bring one closer to a defined goal. Also, if the journey is the way to get to God, we meet Him only at the end. The journey model results in "comparison and judgment," "despondency," and "inauthenticity" (Ochs 117-18). This pattern does not match the experiences of women (Donovan 103).

Ochs offers an alternate pattern or metaphor called "the walk" that better fits the experiences of women and possibly a wider audience. The walk has an unknown length, no clear starting point, no preparation required, a "less clearly defined" path, and no distinct end, goal or stages. It is an "undertaking of movement, but at any moment we are precisely where we should be." Time in the walk is cyclical rather than linear. The focus in the walk is the process. In the walk, the steps and the present rather than the goal. Since there is no clearly defined order, each person's walk is different and individual (Ochs 117).

With the walk model, one can be less focused on where one is supposed to be and more focused on where one is (Ochs 117). Norris's narratives and spiritual autobiography follow this model. For her, there was no clear starting point or sudden conversion. She found she could start anywhere, with all her doubt and fear of the church, when she decided to become a Benedictine oblate, someone who participates in the practices of the Benedictines without taking their full vows. Norris felt unprepared and unworthy to be an oblate, which means "to offer." She finally resolved her worries, saying, "I can't imagine why God would want me, of all people, as an offering. But if God is foolish enough to take me as I am, I guess I'd better do it" (*Cloister Walk* xviii).

The traditional model for spirituality is linear, progressing from one stage to the next. Each stage is experienced only once, but in real life, we have times of closeness to God, times of distance, times of intimacy, and times of doubt. Our growth is not always forward because we revert, fall, pick ourselves up, unlearn, and learn (Ochs 123). Norris explains:

There is no right or wrong way to do it, but only the way of your life . . . But it will be necessary to revise—to doodle, scratch out, erase, even make a mess of things—in order to make it come out right. When it comes to faith, while there are guidelines—for Christians the Bible and the scaffolding of the church's theology and tradition—there is no one right way to do it. (*Cloister Walk* 62-63)

Writing of a woman she knows who wants to go back to some kind of meaning and tradition but fears the church and the Bible, Norris states: "There is no set of rules for her to follow, but only the messy process of life to be lived" (*Cloister Walk* 65). Norris accepts the process and the messiness of life. She is unwilling to force a set of rules or goals on a life.

The very structure of Norris's works rejects the linear model. Stroud observes that *Amazing Grace* is not organized in a linear pattern, but seems to

be more “poetic, impressionistic” (par. 12). Chapters can be read separately and do not build on each other. Several readers complained that *The Cloister Walk* “had no direction” and was not well-organized (*Customer Reviews*). Unlike the typical linear structure, Norris skips from various events loosely structure by the liturgical calendar. Her focus is on daily events and impressions rather than on presenting a clear progression in her spiritual development. Readers must read all her books to get the whole story of Norris’s conversion because she does not tell it in a linear order.

Because the walk model requires no specific steps or stages, Norris is free to show the individuality of each person’s walk in her own experiences. She writes several chapters on conversion in *Amazing Grace* that offer various models of coming to God. For Norris’s grandmother and grandfather, being “born again” was a one-time event, which did not reflect her own experience. Norris writes:

From what my grandmother said about her experience of ‘being saved’ by Jesus, I took it to mean that he was a kind of Prince Charming who would magically come into my life one day and change everything. Having just seen Snow White, this seemed like a good deal. But it proved not to be a particularly helpful image of Jesus to grow up with, and it has taken me some time to sort out as an adult; to recognize that the inadequacies I felt whenever Jesus’ name came up—and I hadn’t met him yet—were in my grandmother’s rigid definition of conversion and not in me. (*Amazing Grace* 37-38)

She finds another spiritual model in the life of her Grandmother Totten. Norris reflects:

Her faith was alive for anyone to see; her life demonstrates that conversion is no more spectacular than learning to love the people we live with and work among . . . Conversion is seeing ourselves, and the ordinary people in our families, our classrooms, and on the job, in a new light. (*Amazing Grace* 44)

Norris’s story shows that the doctrine of salvation is lived out in different ways. Some people are like Paul—blinded by light and changed forever—while others are more like Norris—in the conversion process for years. She finds it more of “a process . . . not a goal.” Norris quotes Dag Hammarskjöld, who wrote, “Night is drawing night. How long the road is. But, for all the time the journey has already taken, how you have needed every second of it” (*Amazing Grace* 104). Rather than regretting the time before conversion as time wasted, she finds it all part of the walk. The value of her life is not negated because it doesn’t seem to fit the goal of the lives in many spiritual autobiographies—some ideal state of spirituality. Rather, the goal of Norris’s life is the actual living and growing process. She writes:

If the incarnation of Jesus Christ teaches us anything, it is that conversion is not one-size-fits-all. Christian conversion is in fact, incarnational; it is worked out by each individual within the community of faith. I believe that this is what Paul means by asking Christians to conform themselves to Christ. One has only to look at Jesus' disciples to demonstrate that this 'conforming,' paradoxically, is not strict conformity but takes different forms in different people. (*Amazing Grace* 42)

Since the focus of the walk is where one is, spiritual insight is found in the daily (Ochs 129). Tamala Edwards, in *Time South Pacific* writes that in *Cloister Walk* "without preaching and in prose like poetry, she manages to demystify the rituals, wrapping them around the reader like an old chenille blanket, restoring an alluring sense of magic to issues such as (gulp!) celibacy" (par. 5). "Demystify[ing]" involved taking something out of abstraction to everyday, practical meaning. Lynn Garret, religion editor for *Publishers Weekly* writes, "She [Norris] writes with a poet's sensibility, but there's also a groundedness and practicality to her approach" (qtd. in Edwards par. 5).

The walk model fits women's experience because it is "nuclear" and based on "cyclic time" (Donovan 105). Donovan compares this model to a spider's web that "moves out from one base to a given point and back again" (105). This particular view of time has influenced women's experience of mothering. Women, whether they are mothers or not, are socialized to be mothers in our society (Ochs 44). Mothers are aware of their "interruptibility" and that they are not in total control of their time because they must meet the needs of others before their own (Donovan 102). Also, since women have traditionally been confined to the "private sphere" of the home, and accustomed to performing housework, which must be done again as soon as it is finished, they operate under cyclic time (Donovan 101). Donovan explains:

The housewife is immersed in the daily world of concrete realities in a way that most men are not, and the qualitative nature of her products—that they have been personalized by her touch—gives women an avenue to the sacred that most men, immersed as they are in the profane, alienated world of exchange or commodity production, do not have. (102)

Menstruation also gives women a sense of "repetition" and "interruptibility," while childbirth and breast-feeding give women a "sense of being bound to physical events beyond the self" (Donovan 102-3). Gill-Austern writes:

[Women] desire to find the sacred and the holy in ordinary life. Women seek to find a spirituality that does not take them out of their world, but transposes them into their world in a new way. They seek the sacred in the profane, in the ordinary details and messiness of their lives. (52)

Norris encountered cyclic time at the monastery. As one friend said, “You never really finish anything in life . . . and while that’s humbling and frustrating, it’s all right. The Benedictines . . . insist that there is time in each day for prayer, for work, for study, and for play” (*Cloister Walk* xix). Norris writes, “Liturgical time is essentially poetic time, oriented toward process rather than productivity, willing to wait attentively in stillness rather than always pushing to get the job done” (*Cloister Walk* xix). Norris writes that the monastery is a world which “accepts another kind of time, where requests and reminiscences repeated endlessly remind of us of something which the Orthodox liturgy knows with its continual repetitions again and again” (*Cloister Walk* 356).

Focus on the daily is a recurring theme in Norris’s work . She writes that the “Psalms are holistic in insisting that the mundane and the holy are inextricably linked (*The Cloister Walk* 93). The way daily things such as housework and laundry can become holy like the reading of the liturgy is the focus of Norris’s *The Quotidian Mysteries: Laundry, Liturgy and ‘Women’s Work.’* She writes that “God knows that being rendered temporarily mindless as we toil is what allows us to approach the temple of holy leisure” (*Quotidian* 27). She also observes: “The fact that none of us can rise so far in status as to remove ourselves from the daily, bodily nature of life on this earth is not usually considered a cause for celebration, but rather the opposite” (*Quotidian* 6). Norris chooses to celebrate the mundane things in life, transforming them into acts of worship. Norris finds that God too is concerned about daily life. She writes:

As a human being, Jesus Christ was as subject to the daily as any of us. And I see both the miracle of manna and incarnation of Jesus Christ as scandals. They suggest that God is intimately concerned with our very bodies and their needs, and I doubt that this is really what we want to hear. Our bodies fail us, they grow old, flabby and feeble, and eventually they lead us to the cross. How tempting it is to disdain what God has created, and to retreat into a comfortable gnosticism. (11)

Women, says Ochs, learn to see the holy in everyday life and that “through the telling of their own stories, women keep the gospel close to the ground, making very real connections between the biblical story and our lived lives” (114). Telling stories is a way of affirming the importance of the daily. Norris’s use of narrative theology itself is an example of spiritual practice grounded in women’s epistemology. Josephine Donovan, quoting Carol Gilligan, writes that women are “contextual and narrative rather than formal and abstract” (104). Leonora Tisdale, in her study of women preachers, finds that women preachers tend to use more self-disclosure and stories than men. One professor observed that in their sermons, women chose Bible passages that were “less abstract and more related to everyday, real-life issues” than men (Tisdale 110-11).

Because women find meaning in the daily, traditional dualities are broken

down. In a review of *The Quotidian Mysteries*, Bernadette McGrath writes that Norris "has a talent for weaving seemingly disparate fragments of life together to see them as naturally connected" (106). Traditional spiritual dualities such as "this world vs. the otherworld; the profane vs. the sacred; civilization vs. the desert; heaven vs. hell . . . [m]ale vs. female" are fused in the walk model. Spiritual autobiographies of the past employed these traditional dualities. Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* is a good example. Only in solitude, away from corrupting civilization, can Thoreau explore his soul and find God and spiritual meaning. The profane world and the sacred world of Walden Pond are clearly delineated. According to Carol Ochs, these opposites are not true to women's experiences. As discussed previously, women's lives ground them in the world. And it is in the daily that they find the holy (122).

In Norris's work, one finds that these dualities are merged. Male and female can take on new roles, as seen with the men and women who live in the monastery who choose celibacy in order to become nurturing, selfless, and generous. Norris finds spiritual insight in doing laundry, observing people, and relating to others.

Narratives that fuse the dualities of this world and the "otherworld" promote awareness of emotions, and the body, which is important for women. Graff writes, "The body is fundamental to who we are, and it is how we are in the world. It mediates all our perceptions, feelings, and knowledge . . . To deny the body is a delusion and finally silly; to demean it is to damage ourselves" (224). Norris finds comfort in the fact that the Psalms do not deny the body or its feelings. Norris writes that "psalms act as good psychologists. They defeat our tendency to try to be holy without being human first." She writes, "The psalms make us uncomfortable because they don't allow us to deny either the depth of our pain or the possibility of its transformation into praise" (*Cloister Walk* 96). The conflict between the body and the spirit are fused, and because the walk's focus is on where one is (earth) rather than what one needs to become (a saint in heaven) Norris's focus is rarely on what she needs to become, but where she is. She is very accepting of herself, which allows acknowledge what she is rather than what she thinks she should be.

In a society ardently focused on success, climbing the social ladder, and "being all you can be," the walk model is comforting. One reader reviewer called *The Cloister Walk* "soothing and comforting." Another reader said it "was like being on a spiritual retreat," and yet another, that it "provided much needed reassurance to someone who has been abused and disillusioned by the contemporary Church that God loves us in spite of our best efforts and worst failings" (*Customer Reviews*).

The walk model is also comforting because, with its focus on the daily, the relationships that women value become important. In traditional spirituality, the soul journeys alone to God and salvation. But women, says Ochs, are more focused on relationships and value connection. The traditional pattern denies the importance of relationship in its denial of the importance of the everyday. "In real life," writes Ochs, "we do not climb alone" (120).

Ochs asserts that mothering, rather than the ascetic life, such as seen in *Walden* or *Confessions*, can be a “context for spirituality” (Ochs 29-31). Donovan explains that the socialization of girls leads to nurturing and awareness of others, rather than “acquiring” (103-4). Women’s maturation involves becoming connected, while men’s consists of individuals (Ochs 134-35). For example, in one hospital the baby boys had “I’m a boy” signs on their cribs, and the girls, a sign that said, “It’s a girl” (Gill-Austern 40). The baby boys were given the role of an individual, already achieving and asserting individuality in the crib. “I’m a boy and proud of it,” was the message the baby boys were sending. The girls, on the other hand, were seen more as the product of their parents’ creation. Unconsciously, someone didn’t think it right for a baby girl to assert, “I’m a girl!”

As mothers, women must develop a humility and unselfishness to meet the practical needs of their children. Thus they find their identity in what they do for others and what they mean to others (Gill-Austern 41). Mothers are aware of a dependence that was once natural for everyone. They realize that individuality is only possible because of a relationship with a nurturing mother. They realize that it is natural to be taken care, and that individuality only comes through, and is sustained by, relationship (Ochs 28). Most people lose this knowledge in the desire for independence (Ochs 28).

By acknowledging a “sense of nonthreatening helplessness” that is very natural, it is easier to acknowledge dependence on God (Ochs 32). Ochs states, “Traditional spirituality aims at openness and vulnerability but because of its male-centered perspective, it achieves them only by breaking down defenses through trials” (32). In contrast, mothering gives women the awareness that they need other people, and that all people need each other (Ochs 137). Ochs writes, “If there is no true recognition of the mother’s part, then there must remain a vague fear of dependence” and that part of maturing in a relationship with God is knowing our dependence (Ochs 28-29).

Norris shows an awareness of both dependence on God and dependence on the community of believers. Her narratives model a new type of individuality that acknowledges the healthy dependence attributed to women’s experience as mothers. Norris finds this freedom to be dependent in her examination of the Psalms. She writes of Psalm 131, which speaks of a “weaned child on its mother’s breast”:

This psalm speaks of the grace of childhood, not being childish. One of my greatest freedoms is to see that all the pretenses and defenses I put up in the first part of my life, I can spend the rest of my life taking down. This psalm tells me that I’m a dependent person, and that it’s not demeaning. (*Cloister Walk* 106)

In his examination of the theme of community in her poetry, David Landrum writes that when Norris published *The Middle of the World*, a collection of poetry, after her move to South Dakota, he observed her new awareness that “human beings are born in families, grow up in town or in rural settings that

depend on towns, and that these things shape and mold us, form our identities, harm us, but also give us a sense of belonging, of permanence and oneness" (345-6).

Narratives about her family is a recurring subject in Norris's works. Landrum writes that Norris sees the family's "vital importance to personal wholeness, its transgenerational effects, its pervasiveness as a shaping factor upon the human psyche--the dynamic that unifies Norris's writing and becomes the source of much of its rhetorical power" (343). She often discusses the theme of family and land and its influence (Landrum 346). *Dakota: A Spiritual Autobiography* is a narrative of the land and the people of the Dakotas and her relationship to both.

Norris also writes stories about the Benedictines that model community and interdependence (Landrum 353). Her descriptions of the community are not of a utopian or idealistic vision that would never have any application in the world outside the monastery. The monastics live out the "ideals of community" by working, eating and worshiping together. They find value in "maximizing individuality through surrender to the larger mission of the group" (Landrum 353). As Norris found out when she asked a monk how he liked his eggs, monks in a monastery eat the same food and do not get the choice of how their eggs are prepared. She writes after this experience,

While consumer culture speaks only to preferences, treating even whims as needs to be granted . . . monasteries sense that this pandering to delusions of self-importance weakens the true self, and diminishes our ability to distinguish desires from needs. (*Cloister Walk* 14-15)

Without preaching, which is characteristic of narrative theology, Norris suggests that readers can learn from Benedictines and balance individualism with care for others. This kind of life does not come naturally to monks "schooled in individualism;" they must learn to live with their fellow monks (*Cloister Walk* 21). Norris shows how men from different backgrounds, temperaments, and habits, can live, work and worship together. She writes, "it is no exaggeration to say that you find Al Franken and Rush Limbaugh living next door to each other. Mother Angelica and Mary Gordon. Barney Frank and Jesse Helms" (*Amazing Grace* 158). Norris discusses "organized" religion:

I have come to suspect that when people complain about 'organized' religion what they are really saying is that they can't stand other people. At least not enough to trust them to help work out a 'personal' spirituality. How can they possibly trust these unknown others, people with whom they may have little in common, to help them along on their religious journey? (*Amazing Grace* 258-59)

Graff states that the idea of community is utmost in importance in studying the church today. The vision of community, connectedness and mutuality which

Norris develops is a text needed for the Christian in today's society, particularly in America. It is a text that introduces to theological discussion women's value of connectedness, but also meets the needs of a modern audience suffering from the effects of radical individualism.

Robert N. Bellah, a sociologist who studied religion in America and co-author of *Habits of the Heart*, examines the results of American culture's focus on individualism, which developed from American Protestantism. He explains how American Protestantism, because it was founded by sects dissenting from the Anglican Church, is based on individuality. Dissenting groups valued individualism, freedom in religious practices, and "the sacredness of individual consciences in matters of religious belief" (Bellah 11).

From *The Declaration of Independence* to Henry David Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience*, American culture upholds individual choice and freedom. The implications of these ideals permeate American culture, and specifically, American Protestantism. Because of the focus on individualism, Americans focus on self rather than on healthy awareness and care for others (Bellah 11). Bellah writes, "Afraid of the idea of the sacred in the world, they, pushed God out of the world and into radical transcendence" (11). Focusing on the relationship between the individual and God can easily lead to "divinization of the self," also called Gnosticism. This is seen in the attitude: "If I'm all right with Jesus, then I don't need the church" (Bellah 12). Loss of communities, groups, and associations, "loose connections," "porous institutions," the loss of the feeling of being part of a larger whole, and "something like a major depression" result from radical individualism. Paradoxically, it causes the breakdown of individuals (Bellah 13-14).

Bellah argues that American Protestants can learn important lessons from Catholics about community, rituals, and sacraments that unite people and take the focus off oneself. Bellah argues that the Catholic "religious imagination," which is able to find value in rituals, can help American Protestantism. The sacraments, says Bellah, "pull us into an embodied world of relationships and connections," where the individuals' journey to God is not the focus, but the focus is on the group in the world finding God together (Bellah 13).

Norris's writing is a backlash against the radical individualism of American society and an illustration of Bellah's argument that Protestants can find meaning in Catholic traditions. With the monks, she found "they kept interfering in what I like to pretend is my own life" (*Cloister Walk* xviii). The rule of the Benedictines is based on "acceptance of people as they are" (*Cloister Walk* 6). In the monastery, the self is not all-important, but must learn to be in relationship to others. In such a community, you must "remember that you are not the center of the universe but, to use Benedict's words, 'keep death daily before your eyes'" (*Cloister Walk* 8). According to Landrum,

[Monasticism] contradicts the spirit of the age, cuts across the grain of consumerism, libidinous advertising, and intrusive media that dominate American life and are rapidly becoming a global culture. As such, the lessons that monastics, present and past, teach to

twentieth-century men and women function as a means for social criticism. (354)

He concludes that Norris presents “a unified corpus of work that engages in a critique of current American culture through a variety of thematic motifs: monasticism and its lessons, the concept of inheritance, the locus of place, the realities of faith” (Landrum 355). Norris finds in the monastery a way that community could work and tries, through her narratives, to share the value of community.

The stories Norris tells are an act of community themselves. Each life story shows how different people have encountered God and lived their lives; they acknowledge that no single vision of God is ever complete. In her chapter on the Psalms, Norris explains the importance of reading the Psalms out loud in a community. The experience serves to allow readers to be part of a group. “It also frees them from the tyranny of individual experience. . . . It counters our tendency to see individual experience as sufficient for formulating a vision of this world,” writes Norris (*Cloister Walk* 100). This principle can be applied to the telling of others’ stories outside the monastic community as well. To tell and hear stories that may or may not match your own allows one to see others’ experiences as different, but valid, and to see oneself in the context of the rest of humanity. Norris writes, “Other people’s stories or religious inheritance have long attracted me, partly because I learn from them how individual experience can be made meaningful to others, so it does not remain exclusively private or personal” (25-26).

Telling stories also highlights another aspect of women’s spirituality. Mary Mason in her study of female spiritual autobiography examines the way in which women write with an awareness of connection. She states, “The self-discovery of female identity seems to acknowledge the real presence and recognition of another consciousness, and the disclosure of female self is linked to the identification of some ‘other’” (210). The awareness of an “other” helps women write their stories (Mason 210).

In contrast, the two major male patterns for spiritual autobiography are the confessions of Augustine and Rousseau. In Augustine’s *Confessions*, the self is in conflict--the spirit battles the flesh (Mason 210). According to Mason, “characters and events are little more than aspects of the author’s evolving consciousness” (210). In contrast to the patterns for female autobiography, the male patterns focus on the self as “utterly unique and novel” and posits that God and others are not as important as the self (Jones 25). Rousseau’s does not write his life in relation to other lives. For him, “self-exploration and self-determining freedom are the key virtues” (Jones 35). But this pattern does not meet women’s needs (Mason 210). In contrast, female autobiography is grounded in an awareness of other people and events outside the self (Mason 210).

Mason outlines four patterns for “relationship and self identity” in women’s spiritual autobiography, patterns men never use (Mason 209-10). While female spiritual autobiographers may mix and change the patterns, the

element of an awareness of an “other” seems to be constant (Mason 231). In Julian of Norwich’s “Revelations,” the other is her “Creator, Father, and Lover” (Mason 210). Julian was an anchoress who, during an illness in 1371, saw a series of visions she recorded first in *A Shewing of God’s Love*, and 20 years later, in *Sixteen Revelations of Divine Love* (Mason 213-4). Julian’s identification with Christ does not take away her selfhood, but “intensifies and deepens her uniquely feminine understanding of the import, indeed the needfulness, of both man and woman in God’s creation as His/Her being” (Mason 217).

The second pattern is found in the writings of Margaret Cavendish, the Duchess of Newcastle, who recorded “True Relations of My Birth, Breeding and Life” in 1656. Her “other” is her husband, the Duke of Newcastle, and she employs the “duo pattern” or “alter ego” (Mason 207). In her other work, *The Blazing World*, her alter ego is the *Empress of the Blazing World*, which is herself imagined as a different character (Mason 223). Margery Kempe, who was illiterate, dictated *The Book of Margery Kempe* around 1432 (Mason 209). Her “other” is God and she identifies with Christ as her child and bridegroom (Mason 211-12).

Norris most follows the last pattern established by Anne Bradstreet, a settler in America, who wrote the short autobiographical work, “To My Dear Children.” Her “other” is a “spiritual community.” Mason writes that Bradstreet shows a “unique harmonizing of the divine, the secular, and the personal, a unifying of a public and a private consciousness” (Mason 211). Bradstreet finds identity in her family, her Puritan community, and the colony (Mason 227). Mason writes that “it was the merging of her private consciousness with her collective consciousness that enabled her to be free to achieve her own unique identity as a poet” (230). Anne Bradstreet sees herself as a part of a spiritual community, which, Mason writes, “is to be profoundly in the world and of it, but a world newly transformed, and transformed through and through, by the power of providential destiny so that its people are become God’s Chosen People” (Mason 227).

The “other” that grounds Norris’s identity is her community--her grandparents, the members of her church, and her family. She explains that her community-- “men and women who all [her] life had listened, who had offered guidance and grounding when [she] needed it most”-- facilitated her conversion, and acted as her “cloud of witnesses” (*Amazing Grace* 107-8). She writes, “Christian conversion is not a goal. Above all, it is not something one can strive for and attain for oneself, but comes only with the help of mentors” (*Amazing Grace* 107).

Because of women’s awareness of connection, women write with an awareness of their audience. One customer reviewer wrote that “Norris writes with such a clear and down to earth style that you feel she is in the same room with you discussing her experiences” (*Customer Reviews*). Similarly, women’s preaching has been found to be characterized by “self-disclosure” or “personal examples” (Tisdale 105). In her book, *You Just Don’t Understand*, Deborah Tannen writes that women use “rapport-talk” and men use “report-talk.”

Women talk to connect to others, and men talk to “preserv[e] independence and negotiat[e] status in a hierarchical social order” (qtd in Tisdale 112). One professor observed that in their preaching, women are more aware of community and connections and concentrated on themes of suffering, pain and oppression (Tisdale 111). The stories they told gave images that connected to the similar experiences of the audience (Tisdale 113). Women try to understand others, explains Mary Field Belenky in the book, *Women’s Ways of Knowing*:

Because of their connected modes of knowing, many women tend to use personal experience and examples, rather than more abstract modes of argumentation when explaining ideas. . . . In so doing, they are espousing a form of logic that not only makes perfect sense to them rationally but also existentially. (qtd in Tisdale 113)

Women’s value of connection in their talk and preaching also appears in their writing because “writing is an act that hopes for connections.” Bolker explains that when we write, we hope that people will hear (53). But until we are taught, we don’t know that we are heard. We must be affirmed that there is someone who thinks our thoughts are valuable. Women learn that they aren’t listened to, and feel vulnerable to outside criticism and to their own expression when they write (Bolker 54). Women listen to both their inside voices and the voices of their audience, and unless they have been heard in the past by people in an audience, they won’t have the courage to write the story they need to write (Bolker 53-4).

Norris’s writing is characterized by this awareness of her readers, some of whom are skeptical about Christianity and hurt by the church. While Anne Bradstreet writes to tell her story to her family, Norris writes to encourage the faith of others, whether believers or not. Stroud says Norris is able to see Christianity from “both the believer’s and the nonbeliever’s perspective” (par. 3). Stroud observes that she may not reach an unbelieving audience that reads without faith (par. 13). Bradstreet writes in “A Letter to My Children,” “This book by Any yet unread/I leave for you when I am dead,/That, being gone, here you may find/What was your living mother’s mind./Make use of what I leave Loue/And God shall Blesse you from above” (Bradstreet 186). Bradstreet writes in her letter of her faith in God, her struggles, and her faith.

Norris has a similar purpose. “Oh, my god, did you have a lobotomy,” asked one of Norris’s friends after hearing she had embraced the Christian faith. Norris wrote *Cloister Walk* in part to explain her conversion “to herself and her friends” (qtd in Edwards par. 5).

The review of *Amazing Grace* in *People Weekly* recommends the book “if you have ever felt overwhelmed, turned off or just plain curious about the language of Christianity” (31). Norris is aware of her readers and their possible reactions to her writing. Tisdale finds that female preachers are more aware of identifying with their audience and more often use “we” than “you” (Tisdale 107). This creates affinity with hearers and promotes the idea that the speaker is one of the audience and is listening to the text as well as speaking (Tisdale

109). Norris often uses “we” or “our” in her writing. When discussing what she does at the monastery, Norris uses “we.” In her Psalms chapter, “we” and “our” are scattered through the text. For example, she writes: “The painful images we find there,” “the psalms make us,” “they defeat our tendency,” and “we can only hope” (*Cloister Walk* 95-96).

Norris’s awareness of her audience, rather than hindering her writing by making it cater to the expectations of others, gives her a valuable means of authority and connection to her readers (Bolker 54). Tisdale says that being aware of one’s audience is a “new paradigm for authority,” one of mutuality and “partnership” (Tisdale 110). This is the authority of Norris’s writing. According to Johnson,

Women’s moral development and psychology; women’s ways of knowing; women’s ways of loving; women’s ways of living bodily--all are marked, upon reflection, by an intrinsic connectedness quite different from the male ideal in classic and contemporary culture . . . this revaluation of mutual relationships has within it the beginnings of a moral revolution. (Johnson 69)

Chopp argues that narratives must be written that show readers how to live in “relationship with God, with others, and with the world.” This awareness leads to a healthy “mutuality” that does not crush individuality but balances it with awareness of others (Chopp 12). Norris’s work is important because she brings to the church today the value of mutuality that is capable of “a moral revolution” (Johnson 69).

Norris frees readers from the notion that they must be independent, autonomous people, which is not the model of the Bible, especially of the Psalms. She writes,

It would be impossible to love God without loving others; impossible to love others unless one were grounded in a healthy self-respect; and, maybe, impossible to truly love at all in a totally secular way, without participating in the holy. (*Cloister Walk* 252)

Norris develops a new type of mutuality that is autonomous, but not unhealthily dependent. People are still seen as individuals and whole, like the trinity, with a “self-transcending uniqueness” (Johnson 219).

Norris’s view of God is one of connectedness through fellowship and personal communion, and is influenced by her view of her relationship to others. Graff writes that women’s stories will “highlight the systematic distortions of Scripture and the multiple theological traditions that have done harm to women” (231). By neglecting female values in traditional spirituality, the character of God is distorted. In traditional theology, God does not relate or take part in human life, but instead, humans reach to God, which reflects the patriarchal society that doesn’t give value to mutuality (Johnson 225). Ideas about God are rooted in a patriarchal way of thinking--man against man,

dominance, dualities, and individuality. But if mutuality is made an ideal, God becomes involved, related intimately (Johnson 69). Attributing to God a dependence on humans does not fit the ideals of individuality. To be in relation means to be dependent in some ways, to show weakness, and "risk" (Johnson 225). To think of God as involved and in the world breaks down the traditional dualities of this world and the otherworld, the profane and sacred. Norris observes this element of dependence and involvement in God's character in contemplating the crucifixion:

Successful people often assume that they are infallible, and in control of their own destiny. On the cross, however, Jesus, the beloved Son of God, is revealed as fully human, which means vulnerable to suffering and death. The cross is like a slap in the face, a reminder of our true condition as human beings in a small and vulnerable ecosystem that we call the planet earth. When a Christian meditates on the cross, he or she is not escaping this world, and more importantly, is not doing something completely private. She is not even alone, but sitting in the community of saints, and in the presence of the one whose death on the cross has made all things possible. (*Amazing Grace* 372-73)

Through incarnation, God shattered the duality between heaven and earth; He walked among the profane while remaining holy. God also absolves the duality between male and female. The God of patriarchy is the lone, "dominant male" who does not risk loving the world too intimately to be hurt by it, causing the starkness of the cross to be "like a slap in the face" (Johnson 225). In contrast, women value connection as the "very grain of existence itself," and to not include this in description of the character of God would be "distortion" (Johnson 225). Norris's narratives that value connection, and her observations of incarnation and the cross, take God out of His traditional roles. One of these roles is that given to the male gender in our society.

If Norris writes outside gender roles, she writes a theology that fits both male and female experiences. Gender roles are prescribed, not necessarily biological. This helps to explain why Norris finds life models in a male monastery. Heilbrun writes that men define themselves as "not women." As "not women," men are expected to reject women's values connection and caring. The monks Norris meets transcend gender roles and become nurturing and caring. They do daily tasks—cooking, cleaning and gardening—in the private sphere in which women have been confined in the past. They value connection and relationship over goals, and are focused on cyclic rather than linear time. Their lives are focused on the daily—on prayer, reading of scripture and duties.

While Norris's writing shows the influence of female spirituality, it may be spirituality attributed to females, but actually representative of many males and females. It is confining for both sexes to limit narratives to traditional patterns and gender roles. Norris provides a needed balance for theology by including the experiences not part of traditional theology.

Although Norris's writing is influenced by traditional values of women's culture, it is also able to break away traditional restrictions on women's writing. Sexism limits the tone and content of women's narratives (Johnson 4-5). Women have not been allowed to write about the real pain or anger in their lives (Heilbrun 22). Brita Gill-Austern, in her essay on women's loss of subjectivity and spirituality, says that girls lose their "angry voice" as they grow up (44). Joan Bolker, in her article, "A Room of One's Own is Not Enough," writes of women's voicelessness: "We learn to conform, to mask, to speak softly when we are depressed by our own rage, to assent, and to lie. Such learning kills our voices, and ultimately ourselves" (51). Men can more easily express anger outwardly, while women suppress it into depression. When women write, they begin to discover their own feelings (Bolker 54).

Norris finds freedom from this restriction in her work, and is able to explore her feelings. Again, in studying the Psalms, Norris discovers a freedom to express rage and the whole range of feelings—in a healthy way. She does not deny her feelings, but writes about ways to deal with them. She writes that as a child, she was read only the joyful Psalms, not the angry or bitter ones. She reflects:

I have lately realized that what went wrong for me in my Christian upbringing is centered in the belief that one had to be dressed up, both outwardly and inwardly, to meet God, the insidious notion that I need be a firm and even cheerful believer before I dare show my face in 'His' church. (*Cloister Walk* 90)

Norris felt restricted as a child in what she was allowed to feel. She explains: "A writer . . . once said that the true religions of America are optimism and denial. The psalms demand that we recognize that praise does not spring from a delusion that things are better than they are, but rather from the human capacity for joy" (*Cloister Walk* 94). Norris marvels at the anger expressed in many of the Psalms. She observes:

Anger is one honest reaction to the cost of pain, and the psalms are full of anger . . . the psalms don't theologize or explain anger away... psalms are poetry, and poetry's function is not to explain but to offer images and stories that resonate with our lives. (*Cloister Walk* 95)

Norris's surprise at the honesty of the Psalms reflects her experience as women expected to suppress her feelings.

In a chapter called "Acedia" in *The Cloister Walk*, Norris recounts her continual struggle with depression, called "acedia" or "listlessness" (130). "I am observing my life more than living it," she writes (131). She often recounts the doubts and fears she felt about God and the church. Norris's honesty resonates with readers. Michael Milburn, in his New York Times review of *Amazing Grace*, states that "honest perspectives win the reader's trust, as when she calls the act of throwing a Bible across a room 'a sign of real engagement,'

or issues a command to herself in an early moment of doubt: 'At least read the Beatitudes, dummy'" (Milburn).

Norris's writing works because it cannot be pigeon-holed, leaving room for mystery and ambiguity. She has been told, "I feel sorry for you because you don't know the Lord Jesus Christ," and, "Some of us take Jesus seriously" (*Amazing Grace* 143). One reader wrote, "If you consider yourself a right-wing fundamentalist Christian stay away from this woman" (*Customer Reviews*). Another reader wrote, "She has helped me to reclaim my faith in God and His Church" (*Customer Reviews*). Norris simply responds:

When others label me and try to exclude me, as too conservative or too liberal, as too feminist or not feminist enough, as too intellectual or not intellectually rigorous, as too Catholic to be a Presbyterian or too Presbyterian to be a Catholic, I refuse to be shaken from the fold. It's my God, too, my Bible, my church, my faith; it chose me." (*Amazing Grace* 143)

Norris writes a theology that breaks with tradition through a narrative theology that incorporates the experiences of women. Norris walks away from the traditional journey pattern, choosing instead to use the walk model. The walk model is true to women's experiences and brings to narrative theology the values and ways of living traditionally attributed to women: mutuality, connection, caring, awareness of community, awareness of cyclic time, and focus on the daily. Norris shows how these values are needed in today's society which concentrates on individualism without the balance of mutuality. Norris is also able to write with an honesty traditionally prohibited to women. Norris's narratives free both men and women, and God, from gender constraints. Her narratives accomplish the important task of showing how one can live the Christian life.

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THE UNATTAINABLE AMERICAN DREAM:

Binary Opposition in the Fiction of F. Scott Fitzgerald

MEREDITH BYRD

James Cameron's blockbuster movie *Titanic* is more than a three-hour-and-fourteen-minute story about a sinking ship. It is also more than a sappy love story. If viewers know the ship sinks and the lovers are doomed from the beginning, what is the point of Cameron's film? In fact, *Titanic* has a powerful social message. It is a story of social class differences and tension between classes. Nevertheless, the ship's sinking and Jack and Rose's doomed love are important because the incidents are key in showing the differences in social classes.

Passengers on the *Titanic*, which sank in 1912, are immediately divided according to social class when they board the ship. Clearly, the division portrays an important belief of the time period: the rich are superior to the poor. The superiority is evident in the ship's cabin conditions. Poor passengers stay in rooms that sleep four to six people with several of the passengers sleeping two to a bed. In contrast, rich passengers experience luxurious cabin conditions. Each cabin has its own living room, deck, and enough bedrooms for everyone in the stateroom. Differences between the rich and the poor are also evident when the ship begins sinking. The ship's crew places rich passengers on the lifeboats while they load the poor passengers in the lowest section of the ship, where they are left to drown. The living conditions and the actions taken during the ship's sinking display how society views the rich class as superior to the poor class. Molly Brown's actions during the ship's sinking, however, complicate the simple division of the passengers into the arrogant rich and the poor but honorable. Molly is "new money" and as a result, she has compassion for people who are part of the lower social class. Because of her compassion, Molly urges her half-filled lifeboat to rescue some of the lower-class people on the sinking ship. The Old Money people, however, refuse to do so; they remark that the lifeboats have saved the good people.

Jack and Rose's relationship also shows how the rich are viewed as

superior to the poor. Rose is engaged to a millionaire steel tycoon, whom she does not love; she is engaged to him because he brings her money and a good name, an idea that captivated the rich. Rose, however, falls in love with the free-spirited Jack, who is a poor vagabond. Because of these differences, Rose's mother refuses to let her see Jack. The mother's behavior exemplifies how the rich are superior to the poor. Essentially, Jack is inferior to Rose.

What is the importance of *Titanic* to a literary paper? *Titanic* articulates important issues during F. Scott Fitzgerald's time period. At the turn of the century, Americans experienced feelings of inadequacy. For them to feel better about themselves and their country, people wanted to be the best and to have the best. The ship *Titanic* is an excellent example of the desire to improve inadequate feelings. The goal of Lord William Pirrie and J. Bruce Ismay, founders of the ship, was to build the "biggest and most luxurious ships ever launched" while "no expense would be spared on the lavish appointments" of the ships.¹ A result of carefree spending on luxurious objects such as the *Titanic* was feelings of invincibility and superiority. These feelings are evident in the crew's attitude. Captain Edward J. Smith had received repeated ice warnings from other ships in the sea, many of whose voyages had been delayed because of the icebergs. Smith, however, "continued to unleash the 30, 000 horsepower of the *Titanic's* mighty engines" despite the warnings.² Obviously Captain Smith felt the ship was invincible to disasters.

While the ship's design and the crew's behavior have important social implications, so do the movie's characters. For example, first class passengers attend fancy dinners and political discussions. On the other hand, second and third class passengers celebrate life with lively music and dancing. The difference in the classes is evident in the characters behavior. First class passengers are blasé and languid. In contrast, second and third class passengers are laughing, talking, and smiling. The classes' differing actions have important social implications – although the lower classes lack the material possessions of the rich class, they can enjoy life. At the same time, the lower classes enjoy life more than the upper class because they ignore others perceptions of them. The movie focuses on what happens when the rich and the poor meet. Despite their differences, each class makes a vital contribution to the relationship's survival. In Jack and Rose's relationship, Jack brings the passion for life and love that Rose longs for, and Rose brings the economic means necessary for survival.

Binary Oppositions

Obviously, rich and poor are contrasting ideas. In addition to social implications, *Titanic* demonstrates the rich's superiority to the poor. This example illustrates an important concept in literary criticism – binary

¹ Bryan Jackson, "Titanic: What the Movie Left Out." <http://www.members.global2000.net/~bjackson/>, 29 paragraphs, paragraph 3.

² *Ibid.*, paragraph 18.

oppositions. Western civilization is built on dichotomies, also known as binary oppositions, with one part of the dichotomy superior to the other. Jacques Derrida, the literary theorist who introduced binary oppositions, notes that the superior part is “privileged” and its counterpart is “unprivileged” Society values the privileged element “while devaluing or unprivileging the second.”³ An example of a binary opposition is “day/night.” Society views day as a productive time, both in the workplace and in leisure activities. On the other hand, night is a time when businesses close and people return home for relaxation. Our culture values day over night because the day allows us to be more productive, both at work and at play. “Day/night” can also be explained socially through racism. Light skinned, or “day” colored people, ruled society until the middle of the century and were considered superior. The dark skinned, or “night” colored people were in the minority and were viewed as inferior.

The binary opposition between unequal elements causes conflict in Fitzgerald’s works. Fitzgerald challenges the sense of stability suggested by traditional dichotomies because he refuses to assign superior value to either element. Consequently, conflict arises; when both elements of each binary opposition are viewed as superior, a struggle, or “value clash” ensues over which element the characters in Fitzgerald’s works will view as privileged. Derrida believes conflict arises when the “center,” or aspect of society that remains constantly present, becomes decentered so that what was once a stable, constant presence becomes unstable.⁴ For example, the idea of a god is a constant force in any society. Most societies are molded around that god and if the god is no longer the focus of that society, the society soon faces turmoil. Consequently, the god is decentered. The problem in Fitzgerald’s works is there is never a firm center – there are many centers with equal importance. A lack of a firm center, or a “privileged” element, causes the conflict.

A broad explanation of how binary opposition informs the works must be established to provide a firm foundation for understanding the opposites in detail. Largely, the struggle can be viewed as the Old World versus the New World. Characters from each world view their way as privileged while society, in a state of flux, is simultaneously accepting the values of the Old World and the New World. Fitzgerald’s New World characters value progress while the Old World characters value tradition. The *Great Gatsby* illustrates this binary opposition through Jay Gatsby, who represents the New World, and through Nick Carraway, who represents the Old World. Gatsby is willing to part with his past so he can progress into the New World. He changes his name and moves east because doing so will mean he is progressing into the New World. On the other hand, Nick is unwilling to part with the Old World tradition of

³ Charles Bressler, *Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1994), 179.

⁴ Jacques Derrida, “Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences,” *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*, ed. David Richter (Boston: Bedford, 1998), 879.

carrying on a good family name and living off family money. He emphasizes that his “family have been prominent well-to-do people . . . for three generations.”⁵ Ironically, society is changing so quickly that both lifestyles are acceptable. Other dichotomies that relate to the oppositions are the individual versus the community, self sufficiency versus co-dependency, and movement of place and time versus immobility of place and time.

The struggle between intellectualism and anti-intellectualism also describes the conflict within Fitzgerald’s stories. Nick, the narrator in *Gatsby*, who is part of the Old World, takes great pride in his education. He “graduated from New Haven . . . just a quarter of a century after” his father, so it is obvious that a good education is a strong family tradition.⁶ His long hours at work and his desire to be respected in his occupation show how the Old World feels intellectual achievement is the means to earn respect in society. Gatsby and the New World view intelligence differently. Society places an emphasis on where people get an education instead of how the education benefits the person. Throughout *Gatsby*, Nick describes Gatsby as an “Oxford man.” Although he was only there for five months, his education is obviously important to him because it is a well-known fact that Gatsby is an “Oxford man.” Gatsby provides credibility and stability to his biography and also to his New World by linking himself to a stable institution such as Oxford. The New World emphasizes attending a school with a well-known name, which provides stability in a rapidly changing society. The characters place little emphasis on how educated the person becomes as a result of the schooling. Nick Carraway, however, is an exception to this belief. Nick graduated from a prestigious university – Yale – but unlike Gatsby, Nick’s education actually benefits him in his work as a bonds salesman. Intellectualism and anti-intellectualism both relate to the idea of progress. The New World views education as a way of providing stability in a new society, while the Old World, once again, relies on strong family ties to succeed.

Defining the American Dream

While the idea of binary oppositions is new to literary theory, the basic concepts of opposition and conflict are inherent in history. Conflict arises when new belief systems or new traditions are introduced to society. From the Jews to the Gentiles, to the Americans and the Russians, history is filled with differing groups that believe their beliefs and practices are superior to others. American history typifies the idea of oppositions through a concept known as the American Dream. This dream, a prominent theme in Fitzgerald’s writings, invites differing ideas and philosophies because the idea that America should be a melting pot is at the dream’s core. Pinpointing a universal definition of the American Dream is more problematic than the conflicts arising from the dream. The problem of defining the dream surfaces because each generation

⁵ F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1925), 7.

⁶ Ibid.

embraces different values than the preceding generation. Society is then in a transition phase as it adjusts to the new values. Conflict arises out of this transition phase, as the two generations must discover which set of values to embrace. The conflict makes it difficult for each generation to have an identical definition of the American Dream. A brief discussion of how the dream originated, how it has changed throughout history, and how the dream relates to Fitzgerald's era, will provide a better understanding of how binary oppositions play a role in the American Dream.

The American Dream is neither American nor a dream. Foundational ideas such as the "commercial spirit," which was characterized by "the acquisition of worldly goods," and a division of citizens into privileged and unprivileged classes, originated in ancient civilizations.⁷ As settlers inhabited the land, these foundational ideas infiltrated society and changed to fit fluxing American standards. Consequently, the dream becomes realized in the values that shape American thinking. The dream also changes as it becomes a permanent fixture in American society. Changes are always present so the idea of progress versus tradition is not new to Fitzgerald's society, nor is it a new idea to American history. The types of changes, however, do vary from era to era. Because the changes vary from era to era, a brief definition of the American Dream and how it changes throughout time is crucial in understanding why the presence of binary oppositions prevents Fitzgerald's characters from realizing the dream. It is difficult to have a single, exact definition of the American Dream from generation to generation. But the ideas that occur most often in history include the importance of materialism, the need for progress (in terms of change in technology and change in surroundings), the conflation of the sacred and the secular, and the relationship between the individual and the community.

Materialism encompasses many types of rewards. People place materialistic emphasis on cars, clothes, houses, or recreational objects. In his essay "The Way to Wealth," Benjamin Franklin relays a conversation between two men concerning tax increases. Franklin's purpose is to expose the dangers of pervasive materialism. Abraham, the essay's speaker, tells the people they "will no longer complain of bad Times, or the Difficulty of paying Taxes" when they discover how fortunate they actually are. Franklin ends his story with the observation that the people listening to the conversation "immediately practised the contrary" and "began to buy extravagantly."⁸ Franklin holds that fine clothes and outward appearances exemplify materialism.

Andrew Carnegie's definition of materialism opposes Franklin's. In his essay "The Gospel of Wealth," Carnegie, a nineteenth-century steel tycoon, holds that materialism is a positive good. He believes that "upon the sacredness of property civilization itself depends" and that it is "the right of the laborer to his hundred dollars in the savings-bank, and equally the legal right of the

⁷ Frederick Gentles, "It's Only a Dream," *Dream On, America*, eds. Frederick Gentles and Melvin Steinfield (San Francisco: Canfield, 1971), 4.

⁸ Benjamin Franklin, "The Way to Wealth," *Dream On, America*, eds. Frederick Gentles and Melvin Steinfield (San Francisco: Canfield, 1971), 57.

millionaire to his millions.” Unlike Franklin, Carnegie encourages materialism. He argues that “[n]ot evil, but good, has come to the race from the accumulation of wealth by those who have had the ability and energy to produce it.”⁹

Carnegie believes materialism assumes the form of private property, which he sees as good for society; he connects the acquisition of it to progress. Carnegie sees the recent “contrast[s] between the palace of the millionaire and the cottage of the laborer” as “highly beneficial.” He encourages progress because it brings more luxuries to both the rich and the poor. Although progress causes “[r]igid castes” and “the law of competition,” Carnegie argues that “the advantages of this law are also greater still than its cost” because “it is to this law that we owe our wonderful material development.”¹⁰ Carnegie associates materialism with progress so in his version of the American Dream, materialism is connected to progress – it allows for better living conditions.

In contrast to Carnegie, Perry Miller defines progress in *Errand into the Wilderness* in purely spiritual terms: a progressive nation is “[a] society dispatched upon an errand that as its own reward would want no other rewards.” According to Miller, the Puritan society had lost sight of their original purpose: “social solidarity (within a scheme of fixed and unalterable class distinctions).” The 1679 Puritan synod encouraged their society to recognize problems so they could advance to their original goal of social solidarity. The synod recognized that the Puritans had a “visible decay of godliness,” “several manifestations of pride,” “contention,” “sins of sex and alcohol,” and “a marked disposition to tell lies, especially when selling anything.”¹¹ Miller illustrates another definition of progress—an improvement of some sort. In addition, use of the word “wilderness” in Miller’s title demonstrates another important definition of progress – physical movement into an unknown and unexplored land. Miller’s discussion of how the Puritans believed Godliness was the answer to their society connects the idea of progress to another important belief in the American Dream – the conflation of sacred and secular.

When the Puritans settled in the New World, their ideal government was a theocracy. Puritans “brought with them a strong belief in God, and many were locked into their absolute truths about the deity.”¹² It was only natural that the Puritans thought of their “community as members of the same body,” which is how God commands His church and His believers to behave. The settlers constructed their new society around God, which resulted in the conflation of sacred (God) and secular (government). When the Puritan synod presented its list of iniquities, leaders believed citizens would experience “immediate

⁹ Andrew Carnegie, “The Gospel of Wealth,” *Writing Arguments: A Rhetoric with Readings*, eds. John D. Ramage and John C. Bean (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1992), 664.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 662-63.

¹¹ Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness, Dream On, America*, eds. Frederick Gentles and Melvin Steinfield (San Francisco: Canfield, 1971), 63-66.

¹² Frederick Gentles, “True Believers in the Promised Land,” *Dream On, America*, eds. Frederick Gentles and Melvin Steinfield (San Francisco: Canfield, 1971), 46.

manifestations of [God's] divine wrath" if they did not reform.¹³ The tendency toward a theocracy has persisted throughout American society.

For example, Carnegie expresses the idea of the conflation of sacred and secular in "The Gospel of Wealth." However, Carnegie's discourse more thoroughly expresses how conflated the secular and the sacred have become. The essay's title relays the message, but it is not until the last paragraph that Carnegie blatantly expresses his ideas: "Such, in my opinion is the true gospel concerning wealth, obedience to which is destined some day to solve the problem of the rich and the poor, and to bring 'Peace on earth, among men good will'."¹⁴ Carnegie sees wealth as the solution to world's problems and that it yields peace, much like Christians believe God sent Christ to earth to bring peace and eternal life.

As noted earlier, an important idea in the American Dream, and one clearly related to Carnegie's notion of personal achievement, is the concept of the individual. Ralph Waldo Emerson defines individualism in his essay "Self Reliance" as "a cultivated man [who] becomes ashamed of his property."¹⁵ His definition is connected to Franklin's idea that a person should ignore the property aspect of materialism and should focus on the possessions needed to fulfill his or her needs. Emerson also defines individualism in terms of solitude. He posits that "[i]t is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude."¹⁶ Gatsby exemplifies Emerson's definition of solitude—he ignores the gossip about his shady occupations. Emerson obviously believes an individual's authority ranks higher than society's influence.

The ideas behind the American Dream are not strictly American; ideals, such as class divisions, have European counterparts. So why is the dream American, not European? In early European societies, the only way to be successful was to be a member of the royal family or the noble class. No common person could rise in social class. When European settlers arrived in America, they desired a fresh beginning as independent individuals who were capable of being financially self-sufficient. If successful, settlers would be living a dream that was previously unavailable to them. So, the dream is American because America held more promises for a bright future than Europe.

Vast differences exist in how earlier generations of Americans articulated the dream and how the citizens in Fitzgerald's era articulated the dream. Great changes in Fitzgerald's world accounted for both the differing ideas of the American Dream and the tension between elements of cultural binary oppositions. People were caught in a transition phase between the past and the present, largely due to World War I, which shattered the feelings of security

¹³ Miller, 63-64.

¹⁴ Carnegie, 666.

¹⁵ Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Self Reliance," *Ralph Waldo Emerson: Selected Essays, Lectures, and Poems*, ed. Robert D. Richardson (New York: Bantam, 1990), 170.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 153.

that were so important and familiar to Americans. Fitzgerald spent his childhood during “the confident years,” which lasted from 1885-1915. Frederick J. Hoffman believes that this generation faced three major problems: “a failure of communication,” “a failure of social meaning and value,” and “a failure of morality.” World War I did not cause these problems; it only facilitated the infiltration of them into the next generation. These preexisting issues caused Fitzgerald’s generation to deal with problems that “touched closely the dominating emotional and aesthetic needs of the younger generation.”¹⁷ As a result, “[y]oung people rejected many of the values and ideals . . . of the preceding generation.”¹⁸ An example of tension between cultural elements of the binary oppositions is the sexual freedom of Fitzgerald’s era versus the sexual control embraced by earlier generations. Unstable conditions provoked reinterpretation of the American Dream.

Examples of the dream’s reinterpretation are Franklin’s and Carnegie’s differing versions of the dream. Franklin’s version of materialism encourages people to shun fancy clothes and to realize how fortunate they are for their clothing and for their houses. Franklin believes true wealth results from true realization of blessings. Carnegie’s view, however, is different. He encourages people to accumulate as much wealth as possible. Fitzgerald’s society embraces the version of materialism in Carnegie’s essay. People in the 1920s had “a dazzling array of goods, housing, comfortable restaurants, luxurious movie houses, and shiny new cars.”¹⁹ As a result of Carnegie’s brand of materialism, people are rich, but they are spiritually impoverished.

Textual Analysis: The Role of Binary Oppositions in Fitzgerald’s Works

Fitzgerald’s characters fail to realize the American Dream because their generation experiences the opposing definitions of the dream mentioned earlier. During the 1920s, people were experiencing a difficult transition phase. As mentioned earlier, World War I had just ended and consequently, “many Americans had felt uncomfortably inferior in their attainment of mind.”²⁰ Inferior feelings resulted from the anti-intellectual movement, which held that writers and other artists during the twenties were “both irresponsible and pernicious.”²¹ This anti-intellectual movement caused the emerging generation to question past traditions and to redefine their niche in society. The ship Titanic is an excellent example of how Americans were searching for their niche in society. The ship was lavishly decorated and the builder’s goal was to make it the biggest and best ship to ever set sail.²² The creation of such a luxury liner compensates for Americans’ feelings of inferiority. Many

¹⁷ Frederick J. Hoffman, *The Twenties* (New York: Free Press, 1965), 23.

¹⁸ Barbara Solomon, *Ain't We Got Fun?* (New York: New American Library, 1980), 3

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

²⁰ Hoffman, 23.

²¹ Milton Plesur, *Intellectual Alienation in the 1920s* (Lexington: Heath, 1970), ix.

²² Jackson, paragraph 3.

Americans began to see European culture as the answer to their inferiority. People turned to Europe to generate ideas that would help them discover and develop a unique American culture. As a result, American art, morality, and literature were heavily influenced by Europe. For example, Ezra Pound's decision to move to London and mentor "young poets and prose writers" instigated the London migration of prolific writers such as Gertrude Stein and Ford Madox Ford. The purpose of the authors' movement was to encourage "other Americans [writers] who felt intimidated or stifled" to relocate to a new atmosphere to experience new inspiration.²³ This effort accounted for the dichotomies, and the tension, in American culture and in the American Dream during the 1920s.

Literature was a powerful voice in expressing the difficulties America was experiencing. As Americans struggled to find a unique lifestyle, the struggle between opposing poles of defining dichotomies infiltrated into literature and influenced such authors as Sherwood Anderson, Ernest Hemingway, Sinclair Lewis, and Gertrude Stein to write about the country's loss of innocence. The dichotomies in the dream's definition that were mentioned earlier are subdivided into more specific opposing elements within Fitzgerald's works. Materialism is broken down into the rich versus the poor, and progress is broken down into advancement versus tradition. The individual versus the community is another important binary element in the American Dream. It can be subdivided into solitude versus conformity.

Class Divisions

Dividing citizens into classes based on wealth and power is a binary opposition that is not new to the American Dream or to Fitzgerald's era. Class division into the rich and the poor has roots in ancient civilizations, and it plays a large role in the dream to the extent that "those with wealth, power, and ingenuity" are the citizens who can realize the dream.²⁴ The same system allows people to succeed and fail. As noted earlier, both Franklin and Carnegie believe that material wealth separates people into classes. Franklin writes that materialism adversely affects society because it incorporates people with "expensive Follies," or what Franklin defines as fine clothing, into the upper class, and people who do not have nice clothing into the lower class.²⁵ Carnegie counters Franklin's definition by arguing that only good has resulted from class divisions based solely on money. Franklin implies that people should be more concerned with ultimate reality, which means that people should ignore materialism and focus on the aspects of life – such as education and learning to recognize blessings – that will benefit them in life's journey. Carnegie implies the opposite – people should see the material as ultimate

²³ Hoffman, 23-26.

²⁴ Gentles, "It's Only a Dream," 11.

²⁵ Franklin, 57.

reality and as the venue of progress. Carnegie's and Franklin's contrasting definitions of reality versus appearance are an excellent set-up to display how the divided classes allow material wealth to influence their thinking and behavior.

Fitzgerald parallels the clash of idealism and realism to create status in the geographical divisions of *Gatsby*. The West Egg is "the less fashionable of the two" areas on Long Island Sound.²⁶ The West Egg is home to the "valley of ashes – a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens."²⁷ West Egg is also the home to lower-class citizens Tom and Myrtle Wilson. In contrast, the East Egg, a "fashionable place" of "white palaces," is home to wealthy people like the Buchanans.²⁸ Both classes, however, struggle with similar difficulties in life—indeed, only money separates the classes. For example, at some point in their lives, Tom Wilson and Gatsby both want to rise above their living situations to experience better lifestyles. Gatsby wants to move from the West to the East, and Tom wants to move from the East to the West to seek new opportunities for advancement. However, only Gatsby is able to accomplish his goal, and he is able to do so because he has acquired money. Tom is never able to accomplish his goal, partly because he is not able to earn enough money. Still, neither is happy.

The conflict between appearance and reality is significant in the American Dream. People constantly create a happy facade to gain social acceptance. In reality, those who create a facade are miserable, struggling to find their place in society. Those who create a facade, however, are not the only miserable people. Tom and Daisy Buchanan are both miserable, and successful. The importance of Fitzgerald's use of the word "farm" to describe the "valley of ashes" is highly important.

The word "farm" creates dichotic images. For example, a farm can be a rich, fruitful land where wheat and vegetables grow abundantly. Underneath this fruitful land, however, lies land that can become unattractive and barren. Fitzgerald's use of the word "farm" provokes an image of dry, unattractive land on which nothing grows. Despite the farm's unattractive appearance, underneath the land lies soil that is potentially fruitful if it is given the proper attention needed to make it grow and flourish. Fitzgerald's use of the word "farm" is not a coincidence, for it describes the spiritual impoverishment of the West Egg and the East Egg. In his poem *The Waste Land*, T.S. Eliot describes the spiritual impoverishment people are experiencing. In the poem, Eliot describes the land as uncultivated "stony rubbish" where society is filled with "broken image[s]," or broken spirits.²⁹ People turn to fortune-tellers to find answers to spiritual problems, and love is compared to a game of chess. Eliot sees the answer to society's problem in religion, which he refers to as a "dry

²⁶ Fitzgerald, *Gatsby*, 9.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 27.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

²⁹ Thomas Stearns Eliot, *The Waste Land*, *Modern Poems*, eds. Richard Ellmann and Robert O'Clair (New York: Norton, 1989), 282.

sterile thunder without rain.”³⁰ People cannot see the answer to their problems because there must be a cleansing of society, or cultivation, for improvement to occur. The need for a spiritual awakening is evident when the speaker cries “O Lord Thou pluckest me out / O Lord Thou pluckest [me] / burning [from a hell on earth]” after seeing how love has been reduced to a mere game.³¹ The West Egg resembles the uncultivated land. It appears unable to produce worthwhile goods (people) while actually the people living in the area are impoverished for the same reason as the farm – nobody has paid them any attention in order to “cultivate” them into society. The East Egg resembles the fruitful farmland. On the outside, people appear to have it all – great careers, big houses, family money. But as the attractive farmland, they are actually impoverished on the inside. They have no compassion or respect for each other.

Fitzgerald’s illustration of class divisions plays an important role in supporting the American Dream. The characters living in East Egg do have money and are in control, while those living in West Egg are not wealthy and do not have prestigious careers. Neither class, however, has nobility of character or spiritual wealth. While this illustration clearly supports Franklin’s and Carnegie’s definitions of the dream since one group has money and the other is lacking money, it is also the reason why Fitzgerald’s characters do not realize the dream: the dream is challenged by the development of an emerging class. There are three class divisions in Fitzgerald’s works as opposed to the two class divisions in early European history. The poor, working class constitutes one class, but the elite class has been divided into two categories: Old Money and the nouveau riche. Fitzgerald still recognizes the same poor, working, powerless class as Europe, and he addresses this issue through Henry Gatz, Jay Gatsby’s father, but Fitzgerald shows how the American Dream has changed over time with the addition of two divisions of the upper class. Fitzgerald’s division of the upper class into two separate categories shows that money is not the real issue behind the division. The underlying issue behind the division is a search for emotional and spiritual strength and a search for a character’s true place in society.

The development of the new wealthy classes creates the most tension in Fitzgerald’s works because society must determine which lifestyle is most appealing. Anson in “The Rich Boy” is an example of “old money.” He “[is] the eldest of six children who [will] some day divide a fortune of fifteen million dollars.”³² Anson’s father has already secured his financial situation, so concerns about money are nonexistent. Also, in *Gatsby*, Nick Carraway, the narrator, fulfills the older ideal of living in an affluent economy that is a result of hard work. Nick’s money comes from a grandfather who “started the wholesale hardware business that my [Nick’s] father carries on today.”³³ The

³⁰ Ibid., 292.

³¹ Ibid., 291.

³² F. Scott Fitzgerald, “The Rich Boy,” *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, ed. Matthew Bruccoli (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1989), 318.

nouveau riche, however, are new to wealth. Bill McChesney, from “Two Wrongs,” illustrates this new class. He thinks he is “going to be the greatest producer in the world.”³⁴ Fitzgerald’s use of the future tense to describe Bill’s success shows that Bill does not come from an established family. He is forced to work hard and earn his wealth. Anson, Nick, and Bill show how the American Dream ideal of class division has evolved from early European times. In addition, the rich/poor dichotomy not only illustrates class divisions; it also shows an underlying dichotomy of hard work versus idleness, traits that are not necessarily related to prosperity.

Sadly, Anson and Bill also portray spiritual and emotional poverty. For example, Anson has everything he could ever want – except Paula, the woman of his dreams. When he discovers her engagement to someone else, Anson begins to fill “himself with whiskey that morning, . . . and [carries] on his work [at the office] without a break” because he is “so crushed at the thought of losing his true love.”³⁵ Anson is now spiritually impoverished because he buries his problems in alcohol and work instead of dealing with them on his own. Bill McChesney is another example of spiritual impoverishment. When his career as a play producer fails, Bill turns to alcohol and women to compensate for his failure. Anson and Bill show how neither the old money nor the nouveau riche are able to get everything they want because they are rich. Deprivation for the upper classes is a result of the rich being denied something they truly want; but this lack becomes spiritual and emotional because Anson and Bill have turned to people to fill the void in their lives created by worshipping material wealth. For example, although Anson is from a wealthy family, he is denied his greatest desire – marriage. As a result, “Anson’s chief concern [is] his own growing loneliness. He [is] sure now that he [will] never marry.” In addition, “he [becomes] not a little depressed” at how marriage has not only affected his personal life, but also caused his friendships with married people “to dissolve and disappear.”³⁶ Bill McChesney also shows how he has become emotionally and spiritually drained by his desire for material wealth. Bill’s career struggles deplete him; consequently, he finds “[h]e [has] come to lean, in a way, on Emmy’s [his wife] fine health and vitality.” But the dependency on Emmy causes Bill to feel “a vague dissatisfaction” with himself.³⁷ Obviously, money is unable to buy Anson and Bill spiritual and emotional fulfillment.

Also emerging during this time period is the middle class. The middle class is in an ambiguous position between upper-class riches and working-class need. As a result, the people are forced to develop their own lifestyle and their own set of values, which places them in a difficult transition phase. In fact, if

³³ Fitzgerald, *Gatsby*, 7.

³⁴ F. Scott Fitzgerald, “Two Wrongs,” *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, ed. Matthew Bruccoli (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1989), 514.

³⁵ Fitzgerald, “Rich Boy,” 328.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 341

middle class citizens (or lower class citizens) are fortunate enough to rise in society, they become part of the nouveau riche. This societal mobility creates the tension in the American Dream. Contrasting middle and working class values conflict when people in the two classes become part of the nouveau riche. Naturally, opposition arises as the two groups adjust to their new lifestyle. In addition, Old Money clashes with the nouveau riche because society accepts both classes despite their different backgrounds. The binary oppositions begin to break down when values become what Derrida refers to as decentered.³⁸ Consequently, the characters are in a difficult transition period and cannot realize the American Dream.

Materialism

As the stories of Anson and Bill illustrate, one reason Fitzgerald's characters are unable to attain the American Dream is that materialism has infiltrated society. Gatsby's illegal acquisition of material possessions shows how the idea of commercialism has changed in America. Americans are turning to foreign countries as models for their lifestyle because the American way of life does not present the illusion of a satisfying lifestyle. Consequently, society and the dream experience friction as the characters adapt to the changes in commercialism and materialism. Materialism is associated with social transgressions although the rich are, ironically, seen as blessed. Through his occupation as a bootlegger, Jay Gatsby portrays how Carnegie's materialism has disturbed Fitzgerald's era. Gatsby's occupation is disturbing because he gains material objects illegally. His house "[is] a factual imitation of some Hotel de Ville in Normandy, with a tower on one side, spanking new under a thin beard of raw ivy, and a marble swimming pool and more than forty acres of lawn and garden."³⁹ Gatsby literally invents a history for himself so it is no coincidence that his house is covered with ivy. The ivy suggests two important aspects of Gatsby. First, it symbolizes how he is trying to cover his true past. Second, the description of the ivy as "a thin beard" is significant because it shows how Gatsby has potential to be someone outstanding but has not yet reached his potential – hence the irony of the adjective "great" in the novel's title.⁴⁰ Gatsby is "great" on two levels: he creates a successful facade, and he has potential greatness of soul.

Individualism vs. the Community

Ralph Waldo Emerson defines individualism as "the independence of solitude;" however, the definition also has a negative connotation. People can enjoy "the independence of solitude" so much that it causes them to become disconnected from the community.⁴¹ An example of disconnectedness is Bill

³⁷ Fitzgerald, "Two Wrongs," 526.

³⁸ Derrida, 878.

³⁹ Fitzgerald. *Gatsby*, 9.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Emerson, 153.

McChesney in “Two Wrongs.” Despite his failing career, McChesney continues to produce lackluster plays even though his associates have urged him to stop doing so. (McChesney mistakenly thinks that audiences will still come to see his plays simply because he produced them). Eventually, McChesney’s career fails and it is no one’s fault but his own – he has become so autonomous that he only thinks in terms of money and fame for himself. McChesney’s separation simultaneously supports and challenges the American Dream. On the one hand, he fulfills Emerson’s definition because he is independent, but he also challenges the American Dream because he becomes too independent. This overwhelming amount of autonomy causes the conflict with what Robert Bellah calls *comitas*, or sharing, which he says “cannot truly exist.”⁴² The American Dream encourages both individualism and the community and naturally the dichotomy creates friction. Tension develops because the characters in Fitzgerald’s works take the underlying ideas of autonomy and *comitas* too far. As a result, tension occurs because there is not a balance between the two.⁴³

Bellah’s idea of *comitas* conflicting with autonomy is displayed in “The Diamond as Big as the Ritz,” which is a short story centered on two main characters: John Unger, a small-town boy who is sent to school in Boston because his small town was “too small” to hold someone so “darling and gifted,” and Percy Washington, who comes from a very wealthy family.⁴⁴ While the story’s main theme deals with the dangers of materialism, it also deals with the challenges of finding a balance between autonomy and *comitas*. Percy’s family owns a mountain that houses a diamond the size of the Ritz-Carlton Hotel; there is no doubt the family is wealthy, and because of this wealth, they enjoy the pleasures only the wealthy can enjoy, even in small ways. In the morning, their beds “tilt up slowly on [their] side[s],” where they are “plumped gently into water the same temperature” as their bodies.⁴⁵ Their

⁴² Robert Bellah, “Religion and the Shape of National Culture,” *America*, 31 July 1999, 12.

⁴³ Bellah thoroughly explains the concept in his essay “Religion and the Shape of National Culture.” Bellah blames Protestants alone for the development of what he calls “radical individualism,” in which people have come to the “understanding of the self as absolutely autonomous” (Bellah, 11). According to Bellah’s main argument, Catholics experience God’s presence during communion because the bread and wine manifest themselves in the participant as the blood and body of Christ. Because of this manifestation, Catholics experience a true sense of community as they share in their experience. Since Protestants believe that the bread and wine used in communion are merely symbolic of Christ’s blood and body, Bellah believes that a Protestant’s participation in communion promotes inward reflection instead of group reflection. As a result, communities suffer a breakdown in *comitas*. The solution to the problem, according to Bellah, is found in participating in the Eucharist. The Eucharist brings a sense of community where “[t]he sacraments pull us into an embodied world of relationships and connections” instead of a world of autonomous people (Bellah, 13). Participation in the Eucharist requires someone to give up all sense of autonomy. As you can see, Bellah’s article shows how tension develops when there is not a balance between Protestant and Catholic views of community.

⁴⁴ F. Scott Fitzgerald. “The Diamond as Big as the Ritz.” *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, ed. Matthew Bruccoli (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1989), 183.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 191.

lavish possessions are more extravagant than those of other wealthy people in their class, such as Gatsby. The Washingtons demonstrate how *comitas* cannot exist comfortably in the American Dream because possessions are unequally distributed among members of the *nouveau riche*. The idea of competition among members of the same class to live more extravagantly than others supports Bellah's argument that *comitas* has been left out of the American Dream. A lack of desire for *comitas* combined with the desire for autonomy creates greed, which causes the ideals to clash.

The story also demonstrates how too much autonomy is dangerous. Braddock Washington, Percy's father, decides to tell no one of his giant diamond. He chooses to "market his mountain in secret" to "prevent a panic" and to prevent "a monopoly by the government."⁴⁶ While his intentions are understandable, Braddock's decision to keep his secret to himself results in the downfall of his prized possession. One night, airplanes begin to bomb the mountain and to protect his precious possession, Braddock wires the mountain with explosives. Nothing is left of his "house of jewels" after the bombs hit the mountain.⁴⁷ The Washingtons are an excellent example of how conflict between solitude and community causes the characters to fail at realizing the American Dream: the characters are unable to control their lives in order to find a balance between solitude and community. Society and the American Dream encourage the idea of both the individual and the community, but the characters challenge the dream because a balance between the two ideas fails.

Sociologist Ferdinand Tonnies coined the terms *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* which describe the two types of communities in "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz." A *Gemeinschaft* community is a community that stresses the importance of family where people are "[a]ll intimate, private, and exclusive living together."⁴⁸ The close relationships cause the community to be self-sufficient and autonomous. (Although "self-sufficiency" and "autonomy" are terms normally reserved for individuals, I will use them in the discussion of *Gemeinschaft* because the community is so close-knit that it no longer functions as a group, but as an individual). In the *Gesellschaft* community "everybody is by himself and isolated, and there exists a condition of tension against all others. Their spheres of activity and power are sharply separated, so that everybody refuses to everyone else contact with and admittance to his sphere."⁴⁹ *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* are important concepts in Fitzgerald's works because both have disadvantages which are demonstrated in Fitzgerald's works. For example, Braddock Washington is an example of the *Gemeinschaft* community. He decides to keep his giant diamond a secret, which causes the family to work together to ensure no outsiders rob them of

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 193.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 214.

⁴⁸ Ferdinand Tonnies, *Community and Society (Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft)* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1957), 33.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 65.

their prized possession. Ironically, Braddock would have been better off to let outsiders help him protect his diamond since the family's determination to guard it themselves causes outsiders to bomb it, thinking he is hiding something illegal. The Washingtons show how Gemeinschaft harms a community because they become so self-sufficient that they refuse outside help when they need it. Ironically, the same family also illustrates the concept of the Gesellschaft community. The Washingtons are very materialistic people and must have more extravagant possessions than their neighbors. As a result, they become so preoccupied with improving themselves that they will not, as Tonnies writes, admit anyone into their "sphere."⁵⁰ The desire for wealth illustrates an important disadvantage of a Gesellschaft community – competition.

Role of Binary Oppositions in the American Dream

What do the binary oppositions imply about the American Dream? According to Barbara Solomon, "[f]or more than three centuries, the American colonies and, later, the United States have been a place for many 'have-nots' to make the American Dream come true for themselves and to become 'haves'" and with this dream comes "the spirit of optimism."⁵¹ Solomon's definition places the American Dream at the core, or what Derrida calls the center, of American society. Derrida defines the center's function as "to orient, balance, and organize the structure" (the structure in this case being society). He argues that dichotomies within the structure decenter the center so that "[t]he center is not the center" and "[t]he concept of centered structure . . . is contradictorily coherent."⁵² Since the dichotomies prevent Fitzgerald's characters from realizing the American Dream, the opposing viewpoints decenter the American Dream, which according to Solomon, is the center of American society. If the basic ideas behind the American Dream oppose each other, not only in Fitzgerald's works but in the ideas of influential people such as Franklin and Carnegie, then the center of American society is decentered. Consequently, American society has been based on an unstable idea, which due to its contradictory nature will never be attainable.

Literary characters can "buy into" the American Dream. Anza Yeziarska's novel *Bread-Givers*, published in 1925, which is coincidentally the same year *Gatsby* was published, relays the true story of a young woman's struggle to rise above her immigrant neighborhood and her father's strict upbringing. The character defies her father and receives an education to become a teacher. Essentially, she fulfills the rag-to-riches story, which is commonly related to the American Dream. The character, however, only superficially "buys into" the concept of the American Dream because at the end of the story, she returns to her father's aid and helps the man who wanted to keep her from succeeding.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Barbara Solomon, *The Haves and Have-Nots* (New York: Signet, 1999), xiv-xv

⁵² Derrida, 878-79.

By returning to him, she illustrates she is unable to forget her past and move into the future; she ignores a key concept in the American Dream – the concept of physical movement and progress.⁵³ *Bread-Givers* is significant because it shows how the American Dream is unstable in true life, as well as in fiction.

Is it possible to fully experience the American Dream? That question is best left to each person to decide based on his or her goals, beliefs, and values. In his song “Diamond as Big as the Ritz,” which is inspired by Fitzgerald’s short story of the same name, Jimmy Buffett gives important advice for everyone to follow, even if someone is not pursuing the dream:

“A blessing can become a curse
If you keep it to yourself
Your own exaggeration
Is not so good for your health
It’s the prophecy of the unattainable dream
If you take one look behind the shine
It doesn’t always gleam.”⁵⁴

⁵³ Anzia Yezierska, *Bread Givers* (New York: Persea, 1975).

⁵⁴ Jimmy Buffett, *Barometer Soup*, Jimmy Buffet, MCA compact disc 11247.

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THE LORAY MILL STRIKE OF 1929: WHY DID THIS TRAGEDY OCCUR?

CHRIS A. DAVIS

On April 1, 1929 an event happened in the sleepy southern town of Gastonia, North Carolina that left behind a dynasty that lasts to this day. This dynasty that was left behind nearly destroyed all attempts since that time to unionize the South and her industries. This event was the famed Loray Mill Strike that many have never been able to forget. This essay will examine numerous primary and secondary sources of information on this subject and attempt to find some meaning in the stories that they tell.

The central purpose of this essay is to sort through the massive amount of information found in these sources and to demonstrate there were a multitude of reasons for the Loray Mill Strike and not just the one that is popularly circulated: that it was simply a Communist surge into the South. These reasons include: paternalism, separation between the ownership and its workers, the fact that many of the workers were a rural people, mostly farmers, the stretch out system of production, and the struggle of women for equality in society.

Each of these five reasons will be discussed in due time, beginning with paternalism. What does this term mean? What did that mean to the mill workers and the mill owners? Most importantly, how did this help lead to the strike? The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines paternalism as “the policy or practice of governing in a paternal way, or behaving paternally to one’s associates or subordinates.”¹

In the South, textile mills began developing well before the Civil War, but not at a very rapid pace. However, a decade or so after the Civil War, the

¹ *The Concise Oxford Dictionary, Ninth Edition* (New York: The Oxford University Press, Inc., 1995), 1000.

industry did begin to develop very rapidly, with many mills appearing seemingly from nowhere. “Between 1885 and 1915 the number of textile mills in North Carolina grew fivefold—from 60 to 318. The increase in productive capacity of these mills was even more astounding: from 200,000 spindles and 2,500 looms in 1885 to 3.88 million spindles and 67,288 looms in 1915.”² Textiles were hailed as the savior of the region and nearly every town believed they had to have at least one mill.

The men who built these mills and their corresponding mill villages emulated successful models in New England. According to Nathans, “factory owners with a sense of mission sought to create good neighborhoods and well-regulated Christian communities”³ that were to be used to serve their employees well. Therefore, they decided to build not only the mill itself, but also a mill village with houses, usually a store, and sometimes other structures, such as schools, libraries, auditoriums for entertainment, and churches. In addition, many of these mill villages contained baseball teams, summer camps, company doctors, and company-sponsored flower gardens, amongst other things.

As for the Loray, in 1920

“the owners of the Loray Mills are spending [about \$500,000 on] new buildings, including 150 of the best constructed, most convenient and withal most attractive bungalows for their operatives that can be found in any manufacturing town in the country....In addition to these homes....two large dormitories, one for men and the other for women.....each dormitory has 23 bed rooms besides matrons’ rooms, reception rooms and halls. ...Each building is thoroughly equipped with baths, writing rooms, etc. In the basement of the men’s dormitory will be a bowling alley, a pool room, and probably a barber shop, to say nothing of shower baths and locker rooms.”⁴

More important than all of this, though, was how the mill owners treated their employees and had a direct interest in their family of employees. At the village of Glencoe, which is three miles north of Burlington, the mill founder’s son lived in the village with his employees. “He knew all employees and their children by name. Despite Holt’s (the owner) wealth and authority, he seemed ‘just like one of us,’ a resident recalled. In other mill villages, owners dispensed paternal gifts. One saw to it that all his female workers received a parasol at Christmas—which he delivered personally from house to house—and chartered a private train for picnic outings on the Fourth of July.”⁵ Other owners even shared wood or coal with their subordinates in the event that there was a harsh winter.

² Brent D Glass, *The Textile Industry In North Carolina: A History* (Raleigh, North Carolina: Division of Archives and History North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1992), 34.

³ Sydney Nathans, *The Quest for Progress: The Way We Lived in North Carolina, 1870-1920* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1983), 29.

⁴ S. H. Hobbs, *Gaston County: Economic and Social* (Raleigh, North Carolina: Edwards and Broughton Publishing Company, 1920), 22 - 23.

⁵ Nathans, *The Quest for Progress*, 30.

As one might imagine, this led to a feeling that the mill workers and their employer were all of one big family. Of this “family” one mill spokesman said:

“While the system in the Southern mill is paternal, there is a democracy greater than to be found perhaps in any other industry. Feeling that he or she is of as good stock as the employer, the mill worker has no hesitancy about going into the boss’ office, sitting down alongside his desk and asking advice on some matter or voicing a protest. They’re all of one family. They’re all of one community. They are all of the mill.”⁶

The reader is probably wondering how this could have ever helped lead to the Loray strike.

“Sometimes, if the occasion warranted it, workers simply walked off the job. Elections were usually celebrated in this manner, as was the advent of a singular attraction, such as a circus. Often these practices resulted from the fact that the workers had direct access to the owner; there was an element of personal involvement which, while doubtless paternalistic, at least afforded workers some chance of directly influencing the conditions under which they labored, either to protest the decisions of a supervisor considered harsh or unjust or even, at times, to influence policy directly. Management...would often accede to such limited demands. Owners and managers came to know the limits of their authority....Nowhere is this more obvious than in the decision....to restrict black labor in the mills....Those who tried (to use black labor for anything other than janitorial tasks), however, ‘quickly learned that such efforts were counterproductive.’ Violence, walkouts, and political action was the inevitable result.”⁷

Therefore, because of the Paternalism that was fostered by the mill owners, mill employees felt that they could walk off the job in protest and the owner and managers would just give in to their demands. After all, they were all just one big family. If the owner and managers did not give in to their demands, they could always go to another mill as there was a major labor shortage in the country during the mills’ early days.

This can be demonstrated by what some strikers in May 1929 said about the strike at the Loray. “We just went to the boss and told ‘im we couldn’t stand it any longer and he didn’t do anythin’ about it an we come out.’.....Many of them , when the strikes began, shook hands with their superintendents and managers as they filed out of the mills to ‘make certain that there was no hard feelin’s.’”⁸ Further, once the strike at Loray started, the

⁶ Melton Alonza McLaurin, *Paternalism and Protest: Southern Cotton Mill Workers and Organized Labor, 1875 - 1905*, (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Corporation, 1971), 47 - 48.

⁷ John A. Salmond, *Gastonia 1929: The Story of the Loray Mill Strike*, (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 5.

⁸ Paul Blanshard, “One Hundred Per Cent Americans on Strike,” *The Nation* 128, No. 3331 (May 8, 1929): 354.

strikers were not really protesting as one might think. Rather, they appeared to be a happy, laughing, joking crowd that did not become belligerent until later on, this according to *The Daily Gastonia Gazette*.

Also, in reference to the strikers' feelings about the mill bosses in general: "Mr. D. D. Little, secretary of the mills, and his son and grandson are regarded by the workers with affection. This is the first time the operatives have struck and their letter to Mr. Little was couched in terms of the utmost respect."⁹ This is clearly the mark of Paternalism and its "family" system.

This had worked well for many workers during the industry's boom years of 1880-1920. It was in 1920, though, that the post-World War I depression in the textile industry began. During the boom years hundreds of mills were built to produce textile products for the war effort and the world market. With the end of the war, the overabundance of mills resulted in an overproduction of goods and, thus, a depression in the industry. The result of this for these discontented workers was that there was no longer a labor shortage, but a surplus, and they could not just leave their current job, as they may not be able to find another one. When the Loray workers began to strike, they probably thought that it would only last a short time and the owners would just give in as in years before.

Having discussed Paternalism and its effects, the second reason for the strike must be examined. This next reason is that the employees and community grew more and more separated from the mill and its owners as time went on. This was a process that began with Henry Ford's introduction of the assembly line and his famous Model T automobiles. "The automobile altered urban residential patterns. People now drove downtown to work and to shop....Suburbs, previously located within the outer neighborhoods of cities, now evolved as satellite cities, often ten to twenty miles away from central cities."¹⁰ It was these suburbs that the upper and upper-middle classes fled to from the cities.

North Carolina was not immune to this phenomenon. Near Winston-Salem, R. J. Reynolds and his family fled the city and built Reynolda House, which was their country estate and working farm. "In the first two decades of the twentieth century not only Reynolds but also upper-class southerners generally began to abandon the center of the city....their departure marked the moment of a widening social gulf among distant classes. Some moved to exclusive suburbs, such as Myers Park in Charlotte, where winding roads, carefully designed landscapes, and an elegant club set off the rich from the rest of society."¹¹

In Gastonia, those that could afford to move away from the city moved to the uptown area.

⁹ Louis Stark, "Threaten to Evict Southern Strikers." *The New York Times* (April 10, 1929): 3.

¹⁰ George Donelson Moss, *America in the Twentieth Century*. (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1997),123.

¹¹ Nathans, *The Quest for Progress*, 64 - 65.

“The mill owners and managers increasingly moved away from their mills and built themselves huge, beautiful, lavishly furnished homes in the city’s uptown area. These houses were removed both physically and conceptually from the mill villages where the bulk of Gastonians lived, and the town’s leading professional people—the lawyers, the doctors, the real estate agents, and the clergy—generally followed the mill owners’ example. Gastonia, then, was a town clearly divided by class, as aerial photographs of the time show. In the uptown area of these photographs one sees the large, elegant houses with their commodious gardens, divided by the business center and the railroad tracks from the drab, identical mill villages.”¹²

“‘As the towns expanded,’ wrote W. J. Cash in *The Mind of the South* (1941), ‘the big-house people in the larger places no longer knew even the lesser burghers or anybody at all save their own immediate business and social associates. In such a place, the mill worker might wander the streets all day now without ever receiving a nod or a smile from anybody, or any recognition of his existence other than a scornful glance from a shop-girl.’”¹³

As Blanshard and MacDonald say: “The mill villages are far removed from the parts of the town where the ‘best people’ live.”¹⁴ “Most of these villages in the South are outside the corporate limits of the towns. In such cases, and often when the mill is within the town limits, the people live on one side of the town and the mill people, or ‘lint heads,’ as they are called, live on the other. Between the two there is a great gulf fixed, a distinction of caste.”¹⁵

Obviously this physical separation from the mill owners and the “regular townspeople” affected the workers psychologically. No longer did the owners live in the same village as their workers did, but now lived on the other side of town with everyone else. This definitely did little for the Paternalism that the owners had been trying to create in the villages. The “welfare” that the owners provided did not disappear with them, but one can imagine that the “family” concept was severely injured by this separation.

Furthering this separation between Loray’s workers and its owners was the fact that in 1919 the mill’s ownership changed hands. It was originally built in 1900 by George Gray and John F. Love. Through the use of the capitalization concept codified in the 1890’s by Daniel A. Tompkins in his “Plan To Raise Capital for Manufacturing,” the owners raised around \$1 million of mostly local capital. However, this sum was not enough as the cost of the mill and her machinery was more than \$1 million.

Lacking in money, it is said that George Gray went north in search of extra financing for their project. It is also said that a northern woman subscribed

¹² Salmond, *Gastonia 1929*, (Preface) 1 - 2.

¹³ Glass, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina*, 64.

¹⁴ Blanshard, “One Hundred Per Cent,” 555.

¹⁵ Lois MacDonald, “Normalcy in the Carolinas,” *The New Republic* 61 (January 29, 1930): 268 - 269.

another \$500,000 to help complete the mill. With a capitalization of \$1.5 million, the mill began operation, but was never really all that successful and underwent a number of reorganizations. Throughout all of this, northern capital was able to govern management. Finally, in 1919 Loray fell into the hands of the Jenckes Spinning Company of Rhode Island. Thus, the Loray Mill became the first mill to be owned and operated by outside money.

Of this situation Salmond says:

“...by 1929 it was, according to Liston Pope, ‘both the pride and despair of Gastonia.’ Though Gastonia residents could not help but be impressed by the size of the structure, which literally dominated the town, from its very beginning there was something different about the Loray Mill. The fact that (part) of the money needed for its construction was raised in New York automatically gave it a slightly ‘northern taint,’ and this situation was exacerbated in 1919, when ownership passed to the Jenckes Spinning Company of Pawtucket, Rhode Island.”¹⁶

This separation had the net effect of making the workers feel betrayed by the mill’s owners and managers. For the workers at Loray this was devastating because most were from a rural background (which is discussed a little later). Of these rural dwellers, Stark writes: “Nothing can swerve him from the path of loyalty and friendship. But when a friend fails him he casts him off at once; he may have heartaches in following the line of self-imposed duty as he sees it, but he follows it.”¹⁷ This is exactly what the mill workers at the Loray did, they simply cast off the owners.

It should be noted that in the same year, at this very same mill that was marked as being “different” and the workers felt that they had been betrayed, took place Gaston County’s first labor strike. Some time in 1919 the United Textile Workers formed a local, and in October, 750 of the mill’s workers walked off the job in protest to the owners not recognizing the union.

The workers did not walk off the job and directly protest this separation from the owners, but one must wonder if it is just pure coincidence that the county’s first strike happened at this particular time. After all, strikes had been going on in and around the South for years. Stark noticed this and wrote of it “the unrest in the textile centres is most marked in those cities where large mills are located.....and where no attempt has been made by the management to bridge the gulf which separates the operatives from officialdom.”¹⁸

Even after this strike the mill owners continued to make attempts to further separate themselves from the workers.

¹⁶ Salmond, *Gastonia 1929*, 12.

¹⁷ Louis Stark, “The Southern Hillman a New Kind of Striker,” *The New York Times* (May 19, 1929): 17.

¹⁸ Louis Stark, “Threaten to Evict Southern Strikers,” *The New York Times* (April 10, 1929): 3.

“Manville-Jenckes¹⁹ had fenced the whole area in and had also taken to locking the doors during working hours, so that employees had to have special permission to leave. Moreover, the welfare workers seemed less interested in helping the workers than in monitoring every aspect of their lives. Company police were constantly visible, and the village had an atmosphere of increasing impersonality, exacerbated by absentee ownership. Workers soon came to refer to the mill as ‘the jail,’ even in a time of labor surplus, turnover was high.”²⁰

Another possible cause of the 1929 strike was that many, perhaps most, of the mill workers were originally a rural people, with many coming straight off the farm to work in the mill. On the surface there was not a problem with using rural labor, but there were some problems associated with it that were apparent to an observant person.

As the textile industry grew at an ever faster rate in the South, the need for laborers only shadowed this growth. In the North the need for laborers was largely filled by the influx of immigrant labor that continually flowed through the ports of New York and Boston. Unfortunately for the Southern mill owners, they did not have the benefit of a readily available immigrant labor supply. It seems that few immigrants could be enticed to come south and stay for more than a short while.

Therefore, to fill their needs, North Carolina mill owners turned to the rural areas of the region, particularly the mountain areas of the state. They sent their labor agents to neighboring states and to the mountains in search of labor. Owners became frantic over the severe labor shortage, with some even resorting to violence to steal laborers from their competitors.

“The rapid growth of the industry during the nineties would have created a labor shortage had it not been for difficult conditions in agriculture. The low prices of cotton—often around five cents—and the almost equally low prices for tobacco were below the cost of production. The farmers got in debt to the time merchants. They could scarcely secure cash to pay taxes.....More and more hard-working, solid people, were forced into the mills along with the less provident, who had been pinched first. But by the early nineteen-hundreds and again after the depression of 1907-8, labor for the ever increasing plants began to be scarce. Labor scouts sent to the country around and to the mountains enticed families with rather too glowing pictures. They told of wages amounting to cash far beyond anything these families had ever handled. They paid moving expenses. Sometimes they enticed workers from neighboring mills in the same way.”²¹

¹⁹ In 1923 the Jenckes Spinning Company merged with another Rhode Island chain, the Manville Company, which created the new entity.

²⁰ Salmond, *Gastonia 1929*, 13.

²¹ Harriet L. Herring, *Welfare Work in Mill Villages*, (Montclair, New Jersey: Patterson Smith Publishing Company, 1968), 21.

Besides being in debt, rural people left for many other reasons. Although the reasons are numerous, economic conditions most frequently figured into the equation in trying to decide to leave the country. Some of these reasons include: promises of more pay, looking for a better chance to survive, looking for a place where all the family could work, death of the family head, the influence of relatives already working at the mills, bad crop years, and the boll weevil and its destructive nature.

As to the extent that the mill owners drew upon mountaineer labor, “it is significant to note...the proportion of those having their birthplace in....a mountain county. According to the data on birthplace by counties approximately...two fifths were born in the mountain area.”²² While this meant that a majority of the mill workers were not from rural parts, enough of them were for the rural workers to be a very important force in the mills.

So, why did the mill owners seemingly go after workers from the mountain areas? According to Rhyne, the answer to this question “may be found in the relative productivity of the two groups concerned (mountaineers and tenant farmers from the piedmont region). Cotton manufacturers have often stated that the mountaineer makes a much more efficient laborer....his greater efficiency, his superior capacity for hard work, and his rampant individualism all combined make of him probably the best worker to be found anywhere, according to statements from the manufacturers. Whether or not these estimates are true cannot be determined here, but the fact remains that the representatives of mills, of new mills especially, have scouted the mountain sections of North Carolina for workers.”²³

Once in the mill villages, “men and women, grown to maturity without seeing a railroad train or setting foot inside a motion picture theatre, have exclaimed in wonderment when transplanted among the common places of modern life.... For some time the change was like a holiday. Despite the long hours at unaccustomed tasks in the mills, the people appeared to be happy.”²⁴

These mill villages may have appeared to be utopia for a time, but there were some problems associated with them. The mill owners attempted to create a place that would make their workers happy and serve their needs in the mill village, as already discussed.

“Yet the transition from farm to mill village was far from easy for all. For some – especially children – the adjustment to factory work could be sudden and startling. The whirring and deafening din of machinery frightened many a novice. One woman recalled that she ‘fled from the room’ with her superintendent in hot pursuit. For children the shock

²² Jennings J. Rhyne, *Some Southern Cotton Mill Workers and Their Villages*, (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 70.

²³ *Ibid.*, 67.

²⁴ Stark, “The Southern Hillman,” 17.

came at the end of the first week's work, with the payment of wages that amounted to 12 1/2 cents a day. 'I came home to my momma and I cried,' remembered a retired workingman. Nothing on the farm prepared mill workers for the cotton dust of the spinning room, which a Glencoe worker described as 'just like fog.' Nor was it easy to adjust to the intense, humid heat of the factory, where moisture was needed to keep cotton fibers from breaking. 'You just sweated it out, that's the whole thing there was to it.'"²⁵

Complicating the inability of the workers to adjust was that many were ignorant and illiterate and had a total lack of knowledge as to methods used to promote health and sanitation or of correct living habits. When they came to the mills, they brought their lack of knowledge and poor habits with them. Also, many attempted to keep livestock in the villages as they had done in the country. With the crowded conditions within the villages, much disease and death resulted from these conditions created by the villagers. This undoubtedly took its toll on the workers, having to see their fellow workers sick and/or dying.

Another problem with this workforce was also one of the fundamental reasons that the mill owners had wanted them, that of individualism or a love of independence. On the farm, these workers had been able to live a reasonably independent life, which was compromised by working in the mill. Working at the mills meant being at work at a certain time, working a specific set of hours, and doing what the supervisors and line managers told them to do. This went totally against what these workers were accustomed to. As Stark further states:

"then gradually the novelty of life in the new surroundings began to wear off. The mountaineer, once free to roam the hills, found the long hours irksome. While he tended his machine his thoughts flew back to the open air life in the hills.... The wages of \$10 to \$25 per week which seemed so alluring in the hills to a folk unused to much cash, lost their glamor. Wants, increased by social contact, by newspaper and magazine advertisements and the proximity of stores, could not be satisfied."²⁶

With all of these problems, one could reasonably guess that many decided to leave the conditions in which they were living behind. Of those that left the mills, many returned to farming, while many others simply went from mill to mill. A woman is quoted by Blanshard as saying: "We've moved five times since we was married-that's eleven years ago. It don't cost much to move when

²⁵ Nathans, *The Quest for Progress*, 31.

²⁶ Stark, "The Southern Hillman," 17.

you move a little way. We ain't been outside of South Carolina. They ain't nothin' in movin' from one mill to another in the long run."²⁷

As the nation got deeper into the 1920's it became more and more difficult and finally nearly impossible for these workers to return to their roots and farm. In addition, the mid- and late 1920's saw a depression in the textile industry, which created a labor surplus. Together, these two factors prevented the workers from readily leaving the mills and only made their situation more miserable. Taken altogether, these things made for an unhappy group of people that found themselves out of their element, with no way to get out of their present situation.

The fourth possible cause of the strike of 1929 was that the mill's new owners instituted what they called "scientific management," or popularly called the "stretch-out." The "stretch-out" involved using new technologies and productive techniques. Wherever it was possible, men and women were replaced by machines, the number of employees required to perform tasks was reduced greatly, and the employees were made to labor relentlessly hard around the clock. Further, restrictive supervisory practices were implemented and many mills went to piecework in determining their workers pay.

This new institution was imported from the northern mill owners in the hope that the declining trend in the profitability of the industry could be reversed. In 1927, Loray's owners put this institution into practice for the first time in Gaston County. A new superintendent was hired in G. A. Johnstone with orders to reduce production costs dramatically.

"He went about his work with enthusiasm, dramatically raising workloads, replacing skilled with cheaper labor, and redistributing or abolishing tasks, and within fifteen months the Loray labor force had been reduced from 3,500 to 2,200. He slashed wages, imposing two general reductions of 10 percent, and, more important, put much of the work-especially that done by women-on a piecework basis. The general result was a wage reduction of between 25 and 50 percent, a drastic alteration in the mill's work practices, the bitter alienation of its workers, and the collapse of any lingering notions of a community at Loray."²⁸

Without a doubt Johnstone was highly successful in accomplishing his goals. In a letter to Johnstone, F. L. Jenckes admitted that he had been skeptical about his chances of cutting the annual payroll expenses by \$500,000. However, since he had been able to accomplish this feat, Jenckes wrote that he thought that another \$1,000,000 could be cut annually from the payroll to help reduce costs further.

The problems with this are obvious, but they run deeper than the eye can see. One will remember the Paternalism and all of its elements that were

²⁷ Paul Blanshard, "How to Live on Forty-six Cents a Day," *The Nation* 128, No. 3332 (May 15, 1929): 580.

²⁸ Salmond, *Gastonia 1929*, 14.

previously discussed. Along with these changes to the mills came changes to how the owners viewed Paternalism. While chasing down profits, many mill owners greatly reduced the welfare that they had once freely offered. Gone were the baseball teams, the summer camps, the auditoriums, and all the other extras. Of course, they continued to provide very basic housing, after all, they still needed some workers.

Along with this was the fact of how the entirely new system was introduced. "New equipment was installed.... Mill workers looked on in absolute horror as old equipment was thrown out the windows and broken up for scrap. No one told them why. To the workers, the machines had been their livelihood. The destruction of their machines, for which they had almost personal affection, hurt them deeply."²⁹ Of this Nathans says: "they took immense pride in their work and in their ability to manage the tasks they were assigned. In the early days of factories, an individual tended the same machines every day. It was not unusual for a worker to talk to the machinery, to cajole it, to give it a whack on bad days and praise it on good."³⁰

The workers did not like having so-called efficiency experts come in and tell them what to do and how to do it.

"Their importation was the sign for a certain discontent which most observers now hold to be at least human. The experts had to work among a class of employees almost entirely native to the section and in many instances lately recruited from the countryside. The boast of the manufacturers of the Carolinas is the large supply of both actual and potential laborers of Anglo-Saxon stock who are not, and never have been, successfully organized into unions. But it is a class used to its own ways and not accustomed to change, and it tends to resent what it interprets as outside interference."³¹

Finally, one of the major problems with the "stretch-out" system was that it meant that the workers had to really work in order to perform their duties. Remember that these workers were used to hard work, as many had come from a life of farming. However, what the "stretch-out" meant was intolerable to them. Before the implementation of this new system the workers had had to work long, hard hours, but they did have some relief. For instance, "women with young children who wanted to look after their infants might be given piecework that they could do at home.... Because most women had to work full-time....the company accommodated mothers by permitting them to walk home at midday to feed their family lunch and by allowing them to leave work an hour early in the afternoon to prepare supper."³²

²⁹ Mildred Gwin Andrews, *The Men and the Mills: A History of the Southern Textile Industry*. (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1987), 87.

³⁰ Nathans, *The Quest for Progress*, 32.

³¹ Lenoir Chambers, "Stop Watches Led to Textile Strikes," *The New York Times* (April 7, 1929, 3): 1.

³² Nathans, *The Quest for Progress*, 33.

Also, while at work the workers were allowed to pretty much just set their own pace. “‘It was just like a family operation,’ recalled one woman. ‘You had time to fraternize with your fellow workers. You could get up when you had to, sit down when you wanted to.’ Textile factories required long hours, reflected another worker, ‘but it was no pressure. When you’re working under pressure, it’s killing you all the time. We were more like just one big happy family.’”³³

All of this changed with the introduction of the new system. Gone were the days of sitting, talking, and generally just setting your own pace. Under the new system, the machines pretty much set the pace for the workers. In addition, the workers were given more machines to run, which resulted in them literally running from machine to machine all day long, with no time to sit or fraternize. In another of Blanshard’s articles Gladys Caldwell tells of the situation: “I run up and down the alleys all day. No, they ain’t no chance to sit down, except once in a long time when my work’s caught up, but that’s almost never.”³⁴

“For the workers...the whole nature of employment had changed....The workplace was now a situation of tension. Men with more machines to tend now ran where they had once ambled; women found timepieces-‘hankclocks,’ they called them-installed on each piece of machinery they used; gone was the chance to chat with one’s neighbor, let alone to make the occasional trip home to see the children. Even going to the bathroom was likely to come under scrutiny from a new breed of unsympathetic, aggressive supervisors.”³⁵

The last reason for the Loray Mill strike of 1929 was that in some ways it represented the struggle of women for equality in the workplace and society. This is a struggle that had been going on for many years, but has not even been entirely achieved today, in 1999. One could say that the Loray strike was only one of the many battles in this long war.

To understand this struggle, one must go back a few years to the 1890’s to what has become known as the Populist Movement. It was during this movement that women really started taking the lead in pushing for reforms and attempting to get help to the masses (in this case the farmers). According to Boles “both men and women were charter members of the fledgling Southern Alliance. The women were often more radicalized than the men were, for no one had suffered longer or harder from the numbing poverty and bone-aching exhaustion of farm labor than did the womenfolk.”³⁶

During the next decade women took an even more active role in the communities in which they lived. “Women began seeking ways to extend their nurturing skills to the community around them, and as such, their clubs evolved in purpose from self-culture to community service. By 1900, women’s clubs in

³³ Ibid., 34.

³⁴ Blanshard, “How to Live,” 580.

³⁵ Salmond, *Gastonia 1929*, 8 - 9.

³⁶ John B. Boles, *The South Through Time: A History of an American Region*, (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1999), 423.

the South were advocating health reforms in the schools, clean water fountains in towns, playgrounds, city beautification projects, and cleanliness standards for dairies and city markets.”³⁷

During the 1910’s, the major issue for these women reformers became suffrage. This crusade had begun in the mid-nineteenth century as a spin-off of the abolitionist movement, which insisted that all Americans were equal and deserved equal rights, regardless of sex or race. It was not until the 1910’s that the movement was able to really pick up any steam.

It was during this period that more and more women joined the workforce to help supply labor for a war-driven economy that was going full blast. With these jobs came a want for equal rights and recognition for their hard work. Such leaders as Carrie Chapman Catt and Alice Paul helped lead parades, protests, pickets, and hunger strikes that eventually led to the creation and ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920.

This amendment did give women the right to vote, but they were still lacking equality in a major way, that of equal pay for equal work. To see this, all that one must do is look at data from the time the Industrial Revolution began up to the late 1920’s. Such works as Simpson’s are useful here. His work includes many tables and comparison’s of the wages that both sexes earned at various times. Table III³⁸ lists wage information from 1865 to 1890 and breaks it down between the two sexes. From this table one can see that men earned much more than women did. For instance, in 1875 male spinners in Massachusetts earned \$1.83 per day as compared to the \$0.91 that women earned. In 1885 the difference was down to \$1.06 versus \$0.91, but back up to \$1.61 to \$0.96 in 1890. One important thing to note here is that both were doing the same job, working the same number of hours, but receiving much different rates of pay.

Of this situation in North Carolina, Rhyne in 1930 said that “the average weekly wage received by all wage-earners was \$15.72, the median wage was \$15.14....Males were generally paid a higher wage than females. The average weekly wage was \$16.67 for males and \$13.58 for females....17 percent of the female wage-earners were receiving less than \$11 per week as compared to 2.8 percent of the male wage-earners. Further, 60.9 percent of the women and 28.8 percent of the men were receiving less than \$14 per week.”³⁹

Seeing this disparity in wages, feminists, having just won the battle of the vote, began concentrating on issues involving women in the workplace. It seemed to have been the next natural step in the struggle for equality. Alice

³⁷ Ibid., 434.

³⁸ William Hays Simpson, *Some Aspects of America’s Textile Industry*, With Special Reference to Cotton. (Columbia, South Carolina: Division of General Studies University of South Carolina, 1966): 34.

³⁹ Rhyne, *Some Southern Cotton Mill*, 95 - 96.

Paul again helped lead the way, supporting an equal rights amendment that was introduced in Congress in 1923. While this amendment drive failed, it awakened many to the problems women faced. In fact, it even made many that suffered from this discrimination realize their true situation.

Since women joined the workforce in large numbers, the popular belief was that they only worked to supplement their husband's income. For the mill workers this was just not the case. Most, if not all, worked because they had no other choice if they wanted to survive. Feminists arguing for equal rights and equal pay brought much needed attention to this disease and helped those that suffered from it realize their predicament and possible solutions.

Considering these facts, it is no wonder that women were at the forefront of the strike.

“Increasingly, it was Vera Buch who provided the strike effort with backbone. One of the grievances they (the women) aired then, and one that certainly rankled with the female strike leaders, was the question of who would do the picketing. Always an important issue, the matter had now acquired urgency due to the certainty of the violent response. Beal (the male strike leader) simply refused to picket; that was not the job of the strike leader...While Vera Buch's later assertions that women did most of the picketing in Gastonia cannot be sustained-the press reported too many instances of men being arrested for that to be true-it is nevertheless clear that from April 21 until picketing stopped altogether, it was the women who did most of the marching, who faced most of the violence, and who went to jail.”⁴⁰

Two examples of women's role in the strike are: “one woman carried a baby in one arm, and a big knotted stick in the other. Another woman, apparently in her twenties, fought her way through the crowd to the front ranks of strikers and shook a half-inch pipe at one of the guardsmen. She seemed in a good humor, however, but she held on to the pipe.”⁴¹

Another prime example of one of these women leaders was Ella Mae Wiggins. She was a simple country girl that lived in Bessemer City. She did not even work at the Loray, but she still helped lead the strike and its supporters. She was best known for the many ballads that she wrote and sang for the strikers. Why did she put herself on the line for a strike that she seemingly had nothing to gain from? Ella Mae said it best herself: “We must stick out for our rights. That is what will whip the mill owners, and they see we are going to win. I want every worker to stick together, and if we do, we are sure to win, and if we don't stand up for our rights and we hang on the bosses, we are fighting ourselves and fighting our children and against our freedom for the working class.”⁴²

⁴⁰ Salmond, *Gastonia 1929*, 47 - 48.

⁴¹ Legette Blythe, “Workers Are Anxious For Mill Strike to be Ended,” *The Gastonia Daily Gazette* (April 4, 1929): 1.

⁴² “Let's Stand Together: The Story of Ella Mae Wiggins,” (Metrolina Chapter of the National Organizations for Women and Charlotte, North Carolina, 1979), 12.

These women not only were willing to picket, but were also willing to take their case to their elected officials in Washington, D. C. During the strike a delegation made up of six men and five women traveled there in the hope of discussing their situation with at least some government officials. While there, they happened to run into Lee Slater Overman, the junior senator from N. C. At first he tried to ignore them, but finally gave in and talked with them.

During the course of the conversation he remarked that one of the young ladies needed to get back to school. To this Ella May Wiggins seized the moment and told him what many striking moms were feeling. “How can I send my children to school when I can’t make enough to clothe them decently? When I go to the mill at night, I have to lock them up at night by their lone selves. I can’t have anyone to look after them. Last winter when two of them were sick with the flu I had to leave them at home in bed when I went to work. I can’t get them enough good clothes to send them to Sunday School.”⁴³

It should by now be clear that the women were probably the most active strikers. But why? All one can say to this is that between the male and female mill workers, the females had it the hardest. After all, they were doing the same work as men, but receiving less pay for it. Also, they had to look at their children and realize that they would have to do the same type of work to survive someday. Without an education, what other type of work could they expect to get? One could say that by striking they had little to lose

Also, one could say that the women had begun to think about how unfair the situation that they were in was, relative to that of men. As one gentleman said “The unions was good.... It made the folks use their minds. It shore does workers good to use their minds and do some thinkin’ of their own. Yes, Ma’am, it shore does.”⁴⁴

The Loray Mill strike was a terrible event in the history of Gastonia and North Carolina. The reasons for it can not easily be seen, as one must go back well before the time of the strike to understand them. However, once one does this, they can see that the strike was caused by multiple factors, not by the most common belief that it was simply a Communist surge in the South.

To many people this event was just that, a Communist surge that failed. However, that theory just does not hold very much water. Blanshard probably puts this theory to rest the best of any the author has read:

“The workers in the strike only know that they are fighting for a better life. They do not know the difference between one union and another, and for them ‘communism’ is simply a general epithet. The employers have shouted ‘Wolf! Wolf!’ so often that now their paroxysms have little effect upon the workers. On the red clay banks of the railroad track they sit in their overalls listening to the Communist strike leader

⁴³ Salmond, *Gastonia 1929*, 59.

⁴⁴ MacDonald, “Normalcy,” 269.

as he stands on a box in the vacant lot. They hear with blank faces phrases about international solidarity and class power. But when one of their own number stands up and shouts: 'Every striker git a scab and the strike will soon be over,' they howl with delight. They are tired, undernourished, and uneducated, but even the employers admit that they are becoming aware of their own degradation."⁴⁵

To review, the mill owners encouraged many mountaineers to come to their mills to work. As they did this, they even created mill villages for them to live in and even a feeling of everyone there being one big family. At the Loray Mill this was the case, but something happened that, for many, destroyed the family feeling. During the 1910's the mill owners and managers moved out of the village, leaving their "family" behind. Complicating this, in 1919 the mill's ownership passed to a northern company and it became the first mill in the area to have "Yankee" owners.

These workers were, to begin with, of the mountain areas. This was important because it meant that most were determinedly independent and treasured their individualism. The workers, having by then felt betrayed and deserted, were then put through the "stretch-out" experience. This experience stripped them of that independence and hurt them in other ways.

The final piece of the puzzle was that women, having just attained the right to vote, were beginning to want equality in other ways, namely in wages. All of these things, taken together, resulted in the Loray Mill Strike and the terrible violence that accompanied it.

⁴⁵ Paul Blanshard, "Communism in Southern Cotton Mills," *The Nation* 128, 3329 (April 24, 1929): 501, 24.

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HIS AND HERS SPIRITUALITY:

Pilgrim's Progress and Hinds' Feet on High Places

COURTNIE WALTON

As early as medieval times, men's and women's spiritual experiences have differed. Men saw eating as a way to unite themselves with God, while women saw fasting as virtuous (Bynum 4). To these women, fasting was a way to control and renounce their selfishness and their environments (Bynum 5). Food was considered flesh, and by not eating it, women believed they brought themselves closer to God by abandoning their physical beings (Bynum 5). Even though women's spirituality as separate from men's is not a new concept in history, it is relatively new in popular culture and scholarship. An understanding of how both sexes experience spirituality leads to the realization that God is bigger than individual perceptions of Him.

In addition to the medieval examples, John Bunyan's and Hannah Hurnard's allegories provide contrasts between male and female spirituality as well. The first line of Hannah Hurnard's *Hinds' Feet on High Places* sounds like a fairy tale. It reads, "This is the story of how Much-Afraid escaped from her fearing relatives and went with the Shepherd to the High Places where 'perfect love casteth out fear'" (*Hinds' Feet* 17). However, this story is more than a fairy tale because it represents reality in a new way, and in so doing, teaches readers how to cope with their daily realities. *Hinds' Feet* is an allegory, which is defined as "the representation of spiritual, moral, or other abstract meanings through the actions of fictional characters that serve as symbols" (36). According to author C.S. Lewis, allegory "represent[s] what is immaterial in picturable terms" (qtd. in Wilken 199). According to Robert Louis Wilken, professor of religious studies at the University of Virginia, "without being attentive to allegory, it is not possible to read the Bible" (Wilken 198). Allegory is present in many of Jesus' parables, as the stories grab the reader's attention, and when analyzed even closer, explain deeper concepts.

Barbara Stern, associate professor of marketing at The State University of New Jersey, has studied the effects of allegory on advertising. She asserts that

“true allegory” deals with love, religion and spirituality—issues of the inner life—because these subjects can be touched only by allegory, and are otherwise intangible (7). Biblical translator, St. Jerome, stated that the terms “allegory” and “spiritual sense” are synonymous (Wilken 201). In Hannah Hurnard’s *Hinds’ Feet on High Places* and John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*, allegory provides a pertinent genre for spiritual writing. Both Hurnard and Bunyan use allegory to portray ideals and images that would be difficult to represent through other forms of writing. Both deal with issues in Christianity, such as the trials Christians must endure on this earth. However, Hurnard and Bunyan approach these obstacles in two very different ways. Although several factors may account for their opposing viewpoints, by studying the differences between male and female spirituality, one can see that the gender factor seriously impacts their writing. *Hinds’ Feet* has been called the “modern Pilgrim’s Progress” (“Songs” 2). However, this comparison is not completely accurate. A careful study of the issues covered in both allegories reveals that in *Hinds’ Feet on High Places*, Hurnard rewrites *Pilgrim’s Progress* from a woman’s point of view.

Hinds’ Feet on High Places is the story of a young woman named Much-Afraid who is crippled and has a disfigured mouth. She lives in the Valley of Humiliation and is constantly taunted for her disabilities by her relatives, the Fearing clan. She longs to have hinds’ feet like the ones described in the Bible in Psalm 18:33 and Habakkuk 3:19, “The Lord maketh my feet like hinds’ feet, and setteth me upon mine High Places” (*Hinds’ Feet* 5). She takes a journey with the Shepherd (God), and is transformed by her relationship with him. She is then able to leap to the High Places and back down to the Valley of Humiliation to tell others how to live victoriously on earth.

In the Preface, Hurnard asserts that these “High Places do not refer to heavenly places after death, but are meant to be the glorious experience of God’s children here and now—if they will follow the path he chooses for them” (*Hinds’ Feet* 13). Through her unique perspective of women’s spirituality, Hurnard states that the lessons that a reader should learn from *Hinds’ Feet* are those of: accepting and triumphing over evil, of becoming acquainted with grief, and pain, and ultimately, of finding them transformed into something incomparably precious: of learning through constant glad surrender to know the Lord of Love himself in a new way and to experience unbroken union with him (*Hinds’ Feet* 13).

Hinds’ Feet on High Places was published in 1975, and over one million copies are still in print (Fisher 1). *Christianity Today’s* readers ranked *Hinds’ Feet* number eight for “Best Christian Fiction of the 20th Century” (Bishop & Steffen 2). *Hinds’ Feet* is so popular that two soundtracks and variations of the allegory for children have been produced. One soundtrack, “Songs from *Hinds’ Feet on High Places*,” was released in 1983, and Hurnard said that she hoped the soundtrack would reach those who may not read the book (1). The second soundtrack, “Much-Afraid,” recorded by the critically acclaimed Jars of Clay, is named after the main character of *Hinds’ Feet*. By taking all of the paraphernalia associated with *Hinds’ Feet* into account, one can surmise that

Hinds' Feet is well accepted in popular culture. However, it has been ignored by critics on a universal level because it demonstrates a spirituality different from their own. As her critic, James Thorpe, suggests, traditional spiritualists are threatened by Hurnard's new point of view and dismiss *Hinds' Feet* as a "girl thing" book (3).

In 1678 and 1684, John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* was published. This allegory, which chronicles the journeys of Christian and Christiana through this world, has endured through the years and is still widely read and referred to in various ways. Bunyan scholar Roger Sharrock says it began when "a seventeenth-century Calvinist sat down to write a tract and produced a folk-epic of the universal religious imagination"(27).

Pilgrim's Progress was named number one in *Christianity Today's* "Best Christian Fiction of the 20th Century," even though it was written in the 1600s (Bishop & Steffen 2). *Pilgrim's Progress* has been called "the supreme classic of the English Puritan tradition" (Sharrock 7). Bunyan scholar Roger Sharrock asserts that *Pilgrim's Progress* is based on strict Puritan ideals prevalent between 1640 and 1660, perhaps explains the severity in *Pilgrim's Progress* to an extent (7). However, gender plays an even larger role in Bunyan's ideas about spirituality. Even though contemporary readers may not connect with Bunyan's autobiography, *Grace Abounding*, allegory allows Bunyan's religious experiences in *Pilgrim's Progress* to seem familiar to readers to produce a "less personal and more universal truth" than other genres (Sharrock 12).

Allegory is often used in autobiography. In his article, "Autobiography, Allegory, and the Construction of Self," Herman asserts that nearly every autobiographical account contains allegory (351). Both Hurnard's and Bunyan's allegories are based on autobiographical events. The character of Much-Afraid is modeled very closely after Hurnard, as her own conversion came after many years devoid of any kind of love. In her autobiography, *Hearing Heart*, she admits that she did not even feel love for her parents, and most certainly not for God or herself. She was brought up in a Puritan family, complete with many rules and church services. However, God was never real to her. The weekend of her conversion, she says she heard Pastor Clarence Foster preach. When he said, "Will you not look on your Lord as the great Lover... And look upon the Bible as his love-letter," Hurnard felt a connection with a loving, real God (35). She recounts that her "lonely, loveless heart had at last found a center on which to rest with absolute thankful security. . . . I loved for the first time in my life" (35).

Pilgrim's Progress is also autobiographical in many ways. Bunyan grew up in a family whose "rank [was] meanest, and most despised of the families of the land" (*Grace Abounding* 7). Despite this, he had the opportunity to go to school, but Bunyan spent his youth in rebellion against God. In his autobiography, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, he recounts all of the temptations he faced and tells about God's grace saving him from what his actions deserved. Bunyan explains:

In this discourse of mine, you may see much; much, I say, of the grace of God towards me: I thank God I can count it much; for it was above my sins, and Satan's temptations too. I can remember my fears, and doubts, and sad months, with comfort. . . . (*Grace Abounding 2*)

As a man who had experienced the terror of living in opposition to the will of God, Bunyan knew the power of God's grace, as well as God's discipline. Bunyan began *Pilgrim's Progress* in prison and was released before he completed it (Sharrock 11). The temptation Bunyan seemed to fear most was that he would "despair of his faith"; Christian fears that same temptation (Sharrock 12).

Another advantage of allegory, according to Stern, is its liveliness, which is linked to the individual reader's response because each reader must create individual meaning (3). For instance, Bunyan's and Hurnard's interpretations of God's character demonstrate their gender differences. These differences are seen in Christian's and Much-Afraid's differing views of God, destinations, fears, relationships, enemies, ecstatic experiences and desert experiences. Both Christian's and Christiana's journeys are written from a male's point of view, as Bunyan was writing in a male-dominated society. *Hinds' Feet* carries its readers past male dominance, validating female spirituality by focusing on Much-Afraid's experiences. Although it is commendable that Bunyan balanced his allegory by including Christiana's journey, which does incorporate some valid insights, her journey is still essentially what a man imagines a woman's journey to be.

Deborah Tannen, a sociolinguist, defines a difference in the way men and women view the world, a difference applicable to gender differences in spirituality. According to Tannen, men see themselves as individuals in a society that ranks their importance as either "one-up or one-down" (24). With this view, men use conversation as a way to achieve the "upper hand" and "protect themselves from others' attempts to put them down and push them around" (Tannen 24-5). Christian follows this example in that he is constantly struggling to stay on top of worldly evil, and his conversations are negotiations between good and evil. He is an example of the male perspective that life is a contest in which independence is valued and failure is the ultimate fear (Tannen 25). Christian has also been the model of Christianity, but his experiences do not include what is important in women's spirituality. Hurnard was able to write about Much-Afraid from her own experiences in women's spirituality. For our purposes, the term "spirituality" will refer to an individual's coming into a relationship with God. According to Tannen, women view the world as a "network of connections" that values conversations for the purpose of intimacy (25). Much-Afraid is an example of this perception because her transforming experiences come from her relationship to a loving God. Her life is a community that values intimacy and friendship (Tannen 25). *Hinds' Feet* and *Pilgrim's Progress* provide stark contrasts between male and female spirituality through these basic gender differences.

Bunyan's view of God as revealed in *Pilgrim's Progress* is primarily one

of a threatening God bent on judgement for those who stray from his will. Although his view of God is not the whole point of the allegory and does not discredit *Pilgrim's Progress*, it does contrast with the view of God in *Hinds' Feet*. When Christian meets the man in an iron cage and asks him why he is in a cage, the man tells Christian that he sinned against God by letting his guard down and tempting the devil (78). When Christian asks the man if he can be forgiven, the man answers that God has denied him repentance (78). He tells Christian that "there now remains to me nothing but threatenings . . . of certain judgements and fiery indignation" (79). The man also says that in one of his dreams, "the Judge had always his eye upon me, showing indignation in his countenance" (81). He talks about a dream he had in which "the pit of Hell opened her mouth just where I stood" (81). The fact that Bunyan describes hell as female demonstrates the view of women when he was writing; they were temptresses. Christian does not experience the intimate presence of God and does not expect to until the end of his journey. Rather, God is a transcendent being who is all-powerful and all-knowing, but distant from his creation.

In his autobiography, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, Bunyan says he offended God so much that even while he was a child, God tormented him with horrible dreams and visions (8). Bunyan stresses the "day of judgement," "devils and hellish fiends," "eternal darkness," and the importance of living a "strict and holy life" (8-9). Viewing God as a wrathful, vengeful God is only one way of looking at God and cannot encompass all that God is.

However, *Hinds' Feet* presents a different image of God that reflects female spirituality, one who "above all things delights in saving and delivering" (*Hinds' Feet* 60). In Maurine Cromwell's review of *Hinds' Feet*, she asserts that Hurnard "turns the ageless yearning for unbroken intimacy with the Lord into a charming, attitude-changing allegory" (3). The God whom Much-Afraid serves is an immanent God who cares about every little detail of her life. He knows her:

through and through, in all the intricate labyrinth of her lonely heart, better far than she knew herself. . . . He looked with a certain tender pity and compassion at the glowing cheeks and shining eyes which had so suddenly transformed the appearance of plain little Much-Afraid. (*Hinds' Feet* 27)

Much-Afraid learns that with the Shepherd (God), "perfect love casts out fear" (17). In sharp contrast to the transcendent, vengeful God in *Pilgrim's Progress*, Much-Afraid finds love, acceptance, patience, healing and joy in the Shepherd. Much-Afraid tells the Shepherd, "How good you are. How patient you are. There is no one in the whole world as good and kind as you" (*Hinds' Feet* 26). Every time Much-Afraid makes a mistake by not trusting the Shepherd and falls back into the clutches of her fearing relatives (Pride, Bitterness, Self Pity, etc.), she looks up expecting to see a stern, angry look in the Shepherd's eyes, but instead finds unbelievable love, tenderness and forgiveness. She finds that God understands humanity, as the Shepherd asks,

“Much-Afraid, don’t you know by now that I never think of you as you are now but as you will be when I have brought you to the Kingdom of Love and washed you from all the stains and defilements of the journey?” (*Hinds’ Feet* 143). Much-Afraid sings a verse from Canticles, or Song of Songs when she discovers how God views his children:

I am not fair save to the king,/ Though fair my royal dress,/ His kingly
grace is lavished on/ My need and worthlessness./ My blemishes he
will not see/ But loves the beauty that shall be. (*Hinds’ Feet* 34)

The view of a God who is unconditionally loving is essentially a more feminine interpretation of God. The medieval women emphasized God’s love by serving the poor (Bynum 4). According to Nora Lozano-Diaz, an expert in women and theology studies, God has traditionally been described with traditional male characteristics such as strength, power, control and dominion (35). She argues that if God created both male and female in his image as the Bible says he did, it is inaccurate to suggest such a limited view of God (Lozano-Diaz 35). According to Lozano-Diaz, one must consider both sides and include God’s other qualities, such as compassion, nurture, care and empathy (35).

Carol Ochs explores the more feminine interpretation of a sympathetic, nurturing God in Women and Spirituality, and emphasizes the role of circumstances in women’s lives. Through circumstances, women learn that although they “cannot sustain [themselves], [they] are nevertheless sustained” (91). The Shepherd tells Much-Afraid that, even though there are times he cannot be with her physically, “there is really no distance at all separating us. I can cross the desert sands as swiftly as I can leap from the High Places to the valleys, and whenever you call for me, I shall come” (*Hinds’ Feet* 81). Even though she cannot make it alone, she knows the Shepherd will help her. It is this knowledge, Ochs asserts, which leads women to conclude that they are loved. Thus circumstance can point to God’s love in that women learn that God is with them through their hardships (91).

According to expert Brita Gill-Austern, “It is the desire [of] women to know they are beloved of God” (37). Much-Afraid finds a “saving spirituality” by knowing she is loved by the Shepherd and by realizing what Gill-Austern calls her “interrelatedness with all being[s], a larger ability to embrace the fullness of reality and ultimately an awareness of our oneness rather than separateness” (38). Much-Afraid realizes the oneness of humanity when she tells the Shepherd what kind of love is growing inside of her. She says, “I think that what is growing there is a great longing to experience the joy of natural, human love and to learn to love supremely one person who will love me in return” (*Hinds’ Feet* 23). The Shepherd tells her, “. . . it is happy to love even if you are not loved in return” (*Hinds’ Feet* 23).

Ochs says that women long to find a way to love others without draining themselves. The Shepherd tells Much-Afraid how she can love others without becoming exhausted. He says, “It is only up on the High Places of Love that

anyone can receive the power to pour themselves down in utter abandonment of self-giving” (*Hinds’ Feet* 54). According to Ochs, women find this kind of love, one that is a chosen action rather than a suffered passion, in spirituality (92). Much-Afraid seeks a love that “is not suffering but that transforms suffering” (Ochs 92). When the Shepherd teaches Much-Afraid about love, he plants the seed of love in her heart. The Shepherd’s love transforms Much-Afraid. The experience is described as beautiful:

Suddenly, a sweetness she had never felt or imagined before tingled through her. It was bittersweet, but the sweetness was stronger. She thought of the Shepherd’s words, ‘It is so happy to love,’ and her pale, sallow cheeks suddenly glowed pink and her eyes shone. (*Hinds’ Feet* 25)

Another contrast between *Pilgrim’s Progress* and *Hinds’ Feet* is the destinations of Christian, Christiana and Much-Afraid. Bunyan explains his world view in the first line of *Pilgrim’s Progress* when he says he walked through the “wilderness of this world” (51). The journeys of Christian and Christiana follow the traditional spirituality format. As in most Western religious systems, their God is a “spiritual progenitor,” an “external judge,” and an “artist rather than [a] father” (Ochs 21). Christian and Christiana develop what Ochs calls the “otherworldly view,” which looks forward only to death (21). Once the “otherworldly view” is applied, life ceases to be enjoyed, but is merely a road to take to achieve the goal of death (Ochs 21). Life becomes a journey to struggle through “in an effort to reach the release from our tainted fleshly existence” and “death becomes the entry into a life that is more real” (Ochs 21).

Christian begins his journey in order to find heaven; his entire goal of living is to stay on the path and not fall away from righteousness. His destination is heaven, but he never feels secure in God’s love because he is always afraid of straying from God’s will. Christian is unable to enjoy daily blessings on earth because he fears that he will fail God. He tries to convince Pliable and others he meets of the “endless kingdom” of heaven (56). Bunyan’s characters have one goal, to die so they can go to heaven. According to Anne Baxter, a minister who has studied women’s spirituality, male pilgrims have left worldly pursuits and are on a mission for God (40). They see themselves as “soldiers of the cross” who are creating paths through evil that women and children can later follow (Baxter 40). Christian fits this description perfectly. In contrast, Much-Afraid’s goal is to be beloved of God, but once she realizes that she already is, she wants to minister to others.

The concept of looking forward to heaven is biblical, but what about the abundant life on earth that Jesus offers His followers? Having death as a goal denies the importance of life experiences. However, it is what Ochs labels “traditional spirituality” (22). For many traditional mystics, spirituality means that a seeker must deny the world to find reality. Throughout the history of philosophy and theology, the term “reality” has meant “perfection and being” (Ochs 22). What Ochs calls traditional spirituality is a direct parallel to Bunyan’s philosophy of denying the world as Bunyan instructs us to always “hold the image of our death ever before our mind[s]” (Ochs 105). Bunyan may

concentrate on heaven as a goal because he was in prison while he was writing part of *Pilgrim's Progress*. However, Hurnard was also imprisoned. Her prison was made up of her own fears and handicaps, which prevented her from being free enough to enjoy life and to love others.

By labeling only the epic details in life as real, many experiences that are precious to women are ignored. Ochs argues that "refusing to bestow the judgement 'real' on our world is to trivialize what we do, experience and suffer in our daily lives" (23). According to Baxter, men have been the symbols of ideal Christian spirituality (40). For men, spirituality entails living disciplined and upright lives that are not concerned with the experiences of daily life and its trivial details (Baxter 40). To imply that the only reality is in denying the world itself discredits women's experiences. According to Josephine Donovan, an expert in female culture, women are generally more concerned with everyday matters because of their domestication as housewives (102). They find importance in their mundane, everyday work by personalizing each task they complete to make it special, allowing women to view even housework as sacred (Donovan 102).

The Shepherd values everyday details, as he tells Much-Afraid that "many a quiet, ordinary, and hidden life, unknown to the world, is a veritable garden in which Love's flowers and fruits have come to such a perfection that it is a place of delight" (*Hinds' Feet* 50). Much-Afraid seeks help for her everyday experiences:

It seemed as though her senses had been quickened in some extraordinary way, enabling her to enjoy every little detail of her life; so that although her companions actually were Sorrow and Suffering, she often felt an almost inexplicable joy and pleasure at the same time. (*Hinds' Feet* 133)

However, according to Ochs, "Reality is something larger than our experience of it" (10). Again, Much-Afraid fits into the reasoning of women's spirituality because she does not merely want to know the Shepherd or to know only spirituality. She wants her spirituality to be more than knowing, but also "a way of being and doing" (Ochs 10). Much-Afraid's spirituality contrasts with traditional spirituality, which sees spirituality itself as the "highest state of maturity" (Ochs 10). In a male model, such as *Pilgrim's Progress*, the task of Christian is to "achieve individuation" and separate himself from everything in the world (Ochs 10). However, Much-Afraid's task is to connect with the Shepherd in a relationship and be changed by the relationship (Ochs 10). Hurnard writes, "She did not understand how it happened, but what the Shepherd had said had come to pass in herself. . . . [She] would never be the same again" (*Hinds' Feet* 83).

Ochs suggests that although the image of the journey as a model for spirituality is prominent in western spirituality, it is incorrect because it assumes that the only contribution that experiences have is toward the goal of the journey (23). If the only goal in Christians' lives is to enter heaven, the

only value of their lives is whatever experiences contribute to their deaths. Ochs asserts that the “walk” metaphor, which emphasizes the individual importance of each step rather than merely its contribution in reaching the destination, would more accurately represent a Christian’s experiences, especially women’s experiences, because it is a more cyclical representation in that each person goes forward and also regresses (117). The walk metaphor allows more room for meaning in the everyday lives of women, thus giving a more realistic picture of an actual spiritual quest (Ochs 117). Although Much-Afraid’s story can be called her journey, her experiences are more accurately described using the walk metaphor. Women are able to relate to the honest experiences of others, and the walk metaphor creates an understanding that finding the holy in everyday situations is both plausible and spiritual.

The experiences of others are becoming more valued in society as twentieth century psychology focuses on feelings, sometimes comparing the effects of emotional experiences on mental life to the effects of sensory experience on the physical life (Ochs 11). It teaches that rather than being a goal in itself, experience is important because through it we learn about ourselves (Ochs 13). Throughout Much-Afraid’s journey, her unhealthy self-image changes as she lets go of “earlier image[s] of herself and the life that went with [them]” (Ochs 14). She learns that what she depends on the most is actually what she cannot control (Ochs 14). This kind of journey is a direct contrast to Bunyan’s interpretation of a Christian’s journey in that he fights his circumstances, while Much-Afraid learns to embrace hers.

In traditional spirituality, one may escape the world through circumstance, suffering, conflict, guilt and naturally, death. However, viewing even these situations through a woman’s eyes allows for an entirely new interpretation (Ochs 90). In his book, *I and Thou*, author Martin Buber describes women’s experiences in general: “The mighty revelations to which the religions appeal are like in being with the quiet revelations that are to be found everywhere and at all times” (116). Although Buber does not specify women’s experiences as “quiet revelations,” the insights women receive often occur during their daily routines.

Gill-Austern, a theology professor, asserts that in the midst of their everyday experiences, women look inside themselves for strength because they long to find holiness in everyday situations (52). Such differences might be seen in the contrasts between poets Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson. Whitman’s poetry deals with issues in a way that is larger-than-life, while Dickinson writes about the small details of a bird hopping on the grass. Dickinson’s is a distinctly feminine approach, like Hurnard’s Much-Afraid, who, unlike Christian and Christiana, does not long to be taken out of this world, but rather to find God in this world.

According to Gill-Austern, women “seek to find a spirituality that does not take them out of their world, but transposes them into their world in a new way” (52). At the end of Much-Afraid’s journey, she and her companions are transformed. When she seems surprised that her companions are also transformed because they were sent to help her, they ask her, “Don’t you know

that everything that comes to the High Places is transformed?" (*Hinds' Feet* 202).

According to Ochs, the best way to respond to "otherworldliness," as found in *Pilgrim's Progress*, is to analyze the situations that may deter people from committing fully to this world (58). Much-Afraid is able to analyze her situation in a new light through her experiences with the Shepherd:

understand quite clearly that truth cannot be understood . . . [except] by personal growth and development in understanding, and that things written even in the Book of Books can be astonishingly misunderstood while one still lives on the low levels of spiritual experience. . . . (*Hinds' Feet* 207)

One of the situations traditionally seen as a way to escape the world, circumstance itself, is actually a way in which women find joy in this world. As women learn that they cannot control their circumstances, they also realize that they can receive nourishment (Ochs 61). Anthony Bloom says, "Poverty is the root of perfect joy because all we have proves love" (qtd. in Ochs 61). Women's spirituality focuses on working through hardships not merely to get through them, but to learn to find good in them. Women learn that everything they have is a gift, and although hardships may be distressing, the results will include positive aspects. According to Ochs, women learn to see even hardships such as poverty as gifts from God because they "affirm [their] ongoing relationship[s] to God in a way that possession never can" (61). Once again, the medieval women's practice of giving to the poor provides a connection to modern female spirituality.

Hurnard grew up with two handicaps: irrational fears and a horrible stammer. Much-Afraid also has two handicaps: fear and physical deformities. Her handicaps are the reason she initially meets the Shepherd, just as Hurnard's handicaps brought her to God. In *Hearing Heart*, Hurnard says, "Natural strength is often as great a handicap as natural weakness; both must be utterly yielded to the Lord" (47). She concludes, "No one has such a perfect opportunity to practice and develop faith as do those who must learn constantly to turn fear into faith" (*Hearing Heart* 13). She learned what God was capable of doing through her and knew that it was God and not herself who could succeed in public speaking and evangelism, as she later did. "All fears are groundless," Hurnard states from her own experience (49). She learned that God was able to use her circumstances to give her divine inspiration.

Bunyan includes some fearful situations in *Pilgrim's Progress* as well, but Christian's fear is founded on God's judgement. At one point, Christian admits, "Fear followed [him] hard" (58). The Slough of Despond is made up of the fears and doubts that torment sinners whose eyes have been opened to the truth about their sins (58). Christian's fear is based on his perception of God as a fearful judge, while the fear that brings both Hurnard and Much-Afraid into a relationship with God is based on fear of people and worldly devices. In Christian's situation, he fears falling from grace; thus God is more a part of his

fear problem than its solution. In contrast, from Hurnard's and Much-Afraid's view, God is their savior, redeeming them from their fears.

The terror which Bunyan talks about in *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Grace Abounding* is present in Hurnard's works only in the context of love. After being attacked by Craven Fear, the most threatening of all her relatives because of his harsh cruelty to her, Much-Afraid is saved by the Shepherd and is then ashamed of her fear. Hurnard writes, "She did not dare look at the Shepherd, but had she done so she would have seen with what compassion he was regarding her. She did not realize that the Prince of Love is 'of very tender compassions to them that are afraid'" (*Hinds' Feet* 30).

Traditionally, men's spirituality has emphasized independence, while women's maturity involves their "coming into relationship with others" (Gill-Austern 134-5). Christian's solitary journey also has the characteristics of traditional spirituality because it is for his justification alone. Although he meets people and encourages them along the way, he is completely focused on reaching his goal. His conversations with Faithful, who is one of his closest companions, are not the focus of the allegory. Rather than record their conversations, Bunyan simply mentions that Christian and Faithful talked.

However, Much-Afraid's conversations with the Shepherd and her companions are crucial to what she learns on her journey. Many times women's struggles enable them to help others with their hardships (Gill-Austern 138). Much-Afraid grows in her spiritual life by coming into a relationship with the Shepherd and her two constant companions, Sorrow and Suffering (who become Joy and Peace when they, too, reach the high places). Much-Afraid's experience is synonymous with Ochs' and Gill-Austern's definitions of women's tendency to grow and learn through their relationships with others (15). The importance of relationships to women can also be seen in the way medieval women valued serving Christ by touching the lives of others (Bynum 4).

While Christian's stark determination is commendable, it does not accurately represent women's spirituality because women look to the daily events in their lives for their insights. If they were to focus only on their main goals, they would trivialize anything that happened outside of their destinations and label everything else unworthy of their time and attention. Christian is able to leave home because he does not have the responsibility of motherhood like Christiana, who is looking to daily events for inspiration as she raises their children. Christiana is fulfilling her role as mother by staying with her children and later on, by taking them with her on her journey, whereas Christian is fulfilling what he believes is his God-given role of going on a solitary journey. Bunyan may have seen the solitary journey as a male ideal in that his account of Christiana includes Mr. Greatheart and other companions at all times, whereas Christian is not constantly accompanied by companions.

According to Ochs, being alone is "the ability to live out of one's inner life—indeed, to have an inner life. . . . We fail to recognize that the idea of God that we have formed and the practices that we observe also indicate that we are not—nor have we ever been—alone" (23). Ochs states that the notion of self-

sufficiency is a myth (23). Much-Afraid is not seeking solitude or a journey that will prove her worth according to the strength and discipline she demonstrates, rather, it is in her dependence on the Shepherd that Much-Afraid finds freedom. She writes, “Upheld by the Shepherd’s hand and supported by his strength, she had really forgotten her lameness and had been unconscious of either tiredness or weakness” (*Hinds’ Feet* 55).

According to Ochs, the goal of traditional spirituality, individual salvation, can be defined as “communion with God,” which can take on different meanings depending on where a person finds God (24). Christian and Christiana are expecting to find their salvation outside of this world, whereas Much-Afraid realizes that although salvation will ultimately be found in heaven, God has given her abundant life on the earth as well. Ochs states, “. . . if God is outside or above this world, then the salvation must be from this world. If we locate God wherever ‘two or three are gathered in [God’s] name,’ then salvation keeps us healed and joyous in this world” (24).

In contrast to *Pilgrim’s Progress*, *Hinds’ Feet* does not end with Much-Afraid’s death, but ends with a celebration of her new life on earth: “But for Grace and Glory [Much-Afraid’s new name] it was the beginning of a new song altogether” (*Hinds’ Feet* 223).

Christian’s and Much-Afraid’s enemies torment them in different ways as well. According to Bunyan scholar Sharrock, many of Christian’s enemies are created “for the sake of an immediate effect and then passed over when a fresh incident occurs in Christian’s progress” (Sharrock 18). Much-Afraid does not merely conquer her enemies once and never see them again as Christian does; she continues to struggle with the same ones repeatedly. In the same way women are concerned with daily events in cyclical time as they must repeat their tasks repeatedly, they also grapple with the same enemies in cycles. Much-Afraid demonstrates this cycle with her biggest enemy-- fear: “Much-Afraid . . . all of a sudden seemed to have become deaf to the music around her and to be full of fears and forebodings again” (*Hinds’ Feet* 56). Struggling with the same enemies is more true to spiritual experience, as people do not live their lives in a “linear, developmental manner,” but repeat some mistakes and fall back (Ochs 24). Much-Afraid, like many women, is perplexed when she continues to be harassed by the same enemies. However, her experiences depict women’s spirituality because women deal with the same events in cycles:

It did seem strange that even after safely surmounting so many difficulties and steep places, . . . Much-Afraid should remain so like her name. But so it was! No sooner did the Shepherd pronounce the words ‘danger and tribulation’ than she began to shake and tremble all over again. (*Hinds’ Feet* 125-6)

In *Pilgrim’s Progress*, Christian looks at the acts done by men for God, such as “how they had subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, . . . stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword . . . waxed violent in fight”(99). In contrast, Much-Afraid does not glory

in those who have fought valiantly for God, but learns God loves her so she can love others.

Some of Christian's and Christiana's enemies torment their minds as well as their bodies, but their battles are primarily fought physically. Ochs considers Christian's physical battles as a part of traditional spirituality as well because through a male-centered perspective, *Pilgrim's Progress* "achieves [openness and vulnerability] only by breaking down defenses through trials" (32). Men can relate to conquering obstacles and vanquishing enemies as a means to their destinations. Although the physical battles in *Pilgrim's Progress* often correspond to spiritual ones, the focus is on Christian fighting a society that is trying to hold him down.

In contrast, Much-Afraid's battles are fought inwardly. Although her relatives chase her physically, the connection the reader can infer is that Pride, Self-Pity and Craven Fear are assaulting Much-Afraid's inner being. Her relatives send Pride to assault Much-Afraid, as "he [will] feel no scruples against exerting all his powers of fascination in order to coax Much-Afraid away from the Shepherd" (*Hinds' Feet* 65). The idea of inner struggles is more prevalent in women's spirituality as well in that women need to come into a relationship with God, with others, and with themselves (Gill Austern 134-5). By struggling with their attitudes and thoughts, women are able to grow in their knowledge of themselves. In contrast, Men struggle with outer temptation, or inner temptation that leads to outer demise, such as lust that leads to adultery or hatred that leads to revenge, while much of what women struggle with cannot be seen on the outside.

Both Faithful, one of Christian's companions, and Much-Afraid meet with Discontent, Shame and Pride. However, the differences between the enemies of *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Hinds' Feet* is that Christian's and Faithful's enemies seem to argue more intellectually, as if they are attempting to persuade them to do wrong through logic while Much-Afraid's enemies taunt and ridicule her. Pride always reminds her of her unworthy appearance. He taunts her: "Ask yourself, honestly, are you not so ugly and deformed that nobody even in the Valley really loves you? That is the brutal truth. Then how much less will you be welcome in the Kingdom of Love" (*Hinds' Feet* 67). These attitudes toward enemies are also influenced by gender, as men place a greater emphasis on fear of falling into physical temptation, while women have a greater fear of being belittled physically.

John Dunne defined religion as "insight into the common experiences of mankind" (qtd. in Ochs 1). In order to gain insight into the experiences of others, one must understand both their emotional and practical experiences. Although traditional masculine spirituality prefers reason over experience, Ochs asserts that one cannot be human without possessing both emotions and reason, and one cannot achieve individual spirituality without his or her humanity (5). Writing about ecstatic experiences, defined by Ochs as "standing outside ourselves," tends to threaten traditional society because extreme emotions are dangerous to the presumed safety of institutionalized religion and society (3).

Christian's experiences are more acceptable to traditional spirituality than Much-Afraid's because they deal more with reason than emotions. However, Hurnard writes about her ecstatic experiences in *Hinds' Feet*. These include Much-Afraid's extreme emotions, depression and elation. As Much-Afraid thinks about the love that is forming in her heart, "the same almost intolerable sweetness st[eals] over her, the bittersweet indefinable but wholly delightful ecstasy of a new happiness" (*Hinds' Feet* 30). Her ups and downs are dramatic and powerful, and her strength is in her ability to draw readers into her experiences so that they, too, feel cleansed and joyous as Much-Afraid experiences these emotions. Much-Afraid's experiences give her new perspectives and insights:

Her heart often thrilled with an inner ecstasy when she caught sight of the sun shining on the wings of the wheeling seagulls, making them gleam as dazzlingly white as the snow on the peaks of the far-off High Places. . . . She had the feeling that somehow . . . there would be a meaning found to all sorrow and an answer far too wonderful to be as yet understood. (*Hinds' Feet* 84)

According to Ochs, for those who are willing to move past complete reason and acknowledge emotions as a relevant spiritual reality, ecstatic experiences offer insights that can be used for spiritual growth and to teach others (8). True religion "emphasizes the insight into our experiences and the consciousness that insists upon learning from them" (Ochs 9).

If humanity is defined only in negative ways, such as the depravity of men and women, the complete picture of spirituality is misconstrued. Positive views are often left out of the picture in traditional spirituality, which focuses on "times of dejection" (Ochs 90).

However, in order to see the whole picture of spirituality, one must recognize that times of elation are also part of humanity. Ochs asserts that "joy is as real as pain and just as worthy of serious consideration if we are to know ourselves fully and to understand how we fit into the rest of reality"(90). In this way, women contribute to the complete picture of spirituality by sharing their ecstatic experiences. The ecstasy Much-Afraid feels when she is renamed Grace and Glory is evident to everyone who sees her. Hurnard writes, "Love was for her, too, even for her, crippled little Much-Afraid. . . .Even as she thought of this, doubt mingled with sweetness. Surely it could not possibly be true" (*Hinds' Feet* 34-5).

If, as John Dunne said, religion is "insight into the common experiences of mankind," it covers female spirituality by what it does and does not say. It does not mention structures, hierarchies or doctrines, but emphasizes the experiences that all people have in common (Ochs 9). By underscoring the significance of our world, religion demonstrates the primary insight of women's spirituality. Ochs states that if religion is indeed "insight into our experiences, it must result from thinking about what our senses and emotions tell us" (9). The Shepherd tells Much-Afraid that even he loves to do "preposterous things" that do not

seem reasonable (*Hinds' Feet* 111). The Shepherd says, "Why, I don't know anything more exhilarating and delightful than turning weakness into strength, and fear into faith, and that which has been marred into perfection" (*Hinds' Feet* 111).

Desert experiences are a part of most journeys, and women's and men's desert experiences differ (Ochs 107). The Christian hermits of the past, who are the models to which we compare modern desert experiences, went into the desert to find solitude and inspiration. Much-Afraid's desert experience is also literally in a desert, but symbolizes the trials in one's life. The Christian hermits' experiences do not encompass female experience. Rather than seeking loneliness, women accept it; rather than either submitting to or fighting despair, women accept their situations and look inside themselves for strength; rather than staying in the desert, women go back to the world transformed (Ochs 107-8). As Much-Afraid leaves the desert, she looks back at herself, "but [she] was looking at somebody else together, and she said to herself, 'I was that woman, but am not that woman now'" (*Hinds' Feet* 83).

According to Gill-Austern, women return from their desert experiences because they want to live out what they have learned in reference to everyday holiness by sharing their insights (108). In *Mountains of Spices*, the sequel to *Hinds' Feet*, Much-Afraid returns to the Valley of Humiliation after her journey to the high places in order to comfort and teach her relatives what she has learned. Much-Afraid realizes that there is more to life and she must share her insights with others:

a wondrous and glorious truth; 'a great multitude whom no man could number' brought like herself by the King to the Kingdom of Love and to the High Places so that they could now pour out their lives in gladdest abandonment, leaping down with him to the sorrowful, desolate places below, to share with others the life which they had received. (*Hinds' Feet* 222)

Much-Afraid learns four things from her desert experiences: to accept her circumstances with joy, to bear others with love, that the Lord never sees her as what she is but what she will be, and that every circumstance can be transformed if one reacts to it in love and obedience (*Hinds' Feet* 210). Hurnard writes:

. . . For something had happened in the wilderness which had left a mark upon her for the rest of her life. . . a deep inner change had taken place which indicated a new stage in her life. . . Somehow, incredible as it was, she, Much-Afraid, had been enabled to accept the knowledge and to acquiesce in it, and she knew within herself that with that acceptance a gulf had opened between herself and her past life, even between her past self; a gulf which could never again be closed. (*Hinds' Feet* 82-3)

Acceptance is a virtue in women's spirituality. While a hero vanquishes his enemies, the more accurate picture of a heroine is one who becomes what she is meant to be by allowing herself to be transformed by her circumstances. She is able to find sustenance in dry times, and is able to "pass on the gifts of life" to others (Ochs 33-4).

Hurnard demonstrates this female concept of heroism in *Hinds' Feet* when Much-Afraid finds a flower in the desert. She cannot understand why such a lovely flower would grow in the middle of nowhere. She asks the flower what its name is, and the flower answers, "Behold me! My name is Acceptance-with-Joy" (*Hinds' Feet* 80). She realizes that beautiful things happen when she is content where God places her: "He has brought me here when I did not want to come for his own purpose. I, too, will look up into his face and say, 'Behold me! I am thy handmaiden Acceptance-with-Joy'" (*Hinds' Feet* 80). Throughout the rest of her journey, whenever she is troubled by discontentment, she thinks of the flower and remembers what God can do when she is submitted to his will. All the Shepherd asks of Much-Afraid is that she trust him. He tells her, "You have one real beauty, Much-Afraid, you have such trustful eyes. Trust is one of the most beautiful things in the world" (*Hinds' Feet* 57).

As evidence of her transformation, Much-Afraid allows herself to have desires. Before her journey, Much-Afraid is unable to stand up to her abusive relatives because she does not see herself as someone who is allowed to have her own desires. Gill-Austern says, ". . . a woman's expression of love and exercise of freedom is greatly enhanced to the extent she is aware of herself as a subject and is able to connect with her deepest desires" (38). Much-Afraid does not think that she is allowed to have her own desires, so she is unable to realize when her relatives abuse her. She thinks that it is only natural for her to submit to their abuse and is then more vulnerable to keep on being abused by them and others (Gill-Austern 44). Thus, she is imprisoned. Much-Afraid represses her hurt and her desire for love because repression and addiction are two ways in which women deal with desires they cannot communicate (Gill-Austern 38).

Whenever Much-Afraid is plagued by her relatives (Bitterness, Self Pity, Pride, Craven Fear), she is disconnected from her deepest desire, which is her need to be loved (Gill-Austern 40). It is during these times that she looks up, expecting to be rebuked by the Shepherd, but receives unconditional love instead. It is difficult for her to receive the Shepherd's love, as she does not love herself. Women who cannot be subjective are not able to love God with their whole beings because they do not know themselves fully (Gill-Austern 38).

Schafe, an expert in co-dependency studies, says that women isolated from their feelings find their identities outside themselves and have no self-esteem. They try to find out what they can do for others, but are estranged from themselves and therefore have no selves (39). This behavior, known as co-dependency, is a part of the addictive process that stems from a societal system (Schafe 39). Baxter, an expert on women and theology, agrees that the church has a double standard when it comes to spirituality (42-3). While a man's

expression of spirituality is to be active in defending God's mission, women have been taught that selfless love is virtuous and that to sacrifice their well-being for another is their mission (Baxter 42-3). According to Baxter, the result is fear, addictive relationships, and women unable to love themselves or others (42-3). Much-Afraid's abuse by her relatives and her attitude about herself is the perfect example of Baxter's definition.

From her understanding of herself and her abusive relatives, Much-Afraid is able to relate to others who are hurting. She, like Anthony Laird, a pastor who often feels burned out with ministering to others, is able to tell others about a "more human Christianity" (Laird 3). Laird also writes about learning that sometimes God calls people in their weaknesses instead of their strengths (3). He refers to Hinds' Feet, comparing his fatigue, which he calls his "cross to bear" that "keeps [him] near the cross," to Much-Afraid's handicaps (Laird 4).

As Much-Afraid is able to view the world from a different place, women are able to view the world as outsiders, a role placed on them by society (Ochs 44). In a traditional society where to be male is to be important and to be female is automatically less preferred, women have been outsiders. Throughout history, the male child has been considered more important because he is able to carry on the family name and inherit the family's land or money. Although many women are now breaking free from that stereotype, what women have learned from being viewed as outsiders is that all people anguish over who they really are as defined apart from what other people do to them (Ochs 44).

Another contrast between *Hinds' Feet* and *Pilgrim's Progress* is the poetic passages of each, which differ in tone and content that can be traced back to the genders of the authors themselves. Hurnard's poetic passages are romantic and endearing:

The Voice of my Beloved!/ Through all my heart it thrills,/ He leaps
upon the mountains,/ And skips upon the hills./ For like a roe or
young hart,/ So swift and strong is he,/ He looketh through my
window,/ And beckoneth unto me. (*Hinds' Feet* 37-8)

The contrast between Hurnard's and Bunyan's poetic passages is exemplified in Christian's statement to God after gaining victory over Apollyon. Christian says,

Great Beelzebub, the captain of this fiend,/ Designed my ruin;
therefore to this end/ He sent him harnessed out, and he with rage . . .
(*Pilgrim's Progress* 106)

While *Pilgrim's Progress* focuses on poetry that talks about victory in battle, the poetry in *Hinds' Feet* is taken from Canticles or Song of Songs in the Bible. Men are encouraged by tales of strength and victory, while women are inspired by poetry about being loved.

Similarities can be found between the two allegories when one compares

the second part of *Pilgrim's Progress*, Christiana's journey, with *Hinds' Feet*. Christiana also must learn to put up with wrongs done to her without objecting to the things she suffers (*Pilgrim's Progress* 262). The Visitor tells Christiana that the bitter comes before the sweet (*Pilgrim's Progress* 238). The Visitor's advice concurs with Much-Afraid's guides, Sorrow and Suffering, whom she must follow. The scene in which the messenger of death gives Christiana an arrow of love to pierce her heart "which by degrees wrought so effectively with her that at the time appointed she must be gone" is similar to the scene in *Hinds' Feet* in which the Shepherd pierces Much-Afraid's heart with the seed of love (*Pilgrim's Progress* 377). A possible reference to the high places Hurnard talked about occurs in the second part of *Pilgrim's Progress*. Secret says, "I dwell with those that are high. It is talked of where I dwell, as if thou had'st a desire to go thither . . ." (*Pilgrim's Progress* 237). However, some critics find the second half of *Pilgrim's Progress* does not reach the caliber of the first part. Some critics claim that "sometimes it seems almost like a conducted tour of the battlefields where Christian vanquished giants" (Sharrock 23). According to Bunyan scholar Roger Sharrock, Christiana and her friend Mercy also "seem to be moving in the afterglow of her husband's heroism" (24).

Although there are many contrasts between *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Hinds' Feet*, Hurnard chose to model her main character after the Much-Afraid who appeared in Bunyan's allegory. She is mentioned as Master Despondency's daughter who feels that God has forsaken her, but finds that God is really her friend (*Pilgrim's Progress* 229). In this way, the allegories connect because Hurnard's Much-Afraid also realizes that God is her friend. Hurnard herself was affected by *Pilgrim's Progress*, and said that until her conversion, "the name which had best described my nature was Bunyan's 'Miss Much-Afraid'" (*Hearing Heart* 28). She realized that her first name, Hannah, means grace in Hebrew, an influence that can be seen in *Hinds' Feet* when Much-Afraid receives the name Grace and Glory after she reaches the high places.

Both Bunyan and Hurnard were writing in turbulent times; in *Pilgrim's Progress*, Bunyan addresses religious sects and the politics of religion. Each evil character belongs to the gentry or nobility, as described at the trial of Faithful at Vanity Fair: "Sins are all Lords and great ones" (Owens 13). However, Hurnard addresses larger, more universal themes through her evil characters. Bunyan deals with universal themes as well, but his characters seem to have an agenda behind them beyond spiritual concepts. One may argue that this difference places *Pilgrim's Progress* at a slightly higher level than *Hinds' Feet*, but perhaps even this difference is one that is influenced by gender. Men tend to see themselves as strong, independent forces battling nature, while women in general seem to struggle so vehemently within themselves that the inner self is valued over outside forces. Does this mean that the inner struggle is any less important than political or physical struggles? A more balanced view of spirituality takes both Hurnard's and Bunyan's views into account, as neither gender's view is allowed privilege over the other. They are of equal importance and most effective when used to complement one another.

Those who may have a vision of spirituality different than that of Bunyan's may connect with Hurnard's invitational tone, as she is writing for an audience of today. *Hinds' Feet* is a best-seller among contemporary Christian readers because Hurnard speaks to a wider audience of women and men. By including women's spiritual experiences as viable and necessary for a more complete view of God, Hurnard gives women a voice, which lends to the realization that God is larger than one gender's view of him, and opens the door for a more complete spirituality. As Ralph Waldo Emerson says, "Each age, it is found, must write its own books; or rather, each generation for the next succeeding. The books of an older period will not fit this" (67). Accordingly, *Hinds' Feet* offers a point of view suitable for a different, wider audience than Bunyan's, as modern readers place a greater emphasis on spirituality that values the experiences of many different people. The modern age is one of greater gender equity, which was not present when Bunyan was writing. Gender equity expands Hurnard's audiences and allows for a greater feminine readership, whereas Bunyan's writing is limited by his time and culture. With the knowledge and perspectives of both allegories, men and women can celebrate their differences and learn from each other.

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A STUDY OF FEMALE IMAGERY WITHIN TELEVISION COMMERCIALS: REALITY OR HOAX?

KATHERINE BURCH

The hours of television viewed by the average American rise every year. With this increased percentage of viewing comes a higher number of advertisements seen by the American public. According to Allen and Coltrane, adults and children are exposed to gender depiction from a multitude of sources, but perhaps the most ambiguous and stereotyped portrayals come from television.¹ Further, “since its introduction in the 1940s, television has become so pervasive in the United States that it is preeminent among current purveyors of popular culture imagery.”²

This rise in “pop culture” caused some major issues within our society such as a perceived rise in violence, lower social interaction, and a lower attention span among children. A major problem linked to the general media is the portrayal and perception of the female within society. Television, especially commercials, changed the image of the female body on its screens. This unrealistic image is having a great deal of effect on the way males and females look at the female body.

“Males and females appear equally often as primary characters in prime-time advertisements,”³ however there is a general problem with how the female image is represented within these commercials. Allan and Coltrane state that since television shows conform to the gender “pictures” often presented in commercials, then commercials tell us something about gender portrayal of the medium as a whole.⁴ The current presentation of the female image has become

¹ Alan, K., & Coltrane, S., “Gender Displaying television commercials: A comparative study of television commercials in the...” *Sex Roles* 35 (August 1996): par. 2.

² Alan & Coltrane, 1996, par. 2.

³ Brentl, S. J., & Blasko, V. “The portrayal of men of women in US television commercials: A recent content analysis and trends over 15 years,” *Sex Roles* 18 (September and October 1988): 606.

⁴ Allan & Coltrane, 1996, par. 3.

most noticeable within television advertisements. This medium could have the greatest effect on American society due to its popularity among the culture.

Advertisements on television often portray an image most women are unable to achieve. The female presented is either an innocent homemaker or a seductive temptress. Researchers Clifton, McGrath, and Wick found that society perceives women in either one or two categories: the traditional sex-role stereotype of homemaker or the non-traditional sex object.⁵ It was concluded from the same research that this latter category became recognizable in society with the help of mass media.⁶

Now it seems in the last decade women are being represented as thin, as well as seductive. Lavine, Sweeney, and Wagner state that once female attractiveness was a plump body shape, the recent ideal emphasizes a slender body.⁷ Overall, commercials have an effect on young women after repeated exposure to this ideal. Silverstein, Perdue, Peterson, and Kelly state that many models found within the media promote a slimmer, more weight-conscious standard for women than for men, and the standard of bodily attractiveness for women is slimmer now than in the past.⁸ Few women remember, as they see these figures on television advertisements, that they represent a small percentage of women.

It seems that this depicted ideal image causes an individual to be seen as intelligent, popular, or outgoing.⁹ According to Stephens and Hill, others classified as physically unattractive and overweight individuals are expected to be less intelligent, popular, or outgoing. The advertising industries, as well as the female viewers themselves, perpetuate this attitude. Women who achieve the ideal often find that the image is as imperfect as any average female image. Even if the desired "ideal" weight is achieved, often women find that they still have the same imperfect life as before.¹⁰

Kenrick asserts that while fashion models and other endorsers considered very attractive may be peers in the eyes of the "average" female consumer, studies show that male and female consumers alike use them as standards by which to judge the attractiveness of ordinary females.¹¹ Females use these set

⁵ Clifton, K., D. McGrath, and B. Wick, "Stereotypes of Women: A Single Category," *Sex Roles* 2 (1976): 143-144.

⁶ (Clifton, 1976, 146).

⁷ Lavine, Howard, Donna Sweeney, and Stephen Wagner, "Depicting Women as Sex Objects in Television Advertising: Effects on Body Dissatisfaction," *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin* 25 (August, 1999): 1050.

⁸ Silverstein, Brett and Lauren Perdue, Barbara Peterson and Eileen Kelly, "The Role of the Mass Media in Promoting a Thin Standard of Bodily Attractiveness for Women," *Sex Roles* 14 (9/10 1986): 520.

⁹ Stephens, Debra Lynn and Ronald Hill, "The Beauty Myth and Female Consumers: The Controversial Role..." *Journal of Consumer Affairs* 28 [Online database], available from EBSCOhost/MasterFILEPremier/Accession Number 9405267515: par. 22.

¹⁰ (Stephens 1986, par. 22).

¹¹ (Stephens 1999, par. 34).

standards as the deciding factor to improve their appearance. The solution to improve their flaws is to buy the endorsed product. By simply buying the product, females can become sexy and “ideal” like the models. Females within television commercials are often associated with products that are deemed feminine, and these products are used to enhance or improve the female image. The portrayal of feminine beauty within these ads “temporarily lowers women’s body image and sets unrealistic image standards.”¹² Moreover, the lowered self-image makes them more vulnerable to purchasing these products to fix the perceived flaws.

Solomon and Greenberg contend that the information conveyed by an advertisement can influence the degree to which members of a target market identify with and will try to emulate the lifestyle or person depicted.¹³ In short, the ads are depictions of an imagined genuineness.¹⁴ This construed reality has a very unstable effect on most women. Richins finds that within marketing, creation of customer satisfaction is the key to selling more products, but with females the key is leaving them dissatisfied so that they will buy products that improve their appearance to enhance satisfaction with themselves.¹⁵

Furthermore, the current feminine image has become sexier and skinnier versions of the older prototypes used in advertisements. Naether attributes to all women the “abiding desire to look young and sexually appealing... to be the American ideal.”¹⁶ Not too long ago this American beauty had curves. Today the ideal is quite the opposite. “As the media places its slim models before women, many end up considering themselves five, ten, fifteen, or twenty pounds overweight.”¹⁷ Further, “an unnatural slimness is seen as natural.”¹⁸ Fishborn states it is the norm to which women strive to conform; when they fail, they often hate their bodies for their perceived imperfection.¹⁹

As has been seen, representation of women as motherly homemakers or sex objects conjures up different associations and attributions. The change to sexier women in advertisements has led to a more dangerous societal association concerning the female image. Lavine, Sweeney, and Wagner propose that ads depicting scantily clad women posing as decorative objects may activate the belief that women are seductive and frivolous sex objects.²⁰ These activated beliefs are what the ad producers want. In short, these ads market the feeling to women that they can become beautiful just as the

¹² (Stephens 1999, par. 45).

¹³ M. R. Solomon & L. Greenberg, “Setting the Stage: Collective Selection of the Stylistic Context of Commercials,” (*Journal of Advertising*, 1993) [database online]; available EBSCOhost/MasterFILEPremier, 9306015139, par. 3.

¹⁴ (Solomon 1993 par. 3)

¹⁵ M. L. Richins, “Social Comparison & the Idealized Images of Advertising,” *Journal of Consumer Research* (June 1991:81).

¹⁶ Fishborn, H. *Women in Popular Culture*. London: Greenwood Press, 1982, 142.

¹⁷ (Fishborn 1982, 143)

¹⁸ (Fishborn 1982, 142)

¹⁹ (Kilborne 1982, 142)

²⁰ (Lavine 1999, 1050)

envisioned models in the ad. These feelings sell products but they have a dangerous effect on women.

Lavine, Sweeney, and Wagner state that the mass media play a prominent role in socializing norms of physical attractiveness.²¹ It is only reasonable to conclude that television ads “play a causal role in shaping women’s perceptions and satisfaction with their body.”²² Television in a sense heightens the “ideal” image, which causes a perceived weight problem among American women. Rabak-Wagner and Eickhoff-Shemek maintain that the mass marketing of body images through print media and television advertisements have been well documented as a powerful force in creating the 1990s perception of the tall, thin and toned ideal for women.²³

In a study on MTV commercials, Signorielli and McLeod found that female characters in MTV commercials appeared less frequently, had more beautiful bodies, were more physically attractive, and wore more sexy and skimpy clothing,²⁴ than the typical, average female. The research contends that the female characters were more often the objects of another’s gaze than were the male characters.²⁵ Further, they found that the primary purpose of these ads for women was an effort to “look good” and to be the object of the visual attention of others.²⁶

Due to the increased attention placed on the ideal image of the female within commercials and the general mass media, females have an increased self-awareness. This self-awareness is in most cases negative. Gould found from his study that females seem more conscious of their public self-concept roles than males...²⁷ . The researcher found “that women orchestrate their roles in society with greater attention both to themselves as social objects and to external cues, such as advertising, that address their needs in these roles.”²⁸ Viewing females as social objects leads them to try to fit into the perfect image presented to them repeatedly on television screens.

Researchers suggest that the uniform thin and beautiful models, create such unhappiness among young women about their bodies that they have lowered confidence and they will resort to drastic measures to get the “ideal” size. Richins argues that by late adolescence, however, the sight of extremely

²¹ (lavine 1999, 1050)

²² (Lavine 1999, 1050)

²³ J. Rabak-Wagener, J. Eickhoff-Shemek & L. Kelly-Vance, “The Effect of Media Analysis on Attitudes and Behaviors Regarding Body Image Among college Students,” (*Journal of American College*, 1998) [database online]: available from EBSCOhost/MasterFILEPremier, 926555, par. 2.

²⁴ N. Signorielli & D. McLeod, “Gender Stereotypes in MTV commercials: The Beat Goes on Gender Differences in Population Versus Media Body Sizes: A Comparison Over Four Decades,” (*Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 1994) [database online]: available from EBSCOhost/MasterFILEPremier, 946161380, par. 37.

²⁵ (Signorielli 1994, par. 37)

²⁶ (Signorielli 1994, par. 37)

²⁷ Stephen Gould, “Gender differences in advertising response and self-consciousness variables,” *Sex Roles* 16 (5/6 1987): 223.

²⁸ (Gould 1987, 223)

attractive models is “old news” and unlikely to provide new information that might influence self-perception.²⁹ The researcher notes that this is not to say that self-perception is unstable from moment to moment.³⁰ However, Richins finds that more than fifty percent of respondents said that when they see clothing ads and personal care and cosmetic ads they compare themselves with models in the ads “about half the time” or more frequently.³¹

Many women do countless things to become thin like the ideal that is presented to them. As of late, a rising number of women, particularly young women, are developing eating disorders to become this media-pressured ideal. Barber backs up much of the other research that indicates there are negative effects caused by this ideal. The researcher asserts that cultural changes in the feminine ideal can cause serious eating disorders, such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia.³²

Anorexia nervosa and bulimia are much more prominent among women than men. With the pressure from popular culture to be unrealistically thin, it seems a woman's need to conform to a certain image is caused in part by the mass media, particularly advertising. The unrealistic ideal of thin and sexy presented in ads causes average women to go to extremes to obtain the ideal.

One of the lesser effects of the “improved” feminine body is a change in a female's perception of her body. Women exposed to sexist television advertisements perceive that actual body size is larger than it actually is, and there is a large gap between their actual and ideal body size.³³ Such feminine ideals lead to dangerous physically unhealthy outcomes. Silverstein maintains that some women respond to this extreme pressure toward thinness by becoming dissatisfied with their bodies; as a result, they become chronic dieters, developing anorexia, using laxatives, or vomiting to purge themselves of excess food.

A suggested way to combat the war women are waging against their bodies is through education. In the Rabak-Wagner and Eichnoff-Shemek findings women were less likely to be influenced by the ideal image presented if they were educated on how to interpret commercials.³⁴ For those in this intervention group, they were less likely to believe that models in ads represented the ideal body size and shape.³⁵ The researchers found that women from the uneducated group felt women would be more attractive if their body size or shape looked like female models.³⁶

²⁹ (Richins 1991, 74)

³⁰ (Richins 1991, 74)

³¹ (Richins 1991, 76)

³² S. J. Barber & V. Blasko, “Social perceptions & by products of advertising,” (*Journal of Communications*, 1984) [database online]: available Infotrac/College Edition, accession number 3492438, par. 20.

³³ (Lavine 1999, 1050)

³⁴ (Rabak-Wagener 1998, par. 34)

³⁵ (Rabak-Wagener 1998, par. 34)

³⁶ (Rabak-Wagener 1998, par. 34)

If media education programs were taught as required courses in middle and high schools, as well as universities and colleges, there eventually could be a trend in how young women view themselves and their bodies. This trend would be toward improved self-image and away from the lurking dangers of a lowered self-image. It is important to cultivate within the female population an acceptance of the natural body without trying to alter this natural state to the point of death.

Some researchers argue that women are also less likely to be influenced by television commercials if they are inclined to feminist views. However, Lavine, Sweeney, and Wagner found in their research that feminism did not exert any moderating effects on body image.³⁷ The same authors observe that even though feminists reject sexist ads, when the feminists evaluated ads they were no more aware of the influence of the advertisements than were the non-feminists.³⁸

It would seem that the opposite would be true; that feminists would be unaffected by these advertisements. Yet, the amount of protection that the feminist standpoint provides is whether television advertisements call upon automatic stereotypes or subtle stereotypes.³⁹ Overall, feminism in a sense can provide a buffer system for females against the ideal if the ideal presented is in stereotypical sexist form.

The argument put forth by the advertising industry needs to be considered within the research on the effect of advertising on the female population. It is argued that the images presented by the media, particularly television advertisements, are not meant to represent women as a whole. The popular notion is that these advertisements do not represent what it means to be a woman. Smith argues within Currie that "gender is an accomplishment that is sustained through ongoing, everyday practices that resonate with (or react against) dominant definitions of what it means 'to be a woman'."⁴⁰

Yet, Currie argues against Smith's assertion stating that women are portrayed according to their bodies in relation to the products they are using,⁴¹ not according to those traits that make them women. Thus one can consider the idea gleaned from both arguments that the media portrays women in such a way that women within society feel that they cannot be successfully as woman unless they fit this stereotypical prototype. The resonant attitude toward the changing feminine physique among women and its dangers has not been the subject of enough research to conclude what the outcome will be.

From the data, there are two main arguments. One side of this delicate situation seems to state that television advertisements are surreal so in a sense women cannot be that affected by the presented ideal images. The other side of

³⁷ (Lavine 1999, 1050)

³⁸ (Lavine 1999, 1050)

³⁹ (Lavine 1999, 1050)

⁴⁰ D. Currie, "Decoding femininity," (*Gender & Society*, 1997) [database online]; available from EBSCOhost/MasterFILEPremier, accession number 9708276543, par. 26.

⁴¹ (Currie 1997, par. 26)

the spectrum on this argument agrees that the ideal presented by television advertising not only sells the product, but it does so at the cost of some women's emotional and physical well being. There is evidence to support either side of this issue. The main concern at this point in the research should be of helping women who could fall prey to this unrealistic ideal.

In a sense, it would seem that education could be one of the main tools to fight the current battle being staged against the female image. The female image in modern media has become a physical ideal both for men to desire and for women to envy. Mental or emotional capacities, the essential components of any human being are not considered, therefore women are currently basing their desirability on a superficial ideal. The current ideal presented by the media is more than superficial; it is affecting women's psyche. Women, after much exposure to media, not just television advertisements, are beginning to harm themselves to achieve the ideal.

However, this unfavorable cultural condition cannot be solely blamed on the media. This problem goes much deeper into how society accepts the physical representation of women by a minuscule percentage of females. If there is a change, it will have to be for society not to accept the media with its subjective view of what the female body should look like. If something is not done, the correlation between eating disorders and the images presented could become more direct. It would seem that helping women, in general, to view their personal self-worth through their character and values is better than the current situation with its dangerous side effects.

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