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Note
Each paper in this journal serves as an example of the scholarship being produced by the students at Birmingham-Southern College. As such, it attempts to reproduce each paper in the format of the discipline in which it was created. Consequently, there are minor inconsistencies of style throughout the publication. These have been retained as a subtle celebration of the diversity that makes Southern Academic Review representative of the liberal arts education found at Birmingham-Southern College.

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The Viśva Hindu Pariṣad and Their “Fundamentalist” Label
by Hope Lloyd

“Fundamentalism,” as a term, is common in popular culture today and rarely requires explanation when used in private or public discourse, yet when its meaning is brought into question precisely defining this term can be difficult. The term originated in America and is still used in America today, most often in reference to Christian groups, whom are usually being cast in a negative light. The term has also been adopted in academic inquiry and is now being used to refer to religious movements all over the world, in both academic and non-academic contexts. The labeling of many religious groups as “fundamentalist” has resulted in comparative religious studies centered around the application of this term. Many groups in South Asia are now associated with this term, one group in particular being the Viśva Hindu Pariṣad. The preconceptions that accompany the controversial comparative term, “fundamentalist,” when used to refer to India’s Viśva Hindu Pariṣad, limits our understanding of this Hindu nationalist group.

While this paper will focus on the academic use of the term fundamentalism, it is important to acknowledge the use of this term in non-academic settings. Fundamentalism has become a frequently used term in the media and usually carries a negative connotation. Torkel Brekke addresses this use of the word in the introduction to his book about fundamentalism saying, “in public debates and everyday conversation, the term ‘fundamentalism’ is used widely simply to name persons and attitudes that we do not like” (3). Though the term is sometimes used to oversimplify in the media, many scholars have deemed it worthy of academic consideration. Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, editors of the five volume Fundamentalism Project, consider the term’s widespread use a reason to make it the focus of academic inquiry claiming, “when they must communicate across cultures, journalists, public officials, scholars, and publics in parts of the world where these books have their first audience have settled on this term” (viii).

Despite careful and thoughtful approach in the academic realm, some scholars express hesitation over this term’s use, and other scholars disagree with its use completely. Though fundamentalism, when used in an academic setting, can be a helpful descriptor for some religious groups, I find the use of the term to describe the Viśva Hindu Pariṣad (hereafter, the VHP) to be unhelpful and detrimental. When I claim the use of the term is detrimental, I do not mean to support the VHP—its actions, beliefs or claims—but to insist it is appropriately regarded in any academic considerations utilizing fundamentalism as a framework for comparison. Regardless of one’s stance as supporter or critic of the VHP and their actions, the VHP must be situated within its cultural, historical and political context in order to facilitate a clear academic understanding of this organization. I would argue that the application of the term fundamentalism, as it is accepted currently, compromises our understanding of the VHP within its unique context.

Hindutva

To fully introduce the Viśva Hindu Pariṣad, “World Hindu Council” or “Assembly,” and to later illustrate the shortcomings of referring to the VHP as fundamentalist, a brief history of the organization is required. Many historical, political and cultural factors contributed to the VHP’s creation, but perhaps the most important concept to grasp when attempting to understand the VHP is Hindutva. In the early 1920s, Vinayak D. Savarkar, a leader in the Mahasabha political party in India, wrote a book while in prison entitled, Hindutva: Who Is a Hindu? This book, and the concept of Hindutva, has, “become the centerpiece of the Hindu nationalist movement in all its forms” (Doniger 464).

The ideology of Hindutva is largely concerned with what it means to be Hindu. The word Hindu originated from the word Sindhu (Sharma 3). In the ancient world, different cultures used the word Sindhu in different ways, some to refer to the people of what is now India, and others to refer to practitioners of a religion, Hinduism (Sharma 4). Today, the word Hindu is largely understood to refer to a practitioner of Hinduism, but the concept of Hindutva revisits geographic connotations in the history of the word Hindu.

It is obvious to Savarkar that there are religious connotations to the word Hindu, but the geographic component in this word’s origins is also critical. Savarkar considers all of these peoples to be Hindu. After reintroducing the geographic significance of the words Hindu and Hinduism, Savarkar says of Hindutva, “thus the actual essentials of Hindutva are…also the ideal essentials of nationality” (137). Sharma addresses questions about Muslim and Christian practitioners in
India and their relation to Hindutva according to Savarkar, “Hindu nationality would be restricted to ‘Indian religions,’ in contrast presumably with Indian nationality which would be shared by the followers of all religions” (23). Because the holy lands of Islam and Christianity are not in India, Christians and Muslims are not considered Hindu, even if the practitioner was born in India (Savarkar 22). In short, Savarkar formulates the concept of Hindutva by invoking the geographic connotations of the word Hindu and harnessing religion in the cultural dimension to inspire nationalism among his followers. Much time has passed since Savarkar’s book on Hindutva was first published. Arvind Sharma notes in his evaluation of the term that, “most regard it [Hindutva] as constituting a static and monolithic concept from 1923 onwards when it was first proposed. The reality is that its context, text and subtext has changed over time” (23). Sharma is noting that the concept of Hindutva was adapted and adjusted once adopted by organizations like the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Singh and the VHP. Though Hindutva is not a static concept, considering Hindutva’s origination in a text written by a nationalist political leader and its adoption and adaptation by other significant nationalist groups, it is impossible to separate Hindutva from its political and nationalist connotations. This is important to remember as we move forward in history to the formation of the VHP. Though the VHP’s adherence to Hindutva has a thick religious dimension, political and nationalist dimensions also remain present.

Viśva Hindu Pariṣad

Inspired by Savarkar and his concept of Hindutva, Keshav B. Hedgewar formed the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Singh (RSS hereafter), the “National Volunteer Association” or “Corps,” in 1925. The RSS organized under the concept of Hindutva, instead of Hinduism as a religion. T.N. Madan elaborates, “the RSS from the very beginning emphasized character building (through physical culture and ideological instruction) rather than religion” (325). It would be an overstatement, however, to claim preserving Hinduism as a religion was not important to the RSS.

In fact, the RSS took greater strides towards religious exclusivity when M.S. Golwalkar became the leader of the organization in 1940, after Hedgewar’s death. Golwalkar’s adaptation of Hindutva, and the RSS’s adaptation as a result of his leadership, takes issue with the caste system in Hinduism but promotes Hinduism over other Indian religions (Sharma 26). In Golwalkar’s book, We or Our Nationhood Defined, 1938, he extends a hand of acceptance to non-Hindus (the term “Hindu” now excluding practitioners of other Indian religions as well as Christians and Muslims) in India, on the condition they adopt Hindu culture and language or accept the status of a lesser citizen (Sharma 26).

Though the RSS does not formally participate in politics, a few of its leaders formed a political party in 1951, now called the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP hereafter), the “Indian People’s Party.” The party has achieved some political success, becoming the largest party in parliament in 1998. The BJP lost its majority in 2004, though it is still an active political party in India.

A gathering of religious leaders in Bombay in 1964 produced the Viśva Hindu Pariṣad, also championing the advancement of Hindutva and introducing a more religiously focused approach to Hindu nationalism. Madan writes, “it is common nowadays to speak of the Sangh family, comprising RSS as the cultural body, BJP as the political party, and VHP as the religious organization” (327). The VHP pushes back on Indian secularism (which, from a Western perspective, is more comparable to pluralism) by specifying a more unified practice of Hinduism. The VHP has several objectives, which include promoting a worldwide Hindu society, championing Hindu values of life, and offering social services to all (Madan 327). According to Madan, the VHP, “portrays it [Hinduism] as a religion beleaguered by Christianity and Islam. To strengthen it, the VHP has devoted considerable attention to missionary work among low-caste Hindus and the non-Hindu tribal peoples” (327). The RSS, BJP and VHP have accumulated a wide following because of their missionary work and helpful, quick responses after natural disasters.

The Sangh family of organizations has also been widely associated with violence in India, the most notable event being the destruction of the Babri Masjid in 1992. The Sangh family organizations claimed the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, the city considered by the Sangh family organizations to be the birthplace of Rama, was constructed on the site of a former Rama temple. Rama is the main character of the Hindu epic, the Ramayana, in which a political and social Hindu utopia is depicted, though the VHP often utilizes a militarized translation of the epic (Madan 327). The importance of the Ramayana to the VHP, made the presence of a mosque where they claimed a Rama temple once stood a great affront from their perspective. The VHP’s protests against the mosque began to escalate in 1989. VHP supporters sent bricks to Ayodhya from all over India for the purpose of rebuilding the Hindu temple, and television broadcasts of the VHP’s versions of the Ramayana and
Mahabharata gained national following (Sahu 256-7). Tensions surrounding the mosque came to a climax when it was destroyed on December 6, 1992, with the VHP at the forefront of the destruction. The aftermath included violent riots in several places in India, resulting in the loss of thousands of lives, Hindu and Muslim.

In addition to being affiliated with many riots across India, the VHP has also risen in protest at many cultural events in India that were deemed, by the VHP, a threat to the true values of Hinduism. The VHP organized protests at the Miss World pageant, held in India in 1996, and at film productions, like Deepa Mehta’s film, Water, released in 2005 (Reuters; Bumiller). The New York Times article that reported protests of the film, Water, referred to the protestors as “Hindu nationalists” and “Hindu fundamentalists” (Bumiller). In the last 20 years, as the term fundamentalism has become more popular, it has become a fairly common descriptor for the VHP. Before analyzing the use of the term fundamentalism to describe the VHP, we must look more closely at the term itself.

Fundamentalism

The specific term, “fundamentalism,” came about in America in the early 20th century with the publication of a series of essays in twelve, paperback volumes called The Fundamentals, and the formation in 1919 of the World’s Christian Fundamentals Association. The broad goal of these early “fundamentalists,” coined by Curtis Lee Law in 1920, was to combat modernism, a term that will be addressed later in this section, in their churches and in America at large. Since this time, “fundamentalism” has become a widely used term, in academia and in popular culture.

Before offering any extensive commentary on fundamentalism it is, of course, crucial to define the term. Fundamentalism has not only been studied by religious studies scholars, but also by sociologists, anthropologists, historians and political scientists. Looking into academic studies of fundamentalism, it is impossible to ignore the names Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby. A section of the final volume of Marty and Appley’s Fundamentalism Project, written by Appleby with Gabriel A. Almond and Emmanuel Sivan and later reproduced in an individual book, solidifies a definition of fundamentalism. Almond et al. define fundamentalism in the context of comparison as:

‘Fundamentalism,’ in this usage, refers to a discernible pattern of religious militance by which self-styled ‘true believers’ attempt to arrest the erosion of religious identity, fortify the borders of the religious community, and create viable alternatives to secular institutions and behaviors. (17)

Emerson and Hartman academically value the term fundamentalism, but bring a refreshingly skeptical approach to the term, and so their definition of fundamentalism provides a complimentary additional definition to that of Almond et al. Emerson and Hartman borrow key language in their definition from a former scholar, Max Weber, whom they specifically credit, among unnamed others, with this sentiment, “secularization is the demystifying of the world” (127). With Weber’s notion in mind, Emerson and Hartman define fundamentalists as, “movements, organizations, and people who remystify, and who resist demystification” (128). These scholars also highlight the importance of modernity when addressing fundamentalism. Emerson and Hartman specify fundamentalism is a “contextual phenomenon” that “cannot be understood apart from modernity nor exist outside of modernity” (129).

From these two definitions, emerge two key facets of fundamentalism: modernity and militancy. Emerson and Hartman would explain that modernity has many factors, including a “division of social life,” rationalization, industrialization, urbanization and pluralism (129). These factors combine and have an effect on religion. Ultimately, Emerson and Hartman argue, “religion comes to be relegated to the private sectors of life, divorced from formal roles in government, economics and eventually education, medicine, and other areas.” (129). Almond et al. also highlight militancy as a feature of fundamentalism, claiming it is usually fundamentalisms’ response to modernity’s relegation of religion, which usually compromises and questions the critical aspects of Almond et al.’s definition of fundamentalism (“religious identity,” “borders of the religious community,” and “viable alternatives to secular institutions and behaviors”).

While this militancy does not always take on a violent form, it is always a reaction to the perceived or actual challenges posed by modernity against the respective fundamentalism’s perception of its religion (Marty and Appleby ix).

Many scholars have isolated this “division of social life,” as an aspect of modernity, and refer to it as secularization. Torkle Brekke is one such scholar, defining secularization as, “the process whereby religion loses its authority and relevance in public and private life” (26). This “erosion,” highlighted in Brekke’s definition of secularization and in Almond et. al.’s definition of fundamentalism, is the same concern of Weber when he discusses the “demystification of the world.” Brekke highlights secularization as the main opponent fundamentalists find in modernity, “fundamentalism is a specific type of reaction against the
erosion of ‘religious authority in public and private life in the modern world’ (25).
It is critical that we pay attention to these scholars’ definitions of modernity and securalization, because of their importance in discussions of fundamentalism, and assess whether or not the conceptions of modernity and securalization these scholars utilize are represented in India.

The VHP and Fundamentalism

Thinking of fundamentalism in terms of modernity and militancy is helpful as we begin to analyze the application of this term to the VHP. It is understandable that the Viśva Hindu Parishad may be labeled as a fundamentalist group, especially in the context of Almond et. al.’s definition of fundamentalism. The VHP is certainly a militant reactionary, with Hindutva drawing strict lines around what and whom the VHP should aim to preserve and advance.

Marty and Appleby highlight a process they observe in fundamentalisms, “The movements got their name from the choice: they reached back to real or presumed pasts, to actual or imagined ideal original conditions and concepts, and selected what they regarded as fundamental” (ix). Hindutva can be thought of as the ideology utilized by the VHP as they “reached back” and chose to promote and adapt certain Hindu scriptures and practices—for example, their selection of specific translations of the Ramayana and the Bhagavad Gita.

The militant aspect of fundamentalism is not what I consider to limit our understanding of the VHP. I would agree that the VHP demonstrates the reactive characteristic that is crucial in all definitions of fundamentalism, and it is obvious that the VHP is largely militant in its organization. Where I consider fundamentalism to be a limiting label for the VHP is in what fundamentalisms are supposed to be reacting to: modernity.

Scholars discussing fundamentalism repeatedly claim that modernity is the force against which fundamentalisms are reacting. Almond et. al. refers to this as the “sine qua non of fundamentalism,” specifying, “fundamentalist movements form in reaction to, and in defense against, the processes and consequences of secularization and modernization which have penetrated the larger religious community” (94, 93). It is widely acknowledged that “Hindu fundamentalism” takes on an “ethnoreligious” tone, especially in regards to the Sangh family of organizations (considering Hindutva’s emphasis on nationality as well as religion); however, it is still considered a reaction to “the general processes of modernization and secularization” (Almond et. al. 94).

Some scholars would claim that modernity and securalization are not the target of the VHP’s militant reactions, and so the organization should not be considered fundamentalist. Steve Bruce’s argument regarding the labeling of South Asian movements as fundamentalists is summarized by Malise Ruthven in his book on fundamentalism:

First, he [Bruce] says, with reference to the BJP and VHP, they have been ‘provoked more by the threat of Islam than by a decline in religious ob servance by Hindus.’ Second, they are directed more towards expelling or subordination ‘foreigners’ (as they see most Muslims) than to revitalize and purify the Hindu faithful…. Third, they are only tangentially a reaction to secularization. (169)

Bruce’s argument suggests that the VHP’s reaction is not to modernity but to Islam, specifically the threat to Hindutva it perceives from Islam. While the VHP claims to support religious freedom, events like the destruction of the Babri Masjid suggest that the VHP views the presence of Muslims in India as an encroachment of “foreigners” on their advancement of Hindutva (Almond et. al. 140; “FAQ”). Bruce’s third point suggests modernization and securalization temporally overlap with the causes of the VHP’s reaction, and so have some influence, but they are largely not the cause. Ruthven later quotes Savarkar, “‘Hindus should actively reject any alien dominance,’”(176). This perception of “alien dominance” is what Bruce would claim the VHP is reacting to.

Ruthven counters Bruce’s claim that the VHP is reacting to Islam saying, “the original movement was not in the first instance anti-Muslim but anti-colonial, stimulated by the British administration’s pigeonholing of India’s religious communities” (170); however, this claim lends itself to Bruce’s second argument, except the British are the foreigners in this instance. Almond et. al. also acknowledges the British, as well as the Muslim, influence on the formation of Hindutva and the organizations that champion this ideology, “without the Moghul and British invasions and occupations, Hinduism would never have acquired a mobilized ideological identity or even a militant collective consciousness” (135).

While Bruce makes strong points against the application of the term fundamentalist to South Asian groups, I think he goes too far in his third point by claiming that secularization does not factor into South Asian groups’ actions. The historical events highlighted by Bruce and Ruthven, however, are incredibly important to our understanding of the VHP and its actions because they historically and culturally contextualize the VHP. With a sound understanding of the historical and cultural context of the VHP, we see that the VHP does consider...
what they hold fundamental, Hindutva, as being threatened, but not by—to paraphrase Emerson and Hartman—a relegation of religion to the private realms of life.

Returning to Almond et. al.’s and Emerson and Hartman’s definitions of fundamentalism, the VHP does seek to protect a religious and nationalist identity as outlined by Hindutva, but the adherence to these definitions breaks down when only one understanding of modernity is defined as the threat to religious identity. Fundamentalism, as defined in this paper, operates under generalized conceptions of modernity and its resulting factors, like secularization. When secularization is understood as the relegation of religion to private sectors of life, as it is in the West and in the definitions of fundamentalism outlined in this paper, it does not align with South Asian conceptions of secularization which aim more at integrating plurality into all sectors of life. This incongruence of definitions is significant because most comparative approaches to fundamentalism refer to modernity and secularization as a common factor to which they claim fundamentalisms are reacting. When this comparative analysis is applied to the Viśva Hindu Pariṣad, our understanding is incomplete because, while modernity and secularization are present in India, they do not follow the same conceptions that operate in current understandings of fundamentalism, therefore, this term cannot be applied to the VHP and result in an accurate understanding of the VHP’s beliefs and behaviors.

Conclusion

A comparison of the VHP and the Westboro Baptist Church and these groups’ interactions with their respective governments can exemplify how Indian conceptions of modernity and secularization differ from Western conceptions. The Westboro Baptist Church claims that the condemnation of homosexuality is a fundamental aspect of Christianity. They perceive any acceptance of homosexuality as a direct challenge to their conception of Christianity. They see the separation of church and state in the US as a threat to their conception of Christianity because it excludes their religious group from governmental influence. Because nonreligious rationalizations must be made to influence governmental action, the Westboro Baptist conception of Christianity has no governmental agency in the United States. Here we see an example of the relegation of religion to non-governmental realms, indicative of modernity according to Emerson and Hartmon.

The VHP’s interaction with the Indian government is quite different, as evidenced by the Sangh family of organization’s political prominence. The VHP, however, takes issue with Muslims and Christians having the same avenues of influence in the Indian government as Hindus do and so cites Hindutva, which they hold fundamental, to claim that Christians and Muslims should be excluded from governmental influence. By championing Hindutva, the VHP seeks to limit Christian and Muslim influence by questioning their nationality, not by excluding religious influence in the governmental realm. The Western conception of secularization assumes exclusion of religious influence in government, while the Indian conception of secularization assumes equal inclusion of religious influence in government. While the Westboro Baptist Church and the VHP are both reacting in a modern context to modern circumstances, they are heavily contextualized by historical attributions and different conceptions of modernity and secularization.

While the VHP does share some qualities of “fundamentalist” groups, I would suggest it is better to abandon this label for the VHP due to implications imposed by definitions of modernity and secularization fixed within the current understanding of fundamentalism. Specific religious, political and cultural climates produced Hindutva and the VHP and labeling this organization as fundamentalist alters our understanding of these factors to fit generalized conceptions of Western modernity. Further inquiry into differing definitions of modernity within different cultural contexts would be required to better adapt the term fundamentalism, or create new terms, for use in comparisons of global religions that are currently regarded as fundamentalist. Unless understandings of fundamentalism adopt and allow for such individualized understandings of modernity and secularization, the Viśva Hindu Pariṣad is better understood fully within its unique cultural and historical context, with emphasis on its adherence to Hindutva and the way this concept shapes its beliefs and actions.
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Works Consulted


Themes of Violence as Seen in *Doctor Who*
by Mary Hiller

Throughout history, forms of art and media have been used to depict the feelings of the general population in times of great anxiety and turbulence. One such time was the 1960’s, a decade characterized by a simultaneous focus on nuclear warfare and a deep-rooted sense of paranoia. It was from this cultural atmosphere that *Doctor Who*, a science-fiction story of a nearly-immortal, regenerating man journeying throughout time and space in order to explore and defend the universe, was created. Originally appearing on British airways in 1963, *Doctor Who* quickly became one of the most popular television shows on the air. Children were fascinated with a quirky, heroic set of characters while simultaneously being introduced to previously unheard of terrors in the form of Daleks, Cybermen, and many other enemies from deep space. While children were enthralled with the adventure aspect of the program, parents soon began to realize that, in addition to being highly entertaining for younger viewers, *Doctor Who* contained a level of suspense and a sense of humor that appealed to an older audience—in fact, the BBC now claims that “surprisingly [it is estimated] that sixty percent of the audience is adult” (Who). Such immense popularity can be seen in the details of an illustrious career that few other television shows can claim: Spanning roughly five decades, *Doctor Who* is the longest-running science-fiction television show, according to Guinness World Records. By analyzing the various types of characters and plot lines used throughout the many seasons of *Doctor Who*, the viewer is able to glean insight into certain aspects of the culture at any given time from the original air date in 1963 to the present day. Therefore, through an examination of the first and second Doctors, on air during the sixties, compared to the ninth, tenth, and eleventh Doctors of the new millennia, it is possible for the viewer to witness the evolution of a common theme running throughout both eras: The differing attitudes shown towards violence and foreign cultures in the *Doctor Who* universe.

When *Doctor Who* first aired on BBC in 1963, tensions were high. The Cold War was escalating, causing many people to fear for their lives and the lives of their loved ones on a daily basis. According to safety announcements, news reports, and world leaders, nuclear bombs could be dropped by members of the Soviet Union at any time, essentially stating that no one was safe. The fear of communism and spy infiltration from the Soviet Union was also weighing heavily on the mentality of the general public. It was this fear and paranoia that shaped the public’s reactions to the idea of the unnamed “Other,” effectively implanting in the culture a dichotomy between “Them” and “Us,” where “Them” included all foreign entities: In essence, this split was patriotism taken to an irrational extreme. The writers of *Doctor Who*, equally immersed in this culture of fear, naturally incorporated a sense of the “Other” into the episodes that they wrote.

One example of this dichotomy can be seen in the first season, when the Doctor travels into the past with his companions and lands in the time of the Aztecs. Upon learning of the human sacrifice practiced by this group of people as a fundamental part of their religion, the companions decide that they must stop such behavior. While human sacrifice is undoubtedly shocking to modern viewers, the episode clearly points out that to the Aztecs it is an exceptionally high honor. Instead of respecting this religious and cultural difference and seeing the Aztecs as people—rather than as the odd, somewhat barbaric “Others” that they are made out to be—the time travelers do not attempt to understand this foreign society, focusing solely on making the Aztecs’ beliefs conform to their own. Much like their encounter with the Aztecs, in another early plot line the Doctor and his companions meet the Daleks and the Thals, a story that is described by the production company when they write:

*The TARDIS has brought the travelers to the planet Skaro where they meet two indigenous races—the Daleks, malicious mutant creatures encased in armoured travel machines, and the Thals, beautiful humanoids with pacifist principles. They convince the Thals of the need to fight for their own survival. Joining forces with [the Thals] and braving Skaro’s many dangers, they launch a two-pronged attack on the Dalek city. The Daleks are all killed when, during the course of the fighting, their power supply is cut off.* (Daleks)

Many of the cultural preoccupations of the sixties are immediately evident in this quote. For instance, the two alien species have extremely different physical appearances: One is “malicious,” “mutant,” and “encased in armoured travel machines,” while the other is described as “beautiful humanoids with pacifist principles.” Therefore, the viewer is able to identify exactly who the evil villains are—they are the “Other,” non-human in appearance, forming the previously
mentioned “Them” group in the episode and reflecting the actual “Them” group of the time: The Soviet Union. Alternately, those who do look like humans make up the “Us” group in the episode, reflecting the “Us” group of reality, and possessing “pacifist principles,” thereby making known to the audience the fact that any violence shown must be the fault of the “Others.” The Thals are persuaded to abandon those pacifist principles in order to “fight for their own survival,” a concept mirroring the mindset of the general public at the time: In order to survive, we must engage in an arms race, manufacturing more nuclear weapons than our rivals, the Soviets, are able to. The end of the plot even mirrors the way in which the sixties audience wanted the Cold War to end—with the defeat of the foreign enemy. Therefore, the writers’ attention to the mindset of their audience is evident through the obvious parallels between the current events of the time and the actions taken by the first and second Doctors and their companions.

Fifty years later, the present-day seasons of Doctor Who feature the ninth, tenth, and eleventh Doctors. While they retain many of the characteristics found in the first two Doctors, they consistently disagree in their tolerance of violence and their attitudes towards both the people and the aliens that are written to symbolize foreign cultures. The overarching paranoia and fear that pervaded the sixties inevitably slips into the tone of the original Doctor Who universe, a fact that is evident through periodic displays of violence and intolerance in the plot lines—violence that is sometimes even carried out by the Doctor himself. However, the present-day Doctors reflect not only a disagreeing viewpoint from this original aggressive behavior, but they actively teach against it, focusing instead on acceptance and respect for other cultures.

One example of this shift in tone can be seen in the character of the ninth Doctor, responsible for introducing a new generation to the exploration-driven science-fiction adored by their parents. Played by Christopher Eccleston, the ninth Doctor quickly establishes that he does, in fact, believe strongly in the use of pacifism in the face of adversity, often condemning the more aggressive actions of those around him. The tenth regeneration continues on this method of thinking, reaffirming time and again that the Doctor, faithful champion of humanity, can and will save the world with only his sonic screwdriver—a small device used mainly as a scanner and a master key—in the way of weaponry. Cruelty and war is not tolerated, while themes such as mercy and understanding are highlighted as being crucial tools towards true success and happiness.

Similarly to the ninth and tenth Doctors, the eleventh Doctor is also an advocate of peace. He is the youngest regeneration that viewers have yet to see and is often depicted acting childishly rambunctious and silly. Though this Doctor is roughly nine hundred years old, the writers put an exceptional amount of care into making certain that the audience knows that, though the Doctor has lived so long and seen so many atrocities committed throughout the universe, he is still able to find the good in both human and alien races, no matter how difficult that may be.

While the ninth, tenth, and eleventh Doctors are all staunch advocates of peace and understanding, they have each experienced challenges in maintaining such a passive stance in the face of blatant, infuriating cruelty. The tenth Doctor especially has had to be held back from unleashing his true potential in inflicting punishment on many occasions, rarely utilizing his full abilities. One of the only times in which he punishes his adversaries to the full extent of his powers occurs during the third season, in an episode called “The Family of Blood.”

After watching the monstrous alien Family wreak havoc and murder innocents in a peaceful, pre-World War I English village, all for the purpose of eventually satisfying their own hunger, the Doctor devises an ironically fitting punishment in order to permanently defeat these villains. The viewer is finally able to see the just fury wielded by the Doctor in the form of Son of Mine, one of the four members of the Family, and his closing words:

He never raised his voice. That was the worst thing…the fury of the Time Lord…and then we discovered why. Why this Doctor, who had fought with gods and demons, why he had run away from us and hidden. He was being kind…he wrapped my father in unbreakable chains forged in the heat of a dwarf star[.] He tricked my mother into the event horizon of a collapsing galaxy to be imprisoned there…forever. He still visits my sister, once a year, every year. I wonder if one day he might forgive her…but there she is. Can you see? He trapped her inside a mirror. Every mirror. If ever you look in a mirror and see something move behind you just for a second, that’s her. That’s always her. As for me, I was suspended in time and the Doctor put me to work standing over the fields of England as their protector. We wanted to live forever. So the Doctor made sure we did. (Family)

The various punishments inflicted on the Family of Blood by the Doctor are harsh only in their irony, remaining passive and non-violent in their execution. In other words, even when faced with extremely violent opponents, the Doctor merely uses intelligence and understanding to turn their weaknesses against them. The family’s murderous rampage is spurred by a desire for immortality so the Doctor gives them exactly that, but with a twist. The father is forever wrapped in unbreakable chains, while the mother is trapped in a black-
hole-like vortex, forever falling into the void. The young sister is forever trapped behind the glass of every mirror, forced to witness—but never partake in—the life unfolding on the outside of the glass, while Son of Mine is forced to act as a scarecrow, forever protecting the fields of the village he and his family tried to destroy. By not stooping to violence even when confronted with violence and by enforcing just punishments, it is evident to the viewer that the Doctor is truly a pacifist upholding his beliefs in peace.

Similarly, the eleventh Doctor also experiences difficulties with his pacifist values, though in his case he struggles more often with actually upholding them and not falling into a negative, apathetic mindset in regards to the human race. As the latest regeneration and oldest form of the Doctor, he, in his many years of being a time traveler—or Time Lord, as his species is called—has had to cope with innumerable tragedies brought about through violence and ignorance. His home planet, Gallifrey, has been destroyed in a horrible war between the Time Lords and the Daleks, a race of aliens focused entirely on “exterminating” every form of life that is not also a Dalek. The Daleks are one of the oldest and worst Doctor Who villains, created in the sixties and reflective of the attitude of paranoia towards the general, hyper-violent “Other.” The eleventh Doctor faces the repercussions of this violence, along with the violence and intolerance of humanity, as is seen in his constant arguments and frustration with humans who are quick to choose the oftentimes easier option of attack rather than a calmer, more rational method that, while requiring more time and effort, is ultimately the morally correct choice, leading to fewer casualties and a better outcome for everyone involved. The eleventh Doctor becomes so disillusioned from constant violence and subsequent loss that in the seventh season he even goes so far as to renounce humanity, only stepping in in extreme situations to help the species he once loved. However, even this Doctor, so often disillusioned and plagued by bitter memories of violence and intolerance, eventually comes around again and realizes that the universe can only be bettered through constant attempts at peace with each culture.

This level of importance placed on peace, along with a sense of pacifism that is evident in the characters of the ninth, tenth, and eleventh Doctors functions in the same way as the sense of aggression and violence evident in the characters of the first and second Doctors. That is to say, the focus on the desire and attempt for peace in the later seasons reflects the same desires in the current world. After roughly ten years of hiatus, Doctor Who was brought back to the BBC airwaves in 2005, into a world still reeling from the September 11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in 2001. Since the attack, a war has been waged in the Middle East, causing irreparable damage that is evident not only in an examination of casualties and wounded, along with subsequently grieving families and loved ones, but is also evident in the mentality of the average citizen. These circumstances are similar to those surrounding the production of the original Doctor Who series: With the Cold War escalating, fear of death and nuclear destruction was being expressed in the form of paranoia towards other nations and nationalities by the general public. Thus, the first and second Doctors reflect the paranoia and willingness to violence that was felt by the general public in the sixties. While the present-day Doctors also reflect the feelings of the general public in a time of war and violence, they remain passive due to a change in the public’s reaction to such destruction: The war taking place in the Middle East has, for a majority of citizens, been seen as unpopular. The producers of Doctor Who at the time of the ninth Doctor even went as far as to announce:

In its themes, settings, and allusions [there is] an unusually direct engagement with contemporary politics: specifically, the repercussions of the Al-Qaeda strikes of September 11, 2001 […] the new “Doctor Who” argues against the totalizing strategies advanced by both sides in the war on terror; denouncing violent modes of pseudo-utopian fundamentalism in favor of pluralist and personal solutions to global problems. Y et it has also remained aware of its own protagonists’ potential to succumb to such forms of fanaticism. (War)

Therefore, it is evident that the Doctors reflect the general public’s line of thinking by remaining passive, frowning upon weapons in general, and always imparting a sense of wonder and respect when it comes to different life forms, rather than a sense of fear and irrationality.

It is for these reasons that Doctor Who stands out among the crowd of children’s science-fiction for more than its clever plots, likeable characters, and suspenseful adventures. The show serves as a mirror with which the viewer is able to observe the focuses and opinions of the culture of the day. Because Doctor Who’s seasons have managed to span such a long time, the writers have been charged with the task of appealing to an ever-changing audience. Therefore, they must stay in touch not only with the desires and enjoyments of the current age, but also with the underlying fears and concerns in order to produce a captivating show. While creating Doctor Who episodes in the sixties, the writers had to keep in mind the wishes of the audience: What they, based on the cultural events progressing around them, would want the Doctor to do when faced with...
adversity. Due to the paranoia and willingness of violence towards the unnamed “Other,” the answer to such a question in the sixties was typically one involving quick action and aggression. However, now that modern audiences are faced with an unpopular war and the violence and death surrounding it, the writers realize that the Doctor must play a new role. Therefore, he is consistently depicted as relying on intelligence and understanding, rather than weapons and violence, to save the day. Through this examination of the shift from aggression to pacifism within Doctor Who, the modern audience is able to witness the changes that take place in the culture and minds of decades of viewers.

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The Fiscal and Monetary Causes of the Great Depression
by Sean Moran

Beginning in 1929 and lasting until the US's entry into World War II, the Great Depression was a horrific period of economic crisis and ruin that made Americans “fear for their very survival” (Newman and Schmalbach 492). Americans were accustomed to periodic letdowns in the economy called panics, but the Depression was by far the longest lasting and the most severe. There are numerous reasons for the cause of the Great Depression and its longevity, but they are often oversimplified or ignored. Many people believe that a single event or person was able to cause the Depression, but this simply is not true. Although some people blame the stock market crash in 1929 for the Great Depression, the primary cause of the Depression was the disastrous monetary policy of the Federal Reserve coupled with the secondary factors of President Herbert Hoover’s fiscal policy and the Hawley-Smoot tariff.

It is inaccurate to cite the stock market crash in 1929 as the sole or main cause of the Great Depression. Throughout the 1920s many people attempted to get rich quick through the buying and selling of stock on the stock exchanges, the most famous being the New York stock exchange on Wall Street (Newman and Schmalbach 493). Through buying on margin, people bought stock with borrowed money with very low down payments and took many risks in order to make the money back and pay off their increasingly high debts (Amadeo). Some did become rich as the average stock value quadrupled from 1924-1929 and Americans believed the wealth would never stop flowing (Suddath). But all of that supposedly came crashing down during the crashes on Black Thursday and Black Tuesday when the market dropped by over 25% and nearly $30 billion disappeared (Amadeo). No one can deny that a great deal of money was lost during the crash, nearly $320 billion in current dollars, but even before the crashes on Black Thursday and Black Tuesday the market had already begun to fall. Large companies had already begun to lose a lot of money, and many banks had failed before Black Thursday (Suddath). Bank failures and money losses were happening before the crash proves that the crash was not the cause of the Great Depression. In all likelihood, the stock market crash was a result of the Depression. Probably the only direct effect of the crash was “the loss of people’s faith in Wall Street” and the economy in general (Amadeo). The information suggests that rather than being a cause of the Great Depression, the stock market crash in 1929 was actually a result of it. Perhaps because it appeared to be much more impactful than it really was or was such a complete shock to everyone, the stock market crash in October 1929 has been incorrectly labeled as the start of the Great Depression.

For many Americans, Herbert Hoover is remembered as the man that caused the Great Depression by allowing the stock market to crash and failed to do anything to end the terrible economic conditions. Although they were fairly ineffective at combating the Depression, Hoover actually implemented several programs and policies that would be the forerunners of Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal (Johnson 740). The essential problem with Hoover’s response to the Great Depression was that he reacted too late and inappropriately. Agencies such as the Federal Farm Board and the Reconstruction Finance Company were only partially effective at limiting overproduction and distributing aid to businesses because they were too small to handle a large scale disaster (Newman and Schmalbach 497). Under the Dawes Plan, nations were able to pay back their World War I debts to the United States. Hoover decided to put a hold on these payments while economic conditions worsened around the globe, but this action was also too late. Banks in Germany and Britain had already begun to shut down because they could not make their payments which forced “5,096 banks, with deposits well over $3 billion, to go bust” (Johnson 742). Hoover attempted several times to intervene and take the correct actions for the economy and country, but he was always too slow and too late. Although he was more interventionist than many of his advisors and administrators, Hoover was not adamant enough for the right forms of government intervention during his presidency.

Before Hoover ever tried to intervene directly in the economy, he tried to boost American business by supporting a protectionist trade policy that included the Hawley-Smoot tariff. Hoover believed that all the economy needed was a boost in American business and the easiest way to accomplish this was to create a new tariff (Newman and Schmalbach 496). Amy Shlaes writes that the Smoot-Hawley tariff was incredibly detrimental to US business and caused “exports to fall by more than 40 percent” (112). Because the US had enacted a protectionist tariff to protect its own industries, other nations responded with similar tariffs of their own and the world-wide Depression escalated as trade declined drastically (US Department of State). The US lost nearly $6 billion in exports alone in
1930, and the stock market took a 23% drop on the day Hoover signed the tariff into law (Phalan, Rustici, and Yazigi). There have been recent arguments that the tariff was not as terrible and harmful as first believed, but “it did not make the Depression any better” (US Department of State). Current research shows that the Hawley-Smoot tariff did in fact worsen the Depression, but not as much as was once thought. The Hawley-Smoot tariff failed because it failed to boost American business by cutting international demand for US made products, but its impact is often overstated.

Probably the most critical factor that determined the longevity of the Depression and prevented it from being a mere recession was the action of the Federal Reserve. The Federal Reserve had been created in 1913 to prevent recessions from turning into major depressions by controlling the money supply and regulating banking, but during the early 1930s it failed to do so by pursuing a contracting monetary policy and ignoring bank failures (Kupelian). During the Depression over 9,000 banks are thought to have failed, with over 700 of those happening in the first year, 1930 (Wessels Living History Farm). Because it was inexperienced with a recession as large as the early stages of the Depression and because it deemed many of the failing banks as too small to matter, the Fed did nothing to prevent people from continuing to make runs (Kupelian). This action, more like inaction, by the Federal Reserve was inexcusable and completely detrimental to the entire banking system. Unlike the current version of the Fed, the 1930s version failed to realize that bank failures could set off a chain of events capable of ruining the entire economy. That is exactly what happened, and by 1933 people had lost over $140 billion from their bank accounts alone (Wessels Living History Farm). Not only did the Federal Reserve fail to monitor the banks, but it also failed to adequately monitor and regulate the money supply of the United States. During a time when people desperately needed money and purchasing power, the Fed failed to adopt an expansionary monetary policy of buying government bonds and lowering the federal funds rate (Pongracic Jr.). Instead, the Fed sold bonds “in effect, soaking up money from the economy to offset monetary expansion” (Shlaes 90). But even after Franklin D. Roosevelt had become president and had begun to implement his New Deal, the Federal Reserve continued to disastrously manage the economy. In 1937, the Fed tried to implement expansionary policy too late by raising reserve requirements for banks and over a billion dollars were lost by US banks (Shlaes 336). This just serves as another example of the Fed’s complete bungling of the Great Depression. Instead of preventing a major recession and regulating the banking system of the United States, the Federal Reserve completely dropped the ball with its monetary policy and should be considered the main factor of the Great Depression.

The Great Depression was the result of unsuccessful monetary policy by the Federal Reserve and the misguided efforts of the Hoover administration, not by the stock market crash in 1929. It could be argued that the Depression might have already been in motion by the beginning of 1928 and that the stock market crash was a first sign of trouble. There are multiple reasons why the Great Depression happened, and no answer is completely wrong or right. Even after the presidency of FDR and the enactment of the New Deal, it would take a second world war for the Depression to officially end.

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W.E.B. Du Bois and Religion: Discovering the Truth Behind Du Bois and his Faith
by Katie Valin

W.E.B. Du Bois and American History

When historians look back on the life of W.E.B. Du Bois one word comes to mind: complicated. Throughout his life, Du Bois’s arguments regarding certain issues were always passionate, thoughtful, and persuasive; however, what confuses historians is Du Bois’s adept ability to utilize this same convincing appeal elsewhere—for the opposing side. Because of Du Bois’s tendency to make conflicting claims and cite contradictory opinions on certain subjects, readers of Du Bois are left scratching their heads, trying to make sense of the complicating puzzle that is W.E.B. Du Bois. One issue in particular, Du Bois’s spirituality, has sparked controversy among historians, for Du Bois’s writings on religion, as well as his personal choices regarding faith, appear so to be so mixed in nature. The instability of Du Bois’s views regarding religion has forced Du Bois scholars to take a position on the vital question of Du Bois and his Religion—a man of faith or a man without? While historians attempt to paint a coherent image of Du Bois through their own eyes and interpretation, they neglect to recognize what the deep-seated nature of Du Bois really entailed: “a mix of virtues and vice, but also different because he was a genius.”

Du Bois’s projected spirituality was not one that was cut and dry: it was pragmatic, rhetorical, and rational, but also contained purity and a sense of morality that transcended the values that the Christian church was preaching at that time. Through his unique practice of religion and his incorporation of Christianity into his literary works, Du Bois attempted to shift the focus off the Church’s message concerning church attendance and the existence of God, and onto Christian values that would promote the betterment of humanity and encourage societal process. To Du Bois, God could not exist without work. He felt that in order to be respected, religion had to bring practical progression, that is, the practicing and spreading God’s message—peace, justice, and selflessness—at the expense of promoting His name. Often times, though, these values that focused on the improvement of society were abused, ignored, or manipulated by the Church, causing Du Bois to reprimand religion and ultimately abandon religious practice in his life.

Don Hufford, a professor of education at Newman University, explains religion for Du Bois in this way, “it was the spiritual impulse made existential. It was concept turned into precept, belief into practice, meaning into purposeful action.” As exhibited by Du Bois’s life work, his focus and activism centered around three primary concepts: democracy, discovering Truth, and human rights. Making progress in these fields was something Du Bois was constantly attempting to do, and he found that the Church and religion either facilitated or inhibited his goal of advancing these ideals. This main concern with the practices of the Church and how it functioned in society provided the grounds for Du Bois’s commentary, criticisms, and shifts in spirituality. While seemingly inconsistent, Du Bois’s changing and conflicting bouts with religion can be seen as a mere extension of his foremost activist objectives. This emphasis on the function of religion in society is the key to discovering Du Bois’s spirituality, for including the heart of Du Bois’s message, values, and character, not only creates a complete work of art, but puts together the mystery concerning Du Bois’s faith.

The racial issue in America was one of Du Bois’s leading objectives on his agenda, if not his most significant objective, during his lifetime. Du Bois repeatedly said throughout his life on various occasions that “the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line.” He also sought to study extensively, and in turn educate people, on theNegro Problem in America. While Du Bois championed a vision of an equal America, a world where it is “possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face,” the Christian church, of various denominations, often impeded this idea of a true democracy. Du Bois asserted that the American-European white church especially was at fault for segregation in America, stating in The Crisis in 1929 that “[t]he American Church of Christ is Jim Crowed from Top to Bottom. No other institution in America is built so thoroughly or more absolutely on the color line.”

3 Du Bois, Souls 9.

asserting that “it still remains possible in the United States for a white American to be a gentleman and a scholar, a Christian and a man of integrity, and yet flatly and openly refuse to treat as a fellow human being any person who has white ancestry,” while also condemning the religious nature of America as a whole: “a nation’s religion is its life, and as such white Christianity is a miserable favor.”

Du Bois often expressed this anger towards the white church poetically, and ironically, in biblical language. Edward Blum, a historian of race and religion in America and professor at San Diego University, explains in his book, *W.E.B. Du Bois: A Prophet*, that “Du Bois often included apocalyptic visions in his novels, and he imagined the Lord chastising whites, destroying western culture, and devastating the defilers of black women and men in his historical works.”

Du Bois’s incorporation of Christianity into his literature, whether it was in a positive or negative light, not only served to enhance the quality of his work by making it more understandable and relatable to the audience he was directing it to, but ultimately gave his work an enduring since of poignancy. Referencing religion and God in his works served the purpose of making Du Bois’s message seem more serious, profound, and almost sacred in nature.

While Du Bois felt strongly about the color line, his views on Christianity did not mimic this perception, that is, he offered both criticism and praise to churches of all denominations. Churches that practiced discrimination received strong reprimand from Du Bois, for even if they were colored, these intuitions were ultimately helping to devastate Du Bois’s ambition of eliminating the Negro Problem. The Catholic Church, an institution one would think Du Bois would be sympathetic too because it included colored immigrants who were discriminated against in America society, was in fact loathed by Du Bois because of its role in spreading bigotry against the Negro race. Du Bois’s perception of the Catholicism was initially positive when the Church embraced African-Americans, but transformed when the Catholic Church began to practice segregation and promote the idea of inequality. In his piece *The Philadelphia Negro* written in 1899, Du Bois offers a friendly comment on the Catholic Church,


reporting that “The Catholic Church has in the last decade made great progress in its work among Negroes and is determined to do much in the future, its chief hold upon the colored people is its comparative lack of discrimination.” In 1925, however, Du Bois’s views on Catholicism changed as their policies towards blacks changed: “Because Catholicism has so much that is splendid in its past and fine in its present, it is the greater shame that ‘nigger’ haters clothed in its episcopal robes should do black Americans in exclusion, segregation and exclusion from opportunity all that the Ku Klux Klan ever asked;” Du Bois also stated that “The Catholic Church in American stands for color separation and discrimination to a degree equaled by no other church in America, and that is saying a very great deal.” One of Du Bois’s essential priorities was to spread the importance of democracy and diminish discrimination and prejudice due to race in the United States. As religious institutions like the Catholic Church began to jeopardize this goal, however, Du Bois began to sense that the Church was an enemy in his quest for equality.

Du Bois wasn’t entirely negative about organized Christianity though, especially with the Negro Church. He credited the Negro church with being the center of Negro social life and claimed that the Negro Church “…has accomplished much. [The Negro Church] has instilled and conserved morals, it has helped family life, it has taught and developed ability and given colored man his best business training.” Despite these positive comments concerning organized black religion, it is essential to recognize that Du Bois didn’t praise the institution because it was developing Christianity and spirituality in God’s name, but because it was alleviating the pains of the Negro Problem by helping blacks develop a community, provide social support, and present opportunities that would not only raise up the status of the black individual, but the Negro race as a whole. Du Bois even stated in *The Philadelphia Negro* that the “black church, is to be sure, a social institution first, and religious afterwards.” Hufford elaborates on Du Bois’s analysis of church, stating that “Du Bois saw this ‘church’ as part social

service agency, part educational institution, part conserver of cultural heritage, part activist challenger of oppression.”12 Evidently, Du Bois’s reasoning for commending the Church is not based off his desire to see the word of God spread but rather on his observation of the benefits the Church provides for blacks and its potential to obliterate the Negro Problem.

Even though Du Bois offered plenty of laudatory language for religious African-Americans who were raising the status of blacks in America, he also supplied ample criticism to black believers who threatened black equality. In 1938, Du Bois accused the Negro church of “interfer[ing] with and nullifi[ng] its chief duty of character building” and stated that “it has built up…unquestioning belief and obedience.”13 By promoting immorality, as well as fostering submissive and ignorance, the church not only threatens the advancement of the blacks in American society by instilling the wrong values in their community, but essentially strengthens white discrimination by promoting the stereotype that Negros are wicked, stupid, and uncivilized. Blind to a particular church’s ethnicity, race, or what they have experienced in society, Du Bois’s positive or negative outlook on religion depended on whether the churches were encouraging or rejecting racial equality in the United States.

Along with Du Bois’s focus on an egalitarian America, Du Bois also stressed an unyielding search for the Truth. Du Bois’s emphasis on the Truth was evident through his literary pieces, stating that his goal was to “simply to establish the Truth, on which the Right in the future may be built”14 and that ultimately “The Truth shall make ye free.”15 In a moral sense, discovering and dispersing the Truth to Du Bois among society meant revealing to them the horrific crimes that being committed against humanity that they were too blind to see. It meant exposing to them the Negro Problem, the implications of inequality in all forms, and ultimately, to demonstrate the horrors ignorance and a lifestyle absent of the Truth can cause society. Truth for Du Bois was also stressed in his advocacy for schooling and education. Henry Louis Gates Jr., and Cornel West, both prominent African-American literary critics and scholars, assert in their book The Future of Race, that “for Du Bois, education was the key. Ignorance is the major obstacle.”16 Du Bois’s intention was to ensure that most of society, especially black Americans, would receive a well-rounded education that covered intellectual as well as moral principles and that this in turn would build their character and bring them closer to discovering the Truth.

Although Du Bois was fascinated with discovering the deeper meaning of many subjects, when it came to religion, he seemed to have no interest or desire to discover the validity behind it. For instance, in 1928, Du Bois wrote this inquiry in The Crisis: “what difference does it make whether the whale swallowed Jonah or Jonah swallowed the whale, so long as Justice, Mercy, and Peace prevail?”17 He also wrote this to his wife concerning his funeral: “don’t stress religion or immorality or Jesus Christ or the Good God. The good life at present and progress in the future are what I want stressed.”18 Du Bois’s outlook on religion as it concerned Truth did not involve literal truth, such as the reality of God, biblical literalism, or whether life existed after death, but encompassed the ideal of Truth that was important to Du Bois—the understanding and progression of human worth and condition. For as Du Bois articulately put his outlook when it came to Truth and Religion: “Away Myth and Miracle, Greed and Dogma; Up Science, Truth, Right, and Reason.”19

Because Du Bois focused on religious Truth and not religious truth, he encouraged churches practice this same dissemination of education and profound sense of morality. Du Bois often put pressure on the church to spread Truth in his speeches and writings, explaining that “[w]hen the church ceases to stand for education and morality, it must go” and that “[The Negro Church] must make its sermons a regular source of real information. It must give people knowledge, it must inspire them with high ideals of good deeds…”20 When the Negro church engaged in this quest for Truth, Du Bois offered them praise, stating that “The Negro churches were the birthplace of Negro schools and of all agencies which

12 Hufford, religious thought, 83.
seek to disseminate news of information so quickly and effectively among Negros as the church.”

However, when the churches failed to take an appropriate stance on teaching the Truth, Du Bois was severely critical of their actions. Du Bois was often unforgiving of black preachers, portraying them as “ignorant, unlearned, dishonest, and immoral” and saying “that the growth of the church is threatened by a lack of educated leadership.” Moreover, Du Bois expressed his disapproval of the passionate, wild displays of emotion the black church often supported, as illustrated in this description of his observation with a Negro revival: “A sort of suppressed terror hung in the air and seemed to seize us, a pythian madness, a demoniac possession, that lent terrible reality to song and word” and “those who have not thus witnessed the frenzy of a Negro revival in the untouched backwoods of the South can but dimly realize the religious feeling of the slave; as described, such scenes appear grotesque and funny, but as seen they are awful.”

Du Bois’s perception of the Church, especially the Negro Church, fluctuated with the Church’s adaptation of Du Bois’s version of the Truth—education and true morality. When the Church did not embody these ideals, Du Bois distanced himself from religion; however, when the Church embraced the Truth that Du Bois held so dear, Du Bois displayed the Church in an encouraging manner. Du Bois was not concerned with removing the devil’s influence or abolishing evil, but rather eliminating the ignorance in society that not only has the potential to harm black advancement, but threaten intelligence, success, and character. As a true advocate for the well-rounded, honest, and informed citizen, Du Bois saw the potential the church could do in shaping society and was disappointed when they failed to fulfill this goal.

While Du Bois fought fervently for the spread of democracy and the promotion of Truth, his motivation behind this activism was contained in his ingrained focus on the importance of human rights. Improving the human condition, upholding peace, and ensuring justice for all were at the heart of Du Bois’s decisions, lifestyle, art, and literature and had a profound influence on him. Norm Allen Jr., author of the book *African American Humanism*, describes Du Bois as a freethinker who embodied and supported “reason, science democracy, openness to new ideas, the cultivation of moral excellence, a commitment to justice and fairness, a belief in the inherent worth of humanity.” Du Bois’s passionate “belief in humanity,” in relation to religion was a complex one, for he valued the ultimate Christian message, especially that of Jesus, of humility, sacrifice, and selflessness, but he strongly disproved of Churches ignoring this message and adopting one of inequality, injustice, and oppression. Du Bois found himself continuously trying to promote what he saw as the real Christian message with his pleas against imperialism, as well as his intertwining of biblical allusions and messages with the fundamental urging of human improvement and morality.

Du Bois’s religious practices and Christian writings are what confuse historians the most about Du Bois’s spirituality. They see the words “God” “amen” and references to the bible in Du Bois’s works and immediately assume Du Bois was a “Christian” and a follower of church and religion. But Du Bois’s spirituality was simply much meaningful than the message of the Church at the time, for it spoke of the power of Truth at a time when the Church was doing the opposite. Thus, Du Bois’s fight for human rights is the ultimate message and philosophy behind his seemingly complicated relationship with religion.

Whenever human injustice and oppression was cultivated by faith, Du Bois offered strong words towards religious institutions, pointing out their hypocrisy and calling for integrity to be illustrated by the Church. Imperialism, which Du Bois was strongly opposed to for it denied sovereignty to independent nations, resulted in oppression, and ultimately denied peoples human rights, fostered global violence, and was a result of white Christianity attempting to justify enslavement and brutality against other nations. Du Bois was especially sensitive to the colonization of Africa, making a plea regarding the colonization of Africa by Europeans, “let the white world keep its missionaries at home to teach the Golden Rule to its corporate thieves. Damn the God of Slavery, Exploitation and War, Peace on Earth; no more war. The earth of Africa is for its people. Its Wealth is for the poor and not for the rich.”

While this call for world

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23 Zuckerman, foreword to *Du Bois and Religion*, 11.
26 Ibid., 138.
peace came to include several other nations suffering from European oppression, the perpetrator, the Church and Christianity, remained the same in Du Bois’s eyes: “...in general, it is true that there is scarcely a bishop in Christendom, a priest in the church...who does not stand by War and Ignorance as the main method of the settlement of our pressing human problem.”30 As it became clear that the Church was a main advocate in the denial of human rights and injustice around the globe, this ignited hate in Du Bois for the church, for he began to see it for what it really was, “pathetically timid and human; [The Church] is going to stand on the side of wealth and power”31 and that “the church in modern civilized countries has become the special representative of the employing and exploiting classes...”32 As Du Bois began to recognize the Church’s violations of human rights, he began to create his own attack in response to the Church’s behavior, though through a much more peaceful and persuasive method than the Church’s: writing.

Du Bois’s religious references, biblical pleas, and appeals to Christianity had one thing in common: an embodiment of Du Bois’s passion for the human condition, justice, and peace. Although historians often mistake Du Bois’s poetic pieces concerning religion as a testament to his identity as a Christian, it is clear that the works exemplify a message that was not one the Church preached at the present time, but rather one of love, sacrifice, and humility. The representation of these values happened to occur in a religious figure, Jesus Christ, that Du Bois had a strong adoration for. Du Bois constantly illustrated Jesus as “a man who despised the prejudices of his time, who discovered among the lowest and meekest the loftiest and sweetest souls and who laid down a guiding rule of life to ‘Do unto others even as you would that other would do unto you’”33 and who stood for an “attitude of humility, a desire for peace...mercy and charity toward fellow men, willingness to suffer persecution for right ideals.”34 Du Bois pleaded that the teachings of Jesus be adopted by the Church, and was angered when the Church instead ignored Jesus’s message and continued to perform their horrendous acts, for as editors Gerald Horne and Mary Young state in their book, W.E.B. Du Bois: An Encyclopedia, “Du Bois warned that the church professed to follow Jesus Christ but failed to serve as an advocate for justice.”35

This disapproval of the Church’s actions lead Du Bois to engage in his own form of preaching, that is, incorporating Jesus Christ and his message of love into his poetic works. Over his lifetime Du Bois wrote several pieces of literature involving Jesus, including Jesus Christ in Texas, The Gospel According to Mary Brown, Pontius Pilate, and The Son of God. In most of the writings, Du Bois used Jesus’s suffering and message to poetically illustrate the tragedies and oppression he saw mimicked in society’s actions, as well as highlight the honorable nature of suffering those oppressed were enduring. For instance, he used this comparison of Jesus and American blacks to convey the extent to which African-Americans struggled: “Jesus Christ was a laborer and Black men are laborers. He was poor and we are poor; He was despised. He was persecuted and crucified, and we are mobbed and lynched.”36 Although in this case Du Bois is engaging in religious language, his ultimate purpose behind this rhetoric is to appeal to religious followers in their own language, as well as effectively communicate his message of embracing human rights in the world. Du Bois believed that by following the teachings of Jesus Christ, rather than those of the Church, the world could successfully instill values that were quintessential to global improvement: peace, justice, and freedom for all.

Throughout his life, Du Bois fought passionately for the human. Whether his message preached racial equality, embodied the ideals of Truth, or promoted universal rights, Du Bois always commanded that respect, dignity, and moral character be practiced by his fellow humans; however, this idealistic goal often met opponents, especially in the case of the Church. Du Bois often found himself torn in the case of spirituality, for his philosophy of justice was religious in nature, but was neglected in practice by religious society. Herein lays Du Bois’s greatest concern: the practical nature of The Church in fulfilling his goals. In his novel Dark Princess: A Romance, Du Bois says that “Work is not God—Love is God and Work is his Prophet.”37 Du Bois strived to uphold a lifestyle of activism, calling for work to be done in the case of human progress. This ambition was motivated

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30 Du Bois, Black Reconstruction, 35, in Imbid, 172.
31 W.E.B Du Bois, Christian Century, 9 December 1931, in Annotated Bibliography, 58, quoted in Hufford, religious thought, 76.
35 Young and Horne, An Encyclopedia, 114.
36 Du Bois, Crisis, 1913, quoted in Imbid, 113.
by a profound sense of understanding for the human condition and morality, one that could exist absent in the name of Lord or of Christianity.

An identity often embodies statuses we project, names or stereotypes that society has given us so that our personhood can be shaped into one neat and understandable little frame. This molding of one’s identity into a simplistic form is precisely what Du Bois was against: being judged on the basis of one’s appearance. Ironically, however, historians do the same with Du Bois. Beckoned to provide a direct answer concerning Du Bois’s faith, scholars attempt to pick one title to describe Du Bois’s religious affiliation. Du Bois’s spirituality, however, lies outside these bounds, containing both elements of hope that might be characterized by faith, as well as qualities of disbelieve and cynicism. In the case of religion, the portrait of Du Bois may look disordered, lively, and perplexing at first glance, but with a little attention to detail, it is easy to see a picture of a man unified by the beauty of his beliefs.

Bibliography
mental health, and lowering of risks for substance abuse (Alexander, Robinson, Orme-Johnson, and Schneider, 1994). TM may also be beneficial in lowering stress-related health complications, as well as reducing chronic pain from injuries (Astin, 1997). Transcendental meditation can also lower hypertension, congenital heart disease, and mortality (Alexander, Robinson, Orme-Johnson, and Schneider, 1994).

**Respiratory Sinus Arrhythmia**

Respiratory Sinus Arrhythmia is the difference between instantaneous heart rate during inhalation and instantaneous heart rate during exhalation. The length of time taken to complete one heart beat shortens during exhalation, lowering the instantaneous heart rate during exhalation (Yasuma and Hayano, 2004).

RSA can be used to assess parasympathetic nervous system activity in the body because the vagus nerve is involved in creating RSA. During inhalation, the vagus nerve is inhibited, causing a decrease in release of Acetylcholine. This decrease in ACh leads to a slight increase in heart rate on an inhalation. During exhalation, however, the vagus nerve is no longer inhibited, causing an increase in release of ACh, leading to a slight decrease in heart rate during exhalation. This parasympathetic control causes an increase in instantaneous heart rate (IHR) during inhalation and a decrease in IHR during exhalation (Katona and Jih, 1975).

RSA can be measured by subtracting the IHR during exhalation from the IHR during inhalation. Previous studies show that increasing RSA can increase the efficiency of pulmonary gas exchange (Giardino, Glenny, Borson, and Chan, 2003), as well as decrease cardiac and pulmonary energy use. RSA does this by decreasing heart rate during exhalation, meaning that it suppresses unnecessary heartbeats (Yasuma and Hayano, 2004).

**Respiratory Sinus Arrhythmia and Meditation**

Previous studies show that there is a higher level of synchronization in heart rate and respiration during meditation than at rest. Respiratory rate decreases during meditation, mainly because of the increased exhalation time length. This causes an increase in RSA amplitude during exhalation (Cysarz and Büssing, 2005). Meditation techniques and breathing techniques are recommended to many patients with cardiovascular and/or pulmonary diseases in order to improve pulmonary gas exchange, which is mediated partially by RSA (Giardino, Glenny, Borson, and Chan, 2003).

**Purpose and Hypothesis**

The purpose of this experiment is to determine if meditation causes a significant change in the amplitude of RSA in subjects after meditating for fifteen minutes. The null hypothesis is as follows: RSA at rest ≥ RSA during meditation. The alternate hypothesis is that RSA at rest < RSA during meditation.

**Materials and Methods**

**Setting Up BioPac Equipment**

An electrocardiogram and respiratory trace are used to conduct this experiment, using similar techniques as seen in previous studies that assessed heart rate and respiration rate synchronization (Cysarz and Büssing, 2005). The Biopac EKG and respiration belt were used to measure respiration rate and heart rate of the subject, in conjunction with the Student BioPac computer program. The subject was hooked up to the BioPac equipment by wrapping the Respiration Belt around the subject’s chest, placing the top of the strap around the upper portion of the subject’s breasts. The electrode patches for the BioPac EKG were attached to the subject’s skin in the following configuration: the white electrode patch on the right wrist, the black electrode patch on the inside of the right ankle, and the red electrode patch on the inside of the left ankle. The electrodes were then connected to the corresponding pads. This was done for all 18 subjects, who were all females between the ages of 18 and 22 years old.

**Measuring Heart Rate and Respiration during Rest**

Once the BioPac equipment was set up, the subject was asked to sit quietly and read chapter 19 “The Kidneys” in Dee Unglaub Silverthorn’s *Human Physiology: An Integrated Approach, 6th Edition* for a total of five minutes. While the subject read, respiration rate and heart rate were measured for five minutes in order to determine the subject’s resting heart rate and respiration rate.

**Measuring Heart Rate and Respiration during Meditation**

After measuring resting heart rate and respiration rate, the subject was then asked to meditate using the transcendental meditation technique. The subject was instructed to silently repeat the phrase “I am” to herself, focusing on the phrase and on the breath for the full time period, bringing her focus back to
Calculating Respiratory Sinus Arrhythmia

Respiratory Sinus Arrhythmia (RSA) was calculated by subtracting the instantaneous heart rate on an exhale from the instantaneous heart rate on the inhale of the same breath.

Results

Data was analyzed statistically using the paired t-test method. A t-test was run to compare the instantaneous heart rate (IHR) of the subjects during inhalation at rest and the IHR of subjects during exhalation at rest, giving a p-value of 0.402. This means that the two sets of data were not significantly different. IHR of the subjects during inhalation during meditation was then compared to IHR of subjects during exhalation during meditation, yielding a p-value of 0.013, showing that the two sets of data were significantly different.

IHR during inhalation at rest and IHR during inhalation during meditation were then compared, giving a p-value of 0.067, showing that the two sets of data were not significantly different. IHR during exhalation at rest and IHR during exhalation during meditation were compared, giving a p-value of 0.001, showing that the two sets of data were significantly different.

Respiratory Sinus Arrhythmia (RSA) is the difference between IHR on an inhalation and IHR on the exhalation of the same breath. A t-test was also used to analyze the amplitude of RSA of subjects at rest and the amplitude of RSA of the same subjects during meditation, giving a p-value of 0.017, showing that the two sets of data were significantly different. The p-values for every t-test are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 p-values for t-tests Comparing Instantaneous Heart Rates during Inhalation and Exhalation at Rest and Meditation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inhale IHR</th>
<th>Exhale IHR</th>
<th>RSA during Rest v. RSA during Meditation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IHR during Rest v. Exhale during Rest</td>
<td>IHR during Meditation v. Exhale during Meditation</td>
<td>IHR during Rest v. Exhale during Meditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p-value</td>
<td>0.402</td>
<td>0.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant Difference?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table shows the p-values for t-tests comparing the subjects’ average instantaneous heart rate during inhalation and exhalation during both rest and meditation.
As mentioned previously, IHR during inhalation at rest and IHR during exhalation at rest were not significantly different. This can also be shown by graphing the two sets of data in relation to each other. Figure 1 shows that there is almost a direct correlation between IHR during inhalation and IHR during exhalation at rest, because there is an R^2 value of almost 1. The fact that the two sets of data correlate agrees with the insignificant p-value.

![Graph of Average Instantaneous Heart Rate during Inhalation at Rest with respect to Average Instantaneous Heart Rate during Exhalation at Rest](Image)

**Figure 1- Average Instantaneous Heart Rate during Inhalation at Rest with respect to Average Instantaneous Heart Rate during Exhalation at Rest**

On the other hand, Figure 2 shows that inhalation IHR and exhalation IHR during Meditation do not correlate nearly as closely as inhalation IHR and exhalation IHR at rest. Although the graph of the data has a trendline with a positive slope, the R^2 value is 0.6836.

![Graph of Average Instantaneous Heart Rate during Inhalation at Meditation with respect to Average Instantaneous Heart Rate during Exhalation at Meditation](Image)

**Figure 2- Average Instantaneous Heart Rate during Inhalation at Meditation with respect to Average Instantaneous Heart Rate during Exhalation at Meditation**

**Meditation**

Figures 3 and 4 compare inhalation IHR’s during rest and meditation and exhalation IHR’s during rest and meditation, respectively. Figure 3 has an R^2 value of 0.813, while Figure 4 has an R^2 value of 0.6634. This means that there is a greater correlation between inhalation IHR’s at rest and meditation than between exhalation IHR’s at rest and meditation. Figure 3 supports the results of the inhalation IHR t-test, which concluded that the two sets of data were not significantly different with a p-value of 0.067. Figure 4 supports the results of the exhalation IHR t-test, which concluded that the two sets of data were significantly different with a p-value of 0.001.

![Graph of Average Instantaneous Heart Rate during Inhalation at Rest with respect to Average Instantaneous Heart Rate during Inhalation at Meditation](Image)

**Figure 3- Average Instantaneous Heart Rate during Inhalation at Rest with respect to Average Instantaneous Heart Rate during Inhalation at Meditation**

![Graph of Average Instantaneous Heart Rate during Exhalation at Rest with respect to Average Instantaneous Heart Rate during Exhalation at Meditation](Image)

**Figure 4- Average Instantaneous Heart Rate during Exhalation at Rest with respect to Average Instantaneous Heart Rate during Exhalation at Meditation**
Meditation

Each subject had 20 RSA values, 10 at rest and 10 during meditation. Table 2 displays all the average RSA values for every subject. Table 2 shows that RSA increased for the majority of subjects during meditation, and the p-value for comparing RSA during meditation and rest was 0.017 (Table 1). Both tables show that RSA during meditation was significantly different from RSA at rest.

Overall, the data shows that the amplitude of Respiratory Sinus Arrhythmia was significantly greater in subjects during meditation than in the same subjects at rest. Therefore, the null hypothesis that “RSA at rest ≥ RSA during meditation” can be rejected, and the alternate hypothesis that “RSA at rest < RSA during meditation” does not have to be rejected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>RSA at Rest</th>
<th>RSA Meditation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>-0.62802387</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2- Average Amplitude of Respiratory Sinus Arrhythmia at Rest and during Meditation

This table shows the average amplitude of RSA at rest and during meditation for all 18 subjects.

Discussion

In this experiment, we determined the amplitude of Respiratory Sinus Arrhythmia in 18 female subjects between the age of 18 and 22 years old during meditation and at rest. The collected data showed a statistically significant increase in the amplitude of RSA during meditation as compared to the amplitude of RSA at rest, confirming the alternate hypothesis and rejecting the null hypothesis. This experiment supported previous research on RSA, meditation, and the effects of meditation on RSA.

The increase in RSA during meditation can be explained by the slower respiration rate of subjects during meditation. While at rest, inhalation periods and exhalation periods of subjects were almost equal. Because of this, the IHR of the subjects during inhalation at rest was not significantly different than the IHR of subjects during exhalation at rest. Interestingly enough, IHR during inhalation at rest and IHR during inhalation during meditation were not significantly different either. This could be because we did not witness a great change in how long subjects inhaled during meditation as opposed to at rest. The time periods of inhalation during both meditation and rest were similar, giving similar IHR’s during inhalation.

The major difference in subjects’ breathing patterns could be seen in the exhalation time periods during meditation, as opposed to exhalation time periods at rest. Subjects’ exhalation time periods increased during meditation, and the IHR during exhalation during meditation was significantly lower than IHR during exhalation at rest. This was most likely because the longer exhalation period during meditation created a more sustained stimulus to the vagus nerve so that it had a greater effect on lowering IHR on the exhale.

Overall, this study showed that RSA increases during meditation. Previous studies have shown that RSA amplitude reaches a maximum when subjects breathe at a rate of about six breaths per minute, which happens to be the goal respiration rate of many meditation techniques (Giardino, Glenny, Borson, and Chan, 2003). This is important because there are many supposed physiological and emotional advantages to breathing deeply and slowly, such as practiced during meditation. Slower breathing patterns can improve pulmonary gas exchange efficiency, which is most likely mediated by increases in RSA. RSA also serves the purpose of saving cardiac and respiratory energy so as to increase the efficiency and longevity of the cardiovascular and pulmonary systems (Giardino, Glenny, Borson, and Chan, 2003).

We used inexperienced meditators as our subjects because past studies...
have shown an increase in RSA amplitude in practiced meditators, and we wanted to determine if meditation would have similar effects on RSA in subjects with no significant meditation experience (Cysarz and Büssing, 2005). Subjects were asked after the trial if they felt more relaxed than when started the experiment or if they had difficulty practicing the transcendental meditation technique. Only two subjects said that they did not feel more relaxed after the experiment. One of those two subjects was interrupted during meditation by a group of people who entered her meditation room and talked audibly for the majority of the meditation period. She said that because of this she was not able to truly focus and meditate. However, even with her results, RSA still significantly increased during meditation over all, so she did not qualify as an outlier.

Another possible source of error could be that not all tests were conducted at the same time of day. Two subjects were tested in the morning, while all the others were tested in the afternoon. Time of day, sleep patterns, and/or caffeine consumption might have influenced results. If this study is conducted again in the future, subjects should be tested at the same time of day and should be instructed to have a certain amount of sleep and consume no caffeine before their trial times.

Previous studies have shown that meditation has been found to decrease the risk of and/or the effects of congenital heart disease (Alexander, Robinson, Orme-Johnson, and Schneider, 1994). This study found that meditation increases amplitude of Respiratory Sinus Arrhythmia. Future studies could test to see if there is a correlation between increased RSA and improved heart health, causing a decrease in the risk of and/or the effects of heart disease.

Literature Citations


Illusionism and its Weaknesses: Analyzing Smilansky’s Claim that Free Will Illusion Yields Positive Effects on Society by Reeve Jacobus

Much of the past discussion of free will has concerned its existence or non-existence, examining wills, causations, and ‘could have done otherwise’. Only recently has the discussion begun to slip into the effects of these beliefs. As we continue to debate determinism and its importance, it might be necessary to examine the consequences if its existence proves to be true. We know what a free will-accepting society that is ignorant of determinism looks like; what would it look like as one that accepts determinism and rejects the idea of libertarian free will? Would the general public accept some sort of compatibilistic perspective, or would there only be fatalist notions of free will combined with rampant crime and misunderstanding? Saul Smilansky, throughout his book Free Will and Illusion and in numerous other articles, has advocated for the general public’s belief in libertarian free will as beneficial to society. This main thesis, known as illusionism, is articulated by Smilansky in the following: “illusory beliefs are in place [concerning free will], and… the role they play is largely positive [to society]” (Smilansky 9).

This paper will seek to challenge Smilansky’s thesis of illusionism through both theory and experimental philosophy. In theory, Smilansky’s illusionism seems to advocate a type of deception that advances on thin ice; it would have to be known that society’s observance of determinism would lead to fatalism and consequently fatal acts. On the other hand, the experimental philosophy of Adam Feltz and Thomas Nadelhoffer also proves illusionism inept; their research examines current folk intuitions and distinguishes them from misassumptions that Smilansky makes. I want to challenge Smilansky and argue that society would be able to understand causally sequenced determinism and still leave room for a sufficient responsibility; this would come in the form of comprehending a reasonable compatibilism.

It is first necessary to outline Smilansky’s version of illusionism and his arguments for supporting such a position. The version I will be outlining comes from his article, “Free Will, Fundamental Dualism, and the Centrality of Illusion.”

Smilansky initially attempts to show the strength of illusionism by providing some of the “difficulties that would prevail without it” (Smilansky 9). The first concerns the problem of innocence: if society learns that innocence and guilt are not as black and white as previously thought, it will lose the concepts altogether. He explains, “the worst thing one could do would be to point out that, ultimately, none of this makes sense — because the ‘guilty’ are, ultimately, no more guilty than others” (Smilansky 9-10). Smilansky provides an example of such confusion: “in a world imbued with a deterministic outlook the ethical-emotional weight of the Dreyfus affair, for example, is scarcely comprehensible” (Nature 84). With the two concepts now blurred, he sees no outcome in which society can determine innocence and guilt confidently. Smilansky also maintains that illusion is necessary so that persons will take responsibility for their actions. He adds, “people as a rule ought not to be fully aware of the ultimate inevitability of what they have done, for this will affect the way in which they hold themselves responsible” (Smilansky 10). One can imagine a bank robber who upon being accused, blames his actions on an ultimate inevitability that was out of his control. If a person realizes this ultimate inevitability, he or she will simply blame their action on causal factors in order to avoid punishment. Lastly, Smilansky envisions a loss of meaning within society. If determinism holds true, an agent’s (in Smilansky’s case, the moral hero’s) “actions… are simply an unfolding of what he happens to be no matter how devoted he has been, how much effort he has put in, how many tears he has shed, how many sacrifices he has willingly suffered” (Nature 86). These causally determined events eliminate the moral worth in our lives; a sense of fatalism rises in which no person feels the motivation to be successful or moral in any way.

After showing some of the supposed difficulties faced if society were to accept determinism and its consequences, Smilansky moves on to provide illusionism as a solution. He first defines illusionism as the belief that “illusion often has a large and positive role to play in the issue of free will… and humanity is fortunately deceived on the… issue” (Smilansky 11). Why do we need the illusion of free will? Smilansky believes uncovering the illusion would lead to hard determinist perspectives among the public in which fatalism would dominate. Compatibilist notions would be rare because our over-simplifying society could not understand the combination of determinism and responsibility. Smilansky notes that “this might lead them to succumb to ‘pragmatic’ consequentialist temptations, or unprincipled nihilism” (Smilansky 12). Only libertarian notions of free will can create an adequate degree of responsibility.
Smilansky lastly attempts to show how illusion can function within our society. He provides an explanation to its function. The answer is a type of elitism, in which the general public continues its belief in libertarian free will, while only the ‘elite’, the policy-makers and academics, should concern themselves with finding responsibility and desert in the face of determinism (Smilansky 13). This would allow the ‘elites’ to operate accordingly without the illusion, while the general public continues to function ignorant of determinism and its far-reaching consequences.

I will first challenge illusionism through theory; that is, I will point out a number of inconsistencies in Smilansky’s thought process concerning the effects of society’s acceptance of determinism and subsequent free will perspective.

A quick parallel is necessary to shed light on the problem as a whole: that of morality without God. In the past, it has been thought that God, or religion in general, has been necessary in order to have any sort of morality. It might be imagined a critic of atheism would say, “if there is no religion, where will society ground its morals?” Yet libertarian free will can replace God, and responsibility can replace morality in this example. Tom Clark acknowledges this parallel in his essay entitled “Is Free Will a Necessary Fiction?” in explaining that atheists are just as capable of morality as the religious (Clark 6). Just as in this example, we have simply been conditioned to believe libertarian free will is absolutely necessary in order to maintain responsibility in society. There are atheists that are moral and consequently compatibilists who are responsible. Clark continues: “thorough-going naturalists may even have an advantage in achieving certain moral virtues, since they are perhaps less susceptible to the radical individualism and egoism generated by belief in libertarian agency” (Clark 6). This parallel does not prove that there can be a responsibility that is compatible with determinism; it simply provides a context with which to view the debate at hand.

Secondly, advocates of illusionism base this philosophy on assumptions. Smilansky assumes that the society’s reaction to the illusion of free will would be disastrous in nature; he expects the general public to equate seeing through illusion with fatalism. Clark again challenges Smilansky: “someone who adopts a completely causal view of his behavior is unlikely to feel that his punishment is appropriate is an empirical claim needing research…Smilansky assumes that naturalism inevitably demoralizes, no matter what sort of education about causality and compatibilism we might provide” (Clark 5). There is a growing population of naturalists who can find a middle ground of responsibility and determinism, and these are not just intellectuals and academics. Clark concludes, “in any case, we need to actually find out what sorts of responses people have to naturalism, not imagine the worst and then restrict knowledge about it on that assumption” (Clark 5-6). Smilansky simply assumes that if the truth of determinism were taught to society, a healthy compatibilism would, or could, not emerge.

These assumptions also plague Smilansky’s supposed naturalistic difficulties. Smilansky bases these difficulties on his interpretation of how the general public would respond to such notions. He assumes that society will immediately adopt the hard determinist perspective and hold no one accountable for their actions; this assumption plagues all three ‘difficulties’ that would exist after validating determinism’s truth.

The problem of innocence can be avoided if it is realized that though naturalism does complicate the notions of innocence and guilt, it does not erase them. Compatibilist notions still allow a large amount of space for free will, and requisite innocence and guilt. If society were to adopt this type of thinking, I believe the concepts of innocence and guilt would actually be augmented, where actions are judged according to an updated and more scientific understanding of the concepts. A reasonable compatibilism also eliminates the problem of taking responsibility. Determinism does not erase responsibility; anyone who speaks of an ‘ultimate inevitability’ post-determinism has simply misunderstood the theory (or could be a hard determinist). In a compatibilist society, the bank robber would still be held responsible for his actions unless it was proven innocent due to coercion or mental illness. The issue of worthlessness would also evaporate if we escape Smilansky’s assumption. Determinism is not meant to erase meaning from our lives; consequently, it is not meant to do anything other than provide facts. It is a scientific concept of cause and effect that does not attempt to blur concepts or refute meaning. Moral worth does not lose gravity in a compatibilistic perspective. Again, Smilansky’s assumption that society would immediately adopt a hard determinist perspective needs empirical evidence and not biased assumptions. Only then can we examine the benefit of the illusion.

I want to argue that a break from such illusionism would actually benefit society in terms of moral standards. These standards (particularly in criminal justice) in present-day society are grim because they fail to see the silver lining in determinism. Illusionism sees it as a disappearance of the will, whereas
compatibilists see determinism as an opportunity to ‘right the path’ of moral standards. Present-day standards include excessive praise and blame, cruel forms of capital punishment, and often instituting punishment where rehabilitation is necessary (Clark 4). An adoption of a society-wide naturalist perspective, for Clark, would mean “a lessening of ego-driven, punitive, and fawning attitudes, and an increase in knowledge about the actual causes of crime and social and personal dysfunction that we can use to reduce human suffering” (Clark 4, 7). Society's impression concerning delinquent behavior would not only become more accepting and compassionate, its systems of criminal justice and morality would become more useful and effective.

It is next necessary to examine Smilansky’s illusionism through a perspective of experimental philosophy; that is, I want to look at the empirical evidence concerning society’s intuitions concerning determinism and free will and judge whether Smilansky’s thesis proves accurate.

Adam Feltz and Thomas Nadelhoffer offer a direct challenge to Smilansky’s illusionism in their joint article, “Folk Intuitions, Slippery Slopes, and Necessary Fictions: An Essay on Saul Smilansky’s Free Will Illusionism.” They want to identify two claims that Smilansky makes concerning free will: that humanity is deceived on the issue of libertarian free will, and if the issue of free will were to be exposed, society would fall into moral disarray. In surveying society’s intuitions on these matters, they show Smilansky’s assumptions might damage the accuracy of illusionism.

Feltz and Nadelhoffer begin their challenge of Smilansky by examining the first issue of whether society is actually deceived on the issue of free will. They first cite an experiment conducted by Nadelhoffer and three other colleagues that measured incompatibilist notions in society. Participants had not been subjected to the free will debate, yet were given paragraph that detailed an instance of determinism, but did not speak of the issue explicitly. They were asked if the subject mentioned acted freely and whether he was blameworthy.

In short, the survey given told of the Laplacean supercomputer that predicts a man will rob a bank some years later. Feltz and Nadelhoffer examine the results of that survey: “surprisingly, a majority of participants in the first group judged that Jeremy robbed the bank of his own free will (seventy-six percent) and majority in the second group judged that he was blameworthy for having done so (eighty-three percent)” (Feltz 208). Yet one might be critical of the wording in the survey, for it seemed purposely vague and does not mention determinism or compatibilism (Feltz 208).

Because of the unspecific language in the above experiment, Feltz and Nadelhoffer attempted their own survey of 105 undergraduates at Florida State University (who similarly were ignorant of the free will debate). Participants answered the following question: “Do you think that our actions can be free if all of them are entirely determined by our genes, our neurophysiology, and our upbringing?” (Feltz 208). The language of this experiment is obviously much more specific, mentioning determinism and its factors. Feltz and Nadelhoffer explain that forty-four out of the 105 participants (forty-two percent) nevertheless judged that our actions can be free under these conditions” (Feltz 208). Though this is a significant drop off in compatibilistic notions, there is still almost half of the polled that can find responsibility through determinism. This number would need to be significantly lower in order to validate Smilansky’s first claim that humanity is deceived on the issue of free will.

It should be mentioned that there is no accepted answer concerning society’s intuitions of free will. While in the past it has been agreed that most people without philosophical training possess ‘incompatibilist intuitions’, experimental philosophers such as Nadelhoffer, Feltz, and their compatibilist-leaning colleagues have attempted to show otherwise. Most of the experimental philosophy consists of these compatibilist-leaning academics attempting to ‘explain away’ incompatibilist intuitions in society by gathering empirical evidence (it does seem they have the burden of proof). Nadelhoffer attempted another experiment in the footnotes, also conducted at Florida State University (who similarly were ignorant of the free will debate). Participants were read one of two vignettes; the first consisted of a first-person narrative in which the participant lost free will, whereas the second spoke of society altogether losing free will. Feltz and Nadelhoffer tell us that “thirty-five percent of the participants who read the first-person case believed they would be more inclined to behave immorally; and (2) would be more inclined to adopt a pessimistic stance toward themselves and their place in the cosmos” (Feltz 210). 80 participants were read one of two vignettes; the first consisted of a first-person narrative in which the participant lost free will, whereas the second spoke of society altogether losing free will. Feltz and Nadelhoffer tell us that “thirty-five percent of the participants who read the first-person case believed they would be more inclined to behave immorally” after learning all their actions were determined (Feltz 210). This information is a little disconcerting, since it seems participants here are equating determinism with the disappearance
of morality. Ultimately, only more empirical evidence will bring to light whether compatibilist or incompatibilist notions exist in the general public.

The more significant claim of illusionism that Feltz and Nadelhoffer need to challenge is that society is fortunately deceived on the issue of free will. This claim is also difficult to test in experimental philosophy; it most likely involves “asking people what they thought about Smilansky’s worry” (Feltz 209). Yet Feltz and Nadelhoffer see this type of survey as unreliable because people are often poor judges of their own or others future behavior (Feltz 209). Another type of survey might be more effective: “identifying and then interviewing people who once believed in [libertarian free will]… then test whether they feel that their lives lack significance” (Feltz 209). It seems though, on the face of it, that most compatibilist philosophers do not lose this type of meaning or turn into immoral fatalists. Smilansky and others still find meaning, morality, and responsibility in their lives, yet he believes the general population would fall off the moral cliff into insanity.

This realization is where Feltz and Nadelhoffer put the nail in illusionism’s coffin. They accuse: “perhaps it is simply because Smilansky believes that the hoi polloi, unlike professional philosophers, are not intellectually equipped to appreciate the small grain of truth contained in compatibilistically grounded notions of control and responsibility” (Feltz 212). This accusation returns to Smilansky’s elitist solution in which those enlightened on the issue of free will should keep society in the dark concerning determinism and its effects. These elitist approaches skate on thin ice; not often does a society enjoy being kept in the dark concerning an issue, especially one that might affect such day-to-day notions such as responsibility, praise, blame, and meaning. The willful deception of illusionism is a tough obstacle to overcome.

One last response might be brought by the illusionist: just because the public sees an idea negatively doesn’t mean that it wouldn’t ultimately bring positive effects on society. This is true, but I believe it is not the case in illusionism. Unless future experiments of philosophy show that disastrous effects would occur if society was enlightened about determinism, illusionism should remain in the shadows. A small portion of society (philosophers, physicists, and even normal people) have become convinced of compatibilistic notions in reality and have maintained responsibility, morality, and meaning in their lives.

I believe there are two necessary steps in expanding this debate to understand the significance or insignificance of illusionism. First, more experiments similar to Feltz and Nadelhoffer’s will allow more light to be shed on society’s free will intuitions and its ability to respond to a theory of determinism. There is a group of academics exploring these concepts through experimental philosophy. The second step would be to continue educating the public (if only through college-level philosophy classes) and subsequently imagine what an attempt would look like if academics were to expose deterministic truths and compatibilistic notions to society. It is no question that only a small percentage of the general public has the requisite philosophical training to immediately understand a theory that accepts determinism and still finds room for responsibility. Yet students are often convinced after mild experience with free will literature; shouldn’t society comprehend and not dive into hard determinist notions and fatalism with this same experience?

Saul Smilansky’s illusionism makes sense from far away; we have a (not particularly) successful criminal justice system, as well as a requisite amount of responsibility, morality, and meaning in our lives. Why should we hassle with notions that we are already used to and do a good enough job? There are two reasons to do so. First, as Tom Clark questions: “is the ‘civilized’ status quo what we really want, given the psychological and social pathologies generated by assigning ultimate credit and blame, and the excessive rewards and punishments justified by libertarian free will?” (Clark 6). The intuitions that are in place now are not only wrong, but also more vicious and immoral than a compatibilist perspective. Secondly, if Smilansky takes issue with the compatibilist perspective because he is worried agents will be punished for actions ultimately beyond their control, how can he advocate for a willful deception that would punish more than the compatibilist conception he argues against?

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Islam: Bridge Between Two Worlds
by Dunya Habash

“My camel has been wounded!” cried an old woman named Basus from the banu-Bakr tribe in North Arabia, sparking a forty-year war between her tribe and the tribe of banu-Taghlib, whose chief allegedly wounded the camel. This war, known as Harb al-Basus, occurred during the end of the fifth century C.E. and is a prime example of the Arab hotheadedness and sometimes tribalistic attitudes that I have been exposed to growing up in an Arab family and community (Hitti 89). I do not mean to characterize all Arabs as such, however, we Arabs generally characterize ourselves as being impatient and prideful people.

In Arabia, Muslim scholars recognize the era before the dawn of Islam (from the fifth to the seventh century C.E.) as the Jahiliyah era because it truthfully characterizes the barbarism of pre-Islamic Arabia: strictly defined tribalism, burying daughters alive, low status of women, and a constant hotheaded atmosphere. The Arab Bedouin was a nomad who was always ready for a fight, generally in a constant state of semi-starvation, and hardly possessed a written form of language. The only cultural sophistication these Arabs possessed was oral poetry (Hitti 87-90). How is it that this conglomeration of primitive Arabs with severe attitudes of tribalism evolved into the sophisticated and prosperous medieval Islamic empire? What were the major causes that gave way to the rise of the Islamic empire such as effective leaders, physical and strategic strength of the Islamic army, as well as oppressed citizens who were waiting for the opportunity to topple their rulers. In my opinion, the doctrines and teachings of Islam were one of the various causes for the rise of the empire. These teachings played a major role in the sophisticated, progress-oriented society of the medieval Islamic empire.

To illustrate that Arabia shifted from a primitive way of life to a civil and organized society, first we must define a civil society. According to Helmut K. Anheier, director of the Center for Civil Society at London School of Economics and Political Science, a “civil society is the sphere of institutions, organizations, and individuals located among the family, the state and the market, in which people associate voluntarily to advance common interests” (par. 3). In other words, a civil society involves the interaction between institutions and individuals both of which voluntarily work for the advancement of common interests. In tribal Arabia there were no institutions such as government that worked to help the people. The individuals themselves only worked towards the interests of their own tribes instead of Arabian society as a whole. Carroll Quigley, a Harvard graduate and theorist of the evolution of civilizations, states that “civilization is a producing society with an instrument of expansion” (Drew sec. 3). To become a producing society, writing and city life is necessary so he claims. Not only did the Islamic empire possess the universal Arabic scripture as its main written language, but it also discovered paper from central Asia and proceeded to develop a widespread paper industry (Gardner). Also, some of the most prosperous cities of the time, such as Baghdad, Damascus, and Cordoba, were located within the empire.

From this definition of a civil society, it is clear that the medieval Islamic empire was one indeed. I would like to illustrate that Islam was one of the leading causes in the development and sustainability of such a sophisticated civil society. To do so I have chosen to analyze three components of a civil society: education, the legal system, and the public sphere. My paper will be divided into these three sections. Each section will begin with some Quranic verses and prophetic traditions that relate to the topic. I will briefly explain the tradition as well the various interpretations by scholars of the time, highlighting the widely accepted view. Finally, I will reveal the correlation between the tradition and medieval Islamic society.

Although my research can state and explain the traditions and teachings of Islam, as well as extricate their influence on society, historically, it is hard to claim that Muslim rulers always adhered to the teachings. In other words, it is difficult to quantify how many citizens and rulers strictly obeyed the teachings of Islam. Also, as Michael C. Cook points out in his book Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought, controversies over interpretations of Quranic and prophetic traditions frequently occurred considering the numerous scholars that were present as well as the sometimes vague verses in the Quran (11). These controversies led to the formation of several schools of thought in Islam, which might counter my argument that an umbrella view of Islam influenced society in
the empire. However, over time, scholars discovered their similarities and “in time were able to articulate a body of shared doctrine” (Weiss 9). My point, however, is to explain the teachings of Islam and attempt as best as possible to show the correlation between medieval Islamic society and such teachings.

The Search for Knowledge

Muslims believe that the first verse of the Quran to be revealed was “Proclaim! (or read!) in the name of thy Lord and Cherisher, Who created—" (Ali “Al-Alaq”). The significance of this command not only illustrates the importance of reading and learning in Islam, but it also indicates the great emphasis Islam places on education, for God's first words to mankind through Muhammad were to “read.” Several prophetic traditions—hadiths—also reinforce this teaching: “To acquire knowledge is an obligation on every Muslim, male or female”; “Seek knowledge from the day of your birth until the day of your death”; and “Seek knowledge, even if it is in China” (“Education in Islamic Education”). Clearly education should be a daily part of life for the believer, regardless of gender or location.

This emphasis on the pursuit of knowledge greatly influenced several important developments in the Islamic empire. The first, and probably the most significant contribution the Islamic empire made to humanity was the “Translation movement.” The movement erupted in Baghdad in response to the growing intellectual atmosphere. In his documentary Islam: Empire of Faith, Gardner points out that the top scholars, scientists, and inventors from all over the empire flocked to Baghdad in an attempt to dabble in this intellectual environment. Eventually, a school of scholars known as the “House of Wisdom” was created and the top minds from around the world began to collaborate and share ideas (Gardner 5:05-5:35). Naturally, the scholars started realizing that the knowledge they possessed was not enough to solve their theological, ethical, and political questions. This realization led to the pursuit of a vaster body of knowledge, which meant the translation into Arabic of outside sources was required. Thus the Muslims embraced Aristotle and Plato, with the goal of translating and assimilating as many Greek scientific and philosophical texts as possible (D’Ancona 20).

These translations gave rise to a corpus of Islamic philosophical commentary, thus leading to the development of falsafa, or “Arabic philosophy” (Adamson and Taylor 3). Contributors to this new form of study were famous philosophers such as Al-Ghazali, Al-Kindi, Avicenna, Al-Farabi and numerous others (Adamson and Taylor 2-3). These names have been stamped on Islamic as well as Western philosophical thought due to their numerous textual outputs.

Besides the development of falsafa, the new translations also contributed to the growing output of scientific experiments and inventions. The Translation movement translated more than just philosophical works; it also rendered “the medical writings of Galen, and the astronomical and mathematical works of Euclid, Ptolemy, and others” (Adamson 32). The House of Wisdom’s want to assimilate more knowledge led to a scientific quest by scholars and scientists to seek knowledge from any civilization that had scientific knowledge in the past. Thus, the Arabs learned math concepts from the Hindus, which prompted the Scholars from the House of Wisdom to create the system of Arabic numerals still in use today (Gardner).

After gaining all this knowledge, “the Muslims began to challenge it…thus, the scientific process was born…which led to a spirit of questioning” (Gardner 9:48-10:25). The Muslims believed that the mathematical representation of the universe needed to match precisely; therefore, leading to the creation of Algebra, Astrology, Trigonometry, and engineering (Gardner). The development of the scientific process leaked into the search for medical knowledge. Medieval Muslim doctors developed the theory that sickness is transmitted through tiny air-bourn animals, the precursor to the germ theory. Further research created innovations in medicine as well as surgical techniques. Al-Haitham, the father of optics, wrote the “first treatise that tried to explain how the eye actually sees, which was the precursor to the development of the camera” (Gardner 12:35). At this time, Muslims doctors were removing cataracts surgically and their study of anatomy was so sophisticated that it remained in use for 600 years (Gardner).

Because the citizens of the Islamic empire saw the empire as a unity of peoples, the scholars and scientists knew that their acquired knowledge had to be copied and shared through out the empire for the advancement of the general interest. This led to the creation of a massive paper industry. After discovering paper from central Asia, the Muslims printed the new assimilated knowledge and dispersed it quickly through out the empire in the bookstores of its cities and towns.

It is amazing that a simple command to seek knowledge on a daily basis could lead to the development of a massive translation movement that led to the creation of numerous inventions such as paper, innovations in science and
medicine—such as the performance of cataract surgery—and the development of an entire school of thought known as falsafa. This simple Islamic teaching contributed to the sophistication of the empire and the intellectual advancement of its citizens.

A Just Legal System

Allah invokes the Muslims in the fourth chapter of the Quran, titled Al-Nisa (The Women), verse 135: “O ye who believe! stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest ye swerve, and if ye distort (justice)...verily Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do” (Ali “An-Nisa”). Clearly, justice is a massive concept in Islam, for God asks the believers to be just in all circumstances, even if it requires going against kin, family, and even one’s self. This is only one of the 55 verses that directly reference justice in the Quran. God insists that justice permeates all actions and deeds towards other humans, not just during judgment time between two parties. This idea is furthered by a prophetic tradition in Sahih Bukhari (a compilation of hadiths by the Persian Muslim scholar Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, the standard hadith text for Muslims): “for every day on which the sun rises there is a reward of a Sadaqa (i.e. charitable gift) for the one who establishes justice among people” (#49: #870).

Clearly upholding justice in all aspects of society is a divinely ordained command for Muslims. Most importantly, this command greatly influenced the development of the legal system in the Islamic empire. There were two aspects to this system, the actual structure of judges and scholars as well as the body of law that they created, both of which incorporate the concept of justice as effectively as possible. During the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates, there were cadis and jurists who worked together to solve cases of private law. The cadis were the official judges elected by the caliphs who made the decisions in a case. Justice enters the equation through the types of testimony the cadis would accept: they refused oral testimony or circumstantial evidence, relying solely on men who possessed “the highest quality of moral and religious probity” (Gerber 61). The jurists were religious and intellectual scholars who commented on the rulings of a case. For example, Imam Al-Tahawi was a “first-rate jurist, a brilliant grammarian and philologist…an erudite man of letters” as well as a master of Islamic primary sources—“the Qur’an, the Sunnah, and the opinions of the Prophet’s companions and early independent scholars” (Tahawi 32). His intellectual legacy was typical of most medieval Islamic jurists. The jurists became the spiritual leaders of their communities and they “did so quite spontaneously and quite independently of the imperial regime and its aspirations” (Weiss 7). This disassociation with the imperial regime meant that the jurists could interpret the law based on their Islamic studies instead of trying to please their rulers, naturally fusing justice within the system.

The second aspect of the Islamic legal system was the creation of a body of law called the “Shari’a”. The Shari’a was the “all-encompassing code of behavior worked out over the centuries by religious scholars (‘ulama) [the jurists] who sought to determine how Muslims could best live in accordance with God’s will as they understood it” (Lindsay 22). Because of this, it was “[n]ot judges but scholars who lacked official connections with the caliphal regime who were to play the key role in the development of a body of law suited to the Islamic polity” (Weiss 7). However, this does not disregard the fact that the judges also laid important foundations for Islamic law through case-by-case decisions, for at the beginning, Muslims did not have a body of law that could be easily called Islamic. The law available was a mix of Roman law and older indigenous law of the various areas of the empire, such as Arab tribal law. The judges used this body of law to add to the development of the Shari’a (Weiss 6).

Even though the judges did play an important role in developing the Shari’a, the jurists played a larger role because in the growing Islamic society, “authority was fast becoming linked to personal piety and religious knowledge, not to power” (Weiss 7). This meant that scholars were given more credence for the interpretation of law, which allowed them to develop a serious attitude towards the creation and interpretation of Islamic law. They commented on more than legal aspects of law but also on day-to-day behavior of Muslims. Together these comments created the Shari’a, which “includes norms beyond those that constitute law in a strict sense” (Weiss 8). This is because the “scholars were very conscious of living within a polity that had to be reckoned with in their envisioning of an ideal Islamic order of society” (Weiss 8), mainly the ideal of incorporating justice through all aspects of society. Because God demanded justice through all aspects of society—personal relationships, divorce, transactions, treaties, etc.—the jurists endeavored to create a body of law that would satisfy this demand. This led to the creation of the Shari’a as a “totality of norms—legal, moral, and ritual—that these pious scholars endeavored to articulate” (Weiss 8).
To make sure that the sources the scholars relied on were accurate statements of truth, thus being just towards knowledge, a group of scholars called the ahl al-hadith stepped into the picture. They “refused to allow mere human judgment or insight to be decisive in the articulation of [the] norms” of the Shari’a (Weiss 12). Their task was to gather, order, and memorize the words of the Prophet and his deeds, which came to be known as the Sunnah. Because of their thorough work, the appeal to hadiths, the Quran, and Quranic commentary became the standard for argument and justification of laws (Weiss 12). Because hadith is an orally transmitted literature, naturally some fabricated hadiths cropped up as some rulers tried to encourage their agendas. To avoid this fabrication, ahl al-hadith created isnad, which was the chain of transmitters that accompanied a hadith. In other words, if a scholar wanted to argue for a law based on hadiths, he was required to make sure that the transmitters of the hadiths were trustworthy as agreed upon by scholars of hadiths. Any gaps in the chain of transmission or reasons for untrustworthiness would deem the hadith void as a tool for argument. This scrutiny of legal arguments was clearly encouraged by the command to uphold justice in the Quran, for this scrutiny is the assurance of justice through legal knowledge.

Through the encouragement of justice within the legal system, the legal scholarship that ensued resulted in the compilation of classical hadith books. The writing down of the hadiths fostered literary character of the law, which gave rise to commentary and numerous manuals and expositions, which were incorporated into the study of law. Eventually, “an entire educational institution, the madrasa, would emerge, whose primary function was to train scholars in all disciplines entailed in legal study” (Weiss 15). Also, the piety of scholars—who were seeking God’s grace and earthly recognition since they were scholar-sages—led to the development of intellectual sophistication of the empire through its creation of schools, ways of argument, and search for authority. Therefore, the demand for justice did more good than just create a just legal system and body of law; it also contributed to the eloquence of medieval Islamic society.

The Public Sphere

In the year 748 A.D., a man named Abu Muslim from Marw started a revolution against the current Umayyad caliphate known as the Abbasid Revolution. A local goldsmith spoke out against his insurrection and corrupt leadership because of a specific prophetic tradition: “the finest form of holy war (jihad) is speaking out in the presence of an unjust ruler and getting killed for it” (Cook 5). The goldsmith was murdered after several outbursts against Abu Muslim, fulfilling his purpose to do God’s will. This scene illustrates the development of an important value in Islamic thought: the “principle that an executive power of law of God is vested in each and every Muslim,” meaning that it is every believer’s duty to stand up against those who are not abiding by God’s will (Cook 9). Besides prophetic traditions, the Quran also encourages Muslims to forbid wrong and command right. In chapter 3, verse 104, titled Aal-e-Imran (Family of Imran), God says “Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: They are the ones to attain felicity” (Ali “Aal-e-Imran”). This explicit ethical rule to forbid wrong in society is one that intrigued Islamic studies researcher Michael C. Cook, for in his book Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought he was astounded that Islam recognized and named what the West calls the “gut-feeling” impulse for stopping evil in society. This concept is later developed to regulate contracts, business relationships, behavior in the market place, relationships between non-Muslims, and numerous other social aspects—all of which enhance the Islamic empire economically and culturally.

The biggest impact the concept of commanding right and forbidding wrong made was towards trade and markets within the empire. First of all, the concept encouraged honesty in business relationships, which helped “establish an age of pluralism and monetary fluctuation” (qtd. in Lindsay 113). This honesty created a monetary system based on weight, meaning that coins were not taken for face value. This system was extremely beneficial to the economic status of the empire, for it allowed for ease in trade, and considering the vast expanse of the empire, filled with numerous cultures and languages, this weight system was perfect for the exchange of merchandise within the empire. Due to this clever monetary system, a merchant in Cordoba could easily set up a partnership with a merchant in India; thus, bringing Indian luxuries to those in Spain. A literal world trade system was created. In fact, this honesty in business encouraged the development of the check. A merchant could write a check in Spain and cash it in India because the system ensured that his money would be dealt with honestly. This freed up trade and travel within the empire, making Muslims the greatest merchants during medieval times (Gardner).

Because the market was the central social gathering for citizens, Muslim scholars and leaders wanted to ensure that it was a place of honesty and proper behavior. To command right and forbid wrong in the market place, a special
The impact the medieval Islamic empire has made on humanity and world history.

Until recently, Western scholars have chosen to disregard the massive markets, and the assimilation of non-Muslims. As illustrated, the Islamic concept of commanding right and forbidding wrong affected numerous social institutions throughout the empire: trade, the market place, and the public morality in the very public space of the market was upheld (Lindsay 114). Seeing that Nizam al-Mulk in his Book on Government advised the Seljukid Sultan Malikshah during the eleventh century that “in every city a [market inspector] must be appointed…to see that there is no fraud or dishonesty, that weights are kept true, and that moral and religious principles are observed” not only emphasizes the importance of the market inspector, but also reveals the correlation between the Islamic teaching of commanding right and the market place (qtd. in Lindsay 114). According to Nizam, if the Sultan did not ensure that the market place promote justice, then he would be setting divine law at naught (Lindsay 114).

Besides the market place, another element that was influenced by the Islamic teaching to command right in the public sphere was the treatment of non-Muslims. Through his example of kind treatment towards Jews and Christians, the Prophet Muhammad taught his followers that justice towards others also meant justice towards Jews and Christians. For example, upon migrating to Medina, the Prophet wrote a peace treaty between his followers and the Jews already there in residence, establishing them as citizens within the Muslim state, where they “enjoyed their religious freedom and state protection” (Salahi 224). This tolerance taught the Islamic empire to treat non-Muslims with kindness. This meant that Jews and Christians were not forced to live in ghettos or keep their practices secret. They lived among Muslims in the same neighborhoods, built churches and synagogues, and created business partnerships occasionally. For example, the jizya or poll tax only for non-Muslims was often really strict, sometimes not allowing for non-Muslims to travel within the empire without paying the tax (Lindsay 121). Even with these slight intolerant attitudes, the Islamic empire was still the most secure and comfortable place to live in for non-Muslims during the time.

As illustrated, the Islamic concept of commanding right and forbidding wrong affected numerous social institutions throughout the empire: trade, markets, and the assimilation of non-Muslims.

**Conclusion**

Until recently, Western scholars have chosen to disregard the massive impact the medieval Islamic empire has made on humanity and world history.
philosophical questioning, and numerous other disciplines that have leaked into our modern education system. The divine decree for justice among all humans encouraged scholars and jurists to create a legal system that required strict rules of evidence and comprehensive citations—isnad—in order to ensure justice. The commanding of right and forbidding of wrong created honesty in the market place, which led to the flourishing of the empire’s economy.

I believe that the best way to improve the West’s understanding of the contribution of Islam and the medieval Islamic empire is through education. I hope that my research can be of help in this process and that future Muslim and non-Muslim researchers and scholars will expand on my topic, for more research is required to offer an in depth angle on this topic—Islam’s influence on women, children, material culture, elections, government, etc. However, I believe starting with the broad topics of education, law, and the public sphere offers sufficient background in order to begin delving into the specifics of this question.

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“Yes, We Want Our Freedom”: Freedom Songs’ Forgotten Radical Message
by Liz Wallace

“We shall not / We shall not be moved / Just like a tree that’s planted
by the waters / We shall not be moved.”¹ These lyrics to the classic African
American spiritual, labor protest anthem, and civil rights movement freedom
song “We Shall Not Be Moved” encapsulate many present-day cultural and
historical memories of the movement. The slow and calm pace of the singing,
the spiritual undertones, and the simple message all embody the popular and
overly-simple conception of a nonviolent and Christian civil rights movement led
by Martin Luther King, Jr. The civil rights movement suggested by these lyrics
is the movement that we remember today. However, the very next verse reads
“We shall not be moved / Wallace is our enemy / He must be removed / Wallace is our enemy / He must
be removed.”² Directly and unabashedly calling out a stalwart of segregation
(Governor George Wallace of Alabama in this case), promoting direct action
for a discriminatory figure’s removal from office with a slightly threatening
tone—such lyrical characteristics do not mesh with popular culture’s concept
of the nonviolent and thus non-radical early civil rights movement. Upon closer
inspection of the lyrics and history behind them, many freedom songs other
than “We Shall Not Be Moved” exhibited this same underlying radical message.
The traditional narrative has assigned such a message largely to the Black Power
movement of the late 1960s and 70s. Contrary to the traditional narrative,
freedom songs contained a significantly radical message for their time as well as a
direct call to action to achieve equality.

In order to explore the underlying radical nature of freedom songs,
I plan to examine how they aided in bolstering in-group unity for movement
protestors and raising awareness for civil rights issues outside of black/southern
populations. Though historians have debated which of these two constituted
the greater impact on music on the movement, I find the two to be inextricably
linked in helping African Americans recreate a sense of self-worth, gain the moral
high ground in their cause, and strengthen themselves for the fight. I also plan
to investigate the link between slave spirituals, the lyrics of which were radical in
their own era, and freedom songs. Also of note, freedom songs connected people
across racial lines, a radical notion in the segregated South.

First, a general explanation of the term ‘freedom song’ is in order:
Freedom songs were songs based on older hymns, slave spirituals, or labor protest
music. This music often featured masked political commentary, or assessments/
criticisms of societal conditions, on the treatment of African Americans.³ Group
singing was particularly important and valued in the black musical tradition—
protestors felt the power of freedom songs through the raising of many voices in
unity for the same cause.⁴ Reflecting the youthful spirit of the early civil rights
movement (particularly in regard to sit-ins), protestors put their own twists on the
songs, often times creating a new song completely in the moment. Many freedom
songs changed the lyrics of traditional songs in order to reflect current issues
confronted by civil rights advocates.⁵ For example, “woke up this morning with
my mind stayed on Jesus” from the slave spiritual became “woke up this morning
with my mind stayed on freedom;” “keep your hand on the plow” became “keep
your eyes on the prize;” and “I’m gonna sit at the welcome table” became “I’m
gonna sit at Woolworth’s lunch counter.”⁶ In this way, freedom songs blended a
myriad of musical and cultural sources in order to create an organic and lively
soundtrack for the movement. The protestors’ familiarity with the songs also
contributed to making music a potent factor in the movement. The tradition
of music and singing “was a living tradition” in African American southern
communities, a tradition that made freedom songs natural companions to the

¹ James B. Stewart, “Message in the Music: Political Commentary in Black Popular Music
from Rhythm and Blues to Early Hip Hop,” The Journal of African American History 90 (2005): 196,
² Martin Luther King, Jr., “Songs and the Civil Rights Movement,” Martin Luther King,
dex.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_songs_and_the_civil_rights_movement/.
³ Carlton Reese, interview, in Foot Soldiers for Democracy: The Men, Women, and Children of the
Birmingham Civil Rights Movement, ed. Horace Huntley and John W. McKerley (Urbana: University of
Illinois Press, 2009), 100.
du.edu/spirituals/freedom/civil.cfm, accessed April 5, 2013; Guy Carawan, “We Shall Overcome:
Songs of the Southern Freedom Movement,” in Sing for Freedom: The Story of the Civil Rights Movements
movement. Historically, the approaches to the study of music in the movement have varied over the past four decades, though scholars have recognized one main theme across time and academic disciplines: Freedom songs provided African Americans participating in the civil rights movement with hope, motivation, and an outlet for frustrations with injustice. However, researchers from different areas of study (namely historians and musicologists) have approached the study of music, and specifically freedom songs, during the movement differently. Scholars debate whether freedom songs acted primarily as a survival strategy to help protestors remain motivated or as a tactic to affect change more broadly in the nation (outside of the protestors themselves). The level and importance of whites’ interaction (mainly in regard to the Highlander Folk School and white folk singers) with black protestors forms another point of contention among scholars. Opinion on this matter splits fairly neatly by field, with musicologists and music historians exploring white interaction to a higher degree than historians of African American history. Though scholars will continue to debate, the continued discussion of freedom songs reveals their lasting importance to past and present movements for justice.

Historians have approached the study of freedom songs in interestingly diverse ways since the songs’ height of popularity and use in the early 1960s. Generally, research undertaken before the early 1990s focuses on the songs themselves—their history, context, and use as a tactic for inspiration for protestors on the front lines of the movement. For instance, Bernice Johnson Reagon, historian and former member of the SNCC Freedom Singers, writes in 1975 on the importance of the songs as pieces of history—lasting pieces of an oral history tradition in the African American community that has existed for centuries. This anthropological connection between slaves and civil rights protestors through song echoes the previous sentiments of fellow movement participator, Sterling Stuckey. She also writes about the songs primarily as tools for within-group cohesion for black protestors, drawing important connections between the intent, lyrics, and structure of traditional slave songs and the songs of the civil rights movement. Though Reagon does mention the role that whites played in the evolution and use of freedom songs, their role is a historical one: She briefly mentions the role of white abolitionists in the 19th century and white labor union members in the early 20th century in penning songs that protestors transformed during the 1960s movement. More extensive is her discussion of Highlander and white activists and music leaders such as Zilphia Horton, Pete Seeger, and Guy Carawan. Interestingly though, there is little mention of the tension between white singers and black activists in teaching and learning, respectively, traditionally black songs. Overall, the focus certainly remains on African Americans in Reagon’s work.

Similarly, yet more than fifteen years later, Kerran Sanger also emphasizes the structural significance of the songs themselves and the impact that they had specifically on the civil rights protestors. Sanger portrays freedom songs as outlets for survival and group unity. Specifically, she writes on the power of freedom songs to aid in the recreation of black identity that occurred during the movement. Though this emphasis could be due to Sanger’s specialization in speech communication, the significance of the continuation of such a pattern across multiple decades remains. While in Sanger’s work, the modern reader can see the roots of the hypothesis that freedom songs functioned as both survival technique and tactic for affecting larger change, the focus remains on the former. Interestingly, Sanger also notes that unlike typical protest rhetoric or songs, freedom songs employed during the movement did not attempt to alienate outsiders or verbally attack their opposition. Such an observation creates an even more noticeable difference in thought on this subject between the freedom songs of the early 1960s and the more directly political and confrontational songs by popular artists of the late 1960s.

In scholarship written after the early 1990s, more scholars—both historians and those studying music or culture—began to explore how freedom songs acted primarily as tools for within-group cohesion for black protestors, drawing important connections between the intent, lyrics, and structure of traditional slave songs and the songs of the civil rights movement. Though Reagon does mention the role that whites played in the evolution and use of freedom songs, their role is a historical one: She briefly mentions the role of white abolitionists in the 19th century and white labor union members in the early 20th century in penning songs that protestors transformed during the 1960s movement. More extensive is her discussion of Highlander and white activists and music leaders such as Zilphia Horton, Pete Seeger, and Guy Carawan. Interestingly though, there is little mention of the tension between white singers and black activists in teaching and learning, respectively, traditionally black songs. Overall, the focus certainly remains on African Americans in Reagon’s work.

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songs affected populations other than southern blacks and how the history of freedom songs precipitated the degree of interracial cooperation seen in the movement’s musical arena. Specifically, scholarship during this time delved deeper into other aspects of the songs, such as the role that the Highlander Folk School played in producing and disseminating these songs (specifically “We Shall Overcome”), the (tense at times) relationship between white folk singers and black civil rights protesters, and the directly political lyrics of some freedom songs. Beginning in 1997, scholars began to shed light on the peculiar marriage of slave spirituals with folk music that helped create freedom songs in the movement. Accordingly, Guy Carawan has become the focus for many researchers of freedom music. Carawan aided in the revitalization of traditional African American music and helped bring the old songs into a modern context, according to Peter Ling. Many authors, such as Phull Hardeep, have followed in this tradition and have stressed the importance of Highlander in uniting black and white activists together toward a common goal. However, other authors, such as Dick Weissman, have written on that same role of Carawan, while adopting a more critical tone: Some authors write on the tension that resulted from white folk singers teaching African Americans about their own past as a race and about their own cultural traditions. While such a swing in interest could be due to the increased presence of musicology in the research on freedom songs, attention has been increasingly paid to the role and presence of whites in transforming older traditional freedom songs to fit the modern movement context. Interestingly, Allan Winkler writes on the prominent role that white folk singers, such as Pete Seeger, played in fundraising for organizations such as Highlander through their concerts; this signifies an ability that white folk singers had to reach white audiences rhetorically and financially that many black leaders and foot soldiers in the movement were denied.

Devoted almost solely to scholarship on the involvement of whites in social change is Jeff Biggers’ work focusing on the Appalachian South. Biggers writes on the Highlander Folk School and its unique role in the creation and dissemination of various freedom songs (most notably, “We Shall Overcome”). Biggers focuses on the background information about Highlander, and writes on the school as a place of interracial cooperation and learning; in this way, the author aligns himself with the first school of thought of interracial activity in the realm of freedom songs, emphasizing the positives about that relationship.

In the midst of the relatively new focus on whites’ involvement in the music of the movement, recent scholarship has returned to addressing whether music acted as a survival technique for black activists, a technique for spurring change in other populations, or both. For one, James Stewart writes on the ongoing and perhaps insolvable aforementioned debate: He remarks that freedom songs contained both intents—motivation and agitation. More recently and somewhat conversely, Christopher Trigg writes that freedom songs sung during the civil rights movement sought “to move society forward,” signifying his endorsement for the belief that freedom songs contained more potential for outside change than the traditional narrative may recognize.

Scholars have also analyzed the difference between freedom songs of the early 1960s and the more popular culture songs from the late 1960s, with the latter expressing more direct political statements. Nina Simone has been the topic of much research and analysis, particularly in relatively recent work by Ruth Feldstein. Feldstein terms Simone’s songs “political anthem[s],” in that they emitted clear anger over the atrocities against African Americans in the South in 1963. As the name of her article suggests, Simone’s music and other musicians singing in a similar style, the break between freedom songs and the direct-action music of the later 1960s reveal the difference between striving for integration and the subsequent loss of trust in political systems.

15 Weissman, Whith Side, 141.
meaning and purpose of freedom songs: Protestors sang to encourage intergroup solidarity in the cause as well as to send to outside communities (whether that be northern or southern blacks or whites) slightly veiled political messages (veiled in comparison to music such as Simone’s) in order to affect change. Craig Werner specifically writes on the connection between freedom songs in the civil rights movement and slave spirituals, both of which expressed political statements and motivation to freedom.  Although research on this area has taken many directions and forms, historians, when discussing and analyzing music’s role, have largely been in agreement as to the overall importance of freedom songs to the movement. However, in the larger body of work on the civil rights movement, non-music histories tend to mention music in passing or as a detail toward a larger event: For instance, though many sources detailing the traditional narrative briefly mention the singing of “We Shall Overcome” at sit-ins, and some even mention the Highlander School, little focus is directed toward the greater impact of music on the movement.

In response to the wearying positions in which the movement frequently placed protestors, freedom songs sustained group morale for black activists on the front lines. Carlton Reese, protestor and director of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights choir, recalled that the choir provided the foundation for many mass meetings, keeping them lively and inspiring even when speakers were late to arrive. When activists in the thick of the violence and persecution would sing freedom songs, such as “This Little Light of Mine,” “We Shall Overcome,” or “Ain’t Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me ‘Round,” the group reaffirmed its belief in the cause and received a soulful motivation to continue onward.

Indeed, in keeping with the tradition of black churches, freedom songs offered a collective expression of individual fear, weariness, and hope, sentiments that ran deep in the African American ethos. Even as early as 1962, observers recognized the ability of freedom songs to encourage unity and aid communication within the larger African American protest group. As one Nashville African American pastor recalled, the choir at his church followed one of his sermons supporting the movement with the song "I’ll Fly Away," Such a song expressed the desire to leave troubled times instead of make them better. Such an observation reveals the subtle difference between merely religious songs and their derivatives, freedom songs: Whereas hymns largely advocated glorification and the eventual escape of difficulties in heaven, movement protestors updated them to reflect both spirituality and a yearning for justice now.

And freedom songs referencing Jesus and New Testament teachings were not the only songs that played an important role in the movement: Some, such as “Go Down Moses,” mirrored a centuries-old tradition in the black community of forging connections between the enslavement of the Israelites and the oppression of African Americans. But even with a song such as “Go Down Moses” that harkened back to the long road to freedom faced by the Israelites, civil rights protestors changed the lyrics to tell President Kennedy to “tell Old Pritchett to let my people go” (Pritchett referring to the chief of police in Albany, Georgia during the Albany Movement). Freedom songs mixed a religious faith in eventual justice with a political demand for immediate change. Songs and singing also help create leaders in areas of the South that developed later as centers of movement activity. As movement leaders entered a new town or city in order to create energy and excitement for the civil rights movement, they found that music connected people faster and more efficiently than did words, based on the aforementioned familiarity of many of the songs. In this way, music not only sustained the movement, but also helped to start the movement in new parts of the South.

Though much of the literature portrays music as either a tactic for in-group survival or out-group change, the two are necessarily linked. For instance, Reese recollected that freedom songs encouraged unity in troubled times as well.  

24 Reese, interview, 102.
25 Werner, A Change Is Gonna Come, 5.
27 Winkler, To Everything, 100-1.
28 Shelton, “Songs a Weapon.”
as inspired protestors to keep marching and take their anguish and hope onto the streets in marches. Protestors even continued to sing in jail, which Reese credited for evoking guilt in the white jailers.\textsuperscript{30} The use of Christian freedom songs also lent a moral imperative and a godly approval to the civil rights movement, a righteousness that was meant to awaken the consciences of white America.\textsuperscript{31} In order to affect change in the hearts and minds of others, African Americans had to reconstruct their sense of self and self-worth. Songs provided an avenue for such a reconstruction and redefinition.\textsuperscript{32} Not only did songs inspire marches, demonstrations, and perseverance, they also inspired a fundamental group cohesion that precipitated a strengthening of African American identity. By changing the individual, protestors believed that those individuals could change government and policy, an important mindset that characterizes the early civil rights movement.

The belief that freedom songs contained dual meanings (a religious and a more radical political meaning) is evidenced by the existence of songs with the same dual meanings in slave culture. In this way, freedom songs connected the civil rights protestors in 1960s with 19th century slaves in important anthropological and historical ways. Examining slaves’ singing of freedom songs, songs that civil rights advocates often applied directly to the movement, one can see the hidden political purposes behind these songs. Rather than indicating slaves’ acceptance of their condition or happiness in their condition, as many white slave-owners believed, slaves sang freedom songs in order to express hope in both heavenly and earthly deliverance. Music became a communicative survival technique for slaves to persevere through hardship. Indeed, for many slaves, freedom songs formed a virtual guide to escape: In this tradition, the River Jordan meant the Ohio River, the chariot in “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” could lead them to Canada, and “Move On Up a Little Higher” referred to African Americans’ gaining full rights.\textsuperscript{33} By identifying with the plight of African Americans in past years through song, civil rights protestors identified their efforts as part of the larger body of the black freedom struggle, adding a rich cultural and historical component to the melodies and lyrics. This legacy of marrying political and religious messages in music connected protestors to the masked messages of slave spirituals and revealed an eagerness to claim rights too long denied. Indeed, freedom songs, though religious in inspiration, were far from docile or accepting of the status quo.\textsuperscript{34} Much like the power of slave spirituals to inspire hope and coded talk of escape, freedom songs in the civil rights movement spoke of divine justice intervening on the side of African-Americans’ freedom. Rather than singing only of peace and rest in heaven, freedom songs expressed a deep yearning for equality and freedom for African Americans in this life as well.\textsuperscript{35}

Freedom songs also connected African Americans during the civil rights movement to African traditions of song, most notably with the example of the “call and response” style. As with the freedom song “Certainly Lord,” the call and response of some tunes encouraged group singing and participation.\textsuperscript{36} As Reagon, a former vocalist in the SNCC Freedom Singers, recalls, the songs took on new meaning in the context of the civil rights movement. Though she had sung these spiritual songs growing up in church and at school, the lyrics and melodies assumed the power to unite and inspire perseverance while Reagon and her fellow protestors were in jail. The meanings of the songs became clearer and her identification with the past, as well as her vision for her personal and the African American collective future, was solidified.\textsuperscript{37} One can see the importance of this connection to the past particularly through the example of the Sea Islands of South Carolina, in which Guy Carawan led a revival of traditionally African American oral history and music. Scholars cite the Reconstruction-era silencing of pre-Civil War slave culture and traditions as one factor responsible for the loss of cultural memory of African Americans in that area.\textsuperscript{38} By the younger generation embracing their new identities through association with past cultures, freedom songs became a vital component of the protest dialogue. Certainly, freedom songs exerted a powerful influence on the psychological wellbeing of protestors, especially in the midst of great tribulation.

\textsuperscript{30} Reese, interview, 102.
\textsuperscript{31} Werner, A Change Is Gonna Come, 7.
\textsuperscript{32} Sanger, “The Rhetoric of the Freedom Songs,” 52.
\textsuperscript{33} Werner, A Change Is Gonna Come, 6-7.
\textsuperscript{34} Ling, “Developing Freedom Songs,” 203.
\textsuperscript{35} Shelton, “Songs a Weapon.”
\textsuperscript{36} Reagon, “Songs of the Civil Rights Movement,” 25.
\textsuperscript{37} Bernice Johnson Reagon, If You Don’t Go, Don’t Hinder Me: The African American Sacred Song Tradition (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2001), 134.
A study of freedom songs would not be complete without mention of the Highlander Folk School. In its radical inclusiveness, interracial foundations and vision, and emphasis on musical education as cultural education, Highlander reveals how freedom songs and the people who sang them were radical for their time. Founded in 1932 by two white men and located in the mountains of Tennessee, Highlander brought white and black civil rights, labor, and justice advocates together for seminars and workshops on social justice, leadership, and cultural education.39 Though founders Myles Horton and Don West originally founded the school in order to aid labor unions and ease labor tensions in the area, they soon expanded their own commitment to interracial cooperation to the school’s activities.40 This experimental school featured music prominently as a tool for social change and education, bringing folk music (and white folk singers) into conversation with black civil rights protestors. From Zilphia Horton’s (Myles’ wife) learning “We Will Overcome” from local labor protestors in the 1940s to Guy Carawan and Pete Seeger adapting the song for the civil rights movement and teaching it to SNCC protestors at the school, Highlander played a unique role in the history of music and the movement and highlights freedom songs as an affront to the status quo.41

However, racial relations at Highlander were not without tension at times. White folk singers and music teachers at Highlander frequently taught black students about slave spirituals and freedom songs, music rooted in African American traditions and culture. Such a racially specific relationship between instructor and student led to mixed emotions from black attendees at the school, including resentment at being taught their own cultural histories.42 Carawan was keenly aware of his potentially problematic role: Though he wished to reinsert black folk traditions into the black community, that necessarily meant the assumption of a leadership role. Carawan traversed this fine line with self-awareness and attempted to limit his notoriety so that the focus could remain on black protestors. He identified sit-ins as instrumental in African Americans’ reclaiming the cultural practices of previous generations of black men and women who had engaged in protest, whether direct or subtle, for their freedom.43 Other activists recognized the benefits of having white singers publicly perform in support of civil rights. White singers such as Pete Seeger, Guy Carawan, Bob Dylan, and Joan Baez had the ability to travel across the country and sing songs that would spread the message of the civil rights movement to those outside of the South. These concerts also raised money that went to support Highlander or other movement efforts.44 So although white folk singers’ teaching and performing traditionally black music raised some issues within the community of protestors, the interracial cooperation aspects of freedom songs reflected the early movement’s commitment to integration rather than separation between the races.

To take a specific example, we can see the diverse path that freedom songs traveled to reach black and white audiences alike by tracing the evolution of “We Shall Overcome.” The song has been transformed from a European hymn, a companion to labor protests, the anthem of the civil rights movement, and a part of the soundtrack of present-day social justice movements. Though accounts of the song’s evolution vary slightly, Reverend Charles Tindley, an African American Philadelphia preacher, wrote the words and created a melody for his religious song called “I’ll Overcome Some Day” in 1901. Eventually the song adapted a new melody, a melody from a slave spiritual that took its tune from an 18th century European hymn. After becoming the anthem of a strike by black laborers of the Charleston American Tobacco factory in 1945, the song was brought to Highlander and adapted to fit the movement from there.45 By examining this song as broadly representative of the complex history of freedom songs, one can gain a sense of the fluid and improvisational nature of freedom songs, as well as the lasting “need to write freedom music.”46 Since the song sprang from both a fluid process through time and space to appear in music workshops at Highlander and the movement as a whole, “We Shall Overcome” does much to reflect the multi-dimensional background of freedom songs. Though the lyrics claim that “We shall live in peace” and “We’ll walk hand in hand some day,” motifs that seem innocuous to a modern audience, white

39 Biggers, United States of Appalachia, 176.
40 Ibid., 178.
41 Ibid., 185.
42 Weissman, Which Side, 141.
effects appear to overlap considerably more than a cursory analysis would reveal. In approaching the study of freedom songs and the different musical genres in the civil rights movement, the modern researcher must not overlook the radical nature of freedom songs in their time. And though the songs connected protestors to the cultures and traditions of slaves, they also reflected the newer and more youthful energy that characterized much of the movement. Firsthand observers noted the controversial nature of freedom songs in regard to the changed lyrics – lyrics that frequently incorporated public segregationist figures by name. Placed in the larger context of protest up until that point, freedom songs provided the soundtrack for one of the greatest instances of speaking out against injustice since the labor movements and protests three decades prior.

Remarkably more complex than a surface listen or reading reveals, freedom songs in the civil rights movement mixed faith with calls for direct action and helped protestors continue the march for equality.

Though freedom songs and the more mainstream militant songs of the later civil rights movement differed in lyrical and melodic style, they both encouraged in-group recreation of a sense of individual and racial identity. In this way, the study of music in the movement holds the capacity to break down unnecessary and at times dangerously inaccurate barriers between the early and later years of the civil rights movement or between nonviolence and Black Power. And as Stewart notes, the music of the late 1960s targeted not only external groups, but also the internal African American group with its messages, as did the freedom songs of the early 1960s. Many songs that would typically fall under the more militant categorization of late 1960s music actually occurred during the same time that freedom songs predominated. For instance, Nina Simone wrote and recorded her song “Mississippi Goddam,” a song of anger and frustration at the bombing of Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, in 1963. Ultimately, the similarities between music of the early versus late 1960s suggest a neat separation of the two to be inaccurate and overly simplistic.

However, the differences between the two music genres are certainly worth noting. Not only a commentary on the actions of white segregationists, Simone’s songs can be interpreted as criticizing the gradualist approach of black integrationist civil rights protestors and offering an alternative strategy for direct activism. And though Simone’s songs, such as “Four Women,” spoke directly about gender equality and women reclaiming their personal identities, freedom songs in the early movement also worked to recreate personal identities.

Though the two types of music arguably were written for different purposes, their

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47 Shelton, “Songs a Weapon.”
49 Ibid., 204.
50 Feldstein, “I Don’t Trust You,” 1349.
51 Ibid., 1352.
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Sponsored by the Birmingham-Southern Library faculty and inaugurated in 2014, the annual Award for Excellence in Library Research recognizes the paper written by any current first- or second-year student that best demonstrates an advanced understanding and appropriate use of the Library’s services and collections.

KP1019: Chemical Interactions with Nitrogenous Bases and Their Biological Significance
by Jake O’Leary

Abstract
KP1019, a ruthenium-based anticancer drug, has previously been shown to cause DNA damage in human cancer cells and has shown promise in Phase I clinical trials. The drug, which has also been shown to bind to DNA, is thought to do so by binding to purines, which are nitrogenous bases. This study shows primarily that KP1019 binds to purines such as caffeine, nicotine, and 9-ethylguanine, and that the presence of these compounds significantly decreases KP1019's ability to inhibit growth in Saccharomyces cerevisiae, a model organism. Additionally, this study demonstrates that the inhibition of the DNA damage response in Saccharomyces cerevisiae significantly increases KP1019's effectiveness as an inhibitor of cell growth.

Introduction
KP1019, or trans-[tetrachlorobis(1H-indazole)ruthenate(III)], is a ruthenium-based investigational anticancer drug that has shown promise both in studies with model organisms, such as yeast, and in Phase I clinical trials with humans. The mechanism by which KP1019 enters cells and induces apoptosis, or cell death, is not definitively known, but it has been demonstrated that the drug is capable of binding DNA. KP1019 is also capable of causing DNA damage, which has been seen in studies with yeast cells and human tumor cells. The model organism Saccharomyces cerevisiae, or budding yeast, is particularly useful for the study of anticancer complexes like KP1019 because of its rapid growth, which resembles that of mammalian cancer cells, its evolutionarily-conserved biological pathways, and availability in many isogenic mutants, which allows researchers to easily explore the effects of gene deletions. Saccharomyces cerevisiae cells, like other eukaryotic cells, have evolved a method by which they can overcome factors that cause damage to their genome, called the DNA damage response, or DDR. This intracellular response to DNA damage involves a complex pathway of genes and proteins that sense damage and halt the process of DNA replication until the damage can be repaired. Inability to detect and respond to DNA damage is one of the factors that promote oncogenesis, or the formation of tumors. DDC1, the yeast analog of the human RAD9, a gene that encodes a kinase, or signaling enzyme, involved in the central DDR pathway, is required for the halting of the cell cycle and the slowing of DNA replication during the synthesis phase. DUN1, another gene involved in the DDR, is required for transcription of target genes in the DDR pathway and for arrest in the G2/M phase of the cell cycle, halting cell reproduction. S. cerevisiae mutant strains lacking either of these genes would be hypothesized to have a higher sensitivity to DNA-damaging agents such as KP1019 due to their diminished ability to respond to such damage.

Ruthenium-based anticancer complexes like KP1019 are known to bind to DNA, as well as deoxyguanosine monophosphate (dGMP), a DNA-modeling nucleotide based on guanine, one of the nitrogenous bases that comprise DNA. Another area of interest in the study of KP1019 is how the drug interacts with guanine and other nitrogenous bases, such as caffeine and nicotine. Ruthenium(III) has already been demonstrated to form complexes with nicotine, and other metal cations have been shown to bind to caffeine, specifically divalent cations like cobalt. In addition to examining the effect of impeded DDR or loss of a drug resistance pump on yeast sensitivity to KP1019, this study examines the interaction of KP1019 with nicotine, caffeine, and purines from both a chemical perspective and a biological perspective in vitro with Saccharomyces cerevisiae. It was hypothesized that KP1019 would bind to these compounds and thereby undergo a measurable change in molecular structure. The addition of nitrogenous bases such as nicotine and caffeine, or the use of purine homeostasis mutant strains, which have excess amounts of adenine and guanine present in the cytosol, would be hypothesized to decrease yeast sensitivity to KP1019.

Experimental
Growth Inhibition Assays
Several growth inhibition assays were done using 96-well microtitre plates. In order to examine the effect of nicotine and caffeine in vitro with KP1019, several 2x concentrated 20 mL stock solutions were made up in SDC:
were 0.2 mM, and chemical variables (caffeine, nicotine, or 9-ethylguanine) were 0.4 mM. Scans in the spectrophotometer were taken every 15 minutes for 16 hours, and cuvettes were kept at 30°C with a heated water bath. NMR kinetics studies were also done by taking scans over a 16-hour period. Solutions for NMR were made in D_2O, with a KP1019 concentration of 1.67 mM and chemical variables at 3.33 mM. Samples were again kept at 30°C. Samples of KP1019 as well as chemical variables (caffeine, nicotine, 9-ethylguanine) were analyzed in the NMR prior to running kinetics studies for comparison.

**Results**

Growth inhibition assays with wild-type yeast incubated with both KP1019 and nicotine confirmed the hypothesis that sensitivity of yeast to the drug would decrease in the presence of nicotine. As shown in Figure 1, as nicotine concentration increased, IC_{50} values increased from 6.4 ug/mL in the control to 10.4 ug/mL in the highest concentration of nicotine. Statistical analysis (one-way ANOVA) indicates a significant decrease in sensitivity in the 0.5 mM and 0.7 mM nicotine treatment groups versus the no-drug control (p< 0.05, p<0.01 respectively). Analysis did not indicate that any of the nicotine-treated groups were significantly different from another nicotine-treated group.

![Figure 1](image1.png)

**Figure 1.** Comparison of wild-type S. cerevisiae incubated at 30°C overnight with KP1019 and various concentrations of nicotine using absorbance values at 630 nm. No-nicotine control shown in red (IC_{50}=6.4 ug/mL), 0.3 mM nicotine shown in orange (IC_{50}=8.1 ug/mL), 0.5 mM nicotine shown in yellow (IC_{50}=9.4 ug/mL), 0.7 mM nicotine shown in green (IC_{50}=10.4 ug/mL). N=5, error bars show standard deviation.
Figure 2. Comparison of wild-type *S. cerevisiae* incubated at 30°C overnight with KP1019 and various concentrations of caffeine. No-caffeine control shown in red (IC$_{50}$=6.9 ug/mL), 0.625 mM caffeine shown in orange (IC$_{50}$=8.5 ug/mL), 1.25 mM caffeine shown in yellow (IC$_{50}$=10.2 ug/mL), 2.5 mM caffeine shown in green (IC$_{50}$=16.3 ug/mL). Absorbance values taken at 630 nm. N=4, error bars show standard deviation.

As shown in Figure 2, growth inhibition assays with both KP1019 and caffeine also served to confirm the hypothesis that the addition of nitrogenous bases *in vitro* with KP1019 and yeast would decrease yeast sensitivity. IC$_{50}$ values in the caffeine trials increased from 6.9 ug/mL in the control to 16.3 ug/mL in the highest concentration of caffeine. Statistical analysis (t-tests) indicates that the 1.25 and 2.5 mM caffeine treatment groups are significantly less sensitive to KP1019 than the no-caffeine control (p=0.005, 0.001 respectively). Furthermore, the 2.5 mM caffeine group was significantly less sensitive to the drug than the other two groups treated with lower concentrations of caffeine, 1.25 mM and 0.625 mM (p=0.03, 0.02 respectively). Because caffeine is toxic to *S. cerevisiae* at certain concentrations, a preliminary assay was run which determined the maximum concentration that would be useful in this study.

Growth inhibition assays comparing the KP1019 sensitivities of wild-type yeast to DDR mutant strains confirmed the hypothesis that these mutant strains would be more sensitive to the drug due to their inability to properly respond to the DNA damage caused by KP1019 (Figure 3). Statistical tests (t-tests) showed that both *ddc1Δ* and *dun1Δ* strains are significantly more sensitive to KP1019 than the wild type (p=0.009, 0.001 respectively).

Figure 3. Comparison of wild-type *S. cerevisiae* and *ddc1Δ/dun1Δ* mutant strains incubated with KP1019 at 30°C overnight. Wild-type shown in red (IC$_{50}$=6.8 ug/mL), *ddc1Δ* shown in orange (IC$_{50}$=3.0 ug/mL), *dun1Δ* shown in yellow (IC$_{50}$=3.6 ug/mL). Absorbance values taken at 630 nm. N=5, error bars show standard deviation.

Figure 5. Comparison of wild-type *S. cerevisiae* and *fcy2Δ/hpt1Δ* mutant strains incubated with KP1019 at 30°C overnight. Wild-type shown in red (IC$_{50}$=7.9 ug/mL), *fcy2Δ* shown in orange (IC$_{50}$=8.5 ug/mL), *hpt1Δ* shown in yellow (IC$_{50}$=8.1 ug/mL). Absorbance values taken at 630 nm. N=5, error bars show standard deviation.

Analysis of the results shown in Figure 5 indicates that the purine homeostasis mutants *fcy2Δ* and *hpt1Δ* have no significant increase in resistance to
KP1019 (p>0.05). All IC_{50} values were approximately 8 ug/mL, suggesting little or no change in sensitivity to the drug.

**Figure 6.** Results of 16-hour UV-Vis run with 0.2 mM KP1019 in pH 7 phosphate buffer. Scans were taken every 15 minutes.

**Figure 7.** Results of a 16-hour UV-Vis run with 0.2 mM KP1019 and 0.4 mM 9-ethylguanine in pH 7 phosphate buffer. Scans were taken every 15 minutes.

**Figure 8.** Results of a 16-hour UV-Vis run with 0.2 mM KP1019 and 0.4 mM nicotine in pH 7 phosphate buffer. Scans were taken every 15 minutes.

The data shown in figures 6-9 from the UV-Vis kinetics runs show some differences between the KP1019 control solution (Figure 6) and the experimental groups (Figures 7-9), indicating that the nitrogenous bases are likely binding to the drug. Specifically, the reaction between KP1019 and 9-ethylguanine produces a solid that causes increased absorbance at 500-700 nm (Figure 7) versus the KP1019 hydrolysis reaction, which doesn’t produce a solid and exhibits less change at these higher wavelengths during the 16-hour experiment.

**Figure 9.** Results of a 16-hour UV-Vis run with 0.2 mM KP1019 and 0.4 mM caffeine in pH 7 phosphate buffer. Scans were taken every 15 minutes.

As shown in Figure 10, proton NMR scans show peak broadening,

**Figure 10.** $^1$H-NMR characterization of KP1019 (top), 9-ethylguanine (middle), and the combination of the two compounds (bottom) in D$_2$O. Scans were taken approximately 30 minutes after dissolving the compounds in solution. Two peak regions are shown for each solution for comparison.
smoothing and shifting in the experimental group (KP1019 + 9-ethylguanine), with shifts of approximately 0.2 ppm in the positive direction. These shifts indicate binding interactions between KP1019 and 9-ethylguanine.

Figure 11. 1H-NMR characterization of KP1019 (top), nicotine (middle), and the combination of the two compounds (bottom) in D2O. Scans were taken approximately 30 minutes after dissolving the compounds in solution. Two peak regions are shown for each solution for comparison.

Similar to what was shown in figure 10, NMR data suggests that nicotine is binding to KP1019, with peaks broadening and shifting left as much as 0.3 ppm.

Figure 12. 1H-NMR characterization of KP1019 (top), caffeine (middle), and the combination of the two compounds (bottom) in D2O. Scans were taken approximately 30 minutes after dissolving the compounds in solution. Two peak regions are shown for each solution for comparison.

Figure 12 shows the NMR data for caffeine and KP1019, again showing broadened and shifted peaks and supporting the hypothesis that KP1019 binds to caffeine. However, the shifts are approximately 0.2 ppm in the negative direction, opposite of the shifts in the 9-ethylguanine and nicotine graphs.

Discussion

The results shown above in Figures 1-5 demonstrate that KP1019 is toxic to S. cerevisiae, inhibiting their growth even at very low concentrations, results that are consistent with previously-reported data regarding the effect of KP1019 on yeast. More significantly, these results show that both extracellular and intracellular factors can positively or negatively affect the sensitivity of S. cerevisiae to KP1019. Consistent with what is known about the DNA damage response in yeast, and specifically what has been reported about the Ddc1 and Dun1 genes’ functions in the DNA damage response, the ddc1Δ and dun1Δ strains were demonstrated to be hypersensitive to KP1019 compared with the wild-type strain due to the DNA damage caused by the drug. And, consistent with what is known about the Pdr5 multidrug transporter, the results showed a significant increase of sensitivity to the drug in the pdr5Δ strain due to the strain’s diminished ability to pump the drug out of the intracellular matrix.

The studies involving the nitrogenous bases caffeine and nicotine, which share structural similarities with guanine, one of the purines that comprise DNA, also yielded results consistent with previously-published studies regarding ruthenium and other metal binding to the compounds. The sensitivity of the cells to KP1019 decreased significantly as the concentration of the nitrogenous base increased, an effect seen consistently in both the caffeine and nicotine studies. The concentrations of caffeine and nicotine used in this study were chosen based on prior research done on this topic (data not shown). Concentrations of caffeine were also chosen based on the compound’s toxicity to S. cerevisiae. The main source of error as displayed in figures 1-4 was the concentration of KP1019, which was only as accurate as the minute amount of the compound measured for each trial.

The effect of caffeine and nicotine in vitro with S. cerevisiae as discussed
above can be explained by the results from the NMR (Figures 10-13) and UV-Vis kinetics studies (Figures 6-9), which indicate that KP1019 binds relatively quickly to these compounds, as well as to 9-ethylguanine, a more soluble form of guanine. More in-depth analysis of the UV-Vis kinetics data would be useful to elucidate the rate of the reaction and how it compares to the typical KP1019 hydrolysis that occurs in solution at neutral pH. The data from the proton NMR studies could also help to determine where on the nitrogenous base KP1019 is binding, and to how many sites it binds.

The data shown in Figure 5 suggests that the purine homeostasis mutants fcy2Δ and hpt1Δ have no increased resistance to KP1019, even though KP1019 has been demonstrated to bind to guanine and the addition of other nitrogenous bases has been shown to decrease yeast sensitivity to KP1019. A possible explanation of this is that KP1019 in other studies is binding to the nitrogenous bases in the extracellular space, meaning that excess purines in the cytosol could not bind to the drug and limit its function before it enters the cell. Further experimentation should be done to determine whether the addition of guanine or adenine to yeast media alters the cells’ sensitivity to KP1019.

References


Tragedy in Solitude: Evidence of the Greek Family Sagas in One Hundred Years of Solitude by Samantha Bisese

In an interview for the Spanish magazine Triunfo, Gabriel Garcia Marquez said, “reality is also the myths, beliefs, and legends of the people” (Bernejo 10). On this premise, Garcia Marquez crafted the mythical saga of the Buendia family in his most celebrated novel, One Hundred Years of Solitude. Due to the story’s archaic feel, many scholars have noted Garcia Marquez’s pervasive use of biblical imagery, from Macondo’s origins in a secluded paradise to its apocalyptic death. Yet the ill-fated history of the Buendia family concretely parallels ancient texts: the Greek sagas of the House of Atreus and the House of Thebes. Like the family sagas, the Buendias suffer through an obstinate cycle of incest, violence and isolation, but their greatest tragedy comes from their misguided attempts to cease history from repeating itself. Garcia Marquez uses the classic tragedies of Western mythology in his postcolonial saga of Latin America, doomed if it continues to repeat its past.

Before attempting to prove connections between One Hundred Years of Solitude and the Greek sagas, it would be useful to explore Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s own interactions with classical literature. In his autobiography, Living to Tell the Tale, Garcia Marquez discusses how Gustavo Ibarra Merlano, a drinking buddy soon to be civil lawyer, introduced him to his love of classics at age nineteen. He knew the Greek and Latin plays by heart, since he read and studied them in their original languages (329). Merlano convinced Garcia Marquez to re-read classics he had read in school, which at first had seemed “boring and useless” to him (329). His friend told him, “you may become a good writer, but you’ll never become very good if you don’t have a good knowledge of the Greek classics” (329). For years Merlano loaned him copies of Greco-Roman classics, informally quizzing him on the texts from time to time (Bell-Villada 73). Throughout the rest of Garcia-Marquez’s autobiography, there are scattered allusions to classical mythology. He speaks of “Homer’s rage” more than once (147; 154). At one point he refers to Sophocles’ Athens and later he describes someone as being “vigilant as Cerberus” (115; 419). Apparently Merlano’s teachings had a meaningful impact throughout the course of Garcia Marquez’s life.

Because of Merlano’s persistence, the classics proved to be a major influence in Garcia Marquez’s works. Critics have noticed plot similarities between his first novel, Leaf Storm and Sophocles’ Antigone (Robinson 12-13). In fact, when Garcia Marquez handed his first manuscript to Merlano, he declared, “This is the myth of Antigone” (Garcia Marquez 394). Most importantly, Garcia Marquez has praised Sophocles’ Oedipus Rex on numerous counts. Gene Bell-Villada wrote in his biography, Garcia Marquez, the Man and his Work, that Oedipus Rex was the work that “taught him the most about power, a phenomenon that would obsess him” (Bell-Villada 74). In an interview with Rita Guibert, Garcia Marquez proclaimed Oedipus Rex to be “the most important book in my life” (41) He humorously points out that Sophocles creates the first-ever detective story, “a perfect structure, wherein the investigator discovers that he is himself the assassin” (50). Sure enough, critics Harati and Basirizadeh have drawn connections between Oedipus Rex and the protagonist of Garcia Marquez’s The Autumn of the Patriarch, in which a degenerate tyrant is obsessed with his mother in the absence of his father (142). From Sophocles, Garcia Marquez deduced particular insights and devices that would stay with him the rest of his life: family, justice, and the civil codes of behavior. Despite the evidence of his deep appreciation for the classics, few critics have studied its influence in One Hundred Years of Solitude. More scholars prefer to investigate the traces of Ovid’s Metamorphosis in the text, because of the novel’s magical realist tone. For instance, Lorna Robinson compares the idyllic picture of Macondo’s origin with Ovid’s golden age myth (79-87). However, if we read One Hundred Years of Solitude with an understanding of Greek tragedy, we recognize the similarities in basic characters, plots, and themes.

Tragedy can be defined as, “a ritualized clash between equally valid, though mutually irreconcilable opposites” (Bell-Villada 75). For example, in Sophocles’ Antigone, Antigone faces the choice between obeying the laws and honoring family and the rights of the dead. The chorus in Antigone expresses the universal dilemma in tragedy, “Both sides have spoken well” (Sophocles 220). Yet the decision between the two equally sound choices never ends well. Such is the case with Orestes’ choice to avenge his father’s death instead of avoiding the
social taboo of matricide (Morford, Lenardon, and Sham 445). Similar conflicts of interest exist in One Hundred Years of Solitude, such as Jose Arcadio Buendia’s contradictory aptitudes for politics and science, Amaranta’s desire for love and solitude, and the final couple’s conflict between their mundane, but necessary house chores and their blissful passion.

One Hundred Years of Solitude begins with a basic element of the family saga, the original sin. In the House of Thebes, the House of Atreus and the House of Buendías, the curse of the family is brought about by a single, terrible sin of the founding patriarch. For each family, that sin is murder. According to Morford, Lenardon and Sham’s Classical Mythology, the origin of the house of Thebes is Cadmus. At the beginning of the story, Cadmus sets out to find his sister Europa, who had been abducted by Zeus in the form of a bull. Apollo intervenes and tells him to forget Europa, and to follow his destiny instead by founding the city of Thebes. Cadmus does as he is told, but in the process of building his city, he kills the sacred serpent of Ares, evoking the god’s wrath for the remainder of his family line (410). Similarly, Tantalus of the House of Atreus in ancient Mycenaean begins the series of calamities in his family when he murders and cooks his son Pelops for the gods’ feast (439). Garcia Marquez makes Jose Arcadio Buendia no exception to the original sin device. Before he founds Macondo, Jose Arcadio Buendia murders Prudencio Aguilar for a flippant comment he made about his alleged impotence (Garcia Marquez 21-22). Hence, he begins the cycle of violence in his family. It is noteworthy that all of the original sins have to do with the patriarch’s insecurities about their power. Cadmus struggles with remorse that he cannot save his sister from Zeus, the indisputable king of the gods. Tantalus’ holds resentment of the gods’ power over him, and Jose Arcadio Buendia’s suffers an insult to his masculinity. Garcia Marquez emphasizes in this way that the calamity of society first originates with the individual in power.

Once the seed of the original sin germinates, the family’s fate is sealed. One Hundred Years of Solitude employs the mythological concept of nemesis, which means “necessity” (Morford, Lenardon, and Sham 142). Nemesis is the mythical goddess of retribution; however nemesis becomes an abstract theme that fuels Greek tragedy. The transgressor cannot be freed until his family has suffered for generations. Senseless violence permeates the family line of the original sinner as a result of two other concepts of Greek tragedy: arête, and hubris. Arête, which is the character’s best feature or talent, is both the character’s greatest strength and greatest weakness. Arête blinds the beholder with hubris, pride that leads to insolent violence, and the tragic hero’s demise. Colonel Aureliano Buendia’s boast, for example, that his sons will eliminate the gringos results in the massacre of all seventeen of his sons (Garcia Marquez 238-239). The colonel has grown so conceited over his military skills that he has forgotten discretion. Hubris and arête recur throughout the novel beginning with Jose Arcadio Buendia’s obsession with trying to outperform God by using his aptitude for science. He desires to make a daguerreotype of God, claiming that he is “trying to surprise Divine Providence” (53; 55). Ironically, the smallest scientific success completely derails him. When he succeeds in connecting a mechanical toy ballerina to dance to the rhythm of a clock, he becomes utterly insane and destroys his workshop (78). In this way, hubris blinds the character from realizing that their desires will only lead them to self-destruction.

In the same way, Amaranta uses her arête, her beauty, to best Pietro Crespi and break his heart. However, Crespi’s suicide only gives her remorse. All she can do to soothe her guilt is stick her hand into the stove (110). Her hubris only gives her a memento of her shame, a black bandage on her hand, for the rest of her life. Amaranta’s self-mutilation hearkens back to Sophocles’ Oedipus Rex when Oedipus gauges out his own eyes as punishment for his mistake (68-69). Self-mutilations are one of the failed attempts through which the families seek to end the cycle of horror. However this phenomenon is not exclusive to fictional people. In One Hundred Years of Solitude Garcia Marquez depicts an adaptation of a previously covered up event from Colombian history: the banana factory massacre of 1928 (305-308). Not only does he succeed in recovering a piece of history. Garcia Marquez unearths this event and matches it with his fictional destructive characters, thus exposing Colombia’s tragic self-mutilation for betraying and murdering its own people.

To emphasize that the Buendías are trapped in a nightmarish cycle, Gabriel Garcia Marquez emphasizes the repetition of time. Jose Arcadio Buendia is first to notice the phenomenon when he declares that every day is Monday (Garcia Marquez 77). The confusion of names makes the events of the Buendia history hard to place, especially when incidents tend to repeat themselves. Boy children continue to be named “Jose Arcadio” and “Aureliano” and girl children...
will always be named “Remedios” or “Amaranta.” Ursula has the exact same conversation with Colonel Aureliano Buendia as she does with Jose Arcadio Segundo many years later, giving her “the evidence that time was not passing, as she had just admitted, but that it was turning in a circle” (124; 335). Ursula proves to be the strongest Buendia in her attempts to stop the circle. However she too succumbs to the cycle as she grows older and develops symptoms of Alzheimer’s, confusing the past with the present (327-328). Pilar Ternera’s comprehension of the Buendia’s fate is accurate when she ponders:

> There was no mystery in the heart of a Buendia that was impenetrable for her because a century of cards and experience had taught her that the history of the family was a machine with unavoidable repetitions, a turning wheel that would have gone on spilling into eternity were it not for the progressive and irremediable wearing of the axle. (396)

The repetition of time symbolizes the inability of the family to move forward and progress. The unending cycle of the Buendias history will only end after nemesis is appeased and fate has worn them out. Such is the warning for Latin America if they continue to make the same mistakes of isolation, corruption, and violence.

The wrath of Nemesis proves vicious for the seven generations of the Buendia family and Macondo. Repeated cases of violence include assassinations, suicides, massacres, torture, and self-mutilation. The sacred bonds of family are no protection from violence. The sibling rivalry between Rebeca and Amaranta is reminiscent of Polynices and Eteocles of Thebes with the exception that the brothers murder each other in single combat for power. Sibling rivalry reoccurs in the House of Atreus between the brothers Atreus and Thyestes. Yet instead of killing each other, the brothers steal from each other what they love the most: Thyestes sleeps with his brother’s wife, and in turn Atreus slays his brothers children and serves them to him for dinner (Morford, Lenardon, and Sham 442). From classic tragedy Garcia Marquez takes the component of violence, but adds an element of mystery. Jose Arcadio’s sudden death, for example, remains the only unsolved riddle in Macondo. Though his body emits the pungent smell of burned gunpowder, no one can find a weapon or a bullet wound in his body (132). Jose Arcadio’s death serves as a symbolic example of all the people who disappeared or were mysteriously killed in the duration of Latin America’s history.

More than violence, incest is one of the most studied taboos that recur in the family sagas. The original sin of the Buendia family is rooted in incest. Ursula and Jose Arcadio Buendia knew that they were cousins when they were married, therefore Ursula is terrified that they will conceive a child with a pig’s tail, like their ancestors before them (20). Hence, Ursula resists intimacy with her husband, causing rumors of Jose Arcadio’s alleged impotence (Swanson 61). Jose Arcadio Buendia’s public ridicule causes him to murder one of his taunters and violate Ursula. The curse of the original sin repeats through the family in a series of pseudo-incestuous relationships (Swanson 61). The two brothers, who each conceive a child with Pilar Ternera correlate to Thyestes and Atreus sleeping with the same woman (Morford, Lenardon, and Sham 442). Jose Arcadio marries his adoptive sister Rebeca, and Amaranta seems to have a “vocation for incest” as she attracts the love of her nephew and her great-grand-nephew. Even Arcadio comes dangerously close to sleeping with his own mother, echoing Oedipus’s union with his mother. Ursula’s struggle against incest makes the sin more appealing to her family. It becomes an act of rebellion against her conservative values. Incest gives whole new meaning to the theme of solitude as the family members draw inwards towards each other. Garcia Marquez uses such an ancient taboo act to draw attention to the horror associated with the isolation and selfishness that weakens Latin America.

The repetition of time symbolizes the inability of the family to move forward and progress. The unending cycle of the Buendias history will only end after nemesis is appeased and fate has worn them out. Such is the warning for Latin America if they continue to make the same mistakes of isolation, corruption, and violence.

The repetition of time symbolizes the inability of the family to move forward and progress. The unending cycle of the Buendias history will only end after nemesis is appeased and fate has worn them out. Such is the warning for Latin America if they continue to make the same mistakes of isolation, corruption, and violence.
Ursula trains Jose Arcadio for seminary in Rome, hoping that religion and prestige will save the family (188). However, both children return to Macondo only to find that nothing but death awaits them there. Furthermore, Ursula’s interpretations of the Buendia’s decline which are, “talk of war, fighting cocks, bad women, [and] wild undertakings” only explain the problems of the men in their family (188). She focuses on fighting the symptoms of the family’s disease and not the root of their plight. Not unlike Garcia Marquez’s Latin America, the real tragedy of the Buendias is their failure to recognize the heart of their weakness, their solitude.

Although the Buendias cannot understand their curse, outside sources try to aid them. In classic Greek sagas, there is usually a character with supernatural qualities who warns the family of the tragedy to come. In the house of Atreus, that person is Cassandra, the Trojan princess doomed to watch Troy fall because no one will believe her prophecies. In the Theban saga the seer is Tiresias, the blind prophet who appears in both _Oedipus Rex_ and _Antigone_. His warnings are just as ineffective; Tiresias lives to see Thebes fall just before he dies beside a quiet stream (Morford, Lenardon, and Sham 435). In an eerily identical way, Melquiades in _One Hundred Years of Solitude_ also dies mysteriously by the riverside once his duty is complete (Garcia Marquez 72). Melquiades functions as a Tiresias/Cassandra figure for the Buendias by writing the coded parchments which contain the family’s fate. Possessed with the gift of resurrection, he repeatedly comes back from the dead to help the Buendias translate the writings. Though he helps several of the Buendia men decipher the scripts, his help is ultimately too late as Aureliano cracks the coded texts just as an apocalyptic hurricane destroys the house. With Melquiades, Garcia Marquez conveys his frustration with Latin America’s unwillingness to seek out foreign help and break out of their solitude.

The greatest underlying theme of _One Hundred Years of Solitude_ is that solitude destroys everything. Garcia Marquez said in an interview that, “the point that most interested me as I wrote the book…is the idea that solitude is the opposite of solidarity” (Bernejo 12). In this novel, Garcia Marquez asserts that “solitude as the negation of solidarity is a political concept” (13). Individualism is the antithesis to political soundness, thus solitude becomes a disease. As the family members revert to solitude, they lose out on the opportunities of life, increasing the misfortune of the family (Mellen 52-54). Solitude destroys the most appealing and significant person in the story, Colonel Aureliano Buendia, who draws more and more into solitude as he suffers life’s hardships: “lost in the solitude of his immense power, he began to lose direction” (Garcia Marquez 181). Without solidarity, or love, life is worthless to him. Solitude acts as a temptation for privacy, but it is also a harbinger of loneliness for almost every member of the Buendia family. The fatality of the individual’s solitude expands into solitude on a social scale. Macondo’s geographical isolation parallels ancient Greece’s isolated city-states. Thebes was secluded between mountains and a lake, while ancient Mycenae was caught between two steep hills, (“Mycenae Geography”; Google Map). Seclusion makes these cities vulnerable to outside influences and attacks, but also cut off from the outside world. It would be plausible, for instance, that the king and queen of Corinth could have raised Oedipus without him knowing his true parents in Thebes. Placing Macondo in a secluded location, Garcia Marquez shows how solitude can be dangerous at a political level.

Isolation strikes at the core of survival when families try to erase their history. By keeping Aureliano Babilonia in the dark about his true heritage, his family leaves him vulnerable to incest. Without the knowledge of his real parents, Oedipus commits murder and incest. Families try to preserve their name by covering up the past, creating problems later on. This leads to the _anagnorisis_, the moment in which the character makes a critical discovery. At the dramatic climax of the tragedy, the character becomes suddenly aware of the real situation and where they stand. By the time Oedipus and Aureliano Babilonia discover the truth of their parents, it is too late to save themselves and their families. Thus the quests of Oedipus and Aureliano to solve the riddles of their heritage end with dynamic tragedy. The sin of Oedipus dooms his family and Thebes to civil strife and ultimate destruction. The death of Aureliano’s child summons the wrath of a “biblical hurricane” sealing the horrific fate of the Buendias and Macondo as Garcia Marquez writes “races condemned to one hundred years of solitude did not have a second opportunity on earth” (416-417). At the novel’s end, Garcia Marquez uses ancient political-ethical themes: the unpunished crimes and arbitrary acts in the highest ranks of society are a disease that will spread throughout the social body.

On one final note, _One Hundred Years of Solitude_ ends with a sense
of unavoidable destiny as Aureliano reads Melquiades’ extremely detailed prophecies for the family. Yet the preordained events do not suggest that there was no hope for the Buendias all along. In an interview with Claudia Dreifus, García Márquez clarifies, “One Hundred Years of Solitude doesn’t say that progress isn’t possible. It says that Latin-American society is so full of frustrations and injustices that it would dishearten anyone. That really indicates a society that must be changed” (Dreifus 123). In Spanish, solitude translates into “soledad” and solidarity into “solidaridad.” Perhaps it is no coincidence that García Márquez based his novel on two complete opposite words which happen to sound similar. In fact, maybe García Márquez believed that solidarity was not so difficult to achieve; that it was only one syllable away. García Márquez does not believe that Latin America is doomed. He has hope for the future of Latin America, if it can uphold solidarity, and preserve history by resisting the lure of solitude.

Works Cited


