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Editors' Note:

In the summer of 2013, as this journal went to publication with its first-and-hopefully-not-last issue, the American Academy of Arts & Sciences' Commission on the Humanities & Social Sciences released a lengthy document, *The Heart of the Matter*, ardently standing up for liberal arts education and its practical value. Feeling hounded by American politicians who doubted the benefit an education in these areas provided for society and the workforce, the Commission responded that humanities and social sciences create, "a more civil public discourse, a more adaptable and creative workforce, and a more secure nation." They continued, saying:

> The humanities and social sciences are the heart of the matter, the keeper of the republic—a source of national memory and civic vigor, cultural understanding and communication, individual fulfillment and the ideals we hold in common.

The Commission offered potential reforms that they hoped could help emphasize these inherent virtues. In their document they highlighted the value of literacy, language learning, and international (as well as domestic) cultural understanding—all elements that they held were cores of the humanities and social sciences in primary, secondary, and post-secondary education. The document was filled with specifically American allusions to the Founding Fathers and the importance of liberal education to ensure a well-educated citizenry. Meanwhile, at this journal's home institution, New College of Florida, some of our professors have likewise responded to the Florida governor's administration's outright attacks on liberal arts. During the past several years, the Florida governor has threatened several times to divert funds from social sciences and humanities to science and technology instead.[1] Beginning in 2012, one of our medieval history professors, Carrie Beneš, helped to articulate through projects with the American Historical Association that the abilities imparted specifically from a history education—but also throughout social sciences and humanities—are precisely those sought by employers: "people who can think critically, write, communicate and analyze different kinds of information."[2]

It is the desire of the editors of Anemoi that this journal present the products of some of the most talented undergraduates in these specialties. Anemoi was founded not only with the test of being an artifact thoroughly embedded in social sciences and humanities, but also focusing on the even shakier practicality of pre-modern studies. Amidst this political debate about the usefulness of essentially all but science, math, and technology concentrations, the staff of Anemoi hoped to give evidence for the remarkable abilities of the students of history.

The thoroughly interdisciplinary approach presented in this issue's academic papers towards cultures as disparate as ancient Israel to the early modern Ottoman Empire displays an amazing ability to comprehend other cultures. If critical analysis and the ability to communicate that observation is the hallmark of the liberal arts, then pre-modern studies pushes that obligation to embrace the outlooks of other people even further. What greater challenge for intercultural understanding exists than the time and language barriers that separate us from our pre-modern ancestors? The undergraduate articles presented in this inaugural issue nobly pave the way for how excellently that work can be conducted.

The result of the first issue of *Anemoi: the New College Journal of Pre-modern Studies* was an enormous success. We ultimately accepted nine of our submissions, which spanned a

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[1] Scott Jaschik, "Florida GOP Vs. Social Science | Inside Higher Ed," October 12, 2011, *InsideHigherEd.com*, accessed June 22, 2013.

[2] "New College Professor Carrie Beneš Joins National Initiative to 'Tune' the History Major," *New College of Florida*, accessed June 23, 2013.

broad range of topics and perspectives. They came from a wide array of academic perspectives: history, art, religion, technology, philosophy, gender, and more. The different styles of each paper reflect those varied outlooks.

Each paper was professionally reviewed, blindly, by two readers. Our review panel represented undergraduate students from around the country and several members with advanced degrees. All those who submitted received very valuable feedback.

Particular thanks must go to the academic sponsor of this new journal, Dr. David Rohrbacher. He was at first understandably hesitant to support a project with no history and large challenges to overcome in its inception. Thanks to his backing and to the strong foundation laid by the volunteer reviewers and the strong response from these talented authors, the continuation of this project next year should hopefully be considerably easier.

It is the hope of the editors that other students will continue the project next year and beyond. Certainly we can expect more and better submissions to an established journal than to a new one, and future editors will learn from the problems this crew faced and from the policies established. This journal has already played an important role in developing professional skills for submitters and reviewers, and it will bolster New College's reputation not only nationally but also internationally. All this was done through the hard work of a small but dedicated group.

Acknowledgements

Cover illumination of the four winds from the Voynich Manuscript Cipher Manuscript, 57v, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

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Joshua Edelstein, *New College of Florida*

The Long and Short, the First and Last:

An Analysis of Tragic Structure in Three Versions of the Electra Myth

Abstract
In ancient Greek tragedy, it was common for different playwrights to cover the same mythological ground in their tragedies. We can see a perfect example of this occurring with the Electra myth, which was told and retold by the "big three" of Greek tragedy: Aeschylus, Euripides, and Sophocles. The grisly thread that runs through each version is the murders of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus at the hands of Clytemnestra's children, Orestes and Electra. Despite this commonality, and despite the fact that each of these three versions draws from the same common well of mythology, the plays take radically different courses of action. The structure and presentation of each author's version of this myth has the ability to dramatically alter the moral framework of the myth and cast each character in completely different lights. The moral differences of each play can be most clearly and powerfully seen during the final murder scene, as it draws all the important characters together and marks the climax of every version.

In this essay, I will examine the basic structural differences of the murder scenes in each version of the Electra tragedy and show how these differences of structure affect the moral obstacles encountered by Electra and Orestes in the respective scenes. The first structural quality I will examine is the length of time it takes for the murder scenes to resolve. The second is the order in which Aegisthus and Clytemnestra are killed. I will show that these features affect the actions of Electra and Orestes, producing either an increase or a loss of moral obstacles for Orestes within the context of each play. We will see that Sophocles' version is the one that provides the fewest moral obstacles, Euripides' version the most, and Aeschylus' version lies somewhere in the middle.

Before delving into the analysis of basic structure. It is necessary to clarify what is meant by a moral obstacle. For the purpose of this paper, a moral obstacle is anything, be it an event, a person, or an idea, that forces the main actors (namely Electra and Orestes) to question the correctness of their mission. This may be measured quantitatively by examining how many times the dialogue of a main actor questions the rightness of their action. This effect necessitates a cause, which points towards the moral obstacle. With this definition in place, the main discussion may take place.

The length of time it takes for a particular scene to transpire is a vital, yet often overlooked, element of literature and theater. Length is determined by what is said, and just as importantly, what is not said. Naturally, length also serves as a focusing lens for the thoughts of the audience, or in other words, the longer it takes for a particular event to transpire, the more the audience will be forced to focus on that event. With respect to the murder scenes, the longest belongs to Euripides, with the shortest being presented by Sophocles. Aeschylus lies somewhere in the middle. But what could this tell us about the play? For one, it shows how many problems, both internally and externally, are encountered on the road of revenge Orestes and Electra travel down. Many of these problems take the form of moral obstacles.

In Sophocles' version, the two deaths occur in rapid succession, with the two siblings urging the deaths along faster. This is most obvious when, after the quick and comparatively uneventful death of their mother, Aegisthus attempts to hold a dialogue with Orestes and

Electra. However, unlike the other versions, where pre-death dialogue is welcome (and necessary), they quickly cut him off. Electra is especially fiery on this point, at one point exclaiming "When someone's in a tough spot, about to die, what's the point of having more time?" (S pp. 183). This perfectly exemplifies the single-mindedness, which Electra displays in this play.

This single-mindedness is appropriate, due to the fact that this is the version in which the two siblings, Orestes and Electra, show the least amount of doubt on their mission of retribution. It is this clarity of purpose is what allows the deaths to progress so quickly. These quick and straightforward deaths show that Sophocles' concern was not exploiting the complexity inherent in this myth about matricide, but rather show how clear Orestes and Electra are in their mission at the expense of Clytemnestra.

To further support the feeling of clarity that Sophocles provides for the siblings in his version is the final statement of the play, which follows immediately after the murder of Aegisthus. The chorus speaks this final line, "Seed of Atreus, how much you suffered before you won through to freedom--barely--but perfectly now, from this beginning." (S. 185) This final statement is compelling due to the fact that it takes on a different flavor depending on whether it is read while considering the greater context of the Electra myth or while considering only the play as an isolated work. Taken in isolation, this statement appears to end the play on a positive note. However, to take it this way would be ignoring the greater framework of the Electra myth.

The greater context for this tragedy, which is more thoroughly laid out in Aeschylus' tragic *Orestia* trilogy, is that Orestes is doomed to be hounded by the blood thirsty furies for the murder of his mother. In this light, the final line of Sophocles' play takes on an ironic meaning, as it is oblivious to the consequences of the actions of Orestes in this play. However, Sophocles does not provide the same framework that Aeschylus does, and Sophocles' version must be read as a hermetic work, with no connection to a prelude or epilogue. Taken in this manner, it is clear that the final line is meant to provide an absolute sense of moral closure for us, the readers. In other words, this play provides a complete justification for the actions of Orestes and Electra, providing few to no challenges to the perceived goodness of their actions.

Alternately, Euripides' version is clearly the one with the most moral obstacles, with only the character of Electra remaining steadfast and unwavering to the bitter end. In preparation for the death scene, Clytemnestra reveals a side unseen in the other plays; a side which shows her remorse for the killing of Agamemnon and understanding for the feelings of her children. This is shown clearly in her conversation with Electra when she states:

> Dear girl, you always loved your father, which is natural enough: some are father-lovers, some are drawn more to mothers. I can forgive you… and to tell the truth, I am not proud of everything I've done, my child. (E. pp. 204)

This exclamation of regret forces not only the audience, but also Orestes to reimagine Clytemnestra as something other than the villain that Sophocles presents her as. Indeed, the fact that Orestes must be blinded temporarily by a cloth before he murders his mother, and that even then Electra's "hand was on the sword with [Orestes]" (E. pp. 208), shows how much this murder lacks the clean righteousness of the the murder in Sophocles' *Electra*. Orestes encountered a very strong moral obstacle to his actions, and only by weakening his agency in the murder is he able to continue forward.

It was not only moralistic conversation, however, that lengthened the murders in Euripides' play. It is the only version of this tragedy in which one of the murders takes place outside of the palace. The necessity of this circumstance is the warning from Orestes' tutor that inside the castle Aegisthus would be too heavily guarded. While this same problem does

indeed come up in Aeschylus' version, it is handled in a more utilitarian manner. That is, it is presented as a simple truth which must be addressed. Euripides, on the other hand, takes this problem and turns it to his advantage, enabling him to craft the whole scene of Aegisthus and Orestes at the sacrifice, along with all the rich layers of meaning that scene brings.

Their meeting there and the outcome is told as a report from a messenger to Electra, due to the fact that it was considered *faux pas* to stage a death. This use of a third party allows Euripides to explore his death in a manner which Aeschylus' 'straight' depiction cannot. Orestes infiltrates Aegisthus' sacrifice by pretending to be a Thessalonian traveler. This allows Orestes to sabotage Aegisthus' prayers, which were leveled against him and his sister for "destruction to [his] enemies" (E pp.193) by muttering a counter prayer under his breath. This element of divinity is unique to the tragedy, and while the other two tragedies have elements of sacrifice in them, this is the only play where a sacrifice is so directly corrupted, revealing the complexity of Orestes present in this version. This complexity stems from the fact that he is already engaged in the moral complex mission of murdering his own mother to avenge his father. By adding a corruption of a religious ritual on top of this, it further calls into question the moral authority that Orestes has in this version. This questioning of Orestes' moral authority does not provide a moral obstacle for Orestes, but rather provides a moral obstacle for the audience in determining the ultimate correctness of Orestes and Electra's actions.

It would be correctly anticipated that Aeschylus' play, with a set of murders that lies somewhere in the middle as far as length, is also somewhere in the middle in regards to the number of moral obstacles encountered. While Aegisthus falls in a swift and uneventful manner, Clytemnestra does not go down so easily, appealing to Orestes' sense of motherly love, pointing out that "this breast once nurtured you... your soft mouth sucked the milk that made you strong" (A pp.105) This defense does not seem to contain the powerful weight which her defense carries in Euripides' plays, in part due to the fact that this dialogue is not quite as extensive as the one presented in Euripides' version, and also in part due to the fact that Clissa, Orestes' wet nurse, has gotten a word ahead of Clytemnestra.

If Clytemnestra is the moral Gordian Knot of this play, it is Clissa who acts as Alexander's sword, striking through the problem directly. Despite the fact that when Orestes' mother, Clytemnestra, hears of her son's death she laments this cruel twist of fate, calling Orestes "the one cure for these evils" (A pp. 97), Clissa is skeptical of her sorrow. "In front of us servants she was all doom and gloom, but her eyes were smiling deep down, at what had worked out well for her." (A pp. 98).

Clissa's involvement provides an alternate mother figure for Orestes. The inclusion of a monologue in which she states that "I spent my soul on him, and I raised him when his when his mother passed him to me" (pp. 99) shows that Clytemnestra was only the birth mother of Orestes and not the matronly caretaker one would imagine. The inclusion of a "second mother" in this version allows the audience to see that Orestes would have a much less complicated decision to make in this version, with very little indebted to his already morally questionable mother. By giving up her place as caretaker for Orestes, Clytemnestra's claim of motherhood becomes much less convincing.

The second point of discussion, the order in which the deaths transpire, has a direct effect on the way in which each of the "villains" (Clytemnestra and Aegisthus) is placed within the overall moral framework of the tragedies. In some cases, this ordering may downplay their culpability in the crime, while other orders cast an unusual suspect as the main force in the murderous sequence.

In the case of Aeschylus it is simple to discern who takes the most blame for the murder of Agamemnon due to the fact that we have a prequel play in which we seen that Clytemnestra is the primary force in her husband's death. It is her will and strength that tricked Agamemnon and then struck him down. Aegisthus, who traditionally is the one who

murders Agamemnon in the story, is merely an afterthought, added on due to mythological necessity. This is reflected in *The Libation Bearers* by the fact that Aegisthus dies with hardly a sound, two simple "Ai"s being his only final words. On the other hand Clytemnestra's death is drawn out with a conversation which marks her importance as the prime villain.

In some ways, this focus on Clytemnestra as the main force against Orestes and Electra may appear to empower her as a rare female equal to the men of the play. This is because by giving her ultimate agency in the murder of Agamemnon, we are able to see her as a force which is more than capable of matching the power of the Grecian male characters in this tragedy. However, it would be a mistake to take this message way from *The Libation Bearers*. The fact that a woman murdered Agamemnon does not increase her standing but rather appears to highlight the intense wrongness of this action. This is shown to be true when Orestes states, "It is man's labor that provides the home you sit in." (S. pp. 107). This quote essentially discredits the agency which was implied in her actions by showing that she would not be in the same position she is in without the aid of males. Additionally, when confronted with her own death, Clytemnestra reverts immediately to a feminine defense of her being, that she is a mother, rather than attempting to justify her action of murdering Agamemnon, as I will show she attempts to do in Euripides' version. This ending highlights not only Clytemnestra's role as a primary and completely reprehensible villain, but also the rightness of Orestes' actions, as he restores the sexes to their proper roles in society. In essence, the narrative of this play presents Clytemnestra, being Orestes mother, as a potentially powerful moral obstacle, yet quickly removes this obstacle by attacking her actions in conjunction with her gender.

In Euripides' version of *Electra*, the order of the murders remains the same, but the importance of Aegisthus as a villain is heightened, and Clytemnestra's role as villain is questioned and complicated. Aegisthus becomes much more important due to the fact that he is cast as a merciless tyrant over the household, turning Electra's life into a living hell. In support of this place he has in this version, his murder is made more important by framing it within a messengers account of the sacrifice which Orestes sabotages before taking Aegisthus' life. This scene also does an effective job, without resorting to blunt statement (like the other two plays) of showing how Aegisthus is preoccupied to the point of downfall on visual evidence by showing that he, looking for a prophetic sign, "rummaged among the entrails, staring at them as he drew them apart." (E. pp. 194) while Orestes brutally executed him with a sacrificial tool. It is also important to note that this is the only version in which Orestes is shown to murder Aegisthus through trickery, which at the very least challenges the presumed goodness of this act.

The death of Clytemnestra, for Euripides, leaves more ambiguity than the same event in both Sophocles and Aeschylus' plays. This is highlighted by the main ideological battle which takes place within this play, which is not between Orestes and Clytemnestra, but rather between Electra and Clytemnestra. In this verbal combat, Clytemnestra expresses a complex account of her actions, as shown earlier, while Electra holds firm, stating "you plead justice, and your plea is a sham--utterly unjust" (E. pp.202). It is telling that in the ultimate battle of ideas, two females, not a male and a female, clash ideologically. The importance of Electra in this version is additionally supported by the fact that Electra must help Orestes murder Clytemnestra, as stated before. From Orestes reluctant attitude, it is safe to assume that he would not have the power to do so by himself. Otherwise, why would Electra have to step in and help him?

Sophocles, on the other hand, reverses the order of the murders. Here, it is not Clytemnestra who is the final villain to be slain, but rather the brutal Aegisthus. This reversal of order casts Clytemnestra in a similar light as Aegisthus in *The Libation Bearers*. That is, a mythological loose end which must be tied up before the end of the play. Aegisthus, on the

other hand, is elevated to the position of prime villain, returning the ultimate moral burden of Agamemnon's death to the hands of men.

The reversal of death also allows for an interesting scene to take place before the hasty ending. This is the interaction Orestes and Aegisthus share over the shrouded body of Clytemnestra. This scene is unique in the sense that it is the only version of this story where one of the murdered sees the other's body. The manner in which this comes about ties common elements of the myth together in a unique way. There is the common plot device in which Orestes is disguised as a foreign visitor that has "brought...news that Orestes [has] lost his life." (S pp.180)

There is also the common fact that Aegisthus value of visual evidence is both misplaced and the root of his downfall. His valuing of visual evidence is particularly ironic in this tragedy, not only due to the fact that he sees Orestes with his own eyes, yet cannot see who he is, but also due to the fact that Orestes claims the shrouded body of Clytemnestra to be Orestes' body. This enables a tense scene to take place in which Aegisthus asks the mysterious stranger where Clytemnestra responds, to which he receives the cryptic answer "She's very close to you." (S pp. 182) Yet Aegisthus is still "blind" to the circumstance until he himself reveals the face of Clytemnestra.

At first, this scene appears to offer little help in expanding our understanding of the moral fabric of this play. However, when one examines the morality of this story from an ontological perspective, the relevance of this scene is revealed. The moral imperative of this play is connected to the concept of δίκη, which for the Greeks means both justice and revenge. This moral imperative towards the fulfilment of δίκη comes to Orestes from the god of prophecy, Apollo, thus establishing the divine as the origin of the moral framework Orestes and Electra use to justify their actions. Interestingly, the divine is conspicuously missing from this version. What this means in terms of the story is that the divine does not abide in the realm of the senses, but rather holds a more abstract place in Sophocles' account. This separation of the divine from the realm of the senses shows how Aegisthus' reliance on visual evidence is entirely misplaced, which leads not only to his obvious physical defeat, but also a hidden moral defeat.

By examining elements as simple as length and order, we have been able to see that the three tellings of the Electra myth by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides have vastly different moral landscapes, marked out and highlighted by the moral obstacles encountered along the way to the identical conclusions.

Works Cited

Euripides' *Electra*, the Paul Roche translation was used, noted with an "E."

Sophocles' *Electra,* the Meineck and Woodruff translation was used, noted with an "S."

Aeschylus' *The Libation Bearers*, the Meineck Woodruff translation was used, noted with an "A."

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Breaking the Barrier: Ancient Greek Women Philosophers

Abstract
Ancient Greece was a patriarchal society that kept its women segregated, uneducated, and constantly guarded. Shockingly, there were a handful of women who were able to break societal norms and become intellectual, well-respected philosophers that circulated among the greats. However, they are not well-known and are hardly discussed today. This paper examines their work and lives and compares them to the average women of the time in an attempt to establish a connection among the women philosophers and discover what allowed them to become such anomalies in the uninviting, male-dominated world of ancient philosophy.

Most people have heard of famous Ancient Greek philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. However, very few people have heard of any Ancient Greek *women* philosophers, such as the Pythagorean women, Diotima, Aspasia, Hypatia, and, surprisingly, many more. This paper will show that these women were exceptional not only for their intellect but also for their ability to break the social norms of Ancient Greece by expressing their views and opinions in a patriarchal society.

Ancient Greece was a male-dominated civilization, and even though it was advanced in many respects for the time, women were not seen as capable beings. Women were viewed merely as possessions to be protected and guarded. Their purpose was to bear and raise children and take care of household chores.[1] Women were rarely allowed to leave the home. The intellectual advancement of women was not a priority in this society, which makes these ancient women philosophers that much more extraordinary.

They lived in a time and place where women were strictly forbidden to publicly voice their opinions, but through their writings, teachings, and orations Ancient Greek philosopher women were able to give voice to a largely silenced faction of society.[2] For these ancient women to achieve the level of acclaim and respect they did was truly an accomplishment. The fact that these women are not taught and discussed in schools today is unfortunate. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the lives of these women, their work, and to highlight the stark contrast between them, immersed in the man's world of philosophy and intellect, with the lives of typical women of Ancient Greece trapped in their homes. Additionally, I aim to uncover new evidence as to why these women were able to advance so much further than their domestic counterparts, yet are not talked about today.

In Ancient Greece women were given about the same level of rights as minors. They had literal guardians their entire lives, referred to as *kyrios,* who were responsible for their general well being. *Kyrios* translates as "having power or authority over" and can be thought of as a protector or executor.[3] Women had *kyrios* because they were deemed incompetent, and it was believed they had no control over their actions and needed someone to dictate to them what was in their best interest. In short, women were simply seen as not intelligent enough to look after themselves.

An Ancient Greek woman's *kyrios,* or guardian, was her father up until the time she got married. The guardianship would then be passed over to her husband. If a female's father or husband died, she would then be under the supervision and guidance of a brother, son, or

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[1] Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves: Women in Antiquity* (New York: Schocken Books, 1975), 78.

[2] Roger Just, *Women in Athenian Law and Life* (London: Routledge, 1989), 39.

[3] Just, *Athenian Law and Life*, 26.

next-of-kin.[4] It is important to note that men being guardians of women was not just practiced in ancient times, but continued well into the nineteenth-century in much of the United States and Europe. Just like ancient women, early modern women had no property rights, no legal claims to their children, and could not enter into contracts on their own.[5] Similar to a *kyrios,* a husband was responsible for providing for his wife and supporting her. It was not until equity laws, initially developed in England in the early 1800s, that women finally broke the ancient custom and began to receive more legal and civil rights.[6]

 The job of a guardian was to provide a woman with the necessities to run the domestic sphere of the household and to represent her in society. Typically Ancient Greek women, especially those from the upper class, were not permitted to leave their homes.[7] Women stayed in their houses for a two main reasons: one, they had too many household chores to complete; there was hardly any free time to mill about. Second, and most importantly, being outside the home was socially unacceptable.[8] Unfortunately domestic living conditions in Classical Greece were the opposite of the beautiful, grandiose public buildings they famously constructed. Residential homes were "dark, squalid, and unsanitary," and women were bound to them.[9]

 Women were not only segregated in the public sphere of life but also in the domestic sphere. Even in their own home it was considered unacceptable for a woman to have any contact with male visitors.[10] Ancient Greek houses, even the most modest, had separate male and female quarters.[11] Men entertained guests (not uncommonly male youths) and female entertainers in a room called an *andron.* Women spent most of their time in a single room, or a suite of rooms, called a *gynaikeio,* doing wool-work, caring for their children, entertaining themselves, and sleeping.[12] The Ancient Greek woman's life was centered on preserving her chastity and remaining modest.

 Most homes had at least one slave, and it was the guardian or slave's job to do the shopping and run the errands that required being outdoors. However, the poorest women did not have slaves and could not be kept in seclusion, so they were allowed to perform specific tasks outside of the home, i.e., washing clothes, fetching water, or borrowing an item from a neighbor.[13] In contrast to the women, most men in Ancient Greece spent the majority of their time out of the house, either in the marketplace or the gymnasium. The stark difference between men and women's public life was so deep-rooted it can be seen in ancient literature. The Ancient Greek historian and philosopher, Xenophon, captured the dichotomy in his Socratic dialogue *Oeconomicus*, "So it is seemly for a woman to remain at home and not be out of doors; but for a man to stay inside, instead of devoting himself to outside pursuits, is disgraceful."[14] Xenophon's use of "seemly" and "disgraceful" highlights the inequality that was embedded in Ancient Greek society and demonstrates the strong belief that men and women's proper places were in two completely different domains.

 Since Greek women were typically barred from engaging in public affairs, their *kyrios* would act for them in any sort of contract or legal matter. A woman was not allowed to

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[4] Sue Blundell*, Women in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 67.

[5] "Women's History in America" Women's International Center, accessed October 12, 2012, http://www.wic.org/misc/history.htm.

[6] Ibid., 1.

[7] Blundell, *Women in Ancient Greece*, 135.

[8] Pomeroy, *Goddesses,* 79.

[9] Ibid., 79.

[10] Blundell, *Women in Ancient Greece*, 135.

[11] Ibid., 139.

[12] Ibid., 139.

[13] Pomeroy, *Goddesses*, 80.

[14] Xenophon, *"*Oeconomicus" in *Women in Ancient Greece*, Sue Blundell (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 135.

testify in court even when the case pertained to her directly, in which circumstance her guardian would act on her behalf. By law, Greek women could not enter into any contracts "beyond the value of one *mendimnos* of barley" (about five to six days worth of grain).[15] Women in Ancient Greece had no political, legal, or social power.

To put it bluntly, the sole purpose of women was to marry and procreate. When a young girl died, the main reason for mourning her death was that she had failed to fulfill her duty as a wife. Vases have been discovered marking the graves of young, unwed girls portraying them in wedding gowns, symbolizing the loss of what would have been a future wife and mother.[16] A father was not even expected to raise a female baby if he did not see the possibility of a proper marriage for her in the future.[17] It was even legal for a male guardian to sell an unmarried woman if she had lost her virginity.[18] However, buying a husband was the norm in Ancient Greece. When a woman got married, it was arranged by her guardian and included a dowry. The larger the dowry, the more respectable the bridegroom was likely to be. Once a marriage was arranged and the dowry was paid, the political and social status of a woman did not improve; she merely went from being under the rule of one male to that of another. Women were expected to be completely subordinate to men. Having no say in who their husbands were made married life an unpredictable arrangement for most women. The pain Ancient Greek women felt from having no choice in their husbands, and subsequently their own fates, can be heard in a monologue from the Ancient Greek play "Medea*,*" where the main character laments the unfortunate lot in life for women of her time:

> I am done for, my friends,/ and giving up all joy in life, I wish to die./ My
> whole life was bound up in him, as he well knows;/ yet my husband has
> proved to be the worst of men./ Of all beings who breathe and have
> intelligence,/ we women are the most miserable creatures./ First we
> have to buy a husband at a steep price,/ then take a master for our bodies./
> This second evil is worse than the first, but/ the greatest struggle turns on
> whether we get a bad/ husband or a good one…Otherwise it is better to die.[19]

The lowly status of women in Ancient Greece makes their lack of formal education unsurprising. Women had no legal rights to an education and were only taught enough to efficiently run a household.[20] Typically a young girl's education came from her mother and consisted of learning domestic duties. Males, on the contrary, often attended small private schools from elementary age up to about fourteen years old.[21] Their education then continued significantly longer, focusing on advancing their rhetoric and physical skills.[22]

Besides their inferior rank, women faced another hindrance to advancing their education: the young age at which they were married. A girl was deemed old enough to get married once she was able to bear children, and was typically married off around the age of fourteen to a man easily twice her age.[23] Classically females around the age of eighteen were already married and having children while their male counterparts were still living at home with their parents, furthering their education and training. The wide gap between husbands

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[15] Blundell, *Women in Ancient Greece*, 114.

[16] Pomeroy, *Goddesses,* 62.

[17] Ibid., 62.

[18] Ibid., 57.

[19] Euripides, "Medea" in *Women in the Classical World: Image and Text,* trans. Helen P. Foley (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 68.

[20] Kathleen Wider, "Women Philosophers in the Ancient Greek World: Donning the Mantle," Hypatia 1 (1986): 24, accessed September 4, 2012, doi: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3810062.

[21] Blundell, *Women in Ancient Greece,* 132.

[22] Pomeroy, *Goddesses,* 74.

[23] Ibid., 64.

and wives in education, and age, made the role of the husband more like one of a father. It was up to the husband how educated he wanted his wife to be, and if he did not take measures to advance her intellectually, she was stuck with whatever education her mother had given her until she was married off as an adolescent. Literacy could, quite plausibly, have been viewed as a dangerous tool for a woman. An Ancient Greek comedy writer was known to have said, "A man who teaches his wife to read is giving additional poison to a horrible snake."[24] Even though it may have been just a quip, it still shows the fear men harbored towards educated women. There is evidence that some ancient women learned to read and write, but it is generally accepted that it would have been the exception rather than the rule during this period.[25]

The segregation of women, their lack of legal and political rights, and the young age at which they were married after receiving no formal education brings back the question: how did any Ancient Greek woman break through the barriers and become a literate and intellectual philosopher? The best way to approach this question is chronologically. Identifying the earliest women philosophers may help draw a connection to later ones and lead us to discover how they were able to break societal norms.

The earliest evidence of women partaking in philosophy is found with the early Pythagoreans. Pythagoras was a philosopher and mathematician born sometime around 570 BCE. He created a popular philosophic school that led to the establishment of communities of followers in southern Italy and mainland Greece.[26] Pythagorean thought revolved around numbers and being able to use enumeration to understand the cosmos.[27] Pythagoreans strongly believed in "harmonious arrangement," a principle of proportion and order in the universe.[28] It is remarkable that women were not only admitted to Pythagorean societies, but most likely played a significant role in the development of early Pythagorean philosophy as well.[29] A historian from the third-century, Diogenes Laertius, claimed that a peer of Aristotle credited a woman, Themistoclea, for providing Pythagoras with his ethical beliefs.[30]

Scholars have come up with various reasons for why women were permitted in Pythagorean schools and societies. Mainly, they attribute the anomaly to the Pythagorean belief of the transmigration of souls, because the tenet hypothesizes that all living things were somehow related. This belief supported the notion that women should be accepted as equal to men due to their interrelatedness. In addition, Pythagorean societies considered themselves a "brotherhood" which relied on unity and family.[31] Pythagoreans viewed family as the "harmony of the universe" and this made way for a special appreciation of women because they were not only an essential part of the family unit but a necessary component.[32]

Even though women in Pythagorean communities received a greater amount of appreciation for their abilities, they were still expected to remain subservient to their husbands.[33] However, unlike women in typical Greek society, advancing Pythagorean women's intelligence was deemed extremely important because it added to the security and

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[24] Menander, in *Women in Ancient Greece*, Sue Blundell (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 133.

[25] Blundell, *Women in Ancient Greece,* 132.

[26] Patricia Curd, ed. & trans., and Richard D. McKirahan trans., *A Presocratic Reader: Selected Fragments and Testimonia (*Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2011), 23.

[27] Ibid., 24.

[28] Ibid., 24.

[29] Mary Ellen Waithe, ed., *A History of Women Philosophers: Volume 1/ 600 BC – 500 AD* (Dordrecht: Matinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1987), 11.

[30] Diogenes Laertius, *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* trans. C. D. Yonge (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1853), accessed May 3, 2013, http://classicpersuasion.org/pw/diogenes/dlpythagoras.htm.

[31] Wider, "Donning the Mantle,"

[32] Ibid., 28.

[33] Ibid., 28.

success of the whole community. The emphasis on family made Pythagoreans appreciate the role of women more than most other Ancient Greek communities.

Notable early Pythagorean women philosophers were Theano, the woman believed to be Pythagoras's wife, and their three daughters, Arignote, Myia, and Damo. All the women were distinguished and active members of the Pythagorean School. It is widely believed that Damo was given possession of all her father's works upon his death to keep them safe and that his wife was his successor at his school until she remarried.[34] Both of these acts show that Pythagoras, and the community, had great confidence in the women's ability to implement and preserve the Pythagorean way of life and thought.

A lot of the work attributed to Theano revolves around explaining the proper way to love a husband and raise children. Theano believed that women had a special virtue in their temperament that allowed them to control and run the household in a way a man could not.[35] She believed women were responsible for keeping a special harmony, and *harmonia* was a huge component of Pythagorean theory. It was believed *harmonia* began in the home and would then spread to the state, making well-organized homes the backbone for a successful city-state, much like in Confucianism. Even though Theano's work offers plenty of advice on domestic duty, her writing *On Piety* articulately describes the Pythagorean theory of enumeration and "alludes to the metaphysical concepts of imitation and participation" and in turn exemplifies Theano's deep understanding of complex Pythagorean philosophies.[36] Theano also reveals her own conviction of the importance of a woman being introspective when she quips in her apothegms, "Better to be on a runaway horse than to be a woman who does not reflect."[37]

Other early Pythagorean women philosophers produced work similar to Theano's, often offering guidance and advice on how to maintain a home and the proper way to rear children. Pythagoras and Theano's daughter, Myia, was well known for her superb housekeeping skills, so much so that her house was called The Museum. She was the supervisor of the young women, and then the married women, after she herself married an athlete.[38] Early Pythagorean women writing abundantly about how to keep house can be attributed to the fact that it simply was their best-known realm in life:

> It is their task as women philosophers to teach to other women that which
> women need to know if they are to live their lives harmoniously and, as
> Aesara of Lucania suggests, create justice and harmony in their souls
> and in their homes. Likewise, it is the task of men philosophers to teach
> other men that which they need to know if they are to live their lives
> harmoniously, creating justice and harmony in the their souls and in the
> state.[39]

The work of early Pythagorean women remains controversial. There is much debate over whether the work credited to them was actually written by them, or by later figures of the Pythagorean School, writing in their names. There is an agreement among scholars, which can be backed by other ancient sources, that it is fact that women played an essential role in Pythagorean societies. Even though Pythagorean communities were closed sects the criteria for those admitted was based on merit and what the individual could contribute

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[34] Wider, "Donning the Mantle," 28-29.
[35] Waithe, *Women Philosophers*, 14.
[36] Ibid., 12.
[37] Theano, "Theano's Apothegms" in *A History of Women Philosophers; 600 BC – 500 AD,* ed. Mary Ellen Waithe (Dordrecht: Matinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1987), 15.
[38] Wider, "Donning the Mantle," 29.
[39] Waithe, *Women Philosophers*, 17.

opposed to gender or status.[40] These women receiving credit for writing such intellectually advanced works is itself noteworthy and a substantial enough reason to not dismiss their literature. Furthermore, even skeptics admit the works were definitely written by ancient women, just perhaps not Theano, et al, proving that at least some ancient women were indeed well-educated.[41]

Nonetheless, the reality that women were admitted into Pythagorean schools, that they were considered an essential part of the society, and that they were taught to read, write, and reflect philosophically, already separates them drastically from the average woman of the time. Additionally, it is the fervent belief of scholars like Mary Ellen Waithe that these works were actually written by the women they are ascribed to, so it is important to see them for what they are: insightful glimpses into the world of the earliest women philosophical thinkers. The writings showcase a very revealing awareness on the part of these women. They appear complacent in their realm of domestic duty, but also have magnificent moments of intellectual thought and reasoning. For sixth-century BCE, their work was well formulated and philosophically reflective.

Even though the early Pythagorean women have notable works that should be examined, the women of the school of the late Pythagoreans (e.g., Aesara, Phintys, Perictione I and II) have much more contemplative, and what would be considered more "philosophical," works attributed to them. Those considered to be late Pythagoreans lived no earlier than 425 BCE and, unlike the early Pythagorean women, were unrelated to Pythagoras.[42] The Ancient woman philosopher, Aesara, wrote a book titled, *On Human Nature*. Unfortunately only a fragment survives, but it is significant in helping to understand the other women philosophers of the late Pythagorean school, because her work helped shape their thoughts and ideas.[43]

Aesara's work proposes a theory of natural law. She argues the need to have a philosophical foundation for knowledge because it will positively affect morality, law, psychology, and even medicine.[44] Aesara describes in her book the soul as consisting of three parts: mind, spiritedness, and desire, and describes how each one affects the other.[45] Her theories are extremely interesting because even though Aesara lived in a time where women had no individual or societal rights, she still believed self-examination was the means to perfecting those very things. However, one can still see an underlying belief in male superiority in her work when she says, "[God] intended man alone to become a recipient of law and justice, and none other of mortal animals."[46] While the disparity between men and women still clearly exists in Aesara's writings, it is important to notice how much more meditative her work is compared to the early Pythagorean women. It strikingly explores topics of ethics, law, and the rights of man, subjects an average woman of the time would not be able to delve into so freely or eloquently.

Perictione II has a few fragments of substantial length attributed to her that offer great insight into her philosophy of wisdom. In one fragment *On Wisdom*, Perictione II describes what it is that makes human beings unique, "Mankind has come into being and exists to contemplate the theory of nature of the whole. To possess this very thing is the

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[40] Michelle Baliff and Michael G. Moran, eds., *Classical Rhetorics and Rhetoricians: Critical Studies and Sources* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2005), 316.

[41] I.M Plant, ed., *Women Writers of Ancient Greece and Rome: An Anthology* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004), 68.

[42] Waithe, *Women Philosophers*, 19.

[43] Ibid., 19.

[44] Ibid., 19.

[45] Aesara, "On Human Nature" in *A History of Women Philosophers; 600 BC – 500 AD,* ed. Mary Ellen Waithe (Dordrecht: Matinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1987), 20.

[46] Ibid., 20.

function of wisdom, and to contemplate the purpose of existence."[47] Perictione II goes on to explain the difference between what is studied in mathematics to what wisdom studies, concluding the latter consists of "all that is real."[48] The later Pythagorean women's work can be used as evidence to argue that the early women philosophers of the sixth-century helped pave the way for the later ones to more liberally explore issues that did not revolve around the domestic sphere and were typically thought to be out of a woman's grasp of understanding.

A very controversial but extremely influential woman that lived around the time of the late Pythagoreans was Aspasia of Miletus. Aspasia was the antithesis of the average Ancient Greek woman. Known as a rhetorician, political theorist, and teacher, Aspasia is believed to have taught and influenced many important men, and women, in the fifth-century BCE, discussing with them a wide range of philosophical topics.[49] Aspasia led a school where she taught young women a variety of subjects and it oftentimes doubled as a meeting place for the powerful men of Athens.[50] Rumored to have been a *hetaera,* i.e., a courtesan, Aspasia broke the social norm by practicing her rhetoric and oratory in public and was well respected for her political views by many of the intellectuals of the time.[51]

Aspasia was renowned for her intelligence, but her life's work remains controversial because there are no existing writings from her. However, there are numerous secondary classical sources crediting her for influencing hugely important men of the time such as Socrates, Xenophon, Alcibiades, and especially the Ancient Greek politician Pericles, who was her lover and life companion (she was about twenty; he was fifty.)[52] In Plato's dialogue, "Menexenus," Plato's Socrates credits Aspasia for being his teacher, "I happen to have no mean teacher of oratory. She is the very woman who has produced – along with a multiple of other good ones – the outstanding orator among the Greeks, Pericles, son of Xanthippus."[53] Socrates credits Aspasia with creating funeral orations for Pericles and goes on to recite one that Aspasia had taught him. Upon finishing, Menexus' reaction to the exceptionally composed speech exemplifies the typical ancient male thought of an intelligent woman: ironic, "By Zeus, Socrates, your Aspasia is indeed lucky if, woman though she be, can compose speeches like that one."[54] Adding to the evidence that Aspasia had quite an effect on Socrates and those in his circle, the historian Plutarch points out, "Socrates himself would sometimes go to visit her, and some of his acquaintances with him; and those who frequented her company would carry their wives with them to listen to her."[55] Aspasia's lessons on love, politics, oration, and rhetoric were truly valued, making her widely important in her time.

Unfortunately, scholars who see the lack of any surviving work to be grounds to dismiss her credibility, often question Aspasia's validity as a philosophical contributor. Many argue that Plato's "Menexenus" was a satirical work and that he actually disliked her practices and considered her a threat to philosophy by using wisdom "to control and deceive the public about the history of Greece."[56] Plato was not the only Ancient Greek threatened by

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[47] Perictione II, "On Wisdom" in *Women Writers of Ancient Greece and Rome: An Anthology,* ed. I.M. Plant (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004), 78.

[48] Wider, "Donning the Mantle," 34.

[49] Baliff and Moran, *Classical Rhetorics,* 65.

[50] Ibid*.,* 65.

[51] Ibid., 66.

[52] Ibid*.,* 66.

[53] Plato, "Menexenus" *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997), 952.

[54] Ibid., 964.

[55] Plutarch, "Pericles," in The Internet Classics Archive: Works by Plutarch, trans. John Dryden, accessed November 30, 2012, doi: http://classics.mit.edu/Browse/browse-Plutarch.html, 29.

[56] Waithe, *Women Philosophers,* 80.

her. Aspasia had to undergo a public trial on charges of impiety, which shows that other Athenians were intimidated by her strong public presence.[57] Nonetheless, she was at some point not only Plato's, but also Socrates' teacher, and that cannot be ignored.[58] It is also important to remember that Socrates does not have a single piece of writing attributed to him, yet no one has ever questioned his influence on philosophy and Ancient Greek society.

Furthermore, Aspasia's reputation as a *hetaera* causes scholars to focus on her sexuality and not on the important effect she had on public speaking in the fifth-century. Her undeniable presence among the most intellectual and powerful men in the public arena cannot be overlooked. Aspasia managed to break through the domestic sphere and prove herself to be an intelligent, autonomous individual in a polis of men in an environment that was very distinctively shut off to women. To disregard Aspasia due to her possible position as a *hetaera* would be doing a great disservice to the history of ancient women.

Ironically, as time moved closer to the Common Era, there is less and less remaining evidence of ancient women philosophers' lives and work. There is much speculation about a woman, Diotima of Mantinea, who reportedly was the one to teach Socrates about love.[59] Surprisingly, Socrates even attributes the Socratic method to her; "I think the easiest way will be to adopt Diotima's own method of inquiry by question and answer."[60] Diotima's very existence is too questionable to seriously include her, but how remarkable it would be if Socrates learned and developed the Socratic method by following the example of a woman!

It is unfortunate that we do not know more about these ancient women's lives. Although the little information we do have provides enough to infer that they must have been extraordinary and intelligent people to accomplish what they did, knowing how they achieved it would fill many of the holes that exist in the historiography of ancient women philosophers. Which turns us back to our original question: Why were some women able to become such well-educated, public figures, while the rest of the Ancient Greek women had to remain isolated in their homes?

Although there is no definitive evidence as to what enabled certain women to break the social norms and immerse themselves into the world of philosophy, there definitely appears to have been patterns and indicators that allow one to speculate and draw well-informed conclusions. Primarily, family seems to have been a significant advantage. The most well-known women philosophers of the early Pythagoreans were all somehow related to Pythagoras. It does not seem to be coincidence that Pythagoras' wife and three daughters stood out among the rest and produced the best known works from women in this time. Having a father as influential as Pythagoras had to present much more opportunity to these women than any typical woman would have had in the ancient world. Additionally, the whole concept of Pythagorean schools and societies was to promote intelligence, among *everyone*, so it only makes sense that these women were well-educated and articulate. Women were so vital to Pythagorean principles that their intellectual advancement would have been viewed as necessary for the whole community to be successful.

A woman named Arete is another example of a well-known female philosopher who grew up with a father that was prominent in the philosophical realm. She provides additional evidence that perhaps some women were able to become successful philosophers because of their familial relationships, especially because Arete is known to have been one of her father's disciples.[61] Furthermore, a popular female philosopher, Pamphilia, was one of only three women in history known to have studied at the Lyceum, and she also happened to be

[57] Waithe, *Women Philosophers*, 80.
[58] Ibid., 78.
[59] Wider, "Donning the Mantle," 44.
[60] Ibid., 44.
[61] Ibid., 49.

the wife of a well-known philosopher.[62] Her ability to study at such a renowned school of philosophy could have had something to do with the connections of her husband. If one is to think of the very essence of philosophy, "for the love of wisdom," and what it means to be a philosopher, it would be quite contradictory for a philosopher to raise an ignorant child or keep a wife uneducated simply because it was the societal norm. Philosophers have unique perspectives about the world, so it would be illogical to assume that they would manage their families in the same manner as everyone else.

Another possibility for the advancement of certain women could be wealth and social status. Vase paintings have been discovered that depict women in domestic settings holding book-rolls; these are believed to have been women of the privileged upper class.[63] It is known that Pythagoras' wife was an aristocratic woman and the daughter of Brontinus, a Crotona orphic.[64] Sources reveal that Theano first became a pupil of Pythagoras and then his wife, which means Theano was able to study under him prior to having any relation to him.[65] This demonstrates that kinship was not the only means to becoming a successful woman philosopher, but still leaves one wondering if Theano's high status and connected father could have been the source of her acceptance into the Pythagorean School.

In the case of Aspasia, one has to accredit her success to her supposed position as a *hetaera*. *Hetairai* operated under their own social rules and were the only group of economically independent women in Ancient Greece.[66] Technically considered prostitutes, *hetairai* were at the top of the social scale, and aside from being beautiful women they were typically intellectually trained and quite artistic.[67] *Hetairai* had to be well-educated and interesting in order to make good companions to the men they would accompany to parties and social events. It is unfortunate to attribute Aspasia's success to the belief that she was a *hetaera*, but it is a sensible conclusion because being a *hetaera* would have given her the ability to move about and participate freely in public.

After much research it has to be deduced that the main reason why these ancient women philosophers are not commonly taught today, and as a whole get excluded from historical and philosophical conversations, is because of the lack of conclusive evidence that their work belongs to them. The absence of surviving work seems to nullify their existence and contributions to the subject. One can only attribute the common practice of disregarding Ancient Greek women philosophers to the controversy that surrounds them. Although there is no doubt that these women existed, and that they were rare and unique exceptions, there simply is not enough evidence to talk about them in definitive terms. However, their very obvious achievement in overcoming societal restrictions warrants their acknowledgement.

The many ancient sources that attest to these women's existence and influence proves their significance, and much can be learned from examining their surviving pieces of work. In a subject that is as highly saturated with literature as ancient philosophy, the women philosophers offer a chance to examine the subject anew. It is unfortunate that the data on them is limited, but new analyses of what is available can help determine exactly how these exceptional women were able to overcome the barriers inflicted by their sex. A connection can already be made between the women's relationships and social statuses to their ability to receive an education and practice philosophy. The women's unprecedented role in the intellectual man's world of philosophy is remarkable and demands further discussion. The ultimate goal in examining these women and their works should be securing their place in

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[62] Wider, "Donning the Mantle," 50.

[63] Blundell, *Women in Ancient Greece,* 132.

[64] Waithe, *Women Philosophers*, 12.

[65] Ibid., 17.

[66] Blundell, *Women in Ancient Greece*, 148.

[67] Pomeroy, *Goddesses,* 89.

literature and textbooks. Ancient women philosophers like the Pythagorean women, Aspasia, Arete, and the many more, prove traditions and standards are penetrable and just because these women are not typically discussed does not mean it they should be overlooked completely.

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Proppian Sequence and Freudian Psychoanalysis in the Myth of Perseus and Medusa

Abstract

This paper approaches the myth of Perseus as described by Apollodorus in Book Two of The Library through the combination of two different interpretative methods: the plot-centered approach originally developed by Vladimir Propp to show standardization of plot elements in Russian folklore and a psychoanalytic approach based on the work of Sigmund Freud. The combination of plot structure and a Freudian interpretation of the Oedipus complex and of the head of Medusa yields a more complete understanding of the Perseus myth. This paper argues that the sexual possession of the mother, confrontation of fear of castration, and destruction of female power are steps in a standardized sequence applicable to Greek coming-of-age myths at large.

Proppian Sequence

Vladimir Propp developed his structuralist approach to folklore and legend in 1928, in *Morphology of the Folktale.*[1] In this ground-breaking work Propp proposed that every Russian fairy tale follows a shared plot sequence of thirty-one steps, which he called "functions."[2] By analyzing the body of Russian folklore, Propp found that each story may not fulfill every step and may repeat steps several times. However, the steps were always completed in order.[3] This interpretive method can be applied to folktales and fairytales outside the Russian tradition. The sequence has been successfully applied to Native South American folklore and biblical narratives.[4] How the theory applies to classical mythology, however, is not nearly as developed. In the paragraphs that follow, I will trace the sequence of the myth of Perseus step-by-step, showing that the myth largely fulfills the sequence and, as such, suggests a standardization of plot elements, including conquering of female monsters, across similar Greek myths.

The Myth

Perseus was the only son of Danaë, daughter of Acrisius, King of Argos. Acrisius received an oracle that his daughter would one day bear a son who would kill his grandfather. Fearful of his impending death, Acrisius locked Danaë away underground to keep her from any man who would produce this ill-fated son. The most common version of the myth is that Zeus came to Danaë in the form of a golden rain and impregnated her with Perseus. Apollodorus gives this description in book two of *The Library.* However, immediately after describing the golden stream, he acknowledges a possible alternative paternity by Proetus, Danaë's uncle and Acrisius' twin. (*Library*, 2.4.1) Acrisius does not realize his daughter is with child until after Perseus' birth. When he discovers the boy, Acrisius locks both mother and son into a large chest and throws them to the sea. This exposure fulfills step one of Propp's sequence, Absentation, where a family member is removed from his home.

The chest washes ashore in the kingdom of Seriphus and the pair is taken in by the fisherman, Dictys, who raises Perseus as his own son. Polydectes, the king of Seriphus and brother of Dictys, falls in love with Danaë and wishes to take her as wife. Perseus, who by this time "was grown to man's estate," (*Library*, 2.4.2) would not allow the marriage. Polydectes then attempts to trick Perseus by pretending to be collecting wedding gifts for his

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[1] I will be using an English translation by Laurence Scott. Vladimir Propp, *The Morphology of the Folk Tale* Trans. L. Scott (Dallas: University of Texas Press, 1968).

[2] Vladimir Propp, "Chapter Three: The Functions of Dramatis Personae," *The Morphology of the Folk Tale* Trans. L. Scott (Dallas: University of Texas Press, 1968): 25-65. This chapter lists the thirty-steps and provides a summer, one-word definition, and a few conventional examples of the function from Russian fairytales.

[3] Propp, "Chapter Four: Some Other Elements of the Tale," *The Morphology of the Folk Tale*, 74.

[4] Alan Dundes, "The Structure of Russian Fairy Tales," in *International Folkloristics: Classical Contributions by the Founders of Folklore*, ed. Alan Dundes (Boston: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1999): 124.

wedding to another woman, Hippodamia. The king demands horses from the citizens, knowing full well that Perseus cannot provide these expensive gifts. The pretext of the wedding to Hippodamia constitutes step six of the Proppian sequence, trickery on the part of the villain. The king then demands Perseus to bring him the head of Medusa, the only mortal Gorgon, believing that the journey would kill Perseus and he would be free to marry Danaë. The demand for Medusa's head fulfills step eight in which a task or request is asked of the hero. In order to save his mother from marriage to Polydectes and establish his manhood, Perseus embarks on a journey to do the impossible.

When Perseus leaves Seriphus, he completes step ten, exile from home. Athena and Hermes come to Perseus and aid him in his quest by giving him gifts. In Apollodorus' version, Hermes gives Perseus the adamantine sickle and Athena provides the shield which Perseus will use as a mirror to see Medusa without being turned to stone. The giving of magical agents to the hero is step fourteen in the Proppian sequence. Step fifteen, where the hero is given knowledge of the whereabouts of an object of search, is completed when the divine duo also instructs Perseus to locate the Hesperides, a group of nymphs who, in Apollodorus' version, possess the golden sandals, the cap of Hades, and a special satchel, the *kibisis*, which will be used to carry Medusa's head back to Seriphus. In order to find the nymphs and gain possession of the weapons, Perseus must first seek the Graeae, the Grey Sisters. These three hags have only one eye to share between them. Perseus steals their eye and returns it only after they tell him the location of the Hesperides. The revelation of the location of the nymphs is a second occurrence of step fifteen. The first time, Athena and Hermes instructed the hero to find the Graeae; in turn the Graeae offer information on the location of the objects of search, the sandals and the satchel. Step fourteen is repeated with the Hesperides give Perseus the *kibisis*, cap of Hades, and the sandals.

After completing this complex series of tasks and acquiring these magical objects Perseus "flies to the ocean" (2.4.2) and finds the Gorgons. He then engages Medusa in direct combat, step sixteen of the sequence. Medusa is defeated as per step eighteen (Victory), and Perseus gains the original object of his search, the Gorgon's head, fulfilling step nineteen, liquidation of the initial "lack." Apollodorus then says that Perseus "went back again" (*Library,* 2.4.3) (Step twenty, return home), and was pursued by the Gorgons, who "started up from their slumber" (Step twenty-one, pursuit), and that the magic invisibility cap saved him from their pursuit, (Step twenty-three, rescue). These actions explicitly fulfill Proppian sequence; however, the end of this flight only half-satisfies Proppian sequence. In the sequence, step twenty-four involves the hero either coming to a new land or returning home unrecognized. Perseus does arrive in a new land, Ethiopia, but Apollodorus is not specific about the recognition in the foreign country.

The Proppian sequence of myth concludes in Ethiopia. However, the extent to which the myth follows the final steps of the sequence is less satisfactory than the previous steps. Portions of the end of the Perseus myth rely on a loose interpretation of character types and a partial abandonment of sequence order. After arriving in Ethiopia, Perseus is asked to save Andromeda from a wretched sea-monster, step twenty-five, Difficult Task. He succeeds (step twenty-six), is recognized as a hero (step twenty seven), and then marries Andromeda and ascends the throne (step thirty-one, Wedding). The last part of the Proppian sequence describes a false hero who presents unfounded claims (step twenty-four), is then exposed as a false hero (step twenty-eight) and is then punished (step thirty). Phineus, Andromeda's betrothed before Perseus rescues her, partially fulfills this role. However, the sequence of events is incorrect; Phineus does not appear as a false hero until after the wedding nor is his claim completely unfounded since he was Andromeda's betrothed before Perseus saved her. He is then exposed as a false hero, or villain, through his attempted treachery against Perseus in order to reclaim the woman he did not earn. Phineus and his conspirators are then punished by Perseus who turns them to stone after uncovering their

plot. The punishment fits step thirty, however the extent to which Phineus is a false hero in the Proppian sense is unclear. Apollodorus is largely silent on the specifics of Phineus' treachery, saying only that he has "plotted against" (*Library*, 2.4.3) Perseus. Phineus exhibits the behavior of a false villain, but the character is not developed to the extent required to definitively fulfill the sequence.

The Proppian sequence ends with Perseus' wedding to Andromeda but this last step is not fulfilled entirely in the Proppian sense either. Perseus does not gain the throne of Ethiopia through his marriage, but returns to Seriphus instead and turns the villain Polydectes and his men to stone in the palace. (*Library*, 2.4.3) However, Perseus does not claim this throne either. He appoints Dictys as king and leaves with Danaë and Andromeda for Argos to find his grandfather. On the way, he learns of the prophecy and, attempting to avoid his fate, detours and attends the funeral games in "the Pelasgian land" (*Library*, 2.4.4) where he accidentally kills his grandfather with a discus. Perseus realizes the identity of the slain man and in his shame cannot claim the throne of Argos which he has subsequently been offered. Instead, he goes to Megapenthes, king of Tiryns, and offers a territorial trade. Thus, Perseus does ascend a throne, but it is that of Tiryns--not Ethiopia, Seriphus, or Argos.

The Extent of Proppian Sequence

Overall, the myth of Perseus proceeds very closely in the sequence developed by Vladimir Propp until after the wedding to Andromeda. Some steps--two through five, seven, eight, twelve, thirteen, and seventeen, and twenty-nine—are missing from the myth while step fourteen, the magic gift-giving, is repeated. Propp himself allowed for the omission and repetition of steps, but he does not allow for any deviation from the sequence.[5] Some steps are only partially fulfilled, like Perseus' arrival in Africa, and others, like those dealing with the false hero, depend on a loose interpretation of Propp's sequence.

More important than these discrepancies is the fact that the sequence ends before the myth concludes. The last portion of the myth, Perseus' killing of the suitors then of his own grandfather, is not covered in the sequence. Even if we were to disregard Propp's demand for the exact order of the thirty-one steps, there is no real part of the sequence which aligns with Perseus' killing the suitors and Acrisius. When he returns, Polydectes, the villain, does not try to trick him again, nor do the two engage in direct combat, as Proppian sequence dictates. Perseus uses Medusa's head, not his own sword, to kill the men and Apollodorus says specifically that he held the head with "averted face." My interpretation of the quote in context is that Perseus' face was averted from both Medusa's head and the men's faces. However, this scene parallels the killing of Andromeda's betrothed and his armed comrades. This parallel equates Andromeda and Danaë so in some sense the killing of Polydectes and his men does have a place in Proppian sequence as a repetition of steps twenty-eight and thirty, where the villain is exposed and punished. Unlike Phineus, Polydectes definitively functions as a Proppian villain throughout the myth so in this way the sequence is more satisfactorily fulfilled. However, the defeat of the Proppian villain culminates in a wedding. Perseus does not wed his mother, Danaë. But, if we recognize that Andromeda and Danaë have parallel functions in the sequence, then we can more readily equate mother and wife and apply a Freudian interpretation.

The problem of Acrisius' death is not as easily remedied, however, because there is not applicable series of steps. There is nowhere in the sequence that the killing of Acrisius fits. Perseus does not engage Acrisius in direct combat as step sixteen demands. He kills Acrisius accidentally and is even too far away to immediately realize the fallen man's identity. Acrisius was in no way targeted and purposefully killed by his grandson as the sequence would suggest. Perseus specifically avoids Argos so as to avoid killing Acrisius. Furthermore,

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[5] Propp, *The Morphology of the Folk Tale*, 74.

Acrisius, even though he exposed a woman and baby related by blood, is not a villain in the Proppian sense as he does not trick or cause harm to the hero once the hero was recognized as such. Although Acrisius sent mother and child away, his purpose in this action was to fulfill step one, abstention, and create the framework upon which the narrative is built, rather than to directly challenge Perseus, the hero.

While the death of Acrisius does not have a place in the Proppian sequence, the death of fathers and grandfathers is fairly common throughout Greek mythology of young heroes. In a sense it is a somewhat standardized feature of these myths, even if it does not occur in Proppian sequence. Although the sequence fits the Perseus myth remarkably well, it was originally developed for Russian folktale, not classical mythology. A more general structuralist approach shows that patricide is a distinct, recurring feature in Greek hero myths, regardless of its prevalence Russian fairytales. The Greek heroes Perseus, Oedipus, and Theseus all ultimately cause the death of their fathers and then become kings. Perseus and Oedipus are unwittingly directly responsible for the murders, while Theseus' forgetfulness to change the sails is the cause of Aegeus' suicide. These heroes all must destroy their fathers before realizing their full potential as men and kings. The theme is present in variations across a variety of myths. Cronos castrates his father before becoming king of Olympia and is in turn poisoned by his son, Zeus. While poisoning does not result in murder in this case, Zeus ultimately locks Cronus in Tartarus, the underworld where spirits of the dead reside, thereby metaphorically killing his immortal father. As these boys become men, they destroy their fathers. It is now useful to apply Sigmund Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) to the myth of Perseus and, more broadly, youthful-hero myths at large.

Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*

Freud directly connected the drive to destroy one's father with a sexual desire of the mother in chapter five of the *Interpretation of Dreams* (1900).[6] The child sees the father as a threat and wishes to have sole possession of his mother's body. According to Freud, love for the mother is the first sexual passion an individual feels in his life.[7] Through his use of the Oedipus story, Freud suggests that myths, like dreams, are a way for humanity to express its deepest taboo desires. Freud's exemplum, Oedipus, destroys his true, actual father, Laius. However, Perseus' father is immortal and a paternal substitute, Acrisius, is required. Acrisius substitution is especially poignant when taken with the alternative paternity of Proetus. Since Acrisius and Proetus are twins, Acrisius is an even more direct substitute for the father. Perseus also kills Polydectes, who fulfills the role of the father as husband to the mother. Taken together, Acrisius as generator and Polydectes as husband parallel Oedipus' father Laius and a Freudian interpretation can be applied.

The parallel of sexual desire for their mothers is less immediately apparent in the Perseus myth than that of Oedipus but still a crucial aspect of the story. Perseus begins his journey in an attempt to keep his mother from marrying. Apollodorus alludes to Polycletes' evil nature, saying that Dictys and Danaë have taken refuge at the altars "on account of the violence of Polydectes" (*Library*, 2.4.3). However, Perseus does not become angry with Polydectes at this moment, when the threat of violence is sufficient to cause his mother to flee to the altars, but only when Polydectes attempts to marry his mother. The son does not lash out at Dictys, a more influential and authoritative male presence in his own life, nor does he purposely punish Acrisius for the attempted murder of his mother because these men do not threaten Perseus' possession of his mother. Perseus is only threatened by another male when the other tries sexually possess the mother in marriage. Since Polydectes is cast as a villain by Apollodorus and Proppian sequence, we can assume his nature has always been malicious and often violent. The fact that it takes a proposed wedding to his mother to stir

[6] Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Trans. A.A. Brill, (New York: Random House, 1950): 70-173.
[7] Ibid., 161 .

Perseus to action strengthens the case for the son's competition as a suitor, though Perseus' desire does not manifest itself to the extent which Oedipus' does. However, the conflation of Andromeda and Danaë does suggest that Perseus symbolically possesses the mother through his marriage to Andromeda.

Medusa's Head

Perseus' journey to manhood, which begins and ends with possession of the mother, also includes the destruction of the feminine sexual power through his slaying of the Gorgon Medusa. This event has an undisputed place in Proppian sequence as steps sixteen (Struggle), eighteen (Victory), and nineteen (Liquidation). Freud provides the basis for an interpretation of Medusa as a symbol of female sexuality, specifically that of the mother in his brief essay "Medusa's Head" published posthumously in 1940. The essay appears to be a sketch of a more extensive unrealized work.[8] Though undeveloped, Freud proposes that the decapitation of Medusa is a symbol for castration and that this castration is directly linked with seeing the Gorgon's face.[9] Freud sees Medusa's head as a representation of female genitalia, "essentially those of [the] mother."[10] When men are confronted with this head, they immediately turn to stone, they harden. Freud sees this hardening as a metaphor for erection and, therefore, reassurance to the male that he is not castrated. Freud also reads Medusa's hair as a reassurance against castration. He says that the snakes mitigate the fear of castration by "replac[ing] the penis, the absence of which is the cause of the horror."[11] However, this proposition is flawed. By turning to stone, yes, the men are erect, but they cannot move; they are rendered completely impotent and thus effectively castrated even if they retain the male member Medusa lacks. In this way, Medusa is not reassurance against the fear of castration, as Freud suggests, but the party directly responsible for the loss of male power.

While Freud reads the snakes as phallic, he only approaches this symbolism from the perspective of a male fearing castration. Medusa is extraordinarily powerful as a monstrous female with both male and female attributes. Her masculinity manifests itself through her possession of not one, but multiple metaphorical snake-hair penises. Medusa also fulfills a female role by giving birth to Pegasus and Chrysaor (*Library*, 2.4.2). But, unlike normal women, she does not carry these beastly children in her womb, but her neck. Her method of giving birth represents her dichotomy. Yes, she bears children, but she does not depend on female genitalia to give birth. She is a monstrous female who is identified as woman but lacks a feminine form. Apollodorus describes Medusa as a hybrid beast: "the Gorgons had heads twined about with the scales of dragons, and great tusks like swine's, and brazen hands, and golden wings, by which they flew." (*Library*, 2.4.2) Medusa's power is directly related to her anti-feminine form. Her power resides in the face which is surrounded by snake-hair.

Medusa is gendered feminine, even though she is not human but a conglomeration of creatures. Since she is more female, the phallic hair and the power of her gaze are manifestations of unnatural masculine attributes and therefore represent power in woman. In order to come into his manhood, Perseus must destroy Medusa, take her power, and then use that power to possess his mother. Perseus kills Medusa, takes her head, the physical representation of the combination of male and female power, and then destroys his enemies with the head. The boy must conquer his fear of castration, confront the sexuality of his mother, and ultimately dominate woman through his newfound manhood. In this myth, there is no way a man can exist if a powerful female exists. And if this female is, as Freud suggests, a representation of the boy's mother, then the decapitation of Medusa represents a

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[8] David Richter, Footnote 1 in Sigmund Freud, "Medusa's Head" in *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*, ed. David H. Richter, 3rd ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2007), 533.

[9] Freud, "Medusa's Head," 533.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Freud, "Medusa's Head," 533.

destruction of the power of the mother over the son. The boy has outgrown the feminine authority of his mother and come into his own distinctly masculine power. It is only after slaying Medusa and separating himself from his mother, both physically through his leaving home in step eleven, and metaphorically through his conquering of the sexual mother represented by Medusa's head, that Perseus is able to gain his own kingdom.

Female Monsters

 The necessity of destroying female power is not unique to the Perseus myth. Many, if not most, monsters are gendered female. The sphinx is given the head and chest of a woman, Charybdis was once a nymph, Scylla was a girl, the sirens are female, and the Harpies are bird-women hybrids. The need to destroy these monsters so that boys can come into their own masculine power is presupposed on there actually being a feminine power worthy of repression. Freud's analysis largely ignores this power, seeing Medusa as lacking the male instead of embodying both the male and female. Medusa is able to be both these things, a symbol of feminine power, essentially a corruption of a powerful mother goddess from a previous matriarchal society,[12] and a means by which ancient men could symbolically conquer the fear of castration.

 When we place the psychoanalytic interpretations of Medusa within the context of Proppian sequence, the conquering of female power becomes a step in a standardized plot. Oedipus kills a female embodiment of wisdom, the sphinx, to become king of Thebes. Similarly, Jason kills the Harpies in his quest for manhood. Hercules kills Hippolyta, queen of the Amazons in his journey. The myths of these men, like Perseus', generally follow Proppian sequence, although an in-depth analysis for each is beyond the scope of this paper. There are a few minor discrepancies, for example, Oedipus is branded as an infant rather than by the villain during the final battle, and since these stories are largely a series of tasks put before a hero, steps like questing for magical aids and conquering monsters occur multiple times. The parallels among these stories are made obvious when Proppian sequence is imposed on them. Once the sequence has been applied, the correlating steps can be matched, leading to a comparison of, for example, female monsters. The commonalities between these monsters within the sequence can then be examined using one or more other approaches, for example, Freudian psychoanalysis.

Conclusion

 Proppian sequence can for the most part be successfully applied to the myth of Perseus and Medusa. Although the sequence terminates before the narrative concludes, the series of steps, from abstention to wedding, is fulfilled. The destruction of Polyedectes and his allies, a critical passage for application of Freudian psychoanalysis, can be considered to have a place in the sequence when taken as a repetition of the destruction of Phineus and his comrades. The death of Acrisius is more difficult to situate within the sequence but the recurrence of this symbolic patricide in a variety of young-hero myths suggests that a broader structuralist rather than distinctly Proppian approach is not out of the question. By applying the sequence to the Perseus myth, it becomes apparent that female monsters and sexual desire for the mother have a place in a standardized plot that recurs across the broad spectrum of youthful-hero myths. The Freudian interpretation of these standardized features speaks to the larger cultural fears and experiences which spawn these stories. When used in tandem in the Perseus myth these two complementary interpretative methods show us that the cultural fears and desires put forth by Freud have distinct and definite place within the structure of the Greek young-hero myths.

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[12] Susan R. Bowers, "Medusa and the Female Gaze," NWSA Journal, vol. 2, no 2 (1990): 217, www.jstor.org/stable/4316018.

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Gender is a Thing:

Defining the Body, Object, and Space of Womanhood in Jewish Antiquity

Abstract:
This essay explores some fundamental aspects of the gendered identity of the Jewess in Ancient Israel. Specifically, it focuses on the time period immediately before and during Roman occupation of the Holy Land, the region then called Roman Palestine. The paper examines some primary Jewish scriptural texts of the rabbinic tradition, as well as material evidence from a particular excavation at the ancient settlement of Qumran. Furthermore, I incorporate a range of theoretical work on pertinent topics—from gender by Judith Butler, to things by Jane Bennet, and then space by Cynthia Baker—in order to link the material discourses of the Rabbis and of archaeology into a more complete picture of the female Jewish identity. The overall intent is to show the dynamic and complicated nature of gender identity during this time. Gender is a moving force, associating both human and non-human actors. It is a common tendency within historicist scholarship to get lost in misappropriated and anachronistic terms of gender identity. I show that by incorporating bodies, objects, and spaces into the gender equation, we can discern the multifaceted nature of societal life in antiquity from reductive assumptions. Societies are as in flux as the people and objects they contain; values and categories are more accurate if they capture such movement. One way to do so is to acknowledge the interplay of bodies and objects within space. This method shows us how one spatial-object arrangement leads to very different assumptions and identifications of gender than another. Of course, it is vital to incorporate as many factors as possible, but without testimony from living individuals, we must look to objects for evidence, for life.

Jewish scriptural tradition commonly outlines gender difference through objects that conceal bodies and establish conforming social categories of woman and man.[1] In compliance with the biblical nudity prohibition, clothing acts on sexed bodies—male and female—in ways that form gender categories.[2] In this essay, I consider rabbinic literature on women alongside an archaeological investigation of women at the ancient Jewish settlement of Qumran. I show that the rabbinic *Mishnah* and *Tosefta* portray gender largely in terms of specific objects. Similarly, the archaeological study of Qumran by Jodi Magness positively associates gender identities with material evidence. Following a theory of the discursive construction of gender proposed by Judith Butler, I discuss how objects are discursive entities, carrying with them notions identity. I suggest, however, that neither historical texts nor archeology effectively capture the foundation of gender categories in such objects.[3] Drawing from Jane Bennet's theory of *thing-power,* I argue that the objects discussed by the Rabbis and later by Magness are not in themselves inanimate gender labels, but rather moving actants affecting and arranging human bodies within space.[4] Human bodies and nonhuman objects interact and together form a gendering space. Here, I turn to the work of Cynthia Baker on space and material discourse in Jewish antiquity in order to show how space adds to the gender equation. Human-object interactions gender sexed bodies through the discursive creation and arrangement of intimate space. This rearrangement of space strongly defined gender identity for Israelite women of Roman Palestine.

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[1] Grace I. Emerson, *Women in Ancient Israel,* 1989, 387. Emerson cites Gen. 38:15 and Prov. 7:10 in which female prostitutes are "recognizable by their dress."

[2] Genesis 3:7-11, 21, *The Holy Bible*, NSRV. "Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves."

[3] David Kraemer, "The Mishnah," *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, 2006, 299.

[4] Jane Bennet, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, 2010, viii. "An actant is a source of action that can be either human or nonhuman; it is that which has efficacy, can *do* things."

Without testimony from women in Jewish antiquity, we have no way of understanding their gendered interactions but through the objects they most often came into contact with in the spaces they most often occupied. To strengthen my point throughout, I focus on the function and production of clothing to show how those objects most frequently and intimately contacting human bodies produce particularly gendered spaces.

Much scholarship on the subject of feminism and gender has afforded the conclusion that gender is "the discursive means by which sex is established as prediscursive natural, and gender is radically independent of biological sex."[5] Gender evolved completely from social discourse on sexed bodies. Gender categories rely on cultural expectations rather than wholly sexual ones. Objects and their social functions described by both the Rabbis, patriarchs of Jewish political and religious leadership in antiquity, and by biblical archaeologists of today, embody such gendered discourse.[6] "Gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts."[7] The identity of the Jewish woman I am exploring is constituted in the specific historical context marked by the rabbinic doctrine and the material relations of the late ancient near east through acts engaging the female body with objects.

Substantial evidence shows that in the formative years of Judaism, the sexual category of female became overwhelmingly linked to the social category of woman—a category for the most part considered subordinate to men. I show how woman as a category is socially constituted in material objects like the dress or spindle and the spaces in which those objects were relevant. Most commonly, the distinction arises within rabbinic literature between a husband and his wife, where the former possesses ownership of the latter *chattel*, or property.[8] For the Rabbis, the female sexual role becomes synonymous with the woman-gendered role of wife. The gendering of female bodies is articulated through human interaction with nonhuman objects.

For example, Chapter 5 Mishnah 5 of Tractate Ketubbot—oral Torah concerning *ketubah*, or marriage contracts—dictates: "These are the labors that a wife performs for her husband: she grinds [grain to make flour], she bakes [bread], and she launders [clothes]; she cooks, and she nurses her child; she makes the bed and she works in wool."

A related passage in Tosefta Ketubbot 7:6 reads:

> And if she goes out with her head uncovered, or goes out and her clothes are disheveled, or she is too presumptuous with her [male] slaves or with her [male] neighbors, or she goes out and spins in the marketplace, or bathes in the public bath with everyone, she goes out [is divorced] without her *ketubah* because she has not behaved with him [her husband] in accord with the law of Moses and Israel.

Besides issues requiring a lengthy discussion of *Torah*, time, and context, several aspects of the two excerpts are pertinent to this essay. The Rabbinic commentaries, though belonging to different documents, authors, and dates of composition, have much in common. The passages subjectify individuals under the broader category of "woman," but not directly through biological, reproductive, or sexual categories pertaining to female. Instead, in both passages, "woman" is a relevant social category only where an individual is associated with the articles, objects, and spaces mentioned in the manner required. The gender category

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[5] Judy Attfield and Pat Kirkham, *The Gendered Object*, 1996, pp. 207, citing Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 1990, 6–7.

[6] David Kraemer, "The Mishnah," *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, 299. "Rabbi(s)" in this context refers exclusively to the legal and political authorities of Jewish life in late antiquity. Halakha, or Jewish legal documents, such as the Mishnah and Tosefta, are attributed to Rabbinic authorship.

[7] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 1990, 140.

[8] Discussed further in Judith R. Wegner, *Chattel or Person?: The Status of Women in the Mishnah*, 1988.

requires no explicit prediscursive basis, but rather the interaction of human bodies with nonhuman entities (wool, head covering, laundry, etc.).

Spinning, the act of turning wool into thread, directly involved the legal demands corresponding to the Jewess' identity: she must work in wool for her husband and she must not spin in the marketplace. The regulatory guidelines for womanhood are dependent upon the interplay in space between individual and object, i.e. between a female body and a wool spindle. Likewise, the societal role of woman, constituted by certain duties and objects, rather than by biology and reproduction, supersedes the sexual role of female.

In addition to being socially liable for the production of clothing, the Jewess' sexual propriety and responsibility is intricately weaved into that clothing. Her domestic, sexual responsibility—servicing her husband—is linked to the laundering and upkeep of the garments worn by members of her husband's household. The *Mishnah* and *Tosefta* imply that should she violate her domestic duty, laundry, she transgresses both the private and public constitutes of her identity of Jewish woman. If she fails to provide clean clothing for her household, she obstructs a legal underpinning of rabbinic society by breaking the *ketubah*, or marriage contract, with her husband. If she fails to provide clean clothing for herself and "goes out and her clothes are disheveled," then she violates the unwritten contract between a married woman and society, where a public misfeasance on the part of the woman reflects the incompetence of her husband: "The soundness of the domicile reflects on the well-being of society, as though a man whose wife is capable of betraying him is, by extension, incapable of governing his fellow men."[9] The Rabbis evoke an interesting power dynamic: wives' duties and roles—their identities—are subordinate to and in service of their husbands, yet they posses, through inaction, the power to disrupt the stability of this relationship and affect the reputation of their male overseers.

In his book, *Tasting the Dish: Rabbinic Rhetorics of Sexuality*, Michael Satlow points to another way "maleness" and male power are inextricably bound to female compliance with Rabbinic conceptions of womanly roles and objects. Citing the *Midrash*[10], Satlow discusses the aforementioned feminine task of spinning thread performed instead by a male: "'The male who handles the spindle' [is] one like a woman. To be like a woman, the *Midrash* says, means to be sexually penetrated."[11] Male sexuality depends upon the gendering of females into women. The sexual category of female is not mentioned opposite male. Instead, only the gender category of woman captures the all-encompassing sexual and social identity of the Jewess. Once again, social gender categories, as articulated through objects (the spindle) supersede sexual categories.

When gendered objects and tasks are transgressed, the social-sexual equilibrium is disrupted. In this way, women potentially negotiated some aspects of their gender identity by interacting with objects typically evaded by men. These are just some of the ways textual evidence points to the gendering of interactions between individuals and objects in Jewish antiquity. As I will soon discuss, however, the accuracy of mishnaic and midrashic prescriptions of Jewish society remain ambiguous: Satlow concludes that "The relationship between...rabbinic constructions of sexuality and actual Jewish female life and practice is far from clear."[12] The Rabbis envisioned sexual roles in compliance with social ones, but this may not always have been the case. Texts merely utilize certain objects like head coverings or spindles to label people most closely associated with such objects. The objects themselves, outside of texts, similarly create a gender discourse.

Clothing, or its constituent fabrics and mode of production, significantly mediated sexual and social identity. Men and women's clothing were different; men did not wear head

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[9] Helena Zlotnick, *Dinah's Daughters: Gender and Judaism from the Hebrew Bible to Late Antiquity*, 2002, 108.

[10] *Midrash*, Rabbinic homiletic document of Biblical interpretation used for ceremony and teaching.

[11] Michael Satlow, *Tasting the Dish: Rabbinic Rhetorics of Sexuality*, 1995, 212.

[12] Ibid., 332.

coverings. Interestingly, clothing not only subjected women to boundaries of legal identity discourse, but ironically provided them a productive niche through which they survived and sustained the power relations framing that identity. In her Foucauldian[13] examination of head coverings, Susan Weiss affirms that "these power relations refer to the demarcation of the exclusive and unilateral property rights of a husband in his wife's sexuality."[14] Embedded in an article of clothing were many of the sexual restrictions necessary to keep Jewish social life afloat.

If we were to assume that textile production was a significant occupation of the late ancient Jewish woman, and if we consider the *Tosefta* passage quoted above about spatial regulations concerning spinning, then we involve ourselves in a larger conversation about the location and presence of women within public and private space—a conversation that both Cynthia Baker and Jodi Magness engage, albeit quite differently, in their respective books. As I will show, the presence and position of women within such space is articulated through objects they most often interacted with. Even where the historical presence of female bodies is questionable, archaeologists manage to recreate gender topography through objects linking human bodies with social roles.

In her book, *Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Jodi Magness spends a chapter discussing tensions between textual and material evidence about the presence of women at the ancient community of Qumran, a settlement adjacent to the caves in which the Dead Sea Scrolls were found.[15] Magness attempts to understand the gender dynamic of Qumran by analyzing the archaeological material evidence alongside *Mishnah* and ancient texts by Philo, Josephus, and Pliny on the Dead Sea communities and Jewish sectarians.[16] Magness reasons with the ancient scholars, affirming their claim that Qumran was inhabited by the Essenes, a sect noted for their ascetic tendencies.[17] Magness is troubled by Philo's misogynistic outlook toward asceticism and male sexuality. She quotes Philo: "No Essaean (Essene) takes a woman because women are selfish, excessively jealous, skillful in ensnaring the morals of a spouse and in seducing him by endless charms."[18] Male celibacy, a common trope of asceticism, must have appealed to Philo, encouraging him to portray the Essenes of Qumran as a womanless and therefore morally exemplary community. Thus, Magness reads through the bias in Philo's words and, though she agrees that the Essene sect did inhabit Qumran, she is not convinced that the settlement was completely devoid of women. Citing another passage by Josephus, "who is the only one of these writers with a first-hand knowledge of the Essenes," Magness invokes the idea that "at least some of Essenes were married and had families."[19] If Qumran was an Essene community, as Magness believes, then the testimony of Josephus indicates the possible presence of women there. She goes about resolving this tension by examining the material evidence of the Qumran ruins, using gendered objects like clothing and spindles to support her case.

After a thorough survey of the Qumran dwellings, Magness draws conclusions regarding women at Qumran, claiming that the evidence "attests to the presence of women,

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[13] Foucauldian, of Michel Foucault, b. 1926, a French cultural theorist and historian, notable for *The History of Sexuality* and *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison.* Foucauldian in this sense specifically refers to analysis using Foucault's concepts of power and subjectivication.

[14] Susan Weiss, "Under Cover: Demystification of Women's Head Coverings in Jewish Law," 2009, 90.

[15] Jodi Magness, "An Introduction to the Archaeology of Qumran," *Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 2002, 163. The Dead Sea Scrolls are ancient Jewish scriptural scrolls. Their discovery in the 1950's by French archaeologist Roland de Vaux made available myriad new resources for Biblical scholarship and archaeology.

[16] Jodi Magness, "Women and the Cemetery at Qumran," *Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 2002, 163. Magness refers to major authority of Judaism during the Roman occupation of Palestine (First to Second Centuries CE); the ancient historians Flavius Josephus, Philo Judaeus, and Pliny the Elder.

[17] Jodi Magness, "Women and the Cemetery at Qumran," *Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 2002, 163.

[18] Ibid, 164.

[19] Ibid, 165.

but only very minimally."[20] The "evidence" she refers to comprises four beads and one spindle whorl.[21] A conclusion based on the discovery of four beads and one spindle whorl reveals embedded prior discourse on gender and objects.

Conveniently, in a subsection, "Gendered Objects from Qumran", she outlines her method for determining women's presence at the site.[22] According to Magness, woman gendered objects are "objects that were used or owned exclusively by women".[23] A claim that a single spindle whorl was owned or operated solely by women in a purportedly all-male community, however, would necessarily rely on evidence not gathered from the site. Magness uses the mishnaic tractate Ketubbot 5:5 (cited above), that characterizes spinning as a woman's duty. Additionally she claims that "spinning, laundering, water fetching, cooking, and pottery production have traditionally been major female activities worldwide."[24] Magness clearly brought exterior gender conceptions to light in her study—conceptions, I believe, taken from the ability of objects to affect our perception of gender. It is possible that in a society without women, 'traditional' duties like spinning were necessarily performed by men. Also, a sectarian community, with its own rites concerning men and women, likely dismissed rabbinic legal rulings on gendered duties. After all, Magness points out that the Essenes performed the ritual immersion bath, or *mikveh*, differently from the way the Rabbis dictate: "Women observed at least some of the Essenes' purity regulations, including immersion in ritual baths (while wearing a dress to ensure modesty)."[25]

I do not wish to dismiss the conclusions of Magness' findings, but only to question the ways in which gender identity and objects are inseparable within her work.[26] She associates traditionally gendered tasks and objects with a gendered presence. Texts associating the *mikveh* dress or the spindle with womanhood ground her argument. Additionally, the gender conventions outlined by texts do not always reflect the lived experience of women in antiquity, yet their characterization of material entities affects the way scholars perceive gender during that time. Magness' discussion of gendered objects is most convincing when she cites the spindle whorl or the dresses worn by women in the *mikveh* because the majority of texts she references discuss such objects. Without first-person accounts, Magness imagines gender in late antiquity as a function of the interaction between individual an object. This serves to further my claim about the intimately gendered nature of clothing in Jewish antiquity.

Clothing, as an object relevant throughout history, acts on both the observer and the observed. Both its everyday use and mode of production reveal constructions of identity. Through the continual contact with these objects the gender identity of woman developed, allowing the dress or the spindle to become synonymous with woman and woman's work.

If gendered objects are of such interest to the rabbis and to archaeology of antiquity, then perhaps objects have a force of their own—a force that heavily impacts the way we perceive identity. This force allows us to imagine the lived experiences of women through the everyday objects they used.

Jane Bennet, in her treatise on *thing-power*, theorizes "objects appear more vividly as things, that is, as entities not entirely reducible to the contexts in which (human) subjects set them; never entirely exhausted by their semiotics."[27] Human carriers set objects, or things, in

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[20] Jodi Magness, "Women and the Cemetery at Qumran," 2002, pp. 178.

[21] Ibid.,178.

[22] Ibid., 175.

[23] Ibid, 176.

[24] Ibid, pp. 176.

[25] Ibid., 166. Magness explores the mikveh ritual of the Essenes in more depth in "Clothing and Tzitzit," *Stone and Dung, Oil and Spit: Jewish Daily Life in the Time of Jesus*, 2011, pp. 108. Jewish women were required to immerse in the bath after menstruation before deemed ritually pure for sexual intercourse.

[26] Judy Attfield and Pat Kirkham, *The Gendered Object*, 1996, 1.

[27] Jane Bennet, "The Force of Things: Steps toward an Ecology of Matter," 2004, 359.

Jewish antiquity in place. The woman spinning wool into thread, later wearing that thread as part of a clothing garment, involved identity constructions that can now only be understood in terms of such nonhuman players or 'actants'.[28] Objects like the spindle whorl or the *mikveh* dress have traveled far greater distances through time and contexts than their human counterparts, and any discussion of them involves material discourses gathered along the way. "Things have the power to addle and rearrange thoughts and perceptions."[29]

Perhaps the things or gendered objects Jodi Magness found from Qumran engaged her in a negotiation of history, forcing her to associate certain identities with certain objects involving their own discourses. Also, the objects themselves, obstructing and articulating space through duties and roles, may serve as an integral component showing how and why gender was constructed and conceived by the Rabbis and archaeologists alike. Cynthia Baker, in her book, *Rebuilding the House of Israel: Architectures of Gender in Jewish Antiquity*, carefully explores how material discourse categorizes or genders ways of seeing and studying objects and individuals in Roman Palestine. While Magness believes certain objects indicate the presence of women within a community, Baker examines how space conversely affects how we categorize objects and their associated genders. I show that space is a definitive criterion of gender identity dependent upon the interplay of individual and object.

Empty space is not segregative, but objects, in tandem with human bodies, obstruct space and ways of observing that space. As a result, space becomes divided by the interaction between material entities and human bodies which in turn become socially labeled or gendered. In the chapter, "Space, Material Discourses, and the Art of Cultural Production*"*, Baker illustrates some of the tensions involving female bodies and space found in textual sources. She analyzes the debate concerning public and private space and contests the conventional view—where men occupy public social space and women were excluded to private domestic space: "The more public parts of houses, including courtyards, were discerned to be men's quarters, while more isolated rooms were identified as women's."[30] This view ignores the undeniable interaction of male and females. It also ignores a key component of those spaces: objects. Even the Rabbis, with their idealistic legal picture of Jewish life, recognized the presence of women in public space. Citing the *Tosefta* passage quoted above, Baker argues that it envisions a society in which a woman "must take care that her body is covered by her clothing; that she must not go out to spin yarn in the *shuk*."[31] Despite the subjectivation of women, the Rabbis' passage only imagines the way women *should* act with their bodies and objects. It creates new categories of public and private through obstructing the observation and movement of sexualized female bodies with woman-gendered clothing and objects.

Clothing made and worn by women created new gendered spaces more complex and dynamic than thought in the dichotomous public and private view. Women could conceal themselves certain ways and in certain places by their own accord, allowing them to navigate the stringencies of male control via their own interaction with their own objects. In this way, women's identities were a product of their involvement with activities like spinning and objects like the spindle, yarn, and clothing.

In Jodi Magness' book discussed above, she elaborates on the spindle whorl found in the excavation of Qumran: "The spindle whorl comes from L7...on the margins of the settlement."[32] Locus 7, according to figure 64 in Magness' book, is a small interior room

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[28] See footnote 6.
[29] Jane Bennet, "The Force of Things: Steps toward an Ecology of Matter," 2004, 348.
[30] Cynthia Baker, "Space, Material Discourses, and the Art of Cultural Production," *Rebuilding the House of Israel: Architectures of Gender in Jewish Antiquity*, 2002, pp. 16.
[31] Ibid., 20. The s*huk;* Hebrew for the marketplace.
[32] Jodi Magness, "Women and the Cemetery at Qumran," 2002, 177-178.

bordering a courtyard, with no entrance or exit but through the courtyard.[33] According to Baker, "Archaeological evidence suggests cooking, laundering, etc. took place in courtyards." But, as Baker goes on to say, courtyards are pictured as public and therefore male gendered space. Magness' evidence points to the presence of women performing gendered tasks in private space, but nonetheless adjacent to and inevitably interacting with public space. Hence, discourse on the subject manages to muddle strict spatial and object divisions between man and woman. If gendered tasks like laundering and spinning occurred near or within public space, then males necessarily performed them. *Or*, because of the space, labor and resources involved in making and laundering textiles, women controlled or affected, in some respects, the gender dynamic of that space through objects vital to their identity. Texts may reveal objects, space, and bodies in one way while physical material evidence testifies to another: "There may sometimes be a perceptible lack of correspondence between the images we derive from diverse textual sources and those we derive from diverse material remains."[34] While the rabbis once sculpted their ideal Jewish society, "archeology similarly provides substantiation for a particular *gender* mythology."[35] Material discourse establishes a relation between object and individual, appropriating identity categories via the way such objects act on the observer of that relation.

Baker describes the way household objects like cooking utensils and grinding tools are typically gendered, masking their multi-functional aspect: "few preindustrial tools are task-exclusive."[36] Hence, Magness may have been incorrect in determining a gendered presence based on the location of purportedly gendered objects. Clearly, such objects affected the historical picture Magness wanted to portray. Yet, as I have argued, clothing makes a substantial case for gendering because of its continuous contact with sexed bodies. It is easier to differentiate gendered clothing than objects. For Magness, it is as easy as color-coding: "Some of the brightly-colored clothing probably belonged to women."[37] Yet, "all material artifacts are not simply descriptive; they are discursive," explains Baker.[38] As the spindle's discursive affect entails spatial regulations, material production, and gendered tasks, an article of clothing reveals the segregation of bodies into identifiable social groups.

Clothing is an especially valuable site for locating discourses of gender identity both past and present. To use Baker's words, clothing is one of those "mechanisms whereby the significance of space may be differently constituted by the situating of men and/or women."[39] Clothing situates men and women in different spaces, interactions, and therefore within different social categories. "The body is neither a purely natural given, nor is it merely a textual metaphor" and clothing reconfigures the physical/spatial interaction of bodies in ways that cannot be exclusively represented through text or material.[40] While both reveal insights as to the interaction of objects and human bodies, it is important to recognize the dynamic character of clothing as it demarcates identity by arranging new public and private spaces. Clothing "disrupts the common gaze, much as the walls of a house do."[41] A woman producing that clothing, concealed behind house walls, interacts with certain objects intrinsic to her identity. While the identity of woman may rely in part on one's sex, or one's presence with certain spaces, it ultimately depends upon the individual, sexed body, interacting with objects in such spaces. "We *do* have some access to a number of significant Jewish cultural

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[33] Jodi Magness, "Illustrations," *Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 2002, xliv.

[34] Cynthia Baker, "Space, Material Discourses, and the Art of Cultural Production," 2002, 21.

[35] Ibid, 23.

[36] Ibid, 24.

[37] Jodi Magness, "Women and the Cemetery at Qumran," 2002, 180.

[38] Cynthia Baker, "Space, Material Discourses, and the Art of Cultural Production," 2002, 25.

[39] Ibid., 29.

[40] Ibid

[41] Cynthia Baker, "The Well-Ordered *Bayit*: Bodies, Houses, and Rabbis in Ancient Galilee," *Rebuilding the House of Israel: Architectures of Gender in Jewish Antiquity*, 2002, 63.

practices via the material remains associated with them."[42] If we examine closely the overtly gendered material remains of Jewish women from late antiquity or the texts describing their interactions, it is possible to discern the combined force of human and object in constructing social identity.

Clothing, as I have mentioned, obstructs bodies in different ways. Objects reveal meaning depending on whom they come into contact with and how they shape perceptions of human bodies. Male hair is within public view, but women with head coverings obstruct that part of their body, and create a new concealed private space disclosing their identity. Furthermore, clothing affects movement not only kinetically, by the way it obstructs limbs from moving in certain directions at certain speeds, but also by marking bodies and limiting their social interactions. The rabbis would deplore a public conversation between a married woman with a head covering and a male merchant in the marketplace. Then again, as seen in the book of Genesis, the way a woman dresses may solicit certain interactions involving entirely different relations of power and identity.[43] It may be easy to assume all women lived the same lives in ancient Israel, like Deuteronomy or the Rabbis imagined, but as the Essenes prove, the societal landscape back then was not homogeneous. Women's lives and the objects they used speak of varied experience. There are often discrepancies between how an object is perceived within texts and what an object reveals about material space. Yet, objects, because of their vitality, consistently show us how to articulate identity. In addition to all the potential discourses—whether of its function or production—embedded in a specific article of clothing, it and other gendered objects as I have shown pervade far longer than the bodies and voices they most closely contacted. They are characterized by a kind of *thing-power*, a force that affects the perceiver and perceived. Objects move bodies and they move space. In sum, new arrangements of identity can be mapped. Material entities act in and through sociopolitical regimes, enabling them to determine which aspects of identity stay, and which ones are lost in time. We may be stuck articulating the identity of the ancient Jewess through objects, and these articulations reveal as much about our own notions of gender as they do those of individuals of antique Jewish society.

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[42] Cynthia Baker, "Space, Material Discourses, and the Art of Cultural Production," 2002, 31.
[43] Genesis 38: 15, *The Holy Bible*, NRSV. "When Judah saw her, he thought her to be a prostitute, for she had covered her face."

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Medieval & Renaissance

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Macbeth and the Marxist Aviary Structure

Abstract

As Raymond Williams notes: "A lived hegemony is always a process" (112); however, those who are in power or those who support the dominant power have the burden of making it seem like it is static and unchanging. This is one of Shakespeare's effects in writing Macbeth: he creates a representation, or perhaps illusion, of the feudal system as an ultimately legitimate and infallible institution. The play serves not only to strengthen the ideals of feudalism and the hierarchy of the nobility but specifically to tout the superiority of James' line. Indeed, as G.W. Williams states: "There is no reason [then] to hold that Shakespeare would have been unready, unwilling, or unable to write a play that had special reference to the reigning monarch" (13) – in fact many believe that Shakespeare commonly wrote in order to appease the current monarch and people in positions of higher power. Power structures and ideologies are both challenged and reaffirmed throughout the human and nonhuman –specifically avian – worlds within the play, a technique that eventually reestablishes the hereditary monarchy as the most practical and natural government during a period of turmoil in Europe – a period influenced greatly by James' dual kingship over both Scotland and England.

James believed "King's descent [should be] maintained, and the heritage of the succession of the Monarchy which hath been a kingdom to which I am in descent three hundred years before Christ" (G.W. Williams 18); Not only should the monarchy be lineage-based, but it should also be ordained by God as an institution presented "before Christ." To become a king without being ordained by God, and without following the hereditary order, was unnatural and therefore sinful, an ideology that is circulated throughout Macbeth. In the play, society's human hierarchy is highlighted and paralleled by the animal hierarchy, with Shakespeare presenting the order of noble to lesser birds to ultimately equate with the virtue of monarchy, and noble blood with natural law.

Within the court there is a fairly straightforward human hierarchy that ranges from the ruling class to the classes of the ruled, loosely following from Duncan down through the thanes and on to the porter, servants, etc. This spectrum includes the "dominant" and "subordinate" classes (Williams 109), but Macbeth focuses primarily on the subversion within the dominant order; the work is "in the interest of the class that is dominant in their society" (Parkinson 1).

The power structure of birds in Macbeth is demonstrated in two main ways which relate to the food-based economy of the animal kingdom: the size of the bird, and its place (in relation to the other birds) in the food chain. The order of the bird hierarchy, ranking from largest to smallest (with dietary habits – carnivore, insectivore, omnivore – taken into consideration when relevant), is eagle, falcon, owl, raven, rook, magpie, crow (chough), swallow, martlet, sparrow, wren (Dunn and Alderfer, 1-464). By drawing a metaphorical parallel between the bird hierarchy and feudalism, Shakespeare equates feudal class order with natural law.

Following an attack on the battlefield at the play's start, Duncan asks "Dismayed not this our captains, Macbeth and Banquo?" to which the Captain responds, "Yes, as sparrows eagles, or the hare the lion" (1.2.34-5). Macbeth and Banquo are thus presented as the power equivalent of eagles and lions, masters of the food chain, playing a critical role in the food-based economy of the animal hierarchy. Meanwhile, the Scottish rebels they fight are compared to the low-order sparrows and hares. This affirms the ideology that the strong – those with more economic and political power – will always defeat the weak. This is the first

discussion of ecological order within the play, but it is also one of the only instances where that natural order, as well as the order within the human hierarchy, is actually stable – until the end of the play, in which the status quo is notably restored.

The bird imagery returns with the arrival of King Duncan at Iverness: "The raven himself is hoarse/ That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan" (1.5.37-8). The raven is a commonly understood symbol for ill tidings; "It was supposed by the superstitious to bring bad luck and to forebode death" (Coles 45). The raven does not belong in the same class as falcons, eagles, and owls, which are all birds of prey, but it still maintains a cloak of power due to its placement as the largest omnivore in the group, and also its comparable size to the owl (Dunn and Alderfer 124-256). Like the witches, the raven is close to the superior order, but does not quite qualify as a member. Also like the witches, the raven holds the power of prediction and foreshadows events to come, not the least of which being the impending murder of Duncan. The raven can be compared to the "Weird Sisters" in that it is equally mysterious – its call is a foreboding "low drawn out croak" and it is identifiable by its unkempt "thick, shaggy, black bristles" (Dunn and Alderfer 326). Both parties could be considered "so withered and so wild in their attire," as Banquo proclaims the witches to be (1.3.41).

With parallels drawn between the raven and the witches in terms of their physical attributes and magical and superstitious power – as Brooke says, "myth and naturalism" have a "mutual interdependence – it is fair to say the raven mirrors the witches' place outside of the hierarchy, giving them the to power to operate outside of its assigned order (142). They represent an external force that Macbeth is susceptible to because he is not of legitimate lineage – his rule is not ordained by God, which in Shakespeare's time is equivalent to not being consistent with natural law. That which is unnatural is evil; that which is natural is divine. In James' Daemonologie, a text published in 1597 which Shakespeare likely would have been familiar with, the King further argues that there is an "inverted relation between the monarch and the witch, for if the monarch does not punish the witch severely, he is committing 'treason' against God and committing a sin 'comparable' to witchcraft itself" (Fischlin 10). Therefore, by following the premonitions of the witches and acting upon them as if they are fate, Macbeth operates against the will of God, thereby affirming his place within the unnatural order. Macbeth teaches "that power corrupts, but also that knowledge corrupts" – a distinction that is evident as Macbeth follows his prophesied path of ambition to his eventual downfall (Curran 392).

One of the most definitive comparisons that can be made between the bird hierarchy and the human hierarchy is the argument that the owl is reflective of Macbeth himself. When Lady Macbeth waits for Macbeth to return from killing Duncan, she hears the screech of an owl, and compares him to a "fatal bellman" (2.2.3), one whose job "was often sent to spend the night with a man condemned to death" (Coles 82). If Duncan is the condemned man, then Macbeth can thus be taken as the bellman. Furthermore, "The obscure bird/ clamored the livelong night (2.3.52-3)," with a unprecedented loudness and inappropriateness that signifies Macbeth's own shortcomings in the murder – his anxiety, his doubts, and senseless taking of the bloodied daggers. The owl is a creature with "erratic and wavering flight (Heinzel and Woodcock 54)," signifiers for Macbeth's own hesitancy.

The owl's role in the destruction of the bird hierarchy is another subtle parallel between the human world and the natural world. Shortly after the murder, the Old Man states: "'Tis unnatural/ Even like the deed that's done. On Tuesday last/ A falcon, tow'ring in her pride of place,/ Was by a mousing owl hawked at and killed" (3.1.10-3). The owl not only kills the falcon, a bird that precedes it in the hierarchy, but he also takes on the attributes of a hawk in doing so. This bird is thus an impostor and a defiler of natural society. The choice of the day of the week is also significant; the word "Tuesday" comes the Old English form of "Tiw," the name of the Nordic god of war and law (Daly and Rengel 108).

With this consideration, having such a disruption of power on a day named for order and regulation further shows the unnatural nature of the distortion of the hierarchy. As Macbeth poses as a gracious host and proceeds to kill the king, his senior, he follows the same pattern of deceit as the ambitious owl. The falcon could be representative of Duncan, thrown out of his lofty perch through his murder by an inferior. In committing regicide, Macbeth uses his power as a high-ranking member of the hierarchy to challenge the hierarchal system – just as the owl does in killing the falcon under the cloak of night. He is lower-ranked than the king, and yet he overthrows the throne, a temporary and unsustainable victory as it does not prescribe to the natural order.

Not coincidentally, the owl is the only nocturnal bird referenced in the play; after the murder, Macbeth, too, is deprived of his nightly sleep. Owls traditionally represent "fear and hatred (Nelson 1)" as well as being signifiers for evil, all traits which come to represent and define Macbeth in his steady decline into crime. After he kills Duncan, Macbeth claims "Methought I heard a voice cry 'Sleep no more! Macbeth does murder sleep'" (2.2.38-9); Later, Lady Macbeth states "You lack the season of all natures, sleep" (3.5.143). This night-time wakefulness once again intertwines the animal and human world of the owl and Macbeth.

Macbeth's paranoia about his crimes is amplified after he witnesses Banquo's ghost; in a panic he states: "It will have blood; they say, 'Blood will have blood'…Augurs and understood relations have/ By maggot-pies and choughs and rooks brought forth/ The secret'st man of blood" (3.5.124-8). The "maggot-pies," "choughs," and "rooks", like the "augurs and understood relations," all rank low in the bird hierarchy, and yet Macbeth fears their interference. He knows that the perverseness of his actions opens up for him the possibility of anyone of any status being able to usurp his unnaturally acquired throne – including Banquo, Macduff, Malcolm, etc.

After expressing this fear of being caught red-handed, Macbeth nonetheless continues his killing rampage, this time focusing on the family of Macduff. Lady Macduff, before she knows her ill fate, scorns her husband for leaving his wife and children; "His flight was madness" and he has left his son without a father (4.2.4). In anger, Lady Macduff states: "For the poor wren,/ The most diminutive of birds, will fight,/ Her young ones in the nest, against the owl" (4.2.9-11). Her husband cannot live up to this minor role, nor can she, as any power she may have had is rendered useless without the presence of a naturally lawful king. Not coincidentally, the image of an owl is again brought to light here. If Macbeth is indeed the owl's counterpart, then it is consistent that he is responsible for the murder of Macduff's family, just as an owl would be responsible for the killing of nest of young wrens.

Before their death, the interaction between Lady Macduff and her son about Macduff's apparent abandonment of his family is also important:

> Wife: And what will you do now? How will you live?
> Son: As birds do, mother.
> Wife: What, with worms and flies?
> Son: With what I get, I mean; and so do they.
> Wife: Poor bird, thoud'st never fear the net nor lime/ The pitfall nor the gin.
> Son: Why should I, mother? Poor birds they are not set for. (4.2.31-6)

Without a husband and a father, the wife and family are left without economic support. They become "poor birds": the bottom of the food-chain, the bottom of the economy, the underlings of society – both human and ornithological. They "are not set for" and their existence becomes inconsequential to anyone but Macbeth, whose unnatural attack upon their family casts them out of the natural order. This segment may have a biblical connotation, one that, according to New Historicism, can give precedence to the rest of the

bird imagery throughout the play. According to the King James bible, a plausible "co-text" to Macbeth, what birds receive is given by God and therefore natural. As Jesus proclaimed: "Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow nor neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" ("King James Bible," Matthew 6:26).

Because the ordering of the birds is a natural structure ordained by God, it is the ideal imagery to further support the monarchy's arguably most powerful ideology which maintains that monarchs are chosen by God to take their thrones. Under this theory of Divine Right, kings and queens are given the most supreme power of all within the hierarchy: the power to act out the will of God. In fact, Ropp broadly concludes: "The play's underlying message assumes that society's natural condition is a God-given harmonious order" (1). The birds "sow nor neither do they reap," and yet they are under the watchful eye of God – and so is James' kingdom.

In addition, this allusion to James' Bible relates to Marx's ideal system of government: communism, which is in theory a collectivist institution wherein all class structures are abolished, people are treated equally by the government, and citizens are given equal rights to funds and social liberties, as long as their individual endeavors contribute to the greater, common good. The question "Are ye not much better than they?" challenges the legitimacy of the hierarchy and questions the economic and labor-based feudal institution on which the government of Macbeth, and indeed 16th-century England and Scotland, were based.

By challenging the power structure of 16th-century monarchies, the proto-communist ideology is briefly at war with the hierarchy based ideology, leaving the question: What is better?: A society that is ruled by victory of the strong over the weak, or a society that is ruled by commonalities and collective victories? Shakespeare may not have intended this to be a subliminal message of his play, but it is certainly one that cannot be ignored. However, the time for this sort of structural upheaval was not yet ripe, a belief that is reinforced through the reappointing of a successfully operating feudal system at the play's conclusion.

Throughout the text, the theme of flight ties together the bird imagery and symbolizes progress, movement, and escape; Macduff flees the kingdom in a "flight," Banquo tells his son to "fly" away from the murderers, and Macbeth sends the murderers off to kill Banquo, referring to his trip to heaven as "thy soul's flight" (3.1.146). The flight motif is perhaps most important as Macbeth goes into the hopeless battle for Dunsinane. As he prepares to enter the fight, Macbeth proclaims: "They have tied me to a stake. I cannot fly,/ But bear-like I must fight the course" (5.7.1-2). If Macbeth is indeed an owl, then his wings have been clipped. He no longer has the option to escape from his unnatural acts, so instead, like the bear who is driven by rage and brute force, he must fight. This reference to being bear-like also refers to practice of "bear-baiting" in Shakespeare's time, in which a bear would be tied to a stake and then forced to fight off a group of dogs set upon him for an audience's amusement (Coles 278). Where Macbeth once sets himself apart from the murderers by calling them "dogs" to signify their unnaturalness and immorality – he declares them "clept al by the name of dogs" (3.1.96-7) – his treatment now reflects an even lower status, as he becomes a plaything for those contemptuous mutts.

As Macbeth falls down through the rankings of the human order, he falls from the natural order as well. He no longer lives like the birds do; he can no longer glide above the kingdom and ignore the will of others; he can no longer live in flight, but rather must fight among the rabble of the earth below. In fact, he loses his place within the animal kingdom entirely, as Macduff deems him to belong among "our rarer monsters" – not to be classified as a king, nor a human, nor even an animal (5.8.25). As Spurgeon says, "By the end of the play, Macbeth has shrunk to the dimension of a mere beast: a 'bear,' a 'hell-kite,' a 'hell-

hound,' and a 'monster'" (9). He is a nonhuman, non-animal entity, and in the hierarchy of all kingdoms, his place is stripped from him and effectively destroyed.

Through the killing of Macbeth, Macduff becomes a falcon, as he has restored the order that Duncan lost in death, therefore avenging and taking his place – not as king, but as the binding power that brings the kingdom back to its rightful position. Order is thus restored by the domination of those who are strong in character and obedience to the law and to God over those who are weak and self-indulgent, most especially Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. This once again stresses the ideology that the strong – whether in reference to economic, political, or national strength – will always overcome and dominate the weak, an important warning to the masses in a monarchal system of Renaissance England and Scotland that was being challenged by protests following the naming of James as king (Hurstfield 34-7). Not coincidentally, the falcon, who identifies finally as Macduff's counterpart, is a creature known for "using their notched bills to kill prey by severing the spinal column at the neck" – precisely as Macduff does when he viciously beheads Macbeth and presents his head on a stake where it is written: "'Here may you see the tyrant'" (5.8.27).

At the play's conclusion, order is restored, with Malcolm, the rightful heir, on the throne and the usurper dead. Greenblatt points out that this typical reestablishment of order within the hierarchy repudiates the "desire to escape from the burdens of governance...And in each and every case, the desire leads to disaster" (24); indeed, those who "actively seek to seize the reins of government...are eventually broken by the burden they have shouldered" (25). As Marx declares in the opening chapter of his manifesto, "Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes"(1). In Macbeth, the latter is ardently ensured. Through the representations, rebellions, and eventual restoration of the human and animal orders within Macbeth, Shakespeare reflects the most dominant and critical ideology of his own time: the hierarchy must be maintained, and even if it is challenged – it will not, it cannot, and it refuses to fail.

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A Merry Friar: Criticisms of the Friars in Fourteenth-Century Comedy

Abstract

Scholarly analysis has often placed Geoffrey Chaucer and Giovanni Boccaccio's comedies as part of the anti-fraternal movements and criticisms of the fourteenth century.[1] Scholars have drawn parallels between the critical portrayals of friars found in Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales *(c.1387–1400) and Boccaccio's* Decameron *(1349–51) and contemporary anti-fraternal controversies, pointing to the similarity in criticisms of extravagance and hypocrisy.[2] Boccaccio and Chaucer's criticisms, however, are also similar to those voiced by reformers within the mendicant orders, especially among the Franciscans, and so cannot so easily be dismissed as anti-fraternal works.[3] The comedic genre in which Boccaccio and Chaucer wrote lends itself to hyperbole, and though they are likely exaggerated, the two authors present criticisms which are nonetheless viable critiques of the Franciscan order.*

   The satiric representation of mendicant stereotypes provides a perspective outside the church hierarchy regarding problems within the orders. Both *The Canterbury Tales* and *The Decameron* mark hypocrisy, false piety, greed, the abuse of authority, and the deception of others through language as serious issues among the mendicant orders of the mid- to late fourteenth century. While Friars in these comedic tales are often generic mendicant representatives, the Franciscan order is often mentioned by name. These comedic works thus reveal the social perception of many of the complex spiritual issues, such as the debate over the use of goods versus their possession in conflict with the ideal of poverty, which Franciscans had faced in the previous century.[4] The examination of Chaucer and Boccaccio's work also highlights the cultural and circumstantial differences between the branches of the Franciscan order as they existed in England and Italy during the fourteenth-century.

   The complaints against friars found in Boccaccio's *Decameron* and in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* are very similar to one another, despite the distance between Italy and England, the environments described by each author respectively. These similarities reveal a relative unity in the types of problems seen by both English and Italian societies among mendicants, especially the Franciscans. There is, however, a difference in emphasis between the two works. Although Chaucer's tale does mention abuses of authority by the friars, especially their power of confession and their role as holy men, Boccaccio's tales are far more focused on this abuse. Boccaccio's preoccupation with the abuse of power is especially evident in cases where the abuse results from corrupt and impious men joining the friars and gaining undeserved prestige through that association. Chaucer's stories, in contrast, concentrate more on the deceit and trickery of the friars' sermons. Chaucer points to the abuse of learning or the reputation of being from a learned order as the major mechanism for the friars' abuses. Boccaccio, too, deals with deceit of language, but it is not as obviously central to any of his tales as it is in Chaucer's version.

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[1] Penn R. Szittya discusses the development of anti-fraternalism in *The Antifraternal Tradition in Medieval Literature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986). G. Geltner questions the continuation of anti-fraternalism as suggested by Szittya in "William of St. Amour's *De periculis novissimorum temporum*: A False Start to Medieval Antifraternalism?" in *Defenders and Critics of Franciscan Life: Essays in Honor of John V. Fleming*, Ed. Michael F. Cusato and G. Geltner (Boston: Brill, 2009), 105–18.

[2] Michael Robson, *The Franciscans in the Middle Ages* (Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2006), 155.

[3] Robson, *Franciscans*, 157.

[4] Ideas about how the Franciscans should interpret the rule of poverty and criticisms against the Franciscans for breaking that rule have been debated many times throughout the history of order. See John R. H. Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order from Its Origins to the Year 1517* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968). More specifically, David Burr gives a succinct definition of the *usus pauper* controversy and discusses its origins in "The Correctorium Controversy and the Origins of the Usus Pauper Controversy," *Speculum* 60, no. 2 (April 1, 1985), 332.

The difference in the authors' focuses can be explained by the different ways in which friars were integrated into English and Italian society. The Franciscan movement originated in Italy, and made official in 1209. As a result, their presence was far more established in Italy than in England, where Friars only arrived in 1224. The arrival of the Friars in England came only five years before they established their school at Oxford in 1229. The rapid expansion of the Franciscan's presence in the English university system coincided with the growth of the order's overall presence in the region, inextricably linking the two expansions, and greatly influencing the way English society interacted with the Franciscans.[5] The Franciscan order's Italian origins made the distinctions between the Friars Minor and other mendicant orders far more obvious there, since they had been established much longer than in England. Italian Franciscans had also been more established prior to the incorporation of members of the into the Italian university system.

This difference in development results in Chaucer's focus on the academic rhetoric of the friars and explains why his friars are generic, whereas Boccaccio almost always names a friar's associated order. Since there were more Franciscan friars in Italy than in England, even later in the fourteenth century when the English branch of the order when the Franciscans were more established, Boccaccio had greater access to them, and his audience was probably more aware of how the Friars Minor functioned. The friars' strong continued presence in Italy allowed Boccaccio to be far more specific in his descriptions of the mendicants. His description of the friar's greed in day four tale two, for example, includes references to "certain intermediaries" who accept a bribe on behalf of the friar.[6] This reference to the exact mechanisms which allowed the Franciscans to practice poverty while maintaining use of the donations given to the order—the establishment of intermediaries who handle money on their behalf—is not mentioned in Chaucer's criticisms of the friars' greed.

The most detailed descriptions of friars in *The Canterbury Tales* are found in "The General Prologue" and "The Summoner's Tale." "The General Prologue" portrays the ways in which Friar Huberd contradicts the basic tenets of the mendicant orders, especially those of the Franciscans whose rule emphasizes poverty and abstention from worldly pleasures. By showing how Friar Huberd takes advantage of the poor and while avoiding association with them outside of asking for donations, the "General Prologue" concisely highlights some of the order's worst abuses. The narrator presents Friar Huberd as a well-spoken, sociable man dressed in expensive clothing. Chaucer's description of the friar places value on his social ability and his skill in rhetoric, especially his employment of these skills for profit. The narrator states that the friar is always able to convince people to give him money and "wolde he have a ferthyng, er he wente" even if his donor was entirely without money, hinting at the friar's greed to the detriment of others.[7] The prologue also critiques the friars in their role as confessors. Friar Huberd gives easy penance but insists on donations to his "povre ordre" to show that those who have confessed are truly penitent.[8] This phrasing presents confession solely as a way for the friars to direct money towards themselves without any real aim towards helping others. The description characterizes the friar as preoccupied by the search for wealth rather than the care of the people who confess to him.

The friar's clothing further shows his greed by emphasizing the luxury of his clothing. The narrator describes the friar's appearance as "lyk a maister or a pope," both ranks far above that of the friar, and his clothing is made of "double worstede," a wide woven and

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[5] Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order,* 124 and 171–73.

[6] Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron*, trans. John Payne, ed. Charles S. Singleton (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), I.6.

[7] Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, Ed. Larry D. Benson, 3rd Ed (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1987), I.253–5.

[8] Ibid., I.223–6.

therefore expensive cloth.[9] Chaucer uses the friar's wealthy appearance as a visual manifestation of the man's greed which can already be seen through the friar's behavior towards the poor, specifically taking money from those who have none to spare in order to better show his corruption. The introduction of the friar's clothing as an important element in his description further underlines his hypocrisy and the traits which make him undeserving of the support he receives from the laity. Chaucer's critique of the friar's clothing is the most blatant image of the friar's failure to keep his vow of poverty, a vow which, at the time, was still complicated by the continuing debate over the extent to which the Franciscans were meant to be poor.

The characterization of Friar John in "The Summoner's Tale" expands upon the criticisms and hypocrisies found in "The General Prologue." Just as in the description of Friar Huberd, Chaucer focuses on the friar's use of speech to gain wealth. Chaucer also uses the friars' rhetoric to emphasize his hypocrisy while demonstrating the way in which he uses words to conceal that hypocrisy. The tale's description of Friar John's begging also shows how he ignores the spiritual aspect of his work even as he reaps the benefits of pious donations. The tale shows Friar John erasing the names of all donors as he leaves each location, suggesting that he will never pray for them as he promised. Chaucer criticizes the deceptive nature of the friar's speech through Friar John's sermon later in the tale. In the sermon Friar John quotes Jesus ("'blessed be they that povere in spirit been,'") and then states that Christ must have been talking specifically about the friars, but fails to offer concrete evidence to support his statement.[10] He admits "I ne have no text of it, as I suppose, / But I shal fynde it in a maner glose."[11] Suggestion alone thus maintains academic support for the friar's while his failure to provide that support subverts this value. This technique allows Friar John to lend academic credibility to his words despite the lack of actual evidence. The friar's manipulation of speech in his sermon, especially given Chaucer's preoccupation with rhetoric in "The General Prologue," can also serve as a more general critique of the friars' sermons. It suggests that the friars rely on their reputation in order to manipulate their sermons as necessary since they are able to succeed with only the implication of further evidence. The use of academic deceit in "the Summoner's Tale" shows again Chaucer's experience with the Friars Minor as a primarily academic order, closely linked to the English universities.

The strongly academic nature of the English Franciscans can be further read in Chaucer's attention to the friar's rhetoric in "The Summoner's Tale" as a way to reveal Friar John's hypocrisy. Although Friar John says that he is "a man of litel sutenaunce," the tale shows him as preoccupied with food.[12] This contradiction adds to the friar's image of a falsely pious man because he later tells Thomas and his wife:

> Whoso wol preye, he moot faste and be clene,
> And fatte his soule, and make his body lene.
> We fare as seith th'apostle; clooth and foode
> Suffisen us, though they be nat ful goode.
> The clennesse and the fastyng of us freres
> Maketh that Crist accepteth oure preyeres.[13]

This comparison of the friars with the apostle demonstrates that the friars' worth as an order is based on their adherence to the apostolic lifestyle. The text specifically defines success in

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[9] Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales,* I.259–60.
[10] Ibid., III.1923.
[11] Ibid., III.1919–20.
[12] Ibid., III.1844.
[13] Ibid., III.1879–84.

the apostolic lifestyle on the basis of the friars' abstention from material luxuries such as large quantities of food and expensive clothing. As a result, Chaucer heavily implies that the friars themselves are no more holy than any normal person because they have failed to abstain from the worldly pleasures they have denounced. The tale later reinforces this interpretation, when Friar John says that the prayers of the mendicants are more acceptable to God than "yours with youre feestes at the table."[14] Friar John's hypocrisy lies in his insistence that he and his brothers are uniquely qualified to help others outside their order interact with Christ based on abstention which they do not actually complete.

The conclusion of the tale further highlights the problem of greed among mendicant orders as well as the friars' preoccupation with rhetorical language. Thomas, angered by Friar John's sermon, donates a fart to Friar John and his brothers, but only after he has made John promise that he will split the donation equally. Friar John's commentary about types of donations his order has received precedes this stipulation. He asks "what is a ferthyng worth parted in twelve?" which, though ostensibly based on the necessity of sharing among the friars, really just shows the friar's greed.[15] Because of Friar John's promise the fart, must be divided equally among the friars. Friar John tells this to the local lord, and the lord's squire comes up with a way to divide the farts evenly among the friars by tying them to the twelve spokes of a cartwheel and having Thomas fart again from the center.[16] The squire's speech, compared to Euclid and Ptolemy by the lord's court, allows Chaucer to show the problems of rhetoric from another perspective. The tale's presentation of the squire's language thus subjects the friar himself to problematic logic and emphasizes Chaucer's criticisms against the friars' speeches.[17]

Like Chaucer, Boccaccio discusses the hypocrisy of the friars and their abuses of authority through comedy in the *Decameron*. Boccaccio's tales, however, more openly confront his audience with the idea that what the friars say they are and what they seem to be is often contradictory to what they actually do. The second tale of the fourth day for example tells of a man who becomes a friar to escape his horrible reputation and then uses his position to seduce a woman who comes to give confession. The tale's stated purpose is to "show what and how great is the hypocrisy of the clergy" who are often "exceedingly loud and fierce to rebuke in others their own vices."[18] This sets the tale's focus more on hypocrisy than the abuse of power, though the second element does play into the tale's overall criticism of the friars.

Boccaccio frames the hypocrisy in the tale specifically in terms of Fra Alberto's corruption prior to becoming a friar. A detailed description of the man prior to his feigned conversion introduces the tale and paints him as a person who has behaved so poorly and that there was no one in his town "who would credit him, even when he told the truth."[19] After his feigned conversion into the Friars Minor, the order being specifically named, Fra Alberto appears to lead "a very austere life, greatly commending penance and abstinence and never eating flesh nor drinking wine."[20] This appearance of piety gains him an undeserved position of respect, which allows Fra Alberto to use this position to gain the trust of a young woman. He then uses his holy appearance to convince her that he has been possessed by the angel Gabriel in order to have sex with her. The conflict reflects concerns about who was entering the Franciscan orders and given important religious duties to fulfill based only on their association with the order. By allowing Fra Alberto to join the order, the Franciscans

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[14] Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, III.1911–4.
[15] Ibid., III.1967.
[16] Ibid., III.2254–70
[17] Ibid., III.2289.
[18] Boccaccio, IV.2.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid.

gave him their credibility and the appearance of holiness, which he subsequently abused and used to cause harm. The tale's stated purpose allows it to be applied more generally to both the Friars Minor and other mendicant orders despite its focus on Fra Alberto as an individual.

The third tale of day seven, similar to tale two of day four, tells of a man who returns to his bad habits after becoming a friar and uses his position to commit adultery. Fra Rinaldo lays aside his bad habits temporarily but eventually resumes them over time "making a show and wearing fine stuffs and being dainty and elegant in all his fashions."[21] He blatantly tells his lover "'when I shall have this gown off my back—and I can put it off mighty easily—I shall appear to you a man fashioned like other men and not a monk.'"[22] This declaration encapsulates the problem of the friars and their conduct. Although society sees Fra Rinaldo as a holy man who has put off his vices and whose position as a friar grants him a certain degree of respect, he is still only a man, and one who has not truly converted to a holy lifestyle. The problems of this are shown clearly when Fra Rinaldo's status as a monk allows him and his lover to get away with their affair by telling her husband that he came to the house to heal the man's son of worms.[23] It is telling that two of Boccaccio's tales featuring Franciscan deal specifically with the abuse of the Franciscan reputation for corrupt men to gain trust they do not deserve resulting in crimes against society at a familial level. Although it is presented as comical, Boccaccio's inclusion of this particular form of abuse shows a degree of preoccupation in Italian society with the problems created by loosening standards for who could join the Franciscan. The fear of such corrupt men abusing their privilege as mendicants in order to enter areas of society and social interaction that would otherwise be forbidden to them was obviously a pressing concern.

Boccaccio's other main criticism of the orders is that they abuse their authority for monetary gain. The sixth tale of the first day is one of the clearest examples of this. It tells of a friar who, having been appointed as an inquisitor, uses his authority to extort money from wealthy citizens. The inquisitorial friar is described as having "studied hard to appear a devout and tender lover of the Christian religion."[24] The use of the word "appear" indicates that the friar is not actually so pious. The reality of the friar and the central conflict of the tale are revealed by the comment that he was "no less diligent in enquiring of who had a well-filled purse than of whom he might find wanting in the things of the Faith."[25] The tale further shows the friar's greed when the friar brings a wealthy man to court for saying at a party among friends that "he had a wine so good Christ himself would drink of it" as if it were a serious accusation of heresy.[26] The case is thus "not for an amendment of misbelief in the defendant, but for the filling of his own [the inquisitor's] hand with florins." The friar achieves this goal when the terrified man pays a bribe to earn a more merciful punishment.[27] The friar of the tale takes obvious advantage of a position of authority within the church for monetary gain, and despite his devout appearance, the abuse of authority reveals a greed which clashes with his vows as a Franciscan. This tale more than others in the *Decameron* emphasizes the monetary element of criticisms against the friars. In discussing the bribe given to the friar in exchange for mercy, the narrator describes the bribe as "a sovereign remedy for the pestilential greed of the clergy and especially of the Minor Brethren, who dare not touch money."[28] By mentioning the Friars Minor specifically in this context, the narrator of the tale leaves no doubt that this form of greed is particularly evil because it goes so strongly against their vows and most clearly illustrates the corruption of the order. Further,

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[21] Boccaccio, VII.3.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid., I. 6.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.

it shows another manifestation of the corruption most feared within Italian society, specifically the abuse of a holy reputation for selfish and criminal purposes.

The portrayals of friars in *The Canterbury Tales* and *The Decameron* present a very clear idea of society's concerns regarding the mendicant orders in the fourteenth century, especially the Franciscans. The two works present very similar critiques overall while each one's particular choices of emphasis reveal the differences in the development and perception of the Friars Minor in English and Italian societies. The origin of the Franciscan order in Italy allowed Boccaccio to assume that his audience had a greater familiarity with the differences between mendicant orders, and gave him a greater access to the specifics of how the orders functioned. It also mad the portrayals of friars in *The Decameron* more focused on problems such as the abuse of authority by less worthy members an order that had an established reputation as being particularly holy. Chaucer's experience with the English Franciscans, a part of the order that had been strongly linked to universities from very early in its existence, resulted in criticisms of deceptive rhetoric that reflected those associations.

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Laws, Queens, and Goddesses: Medb and the *Táin*, a Reconsideration

Abstract

Despite previous analysis of the character Medb from the Táin Bó Cúailnge that describes her as a figure of sovereignty; and as the embodiment of a Celtic goddess, it is also necessary to examine Medb from a social perspective. This paper will analyze the relationship between Ailill and Medb in comparison to the Old Irish marriage laws as laid out in the Cáin Lánamna and Senchus Mór, which illustrate the capacities held by the wife in a marriage. The relationship between Medb and Ailill is a compelling one, as Medb exerts significant control and power over her husband, more than otherwise was expected of a woman in this particular time period, even considering the amount of political power held by queens in early Irish society. Examining the Táin in terms of the laws and possibilities declared in the two legal documents provides a significantly deeper understanding of the relationship between the two characters. This research takes our understanding of Medb in another direction as well - accentuating her femininity and expanding on the significance of her role as Cuchulainn's adversary, but also stressing her independence as a character in the poem, whose decisions and actions underscore her as queen of Connacht.

In his Guide to Early Irish Law, Fergus Kelly states that "exaggerated claims have … been made about the degree of power and freedom enjoyed by women in early Irish society."[1] These claims are due to the existence of powerful female characters in early Irish literature, and nowhere is this more obvious than in Medb of the Táin Bó Cúailnge. Medb exhibits complete control over the king of Connacht, Ailill, which begins with her initial desire to be equal to him in wealth, and builds in the piece to the extent that she usurps his masculine prerogatives entirely. According to Tomás Ó Cathasaigh, "the language of the Táin is rich with legal vocabulary," and this is especially relevant in terms of the relationship between Medb and Ailill. One of the marriage unions described in the Cáin Lanamna, the section of Senchus Már dedicated to marriage and divorce laws, is very similar to Medb and Ailill's marriage, and would allow for their two properties to be separate. During the 'Pillow Talk,' Medb discovers that Ailill possesses Finnbennach, the white bull, and that she lacks an animal equal to its value in her herd, which drives her to pursue the Donn Cuailnge. However, while Medb may have initially desired to be equal to her husband, her stance in the battle for the bull, and deliberate violation of Irish social norms[2], completely emasculates Ailill. Ailill does not dispute his wife's dominant personality, and follows her direction without argument. As Medb's power derives from her assumption of a male role, Ailill reduces himself to a feminine figure, yet the arrival of Medb's urination[3] marks a clear response to her violation of the proper role in the relationship. This underscores the impropriety of Medb's appropriation of a dominant role as well as her rejection of gendered social expectation as illustrated in the Irish law tracts.

As a brief summary, the *Táin* begins with the king and queen of Connacht, Medb and Ailill, talking after the consummation of their marriage in bed. This is known as the 'Pillow Talk,' and in this conversation, Medb decides to pursue the Donn Cuailnge, or the 'Brown Bull of Cooley.' She initially asks for it to be lent to her by Dáire mac Fiacha of Ulster, but upon having this request refused, decides instead to pursue ownership of the bull through battle. The men of Ulster themselves are unable to fight against Medb, due to a curse which causes them to experience the pangs of childbirth, and renders them incapable of participating in battle. It is for this reason, that the hero Cúchulainn single-handedly defends Ulster against Medb and her armies, until the last few pages of the *Táin* when the pangs of

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[1] Fergus Kelly, A Guide to Early Irish Law (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988). 68.
[2] In comparison to the perception of the ideal woman reflected in the Triads of Ireland.
[3] In Thomas Kinsella's translation, menstrual flow.

Ulster wear off. It is at this point that the armies of Connacht are defeated, and at which Medb finds the need to relieve herself. The two recensions of the text itself are found in two 12th-century manuscripts and one later 14th century manuscript, the *Book of the Dun Cow* (*Lebor na hUidre*),[4] the *Book of Leinster* (*Lebor Laigen*),[5] and the *Yellow Book of Lecan*.

The collection of law tracts known as Senchus Már is separated into a series of sections, each based on certain subjects.[6] The sections focusing on the relationships and social standings of women in early medieval Ireland are the most relevant to the *Táin*, and particularly to Medb herself. The Cáin Lánamna, (the 'regulation of a complete pairing,[7]) a member of the grouping of laws pertaining to social institutions, can be used to analyze the extent of Medb and Ailill's union as I stated earlier. Granted, the recorded Irish laws were not a reflection of actual judicial processes, rather, a series of idealized institutions.[8] As explained by the scholar Thomas Charles-Edwards, the majority of the Senchus Már does focus on 'social organization.'

> This preoccupation explains why Irish law is such an important source for the history of early Irish society. It is not just a consequence of the inclusion of the four canái, ('the regulation of fosterage, the regulation of a free fief, the regulation of base clientship, and the regulation of a complete pairing,[9]) even if they were removed, this category would still be the largest. The 'Senchas Már,' therefore, is concerned mainly with the legal shape of society and with the remedies and legal activities of ordinary people... This does not imply for a moment that there were no courts or that kings and their officers played no part in the processes of law.[10]

While the laws are crucial of our understanding of early Irish thought, they do not, again, reflect actual Irish lifestyle, rather, function to an extent, as cues and guidelines. Scholar Robin Chapman Stacy emphasizes this in her article on Law and literature in medieval Ireland and Wales: "There was no sense in early Irish society that a legal precedent, once established, ought to be followed in every case. Equity, so prized in our own culture, was simply not regarded in the same way in early Ireland. The Irish conviction that a person's status and behaviour could and indeed should have an impact on the legal rights that person would enjoy made a system based on precedent not only impossible, but undesirable."[11] Stacy continues to elaborate on the importance of tradition in both law and literature, which both types of texts display clearly. Some of the law tracts in the Senchus Már even use characters from the Ulster cycle in order to create situations in which the laws would play a part. She states: "Like storytelling or poetry, law in action was performance tradition, one with its own language, convention, and characters - much of which is shared with the literary tradition." These similarities with literature emphasize this concept of ideal - as she mentioned, the precedents of law were impossible, and therefore the laws surrounding the legal shape of society reflected a sense of tradition which was in fact, too perfect to be reality, even with law courts. Additionally, the laws of early medieval Ireland frequently are even set in a "pseudo-historical" era,[12] much like the *Táin* itself - which purports to detail

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[4] Though this is a partial text.

[5] Currently located at Trinity College Dublin.

[6] T.M. Charles-Edwards, "Early Irish Law," in A New History of Ireland: Prehistoric and Early Ireland, ed. Dáibhi Ó Cróinín. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 332-370.

[7] Charles-Edwards, ibid.

[8] Robin Chapman-Stacy, "Law and literature in medieval Ireland and Wales," in Medieval Celtic Literature and Society, ed. Helen Fulton. (Portland: Four Courts Press, 2005), 65-82.

[9] Cáin Íarraith, Cáin sóerraith, Cáin aicillne, and Cáin lanamna, Charles-Edwards, ibid.

[10] Charles-Edwards, ibid. Pg. 341

[11] Chapman-Stacy, ibid. Pg. 73.

[12] Chapman-Stacy, ibid.

events that happened much earlier than the actual date that the tale was recorded. Most of the laws came from a single century, (from about 650-750)[13], and therefore, any connection to historical backgrounds claimed by the writers of the laws, is again, an attempt to give the texts a deeper authority. This is additionally the case with the *Táin*, and therefore, both types of literature are connected in their similar attempts to strengthen the historical background of early medieval Ireland, as well as their mutual origins, as they both derive from written records based on the original oral tradition.

One of the primarily accepted interpretations of Medb's role in the Táin Bo Cuailnge[14] is that she represents a sovereignty figure. This character appears quite frequently in early Irish literature through different characters, and always supposedly fulfills the same role within the text. Muireann Ní Bhrolcháin defines her as:

> ...the symbol of the land, whose union with the prospective king ensures his sovereignty. Without union with her he cannot become a king acceptable to his people. Without her rightful heir she is lost, old and occasionally deranged. When   united with her sovereign she frequently changes from her former shape of an ugly old woman to a beautiful young girl.[15]

While Medb could easily be construed as a projection of the sovereignty goddess, this description simply does not follow Medb's role in the Táin consistently.[16] The only properly described event that could be construed as 'transformation' is the situation in which Medb loses control of her bladder. This has nothing to do with physical transformation, nor does it involve Ailill, aside from the implication of proper gender roles, as Medb has completely taken his place by assuming the male prerogatives. Additionally, Ailill's union with Medb, though she is clearly financially and socially proper for him to marry, completes the opposite of Ní Bhrolcháin's definition: he truly becomes a king unacceptable to his people, by allowing his wife to completely emasculate him through her pursuit of power.

The cattle raid is spurred by the 'Pillow Talk' at the beginning of the Táin, which introduces Medb's decision to pursue the Donn Cuailnge. The conversation in the beginning lines takes place directly after the two have consummated their marriage and lie in bed, talking with each other. The section continues with the couple simply comparing their respective properties, after which Ailill claims that Medb has been lucky to marry him, implying that he considered her previous status to be lower than his. "'It struck me,' Ailill said, 'how much better off you are than the day you married me.'"[17] Medb believes his claim is false, and so responds with lists of her properties, her ancestry, and the positive attributes of her personality itself. "If I married a mean man our union would be wrong, because I'm so full of grace and giving. It would be an insult if I were more generous than my husband, but not if the two were equal in this. If my husband was a timid man our union would be just as wrong because I thrive, myself, on all kinds of trouble." However, while this list appears to indicate that Medb thoroughly understands her proper position in her union with Ailill, as the text continues, Medb deviates further and further away from her own words,

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[13] T. M. Charles-Edwards, The medieval Gaelic lawyer. (Cambridge: Quiggin Pamphlets on the Sources of Mediaeval Gaelic History, 1999).

[14] The central text of the Ulster cycle and the focus of this paper, though Medb is featured in other myths.

[15] Muireann Ní Bhrolcháin, "Women in Early Irish Myths and Sagas," *The Crane Bag* Vol. 4 (1980): 12-19. JSTOR. http://www.jstor.org/stable/30060318

[16] I recognize that there is clearly enough evidence for Medb to be considered a reincarnation of the sovereignty figure, however, I personally do not believe that Medb is as clear of a representation as are other female Celtic characters - such as Rhiannon, in her first appearance in the Mabinogion. While Rhiannon appears for the purpose of marrying Pwyll, the prince; Medb predominantly looks to please herself rather than Ailill, and this is displayed thoroughly throughout the Táin.

[17] Thomas Kinella, The Táin (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1969), 52.

and her husband becomes the timid man that she mentions. The lines additionally indicate Medb's understanding that her actions in the *Táin* as a whole are socially inappropriate - yet she continues with her pursuit of the bull in order to become completely equal to her husband. The main factor in Medb's decision to do so is that the white bull Finnbennach, who formerly belonged to her, has suddenly refused to be a part of Medb's property following her marriage. He instead chooses to belong to Ailill's herd of cattle, and his worth is the sole reason that Ailill is wealthier than his wife. In this sense, the Donn Cuailnge, the bull of equal wealth to Finnbennach, would have the potential to refuse a female owner as well, Medb must act in a masculine role in order to achieve her goal of equality.

The marriage union between Medb and Ailill can again, be interpreted as the 'union of joint contribution'[18] discussed in the Cain Lanamna.[19] This is due to the high status of their marriage, as well as the fact that their properties are blatantly separate and remain in the personal ownership of the husband and wife. Charlene M. Eska's summary of the section of the document further emphasizes this fact:

> [the section] opens with a description of the lánamnas comthinchuir "union of joint contribution," which is regarded as the type of marriage with the highest status and to which the tract devotes more space than any other type of union it discusses. This marriage involves land, cattle, household equipment, and contributions from the families of both spouses. Although these contributions are pooled for the running of their household, each spouse ultimately retains private ownership over the property with which they entered the union, and each may also acquire additional estate property...[20]

In this sense, the type of union parallels well to Medb and Ailill's - the entire issue at the beginning of the Táin develops from the fact that Medb's personal wealth is not equal to her husband's, and so further emphasizes a sense of separation between the two. Medb additionally would have been legally able to seek more 'estate property,' in this case, the bull; but at the same time, the pursuit would have required the consent of her her husband. Apart from his initial claims in the 'Pillow Talk,' Ailill remains virtually silent, and never outwardly consents to his participation in the battle for the bull, and so his lack of verbal agreement with his wife marks her violation of the old Irish laws.

Under the union of joint contribution, both parties involved must consent to a decision before it is made. The definition of this situation in the Cáin Lánamna is as follows:

"Union of joint contribution, if it may be with land and livestock and household requisites and if their form of union may be equally noble [and] equally lawful - and that [type of] woman is called a woman of condominium - a contract of either of the two without the consent of the other is not a [valid] contract apart from contracts that benefit their common property."[21]

Since the properties of Medb and Ailill are kept separate at their union, the acquisition of the Donn Cuailnge would not be beneficial to the two of them. Rather, the bull, (in the case that he accepted Medb as his owner, as Finnbennach refused to be led by a woman), would belong to Medb, equating her property to her husband's. The entire purpose of the raid is to add more wealth to Medb's fortune, and to challenge Ailill's ownership of Finnbennach. However, as the law clearly states, any contract made by either party in the marriage would not be valid without the express consent of their spouse. Medb does not ask

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[18] lánamnas comthinchuir
[19] The section of the Senchus Már dedicated to divorce and the unions of couples.
[20] Charlene M. Eska, Cáin Lánamna (Boston: Brill Publishing, 2010), 69.
[21] Lánamnas comthinchuir: mad co tír cethrai intreb mad comsáer comthéchtae a cummae lánamnasa - is don bein-sin as-ber ar bé cuithernsa - ní-bi cor cor nechtar dá lína sech araile inge curu lesaigter a cumthus. Eska, ibid. 118-119

Ailill for his agreement. Rather, she simply springs into action upon learning the bull will not be lent to her, placing her greed before the proper attributes of the marriage that she so carefully mentioned earlier. "'We needn't polish the knobs and knots in this, Mac Roth,' Medb said. 'It was well known it would be taken by force if it wasn't given freely. And taken it will be.' Ailill and Medb assembled a great army in Connacht, and they sent word also to the other three provinces."[22] The text proceeds directly to the forming of the armies, with Medb, rather than Ailill, as would be otherwise be expected, leading and giving orders. In this sense, Medb begins to emasculate her husband from the very beginning, disregarding what would otherwise be socially acceptable, and acting on her singular desires.

After the initial basic introduction of the union of joint contribution, the Cáin Lanamna continues with brief elaborations of each expectation included in notes, as well as a further definition of consent. This indicates an assumable consequence to the violation of the law, though the text does not specifically outline what it could possibly be. The text states: "Every contract [is] without neglect, an advantageous contract [done in] good conscience in accordance with right [and] proper procedure, with mutual acknowledgement that what is purchased corresponds to [the] ownership of anything that is sold for it." The note for the line defining 'Every contract...' offers a clarifying example: "i.e. every contract that they will make [is] without neglect of one of them to the other." In terms of Medb's position in the *Táin*, she does completely neglect Ailill, save for few instances. As aforementioned, before entering the cattle-raid she does not seek his consent, and springs into action, automatically expecting to achieve what she desires.

However, contrary to the clear indication that the relationship between Medb and Ailill is a union of joint contribution, Medb disregards Ailill's possession of his own property, and claims their relationship is a 'union of a man on a woman's contribution.'[23] As explained by Eska, and is clear in the text, "Medb, queen of Connacht, insists that this is the nature of her marriage to her husband, Ailill."[24] Her insistence is an attempt to draw significantly more attention to herself and to her social status in an effort to prove that she ought to have more power than her husband, rather than to comply with the fact that Ailill has offered items to the marriage as well. In this sense, Medb and Ailill ought to be equal in their contributions, but this is instead solely in theory. Ailill's possession of Finnbennach prevents this from being entirely true, and so prompts Medb's dissatisfaction. The text of this section of the Cáin Lánamna is echoed in the Táin itself, with the written law, lánamnas fir for bantichur written as follows:

In this case of all kinds of men in Irish law, except for three alone, their wives have half their honour-price: a man without land without property who is married to an heiress - he is paid honour-price according to the honour-price of his wife... these ... women are capable of impugning the contracts of their husbands, so that these latter are not competent to sell or buy without their wives, but they can do only what their wives authorise.[25]

Given that Medb is the daughter of the high king of Ireland, and Ailill has only entered Connacht for the purpose of marrying her, she asserts the fact that she is higher in birth, and that their wealth is based solely on her contributions. "'I gave you a contract and a bride-price as befits a woman, namely, the rainment of twelve men, a chariot worth thrice seven cumala, the breadth of your face in red gold, the weight of your left arm in white bronze. Whoever, brings shame and annoyance and confusion on you, you have no claim for compensation or for honour-price for it excepts what I claim I have', said Medb, 'for you

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[22] Kinsella, ibid. 58.

[23] lánamnas fir for bantichur

[24] Eska, ibid. 73.

[25] D. A. Binchy, Corpus Iuris Hibernici (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1966).

are a man dependent on a woman's marriage-portion.'[26] We know this to be untrue, as again, in the Pillow Talk, Ailill expresses the fact that his wealth is greater than Medb's. In this case, Medb blatantly lies about their relationship and treats it as the incorrect type of marriage, and this is a prime example of her emasculation of Ailill in the text. Her claim that he is dependent on her for any sort of wealth belittles him, and illustrates that Medb feels that he is significantly lower than she is, and also in that Ailill does express any sense of disagreement.

Medb's strong stance in the Táin disrupts any sense of cultural normalcy exhibited in the the piece. While the warrior and honour culture may be displayed in the text relatively accurately, Medb's position in her pursuit for power subverts her from the ideal and accepted vision of women in early medieval Ireland. While the proper position of women in marriage is reflected in the Cáin Lánamna, Fergus Kelly believes "the most accurate picture of the actual position of women in early Irish society is provided by the wisdom-texts, especially in the Triads of Ireland."[27] The two lines of instruction in the text provide two opposite ways for women to act. The first, described as "Three steadinesses of good womanhood: keeping a steady household, a steady chastity, and a steady housewifery," clearly represents the more ideal perception for a women to act, and the second, described as "Three strayings of bad womanhood: letting her tongue, and .... and her housewifery go astray,"[28] offers the undesired, and even potentially punished actions. Medb is boisterous, certainly does not take care of her household, which is especially displayed through her willingness to offer her daughter to warriors throughout the Táin, and instead is clearly undesirable. This is a result of her almost complete lack of feminine qualities. Instead, Medb's drive to acquire the bull renders her as a monstrous figure. Rosalind Clark explains: "Medb's role as a destroyer is apparent throughout the Táin, but such a role is horrifying in a mortal woman. She lures warrior after warrior to his death, offering him rich gifts, her daughter Finnabair, and her own friendly thighs. When a goddess lures men to destruction we do not question her purpose."[29] This expands on the idea of Medb as a subversion of the social norm in early medieval Ireland; she is completely abnormal, and as a result, becomes terrifying and completely unacceptable to the rest of the men around her. Clark's emphasis on the fact that a goddess would be unquestioned pushes Medb further away from the common perception that she is a sovereignty figure. While her husband does not present any argument, Cúchulainn and Fergus both openly recognize her inappropriate actions. After Medb relieves herself in the final pages of the Táin, she receives negative comments from both men: "'Spare me,' Medb said. 'If I killed you dead,' Cúchulainn said, 'it would only be right.' But he spared her, not being a killer of women... 'We have had shame and shambles here today, Fergus.' 'We followed the rump of a misguiding woman,' Fergus said, 'It is the usual thing for a herd led by a mare to be strayed and destroyed.'[30] Cúchulainn's line marks that this is only the second time in the text that Medb has actually displayed typical female needs in terms of her urination,[31] with the first being her initial conversation with Ailill, in which

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[26] "When we were promised, I brought you the best wedding gift a bride can bring: apparel enough for a dozen men, a chariot worth thrice seven bondmaids, the width of your face of red gold and the weight of your left arm of light gold. So, if anyone causes you shame or upset or trouble, the right to compensation is mine,' Medb said, 'for you're a kept man.'" (Kinsella, ibid.) Cecile O'Rahilly, Táin Bó Cúailnge from the Book of Leinster (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1967).

[27] Kelly, ibid.

[28] Kuno Meyer, The triads of Ireland, Volumes 13-14 (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis, & co., Ltd., 1906), Google Books.

[29] Rosalind Clark, The Great Queens: Irish Goddesses from the Morrígan to Cathleen Ní Houlihan (Savage: Barnes & Noble Books, 1991).

[30] Kinsella, ibid.

[31] While Kinsella translates Medb's actions as menstruation and there is an obvious difference between the two, I have chosen to use the 'urination' translation. While menstruation is something solely pertaining to women,

she discusses the way in which her marriage ought to be treated. The commentary in Fergus' lines is clear - that Medb is the sole reason that her armies have failed, and that the men have always disapproved of their leader, as well as the fact that she is completely evil, disregarding the fact that he allowed himself to seduced by her. Fergus additionally does not point this out until the absolute last moments of the piece.

While the law texts and the *Táin* itself were not recorded at the same time, they both are excellent examples of early Irish literature. The text's image of Medb may reflect a historical reality to an extent, in terms of the male response to any strong and powerful female figure in early Ireland, perhaps disliking these women to the extent that their subversion from cultural and legal norms is reflected in texts like the *Táin*. However, whether this power is something attributed to the leniency of the laws in terms of Irish women is objectionable, as we have seen in the Triads of Ireland, though not in themselves laws, women were still expected to remain submissive to their husbands, and to maintain the wellbeing of their household. Medb clearly doesn't take care of her household at all, and certainly lets her tongue go, in terms of commanding her armies, insulting Cúchulainn, and speaking to her husband. Her assumption of a male role in the text is deliberate, as she displays full understanding that she will not have as much control as she does acting in the otherwise traditional role, as well as the fact that her husband is incapable of achieving what she desires, and that she cannot expect to work through him. Instead, she takes complete control, which ultimately is destroyed at the moment of her need to urinate. The amount of this urination is significant, as it marks everything that she has held back during the course of the tale, both literally in the need to relieve herself, as well as figuratively in terms of her lack of interest in acting as she should in her marriage, by mentally changing the type of union that she and Ailill are joined in, as well as in terms of Irish social norms.

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urination marks another clear gender difference – women must sit to urinate, while men stand, and in this sense, Medb must essentially sit at the feet of the men whom she has been commanding in order to relieve herself.

Early Modern

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Competing Accounts for the *Ummah*'s Long Resistance to the Printing Press

Abstract

This paper questions Toby Huff's assertion that "Muslim conservatism" helped to forestall the scientific revolution, at least among the ummah, and ensured that European Christians, and not Muslims themselves, would experience that sea change. Huff is referring specifically to Muslims' refusal to use printing presses they had heard of and understood. This paper positions Francis Robinson's reasoning against Huff's, asking whether "conservative" Muslims had some reason to reject the printing press for so many centuries - a reason that cannot be boiled down as much as Huff boils it.

In his *Intellectual Curiosity and the Scientific Revolution: A Global Perspective*, Harvard researcher and Dartmouth professor Toby E. Huff attempts to account for Europe's unique role as the instigator of the scientific revolution. He considers Europeans' educational traditions and their status just before that revolution as compared to those of China and the Muslim world. This process necessarily requires an explanation of why the printing press existed for centuries before any widespread use of it by Muslims took place, and for that matter why woodblock printing never gave way to metal movable type in the Far East over a much longer period. Huff provides little in these regards, however. The following is the entirety of his investigation into the question:

> The conservative Muslim tradition of opposing new technologies at that time prevented the use of the printing press, both in Ottoman lands and in Mughal India. Indeed, in the latter, regular use of the printing press did not occur until the nineteenth century, as we will see.[1]

For qualification of these claims, and indeed for any actual defense of a theory, he points the reader to three sources: "Islam and the Impact of Print in South Asia," an essay by British historian of Islam Francis Robinson in an Oxford compilation entitled *The Transmission of Knowledge in South Asia*; the entirety of Stanford J. Shaw's *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Volume I: *Empire of the Ghazis* (a weighty reference indeed!); and an account of events surrounding an isolated seventeen-year print run in mid-eighteenth century Istanbul in Niyazi Berkes' *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*.

In order to evaluate Huff's claim that it was "the conservative Muslim tradition" holding the *ummah*[2] back, this essay examines the first and last of these sources. It also looks through Robinson's piece to two somewhat incongruous references of his: Thomas F. Carter's 1943 *Moslem World* article "Islam as a Barrier to Printing" and the decidedly postcolonial *Debating Muslims: Cultural Dialogues in Postmodernity and Tradition* by Michael M. J. Fischer and Mehdi Abedi. Carter's article will be shown to transcend the limitations of colonial-era scholarship by cleverly conceptualizing the *ummah* as a barrier separating East and South Asian woodblock printing from potential European imitators. The piece does still imagine Muslims as more attached than

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[1] Huff, *Intellectual Curiosity and the Scientific Revolution*, 129.

[2] The term *ummah* is similar to "Christendom." It refers to all Muslims, and implies a single community among them.

Christians to prejudices, say, against the use of hog's hair for cleaning a press, but does not frame such a prejudice as uncomplicated conservatism. Whether Huff himself means religious injunctions following the letter of Koranic law, or whether he means a more idiosyncratic and less formalized conservatism, as Carter did, is left up to his readers. This reader maintains that the term "conservatism" is both too widely interpretable and too likely to be interpreted as meaning "religious fundamentalism" in this day and age. For these reasons, I set out to determine whether it does apply, and if not, what else can explain this choice on the part of the *ummah*.

Robinson's is probably the definitive account of that choice in scholarship today, but it is by no means conclusive. His 1993 article "Technology and Religious Change: Islam and the Impact of Print" contains much the same information as his essay "Islam and the Impact of Print in South Asia" of three years later, cited by Huff. In the article, Robinson states that our question here "is a problem that seems not to have been seriously studied."[3] He therefore has only his considerable knowledge of premodern Muslim culture to draw on, and only general information about that culture to bolster his claims. Those claims are necessarily broad, therefore, like this one:

[G]enerally, there would have been the doubt which many pious Muslims would have felt about associating with *kufr*, with the products of non-Islamic civilization. Such doubts never lasted for long in the case of seriously useful items like military technology, or significant sources of pleasure like tobacco, but it has been a feeling which has dogged all initial Muslim responses to new things from the West from clocks to electric light.[4]

Though entirely uncited, Robinson's claim holds authority due to his position as head of Britain's Royal Asiatic Society for two three-year terms. The first of those terms began in the year after his essay in *The Transmission of Knowledge in South Asia* was published, an essay that essentially repeated this article's conclusions.

Those conclusions, though, go far beyond so unspecific a claim as this one. Robinson's thesis, in brief, is that oral transmission and a personal relationship with an author were thought to convey greater understanding of that author's work than was a thorough reading of it; printing only added regrettable degrees of separation between great men and hungry minds.[5] To begin with, Robinson cautions that "it wasn't that Muslims didn't know about printing presses."[6] In support of this, he cites two texts: the 1943 *Moslem World* article "Islam as a Barrier to Printing" by Thomas F. Carter, and a book by Michael M. J. Fischer and Mehdi Abedi entitled *Debating Muslims: Cultural Dialogues in Postmodernity and Tradition*. The former advances an eccentric conception of the historic trajectory of movable type. Carter paints a picture of the print world just before the introduction of the Gutenberg Press:

This barrier [of Islam] between the Far East, where all Buddhist and Confucian literature was being spread abroad in printed form, and Europe where ancient manuscripts were being so laboriously copied by hand in the Christian monasteries, proved in the end to be not impenetrable, but for a time the isolation of Europe from the lands of the Far East was complete.[7]

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[3] Robinson, "Technology and Religious Change," 233.
[4] Ibid., 233-4.
[5] Ibid., 234.
[6] Ibid., 233.
[7] Carter, "Islam as a Barrier to Printing," 213.

As a theory formulated in 1943, it attributes a surprising amount of agency to people other than Gutenberg and to peoples other than enterprising early renaissance Europeans. Carter goes on to write, as far as reasons for this "barrier" go, that "it has been suggested that the Moslem suspected hog's bristles in the brush used for cleaning the block, and that to touch the name of Allah with this brush seemed to him the height of blasphemy," but that "it is more probable that mere conservatism was back of the prejudice. The Koran was given in written form, therefore the Koran must always be written."[8] Could this be a hidden source of Huff's assertion? Certainly Carter could not have been the first Westerner to point simply to what they perceived as Muslim "conservatism" in this or many matters, but this article does seem to still be prevalent today. The sum of Robinson's argument could be pared down to the notion "conservatism," as Huff pares it, but there really is much more to it than that.

Robinson's primary reason to cite Carter was simply that the earlier scholar's article defends the point well that Muslims knew of printing in the Far East for centuries without taking it up. Robinson's other source, *Debating Muslims*, goes one step further than this. It thoroughly catalogs instances of printing within the boundaries of Islam but not within the *ummah* themselves—and it does it all in a page-long footnote to a quote of Carter's used merely for the purpose of opening the book's Part 2: "Texts, Con-Texts, and Pre-Texts." First, the considerable insight they take from Carter's article, paraphrasing a story he tells:

> Rashid-eddin, who was grand vizier of Persia during the Mongol period [. . .] wrote a clear account of Chinese printing in his world history, [but] seems never to have contemplated having his history printed. Instead, he provided in his will [. . .] that each year two full copies of all his works should be made by hand, one in Arabic and one in Persian, until gradually there should be a complete copy in the mosque of every large city of the Moslem world.[9]

This is the starkest and most compelling example I have seen in my research to imply that there was no particular paranoia on the part of the *ulema*[10], no special oppression on the part of the Caliphate, but merely a willing, even conscious decision on the part of the *ummah* itself not to truly entertain the idea of using this tool. For further evidence, consider this peculiar footnote of Fischer's and Abedi's. It lists a minimum of four presses that had operated within the Islamic world prior to the aforementioned seventeen-year run beginning in 1728, none of which were operated by Muslims. Jewish refugees from Spain printed in Constantinople in 1493 and in Salonika in 1512, Christians printed in Syria "in the sixteenth century," and "Armenians and Carmelites set up presses in the Julfa suburb of Isfahan, in Iran, also in the sixteenth century."[11] The passage even advances two theories and their theorists by name, both cited only as personal communications: Ottamanist historian Donald Quataert arguing for "the strength of the guilds of scribes protecting their jobs," and Miraslev Krek saying that "mistakes in the citation of Qur'anic verses may have bolstered resistance to allowing the Qur'an to be printed."[12] These references serve as ample evidence that many Muslims knew of the printing press—enough, perhaps, that if there had been a concerted resistance to or promotion of the technology, that campaign would be a part of the historical record. Quataert's assertion above does describe a possible form of resistance, but one that began considerably after the *reconquista* pushed Jewish

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[8] Loc. cit.

[9] Fischer and Abedi, *Debating Muslims*, 93.

[10] The *ulema* were the class of scholars whose interpretations on *shariah* law checked the power of various state legislators throughout the Muslim world.

[11] Loc. cit.

[12] Loc. cit.

printers into the heart of Islam.

Returning to Robinson's work, he addresses this theory with the question, "Doubtless, the great guilds of khatibs or scribes would have been opposed to printing. But, if this was the case, why should they have carried greater weight than the occupants of the Christian scriptoria?"[13] It is a very good question, and fully half of Robinson's article is devoted to answering it in defense of his thesis that printing "attacked what was understood [by Muslims] to make knowledge trustworthy." The greater weight comes from the oral, person to person concept of the transmission of wisdom in Islamic culture, he argues. To prove this he turns, like so many others hoping to divine the motives of Muslim scholars, to the *Muqaddimah*.

[W]hen a student has to rely on the study of books and written material and must understand scientific problems from the forms of written letters in books, he is confronted with another veil . . . that separates handwriting and the form of letters found in writing from the spoken words found in the imagination.[14]

These are strange words coming from so avid a writer as Ibn Khaldun, but Robinson defends the point well. He adds that "when a scholar could not get knowledge from an author in person, he strove to get it from a scholar whose *isnad*, or chain of transmission from the original author, was thought to be the most reliable."[15] Here Robinson begins to focus on what could truly be called utilitarian aspects of this tendency in the Muslim world. He sums them up well in the following passage:

Person to person transmission through time was the most reliable way of making up for the absence of the original author in the text. It enabled the student to read the white lines on the page, as the Muslim teachers used to say, as well as the black lines.[16]

Here lies the crux of Robinson's explanation. Far from being backward or having their heads in the sand, the *ulema* had a fairly sophisticated system of scholastic rigor. It simply prevented them, by its nature, from turning out very much scholarship. It was this system they were unwilling to buck and this system that they still upheld the superiority of as late as the 1870s in Turkey. Put succinctly, "printing, by multiplying texts willy nilly, struck right at the heart of person to person transmission of knowledge."[17]

From there, Robinson's article veers off into a very close discussion of an explosion in print in the Urdu language in 1820s North India. Indeed, it was from this time that print could be said to have taken hold among at least some of the *ummah*, but a printing press and printing business were established almost a century earlier, and much closer to the heart of Islam, in Istanbul. The debate surrounding its legality and use, and the reasons for its eventual closure, should be enlightening here. As one of the only in-depth analyses of such an event during the long period between Gutenberg's lifetime and the operation of the aforementioned Urdu presses, University of Ankara philosophy graduate Niyazi Berkes' section "The First Innovation" from his work *The Development of Secularism in Modern Turkey* is an invaluable resource. It is this analysis that both Huff and Robinson turn to, though they both sum it up as little more than a mysteriously abrupt seventeen-year print run. Berkes clearly thought there was much more to it than that. The defense of printing that the press' operator Ibrahim Mutafferika was required to

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[13] Robinson, "Technology and Religious Change," 233.

[14] Quoted in Ibid., 237. The *Muqaddimah*, sometimes translated "Prologomena," was the introduction to 14th century Berber scholar and world traveler Ibn Khaldun's intended world history.

[15] Loc. cit.

[16] Robinson, "Technology and Religious Change," 238.

[17] Ibid., 239.

write, and the forms of opposition to it that were mustered, should prove especially informative concerning other oppositions to other presses, records of which have not been preserved to this day, but which must have occurred from time to time in the preceding centuries. Indeed, what prevented the earlier Christian and Jewish presses operating in full view of the public from spreading, if not opposition?

Mutaferrika was a Hungarian Unitarian. Berkes backs up this controversial claim about his religious identity well and writes that it "explains the ease with which he reconciled himself to Islam. It explains also the ease with which he was received and promoted by Turkish statesmen and his career as a printer, editor, translator, and reformist."[18] Berkes also writes that Mutaferrika "was intensely interested in modern scientific progress, and he transmitted to Turkey the new scientific ideas advanced in more than one case in Europe by religious nonconformists."[19] He opened his printing press with Celebi Mehmed, another fan of European culture and science who had spent time in the company of great French lords while traveling Europe, and was eager to spread some of the ideas he had encountered there. Together, they opened their business in 1728, which required that a written request they titled "The Means of Printing" be submitted to "the Sadrazam, the Şeyhul-Islâm[20], and the Ulema."[21] Part of this defense of printing is summed up by Berkes as follows:

In the past, [Mutaferrika] said, Muslims showed more care in preserving their Scriptures than Jews or Christians, but later on, thousands of books were lost forever with the destruction caused by the Mongol invasions and during the expulsion of the Moors from Spain. Then he went on to describe how the art of book-copying declined and how, consequently, copyists distorted the texts.[22]

That someone would be bringing this idea of a precaution against future events that could be so catastrophic as these past ones to the *ulema* for the first time, as though no one has proposed them since the Ilkhanate and the *reconquista*, is striking. If no one truly had, it is just one more feather in the cap of those who say the *ummah* was simply opposed to innovation, at least after Hulagu and Chagatai Khan shattered their dreams of an unending Muslim golden age.

Mutaferrika's specific predictions of the blessings that printing would bring to the Ottoman Empire are equally enlightening. A few of them are as follows:

[I]t would reduce the cost of new books and thus enable everybody to buy them; [. . .] it would put an end to the printing of Islamic books by Europeans who fill them with errors and ugly type-face; and finally, it would make the Turks the sole leaders and protectors of learning in the world of Islam.[23]

The first of these, naturally, seems to have been the biggest source of reluctance on the part of the Turkish establishment. They did grant Mutaferrika and Mehmed permission to found their new press under the conditions that they did not print the Kuran and books on Prophetic traditions (*hadîth*), theology (*kalâm*), Kur'anic exegesis (*tafsîr*), and law (*fiqh*)—that is, permitting the printing mainly of dictionaries and books on mathematics, medicine, astronomy,

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[18] Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, 39.

[19] Loc. cit.

[20] The Şeyhul-Islâm, or Shaykh al-Islam, was the most senior among the *ulema*, though the title has been conferred in various ways by various societies, generally to people old, wise, and knowledgable in Islamic law.

[21] Loc. Cit. *Sadrazam* means Grand Vizier, and the Seyhul-Islam

[22] Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, 40.

[23] Loc. cit.

physics, geography, and history.[24]

The calligraphers and scribes whose organized labor had made up the chief opposition to the press, regardless of the flag of "the safety of religion" they wrapped themselves in, accepted this ruling. It was an official *fatwa*[25], after all, and as Berkes puts it, "they probably knew that most of the reading public was interested in the kind of book that would not be printed [for almost a century afterward, and even then not in Turkey], and the *ulema* of the time did not care about secular learning."[26]

For a taste of the sorts of books Mutaferrika oversaw the writing, editing, printing and publishing of for the next seventeen years, and which failed to ruffle any feathers in the Turkish establishment, Berkes takes the following passage from one of his works on military innovations as representative:

> From now on let [Muslims] be informed of the condition of their enemies. Let them act with foresight and become intimately acquainted with new European methods, organization, strategy, tactics and warfare.[27]

Mutaferrika later uses the example of Peter the Great's recent employment of "skilled experts from the Netherlands and England and other places" for the bureaucratization of his state as an example for his people to compare themselves to.[28] As if these urgings were not enough, he concludes his book with the sentence, "If [the people of Turkey] learn the new military sciences and are able to apply them, no enemy can ever withstand this state."[29] And Turks did begin to learn the new military sciences. Berkes' history goes into some detail about a still-born renaissance during the Tulip Period, and about the founding of new Western military academies under the tutelage of French tacticians, but these "reforms" would not really take off until the Tanzimat era of the late nineteenth century. There were other retrenchments in periods between these two, one of which included the closing of Mutaferrika's press.

Part of the increase in the vulnerability of Mutaferrika's press had to do with his death in 1745. He was a very well-supported figure by the *ulema*, by the Şeyhul-Islâm at the time, and by his patron, the Grand Vizier Sadrazam Ibrahim Paşa. Right around the time of his passing, though, it seems that a controversial history of Egypt was printed at his shop, and that its contents spurred the powers that be to reconsider their disregard for history, and indeed all of the subjects on which they had permitted Mutaferrika and Mehmed to print. Berkes and Robinson mention these events only in passing; it seems that the contents of the history itself may have been lost. Berkes quotes the nineteenth century Austrian orientalist Joseph Freiherr von Hammer-Purgstall on the question of why this brief flirtation with print culture occurred at this time, and not others, in Turkey.

Hammer-Purgstall calls this "a period distinguished chiefly by a marked impact of Occidental customs upon those of the Orient and by the close ties of Ottoman policy with the policies of Europe."[30] Berkes implies that Mutaferrika himself worked long and hard to bring about this "marked impact," and that he and Celebi Mehmed may have been two major

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[24] Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, 40-41.

[25] A *fatwa* is along the lines of a papal bull, though when one is issued today, such as that against Salman Rushdie, it might stem from any Islamic authority. At this time in history, the Ottoman Caliphate was the only legal source of *fatwa* within the Sunni faith.

[26] Ibid., 41.

[27] Ibid., 44.

[28] Ibid., 45.

[29] Loc. cit.

[30] Quoted in Ibid., 41.

instigators, along with the former's patron Sadrazam Paşa, of this distinguishing period's development originally.

Neither Berkes nor Hammer-Purgstall really explains, though, why this did not happen sooner. Was it that European military science had to reach a point at which emulation by Turks would be so tempting as to be unavoidable? Was it the beginnings of the "indirect colonization" Stephen F. Dale has alleged leads to military modernization as a means of preventing "direct colonization?"[31] We can conclude, at least, that Huff delves the question in no way deeply enough, by writing in three lines what it has taken other authors volumes to summarize, and calling it simply "the conservative Muslim tradition of opposing new technologies."[32] Though he cites both a detailed historical account that refrains from interpreting events theoretically, and a direct attempt to interpret this phenomenon that does not reduce it to "conservatism," his paraphrasing is far from the synthesis this essay attempts. If we assume that Berkes' account of Mutaferrika's press run is accurate, and that his run is also representative of others before him to which we have less historiographical access, then Huff's interpretation does stand muster in that state censorship can almost always be called conservative in nature. Robinson's characterization of this tradition, however, as a choice between two standards of transmission, each with its own advantages and drawbacks, that naturally worked their way into state law as well as religious and scholarly customs, has a great deal more explanatory power. What is more, in an age of European and American stereotypes of Islam, Robinson's theory threads a needle between the stereotypical and that which challenges stereotypes, whereas Huff's summary falls back on the stereotype that his source, Robinson, was attempting not to reinforce.

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[31] Dale, *The Muslim Empires of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals*, 284.
[32] Huff, Op. cit.

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Leibniz's Principle of Sufficient Reason and Freedom of the Will

Abstract

The philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz famously asked: "Why is there something rather than nothing?" His answer was that God Himself is a necessary being that could not have failed to exist. Every physical object exists because of some external explanation, but God is necessarily existent and He has no explanation for his existence other than the fact that He must exist in order for anything else to possibly exist. Why we have a world that is seemingly contingent or unnecessary (since it could have not existed) is explained by God's just decree. For Leibniz, the world had an explanation of its existence, and because of this he advocated a principle of sufficient reason for any fact whatsoever. In this paper I examine Leibniz's account of the principle of sufficient reason in relation to his understanding of divine and human free will and I will particularly examine an objection that accuses Leibniz's system of being essentially fatalistic. I will concede this objection and I will argue against Leibniz's account of the principle of sufficient reason, arguing that a weaker principle is essential for one not to devolve into theological fatalism. As a result, I will describe an account of free will as given by philosophers that is not bound by the stricter principle but by the weaker principle and I will describe the theological benefits that such a view of free will shall bestow upon the philosophical theologian who, like Leibniz, desires to know more about God's necessary and contingent properties.

For many philosophers, the principle of sufficient reason is such a self-evident axiom of human reasoning that it rivals the clarity of the truth of the law of non-contradiction. If we deny that some truths lack an explanation then we must also admit that there is a reason for the fact that certain truths lack explanation. If we give an account of why we came to the conclusion that some truths rather than others lack a sufficient reason for their existence, then in doing so we have just given ourselves the sufficient reason for why their existence needs no further explanation. In other words, we have committed ourselves to a principle of sufficient reason of our own making. The principle we have formulated would be as follows: For everything that exists, there is either a reason for why it exists, or a reason for why no further reason is forthcoming. Whether one concedes it or not, this is a metaphysical principle that one is paradoxically forced to uphold in the act of denying the traditional principle of sufficient reason (and it ends up turning out to be almost as strong as the principle denied).

No matter what our metaphysical commitments happen to be, we must formulate some principle of sufficient reason in order to maintain the metaphysical coherence of our respective positions. From now on I will refer to the principle of sufficient reason as *PSR*, in keeping with how contemporary philosophers abbreviate the term for convenience (Pruss 2009, 24). Let us read what Leibniz himself means when he speaks of this principle: "…we hold that there can be no fact real or existing, no statement true, unless there be a sufficient reason why it should be so and not otherwise…" (Leibniz 2009, 278). This is a *prima facie* necessary truth that applies to all statements and facts. This applies to both necessary and contingent facts, and not only to facts but also to necessary and contingent entities. This passage by Leibniz will be central to the issues that will be discussed in this paper.

Understanding the distinction between necessary and contingent facts will elucidate Leibniz's own explanation of why God is necessary. The actual world (i.e. reality) is the way things happen to be, but this world is not the way things necessarily have to be like because reality could have turned out differently. There are an infinite number of different ways the world could have turned out, and these are possible worlds which do not actually exist (but could have existed). The fact that there are humans is not true in every possible world. It could

have turned out to be such that no humans had ever existed. This is a contingent truth, or in other words, a non-necessary truth. It is true in some possible worlds (and in the actual world) but it is false in other possible worlds. There are possible worlds in which there is no Earth, and in that case there would have been no humans. Luckily enough, the actual world has humans and this is a contingent fact of nature. However, there are some truths which are necessary and so exist in every possible world. No matter how the world could have turned out, there are several truths which would remain true in those hypothetical worlds.

The proposition "Bachelors are unmarried males" is necessarily true in every possible world. No matter what possible world we describe, it would be necessarily true that if bachelors exist in that world, they would be unmarried males (this is true by definition). So facts that are necessarily true are true by definition (that is, true because of the meanings of their terms). Bachelors are unmarried males because those two terms ("bachelor" and "unmarried males") are conceptually linked to each other in such a way that they conceptually contain one another. Necessary facts and entities find the explanation for their existence in the necessity of their own nature (Clarke 1998, 8). Even the PSR has a sufficient reason for its existence, namely the necessity of its own nature.

For Leibniz, God Himself is a necessary being so that He exists in every possible world. God is the explanation for why there is something rather than nothing (Leibniz 2009, 279). God explains why there is an actual world because the existence of the Universe is yet another contingent fact that does not serve as its own explanation. There are possible worlds in which there is no Universe and Leibniz's PSR requires there to be an explanation for why possible worlds that include a physical Universe are even metaphysically possible. God serves as Leibniz's ultimate explanation and as the ground of all modality (i.e. necessity and possibility). Even if the Universe had existed eternally and had no beginning point, Leibniz would still have been able to have asked the question: "Why is this Universe eternal? Why is there even a Universe and why is this Universe this way rather than another way?" Contingent facts and entities have an explanation that lies beyond them, in an external cause. The Universe was created by God and thus its explanation is derivative of God's omnipotence and good will. The relation between God and the Universe will be explored later in this paper.

Leibniz's principle must be qualified because when he states: "…unless there be a sufficient reason why it should be so and not otherwise…" he reveals the fatalistic nature of his metaphysical system. For Leibniz, not only is an explanation going to tell us why something is true, but also why it is *not* the case that it is false. There is a distinction that I had made previously between contingent facts and contingent entities. Leibniz's principle is that both facts and entities must be explained in terms of why they are true and why they are not false. This distinction will be more pertinent later. First we must examine the strictness by which Leibniz's principle operates. Let P be the *explanans* (that which operates as the explanation) and let Q be the *explanandum* (that which operates as the incident that *has* an explanation). According to Leibniz, P functions as the sufficient explanation for Q if and only if P explains why Q exists and why it is not the case that Q does not exist. In other words, P is sufficient for Q, and Q is necessary for P. If we deny Q, then we have denied P. If we affirm P, then Q necessarily follows. This follows from the fact that if we require an explanation for why it is not the case that Q is false, then we must appeal to P and P must serve as the sufficient condition for Q and P must necessarily bring it about that Q.

To illuminate this more concretely, let us look at God's choice to create a world with creatures. God is surrounded at first by an infinite number of possible worlds, of which He may choose, and His desire is not only directed at one but He also has a desire to actualize worlds that have creatures which are exclusive to certain worlds. Let us say that God is in a deliberation

process (which should not be taken literally) and chooses a world that happens to be this world. Why did He choose our world? It is because He chose to fulfill one of His desires, but why this specific desire and not a desire to create some other world with some other creatures? If we say that God only has one desire, then it still must be asked why He only has the desire to create our world. It is certainly logically possible for God to have had some other desire (in other words, it is not logically repugnant or incoherent to entertain such a thought). It must be explained how it is that God's nature exclusively explains His choice to create and why it was not another choice. For Leibniz, since P (God's nature) must explain Q (His choice) in terms of sufficient entailment, then if Q (His choice) did not exist, then P (God's nature) would not exist! Then God could not exist without His choice to create this world, and not only that but this strict PSR would apply to human free actions as well. This would result in any state of affairs that exists as being necessarily entailed by God's nature.

Leibniz himself gave an example of this determinism when he stated:

> Thus the quality of king, which belonged to Alexander the Great, an abstraction from the subject, is not sufficiently determined to constitute an individual, and does not contain the other qualities of the same subject, nor everything which the idea of this prince includes. God, however, seeing the individual concept, or haecceity, of Alexander, sees there at the same time the basis and the reason of all the predicates which can be truly uttered regarding him; for instance that he will conquer Darius and Porus, even to the point of knowing a priori (and not by experience) whether he died a natural death or by poison,- facts which we can learn only through history. When we carefully consider the connection of things we see also the possibility of saying that there was always in the soul of Alexander marks of all that had happened to him and evidences of all that would happen to him and traces even of everything which occurs in the universe, although God alone could recognize them all (Leibniz 2009, 228).

In other words, the individual concept of Alexander the Great that was decreed by God was done so on the basis of His decree alone and not on the basis of any contingent knowledge prior to the decree that God was confronted with which was beyond God's control.

If God so desired, He could have made Alexander such that he would have been a monotheistic peasant that lived during the Israelite monarchy, but then it would not have been the same Alexander because "Alexander the Great" is defined by all the properties which we ascribe to him in the actual world. Therefore Alexander's accidental properties are not so accidental on this view. Leibniz himself saw this danger when he stated:

> We have said that the concept of an individual substance includes once for all everything which can ever happen to it and that in considering this concept one will be able to see everything which can truly be said concerning the individual, just as we are able to see in the nature of a circle all the properties which can be derived from it. But does it not seem that in this way the difference between contingent and necessary truths will be destroyed, that there will be no place for human liberty, and that an absolute fatality will rule as well over all our actions as over all the rest of the events of the world? To this I reply that a distinction must be made between that which is certain and that which is necessary (Leibniz 2009, 230).

Leibniz refers to the "concept of the individual substance" as the very nature and essence of what it means to be someone or something. Thus what it means to be Alexander the Great is what we find recorded within the ancient histories of Arrian and Plutarch. Leibniz's

solution relies upon the distinction between necessity and certainty. It is necessary that a triangle has 180 degrees, but it is merely certain that Alexander would become the king of Macedon. The distinction consists in the fact that the concept of a triangle entails (or logically implies) the property of being 180 degrees in every logically possible world, but the mere concept of Alexander does not entail his properties unless you offer the conjunction of *Alexander* plus the other entities and events in the logically possible world in which he is found.

I can conceive of Alexander not being a king, but I cannot conceive of a triangle not possessing three angles. However, for some reason, the concept of Alexander will inevitably involve him becoming king of Macedon if he is created by God (because that description is contained within Alexander's essence which would be manifested at some period during his life). Admittedly, this distinction between necessity and certainty is a very odd and vague distinction in Leibniz's philosophy. When God decreed the creation, Alexander's complete individual concept consisted of his relation to every other being and monad (in Leibniz's philosophical theology) that he existed alongside, which shaped his complete concept and necessitated by God's decree that he would become king of Macedon. The historical past of the Universe was such that Alexander could not *but* become king of Macedon. Given the hypothetical truth of the decree, it becomes necessarily due to that contingent fact that Alexander must have become king of Macedon (and that he possessed all of his other contingent/accidental properties).

Despite Leibniz's solution, his entire idea of a hypothetical necessity is jeopardized by the notion of God's goodness necessitating the best possible world. God Himself has a complete individual concept of His own essence that determines His *contingent* actions and thus the world which He creates is necessary given God's nature. It is not hypothetically necessary because there is no contingent decree by a being greater than God which determines His complete individual concept. Thus it is necessarily the case in every possible world that God's actions and desires would be exactly the same, which begs the question as to why we should even employ the language of possible worlds to begin with seeing that God's causal history will be identical in each one we find Him inhabiting. Seeing that His choices and desires are pre-determined by His nature, the creatures that are an indispensible part of His divine decree will behave exactly as His decree determines they will.

Not only would there be no contingent entities (all the inhabitants of this Universe would be necessarily entailed from God's complete concept and nature), but all facts relating to necessity and possibility would be derivative of this seeming fatalistic view of divine action. In reality, there would be no possibility given this deterministic view. The philosopher Peter van Inwagen makes the point that no necessary truth can explain a contingent truth, since necessary truths only entail other necessary truths. For example, the necessary truth that $1 + 1 = 2$ entails several other necessary truths such as $2 - 1 = 1$. Necessary truths only entail (which simply means to "logically imply") other necessary truths. Truths about mathematics do not entail anything regarding human free actions, for instance. Free actions are contingent and thus are not necessitated by any necessary truths.

If God is to be a necessary being and His existence is a necessary truth, then Van Inwagen argues that according to Leibniz, God can only entail or explain other necessary beings or truths. Van Inwagen opines that if we suppose instead to use a contingent truth to explain the contingent truth of the Universe's existence, then the contingent truth we just stipulated is itself in need of an explanation. Also, if we simply say that the world as a conjunction of contingent propositions (if we describe the world with a conjunction of propositions) can have neither a necessary explanation nor a contingent explanation (since the contingent explanation is subsumed within the conjunction of contingent propositions and also needs explaining), then why not say that the conjunction of contingent propositions (our world) simply explains itself?

That would be impossible, opines van Inwagen, because no contingent proposition (or conjunction of propositions) can ever explain themselves. The reasoning here is that if contingent entities and facts have explanations, then they must lie beyond themselves in an external explanation (van Inwagen 2002, 119-122). Peter van Inwagen completely rejects the necessity of the PSR because of this counterexample he offers. He concludes that there can be unexplained contingent facts. So we are left with two options: Either reject Leibniz's PSR and accept brute (i.e. unexplained) facts that have no ultimate explanation or accept Leibniz's PSR and reject brute facts but also by consequence rejecting non-determined free will in the case of God's choice and man's choices.

Richard Swinburne uses a similar argument to argue against divine necessity (i.e. God's being metaphysically necessary). Swinburne argues that if God is logically necessary, then any propositional truth that is entailed by God would also be necessary. Due to this argument, he comes to the conclusion that God is not metaphysically necessary (as Leibniz held) but rather is as logically contingent as the world around Him. He argues: "…you cannot deduce anything logically contingent from anything logically necessary. And a partial explanation is in terms of something which in the context makes the occurrence of the *explanandum* probable, without which things would probably have gone some other (logically possible) way. Yet a world in which some logically necessary truth did not hold is an incoherent supposition, not one in which things would probably have gone some other way. These are among many reasons why it must be held that God is a logically contingent being, although maybe one necessary in some other ways." (Italics original) (Prevost 2002, 223-224).

The argument by Swinburne is essentially that if God is a logically necessary being, then anything that He does must be logically necessary. Due to the fact that a necessarily existing God cannot explain contingent truths (since necessary truths can never explain contingent truths), Swinburne concludes that God cannot be a necessary being although He is an eternal being. Swinburne's explanation echoes Leibniz's own view that for any being, there must be an explanation for why it exists any why it is not the case that it does not exist. Swinburne and Leibniz expand the principle to apply to facts as well. For any fact (or truth), there is an explanation for why it is true and why it is not false.

There is a distinction between necessary/contingent entities and necessary/contingent facts. Surely necessary entities (like abstract objects such as propositions, properties, relations, numbers etc.) entail necessary facts about reality (and this entailment would be explained by the principle of sufficient reason). This is similarly the case with contingent entities (like rocks, planets, animals, galaxies etc.) such that contingent entities entail logically certain facts about those entities and the worlds in which they exist. Perhaps we can concede that there is an external explanation for every contingent thing that exists (namely God), but not an explanation of the fact: "There is a fact x that exists as opposed to fact y". The fact "There is x as opposed to y" is known as a contrastive fact. Remember Leibniz's last qualification which stated that there must be an explanation for why something is true and why it is not false, that is what I mean by "There is x as opposed to y".

The fact that "God created x instead of y" can admit of no external explanation, unlike the fact that "X exists". The fact that x exists is explained by God. However, the fact that God decided to create x instead of y because He preferred x cannot be explained further. God created this world as opposed to nothing simply because he had reasons to do so, but He just as easily may have had reasons to abstain from creating the world. In some possible world, God may have abstained from creating this Universe for some other reason. The nature of free actions does not allow for us to ask for any further reasons why God chose reasons *p* over reasons *q*. One may surely appeal to further reasons that inform the reasons in virtue of which God chose

to create, but those reasons do not *entail* that God would make the choice that He made (for there are possible worlds in which he considered those same reasons but failed to act upon them). If there was such an explanation, it would be an external explanation and it would no longer allow for freedom in the choice that God made. No reasons compel God to make choices because compulsion contradicts the notion of free will.

Consider the act of God creating this world. The world created by God has as its explanation God's efficiently willing it into existence. However, we need not have an explanation for why God chose this world (w) as opposed to another world or none at all (w*). We may say that the explanation for the Universe's existence is God, but the explanation for the propositional fact which states: "God created world w *rather than* world w*" is without explanation. There is an explanation for why this world obtains, but no explanation for why it is not otherwise. By *explanation*, I am referring to Leibniz's criterion for explanation, namely an explanation that appeals either to an external cause or appeals to the necessity of something's nature. God's free choice to actualize this world (w) as opposed to another or none at all (w*) cannot be explained by an appeal to any external causes or facts beyond God's choice, lest God's choice becomes determined by some external cause or fact that influences His decision in a compulsory fashion.

God's free choice to create w is not explained by the necessity of God's own nature lest this world and God's free choice to create it becomes metaphysically necessary, leading to theological fatalism. Therefore it is best to abandon Leibniz's criterion for an explanation and adopt a weaker principle of explanation. Thus when we assert that P explains Q, we do not assert that Q is the necessary condition of P such that a denial of Q is a denial of P. Nor are we stating that P is the sufficient condition for Q such that the fact of the existence of P is enough for us to know of the existence of Q. Instead, P is merely a necessary condition for Q such that if P is false, then the falsity of Q must follow. Therefore while some facts contrasting the existence of one truth as opposed to the non-existence of another do not need an explanation, facts relating to the existence of some *thing* certainly require an explanation of some sort.

The philosopher Alexander Pruss similarly makes a distinction between the weak form of the PSR (which is the one I have just defended) and the strong form of PSR (Leibniz's own formulation) in his discussion of libertarian free will and contrastive explanation (Pruss 2009, 71-73). Pruss answers a worry raised by Peter van Inwagen, namely the issue of whether a contingent proposition can explain itself by arguing that certain contingent truths can explain themselves (Pruss 2010, 62-64). Van Inwagen had argued that no necessary being can explain a contingent fact, but neither can a contingent fact explain itself. It would need an external contingent fact in order to be explained. Take the collection of contingent facts in this world, a conjunction of contingent truths. If God willed this conjunction to be actualized then that very act of willing the conjunction to be actualized would itself be a contingent fact, and would thus be a part of the conjunction of contingent facts. Should this issue be a worry for the philosophical theologian?

I contend that God's creating the conjunction is a very plausible position to hold. For instance, God created all truths (and the conjunction of all truths). However, in the very act of creating the conjunction of all truths, that very act corresponds to a truth and so the truth of creating the conjunction of all truths is itself part of that conjunction. Similarly, the conjunction of all contingent facts is ultimately explained by its own conjuncts (one of its conjuncts being that God contingently willed the conjunction to exist) and so it explains itself. Not every contingent truth will explain itself. The truth: "Caesar chose to cross the Rubicon" is not self-explanatory because it does not explain the existence of Caesar, although it does explain why he crossed the Rubicon (because he exercised his free will). "God created the conjunction of

contingent facts" and "Caesar crossed the Rubicon" are also not contrastive statements in that they do not contrast the actual choices with other hypothetical choices which either individual could have made.

However, the contrastive statement: "God chose to create conjunction *p* as opposed to conjunction *q*" is similarly self-explanatory. The truth relies upon no external explanation, just like appropriately self-explaining contingent facts (which I contend are only the ones that contain God, since other contingent facts contain entities which require an explanation for their own existence). Contingent facts may be self-explained so long as they include some reference to God's own contingent willing, for example: "God created Adam, who chose to disobey God for reasons p and q". Therefore, instead of having contingent facts which lack any explanation, they explain themselves. As for Peter van Inwagen's point regarding necessary beings not being able to explain contingent truths, here he is arguing against Leibniz's principle of sufficient reason, and not the one I have defended in this paper. I would agree with him in that logically necessary truths cannot explain contingent truths, much less entail them. However, God's choosing a particular world to create is not implied by any necessary truth nor is it entailed by God's necessary nature. It is necessarily true that God has reasons for and against creating certain worlds, and He will act in virtue of at least one of these reasons. In this sense one may argue that God's necessary existence explains why God makes some choice or other (but this fact that God makes some choice or other is also necessary). However, the particular choice that God makes is a contingent one and not entailed by any logically necessary truth.

Should the weaker PSR I have defended be seen as a weakness? Not at all, for a contrastive explanation that seeks a deterministic account of why one free agent made choice x instead of choice y is incoherent in light of a non-deterministic account of free will. If an advocate of Leibniz's PSR is disappointed to see that I have not accounted for the existence of such contrastive facts (e.g. "I chose x over y"), then I simply would have to bring forth the formulation of PSR that was mentioned in the second paragraph of my paper. Remember that even if some facts do not have explanations, then the explanations of such facts not needing explanations are that it is impossible to proffer any explanations. So the reason why free actions have no contrastive explanations is that free actions by definition cannot have contrastive explanations. They are self-explained contingent propositions precisely because that is what is entailed by a free undetermined act of the will. I cannot explain why I chose x over y, but I can explain the fact that I did choose it for a reason R (but I have a variety of other reasons R* that I could have chosen).

PSR now explains why I chose something, but it does not explain why it was that x was chosen over y. Of course, I can offer a reason which is what everyone does when asked. But these reasons do not necessitate your choice of x over y, but merely explain it in a weak sense of explaining your choice of x but not why x was chosen and not y. So for every thing and fact (excluding contrastive facts), there is an explanation of its existence. So in effect, what has been done is that the first disjunction of Leibniz's formula has been preserved, namely: "…we hold that there can be no fact real or existing, no statement true, unless there be a sufficient reason why it should be so…", but we have discarded: "…and not otherwise…" for the obvious reasons of necessitation and fatalism that result from it.

So to sum up the point, every *thing* and fact (excluding contrastive facts related to free actions) that exists has an explanation of its existence (Craig 2003, 115), therefore there is an explanation of why a contingent proposition is true but no explanation for why it could not have been the case that it was false. Even more to the point, the reason why such an explanation is not forthcoming is because there is an either an explanation for the truth of a proposition or there is an explanation for why no explanation for a proposition is forthcoming. In the case of

contrastive facts that relate to free actions, no explanation is forthcoming due to the fact that the very nature of free actions cannot allow for such a contrastive explanation lest it devolve into a deterministic fact. Let me make an extra point of clarification: We can utilize Leibniz's strict principle of sufficient reason when it comes to deterministic phenomena, so long as we utilize the weaker principle when it comes to divine or creaturely actions of freedom (since the latter are by nature non-deterministic). The version of free will that I am endorsing is known as libertarian free will, which is the traditional formulation of a non-deterministic free will. Peter van Inwagen's claim that self-explained contingent propositions are impossible now becomes possible given the fact that God's choice of this world has no explanation beyond the simple contingent (not necessary) truth that God chose this world.

This becomes an interesting turn of events because Peter van Inwagen is himself an advocate of libertarian free will. An argument can be lodged against van Inwagen in the shape of a *reductio* arguing that if van Inwagen rejects the weak PSR then he must by consequence deny libertarian free will. Pruss himself offers such an argument in his work on the PSR (Pruss 2009, 54-56). Now that the Libertarian PSR (the weaker PSR that allows for Libertarian free will) has been explicitly defined and defended against Leibniz's strict PSR, we should appreciate the theological benefits that this formulation bestows upon the philosophical theologian. This weak principle allows the theologian to attribute contingent properties to God, which is essential for Leibniz's view of possibility and his philosophical theology as a whole. The philosophical theologian Jay Wesley Richards notes that God has the contingent property of willing this world into existence, but interestingly enough, He has a contingent property necessarily. How is that possible? Notice that in every possible world, God has the property of contingently choosing that possible world to obtain. However, He could have chosen not to create any world. However, we must keep in mind that in philosophical discourse the term "possible world" also includes worlds in which there is no Universe and God exists alone. So in any possible world we find God (even in worlds in which only He exists) He will always be found with a contingent property (namely, the property of willing that possible world to exist). So it is necessarily the case that He has a contingent property in every world, but there is no specific contingent property that He has necessarily (Richards 2003, 189).

The weak PSR allows a theist to argue that because God could have decided not to create the physical Universe, God is truly the foundation for all of the possible worlds that might have existed instead of this one. Leibniz could not have made a similar statement because for him, God necessarily created this world because everything that occurs has an explanation for why it occurs and an explanation for why it was not otherwise. It was part of God's individual concept that necessarily resulted in the creation of this world. There is no genuine contingency in Leibniz's philosophical theology, but one in name only.

In conclusion, I have examined Leibniz's strict principle of sufficient reason (PSR) and compared it against the traditional understand of free will (Libertarianism) and attempted to explain a way in which PSR can be accommodated to explain creaturely actions of freedom. After doing so, I explained the theological benefits of this exercise and described a way in which the God of Leibniz may be both a necessary being and yet have contingent properties which are essential to the exercise of free will.

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