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Journal of the Far West Popular and American Culture Associations

POPULAR CULTURE REVIEW

volume 29 number 2 summer 2018

Felicia F. Campbell, editor
Heather Lusty, associate editor

Westphalia Press
An Imprint of the Policy Studies Organization
Washington, DC
2018

Far West Popular Culture Association

Popular Culture Review gratefully acknowledges the contributions and support by the University of Nevada, Las Vegas: College of Liberal Arts, and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas: Department of English.

Popular Culture Review: Vol. 29, No. 2, Summer 2018

Westphalia Press
An imprint of Policy Studies Organization
1527 New Hampshire Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20036
info@ipsonet.org

ISBN-10: 1-63391-725-8
ISBN-13: 978-1-63391-725-5

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Felicia Campbell's Innovative Contributions to Popular Culture Studies Award

Each year, at its annual conference in Las Vegas, the Far West Popular Culture Association will present the PCR's "Innovative Contributions to Popular Culture Studies Award." The award recognizes original, innovative, and multidisciplinary studies in popular culture that contribute to the general body of scholarship in new ways, expanding the boundaries into new disciplines and public spaces. We regularly receive and publish scholarship from a wide variety of fields, including, but not limited to, law, eco-criticism, literature, film & television studies, video games, music, gambling, sociology, civil engineering and architecture, the sciences, gender studies, and beyond. The award committee welcomes submissions from scholars and researchers at all levels, without restriction, in any area of study that contributes to studies of popular culture in any combination of fields and approaches.

Applicants may submit to PCR.Awards.Committee@gmail.com, with CV of publications and presentations they wish considered, and a 250-word abstract summarizing applicant's body of work, specifically addressing how the work contributes to an underrepresented field of study that transects with popular culture. The deadline for each annual award consideration is Dec 31st.

Recipients will be notified in advance of the annual Far West PCA conference (February), where the award will be bestowed. In addition to a commemorative medal presented during the Keynote lunch (and two night's accommodation at conference hotel), Westphalia Press is happy to invite each year's winner to select up to ten (10) titles from their publications catalog:

https://westphaliapress.org/book-list/

Editor's Note

As a community made up of many diverse and complex individuals, we seem to have reached a crossroads. Those among us who see the glass as more than half empty (and perhaps even cracking) might even say that we have passed the recognizable points of our road and might have real trouble returning to recognizable ground. Our summer 2018 issue features at its heart not just entertainment and popular culture but some very real questions about ethical and universal concerns. In "Space Race," H. Peter Steeves considers the limits of humanity with an important and touching dissection of our imperialist drive to conquer everything we see, without regard for the persons we fail to recognize as people, even if they are not necessarily homo sapiens. Steeves suggests that perhaps all living (and even non-living) things are worthy of respect and contemplation.

The repercussions of our treatment of the environment have never been clearer, and Amy Green highlights the awareness of our delicate natural balance with the world and its seas, extending from classical literature like Melville to modern video games, in "'Here You Are at Last, in a Ruined and Drowning World': The *Dishonored* Series as Environmental and Social Commentary." Proclaiming the value and fragility of our environment to both the young and the old has never been as important as it is right now.

Of course, power is never simple, even though we exercise it over the world around us daily. Max J. Skidmore takes a look at the lives of two larger than life presidents in "Black Belt and Blue Water: The Vigorous Lives and Presidencies of Theodore and Franklin D. Roosevelt." From the story of the Ted-

dy Bear born of a hunter's mercy to the New Deal, perhaps the Roosevelts, for all that they were men of their times, can show us something about the responsible use of immense authority. Sometimes the trigger simply can't be pulled.

That same authority might easily lead to the most hedonistic excess; Las Vegas certainly wouldn't be Vegas without dabbling in the same promise and illusion of power. Patricia and William Kirtley present the birth and development of one such bastion of pleasure and decadence in their exploration of an iconic Vegas location in the essay "When in Rome—Caesar's Palace: The First Themed Casino in Vegas." Caesar might subjugate nations and impose his own way of life, but he never had the technology we enjoy, sufficient to unhinge the very seasons of the year.

Some seasons are more metaphorical in nature, and in "Seasonal Ethnic Celebrations at Disney California Adventure from 2012 to 2017," Maureen Salsitz shows the changing nature of the entertainment industry. As the face of America transforms, so, too, do market driven forces work to ensure representation and continued interest. However, is Disney interested in true multiculturalism, or in flattening complex and dynamic cultures into simply another way to turn profit?

Mainstream culture has definitely evolved over the years, and Ian Boucher gives us a look at the resurgence of myths and comic book legends by taking a glance into an important and perhaps misunderstood television series from the late 1970s in "Casting a Wider Lasso: An Analysis of the Cultural Dismissal of Wonder Woman Through Her 1975-1979 Television Series." Wonder Woman isn't the only figure worth re-examining: Luc Guglielmi traces cultural legends that have been transformed back into oral versions in Belgium. The means and methods of story-telling constantly adapt to ever-chang-

ing needs in Guglielmi's "Written Text to Oral Presentation."

Our stories and our heroes shift and transform in protean fashion, and Chris Williams makes the case that even modern video game heroes appeal to the masses because of that same mutable character. In "Why Mario Works: Super Mario as Transformative Icon for the Working Class." Mario, it turns out, though he is specifically Italian and possibly representative of an immigrant working class, resonates with all of us in his liminal identity and the possibilities inherent in his almost magical and surreal manifestations.

Finally, we come full circle in asking important questions about personhood and love in Lorna Gibb's account of her own family history, "Defining a Life." How do we define those around us, and do we extend them the same considerations and care we hope others in power will extend to us? Isn't it time to truly demand that we treat living things with the dignity and respect they deserve?

In addition, we have several reviews in this issue. Kim Idol takes a look at Myra S. Washington's *Blasian Invasian: Racial Mixing in the Celebrity Industrial Complex*, while James Altman examines Brent Hayes Edwards' *Epistrophies: Jazz and the Literary Imagination*. At the heart of all of these articles it is important to keep in mind our ideas about personhood and the conscious and unconscious biases we carry with us as we face a world that seems to be both rapidly changing and, depressingly, mired in the same problems that only succeeded in concealing themselves for a time. What does personhood and responsibility entail in our contemporary climate? Hopefully we can all find a fulfilling answer to that question.

Felicia

Space Race

by H. Peter Steeves

ABSTRACT

Through an investigation of popular culture sources focused on our relationship with space exploration, this essay asks if and how we might go about traveling off-planet in an ethical way. Moving from a reading of Georges Méliès' silent film, *A Trip to the Moon* (1902), to the history of the Soviet space program, to contemporary plans to colonize the moon and Mars, questions of the value of science and discovery are juxtaposed with questions of racism, speciesism, environmentalism, and social justice.

KEYWORDS

NASA, Laika, space, Mars, Moon, Georges Méliès, colonization, ethics, astronaut, cosmonaut

1. GO FOR LAUNCH

I have a complicated relationship with space. From a young age, I loved not only space but the scientists who were making it possible for us both to visit and study it. There's a part of me that—though firmly entrenched in middle age—still thinks I might grow up to be either an astronaut or a NASA scientist. But there is also a part of me that realizes how troubled all such work is, necessarily tied, as it is, to capitalism, colonialism, a neoliberal state, the megamachine of technology, and an Enlightenment ideology that has led us to the brink of the destruction of our own world. The notion that we are explorers, that we're necessarily on the move, and that we *must* know something if it is there to be known, leads only

to alienation, injustice, and the death of real community. And so, for all my love—for all *our* love—of outer space, we must tread lightly.

Although we are typically a gung-ho society when it comes to technology, such complications are not merely of my own making but show themselves on a larger scale in our culture, popular and otherwise, as we begin to look at the ways in which our civilization has conceptualized, advertised, and actually gone about the business of heading to space. Thus, like a wayward Major Tom finally heading home from an odd odyssey, let us move backwards in time—from our plans for colonizing Mars, to our missions to the moon, to the first steps we humans took above the firmament into our first orbits—thinking together about what it is we are racing toward when we blast off into space.

2. MISSIONS TO MARS

The most important thing we can do—on so many fronts—is have a real discussion about our future, not taking for granted that anything is inevitable. In our culture at large, science is typically seen as the path to objective truth, with technology celebrated at every step. The fundamental ideology of science is in need of a good shake-up and critique, though, and finding a way to critique the "scientism" of our culture can stand in tandem with an understanding that the empirical investigation of our world has merit. If NASA has a future that will spark real interest in the public, it seems that that future will likely include more missions to Mars. But: *should* we go to Mars? And *why* should we—or *why shouldn't* we?

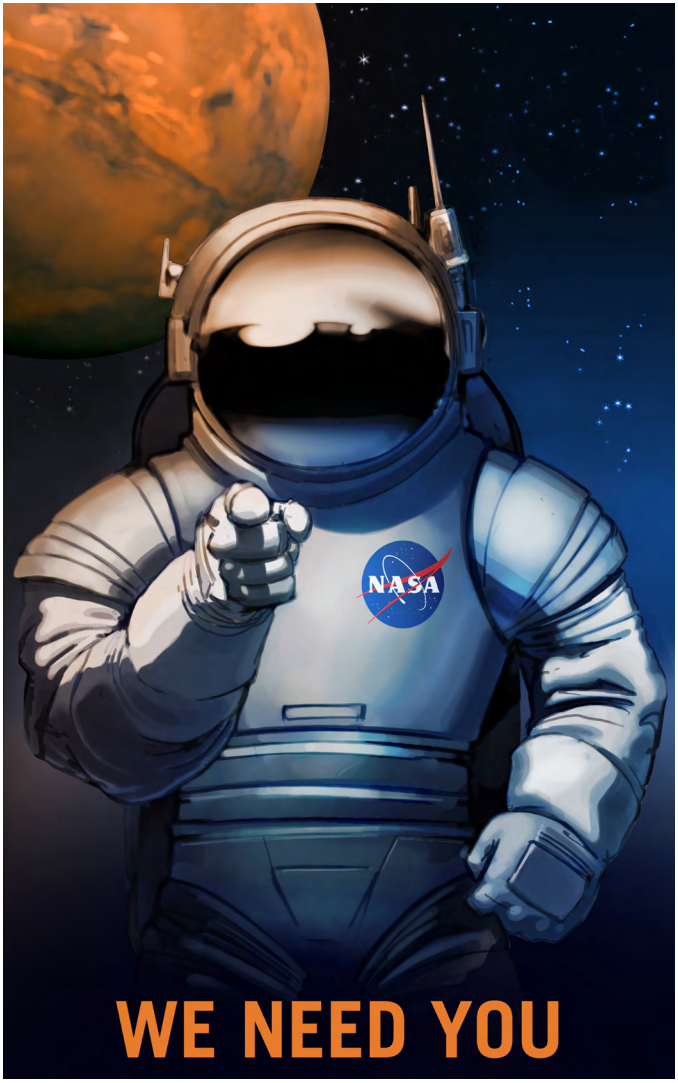
In 2009, NASA commissioned a series of posters for an exhibit at the Kennedy Space Center Visitor's Complex. (See figures 1-4.) Visitors to the Center were encouraged to think

Figure 1

Figure 1

Figure 3

Figure 4



of themselves as potential visitors to Mars. It is surely the case that the way in which we, as a culture, conceptualize Mars is based on how we *visualize* Mars; and interestingly, the fictional enlistment posters clearly, if unintentionally, place scientific exploration into the historical lineage of colonization, empire, and capitalism. There is even a hint of underlying fascism at work in the narrative and the iconography, as if these were posters created by the Nazi-inspired state in Paul Verhoeven's 1997 film, *Starship Troopers*. What are needed are explorers, surveyors, workers—all willing to do anything Uncle Space Sam says must be done. And to do it with a single-minded enthusiasm.

Wherever we go, there we are. And there our values are, too. It is difficult for a capitalist culture not to think of a new land as simply a new market or a new source of resources. We map our values onto our vision of the future. And such posters are part of that mapping as well.

From Earth, Mars is seen as a rocky wasteland, barren and dead. With only rocks (and no life) on Mars, we are told that we thus have a blank check to do whatever we wish with the planet once we finally get there. In truth, we have already encountered Mars first-hand. Mars and the Earth exchange bits of themselves all of the time in the form of rocks and dust. Thinking of our solar system as a connected whole, one with internal systems of exchange, means giving up thinking of our planet as the center of anything—a world-view that is said to have changed with the Copernican revolution, yet never really did. Rocks can found our ethics for an encounter with Mars if we are open to seeing things in a truly revolutionary way. Envisioning the Red Planet as only a rock in space—as merely dead—is not really the end of ethics. Ethics is not only for the living world. Rocks, too, can be

thought of as having moral standing. They require and thus demand different things from us than do plants, animals, and other humans. But rocks and I are co-constituting on many different levels, and thus we participate in a common Good. I literally *am* part rock (without the minerals in my body doing their work, I could not exist). But more than this, rocks are appropriate role models. Rocks show me the importance of being still—a valuable lesson in a culture that equates stillness with inactivity and thus being unproductive. Rocks teach me how to think about time differently—neither worrying about the future nor obsessing over the past, rocks are historical and carry their history with them at all times, but they do not let time bear down on their being to the point that they are overwhelmed by it. Rocks demonstrate how our conceptions of individuality are arbitrary—cut a rock in half and you have two rocks rather than a-rock-cut-in-half. Rocks have their own perspective on morality and the common Good—an ethic not based on an economy of exchange but instead a being-together in which giving and receiving are simply the way in which we necessarily exist in community, not choices that require a dualistic notion of subject/object or agent/patient.

One wonders if Matt Damon's character in *The Martian* (dir. Ridley Scott, 2015) took time, of which he had plenty to spare, to think philosophically about his relation to the Martian rocks all around him. It's doubtful. Wherever Matt Damon goes, there go the values of our culture—even on Mars. That those values displayed by Damon's character include American radical individualism, can-do spirit, and plucky inventiveness seems wonderful at first, until we recall that these are the values that made Manifest Destiny a reality, enslaved Africans in order to build a capitalism machine on the North American continent, and generally ravaged the world.

Even Damon's character's attempt to "live off the land" is no different, really, from Lewis and Clarke, who knew that they couldn't take everything with them on their trip to explore the West after Thomas Jefferson hired them to go on their journey after the Louisiana Purchase had been finalized, and so had to learn (with radical individualism, can-do spirit, and plucky inventiveness) to live off the (Native Americans') land. If anything, thinking that "working *with* the environment" is not still somehow on the same spectrum as "trampling the environment" is just wishful naïveté. The key is that we are still separating ourselves from the rest of our surroundings, reifying it into "the environment," noting how it is harsh and out to get us unless we prove smarter than it, appreciating the "environment" merely for its utility (its usefulness), and always putting our own survival first. From Thomas Hobbes' state of nature, to Lewis and Clarke, to the Dakota Access Pipeline, to Matt Damon and Elon Musk—from a tragic past to an imagined future—there is a continuous line.

And so, what if we envision, dream, and project ourselves onto Mars, but attempt to do so with a new attitude? Seeing it not as an environment, but a world, *the world*, a place of its own integrity and being? A place that surely doesn't need us and might not even be an appropriate place for us to visit?

Humans have singled out the Red Planet for nearly four millennia of recorded history.

Senenmut, the great ancient Egyptian architect, included Mars on the first map of the sky drawn more than 3,500 years ago. By the time of the pharaoh Seti's death in 1279 BCE, Mars was so important that it was being painted on the ceiling of his tomb. Plato mentions the planet in both *The Republic* and *Timaeus*, noting the order of the celestial bodies and

their distance from the Earth. In 365 BCE, Plato's student, Aristotle, observed Mars passing behind the moon and concluded that Mars must thus be farther away from Earth. We have been thinking about Mars for a long time. But have we thought about how we have been thinking about it?

It is unclear how Mars got its name, though it seems to have been associated with struggles and war in many different cultures throughout history. Babylonians called the planet "Nergal," the King of Conflicts. Egyptians referred to it as "Har Decher," the Red One. The Greeks named the planet after their god of war, Ares, and when the Romans adopted and adapted the Greek god pantheon, they simply renamed it in accordance with Ares' new name: Mars. Galileo was the first person to look at Mars through a telescope, though because Mars is so small, telescopes have never been extremely helpful at telling us much about the exact details of the Martian surface. We know now that the southern hemisphere is old highlands with numerous impact craters, but the northern hemisphere is more intricate, with lower elevation plains that have been formed more recently. Even the Hubble Space Telescope, though, was not able to fill in these blanks; it took sending spacecraft to visit Mars to find this out.

And so, long before Mariner, Viking, or Curiosity, we have imagined ourselves on Mars, speculating on our relationship to our nearby neighbor. And we have taken our values with us there as well. As Carl Sagan once wrote, "Mars has become a kind of mythic arena onto which we have projected our Earthly hopes and fears."[1] This is a projection that always seems to take place with us. Even when we Earthlings first set our sites on gathering rocks from our closest planetary body: the moon.

1 Carl Sagan, Cosmos (NY: Ballantine Books, 1980/2013): 109.

3. ONE SMALL STEP

In the Anglo-Western world, there are eight phases of the moon: New Moon, New Crescent, First Quarter, New Gibbous, Full Moon, Old Gibbous, Last Quarter, and Old Crescent.

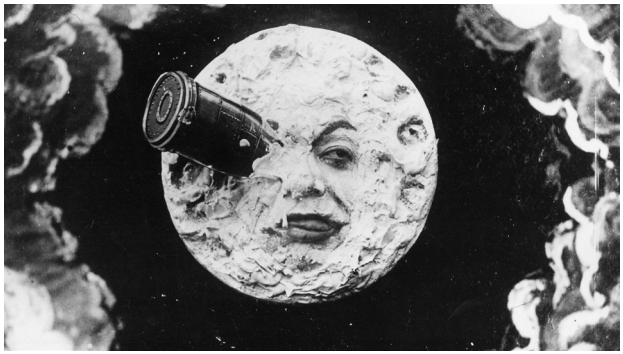
Phase 1: New Moon

Going backwards in time, we begin in the dark. The dark of a new moon. In the darkened theatre with Georges Méliès', *A Trip to the Moon* (1902). The NASA Mars recruitment posters find their roots in Méliès and his complicated film celebrating the imagination, wonder, and scientific ingenuity that has increased our knowledge of the universe beyond Earth, but also puts on display important ethical-political questions that often get ignored in all of the excitement.

A Trip to the Moon is a technological marvel, its cinematography, special effects, and narrative structure groundbreaking for its time and influential over the century that came after. In early movies around the turn of the twentieth century, the camera was typically stationary, fixed to a position as if a spectator in the audience at a theatrical production. But Méliès innovated. The most famous scene in the film—the rocket landing in the eye of the moon—is one in which we see from the perspective of the travelers to the moon rather than as a member of the audience. (See figure 5.) That is, we see the moon getting closer and closer to us as if we were one of the scientists on the rocket. This is *thematically* important, too, for multiple reasons. The landing on the moon is actually presented twice in the film: first the fantastical scene of the moon with a face where we are the scientists, and then the timeline rewinds and we see the landing again, but in a more "realistic" way. And so we have to ask: what meaning is here; why is the director forcing us to take up the scientists' viewpoint by

showing this moment twice? And the answer has to do with seeing this movie as an anti-colonialist, anti-imperialist work of art. In other words, it's clear that it is a satire.

Figure 5



The scientists are shown as buffoons. But it is also obvious that they are horrible people in general: the moon is harmed by their going there. The moon, personified, is assaulted by humanity's landing on it. And once the scientists arrive, things only get worse. They murder the natives—unprovoked and without any apparent emotion other than joy. They swat the natives with their umbrellas and pulverize them, marveling at the wonders of this new world they have discovered while destroying it at the same time. Later, when the colonizers return home, they bring with them one of the natives, forcing him to dance and entertain the masses, even dragging him along in bondage to be part of the celebration that ends with the parade taking everyone to a grotesque statue of an imperialist scientist stomping on the moon, the moon's face a twisted vision of pain with the lunar rocket stuck in its mangled eye. Here, then, is one of the earliest depictions of our voyage beyond the Earth. And it is set clearly within the world of violence and empire-building.

Phase 2: New Crescent

But of course this is not *the* earliest version of such a lunar story. It's not even the earliest version of *this* story, since Méliès was heavily influenced by Jules Verne's 1865 novel, *From the Earth to the Moon*. In Vernes' novel, the scientists are replaced by the United States Baltimore Gun Club. The US Civil War having just ended, these weapons-enthusiasts are looking for new adventure, and new purposes for their cannons, and so they plan to build the Columbiad "space gun" to carry them to the moon. It is a scenario that will recur in only a slightly different manner nearly a century later in the real world when the United States, fresh from World War II, embraces Nazi scientist Werner von Braun, whose German V-2 rockets were fired more than 3,000 times at civilian targets (mostly at civilians in London), but who—we think—might help us win the space race to the moon if we could just get him to work on rockets that carry humans up rather than rockets that carry explosives down. The violent technologies of the war angled now toward exploration, one must pause to ask whether it is possible to point the *values* of those tools anew as well, or if a technology of war, slightly repurposed, will always be a technology of some sort of war.

I was born just a few miles from where Neil Armstrong was born. Though our births were separated by nearly four decades in time, they were separated by very little space. Growing up, I felt a strange connection to him, and would go to the little museum there in Wapak, Ohio, marveling at his boyhood bicycle, his school report cards, his Apollo spacesuit, and a genuine moon rock collected from Neil's two-and-a-half hour lunar walk in July of 1969. To be honest, though, I could get to the public library far more often than I could the museum, and there I read books about the engineers who made the Apollo program happen. I came to idolize those

scientists as much as I did the astronauts—especially the *Ohio* astronauts—who had the more glamorous position in the public eye. I grew up enthralled by space and space-travel, a member of Carl Sagan's Planetary Society, a celebrator of all things beyond Earth, an amateur astronomer with crazy dreams that because the same corn and soybean fields that surrounded me had also surrounded Neil, perhaps we were not so different.

Armstrong's most famous speech was that business we all know about small steps and giant leaps when he first set foot on the moon. But just as interesting is a speech he made as commander of the Apollo 11 mission while he, Michael Collins, and Buzz Aldrin were traveling back to Earth. One day before arriving home, still thousands of miles away, Armstrong addressed the world in a TV broadcast saying: "A hundred years ago, Jules Verne wrote a book about a voyage to the Moon. His spaceship, Columbia [sic], took off from Florida and landed in the Pacific Ocean after completing a trip to the Moon. It seems appropriate to us to share with you some of the reflections of the crew as the modern-day Columbia completes its rendezvous with the planet Earth and the same Pacific Ocean tomorrow."

Phase 3: First Quarter

When the history from which we take our narratives is a history of colonialism, empire, capitalism, and violence, we must be sure to make our small steps—and our giant leaps—carefully and thoughtfully. We are not the first to ask such questions, of course. Even while most of the country was marveling at the space program and the truly incredible feat of having reached the moon, there were those who questioned why we were going and why the focus of our spending was on the space race rather than social problems at home.

Chicago native Gil Scott-Heron was something like a mixture between John Coltrane and Malcolm X: a spoken word, be-bop revolutionary whose beatnik poems and songs always forced us to rethink everything about our culture. He was best known, perhaps, for "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised," but when he released "Whitey on the Moon" on the same LP—just weeks after the Apollo 11 crew made their historic rendezvous with our natural satellite—he gave voice to a sentiment with which a large part of America that wasn't otherwise being heard agreed.

> A rat done bit my sister Nell
> (with Whitey on the moon).
> Her face and arms began to swell
> (and Whitey's on the moon).
> I can't pay no doctor bill
> (but Whitey's on the moon).
> Ten years from now I'll be payin' still
> (while Whitey's on the moon).
> The man just upped my rent last night
> ('cause Whitey's on the moon).
> No hot water, no toilets, no lights
> (but Whitey's on the moon).[2]

It is almost surely a false-dilemma to say that we either fund NASA or we fund social programs, but there is a deeper truth that Scott-Heron is getting at here other than just budget decisions—a truth that forces us both to consider what we mean when we say that "we" chose to go to the moon and also that "we" accomplished something by going there. If Armstrong's first sentence while on the moon was, unfor-

2 The first three stanzas from Gil Scott-Heron's, "Whitey on the Moon" (1970).

tunately, of the times in terms of its sexism—one small step for Man—then we also have to ask, even if we expand it to mean that "humankind" has now reached the moon, who, exactly, gets to count inside that "humankind"? Since the Enlightenment, we have had the tendency to think that tools are value-neutral and our technical achievements are similarly abstract and aloof from the politics of our time. "Humanity" has now been to the moon. But is this even true? Does "humanity" really just mean "whitey"?

Phase 4: New Gibbous

To put the point a slightly different way, Nobel Laureate Bob Dylan once sang, "Man has invented his doom/First step was touching the moon." When *Rolling Stone* magazine asked him to elaborate on that, Dylan responded,

> I mean, what's the purpose of going to the moon? To me, it doesn't make any sense. Now they're gonna put a space station up there, and it's gonna cost, what—$600 billion, $700 billion? And who's gonna benefit from it? Drug companies who are gonna be able to make better drugs. Does that make sense? Is that supposed to be something that a person is supposed to get excited about? Is that progress? I don't think they're gonna get better drugs. I think they're gonna get more expensive drugs.

If we thus approach the moon with a bit of skepticism as to the purity of our intentions, let's also remember the history of why we eventually decided to go there. The reason JFK dared to say that we'd be on the moon within a decade was mainly to beat the Soviets.

Starting in 1959, and over the course of seventeen years, the Soviet Space Program Luna sent robotic missions to the moon. Luna 1 missed the mark and ended up orbiting the sun, but Luna 2 (in September 1959) was the first human-constructed object to crash on the moon. Early in 1966, Luna 9 became the first probe to touch down softly. This was important for showing that a lander wouldn't sink into the lunar dust. It turns out that NASA, too, had been crashing probes into the moon before Luna 9 landed. In the 1960s, NASA's Ranger Program was sending up spacecraft with the specific intention of hurtling them at the moon and taking photos throughout the process. Costing about $1.3 billion dollars (adjusted for today), the first 6 Ranger probes all failed in one way or another. Rangers 7, 8, and 9, however, all hit their marks and returned their catastrophic images.

Phase 5: Full Moon

Which brings us to the full moon, the brightest moment that allows the moon to shine with reflected light and reveal, from its perspective, what it has gained from our travels there. And unfortunately, the only thing that the moon has gained from all of this probing is a black eye. Méliès was prescient.

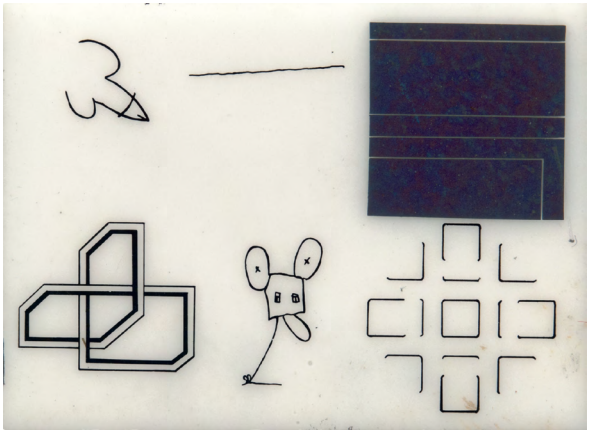
Not only have we bombarded the lunar surface without mercy, but in our many visits there, we have *taken* a great deal: samples, dust, rocks, and data. Yet all that we have left behind in its place has been a heaping mound of trash. More than 413,000 pounds of trash. Some things we abandoned when we pulled up stakes and left after the various Apollo missions from 11 to 17, and some is made up of things that we purposefully crashed. Probes, rocket parts, descent stages of landers, satellites, and three moon buggies—these are the items most people might think of if asked to name garbage on the moon. But it is the small stuff that is much more tell-

ing. That list includes such items as six American flags, Alan Shepard's golf balls, commemorative plaques, pins, jewelry, a gold-plated telescope, a silicon disk with written greetings from 75 world-leaders, a photo of astronaut Charlie Duke's family, a piece of lava from Devil's Lake in Oregon, shovels, rakes, boots, hammers, cameras, backpacks, towels, wet-wipes, empty food containers, a medal, a golden olive branch, a fraternity application, an urn containing the ashes of planetary geologist Eugene Shoemaker which is wrapped in brass etched with 5 lines of Shakespearean poetry—and 96 bags of astronaut's urine, feces, and vomit.

And art. In fact, there's actually an art *museum* on the moon. (See figure 6.) Carried aboard Apollo 12 and designed by Forrest "Frosty" Myers, the ceramic wafer—slightly smaller than a postage stamp—contains works of art by six prominent artists of the times. Most art critics tend to focus on Andy Warhol's penis doodle (which he claimed was just his initials—an A and a W—in a stylized juxtaposition, but ... no). Objectively speaking, though, the single line drawn by Robert Rauschenberg is the star artistic attraction on the lunar gallery.

In many ways, then, this tells the whole story: our best and our worst. We take both with us wherever we go. But maybe we shouldn't go *everywhere*. It's one thing to think about the romantic notion of a museum on the moon. It's another to leave our poop behind. The *logic*, of course, makes perfect sense: why cart the latter back? Why use up space and weight—and thus fuel—on the return vehicle to bring back something no one here wants? But that's the problem with logic. It does make perfect sense. The *logic* of colonialism, empire, and subjugation has never been under question. It's the *ethics* of it all that damns us.

Figure 6



Phase 6: Old Gibbous

It turns out that the moon's black eye gets erased every 81,000 years. Given the extremely thin lunar atmosphere, tons of space debris (mostly rocks), hit the surface of the moon without breaking up upon entry. This churns up the dusty surface, mixing up the top inch of moon dust so much that it amounts to a complete resurfacing. But the truth of the past is never so easily obscured.

The reason that the moon shines so brightly is, of course, that it merely reflects light from the sun. But in reality, it is actually a horrible reflector and is mostly black. It's just that given how dark the rest of the sky is, even a 3% solar reflecting ability makes the moon look bright in comparison to the vast emptiness of space. And we Earth-bound animals have looked up to the brilliance of the moon surely as long as we have had eyes to do so.

Late in his life, when Albert Einstein was at Princeton's Institute for Advanced Study, he glanced up. Walking through

campus with a well-known quantum physicist, Einstein and his friend had been debating the apparent absurdities of some of quantum theory's commitments. According to the Copenhagen interpretation, certain qualities of objects, and perhaps even things themselves, are said not to exist until a measurement is taken on them, until they are observed. Macro-objects are made up of these quantum-particles, of course, and so Einstein asked, "Do you really believe that the moon only exists when you're looking at it?" Today the most agreed-upon answer to that question is, "The moon is there all of the time, but only ... probably."

When I was very young, apart from those scientists and astronauts I idolized, the most important people in my life were my boyhood dog and my great-grandmother. They taught me what it is to love. I hated leaving my great-grandmother each evening, heading back to a less than happy home and always worried about being apart from her. But she told me to look up at the moon through my bedroom window and remember that she was looking at the exact same moon, too, even if we were not in the same place, because in this way we were together. We were both there with the moon. We were both there on the Earth beneath the moon. For me, this is what it came to mean to be *here*. To be together. With the moon.

Phase 7: Last Quarter

The moon has done so much to help us learn how to love. I wonder if it is not mere sentimentality but an actual foundation for an ethic to think about that love, to think about our dependence on the moon, to think about how we might learn to tread lightly on the Earth and also tread lightly, if it all, on the moon, even when merely looking. Because looking can trample, too, and looking always carries values as well.

Ethics is so often a matter of widening the net of inclusion. In the west, it begins with only white, property-owning, males having moral standing. Then, perhaps, white males in general. Then white women. Then non-white men and women. Then non-white humans who don't wish to identify as one sex. Then, maybe, animals. Perhaps eventually plants. The history of ethics reads like an exclusive country club that, little by little, gets more progressive and allows a few select others through its doors, over its walls. But perhaps this has been wrong in spirit all along. Perhaps accepting the need for a wall is *always* wrong—starting the discussion about ethics in exactly the wrong way because then morality is reduced to debating who gets to be on which side of that wall, and never really debating the wall itself, never really debating the presuppositions of our traditions and concepts.

For the last several years, I have been thinking about an ethic for rocks—thinking that lifeism is one of the prejudices we must overcome. Can the moon be better or worse off even though it is not alive? Just because it is dry and lifeless—like Mars—does that mean we have a blank check to do anything we want with it? Can a rock flourish? I was inspired to ask these questions by that moon rock at the Neil Armstrong museum I saw so often as a child. Perhaps it was the third most important person in my early years. I owe much to it. And yet .... We have taken so much from the moon; maybe it is time to give something back. Perhaps, as hard as it is to imagine, it is time to repatriate some of the moon rocks we've taken, sending them home, finding a new way to exist together. (See figure 7.)

Phase 8: Old Crescent

The word "we" is always a loaded word. "We" look up and see eight phases of the moon. But "we" have been conditioned

by the Enlightenment to think that there are certain truths to the ways in which the Enlightenment thinkers think. Native Hawaiians, for instance, look up and see thirty lunar phases.

Figure 7

Some things are ambiguous and confusing: I am still not sure how best to proceed with space exploration in general. Other things are quite simple: we are all in this together. And that "we" must never be taken for granted or walled up. That "we" may very well include bodies that are not the bodies we imagined at first to constitute us. Bodies of those whose difference calls on us to rise to the occasion. Ancestral bodies. Bodies of those yet to come. Even planetary bodies, celestial bodies.

And so, with the phases of the moon complete (though that which is cyclic is never truly complete), a new moon comes into view again—into view in all of its unviewable, dark, unlit glory. And we move back in time once more to ask the same ethical questions again. Back to our first moments of reaching beyond our world.

4. IN THE ORBIT OF LAIKA

Orbits, it turns out, are uncanny. There is something strange and unsettling about them from the get-go. The moon, for instance, isn't so much orbiting the Earth as it is slowly spiraling away from the Earth. Or rather, the moon and the Earth are slowly drifting apart from each other. This is due to the Earth's oceans, sluggishly catching up to the rest of the planet's rotating mass, pushing the moon about one-and-a-half inches father away each year. Few orbits are stable; none are truly stable forever. Most planetary orbits are ones in which, given enough time, everything would smash into everything else because most orbits are actually extended versions of things falling into each other.

As humans, each of us is falling into the ground, into the grave, that same way. Little by little, day-by-day, closer to that smashing ending that awaits each of our individual orbits. Life is so busy that we tend to worry about little unimportant things along the way, forgetting that we are spiraling down the entire time—spiraling, even, as you read these words. But then, if we were only to think about the ending we would never do anything in life. The moon spins and dances. We spin and dance. Perhaps that's enough for now.

It is too easy to think of ourselves as the still point around which the entire cosmos rotates. This was literally a failing of ours until the Copernican revolution, but it much more importantly continues to be a metaphorical failing for most of us today. We think we are the center of meaning, the center of it all: watch how the universe rotates around us! Even in our daily life, we forget that the moon is not really orbiting the Earth, but that the two bodies are orbiting a point between them that marks the barycenter. The barycenter is the center of mass of the two objects *taken as a system*. When one object, such as the Earth, is much larger than the other object,

such as the moon, the barycenter is typically inside the more massive object, causing the latter to wobble a bit rather than appear to circle around the other. In the Earth-moon system, the barycenter is located about 2,900 miles from the Earth's core; and since the Earth has a radius 1,000 miles longer than that, the Earth, indeed, merely wobbles a bit as it moves through space rotating around a point "inside of it."

Even when we accept this, we tend to forget how fast the Earth is also orbiting the sun. And how fast the sun is moving in one of the outer spirals of our Milky Way galaxy, orbiting the massive black hole that sits at the center of our galaxy. And how the Milky Way is orbiting a barycenter outside of it along with several other nearby galaxies in what is called The Local Group. And how those galaxies spinning around each other are moving through space, which is, itself, expanding. The motion of our planet, and of our moon, is relative. Depending on which orbit you're talking about, it is taking a different sort of curved, corkscrew, elliptical path. Nothing is still. There are no still points. We, ourselves, are especially not the still center of anything.

And yet, still ....

Orbits are special because they are curved, and because—when we ignore all of these other larger motions in which we are engaged—they seem to return us over and over to the same place, even as that place is changing. It's harder to see the falling this way. As a metaphor, an orbit is rich. And strange. Always allowing occluding, bodies hiding behind each other; always moving us away and then back. Like truth, always obscuring as much as it uncovers.

On April 12, 1961, Yuri Gagarin became the first man in orbit. Alan Shepard became the first man in space who was an

American just a few weeks later, but it would take John Glenn's February 1962 trip aboard Friendship 7 until an American made an orbit of the Earth. Saying these were the first *men* in space and the first *men* in orbit is not merely to adopt sexist language. Importantly, cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova was the first woman in orbit, two years after Gagarin, circling the Earth forty-eight times over three days in 1963. All of this is true. And it is true, too, that the Soviets placed the first *thing* in orbit: Sputnik 1, less than two feet in diameter, reached an elliptical low Earth orbit on October 4, 1957. True, and true again. But Gagarin was not truly the first *person* in orbit. That distinction goes to a different Soviet. And her story (and yes, it is a *her* story), begins in 1954 when she was born, and ends in 1957 ... in space.

Back in 1957, Nikita Khrushchev wanted something big for the fortieth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution. Specifically, by November 7, 1957 he wanted to have Sputnik 2 in the air. And he wanted it to be carrying a live Soviet citizen.

Laika was found on the streets of Moscow in 1957. She was around twelve pounds, a Husky-terrier mix, though clearly not anything close to a purebred. She had been living on her own for a while, perhaps most of her life. Because such a difficult life had conditioned her to survive in situations of extreme cold and stress, she was chosen to be part of the Soviet program, a candidate for space travel and the inhospitable environment that space might offer a lonely voyager. Vladimir Yazdovsky, chief of the space-dog initiative, wrote that from the very beginning "Laika was quiet and charming."[3] (See figure 8.)

3 https://operavision.org/2008/04/11/755/(Accessed November 21, 2017).

Figure 8

Laika began her training with the assumption that she would blast off sometime in 1958. When Khrushchev demanded Sputnik 2 be sent in November of 1957, corners were cut and time-lines were compressed. The word came down in October. There would be only one month to design the spacecraft from scratch. As the scientists worked to develop the capsule to carry Laika, and the rocket to take her into orbit, they knew that it would be impossible to bring her back safely. They knew that they were sending Laika to die in space.

She trained every day. Laika learned to eat a specially-designed food in the form of a gel packed with high-nutrition and protein. She *learned* to eat it because it was the only thing she was given to eat. In order to acclimate to the confines of the small capsule, Laika was kept in a series of cages, each one smaller than the last. She learned to stay alive through all of this, but she didn't exactly thrive. The confinement and inability to move made her unable to urinate or defecate. Most of the other dogs undergoing the same regiment became listless; their condition deteriorated rapidly. Laika finally be-

came skilled at urinating while sitting and lying down under conditions of extreme stress. Laika held on.

She was taken out and placed in a centrifuge to simulate the g-forces of a launch into space. Loud noises were played in her cage to simulate the racket of liftoff and booster engines firing. Her pulse doubled, and her blood pressure skyrocketed from the stress. Then it returned to normal within an hour. Laika held on.

The day before the mission, Yazdovsky took Laika home and allowed her to play with his children. He wrote in his memoir: "I wanted to do something nice for her: She had so little time left to live."[4] I think of Laika sometimes, playing with the Yazdovsky children, and I wonder what she was thinking. She must have longed for such a family, for such a home, back when she was on the streets of Moscow. She must have wondered about the incongruity of it all, of this man who was responsible for her torture yet who now took her to a place approximating canine paradise. Outside of her confinement cage, away from the centrifuge, eating—perhaps—scraps from the table, and being part of a pack—a human and canine pack—with little ones eager to spend every moment in play. Did Laika have a good time? Did she think she had found a reprieve? Did she think it would last forever? Laika held on.

Back in the center, Yazdovsky operated on her, sewing into her flesh the cables that would attach to instruments meant to monitor her vital signs. The spacecraft was prepared, as was Laika's containment area. The oxygen generator and CO2 scrubber were functioning. The cooling fan was working to specification. A bag to collect Laika's waste was set up, and a six-day supply of food-gel was installed. The gel for day seven was also loaded. It was laced with poison—more humane, it

4 Ibid.

was thought, than having Laika burn up in re-entry or die of hunger. Her fate was sealed no matter what.

On October 31, three days before lift-off, she was welded into her capsule. As the door closed for good, records indicate that a scientist bent down, "kissed her nose, and wished her *bon voyage."*[5] And Laika held on.

The launch itself was a great success, though after reaching orbit there were some problems with thermal insulation coming loose and a part of the booster rocket not separating exactly as planned. The dog-cosmonaut was in a panic. After three hours of orbiting, weightless, Laika began to calm down. Her pulse dropped by more than 50%—almost back to normal. The on-board electronics showed that she ate a bit of food. The scientists cheered. Laika held on.

Three hours later, there were no signs of life in the capsule.

The news continued to report on Laika's position over the days to come, never letting on that she had died. "Look up in the sky and perhaps you'll see her," they announced, though she had long since passed. After a week, it was broadcast that Laika had finally completed her mission and was to be euthanized painlessly. It was not until 2002 that we learned the truth: on just the fourth orbit, about six hours into her flight, Laika had died in agony from extreme heat exposure. One of the designers of the Sputnik 2 rocket testified: "It turned out that it was practically impossible to create a reliable temperature control system in such limited time constraints .... The more time passes, the more I'm sorry about it ...."[6]

5 Quoted in Kathleen Walker-Meikle, The Dog Book: Dogs of Historical Distinction (NY: Old House Books, 2014): 140.

6 https://www.rferl.org/a/laika-soviet-dog-in-space/28833194.html (Accessed November 21, 2017).

On April 14, 1958—after five months and 2,570 orbits—Laika was cremated, disintegrating along with Sputnik 2 during re-entry. A fancy way of saying that the capsule fell slowly, like we are all falling, during its last several hundred rotations around the Earth until, finally, sinking too low, it all came to an end.

Laika is a hero in Russia to this day, though in the then-Soviet Union and all around the world, she stirred discussions of animal testing and animal cruelty. Charming Laika had not *volunteered* to give her life. She had not signed up to be the first person in space. That she paved the way for others is without question. That it was worth it, is unlikely—or at least let us say it is still up for grabs. And all of this, of course, is not to single out the Soviets for having done the one wrong thing in the Space Race. This is all an ethical and political question, of course, but not political in the sense of seeing one side as bad. The U.S. killed its own fair number of nonhumans on the way to space, and today in the name of science we close our eyes to the untold suffering and sacrifices around us as nonhuman animals by thousands are tortured and killed all in the name of "figuring something out" that will supposedly be great for humans. Even if we open our eyes, it is so easy to look up into the sky and convince ourselves that we can still see them, still see her.

We thus end our brief investigation of the space race with this story not in cynicism but to remind us that the demands of ethics and politics do not disappear when we hear the whispered promises of technology. What it means to be a *humanist* is to remember how complicated these things are, to remember what is occluded when other things are made visible. We who work in the arts and humanities cannot think that science is the enemy. But we must also not think that science is "not our department" or "beyond our concern." To

find moments of joy and triumph in the space race, but also to remember the sadness and the losses—that is an inherently demanding undertaking. To accept that there is something wondrous about the glorious history of NASA, but also to see that it carries with it a history of sexism, racism, lifeism, and oppression—that is a hard task. To know that the Enlightenment "overturned" the science of the Ancient world, but also still to see value and insights for us today in that Ancient way of thinking—this demands much of us.

We must welcome such challenges, celebrating the beauty and admitting the failures of our endeavors to reach escape velocity and achieve a stable orbit, even knowing that such a thing is an illusion because there is no stable spiraling, there is no still point. Not in orbit, not on the moon, and not on Mars. But there is cause for hope. Hope that in our collective care, hands entwined together, Laika might still hold on.

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"Here You Are at Last, in a Ruined and Drowning World": The *Dishonored* Series as Environmental and Social Commentary

by Amy Green

ABSTRACT

"'Here You Are at Last, in a Ruined and Drowning World'": The *Dishonored* Series as Environmental and Social Commentary" explores at depth the intersection of environmental destruction, social stratification, and the exploitation of the poor. What emerges from the narrative is a compelling ecological warning, as the player embodying Corvo first witnesses the ruined city of Dunwall and the casual slaughter of whales, then becomes a subject of The Outsider's interest. This warning carries through *Dishonored 2* and *Dishonored: The Death of The Outsider* as these sequels continue to explore the exploitation and oppression of the poor and to follow The Outsider, who is at once a ringmaster, observer of what those who bear his mark enact on the world, and beleaguered victim, enduring fetishization by those who worship him as well as his own history as the subject of terrible violence. The narrative that emerges across all three games provides a stark warning about the consequences of those with power and wealth ravaging the environment and the vulnerable.

KEYWORDS

ecocriticism, video game studies, Dishonored, leviathan, whaling

Arkane Studios' 2012 video game *Dishonored* received accolades and honors for innovation in gameplay. Although much praise fell to the game's mechanics, the game's narrative warrants closer attention. The overarching plot is one of revenge: Corvo Attano, royal protector and lover to Empress Jessamine Kaldwin, carves a path of vengeance after being framed for her murder. First, he must first recover their daughter, Emily Kaldwin, who is being held prisoner by those who orchestrated a coup and murdered her mother in front of her. He must then decide how to contend with everyone involved in the plot. Corvo receives aid from a mysterious figure, known as The Outsider, who takes the form of a young man, and those who are loyal to the murdered Empress. However, the game's setting and its introduction of the god-like character The Outsider belie a simple and straightforward story of vengeance. Indeed, at the core of Corvo's story of revenge lies the crown city of Dunwall, ravaged by plague and filth and engaged in the whale oil trade. In darkened alleys throughout the heavily industrialized city, beleaguered citizens have erected shrines to The Outsider in defiance of the new, dominant religion outlawing the practice. What emerges from the narrative is a compelling ecological warning, as the player embodying Corvo first witnesses the ruined city and the casual slaughter of whales, then becomes a subject of The Outsider's interest. This warning carries through *Dishonored 2* and *Dishonored: The Death of The Outsider* as these sequels continue to explore the exploitation and oppression of the poor and to follow The Outsider, who is at once a ringmaster, observer of what those who bear his mark enact on the world, and beleaguered victim, enduring fetishization by those who worship him as well as his own history as the subject of terrible violence. The narrative that emerges across all three games provides a stark warning about the consequences of those with power and wealth ravaging the environment and the vulnerable.

Video games and their exploration of digital storytelling long ago moved past being simple novelty or mindless entertainment. Although not all video games have as their end goal sophisticated storytelling, those possessing such an aim tell increasingly important, powerful, and controversial stories. The *Dishonored* series forms the foundation of its plot against the backdrops of environmental destruction and the exploitation of the poor such that it effortlessly blends with the actions the player might opt to take in each game.[1] That video games like the *Dishonored* series might opt to explore weighty subject matter, such as the destruction of the environment and the hunting of species to the brink of extinction, intersects seamlessly with the inherently immersive nature of digital storytelling. In considering the role of video games in environmental studies, P. Saxton Brown observes,

> If climate change and the multiple other environmental crises faced on a global scale require a rethinking of the roles that the nonhuman, and particularly various kinds of environment, play in our fiction and cultural production, video games that are, in one way or another, about environment constitute an important area of research for the environmental critic. Environment is at the center of gameplay in numerous ways. (385)

The *Dishonored* series stands as an important example of how digital narrative, already an important source of culturally and socially relevant storytelling, can extend its reach into ecocriticism. In terms of the specific point about the envi-

1 The player's choice of either a Low or High Chaos walk-through and this decision's impact on narrative are discussed further on.

ronment, Greg Pritchard focuses on the essential connection between the fictive space and narrative. In the *Dishonored* series, the settings—the cities of Dunwall and Karnaca—are as vital as any individual plot point.

Instead of eschewing complex matters, such as the exploitation of the poor and the intersection of social inequity with environmental destruction, the game series treats these issues as inherent and important for both the player and the various characters inhabiting the fictional locations to consider. Greg Pritchard argues of the importance of ecocriticism,

> The new construction of nature, as something the Western world cares about, obscures the fact that largely it doesn't. Even people who are well educated in environmental problems do not always change their habits in necessary ways. Given that there are pressing environmental problems, and that they may be partly a result of the way in which Western culture conceptualises the natural world, what role can ecocriticism play in addressing these issues? Western societies, if not all societies, need an ecocritical theory and praxis for the same reason they need feminist theory, Marxist theory, and post-colonial theory. These are proselytising critical theories. And they are all interconnected. They all derive authenticity from the assumption that human rationality can improve the conditions of the disempowered, whether they are women, the poor, the colonised or the environment. (33)

The *Dishonored* series explores the complexity of these issues, centered on the intersection between the ruined environment and ruined lives of the destitute and oppressed, while never pretending the solutions to these issues will come easily or are even wanted by those who may otherwise claim to be advocates of both. Jennifer Calkins asserts,

> While the symbolic nature of other animals is a common focus of literary criticism, the examination of the animal "other" as a true embodied character is rare. However, the recent emergence of animal studies into the academy is resulting in an increasing number of studies investigating how texts are able to embody animal others. (32)

When taken in its totality, the game series spans approximately sixty hours of storytelling and features just such an embodied character via The Outsider. Although he also functions as a god and chooses to appear in the form of a human male, his close and deep association with the whales and their slaughter underscores the important narrative underpinnings of the games and their contribution to a discussion about the modern-day environment.[2]

Across the series' main games and downloadable content (DLC), focus remains on the intersection of poverty, disease, oppression, and, importantly, The Outsider's role as he watches these inequities unfold. However, the game's mechanical elements join with its fictional story elements to form a cohesive whole whereby the player's choices and actions fundamentally shape the fictive space of the narra-

2 The nature of The Outsider and his narrative purpose are discussed in-depth further on.

tive. All of the games in the *Dishonored* series combine both their narrative elements and mechanical elements such that the overriding concerns related to the environment and the conditions in which many of Dunwall's and Karnaca's citizens live blend seamlessly. At the center of this lies the player's control over play style, with two primary modes of play available, each presenting permanent and evolving changes to Dunwall, Karnaca, and their inhabitants. Although the games allow two modes of play, Low Chaos and High Chaos, they do not allow much switching between the two, and the selected mode of play directly impacts gameplay elements throughout, especially in the games' endings.[3] There is technically a third category—which may be called less-than-High Chaos—that is not explicitly revealed to the player, as the game only rates missions and overall chaos levels on a scale of low to high. This less-than-High Chaos mode still causes an overall negative tone to the gameplay, but it is less severe than its highest counterpart.

The first game is divided into ten missions, the second into nine, and the third into five, and after completing each, the player is presented with a scorecard detailing whether the mission was Low or High Chaos and providing other statistics, such as the number of enemies killed or whether the player completed the mission without being spotted or detected.[4] The difference between a Low and High Chaos play-

3 While it is possible to have some chapters completed as Low Chaos and others as High Chaos, the game tracks overall instances of Low or High Chaos and uses this measure as the basis for both changes in the game and the ending that the player receives. It is possible for players deliberately attempting Low or High Chaos playthroughs to replay chapters to achieve that end.

4 Being able to "ghost" a level, as this no detection playthrough is often called, does not determine Chaos level. Of more importance is the player's overall casualty level and decisions he or she makes regarding

through lies primarily in the player's approach to lethality. Corvo, Emily, and Billie eventually gain a number of increasingly powerful skills and weapons, and the player has the option to select those that create a lethal outcome or those that do not. The games also allow the player to use stealth mechanics and a critical assessment of each mission environment to avoid most, if not all, combat.[5] The player's nonlethal options to deal with enemies include using a choke hold or sleep dart, and for every major antagonist or mission objective the player confronts, the game provides at least two options, with at least one being nonlethal. The stealth mechanics of the game are challenging, and completing missions at a Low Chaos level proves challenging, requiring careful planning and strategy at every stage. The less patient player may well feel inclined to simply kill everything in his or her path, as the character embodied by the player can be made sufficiently strong via skills and weapons that this clearly becomes the easier option. Yet, narratively, it is arguably the less satisfying play style to adopt, given that the game's lush and detailed surroundings invite the player to approach each mission with caution and care. For example, many mission loca-

missions, again related to whether they are completed lethally or by finding an alternative means to accomplish the objective.

5 An example of this is the brilliantly designed "Clockwork Mansion" mission in *Dishonored 2*. The mansion contains a number of levers that when activated shift around walls and rooms like puzzle pieces, leading to a disorienting space to navigate and potential encounters with a large number of enemy guards. On entering the mansion, should the player look toward the ceiling almost immediately after entering, he or she may notice that it is made of glass and can thus be broken with a crossbow bolt. A player that does so can move into the opened space, as it is the crawl space between that wall and the outer wall of the mansion, a space needed to allow the pieces to move when activated. Taking this route to the mission objective, which is to neutralize the mansion's creator Kirin Jindosh by either lethal or nonlethal means, enables the player to bypass nearly all guards save one, who can easily be overpowered.

tions are marked by multiple entry points—through a sewer, an unlocked maintenance door, or the like—that beg for a full exploration of each level rather than a quick and simple completion. A number of games make combat the difficult component of gameplay. By contrast, the *Dishonored* series makes combat relatively simple and alternative methods of mission completion more challenging.

The game's narrative also provides divergent environmental experiences for Low and High Chaos playthroughs. For example, Dunwall, beset by a plague spread by rats, experiences even greater numbers of infected citizens should the player opt for a High Chaos game; more corpses lead to more rats and therefore more suffering on the streets of the city. In addition, some characters, such as Emily Kaldwin, the young daughter of murdered Empress Jessamine Kaldwin, begin to emulate Corvo's choices in their own attitudes. A more merciful Corvo provides hope and a sense of morality to those around him. A Corvo focused only on bloodletting deepens the cynicism, rage, and hatred of others. Ultimately, a Low Chaos walk-through leads to an ending that finds Emily Kaldwin installed as empress and ruling justly owing to the example set by Corvo, arguably the best of all possible outcomes for Dunwall's citizens. Order is restored to Dunwall, and the plague ceases to hold sway. Similarly in *Dishonored 2,* a High Chaos walk-through leads to more bloodfly[6] nests in subsequent missions. This game also has a number of possible endings, but all hinge on how Emily Kaldwin, eventually restored to her throne—with Delilah Copperspoon either killed or imprisoned—is perceived thereafter by her people. A High Chaos playthrough finds her deemed Emily the Vengeful, ruling over a Dunwall marked by even further plague and poverty. A Low Chaos walk-through leads to her

6 A dangerous and parasitic insect.

identity as Emily the Just and marks a time of relative peace and prosperity for both Dunwall and Karnaca. The ending of *Dishonored: The Death of The Outsider,* discussed further on in terms of the two options given to the player regarding its ending, bears reflection here as the game ends on a more ambiguous narrative note than its predecessors regarding the amelioration of circumstances in Dunwall and Karnaca. The game takes place only a few months after the conclusion of the events in *Dishonored 2;* thus, insufficient time has elapsed for the player to note any significant and lasting changes. However, The Outsider speaks of possibilities for salvation or further suffering. Of his potential fate, he comments, "When I died, this world was remade. And when I die again ..." He leaves the thought open-ended, as the fate of the world. The extent of inequity and the destruction of the environment is such that, The Outsider ponders here, even a god may be unable to change it quickly or to any significant degree. Instead, The Outsider grants powers to a select group of citizens and allows them to act as agents of change in the world, whether for good or for ill.

The first game takes place wholly in the industrial and crown city of Dunwall, whose economy is primarily driven by, and whose citizens rely on, the steady supply of whale oil produced in what is dubbed Slaughterhouse Row. The settings of *Dishonored 2* and *The Death of The Outsider* broaden to include in the former the southern lands of Serkonos and their capital city of Karnaca, and the latter both Karnaca and the Void itself. The world of *Dishonored* focuses in equal measure on both technological advances, such as the government's far-reaching surveillance and security systems, and magic, such as the type granted to Corvo by The Outsider or the more general, albeit outlawed, practice of the pursuit of black magic. Yet for all of its technical wonders, Dunwall remains

in many ways markedly rooted in a past that has more in common with the burgeoning industrial ages of America or Europe—Dunwall appears to be structurally and architecturally modeled on Western coastal cities—than it might with a thoroughly futuristic setting. Indeed, excepting the game's supernatural and magical elements, it very well might be set in those locales, complete with the ravages of unchecked industrial growth choking the city in pollution and detritus.

Dunwall functions as an effective fictive space in that it is at once familiar, with its similarities to known industrialized cities, and alien, exploiting the familiar to create the unique social, cultural, and economic currencies of the game. P. Saxton Brown argues,

> Natural environments in video games constitute a paradox on top of the built/natural paradox, as a "mimicked" video game environment is always already a technological one. Mimicking, too, is something of an understatement: environment is at the center of gaming because, as a computer program, a video game is a type of world—a second, simplified nature—that forms the groundwork for the user's actions and behavior. (386)

Dunwall as a setting provides the player with the opportunity to engage in a tactile manner with the environment itself, bringing into sharper relief the poverty and environmental struggles plaguing it. The game provides a stunning degree of verticality, allowing the player embodying Corvo to climb and physically interact with the landscape. Indeed, to score a Low Chaos level, the player must use spaces like rooftops, ledges, and industrial pipes to remain out of sight of guards

and enemies. Such an intimate exploration of space and place underscores the root of the name Dunwall—dun, meaning gray or dark. The city is not only plague-ridden but also filthy, with only the wealthiest district located in the north offering anything approaching decent living conditions. These conditions further reinforce the idea that Dunwall's citizens—especially those on the lower end of the socioeconomic scale—have paid a high price for the city's relative technological advance. To this end, the game explores an aspect of ecocriticism along the lines of what Greg Garrard describes. He asserts of the exploration of environmental issues, "Environmental problems require analysis in cultural as well as scientific terms, because they are the outcome of an interaction between ecological knowledge of nature and its cultural inflection" (14). With a digital narrative like *Dishonored,* such conversations occur along two interrelated fronts—the fictional and the real.

The plague ravaging Dunwall provides a critical narrative backdrop to the game's explorations of revenge and ecological disaster. The plague is called "The Doom of Pandyssia"[7]–an often-referenced continent rumored to be uninhabited by humans—by the player's Heart, an item granted to Corvo by The Outsider that provides somber, even bitter, commentary about the state of Dunwall and its citizens. Through The Outsider's power, a mechanism of magic otherwise unexplained, Empress Jessamine's spirit—speaking always with sadness and regret—embodies the Heart. The Heart itself is no longer strictly organic but riddled with wire and metal, indicative of the manner in which Dunwall has lost its con-

7 The Heart will also state that "the Doom of Pandyssia has come to this city," implying that Pandyssia serves as a mirror for the dark path Dunwall walks and that the continent lies abandoned due to the actions of its former inhabitants.

nection with the natural world. Jessamine's spirit, as an omniscient presence, sees not only all corners of Dunwall but also the darkest secrets of its residents. The Outsider says to Corvo when giving him the Heart, "To help you find these Runes, I give you this: the Heart of a living thing, molded by my hands. With this Heart, you will hear many secrets, and it will guide you toward my runes, no matter how they may be hidden. Listen to the Heart now, and find another Rune." The ability to trap Jessamine's spirit inside a heart suggests the magnitude of The Outsider's power, and both his possible identity and narrative purpose are explored further on. The Heart provides a unique aspect to the game, deepening the player's connection to the fictive space. With it, the player gains insights into various people and different parts of Dunwall, the revelations of which are always tinged with a sense of deep sadness, even disgust. That the Heart is embodied by a female spirit presents a tie between the female body and its surrounding landscape. Bertrand Westphal, summarizing in part the work of Elizabeth Grosz, argues that "alienation begins with the metaphorical reification of the body in urban space. The city is transformed into a simulacrum of the body, while the body is absorbed in it" (65). So too does Dunwall mimic the Heart's ravaged state. In an interview with Harvey Smith and Raphael Colantonio, co-creative directors for *Dishonored,* Paul Walker recounts them sharing the following about the Heart, "'Themes of how you use the power you're given—whether its authority, social class and privilege, or the allegorical supernatural powers—are close to the centre of the game and the world,' Smith and Colantonio told me. 'The Heart seemed like a good way to focus on the emotional core'" (n.p.). While the Heart exists as an amalgamation of flesh and technology and sounds ever melancholy in its commentary on both people and places around Corvo, it provides the player who continues to use it with increasing

insights that can guide choice and thus offers vital information about the vast inequalities within Dunwall's social structure. The Heart returns in *Dishonored 2* with the same purpose, whether the player chooses to embody Emily or Corvo. However, to trap Delilah Copperspoon's soul so that she may be defeated, Jessamine's soul is eventually purged from its artificial housing, and the Heart is destroyed during the process of returning Delilah's missing soul to her body. Jessamine's last words to Corvo or to Emily depend on whether the player has played at a Low or High Chaos level and are infused with either hope or despair over her lover's or daughter's fall to darkness.[8]

The vast devastation of the plague permeates thought and theology throughout Dunwall. Of the plague, a prophecy the player can find in the game reads, "A crawling foulness will overcome you because you did not shut the gates of your heart to iniquity." Although this seems to be a statement aimed at Dunwall's elite, their direct suffering as a result of the plague proves minimal, while the poor die in droves, their shrouded bodies discarded in piles. The game graphically illustrates this idea of suffering and inequality through the appearance of those infected by the plague. The infected eventually drip blood from their eyes and are beleaguered by insects. These Weepers, as they are called, will attack Corvo on sight. Further evidence revealed as the game's narrative unfolds shows that the citizens have the right to weep, both literally and sym-

8 *Dishonored: The Death of The Outsider* uses a different in-game tool than the Heart provided to Corvo and to Emily in the first two games by which the player embodying Billie Lurk can gain similar insights into the world around her. Billie gains the ability to listen to the chatter of rats, who sometimes provide information about infiltration points into buildings and at other times speak of the cruelty they have experienced given that they are seen as vermin. For example, some of the rats recount the agony they had experience when they were caught in traps.

bolically. The plague does not occur naturally but has been introduced into the city by Royal Spymaster Hiram Burrows, who eventually orchestrates the assassination of Jessamine Kaldwin and rules, corruptly, in her place before Corvo gets revenge. Burrows wanted to handle Dunwall's poverty problems by killing the poor through the plague, an unspeakable evil that leads to a plague that spreads out of control and has decimated the overall population by half. Michael Eisenstein writes of the spread of plague and disease around the globe, "Cities can also provide greater opportunities for infectious diseases to flourish. Crowding and poor or nonexistent infrastructure exacerbate the risk of infectious disease to slum inhabitants in particular" (1). Although many of Dunwall's citizens have died, the wealthy have avoided the issues of overcrowding and lack of resources found in the poor parts of the city and have thus increased thThe disparity and disease permeating life in Dunwall find their best expression when the player visits the area of the city called The Flooded District. The Heart comments of this area that "they bring the bodies here. With rough hands. Rough hands and cages. Some of them are still breathing. The water is so cold, and it is the last thing they feel," referring to the dumping ground the area has become to those infected by the plague. The Flooded District, ravaged from a previous flood, lies to the south of the city, far from the relative wealth of the north district. The abject misery and poverty of those still living in The Flooded District call into sharp relief that the wealthy are relatively isolated from the horrors of the plague, while everyone else lives in filth and fear, separated both economically and geographically from the safer sections of Dunwall.

In the run-up to the first game's release, IGN created a site that presented additional background to the game's world, fictional accounts written from the point of view of those

who might have lived in Dunwall. In one such article, the fictional Isolde Parallyne says of whale oil, "The benefits of whale oil should be harnessed to help find a cure for the plague that continues to decimate Dunwall's lower classes. They claim that it is instead being used in weapons and security measures that further isolate Dunwall's wealthy elite from the harsh reality unfolding on the city's streets." Yet this highlights the important points that whale oil is not a miracle cure—indeed it is never presented as a curative for any disease—and that it is a finite resource, both realities that seem to have escaped Dunwall's citizens. Despite the problems, though, no one, not even those suffering most, seem especially keen to find an alternative to slaughtering whales. Michael Eisenstein notes of the ability of larger cities to mobilize when outbreaks of disease occur that "better community surveillance and prompt delivery of medical care are key advantages for battling the spread of infection. But even a well-designed rapid response can falter in the slums" (3). In the world of *Dishonored,* those with means seem ambivalent about providing any medical care to the ill, even when such action would potentially halt or slow the spread of the plague affecting all. Instead, they offer ridiculous solutions, such as using whale oil to cure disease as though it were at once snake oil and a panacea, or seek to isolate those who are infected, leaving them to suffer with neither treatment nor hope of cure.

Dunwall's problems in the game's present originated in prior years or even decades. Although Jessamine Kaldwin appeared to rule with a degree of care and concern, her reign was not universally praised, and given how far the plague and social inequity have spread, she was not the city's savior. Dunwall is very much a city under both surveillance and a totalitarian grip, the seeds of which started under Jessamine's

rule and were exacerbated by those who staged the coup. As fear of the plague spreads, the authorities begin to post notices that read, "Report any sickness. Hiding the plague is punishable by death." Everyone is well aware that there is no cure for the plague, and the city streets—at least in the poorer areas—are littered with sheet-wrapped corpses. The homes and properties of plague victims are on lockdown, barred by imposing barriers and posted threats to others to "stay away." Presumably, the families of these victims experienced the same fate, evicted from their homes and divested of the meager property they had possessed. One certainly can infer that this property becomes the chattel of the state and will not be returned. The player can find documents relating the heightened sense of fear and paranoia gripping the city. One such document is a diary kept by a wife and mother whose husband and children have contracted the plague. She notes, "The city watch comes and goes, knocking on doors and asking for signs of the plague. Even neighbors cannot be trusted." It is not enough for Dunwall's citizens to be besieged by the horrors of the plague. The lower classes especially must also contend with being reported to the authorities by their neighbors, perhaps even those considered friends. The plague surely cannot be allowed to spread unchecked, and those who are infected will become a problem if they are allowed to remain where they can infect others. However, the darker implication here lies in the confiscation of goods and possessions: one envisions, given the bleak lives the poor of Dunwall lead, jealous neighbors or covetous members of the Watch using the fear of disease to steal from the powerless.

Dishonored 2 continues this exploration of poverty, disease, and exploitation within its setting of Serkonos, the southernmost of the world's four inhabited lands known collectively as The Isles, to the south of Dunwall and often referred to as

"the jewel of the south at the edge of the world." Such a descriptor seems reserved only for the perspectives of tourists and the rich. While the wealthy live in splendor, the working class enjoy no such luxury. Karnaca, the capital city of Serkonos, becomes the primary setting for *Dishonored 2* and is no less marked by the dichotomy of riches and misery than Dunwall. Although Karnaca has no plague, as there was in Dunwall, the city suffers from an infestation of bloodflies, which are parasitic insects that infect the living with fever and attack with lethal force when defending their nests. The bloodflies become more prevalent, as did the plague-ridden rats in *Dishonored,* should the player embodying Emily or Corvo choose to play with lethality. However, a large number of bloodfly nests infest Karnaca already, oftentimes concentrated in poorer areas and in abandoned buildings. Karnacan authorities appear to have little concern for the bloodfly infestations in such areas.

In addition to the spread of the bloodflies, Karnaca's environment suffers fallout from silver mining, the area's main industry. The mines not only function through the labor of the poorest citizens—the player can find information throughout the area attesting to the dangers of the mines and the many workers maimed or killed within them—but also spew toxic silver dust clouds throughout the area of the city known as the Dust District, primarily inhabited by mine workers. The player embodying either Corvo or Emily frequently finds the visibility brought to zero as periodic dust storms blanket this quadrant of the city. Naturally occurring wind currents regularly blow through the active mines, scattering silver dust within and out into the environment. Under the rule of the self-interested Duke Abele, the output of the mines has been significantly increased, thus compounding the problem. The duke shows no concern for the workers or

the environmental destruction occurring in the Dust District and is instead known for his gluttony and elaborate, wasteful parties. Jessamine, speaking through the Heart, comments on the divide between the wealthy and poor: "I see a mine collapsing on a dozen workers. A beggar succumbs to bloodflies. A cat sleeps on a velvet pillow." This stark contrast of victimization and opulence surrounds the embodied player in the fictional world of the game, but the issues of the dangers of mining and the disregard of worker safety have their real-world counterparts.

Historically, mining safety has mattered, as it does in the *Dishonored* series, only to those whose lives are directly impacted, seeming almost a novel thought to those not directly in harm's potential way. A news item published in the *New York Evangelist* in 1877 reported on an accident in a silver mine in which worker Hugh McDonald fainted as the transport cage was working its way back to the surface. He fell to his death owing to the absence of a security railing to prevent such an incident. The journalist comments that "it is not an unusual occurrence" for miners to faint from the heat in the mines and that "some enclosures should be provided" to prevent miners from falling to their deaths (1). While these comments can be read as sympathetic, they may also seem disconnected, as though such enclosures are intended for animal rather than human safety. Laws in some countries have since improved mine worker conditions, but the industry as a whole remains a threat to both them and to the environment. Matilda Lee explains of modern-day silver mining,

> Generally, silver comes to market as a by-product of the industrial mining of other metals, such as copper, zinc, and gold. In 2005, only 30 percent of silver came from actual silver mines. It is no high honour to

> be grouped into "one of the world's most destructive industries," as the industrial mining industry is known. According to the report "Dirty Metals: Mining, Communities and the Environment," by Earthworks and Oxfam America, the environmental and social costs of metals mining include using as much as 10 percent of world energy, arsenic emissions, cyanide and mercury poisoning, child labour and human rights abuses, as well as vast landscape damage. (n.p.)

The assumption in *Dishonored 2* is that the dust clouds comprise just the silver dust from the mines and sand from the area around it, which would be problematical enough. However, the larger implication is that the clouds contain potentially far worse and more lethal substances, of the types described by Lee. Paul Stretesky and Michael Lynch in their discussion of strip mining for coal assert,

> Environmental justice research is based on the premise that environmental harms are distributed unequally, and that this unequal distribution is explicable with respect to variations in community power and characteristics (e.g., income, poverty, race, ethnicity). In the environmental justice view, eliminating those forms of inequality through the "fair treatment of all races, cultures, incomes, and educational levels with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies" (United States Environmental Protection Agency, 1998, p. 1)

> is one method for reducing inequity in the distribution of landscape harms. (211)

Mining in Karnaca focuses on silver, not coal, but the overarching concerns are relevant. The silver miners of Karnaca have no power and rely on the economics of the industry such that they live in an impossible situation: they mine for silver beyond environmental tolerance, thereby contaminating the poorer areas of the city, yet they have no viable financial alternatives.[9]

Dishonored: The Death of The Outsider focuses narrative attention away from the plague and the environmental ravages of the mines and toward the origins and potential destruction of its titular character as the series resolves the narrative threads surrounding his origins and purpose. Although the player still encounters bloodfly infestations and evidence of the oppression of the poor, the overall focus lies in Billie Lurk's quest to find The Outsider in the Void and either kill or liberate him. The Outsider looms over the events in the series and the characters embodied by the player, and he is particularly associated with whales, a critical hint to his na-

9 The player, embodying either Corvo or Emily, has an opportunity to ameliorate circumstances in the Dust District during Mission 6. However, this opportunity makes the mission more complex to complete because it involves finding and interpreting a clue regarding how to deal with the mission's two main antagonists. The Dust District is bisected into two warring territories—that of the Howler Gang, led by Paolo, and that of the Abbey of the Everyman, led by Overseer Byrne. The initial mission directives lead the player to decide whether to deliver Paolo to Byrne, or vice versa. Bringing the enemy of the other faction into their territory ceases that group's hostility, meaning the player would only need to work through one enemy area, not two. To complete the mission nonlethally and give hope to the miners, the player must instead deliver Paolo and Byrne to a business serving as a front for a trade in slave labor. This places the Dust District in control of those who are more interested in worker safety.

ture and motivations explored further in this paper. The final story in the *Dishonored* series picks up only a few months after the events of *Dishonored 2,* but approximately fifteen years following the events of *Dishonored*, enabling the player a view of the fictive world unfolding across a relatively long span of time. With respect to the ecological disasters in Dunwall and Karnaca and the hunting of whales to the point of extinction, little has changed.[10] At one point, the player embodying Billie can observe a poster that refers to whale oil rationing in Karnaca. This poster serves as one of several physical locations in the game where the Void, a symbolic representation of the desperate state of both the poor and the environment, appears to be bleeding into the real world. At these locations, The Outsider will speak to Billie, commenting on events around them. However, it is unclear whether The Outsider has created these rifts between planes or simply takes advantage of their existence. At this particular poster, he describes Karnaca as having been built on the bones of dead whales and ominously contends that "it will all shudder and writhe." Whether he will be the instrument of such a reckoning or merely acts as its harbinger remains uncertain. Still, his potential loss, his removal from a world already on the precipice of ecological disaster and persistent suffering, weighs heavily across those who inhabit it. One citizen wonders, "What will we have left if The Outsider's gone?" However plaintive the inquiry, it is one the narrative resists answering. Depending on player choice, the narrative concludes with either The Outsider dead at Billie's hands or freed from his prison in the Void, but provides no additional information regarding the fate of Karnaca, Dunwall, or any of the world's other lands.

10 All of the explored areas in the three games appear dependent on whale oil. Dunwall presented the most sustained and massive whale hunting and processing industry. Karnaca appears to have a lesser trade in whale oil, evidenced by several areas near the water where carcasses are processed.

The player embodying the series's major characters has an opportunity to effect small changes, granting hope or fostering more terror. But regardless of the impact that the player's individual decisions have on the plague and the political climate of Dunwall and Karnaca, the foundations from which the greedy and opportunistic have operated remain largely intact, even on a Low Chaos playthrough. A primary example of this lies in Dunwall's whaling industry, mirrored to a lesser extent in Karnaca, and its intersections with the real world and debates about the environment and the preservation of species. The whaling industry still thrives around the globe in the real world and creates passionate, uncomfortable debates between those who see it as nothing but slaughter and those who would argue that nothing is inherently wrong with the industry. Further problematizing debates about whaling are indigenous peoples who seek to hunt whales as part of an expression of cultures often destroyed or riven by incursions by colonizers. The global and more ancient origins of whaling prove hard to definitively discover. Eric Jay Dolin notes, "Just when humans began viewing whales as objects worthy of pursuit will never be known. ... The first close-up encounter between people and whales was likely not at sea but on an unknown beach where a whale, either dead or dying, had washed ashore, no doubt astonishing and scaring the locals" (20). Today, whale hunting may be equated with both the slaughter of sentient creatures and the diminishing of species up to the point of extinction. In *Dishonored*, The Heart says of whale slaughter, "They butchered the deep ones here, breathing in the rich stink of their enchanted flesh." The Heart also comments, ominously, "When the last leviathan is gone, darkness will fall," hinting at a fate far worse than the plague and one that is ultimately driven by those at all levels of Dunwall's socioeconomic scale. Digital narratives, alongside their counterparts in written storytelling, oral storytelling,

and film, have a unique ability to consider ecological issues. Louise Westling argues of these types of stories, although not specifically of storytelling in video games, "They can project possible futures based on present science; they can dramatise ecological dangers only beginning to be glimpsed in contemporary research projects" (82). While the Heart hints at a possible "enchanted" nature to the whales, as it is never clear whether this is a metaphor or some deeper insight into these creatures, *Dishonored*'s whales are easily recognizable. Although their appearance is not identical to that of real-word whales—they have more sets of flippers, for example—it is clear that the pervasive issue of whale hunting is designed to ask players to think about its existence in the modern world.

Although the *Dishonored* series is not without depictions of violence and cruelty—all the more so should the player opt for a High Chaos playthrough—its depictions of the whaling industry are bloody and wholly unpleasant. The player can find a review of a book called *The Leviathan's Sorrow*. It says in part: "Drivel on the 'aesthetic wonder' of what is, in reality, the great and terrible Ocean that ever-threatens to swallow us. Includes arguments on the 'gentle nature' of the brutes, a notion refuted by seamen who return to shore, wide-eyed with tales of the whales' savagery." These words sound above all like a convenient set of theories used to justify the slaughter, but they also mirror modern conversations about the inherent right of existence for nonhuman species. The review also stands in direct conflict to the idea that "many environmentalists argue that we need to develop a value system which takes the intrinsic or inherent value of nature as its starting point" (Garrard 18). In the game series, common citizens prove as complicit as their superiors and oppressors at exploiting the natural environment. Those who rely on whaling for money or for oil to power many of their everyday conve-

niences seem hard-pressed to change even when faced with the reality forecasted by their actions: the eventual extinction of all whales. Adrian Burton writes of the decimation of various species and changing attitudes toward such slaughter,

> Now that we understand that chaos is *promoted* by the needless killing of wildlife, that our ancient heroic epics do not explain how we fit into the biological world and the monsters who have so often been us. Yet a place for heroes does remain. Not for those who kill mantas, lions, or rhinos for some outdated sense of glory or personal gain, but for those who would preserve them. (56)

Burton's thoughts dovetail with the game series's presentation of whaling as emblematic of its world's larger ills. While the citizens of Dunwall and Karnaca might argue that they *need* whale oil, such a supposition sidesteps technological innovations that would certainly be possible. Slaughtering whales, after all, is simple. The Outsider does not seem willing or able to stop the killing himself, but his seeking out of individuals to bear his mark, and thus the powers of the Void, appears to be in part his quest for just such a potential hero.

While the series proper does not shy from depictions of bloody water and the ravaged carcasses of whales, the most graphic depiction of the whaling industry is outside of the main *Dishonored* game series in its DLC "The Knife of Dunwall" during its Slaughterhouse Row sequence.[11] The DLC follows Daud, an antagonist in *Dishonored* and the murderer

11 Although a player is not required to complete DLC add-ons to finish the main game, he or she misses additional and sometimes significant narrative development by sidestepping these extra components.

of Empress Jessamine, in the months after his actions. Daud's story eventually takes him, and thus the player, into one of Dunwall's whale slaughterhouses. Given the inherent immersive nature of digital storytelling and the embodiment of the player in the midst of the story, this section of the game risks devolving into what has been deemed "ecoporn." Greg Garrard explains of nature documentaries that "the illusion of unrestricted access into a mysterious or forbidden space produces a relation of subject to object that is structurally similar to that involved in pornography in which the eye/I derives pleasure from an obtrusive gaze that its object cannot challenge or return" (154). The sequences inside the slaughterhouse, however, avoid this pitfall of the gaze through their unrelenting emphasis on cruelty and bloodletting. The idea of torture porn stems from studies that indicate that, for some people, certain sexualized forms of violence stimulate the same parts of the brain that pornography does. The scenes of unutterable suffering in the slaughterhouse seem inconsistent with torture porn, as the violence is in no way erotic. Moreover, the sequences place the player in the fundamental roles of *both* actor and spectator. The player can opt to find a way to euthanize the whale that is being slowly tortured and bled while continually moaning in agony. Yet this action cannot be quickly or easily completed, as it requires careful elimination of the guards surrounding the area. Graeme Kirkpatrick argues, "What makes a game representation more vivid, then, seems to be the intensity of its interaction fused with the presence in its sequences of symbols that maintain a connection with the subject matter at hand" (209). In the case of these sequences, the player exists in the unenviable position of either finding a way to end the whale's suffering or having to both view and listen to its agony throughout the rest of this portion of the game. Aki Järvinen states that "gameplay, as a human experience, is instilled with emotions, from fierce to

mild in their intensity, and from persistent to fleeting in their temporality" (87). Witnessing these scenes of a majestic and wondrous creature needlessly suffering may make a real and lasting emotional impression on the player. Furthermore, Järvinen asserts that "voluntary suffering appears in many games" and can indeed become a powerful aspect to storytelling (106).

The game series provides a brutal and realistic portrait of the suffering experienced by intelligent animals, such as whales as they are hunted and slaughtered, and it also considers other ecological disasters, including the silver mines in Karnaca and the plagues there and in Dunwall. Against this backdrop of plague and the decimation of the whale population, The Outsider emerges as the primary figure looming over the games and its main characters,[12] an enigmatic figure who in some instances appears to be a herald of destruction and at other times, a symbol of hope and renewal. The Outsider is best likened to a chthonic being associated with the deep. The area of the Void where The Outsider dwells reflects this as it is normally filled with crumbling stone buildings, symbolic of the earth, and whales, whether spectral or simulacrum, floating through. Hazel Monforton observes of The Outsider,

> His places are the hidden, marginal places of the world: the witches' hideouts, the rat-

12 In *Dishonored,* The Outsider appears to Corvo and grants him powers to facilitate his quest to avenge Jessamine. In *Dishonored 2,* the player can embody either Corvo or Emily, and The Outsider grants powers to whomever the player chooses. The player can, however, opt for a "no powers" playthrough, thus completely rejecting The Outsider. Antagonists, such as Daud and Delilah, have similarly been marked by The Outsider. During *Dishonored: The Death of The Outsider,* Billie Lurk is granted powers temporarily, but The Outsider does not grant his mark.

> filled sewers, the abandoned apartments inhabited by the mad or the wicked. His chthonic nature binds him to death and judgment. He is hated and feared by the powerful and worshipped by the destitute. (n.p.)

He is a god, then, along the lines of a chthonic being of the deep, yet he does not function or act in ways traditionally ascribed to gods and goddesses across mythological systems. While he is worshipped, he does not seek such reverence and does not mark only those who would worship at his feet. Indeed, some of his chosen, like Daud, eventually hold The Outsider in contempt. He appears to have the power to create, as evidenced by the Heart and his ability to shape the Void, the in-between, liminal space where he dwells. He is also a trickster in that while he imbues mortals with powers, he chooses those who can act for both good and ill. Although he himself does not test societal boundaries, as is the case with traditional trickster figures, The Outsider empowers those who do. In the specific case of Corvo and Daud, they become pitted against each other, with Daud using his powers to spread terror and fear in all of Dunwall's citizens. The Outsider physically marks those he finds "interesting," but he has also planted Runes and Bonecharms[13] that are imbued with his power throughout Dunwall as signs of his existence and continued presence despite the limited glimpses of him outside the Void. Tellingly, the Runes and Bonecharms are made from whalebone. Yet even with all the signs of his existence, The Outsider refuses to succumb to the hubris plaguing so many gods and goddesses in mythological systems found across the world: the need to be worshipped. Greg Pritchard, citing the work of Arthur Schopenhauer, writes, "Schopen-

13 The player can collect a number of Runes and Bonecharms that allow him or her to upgrade powers or add protections or skills.

hauer's answer is the same as Ishmael's: 'Nature is unfathomable because we seek after causes and consequences in a realm where this form is not to be found ... merely the form under which our intellect comprehends appearance, i.e., the surface of things' (1970: 57)" (28). While Pritchard's work here primarily considers Schopenhauer's theories against an analysis of *Moby Dick,* the ideas prove striking in their relevance to the *Dishonored* series and The Outsider, both of which are largely concerned with whales. The Outsider never seeks to be understood and never justifies his actions, the motivations behind which are his alone.

The Outsider's true nature is not presented in a definitive fashion, and he himself is cagey about the details of his life and the nature of his being. He takes the form of a young man, perhaps in his twenties or slightly younger, with black eyes, and his spirit crosses at will between the Void and the real world. He seems keenly interested in issues of social inequity, oppression, and environmental decimation, especially as they relate to whales. In *Dishonored 2*, he claims to have been a human sacrificed by a mysterious group, although this proves to be a problematical account in that this game heavily implies that his true identity—the life he lived before he was "sacrificed"—was originally that of a whale. He remembers,

> It's the place where my throat was cut 4000 years ago. This is where my life ended and where it began again. It's where they made me. Right up until the end, I thought I would find a way to escape. I fought but the ropes only cut my skin, so I went limp. And then the knife touched my throat and I knew I'd waited too long. The blood ran out and I became a god.

During this sequence, he shows the player a sacrificial altar and table and at one point lies down on the latter. Although to the player the table appears human sized, that doesn't mean it necessarily has to or is intended to be. Given that The Outsider has much in common with the trickster archetype, his words need not be taken literally. *Dishonored: The Death of The Outsider* casts further suspicion on this depiction of events. The Outsider claims to have died young, murdered by a cult when he was 15 years old, some 4000 years prior to the events of the games. However, at no point does he appear as a teenager. He always appears as a human in his twenties, never as a young teenager. While The Outsider can certainly take on any form he wishes, this specific appearance proves important. The choice of appearing as a man in his twenties has no other logical counterpart—for example, it would not make his manifestations to his chosen any more or less effective, as supplicants would certainly fall at his feet no matter his chosen appearance. Yet it warrants consideration that he only takes on this one human guise, which appears inconsistent with his own narrative of himself at the time of his death.

Two plausible explanations for this inconsistency emerge. The first and weaker of the two lies in The Outsider's account, of his being murdered at the age of 15 and through a dark magic ritual reborn as a god, being wholly truthful. However, this interpretation would suggest that his affinity toward whales holds no deeper significance than his overall concern with environmental destruction. The more intriguing interpretation circles back to The Outsider's recitation of his death being symbolically, but not literally, true. The description in the above passage reads much like the final moments of a slaughtered whale. Perhaps the curious whale moved close to a whaling vessel without realizing the danger until

it was too late. The New Bedford National Park's historical documents regarding whaling and whale hunts describe how "when the whale tired from towing the boat and loss of blood, the men would pull themselves up to the whale's back, the officer and boat steerer would exchange places, and the officer would kill the whale by puncturing its lung with a long iron lance" (4). Exhausted and hounded, the whale would eventually succumb to its harpoon wounds in a manner analogous to The Outsider's description of fighting to escape, failing, then dying when his throat was slit. David Dowling writes of the continuously perpetuated myth of the aggressive, violent whale, like Moby Dick, noting the "public perceptions of the whale as a vicious beast, a nefarious sea monster like those storied mythical creatures in the popular press. Inoffensive and timid animals of course do not make formidable foes in romantic hunting narratives whether on land or on the high seas" (260). The Outsider's account drains all sense of adventure or conflict and instead renders the event for what it was: the slaughter of a creature unable to effectively fight against harpoons and steel.

Dishonored: The Death of The Outsider provides two important narrative clues supporting the interpretation that The Outsider was once a whale and thus closely tied both to the ecology of the games' world and to its ruination at human hands. The first clue proves a bit circumstantial, but is nonetheless intriguing. Billie Lurk must retrieve a specific, special blade before she can kill The Outsider. It is the same blade that had been used in the rite in which he was killed and remade. Of the twin-bladed weapon, Billie comments that it "turned a boy into a god," but that reflects her repetition of the story The Outsider has told about himself and is not otherwise grounded in any other verifiable source. Furthermore, the knife, less a dagger than a short sword, bears more than

a passing resemblance to a whaling tool called the "boarding knife.[14]" *National Geographic*'s historical information on whaling describes boarding knives as "long, sharp swords whose use was usually limited to the ship's officers. Boarding knives were used to poke holes in blankets as the blubber reached the deck. A hook would go through the hole, and sailors would hoist the blanket as high as their ship's mast" (n.p.). The otherwise unidentified cultists that The Outsider describes as killing him transform into the crew of a whaling vessel, the instrument of his rebirth and potential death at the hands of Billie Lurk, a tool used to strip blubber from carcass.

The second critical narrative clue provides a more direct link between The Outsider and a previous life as a creature of the deep. As is a hallmark of *The Dishonored* series, players always have at least two options for completing quest objectives, and one of those is always a nonlethal resolution. The game privileges nonlethal over lethal solutions, requiring critical thought and assessment of the environment and a full exploration of it. In *Dishonored: The Death of The Outsider,* the player embodying Billie can opt to either kill The Outsider, as her former mentor Daud pressures her to do, or save him. It becomes apparent when Billie finally reaches the place where The Outsider's physical form lies trapped in the Void[15] that his fate has been terrible, confined between life and death. Billie comments of his state, "But you've always been at the mercy of bad people, haven't you?" However

14 Pictures of boarding knives can be found here http://americanhistory.si.edu/onthewater/collection/AG_026608.html

15 While The Outsider can manifest a spirit form in the real world, he is otherwise trapped in the Void. The narrative hints that a different afterlife exists, the place, for example, to which Jessamine's spirit is finally released, and that the Void is more of a prison for the souls trapped there than anything else.

much the player may sympathize and wish to free The Outsider, certain extra steps must first be fulfilled. Once the player reaches the Void, crawling with members of the Eyeless who fetishize and worship The Outsider, he or she, through careful investigation, can learn of one member called Malchiodi whose special area of research lies in the lost language that The Outsider supposedly speaks as his original tongue. This language takes physical form as well, and Malchiodi discovers that The Outsider's mark is itself a pictogram, a series of 16 distinct images that form both the mark and The Outsider's name. Malchiodi's recorded notes clearly indicate that this name is not in an "earthly tongue" and is conspicuous for its "distinction in tone and pitch to convey meaning." He further asserts that the language is unusual in that it is especially diphthong heavy. Diphthongs combine two vowel sounds pronounced as one, for example, the "ou" sound in cloud and the "oi" sound in foil. Together, the different diphthong possibilities create a sense of rising and falling musicality when recited in longer strings. That the language of The Outsider is really whale song proves a logical assessment, with Malchiodi's comment about diphthongs of critical importance. Jade Joddle, a speech development teacher, utilizes the following rhyme to teach diphthongs to her students: "Deep below where the whales roam/They squeal and moan, squawk and groan/Over the whole wide range of tones" (9). She notes that these lines are "designed to imitate the sound of a whale song" (Ibid) and that this is heard by enunciating and even exaggerating the diphthongs in them. Finally, Billie herself cannot speak The Outsider's name; it has to be done by someone who is dead and trapped with him in the Void. The implication is that human vocal cords and mouth structures are insufficient to intone the language. Daud has been freed from the limitations of mortal flesh and is trapped in the Void with The Outsider. Armed with this knowledge, Bil-

lie can convince Daud to speak The Outsider's name,[16] and by having his name returned, The Outsider is finally freed.[17]

Whether he is the protector or a god of the whales or, intriguingly, perhaps something akin to the biblical Leviathan[18] are all fascinating possibilities, but they remain hypotheses. What is clear is that The Outsider figuratively walks the earth, appearing to some and marking others, and shrines dedicated to him exist throughout the kingdom despite their having been outlawed by the new and now dominant religion The Abbey of the Everyman, a direct result of Dunwall's and Karnaca's ecological disasters. The Abbey perceives the worship of The Outsider as a grave threat to order and stability, and they routinely burn his adherents at the stake. They also inundate the cities with propaganda designed to instill fear of him and his radical potential for change. In their own words, the Abbey "teaches that The Outsider preys on weakness." Where the Abbey of the Everyman attempts to use fear to prevent the worship of The Outsider, the Eyeless[19] fetishize him and nurse an unhealthy obsession with the occult, more

16 Daud, who died earlier in the game, must speak The Outsider's name to him. He does so by whispering it into The Outsider's ear, so the player never hears this ancient lost language spoken aloud. The narrative indicates that only a spirit trapped with The Outsider in the Void can serve to free him.

17 On being freed, The Outsider takes on corporeal form to match the young man that he has always appeared as throughout the series, implying he receives the chance to live out a human life. If he did indeed originate as a whale, the implication here is that his death wrought something so catastrophic that it allowed him a transformation of form. The player embodying Billie can also opt to kill The Outsider using the ceremonial blade.

18 The specific possibilities and reasons for The Outsider being an iteration of the Leviathan are explored further on.

19 The narrative implies that the Eyeless have existed for some time, but the group first appears in *Dishonored: The Death of The Outsider.*

so than the ordinary citizens who search out or build shrines to The Outsider to seek his help or his blessing. Unlike most of the other organized groups and gangs in the series, the Eyeless are unique in that their ranks draw from all social strata, as opposed to being polarized into groups of either the privileged or the destitute. In *Dishonored: The Death of The Outsider,* the Eyeless succeed in opening a pathway into the Void as they pursue the place where The Outsider slumbers, presumably to both gain additional power and be closer to the god they worship. Yet theirs proves an unhealthy fascination. Of the Eyeless, The Outsider comments to Billie that they are "never satisfied, no matter how much they take." Still, even after death and a form of rebirth as a god, The Outsider gains no peace. The members of the Abbey seek his destruction and the eradication of his memory from the living world, while the Eyeless mount a relentless campaign to strip away his secrets and to invade his domain in the Void.

That The Outsider is a source of both revulsion and fascination stems in part from his refusal to explain his own nature. As Hazel Monforton[20] argues, "Sea monsters, witches, black magic, wayward girls, thieves, murderers, etc., are all blamed on The Outsider's influence. Some rightfully, most arbitrarily" (n.p.). The Outsider offers no theology or doctrine for his faithful to follow, yet he seems to be the closest thing to hope they have left. He empowers, for good or for ill, those who tend to be rendered powerless by others or by their circumstances, those he describes as "interesting." Once the mark is accepted and bestowed, The Outsider does not direct the behavior of those who bear it. He may appear to them, as he does to Corvo in the first game and to Corvo or Emily in the second, and comment that their actions have power

20 Hazel Monforton is one of the writers for *Dishonored: Death of The Outsider.*

and weight in the lives of the people around them, but he leaves the choices to them. In their choices lie both potential and ruin. Daud, who gathered a group of acolytes and built a life terrorizing the innocent, never takes responsibility for his actions. When Billie reunites with him in *Dishonored: The Death of The Outsider,* Daud burns with resentment, arguing, "The Outsider gave me that mark knowing what I could do with all that power." The sentiment is hardly fair. As Hazel Monforton argues, "He gives his gifts to the oppressed, the downtrodden, and the blamed. He revisits his own powerlessness when he reaches out to give a choice to the abused. His position within the Empire, forcibly outside its walls, gives him the power to ask these questions" (n.p.). Antagonists, such as Daud and Delilah Copperspoon, eventually come to wield The Outsider's gifts with cruelty, becoming what they once claimed to hate most. The protagonists embodied by the player—Corvo, Emily, and Billie[21]—may opt to become forces of good or chaos. Yet the key point is that all have been allowed to choose. The Outsider has neither threatened his chosen with punishment for not doing as he says nor forced them to follow any particular course of action.

While the game's narrative offers no definitive conclusions, there is significant, albeit circumstantial, evidence that The Outsider's true identity is the Leviathan, greater than just an ordinary whale, and perhaps akin to the biblical creature, an old chthonic creature of the deep who would, by virtue of that ancient existence and power, possess specific concern for the natural world. The murder of such a creature may bring about unintended results, such as this creature finding a new and human form as a god. The player can find a book

21 Billie is never marked by The Outsider, a reality she tells him she once regretted. However, in *Dishonored: Death of The Outsider,* he does grant Billie temporary Void powers.

excerpt entitled "The Spirit of the Deep." In it, the author, who seems to be writing about a first-person mystical experience, says of The Outsider, "You rule my dreams, where I behold with senses I do not possess in waking life the dark splendor of your home in the deep. There the ocean rests on your back like a sleeping child on his father's shoulders. In these sleepless nights of despair, you appear to me not as the mighty leviathan, but as a young man, with eyes as black as the Void." An interesting consideration here is Catherine Keller's assertion that "The fact that atmospheric and oceanic vortices pose prime examples of the dynamic systems of chaos is not incidental to a tehomic intertextuality, which describes turbulent orders only much later legible to science" (143). Dunwall and Karnaca enjoy scientific advancement, so a lack of knowledge is not the source of their problems or the turbulence within their walls. Indeed, it would appear that the Chaos or the Void from which The Outsider lives and emerges has been *forgotten* in this world, such that the reassertion of both the Leviathan's might and its fickle nature proves necessary. Catherine Keller also considers the image of the Leviathan as it exists in the Book of Job. She notes, "The author could not have imagined the current human capacity to annihilate the whales altogether, or to turn the sea into a sewer. ... The chaos monster does not seek vengeance but respect for its domain" (138). David Dowling argues, "The invention of the monstrous fighting whale has had a long cultural life of its own that continues to obscure the fact that the number of ships sunk by whales using their heads as battering rams constitutes a fraction of the innumerable collisions that did not harm vessels but instead left whales lacerated, mangled, and dismembered" (269). His thoughts intersect with Keller's ideas about how a creature like the whale desires not to attack or to harm but to be left in peace, respected and safe in the deep. The violation of the whale who evolves into The

Outsider, an ancient and powerful leviathan-like creature, would be such an affront to the natural world that its rules might be upended, enabling a whale to become human.

The game's developers have, perhaps wisely, left the final analysis of The Outsider's nature and true form in the hands of players and subject to debate. In a Twitter conversation, Harvey Smith, one of the creative directors at Arkane Studios, fielded several questions from players about the nature of The Outsider, tweeting, "He appears almost as he was in life." However, in that same thread, Smith also states that The Outsider's relationship to the whales is ultimately "unclear" when asked if The Outsider's sympathy for the creatures was more a spiritual bond or affinity or something more "literal." In considering The Outsider, there is something of Bertrand Westphal's idea that "the relationship between familiar and fabulous has evolved throughout the history of science. Today, the familiar has prevailed over the fabulous. Originally, the relationship was reversed. All was fabulous, an enormous voice, blank spots on a virtual map" (79). Perhaps this is why The Outsider feels the need to walk the world again. However, the game's narrative avoids oversimplifying what happens in the story such that the environmental message is clearly laid out, with a firm sense of good vs. evil. Even The Outsider's actions are not without fault, as he bestows powers on those he finds "interesting," and allows them to use those powers as they will. That being the case, the narrative evades the flaws of some environmental apocalypse narratives that feature a "warning presented in terms of absolute authority; the material threat is 'evil,' and so, by association, are the authors of it; the consequences of failure to heed the warning are catastrophic, and the danger is not only imminent, but already well under way" (Garrard 95). Certainly, the game provides a pointed critique of the disparity in social class and

the ravaging of the whale population and environment while avoiding simple delineations of good and evil.

Even considering The Outsider's willingness to potentially create more chaos, he does not appear to want this to be the path that his chosen ones select. He appears to favor a Low Chaos playthrough, as his tone in the segments in which the player meets him tends to reflect interest in Corvo's choices, whereas The Outsider sounds colder, clipped, and snide on a High Chaos playthrough. An example of this is found in a mission in the first game involving one of the antagonists who Corvo must either eliminate or deal with in a nonlethal manner. Lady Boyle, one of the supporters of the Lord Regent and therefore of the coup and murder of the Empress, is well protected in her mansion, and reaching her is difficult regardless of which option the player chooses. Corvo can either kill her outright or orchestrate her kidnapping and living, presumably for the rest of her life, under lock and key. Here are the comments The Outsider makes depending on Corvo's choice:

> Death: "I suppose she had to go. Supporting a tyrant, the Lord Regent. And living in opulence while the people of the city starve to death and live in fear of plague. What choice did you have?" The question is presented with a healthy dose of scorn, given that the player embodying Corvo did have a choice.
>
> Captivity: "She supported a tyrant, the Lord Regent. And lived in opulence while the people of the city starve to death and live in fear of plague. Now she'll live out her days, month after month, year after year, far

> away, even as her fine clothes wear into tatters and her silken hair gets dull and gray. Plenty of time for reflection."

This second dialogue option seems much more aligned with The Outsider's machinations, such as they can be discerned, to have not a city of corpses but visceral and visible reminders of what evil has been wrought on it, Dunwall's environment, and the whales.

Perhaps Billie Lurk's ship, *The Dreadful Wale*.[22] provides the most poignant evidence of the games' focus on ecological disaster. The word "wale" evokes two homophones, "whale" and "wail," while avoiding existing definitively as either one. It brings to mind the haunting cries of whale song and the sounds of terror the creatures make in the agony of their deaths at the hands of hunters. Ultimately, the game series offers no neat narrative conclusions to any of Dunwall's or Karnaca's problems. While a Low Chaos ending for *Dishonored* leads to Empress Emily Kaldwin gaining control over the plague and ushers in what The Outsider describes as a "golden age," nothing is mentioned of the continued hunting of whales. Indeed, *Dishonored 2,* taking place some fifteen years after the events of the first game, finds whale oil still the dominant fuel source for the entire kingdom. Although the player can take steps to make Karnaca less corrupt and more mindful of the plight of its mine workers, those are small movements forward, not radical shifts in everyday lives. The seeds for plague, the overcrowding, filthy conditions, and economic disparity, still seem to seethe just below the surface. If the situation is left precarious on Low Chaos endings, High Chaos endings end on bleak notes. Observing all the player's choices, and commenting on them, is The Outsider,

22 This is its spelling in the games.

his presence at once mysterious and smoldering with the anger of the oppressed and a decimated environment.

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Black Belt and Blue Water: The Vigorous Lives and Presidencies of Theodore and Franklin D. Roosevelt

By Max J. Skidmore

ABSTRACT

The presidencies of these two distant cousins stand out as connected, and especially noteworthy, for many reasons, including physical challenges. TR was a puny child, who built his body to match his mind. He came to practice what William Harbaugh called "virile intellectualism," and at the beginning of the twentieth century set the tone for the dynamism of America, and for that of the incredible presidency of FDR. Franklin was an athletic devotee of the oceans. He fought back from polio, first to survive, and then in a muscular fashion, to shepherd the nation through the Great Depression, World War II, and to become a world inspiration.

KEYWORDS

Martial Arts, Physical Activities, The Presidency, The Roosevelts, Presidential Vigor, Judo, Sailing

INTRODUCTION

Theodore Roosevelt undoubtedly was the most vigorous of all American presidents, probably intellectually (despite Kennedy's quip to a group of Nobel laureates that it was the most intellectually powerful force gathered in the White House since Thomas Jefferson dined alone), and certainly physically. His well-rounded vigor helped shape his equally vigorous presidency.

Franklin D. Roosevelt, the Democrat, modeled his career on that of his distant cousin "The Republican Roosevelt." Theodore served in the New York House, was number two in the Department of the Navy under McKinley when it was a cabinet department, was governor of New York, ran successfully for the vice presidency, succeeded to the presidency, then was elected in his own right. Franklin also served New York's legislature (though in the Senate), was assistant secretary of the navy under Wilson, ran (though unsuccessfully) for vice president, was New York's governor, and then president.

FDR's presidency, too, was influenced by his physical activity. Certainly, this is less obvious for him than for TR, but it is a matter of general assumption that FDR's polio, which permanently denied him the use of his legs, caused him to dedicate himself to self-resurrection, and to grow mentally stronger while he built up his upper body, characterized by the pride he displayed in his "wrestler's arms." Not only did his valiant efforts to overcome his paralysis stimulate his strength and courage, but that paralysis may have increased his connection to the people by raising his awareness of the troubles that others faced, and enabling them to sense his power in having overcome overwhelming difficulties. As Doris Kearns Goodwin put it: "[T]he paralysis that crippled his body expanded his mind and his sensibilities. After what Eleanor called his 'trial by fire,' he seemed less arrogant, less smug, less superficial, more focused, more complex, more interesting. He returned from his ordeal with greater powers of concentration and greater self-knowledge. 'There had been a plowing up of his nature,' Labor Secretary Frances Perkins observed. 'The man emerged completely warm-hearted, with new humility of spirit and a firmer understanding of profound philosophical concepts'" (Goodwin 2005 16-17).

Less well known is FDR's connection with the sea. He not only loved the oceans, but was a superb sailor. The skills he learned growing up at the sail continued to benefit him as he faced the political winds and waves of depression and war, while at the same time they continued to afford him relaxation, and relief from presidential tensions. During TR's time as president it would have seemed impossible, but Franklin D. Roosevelt's presidency was to overshadow even his.

A BRIEF GLANCE AT PRESIDENTS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

Alexander Hamilton discussed the need for "energy in the executive." Of course, he meant power and authority in the office, but another kind of energy should exist among chief executives: literal physical and mental energy, the kind that normally requires physical exercise to maintain. Different presidents, of course, have fulfilled this need in differing ways. Those most consumed by politics, such as James K. Polk, Richard Nixon, and Lyndon Johnson were so driven by the demands of the office that it is doubtful that they would have had the time or the inclination to engage in formal exercise, or in sports, on a regular basis (although see below for Nixon).

The press during their recent presidencies was filled with images of Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush jogging, and of Obama—at least in his early years as president—playing basketball skillfully. Certainly, the first President Bush maintained much of his physical ability during and after his presidency, as demonstrated by his practice of taking a birthday parachute jump well into his 80s. Golf has occupied a number of presidents throughout the last hundred years or so, such as Taft, Eisenhower, Ford, Clinton, Obama, and Trump.

Walking is natural, probably the most natural of exercises, and many presidents have been known as avid walkers. Truman's early-morning walks inspired many photographs as Secret Service agents strode briskly to keep up with his speedy pace, which often left reporters puffing behind. A number of early presidents, such as Washington, both Presidents Adams, Jefferson, and Madison walked regularly and many exercised by riding horseback. Swimming, also, is a natural exercise, and helped FDR build his upper body following the ravages of the polio that destroyed his legs. Perhaps the other most notable presidential swimmer was John Quincy Adams. He not only was adept in the water, but swam powerfully, and despite his dour and sober demeanor—or possibly because of it—he courted danger, and braved perils in the most turbulent and frigid waters.

To go into great detail with regard to the exercise habits of presidents or their participation in sports would be to duplicate the detailed work by John Sayle Watterson, *The Games Presidents Play: Sports and the Presidency* (Watterson 2006). Watterson's approach is close to encyclopedic for the twentieth century, though many presidents of the nineteenth century are missing. Despite a few errors and some repetition, it is generally thoughtful and well-researched. For example, Watterson reported that the notoriously uncoordinated Nixon—who had engaged in sports in college with stolid determination—did now and then play golf while president, developing some skill after leaving office, and as president he did bowl alone. Regardless, he loved sports as a spectator. Watterson cast doubt on the incident when Nixon received credit (or blame) for having suggested a risky football play by telephone to Coach George Allen of the unfortunately-named Redskins when Washington was in the playoffs in 1971. He quotes one of Allen's coaches, "Marv Levy, later

head coach of the Buffalo Bills," as saying that Allen himself conceived of the play and suggested it to Nixon who then could take credit for having recommended it. If this is true, it could be seen as consistent with other devious Nixon actions (Watterson 2006 237; 241-243). Watterson also describes a severe wrist injury from a fall that Jefferson experienced in his early forties, causing permanent pain. He called it "possibly the worst sports injury in pre-presidential history" (Watterson 2006 14).

Watterson concluded that Washington's presidency would likely not have happened had it not been for his "athleticism at the Battle of Monongahela in 1754." More fundamentally, he concedes that "at first glance, these activities [sports and games of presidents] had little to do with their public lives. Jackson's ownership of racehorses and Abraham Lincoln's feats of strength tell us little about their presidencies or their political appeal." Looked at from "a different perspective," however, he argues that these activities of earlier presidents "provide glimpses of talents and traits that would carry them to power or even the shadowy outlines of what they would become as president" (Watterson 2006 5; 12).

Even for later presidents there may be truth to this. Kennedy's heroism in swimming for four hours pulling a crew member to safety after his torpedo boat had been sunk presaged his functioning as president despite constant severe pain. Nixon's dogged attempt to play sports suggested his later determination to prevail, right up until his downfall. Clinton's description of an attack before he was in high school is highly significant. One Henry Hill "slugged me in the jaw as hard as he could," Clinton said. "Now, I was big for my age, about five nine, 185 pounds. But Henry Hill was six foot six with an enormous reach. No way was I going to hit back. Besides, to my amazement, it didn't hurt too badly. So," Clin-

ton wrote, "I just stood my ground and stared at him. I think Henry was surprised I didn't go down or run off, because he laughed, slapped me on the back, and said I was okay .... I had learned again that I could take a hit and that there's more than one way to stand against aggression" (Clinton 2004 43). Can anyone read that passage and not remember how Clinton remained firm and resolute during constant attacks that culminated in impeachment, and personal humiliation, coming back stronger than ever?

THEODORE ROOSEVELT: BLACK BELT IN THE WHITE HOUSE

Roosevelt biographies recount terrible descriptions of TR's father bundling the gasping child against the cold, racing his carriage through the streets, to force air into the boy's asthmatic lungs. There also were numerous incidents in which TR's frail body failed to match his powerful mind, leading to determination both of boy and father to build up the son's physical strength. Ultimately, TR succeeded beyond anyone's expectations, except perhaps, his own: vigorously boxing at Harvard and later, training intensely, throwing himself without reservation into violent physical activity, matching the roughest cowboys in the west at their ranching chores, punching out a bully in a bar who was terrorizing the other patrons, capturing two thieves after pursuing them for days through a Dakota blizzard, and even as president remaining frenetically active with his demanding "scrambles" through Rock Creek Park over and never around any obstacle—all the while conducting one of the most significant presidencies in American history. Biographer John Milton Cooper said TR pursued what historian Jacob Burkhardt had called "the state as a work of art."[1] Another TR biographer, the especially thoughtful William Harbaugh, wrote that TR "had read the bulk of his own country's literature and knew personally

perhaps a majority of the nation's best writers." This not only was a "rare quality in any man of action," he said, but was a "unique quality in a President." No one else has practiced what Harbaugh so aptly called "virile intellectualism."[2]

As president, Roosevelt continued to wrestle and box, ultimately giving up wrestling first, and then boxing. He had received a hard blow to his left eye that severely damaged his sight. In his *Autobiography*, he wrote that he "thought it better to acknowledge" that he had become "an elderly man" (although that happened before his election in 1904, and he was only 50 when he left office in 1909), and would have to stop boxing. "I then took up jiu-jitsu for a year or two," he wrote modestly (T. Roosevelt 1913 43).

Few Americans then were even aware of the Asian martial arts, but they strongly attracted Roosevelt. An article in the old *New York World* on the 20th of March 1902 described his ju-jitsu training under Professor John J. O'Brien of Boston, saying that O'Brien had been an inspector of police in Nagasaki, where he "learned the jiu Jitsu tricks." Actually, what O'Brien was teaching was a complete system, not merely "tricks." This source has pictures, and excerpts from some letters mentioning the art from TR to his children. In one of these he said that he had "Professor Yamashita teach me the 'Jiudo'—as they seem now to call Jiu Jitsu" ("How the President is Taught Jiu Jitsu" 1902).

Apparently, Yamashita did not explain that Jiu Jitsu is a more generic term, with "Jitsu" meaning essentially "technique," while "do," means "way." Do implies a more philosophical approach, literally a way of life. Jigoro Kano at his dojo the Kodokan in Japan had created Judo from Jiu Jitsu, and made it a sport, with strict rules, while Jiu Jitsu is a form of "anything goes" combat. Judo, today, in fact, is an Olympic sport, which

Jiu Jitsu, lacking rules and restraint, could never be—unless tamed considerably. Both Jiu Jitsu and Judo rely on the use of an opponent's own force against him or her (the Japanese art of Aikido does this as well, as does the Korean self-defense style of Hapkido), and choking into submission. Judo employs no kicks or blows except at very advanced Atemi Waza levels, where for self-defense they are directed against vital points. Judo never employs Atemi Waza in tournaments.

An article by Joseph Svinth appeared in October of 2000 in the *Journal of Combative Sport* (Svinth 2000). It was a "slightly different version" of a previous piece that Svinth had published in *Akido Journal* (25:2), in 1998. Svinth describes how Yoshiaki (or Yoshitsugu) Yamashita studied at the Kodokan, advanced rapidly in rank, and sought to spread the art to the United States. His opportunity came when a Washington State tycoon, Sam Hill, invited him to come to America to teach. (Hill was the founder of the Maryhill Museum of Art, in Washington State on the north bank of the Columbia River; its collections are rich, as are its archives, which contain some of the relevant correspondence). When Yamashita arrived in Seattle in 1903, Hill arranged for him to give a private demonstration there. Svinth writes that this seems to have been the first demonstration of Kodokan Judo in the United States. For a number of reasons, including his own pacifism, Hill was no admirer of TR, but that is another story.[3]

Yamashita then traveled east, and attracted TR's attention. After studying with O'Brien, the president had worked out for six months with another Japanese Judoka, A. Kitagaki, and recognized Yamashita's potential. Svinth writes that it had been reported that "there were seven degrees in jiu-jitsu, and Roosevelt intended to have at least five of them," although TR's main goal was weight reduction, rather than rank. It is

unclear from this statement exactly what the "seven degrees" meant (whether they included the Kyu, or colored belt, ranks, or were all Dan, black belt—although it might seem doubtful that TR intended to devote the extensive time to achieve a Godan rank, or 5th-degree black belt, which would be close to Master). However, the late Dr. John Gable, then executive director of the Theodore Roosevelt Association and arguably the foremost authority on TR trivia, verified in personal conversation that TR had earned a black belt. Subsequently, TR's great grandson, Tweed Roosevelt, verified that as well. Yamashita had remarked that, however impulsive Roosevelt was, he had become his best student.

Thus, Theodore Roosevelt is almost certainly the only president ever to hold a black belt in any martial art, and absolutely the only one ever to earn one while in office. To honor his contributions to American Judo, the American Judo Association on the 17th of November 2007, at Sagamore Hill, the Roosevelt home, posthumously "presented an honorary 8th degree black belt to President Theodore Roosevelt, the first and only American President to have studied the Japanese art of Judo" ("Honorary 8th Degree Black Belt." 2008 4). Eighth degree black belt, Hachidan, denotes a Master's rank (generally sixth degree or higher) in a martial art. The certificates are on display at the headquarters of the Theodore Roosevelt Association in Oyster Bay, NY.

Most people who have spent any length of time in one of the martial arts—Jiu Jitsu, Aikido, Karate, Kung Fu (wushu), Taekwondo, Hapkido, or another—assuming effective instruction, diligent study, and appropriate practice find that such arts do, indeed, become a way of life. It requires no leap of the imagination to believe that TR's experience with Judo, as well as his "strenuous life," in general, shaped his presidency.

As he said, "Black Care Rarely Sits Behind a Rider whose Pace is Fast Enough." Certainly, TR's pace—as man or president—was fast enough to keep well ahead of any pursuer.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT: SAILOR IN THE WHITE HOUSE

Polio changed FDR's life. Given its severity, it could hardly have been otherwise. Changing his life certainly affected his presidency, which became so momentous that many scholars consider him to have established "The modern presidency," and often disregard those who came before. However shortsighted such a view, the transformational nature of the Democratic Roosevelt's presidency is clear, as is his stature among the greatest who have held the office.

Less well-known, however, is the continuity of his connection with the sea. This also was so influential on FDR the man, as to have had an inevitable effect on FDR the president, and thus on the presidency of this most remarkable figure. Researching Roosevelt and his connection with the sea is simpler than it might seem. After delving into FDR material, it became obvious that there was no need to search records at the FDR Library in Hyde Park. The librarian indicated that Robert Cross had studied all the Library's relevant materials and had produced the definitive book, *Sailor in the White House* (Cross 2003).

There is another book with a similar title, by William Rigdon (with James Derieux), *White House Sailor* (Rigdon 1962). Despite the similarity of titles, the two books are quite different. Rigdon was a U.S. Navy sailor, originally a warrant officer, assigned to the White House. His book is interesting in its own right, and has relevance, but is not primarily directed at FDR and the sea.

"Every land-based sailor will tell you that being on a boat (preferably a sailboat, but almost any 'boat' will do) at sea, even for a short sail, provides a perspective and stimulus to a passion largely unobtainable anywhere else on earth," said FDR's grandson, Christopher du Pont Roosevelt, in his Foreword to Cross's *Sailor in the White House*. "Being at sea also reduces almost everything else to its essentials, to a more manageable scale, and helps the sailor cut through distracting chaff to the core of problems, challenges, and issues" (Cross 2003 xi).

At an early age, his grandson continued, "FDR's father personally taught him to ride horses, to understand farming and agriculture,[4] and, most important, to sail and appreciate being on the water." The grandson, his father, and FDR his grandfather all had "loved the same renowned New England coastal waters," and had had the benefit of "an appreciation for sailing and seamanship, as well as a knowledge and appreciation of naval history" that had been passed down in the family through generations. The younger Roosevelt was pleased to be providing the Foreword, because "Cross shows how a sailor can be also a leader of men, a man of courage, a man of versatility, a juggler of opinions and alternatives during a challenging and turbulent time, and how this particular sailor became larger than life for so many" (Cross 2003 xii-xiii).

It would be difficult to find a better description of FDR the man, or FDR the president. Similarly, it is clear that the Roosevelt grandson had the background, by both familial connections and personal experience, to recognize how Cross had the skills to make clear the relationship of the "skills, temperament, and passions that make a person a great sailor, and those same elements that make a person a great politician and world leader" (Cross 2003 xiii). FDR had his first boat,

New Moon, "a twenty-one foot, two-masted knockabout," that his parents had given him when he turned sixteen. "He sailed *New Moon* almost every summer at Campobello, further honing his skills at learning how to read the tides, currents, and fickle weather of the often-unpredictable area" (Cross 2003 32).

Consider an incident in 1908. Eleanor Roosevelt's brother Hall recalled a cruise he and two other classmates took at Campobello with Roosevelt at the helm of *Half Moon*, a 51-foot sailing yacht. "Hall was seventeen, and FDR was twenty-six." Encountering heavy fog, strong winds, and currents they corrected a list and kept the boat off mud flats only by tying lines to the masts and to anchors, then putting the anchors in boats they rowed through pitch darkness under the shouted directions of FDR. Subsequently, there was a "fierce storm" that "tossed the tiny vessel around for many hours. FDR was at the wheel and he successfully navigated his craft through the heavy winds, huge swells, and tumultuous seas." Hall wrote later that FDR "relished such a challenge as this," and said, "as far as I ever saw was absolutely without a single fiber of physical fear in his entire make-up" (Cross 2003 34).

Equally impressive, although no doubt less dramatic to non-sailors, was an incident that took place when FDR was assistant secretary of the Navy. On an inspection trip to Frenchman's Bay in Maine, he was on a destroyer, under the command of Lt. William F. Halsey (later, in World War Two, to become one of a mere handful of five-star flag officers in American history, "Bull" Halsey). As a heavy fog rolled in, Halsey, knowing that FDR knew the waters, permitted him to take control of the vessel (despite FDR's high position, the Navy's protocol provides for the captain of a ship to have control). Halsey was wary, however, and kept close watch. Despite FDR's "experience sailing schooners and yawls," Halsey

knew that such experience did not translate automatically into the "much more complicated job of guiding a large destroyer along the fog-shrouded New England coastline, with its dangerous rocks and complex tides. Roosevelt impressed all aboard as he took the destroyer through Lubec Narrows, the strait separating the mainland and Campobello" (Cross 2003 42-43). Many years later, when Halsey was an admiral, he wrote:

> The fact that a white-flanneled yachtsman can sail a catboat out to a buoy and back is not [*sic*] guarantee that he can handle a high-speed destroyer in narrow waters A destroyer's bow may point directly down the channel, yet she is not necessarily on a safe course. She pivots around a point near her bridge structure, which means that two-thirds of her length is aft of the pivot, and that her stern will swing in twice the arc of her bow. As Mr. Roosevelt made his first turn, I saw him look aft and check the swing of our stern. My worries were over. He knew his business (quoted in Cross 2003 43).

A look at FDR late in his presidency—and late in his life—makes those elements of greatness clear. Rigdon, the naval aide assigned to FDR, had accompanied the president on most if not all of his travels (Rigdon 1962 4). One was an extensive voyage to Hawaii, and subsequently to Alaska. FDR had left the mainland to sail "for Pearl Harbor July 21, 1944" (Smith 2008 620), to meet General Douglas MacArthur and Admiral Chester Nimitz to work out joint strategy. Admiral William Leahy, who was a member of the president's party on the voyage, "thought FDR was 'at his best as he tactfully

steered the discussion from one point to another and narrowed down the areas of disagreement between MacArthur and Nimitz. The only discordant note was Roosevelt's health. 'He is just a shell of the man I knew,' MacArthur told his wife, Jean. 'In six months he will be in his grave'" (Quoted in Smith 2008 622).

Rigdon writes that they shifted back to the ship on July 29, where FDR and his dog Fala were joyfully reunited. Fala had been required to spend the four days FDR was ashore on the ship, because of Hawaii's quarantine regulations. "Within an hour the cruiser was underway for the Aleutians." The first port of call, Rigdon said, was Adak, "a treeless island near the end of the island chain." The voyage had been uneventful, "except for foul weather much beyond my ability to describe" (Rigdon 1962 123). Decades later, the *Alaska Dispatch News* recalled that FDR had spoken "at a lunch with about 160 servicemen." It was "August 3, 1944 at the Naval Operating Base Adak," and there was "a year of hard fighting left until the end of World War II. President Roosevelt [had] visited Alaska as part of a three-week journey to the Pacific, the only trip he ever made here" ("When the President Came to Dinner" 2014).

Ridgon says that it was the "visit to Alaska that brought Fala into the political campaign." FDR's political enemies had spread the story that Fala had been accidentally left ashore, and FDR had ordered a destroyer back to retrieve his dog—at enormous expense. "The story was completely false," Rigdon verifies, "but it grew and grew until it passed from one anti-Roosevelt narrator to another," with the expense—and the lurid details and consequences—growing with each telling. Moreover, as the story evolved, it came to incorporate a threat to national security, because "he had detached a badly-needed fighting ship from war on Japan to bring him

his dog, jeopardizing American lives to do so—maybe even costing American lives, for who knows but that the destroyer sent for Fala would have sunk a Japanese ship that subsequently sank an American transport?" (Rigdon 1962 126).

The *Baltimore* had been ready to depart at 4:00 on the afternoon of August 2, but the weather was too severe to permit the tugs to get the large ship out of the cove and into open waters. FDR, though, Rigdon writes, "was not to be completely outdone by the weather. To the surprise of us all, he put on a rain slicker and boots and was wheeled out on deck, carrying a campstool. He found a spot on the cruiser's forecastle and dropped his fishing line over the side. He sat there in the rain for nearly an hour and appeared to relish the Down East atmosphere" (Rigdon 1962 127).

When FDR arrived a week later at the Navy Yard in Bremerton, Washington, he "had been out of the country twenty-nine days and had traveled 10,000 miles by ship, a voyage that in past years would have restored him."[5] By nearly all accounts, the Bremerton speech was a disaster. With an election nearing, his radio audience generally agreed that he had been "rambling, halting, and indecisive." Republicans gleefully reported that "the Old Man is through," and continued to spread the tale about Fala while calling attention to a photograph of the president looking haggard. To add to it all, FDR's doctor earlier had placed him on a diet which had caused him to lose 15 pounds, exaggerating the appearance of frailty, and that was when the photo had been taken (Cross 2003 181-182).

Rigdon, who had been present at FDR's speech, presents the Bremerton speech with more nuance. He conceded that "FDR's usually flawless delivery was the poorest of any speech that he ever made," but noted the adverse circum-

stances. FDR had spoken "from the forecastle deck of the *Cummings*, which was moored inside a flooded dry dock at the navy yard." FDR had decided to speak standing, and this required him to use his uncomfortable braces, which he had not used "in many months. They were painful, and he was never sure of himself while standing." The speech was long—35 minutes—the deck was curved, and perhaps most important, "there were numerous loudspeakers. Echoes and reverberations blurred FDR's words and, as we were to learn, the radio pickup was terrible. In addition, he did not follow the text of the draft, which he had approved and which we had distributed to the press." Rigdon cites the book, *My Boss*, by a close FDR aide, his secretary Grace Tully, who had written that the speech had been dictated to Bill Rigdon, the Navy lieutenant stenographer on shipboard (Rigdon by then had been promoted). FDR had shown her the draft, and said it was to be merely a "homey report" on his journey. It was, she thought, one of the "poorest speeches he ever made, both in form and delivery." Rigdon points out, though, that FDR originally had wanted to give the speech in a baseball park in Seattle, but the Secret Service had vetoed the idea. The location would have had to be announced in advance if there were to be a crowd, and that would have caused a security nightmare. When the location was shifted to the navy yard, with a small audience, Ridgon says, FDR lost interest in the talk. It was perhaps his poorest effort, and had been delivered under the most adverse circumstances, thus making it seem worse than it really had been (Rigdon 1962 129-131).

Regardless, FDR masterfully turned the entire incident, and especially the Fala calumny, greatly to his advantage; perhaps even to have saved the 1944 election. "Like an old fire horse responding to the station's alarm bell, Roosevelt rallied for the campaign. This was America's first wartime election since

1864, and, like Lincoln, FDR made the most of his role as commander in chief while Dewey toured the country, racking up short-term gains with attacks on the 'tired old men' who were running the government and making outrageous claims of Communist influence" (Smith 2008 624).

Cross points out that this was "exactly what Roosevelt's campaign needed." FDR "turned the tables on his opponents by delivering what Samuel Rosenman called 'the greatest political speech of his career.'" FDR had bided his time until the opportunity was perfect. "On 23 September 1944, an energized Roosevelt displayed his legendary skill and vigor once again as he spoke about his 'little dog, Fala'" (Cross 1962 183).

Among the many writers who have dealt with this speech, Cross and Smith are perhaps the two best. First, however, let us look at FDR's actual words. He began as follows:

> Well, here we are together again—after four years—and what years they have been! You know, I am actually four years older, which is a fact that seems to annoy some people. In fact, in the mathematical field there are millions of Americans who are more than eleven years older than when we started in to clear up the mess that was dumped in our laps in 1933.
>
> We all know that certain people who make it a practice to depreciate the accomplishments of labor—who even attack labor as unpatriotic—they keep this up usually for three years and six months in a row. But then, for some strange reason they change their tune—every four years—just before

election day. When votes are at stake, they suddenly discover that they really love labor and that they are anxious to protect labor from its old friends.

I got quite a laugh, for example—and I am sure that you did—when I read this plank in the Republican platform adopted at their National Convention in Chicago last July: "The Republican Party accepts the purposes of the National Labor Relations Act, the Wage and Hour Act, the Social Security Act and all other Federal statutes designed to promote and protect the welfare of American working men and women, and we promise a fair and just administration of these laws."

You know, many of the Republican leaders and Congressmen and candidates, who shouted enthusiastic approval of that plank in that Convention Hall would not even recognize these progressive laws if they met them in broad daylight. Indeed, they have personally spent years of effort and energy—and much money—in fighting every one of those laws in the Congress, and in the press, and in the courts, ever since this Administration began to advocate them and enact them into legislation. That is a fair example of their insincerity and of their inconsistency.

The whole purpose of Republican oratory these days seems to be to switch labels. The

> object is to persuade the American people that the Democratic Party was responsible for the 1929 crash and the depression, and that the Republican Party was responsible for all social progress under the New Deal.
>
> Now, imitation may be the sincerest form of flattery—but I am afraid that in this case it is the most obvious common or garden variety of fraud.

After dealing with the Republican charges point by point, he built toward the famous climax:

> These Republican leaders have not been content with attacks on me, or my wife, or on my sons. No, not content with that, they now include my little dog, Fala. Well, of course, I don't resent attacks, and my family doesn't resent attacks, but Fala does resent them. You know, Fala is Scotch, and being a Scottie, as soon as he learned that the Republican fiction writers in Congress and out had concocted a story that I had left him behind on the Aleutian Islands and had sent a destroyer back to find him—at a cost to the taxpayers of two or three, or eight or twenty million dollars—his Scotch soul was furious. He has not been the same dog since. I am accustomed to hearing malicious falsehoods about myself - such as that old, worm-eaten chestnut that I have represented myself as indispensable. But I think I have a right to resent, to object to libelous statements about my dog (F.D. Roosevelt 1944).

Cross said, "the public went wild. They loved the speech and were thrilled that the 'old' master appeared to be himself again" (Cross 2003 183). Smith goes into more detail, and presents it—as FDR himself did—more dramatically. "The audience loved it," he says. "As they warmed to the president, Roosevelt proceeded with a voice that purred softly and then struck hard." When FDR said that "depression" should be the last word in the dictionary that a Republican should use, "waves of thunderous applause cascaded through the Statler's giant ballroom. The outpouring of affection from the audience startled even those who had seen Roosevelt on the campaign trail in many past elections. 'The Old Master still had it,' a reporter from *Time* observed." But the best had not yet arrived. "The Climax came when Roosevelt delivered his facetious rebuttal to Republican charges about Fala." FDR's mock seriousness caused the audience to howl its delight. "The Dewey campaign suffered a body blow from which it never recovered" (Smith 2008 625-626).

FDR won re-election, and went on to Yalta, where an eight-day conference planned for the postwar world. "Despite criticism by some that Roosevelt was too ill and frail to lead the conference, and that Stalin took advantage of that frailty, most top advisers accompanying the president disagreed. Adm. William D. Leahy, Roosevelt's chief of staff remembered: 'It was my feeling that Roosevelt had conducted the Crimean Conference with great skill and that his personality had dominated the discussions'" (Cross 2003 187). Many other authorities on FDR agree (See Smith 2008 629ff). Cross cites Robert Dallek perceptively, and agrees that Roosevelt's policies were carefully crafted. FDR, says Cross, was continuing "his lifelong consistent technique of not revealing everything during discussions and negotiations, thus giving himself greater flexibility to arrive at a settlement. Although

Roosevelt's body was failing him, his mind remained clear." He recalls that FDR "once said, 'you know, I am a juggler, and I never let my right hand know what my left hand does'" (Cross 2003 188).

Amyas Ames, who was to be an official in the War Shipping Administration in World War Two, was a Roosevelt family friend. In 1933, he had sailed with the president from Marion, Massachusetts to Southwest Harbor, Maine, on a "family occasion." Afterward, "Ames described Roosevelt as a 'natural sailor,' who was 'down to earth, with a likeable personality,' adding that he was a very self-contained man." The atmosphere on the 400-mile cruise had been splendid, and the entire crew had always addressed FDR as "skipper," and never as "president" (Cross 2003 196).

Cross's Epilogue is worth quoting at some length. He calls FDR our "greatest seagoing president," and said that "he spent time afloat every year of his presidency except 1942, when security considerations kept him on dry land." As president, he "sought out the sea frequently," for relaxation, and to "clear away 'personal cobwebs'." Regardless of the vessel, whether he was skipper of a tiny yawl, a twin-masted schooner, or a "distinguished guest aboard a forty-five thousand-ton warship," he loved nowhere better than being on the water. "Roosevelt skillfully used dead reckoning as his means to navigate through pea-soup thick fogs and ship-swallowing seas. He calculated where he had been, where he currently was, and where he was going, using nothing more than a compass, chart, and his keen know-how gained from years of sailing." He was "an accomplished blue-water sailor," was "adept at dealing with the unexpected and adapting quickly to the vagaries of the weather. On the sea—and throughout his life—he was a master of improvisation, rapidly issuing orders to his crew to alter course and adjust sails as conditions

warranted. Franklin Roosevelt was in command, both on the sea and in the White House."

It is significant that FDR "carried his sailor instincts" into that White House. He was "a consummate sailor politician"—possibly *the* consummate sailor politician. Frances Perkins sensed this. She said FDR "rarely got himself sewed tight to a program from which there was no turning back." As Cross observes, "this is much the same way a good sailor uses keen skills to prevent getting trapped by wind and weather." As Perkins said, "he worked with his instincts. He relied upon his intuitive judgment." Admiral Emory Land goes so far as to credit "Roosevelt's deep understanding of the sea with U.S. success in World War II. Franklin Delano Roosevelt knew more about the ships and the men who sailed them ... than any man who ever held high office."

A year before he died, FDR confided to his trusted Grace Tully that if anything ever happened to him while on the water, he wanted to be buried at sea. "You know," he said to her, "it has always seemed like home to me" (Cross 2003 195-200).

EPILOGUE

Thus, we have two of the most remarkable men, relatives, who became two of the most remarkable presidents. "Remarkable" hardly does them justice, but will have to do. Each was conditioned by extraordinary physical activities. Theodore courted all sorts of physical challenges and mastered them, including one of the more demanding of the Asian martial arts. Franklin was struck down, then fought back up without the use of his legs, and continued his mastery of all things seafaring. Their activities broadened and strengthened their bodies, their minds, and their insights and instincts. Their presidencies, similarly, reflected—and brilliantly ben-

efited from—their enhanced skills and accomplishments, from their physical and mental powers, and from what must be recognized as their extraordinary temperaments.

NOTES

1 Quoted in Max J. Skidmore (2004). *Presidential Performance: A Comprehensive Review*. Lanham, Maryland: MacFarland. 195. Print; for Cooper's original comment, see John Milton Cooper, *The Warrior and the Priest*, Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press 1983 87-88. Print

2 Quoted *ibid.* 183; original quotation from William H. Harbaugh, *The Life and Times of Theodore Roosevelt*, rev ed., New York: Oxford University Press, 1975 434. Print.

3 For those interested in Sam Hill, his Maryhill Community, his Maryhill Museum, or his views on Theodore Roosevelt, see Max J. Skidmore, *Moose Crossing: Portland to Portland on the Theodore Roosevelt International Highway (2007)*. Lanham, Maryland: Hamilton Books 2007. Print.

4 For a penetrating account of FDR's background in agriculture, his powerful influence on conservation, and his too-often ignored role as an environmentalist, see Douglas Brinkley's *Rightful Heritage: Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Land of America*, New York: Harper Collins, 2016. Print.

5 Smith, p. 622; note: it might have been better to have said it had been twenty-nine days since FDR had left California, because, although Hawaii and Alaska were not yet states, the time FDR had spent in the two territories was not exactly "out of the country."

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When in Rome— Caesars Palace: The First Themed Casino in Las Vegas

by Patricia M. Kirtley and William M. Kirtley

ABSTRACT

"Welcome to Caesars, I am your slave" intoned toga-clad cocktail waitresses wearing high-heeled sandals on the opening day of this stately pleasure dome. This single sentence typified the intent of the creator and builder of this sumptuous development, Jay Sarno (1922-1984). He dreamed of building a casino-hotel that afforded every "reveler"—a unique gaming experience: posh accommodations, fine dining, star-studded entertainment, and up-scale shopping. Sarno chose replicas of the world's most famous art to adorn his creation. This paper analyzes the realization of his dream through the theory of two philosophers fascinated by the reproduction of images. Roland Barthes (1915-1980) elaborated upon the objective nature of art and what the viewer brings to it. Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) developed the notion of phantasmagoria to describe the illusions of sound and light shows in Paris, an apt metaphor for this establishment in Paradise. Benjamin's thoughts on lithographs illuminate the characteristics of the art in Caesars: accessibility, flexibility, decorativeness, and anonymity. These attributes transformed this casino-resort into an icon of popular culture. The authors take a deeper look into the simulacrum, pastiche, and theme of a place that caters to men's wants and desires. The authors also discuss the Forum, an extension of Caesars Entertainment Corporation's holdings. The Forum provides an opportunity for consumers to shop without guilt for the

most exclusive products the world has to offer in a Roman themed environment. The authors conclude with an analysis of the Forum as a cathedral of consumption, an entrepreneur's dream where people pay, not for the intrinsic worth of goods and services; but for the status attached to them.

KEY WORDS

Caesars Palace, Forum, themed casino, Walter Benjamin, Roland Barthes, gambling, cathedral, consumption, Caesars Entertainment Corporation, art, replicas

INTRODUCTION

Caesars Means Business
(Caesars Convention Center Motto 2018)

An advertisement in the *Los Angeles Times* on 27 July 1966, announced the opening of a new casino in Las Vegas. The ad proclaimed, "I CAESAR, INVITE YOU" (A2). It featured a cartoon of a scantily clad slave girl feeding grapes to a rotund, toga-clad caricature that looked remarkably like owner Jay Sarno. It promised a liturgy of titillating memes; "AN ORGY OF EXCITEMENT," "Caper and cavort in Bacchanalian raptures of revelry!" and "rub shoulders with the Jet-set" (A2).

After fifty-two years, the theme, style, and predominately male high stakes gambling clientele of Caesars Palace remain much the same. It still epitomizes what French post-modernist Jean Baudrillard said about Las Vegas: "Here one could find a greater variety of large-scale reproductions than in any other place" (91). These reproductions take the form of replica art. Fredrick Jameson, another post-modernist, described it as a pastiche where "all that is left is to imitate dead styles, to speak through the masks and with the voices of the styles in the imaginary museum" (4). Architect Robert Venturi noted,

"The agglomeration of Caesars Palace and the strip as a whole approaches the spirit, if not the style of the late Roman Forum with its eclectic accumulation" (51). The sin and simulation of the second largest tourist draw in America owes its modern existence to a man who hated being poor (Hopkins 92).

Sarno's notion of a themed hotel was a total concept including the costumes for the cocktail waitresses. His idea of marketing research was, "I'll do what I think is fun, and everyone else will think the same thing is fun too!" (Sheckells 1). Sarno insisted there was no apostrophe in Caesars. He stated, "I am going to create the feeling everyone that is in the hotel is a Caesar" (Early 71). The hotel construction cost nineteen million dollars. Hal Rothman (2002), author of *Neon Metropolis,* noted the finished edifice embodied Sarno's design. "The casino was elliptical reflecting his belief that egg-shaped structures relaxed people" (18).

Sarno commissioned a potpourri of replicas to adorn his dream. He bought Carrara marble; the same medium used by Michelangelo, and hired sculptors at the cost of $200,000. He ordered many statues of Venus and several works depicting scenes of "Roman military conquests and women as booty" from companies that advertised museum quality reproductions (Malamud & McGuthrie 255). His luxurious hotel-casino remains a simulacrum of ancient Rome.

Sarno created an elaborate entry garden replete with reproductions of art encouraging guests to "leave the real world and enter this fantasy world" (Sheckells 1). "Caesars Palace guests are meant to have passed through the other side of a movie screen in a Hollywood inspired projection of ancient Roman opulence and decadence" (Malamud & McGuthrie 251). Theming distanced guests from their everyday world, and "concerns that might inhibit their gambling" (Hess 89).

The Palace caters to high-stakes gamblers, those who bet thousands of dollars, enjoy gourmet food and drink, and spend a fortune on lavish entertainment.

Sarno spent one million dollars at the inaugural party for Caesars on 5 August 1966. Many of the eighteen hundred guests, including Adam West, Eva Gabor, and Jimmy Hoffa, received an invitation scroll from an actor dressed as a centurion. The attendees consumed two tons of filet mignon, three hundred pounds of crabmeat, washed down with fifty thousand glasses of champagne before attending headliner Andy Williams' show.

Sarno was a man of excesses. However, in a rare quiet moment of reflection, Sarno described himself: "I am a loner, different, a little sad. Most creative people are" (Schwartz 152). His profligate lifestyle led to his early death. Sarno biographer David Schwartz recounted what people in the gambling industry said, upon learning of Sarno's demise, "He departed this life in the most fantastic suite, inside the most gorgeous hotel in the world, with a beautiful girl, owing the IRS a million bucks" (266).

After cataloging a small part of the art at Caesars Palace, the authors turned to analyzing its meaning and import. They found this establishment a bastion of masculinity, a paradigmatic means of consumption, and an icon of popular culture. The challenge was to discover how art animated a theme that transformed Las Vegas.

THE DREAM REALIZED

When in Rome Do as Romans Do.
(When in Rome)

John Storey, author of the widely-read textbook, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture* (1997) offered several definitions

of popular culture. The most pertinent one divided this term into high and low culture. Curators and docents sanction the art of high culture that resides in museums and galleries. The art of low culture is residual, reproduced, found in the marketplace, and marked with the stigma of social class differences. Cultural elites entertain a certain condescension concerning popular culture, which only serves to enflame the passions of its devotees. The replicas of Caesars Palace transformed high art into an invitation to seduction.

Lithographs fascinated German literary critic and philosopher Walter Benjamin. He described copies of an original as flexible, accessible, decorative, and anonymous. The art works in Caesars represents all of these categories. Sarno commissioned several statues of *Caesar Prima Porta*, *David*, and *Venus*, sculpted in different sizes and serving diverse purposes. He ordered bespoke art in various media: cast and sculpted statues, bas-relief, and paintings. The scope of this collection is wide, from Eastern to Western, Archaic Greek to modern. Many of the art works are in the gardens, the casino, and the Forum, but there are also numerous objects of interest in the pools, spas, luxury suites, and corridors of the various hotel towers.

The art at Caesars is available all day and night, seven days a week. Visitors can walk up to it, touch it, and have a picture taken with it. The resort decorates the art on holidays and special events like Gay Pride Week or Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Such approachability brings this world-famous casino squarely into the realm of popular culture. Art decorates the casino and reinforces its theme. Museums identify their art as original. Every piece supposedly is authentic with provenance. Replica art is, more often than not, anonymous. "Caesars collapses the historical specificity of individual Roman emperors into one mega-emperor. What matters most

is the category emperor, rather than any particular ruler" (Malamud & McGuthrie 253). Ask someone at the bell desk whether a statue is of Julius or Augustus Caesar and they will reply, "They are all Caesars. After all, it's his Palace."

Benjamin's work reaffirms the conviction that replicated art has its own reality. It reminds us of the original artist's message, intent, and creativity. It enriches our lives as a thing of beauty. A particular piece may not carry a name or author, but is approachable by the people. Benjamin wrote an essay in 1935 entitled "Paris the Capital of the Nineteenth Century" in which he enthused about the interplay of light and shadow on ceilings and walls by magic lanterns. He called these images phantasmagoria (Khatib 11). The gilt and glitter of Caesar Palace constitutes a modern-day version of the commercial and entertainment galleries of Paris.

Sami Khatib, a disciple of Benjamin, observed that the concept of phantasmagoria extended to "collective fantasies and dream images" (5). Khatib stated that Benjamin hoped consumers might one day awaken from dream consciousness and recognize things for their true worth. Until that day, Caesars will maintain their lucrative business based on controlling the human desire to dominate, control, and possess.

The history, the theory, and Sarno's dream come together with a visit to this special place in Paradise. This elegant eighty-acre resort has six towers with 3,976 rooms, seven pools, a convention center, extensive gaming areas, signature restaurants, the Colosseum, and the Forum. This maze without clocks keeps guests gambling, shopping, and consuming. The Roman art found throughout this property forms its signature attraction. Julius Caesar divided all Gaul into three parts. This paper examines replica art in three areas: the

sprawling casino, the beautifully maintained gardens, and the luxurious shopping center known as the Forum.

THE GARDENS

Caesars, like Rome, added and subtracted art over the years. (McCombie 60)

Caesars meticulously landscaped gardens lie along Las Vegas Boulevard across from the Flamingo Hotel-Casino. Visitors see evidence of construction as the Palace continually reinvents itself. Builders recently removed two lovely fountains and an equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius to make way for a Gordon Ramsey restaurant named Hell's Kitchen. The manicured gardens also feature the Garden of the Gods Oasis with seven different themed swimming pools and sun bathing cabanas. A beautiful statue of Tyche, the Greek goddess of chance, presides over a swim-up blackjack table in one of pools. As visitors walk north along Las Vegas Boulevard, the following art works come into view.

Hippocampi—These creatures possess the upper body of a horse and lower body of a fish. This mythical creature originated in Phoenician and Etruscan times.

Winged Victory of Samothrace—The original statue of Nike, the Greek god of victory, stands on a landing on a staircase in the Louvre museum. Jay Sarno commissioned Italian artisans to craft a replica of this ten-foot statue from a block of Carrara marble. This iconic statue of the 2nd century masterpiece says "Caesars" more than any digital and neon freestanding sign. Framed by an elongated reflecting pool, Nike ushers a warm and powerful invitation to all visitors to enter and enjoy the delights of Caesar Palace. David Schwartz described her as "a fitting symbol that hope never dies" (271).

In 2017, Caesars Entertainment Corporation removed the fountain to make way for a Samsung pop-up store. They placed this famous lady in front of the store, forlorn and bereft of identification. A podium near her holds a sign that reads, "Redemption," alerting customers that they can redeem coupons allowing them to try out Samsung's latest electronic products.

The Corporation will achieve a modicum of redemption when it fulfills its promise to return Nike and her pool to its original spot when the Samsung "exhibit" closes its doors. The writers at VitalVegas.com, a web site that touts Las Vegas tourism, observed that in the meantime, "we'll all need a [long prolonged] Silkwood shower because seriously is nothing sacred?" (1). Why would anyone object to repurposing a replica? Benjamin noted that while a replica loses the tradition and history of an original, it maintains the intent, style, and eternal values of the artist who created it (23). VitalVegas mourns the loss of a semblance of an original and draws attention to the shame of its degradation to the status of a commercial prop.

Bronze Sphinx—Located on Las Vegas Boulevard, this winged creature from Greek mythology has a lion's body and woman's torso. This terrifying creature strangled all who could not answer her riddle, but killed herself when Oedipus answered the riddle correctly. A **Marble Sphinx** sits in approximately the same area. Sited nearby are two lovely bronze statues of a **Naked Lady** and a **Venus de Medici.**

Augustus Caesar Prima Porta—Workers discovered this 1st century AD statue on the grounds of a Roman villa in 1863. It now resides in the Vatican museum. A replica of this majestic statue rests on a central traffic island in the vehicle entrance to the property. It serves as the corporate logo for

Caesars Entertainment Corporation. The statue portrays a handsome confident Imperial ruler wearing military garb. He is moving forward, one hand held high, in a gesture common to orators. Caesar's other hand grasps the baton of command. Cupid, riding a dolphin, tugs at Caesar's feet.

Brahman Shrine—The smell of incense leads visitors to the Brahman shrine located to the left of the gardens. This unexpected place for reflection features a fourteen-foot tall shrine covered with tiny pieces of beveled glass. This decorative housing contains a cast bronze gold-plated statue of the Hindu and Buddhist god of creation. Brahma has four heads and eight arms.

A Bangkok Thai newspaper tycoon gave this copy of a Brahman shrine to Caesars in 1983. A plaque at its base notes the donor's intent was to provide "a place of prayer which in turn bestows prosperity and good fortune on those who come to visit and make their hopes and wishes known." The shrine is completely accessible to the public. People leave seven-color flower garlands and small elephants as offerings to Brahma. They sing and dance and play music to entertain him. Scholars find the shrine fascinating because it illustrates the nexus of two of the world's great religions, Buddhism and Hinduism (Suryanarayanan 1).

Capture of the Sabine Women—This statue stands in a small island amidst the traffic headed for the main entrance. Flemish sculptor Giambologna (1529-1608) sculpted the original in 1582. Many prefer to call the statue the *Abduction of the Sabine Women*, rather than dealing with the ugly implications of the title on the plinth, *Rape of the Sabine Women.* The original is located in the Loggia del Lanzi, in Florence, Italy. Giambologna carved this 13.5-foot statue from one block of marble.

He strove for a sense of action and movement, particularly in its vertical lines. The statue's spiral construction offers many vantage points. A Roman soldier firmly grasps a terrified Sabine woman. Her father lies vanquished at the soldier's foot. Giambologna displayed his sedulous skill in portraying both sexes of three different ages.

The legend of the Sabine women is one of the founding myths of Rome. It provided a lurid explanation of how the first Romans used force and cunning to marry outside their social group (exogamy) and develop a strong populace capable of dominating their neighbors as a Republic and an Empire. Romulus slew his brother Remus and became the sole ruler of Rome. Men dominated the population that settled in the city that bore his name. Romulus proclaimed a feast day and invited the members of the neighboring Sabine tribe to celebrate. At a signal from Romulus, his soldiers murdered the Sabine men and took their women by force. Titus Livius in *The History of Rome* (1905) described the "abducted maidens" as "despondent and indignant" (para. 1.9). Romulus boorishly asked them to forgo such feelings and to "give their affections to those whom fortune had made masters of their persons" (para. 1.9).

The statue, carved in Italy to exacting specifications, welcomed visitors when Caesars Palace opened in 1966. Sarno recalled the difficulties he encountered in shipping his favorite statue to the United States: "I had to argue like hell to get the sculptor to ship it to America. He feared it would be damaged in transit" (De Matteo, Strip, 1). Some guests exiting their limousines may see this statue as "simply classy, a fancy sculpture of naked people, that marks the entry as elegant" (McCombie 57). Two statues of armed soldiers mounting horses frame this magnificent marble creation.

Venus de Milo (See appendix A)—Sarno thought so highly of the goddess of sex and beauty that he commissioned several different Venuses. A farmer discovered the original Venus de Milo on the island of Milos in 1820. A French officer bought the statue as a gift to the king. The king donated the statue to the Louvre. The statue exhibited the practice of early Greek sculptors of using several blocks of marble for different parts of the statue. They used metal pins and rods to affix the appendages. One of the statue's missing arms held her garment and the other an apple.

Curators "lost" the statue's arms and plinth after the statue arrived in Paris. They did this because the name on the plinth threatened their claim that Praxiteles, the greatest Greek sculptor of all, carved their new acquisition and therefore was superior to the Venus de Medici, a statue Napoleon looted from the Italians. Scholars eventually uncovered the fraud. They attributed the sculpture to a lesser sculptor and a much later period. Other scholars insisted it was a copy of a Roman statue. Still others believed the statue was not one of Venus, but of a female sea goddess, Amphitrite. The answers to these assertions remain a subject of scholarly dispute (Puchko 1).

Venus de Medici—The Roman sculptor of this statue falsely attributed his creation to a 1st century Greek and thereby sought to enhance its value. Venus looks over her left shoulder, her head in profile. Her arms circle protectively in front of her body. Her son Cupid and an Amoretti, a winged child riding a dolphin, sit at her feet. These figures signal to the Greeks and Romans that beauty was not an end in itself, but a means to desire and procreation. The Pope brought the statue to the Villa de Medici in 1638. However, he thought it lewd and sent it to Florence. Napoleon brought it to France after he conquered Italy. The original *Venus de Medici* now resides in the Galleria Uffizi in Florence, Italy.

Venus Italica—Antonio Canova sculpted the third statue, *Venus Italica* (1819), which is in the Galleria Pitti in Florence, Italy. Canova's sponsors commissioned him to sculpt a copy of the *Venus de Medici* seized by Napoleon. On obtaining a cast of the de Medici statue, he discovered the turn of her head was due to a mistake made by restorers (Honour 686). Canova told his sponsors that, as an artist of the highest caliber, his only choice was to create an original statue. Art historian, Hugh Honour, related a story that explains the attitude of Canova's masterpiece. The artist hired a young woman model. As she was disrobing, Canova's brother unexpectedly entered the room. Alarmed, she stood and clasped the drape to her body. Canova exclaimed this was the pose he wanted. He pulled out his sketchpad and recorded the moment (669).

David—Many consider Michelangelo's *David* the finest sculpture in the world. Not to be outdone by anyone, Caesars Palace features several *Davids*. A large version resides in the Appian Way shopping gallery. Viewers have a close view of a life size *David* at the main entrance of the casino. Carved from a flawed block of marble, the statue shows the moment before the contest between young David and mighty Goliath. David's weight is on his back foot. He radiates, confidence and resolve, bristling with latent power, yet fully aware of his disadvantages.

One of the hallmarks of this statue's greatness is that, in addition to its technical brilliance, it houses the potential to mean powerful things to diverse groups. Roland Barthes, the French philosopher, believed a work of art has a connoted message, "the manner in which a society to a certain extent communicates what it thinks of it" (17). The Opera del Duomo commissioned Michelangelo to sculpt the statue to stand adjacent to Biblical prophets on the roofline of the cathedral

in Florence. When commission members realized the energy and majesty of this work, they decided to place it in the central square of Florence. There it represented the resolve of Florence to maintain its independence from larger and more powerful city-states like Rome. The replica at the entrance stands as a symbol of boldness, self-assurance, and success for the men who enter the casino. The statue, in modern times, often serves as an emblem of the gay rights movement.

Bacchus—Michelangelo's *Bacchus* deftly portrays the god of wine and revelry.

The great Italian artist portrayed the Greek god as naturally robust and self-assured, the epitome of endless pleasure. Bacchus appears relaxed and inviting. He holds a goblet of wine in his right hand and the skin of a tiger in his left. Sacred ivy leaves wreath his hair. The satyr by his side steadies and balances his statue. The Cardinal who commissioned the statue thought it blasphemous and refused to accept the finished work. Put a suit on Bacchus and he could be any of the young men doing business and seeking pleasure at Caesars. Sarno named the expensive all you can eat buffet after Bacchus.

Hebe—The original statue of *Hebe* by Adam de Vries (18th century) is in a private collection. Hebe represents youth, Spring, and forgiveness. She is the daughter of Zeus and Hera. She served as cupbearer to the gods on Mount Olympus bringing them the nectar and ambrosia that kept them youthful. She also acted as chambermaid to several goddesses. She married Hercules and bore him twin sons. The Romans called her Juventas and assigned her the protection of young men coming of age. This replica accents her youth and shows her holding her symbols: a bowl and pitcher.

A marble Statue of an **Armed Roman Soldier** and a reflect-

ing pool sits alongside the curved driveway to the hotel. The corporation now donates coins tossed in the pool to Vegas Strong and the victims of the mass shootings.

Apollo—Guests can find this marble copy of a bronze original (c. 350 BC) by Leochares, at street level outside the Colosseum. Known as *Apollo Belvedere*, artisans rediscovered this artwork during the Renaissance. This god represented healing and music. The extended arms point to the release of an arrow. Aerospace aficionados will recognize the head of the statue featured on the official symbol for the Apollo XVII moon landing space mission.

A visit to the gardens of Caesars Palace provides a refreshing respite, despite obstacles created by new construction. Each statue has its own story to tell. Anonymous art abounds. Management moves or retires various works of art at will, proof of its flexibility. The reflecting pools for donations to Vegas Strong display the Corporation's powerful connection to the people of Las Vegas. The Corporation promised it would eventually restore the *Winged Victory* to her rightful place of honor.

THE PALACE

Did Caesar Live here?
(*The Hangover* 2009)

The muted tones, marble fixtures, and elegant, classical furnishings of Caesars Palace welcomes visitors to one of the most luxurious resorts in the gambling capital of the World. The front doors beckon guests to the dark, seductive, interior recesses of Sarno's dream. Two hammered bronze bas-reliefs frame the narrow entryway. The one on the right is another rendition of the *Rape of the Sabine Women*.

Augustus Caesar Porta—A second prominent statue of Augustus greets those who come through the main entryway. At seven feet, the bronze statue is smaller than the one located at the vehicular entrance to the casino. Supposedly, it is good luck to rub Caesar's left index finger.

Three Muses—The large oval hotel lobby stretches out to the left of the Caesar statue. A marble rendering of the three graces or muses, stands in the center of a large fountain. The muses represent music, poetry, and the fine arts. Their Greek names are Aglala, Thalia, and Euphrosyne. Christian Romans renamed them Faith, Hope, and Charity. The hotel adorns them with beautiful bouquets on holidays.

Sculpted ceilings and ornate details make this hotel lobby a tourist attraction in itself. Sarno insisted the lighting fixtures represent the sun, in homage to the archaic Roman god, Sol. The Mural behind the reception desk depicts the chariot of Helios pulling the sun across the sky. When his son, Phaeton, tried to drive the chariot and lost control, he flew too close to the earth, causing burning and destruction. Only the intervention of Zeus saved the earth.

Capture of the Sabine Women—Another depiction of this scene, a white marble bas-relief wall, appears near the Bacchanal Buffet. Representations of this incident intrigued Sarno. Artists often relished the challenge to present this complex tension-filled scene.

Cleopatra's Barge replicates an ornate craft that reputedly transported Egyptian royalty on the Nile River. The gilded, well-endowed figurehead of the queen of the Nile juts from the prow of the barge into the guest passageway and attracts the male gaze. The barge rests on an arroyo and during the infrequent rains in Las Vegas it actually floats. This craft holds

a classic nightclub featuring live music where customers can literally rock the boat. Frank Sinatra and the Rat Pack: Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr., Peter Lawford, Joey Bishop, Humphrey Bogart, and Lauren Bacall made this bar their own private clubhouse. Cleopatra marks the heart of the man's world in Caesars. The barge is located across from an exclusive steak house and an expensive cigar bar that features straight shots of premium bourbon. The nearby Payard Patisserie provides an excellent place for a latte, a pastry, and a moment's rest from an atmosphere redolent with machismo.

A second and more impressive ***David*** than the one located at the main entrance to Caesars stands in the atrium of the Appian Way shops. It measures eighteen-feet high and weighs more than nine tons. Art historian Mel McCombie (2001) noted that, due to the architectural design of the building, the startling first view of this famous statue is "from the waist down" (58). This often startles busy shoppers who view it after turning a corner. Those who hesitate often become unwitting victims for zealous sales people selling skin care products.

Joe Louis—The statue of the "Brown Bomber" stands at floor level at the entrance to the sports book. People love walking up to it and having their picture taken with the "champ." This statue stands seven and a half feet tall and weighs four thousand, five hundred pounds. Louis, portrayed in a boxer's crouch, was the world heavyweight-boxing champion from 1937-1949. Louis won fifty-two of his fights by knockout. He fought in twenty-seven championship fights. He joined the Army during World War II, tirelessly entertaining his fellow soldiers with exhibition boxing matches.

This casino has a special relationship with Louis. The IRS hounded Louis for back taxes and he experienced financial

difficulties in the 1970s. Ash Resnick, the vice-president of Caesars and an Army friend, gave the popular boxer a job as a greeter (McKenzie 1). In 1981, Louis died of a heart attack at age sixty-six. Jesse Jackson and Frank Sinatra delivered eulogies in the sports book ("Services Friday" 1). Congress passed legislation to bury Louis in Arlington National Cemetery.

Poker Room—Serious card-players gravitate to the hushed confines of the poker room located in front of the Colosseum near the race and sports book. Sarno's underlying message of catering to well-heeled gamblers permeates this bastion of male privilege. Pictures of modern day gladiators and women as objects decorate the walls. LeRoy Nieman's (1921-2012) energetic paintings include the series *Girls of Caesars Palace,* featuring a wine server, a lifeguard, a roulette attendant, and a dealer. Neil Leifer's famous *Sports Illustrated* photograph of the knockout in the Ali-Liston 1964 championship fight is prominently displayed.

The Colosseum—Management replaced the Circus Maximus showroom with a one hundred-million-dollar Colosseum in 2003 to house the Celine Dion musical performance. Some aspects of the contemporary architecture reflect the lines of the Roman Colosseum. The name of that ancient structure is the Latin word for gigantic. One difference between the two structures is that the one in Rome was a stadium for 50,000 citizens and the one in Las Vegas is a theater seating 4,298 people.

The **Busts of Three Emperors**—Three unidentified busts of possibly Tacitus, Hadrian, and Augustus sit in a small alcove near the Beijing Noodle #9 Chinese restaurant.

Fortuna—A 25-foot statue of the Roman goddess of luck and the dawn marks the entrance to the Forum shops. She

holds a cornucopia containing the riches she gives to her followers. In ancient Rome, she oversaw the distribution of grain to the poor, thus her reputation for justice and fairness. She often appears blindfolded in front of courthouses across the United States. The Greeks called her Tyche. They considered her luck capricious, while the Romans thought luck came to those whom the gods favored. At her feet lies an excellent interactive map to guide shoppers through the cobblestone streets of the Forum.

Diana, the goddess of the hunt and wild animals, brought fertility to her worshipers. The original of the life-size marble statue resides in the Louvre Museum. It is a 1st or 2nd century copy of a lost Greek bronze original attributed to Leochares (c. 325). Like so many other statues, someone "discovered" it. A bronze copy of the statue (1813) stands in the gardens of Fontainebleau.

This posh, upscale Xanadu forms the glittering heart of the city of lights. It is an adult male playground. However, its constant expansion with the addition of new luxury hotel towers created a sprawling and confusing layout. Guests trek a long winding way from the check-in desk to the original Forum towers. Given time, a man can find everything he desires: sports book, poker room, steak house, cigar bar, top entertainment, and of course, all types of gambling from slots to Pai Gow. Replica art enhances the Palace, fleshing out the theme of Roman grandeur. Anonymous busts lend dignity to countless niches and alcoves. Statues of Caesar, Cleopatra, and Joe Louis perpetuate good luck rituals and motivate gamblers to take a chance. Alpha males find Caesars synonymous with luxury, enticement, and privilege.

A CONSUMER'S DREAM

When in Vegas Shop as the Romans Do.
(When in Vegas, Ad)

There is no question that Caesars markets to aggressive, risk-taking, testosterone-fueled men. With this obvious emphasis on capturing male patrons, one might inquire, "is there anything that appeals to women or to both men and women?" Fifty years of management elicited a simple response, "Yes, welcome to the Forum!" A Las Vegas Visitors and Convention Bureau survey (2017) indicated that only 5% of visitors come to the largest city in Nevada to gamble, that is fourth on the list of why people visit Las Vegas. It ranks after vacations (48%), visiting friends and relatives (14%), and attending a convention (10%). The survey also indicated that once visitors arrived, 74% spent money shopping (Las Vegas Visitors and Convention Authority 15). Management eventually saw that the future of business in Las Vegas lay in shopping, and in 1992 opened the stores at the Forum.

Named after the shops at the center of ancient Rome, the Forum is a 636,000-square foot shopping mall built as an extension wing of the main complex. It is known as one of the shopping wonders of the world. "Its lavish Romanesque architecture and décor welcome you to luxury shopping, dining, and entertainment unlike anywhere else" (*Vegas Magazine*). This is not an ordinary shopping mall, "The statues talk. The sky does tricks" (*Emperors Guide* 1). The spiral escalator is one of 103 in the world. Ceiling lights simulate a complete cycle of night and day every hour. Computer controlled laser projectors replicate the starry skies at night. Small replicas of Greek and Roman statues occupy the niches above the shops.

This area contains 270 specialty stores and restaurants. The directory of the Forum Shops indicates there are twice as

many women's apparel shops as those for men. Armani, Vuitton, Gucci, Dior, Cartier, and Versace appeal to women. There are numerous specialty stores for men including Fossil, Rolex, Tag Heuer, Montblanc, Brietling, and Harley Davidson. In marketing, status comes from the brand, how much you paid for it, and where you bought it.

The Forum at Caesars Palace is highly effective in marketing a post-modern demonstration of the logic of consumer capitalism (McCombie 53). It is the highest grossing mall in the United States with annual sales of $1,610 per square foot. Michael Schulman, author and Las Vegas expert, observed people come to Vega predisposed to spend money. Even if it is a store they have at home, people are more likely to splurge because, psychologically, the strings on the purse are loose (1). The authors witnessed a couple encumbered with four large shopping bags filled with Sketchers, a popular type of inexpensive tennis shoe, they could easily purchase at a neighborhood Wal-Mart store.

There are several large fountains in the Forum. The Bernini fountain at the entrance of the shops is a copy of the one located in the Piazza Navona in Rome. A copy of the Roman Trevi fountain stands mid-way through the Forum shops. The Fountain of the Gods features a large statue of Artemis. Caesars donates the coins visitors toss into these fountains to Vegas Strong.

The **Fall of Atlantis Fountain** provides a dramatic rendering of a myth. Located near the very end of the mall near the Apple Store, Nike outlet, and Cheese Cake Factory, this fountain features fire, water, smoke, and storytelling. Eerie nine-foot animated figures elicit an "uncanny valley" effect. The more human animatronic figures appear, the more repellent they become. The fire, water, smoke effects, as well as the

teeth-rattling narration makes introverts cringe. However, it is free and crowds thrill to this story of the myth of Atlantis, every hour on the hour.

The fifty-thousand-gallon **Salt Water Aquarium** located behind the Atlantis Fountain features over five hundred large tropical fish including sharks and stingrays. This, the most popular attraction in the entire Forum, absolutely enthralls children. Indeed, all ages delight in this spectacular display of aquatic creatures.

Sociologists George Ritzer and Todd Stillman argued that Caesars Palace and the Forum shops established a new paradigm for the means of consumption (83). This complex attracts large numbers of customers using art and architecture to entice them. An aura of opulence makes it possible for men and women to spend without regret, often purchasing more than is prudent. Caesars implodes the boundary between touring and consuming. "Although tourism has always involved the consumption of goods and services, in Las Vegas consumption has become the main point of touring" (Ritzer & Stillman 92). Most people go to the entertainment capital of the World with the intention of spending time and money, whether gambling in the casinos, trying out the rides in the amusement parks, or shopping at the malls. Customers designate new values for commodities based not on their intrinsic worth, but on what items purchased at the prestigious Caesars Palace say about the buyer.

CONCLUSION

Phantasmagorias are not mere illusions.
(Khatib 4)

Caesars meant business the day of the grand opening on 5 August 1966. Jay Sarno dreamed of building a casino-hotel

that afforded the consumer the best of everything. This Las Vegas landmark still does just that. The themes created by the replica statues remain much the same, as does the attention to the desires of male high stakes gamblers. However, the directors of Caesars Entertainment Corporation realized the market had changed. When gambling declined to fourth on the list of why people visit Las Vegas, management focused on improving amenities like five star restaurants, entertainment, and shopping.

A number of scholars contributed fresh meanings to an understanding of Sarno's dream. Storey's notion of high and low culture made clear how replications brought the art of museums to new purpose and audience. In so doing, the Palace became a dynamic part of popular culture. Ironically, the Palace, like ancient Rome, contains artifacts from around the world. Postmodernists Baudrillard, Jameson, and Venturi provided a basis for a close examination of the simulacrum, pastiche, and theme of this iconic landmark.

An additional study investigated various economic aspects of this modern hotel-casino. Stillman and Ritzer explained the implications of the tremendous monetary engine of this complex, which they described as a "Cathedral of Consumption." They elucidated the phenomenon of advanced capitalism, in that the value of goods may depend on the brand name or where the consumers bought them.

An examination of the replica art found in the gardens, casino, and Forum utilized the philosophy of Barthes in understanding the connotations of a work of art: what we don't see is as important as what we do see. Benjamin's thoughts shed light on the flexibility, decorativeness, and accessibility of replica art. These copies of famous art created a phantasmagoria of light and sound, a dream that was more than an

illusion. This reality based on fantasy enabled the directors of the corporation to build a profitable empire appealing to the full range of consumer's appetites. Caesars means business. It always has, but it also exhibits the way post-modern corporations seduce customers by providing them with an imaginary world where money can satisfy their needs and wants. Certainly, this is fitting for the legacy of a dissolute man named Jay Sarno who believed Gaius Julius Caesar's maxim, "Creating is the essence of life" ("Julius Caesar Quotes").

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APPENDIX A

All photographs by Patricia M. Kirtley

David

Hebe

Bacchus

Venus de Milo

Venus de Medici

Venus Italica

Seasonal Ethnic Celebrations at Disney California Adventure from 2012 through 2017

by Maureen Salsitz

ABSTRACT

By allocating more resources to ethnic celebrations, Disney California Adventure has reflected local demographic trends such as population increases of Hispanic/Latino and Asian groups, connecting the size and duration of each celebration to corresponding demographics within California. The Disney Company has reframed Traditional Disney Ideologies supporting white, middle-class Americans to now reflect this increasing diversity and this illustrates the tensions between Disney's business goals for increased attendance and sales with the goals of ethnic inclusivity and multiculturalism. By highlighting the roles of Diversity Resource Groups (DRGs) as mediators of representations at the ethnic celebrations, this article examines in-park representations of ethnic identities at four different seasonal celebrations, held from 2012 through early 2017 at Disney California Adventure in Anaheim, CA. In contrast to static everyday park features, the ethnic celebrations and festivals are more fluid and dynamic even as they flatten and essentialize identities for *Celebrate Gospel,* ¡Viva Navidad!, *Lunar New Year,* and *Festival of Holidays.*

KEYWORD

Disney, ethnicity, Disney California Adventure, theme parks, multicultural (multiculturalism), representation, ethnic celebration

While many elements of ethnic representation have been removed from the park on an everyday basis to pull away from multiculturalism after the 2012 remodel, renaming, and rededication of Disney California Adventure, the Disney Company simultaneously pushed forward with seasonal ethnic holiday celebrations and festivals. This paper focuses on this concurrent trend of seasonal inclusivity that reflects demographic trends of diversity within California and localized contexts of ethnicity and panethnicity. A major focus of this research in the design, planning, and implementation of such events at Disney California Adventure is the presence and use of internal Diversity Resource Groups (DRGs) as a component of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to consult about ethnic groups and their usage for these seasonal celebrations. Research here focuses on constructions and interpretations of ethnic identities and key celebrations at Disney California Adventure for African Americans, several Asian groups, and Latinos and Hispanics, and how the Disney Company, with the help of DRGs, has interpreted such identities.

Through the lenses of the Disney Company and its Diversity Resource Groups, ethnic celebrations at DCA reflect local demographic trends as the company allocates more resources, like event duration and event space, while using the Disney versions of ethnic identities. As white populations have declined and been edged out by other groups in California, the Disney Company has had to reframe and resituate some of their Traditional Disney Ideologies that support white, middle-class Americans to now reflect increasing diversity. In this phase of DCA Multiculturalism, there is a struggle to balance national trends of homogenization and Traditional Disney Ideologies with local demographic trends that reveal an increase in ethnic and cultural diversity. For the small, and

getting smaller, populations of African Americans in California, *Celebrate Gospel* has just one short day for its event and little to no intervention of their ethnic identifiers by the Disney Company. However, both ¡Viva Navidad! and Lunar New Year, for Hispanics/Latinos and several Asian groups respectively, have grown in duration and park footprints which correspond with their population sizes in California. These events have also seen more intervention on the part of the Disney Company and DRGs with interpretations of ethnicity. Tensions between nationalistic and nostalgic Traditional Disney Ideologies and seasonal inclusivity found within ethnic celebrations can be seen in the presence and use of key characters at these events. While the events themselves include activities, foods, and performances that appear to have been vetted through DRGs, characters from the wider Disney-verse are utilized according to Traditional Disney Ideologies and are often rife with problems. Select characters to be discussed and analyzed include Chip and Dale, Mickey, Minnie, Goofy, Mulan, Mushu, and the Three Caballeros. The flattening and essentializing of ethnic identities for ethnic celebrations like *Celebrate Gospel,* ¡Viva Navidad!, and Lunar New Year at Disney California then suits the business goals of addressing the demographics and some of their interests while simultaneously maximizing profits. My analyses of *Celebrate Gospel*, *Lunar New Year*, ¡Viva Navidad! and *Festival of Holidays*, event footprints of place, space, and scale within the park, as well as the duration of each event correlate to each group's population within California's larger demographic framework and socio-political headspace.

At Disney California Adventure (DCA), a broad concept of ethnicity is utilized. When the Disney Company uses the term "multi-cultural," they are being more literal and are discussing multiple cultures, rather than adhering to an

academic usage of the term multicultural and the theoretical perspectives of multiculturalism. This is demonstrated by Disney through several different ethnic celebrations that have commodified ethnicities. According to Disney, these celebrations are "multi-cultural" in that many different ethnic and cultural groups and their ethnic identifiers are being represented and celebrated. This contrasts greatly with true multicultural discourse because ethnic representations are limited to only a few panethnic groups, and those representations have been Disneyfied and Disneyized at the park. Each of the Diversity Resource Groups (DRGs), such as HOLA, COMPASS, and PULSE, connects with members of local ethnic communities. DRGs serve to mediate between preserving ethnic identities and finding a balance that would allow such identities to be flattened and essentialized as they were run through Disney lenses. However, the DRGs and the Disney Company often walk the line of Disneyization by commodifying ethnic identities for consumption and entertainment.

This research draws upon a combination of methodologies, including my own ethnographic fieldwork on-site at DCA from 2008 through early 2017, as well as my textual analysis of elements within DCA. Various web sources describing multicultural events and more have been used as historical research. In April 2015, I obtained an approved IRB from Claremont Graduate University to email a detailed questionnaire to Disney Public Relations specifically asking the Disney Company and the Disneyland Resort how they defined "multiculturalism," "multicultural," and some of their practices and policies, including those with ethnic celebrations. This questionnaire was emailed on October 27, 2015, and a polite response was received on October 29, 2015 declining to answer the questionnaire based on the "large number of student project requests we receive." As a result, I have drawn

upon other web and print materials, including Disney press releases, job descriptions, event print media for Annual Passholders, and the Disney Parks Blog.

UNPACKING ETHNICITY, PANETHNICITY AND DISNEY'S USE OF "MULTI-CULTURAL" IN DCA ETHNIC CELEBRATIONS

Ethnic identifiers are key components of ethnic identities that help distinguish one group's traditions from another group's traditions. More importantly, they provide a sense of common identity that serve to unify a group of people with one another. These ethnic identifiers may include a common religion, language or dialect, clothing, music and performances, and unique foods. However, Jorge Gracia, author of the article "The Nature of Ethnicity with Special Reference to Hispanic/Latino Identity," reminds us that ethnicity and ethnic identities are dynamic, fluid, and must be thought of in "open, historical and familial terms" rather than as static, unchanging, and with closed terms (Gracia 40). The Disney Company and its Diversity Resource Groups build upon the malleability of ethnicity and ethnic identifiers as they were filtered through Disney ideologies.

To help with ethnic representations and the design and creation of these events at DCA, internal Diversity Resource Groups (DRGs) have provided their input alongside the efforts of participating ethnic groups. Kevin Rafferty, Jr., External Communications Manager at the Disneyland Resort, notes that DRGS are key resources at Disney parks because they "are often consulted on participation in the local community and resort offerings," and to illustrate this he points out that COMPASS, "which builds Asian and Pacific Islander cultural awareness, provided developmental input to the upcoming [2017] Lunar New Year celebration at Disney

California Adventure park" (Rafferty "Disneyland Resort Cast Members Chat with Academy Award Winner® and Social Activist Dustin Lance Black About 'When We Rise,' Premiering February 27 on ABC"). Three specific DRGs are involved as consultants that provide information, research, and guidelines for ethnic and panethnic celebrations in the form of ¡Viva Navidad!, *Festival of Holidays*, *Lunar New Year*, and *Celebrate Gospel*: HOLA (Hispanic Organization for Leadership Advancement) contributed to ¡Viva Navidad!, COMPASS (Community of Pacific Islanders, Asians and Allies) helped with both the panethnic groups found in 2016's *Festival of Holidays* and with *Lunar New Year*, while PULSE (People United to Lead, Serve and Excel) provided insight into some of the activities at *Festival of Holidays* and as the organizer of *Celebrate Gospel.* Each of these DRGs connects with members of local ethnic communities to participate in various activities within the larger event. For example, the Cerritos Chinese School was involved in the Chinese lantern-making activity for 2017, and performers like the Lion Dancers from the Northern Shaolin Kung Fu Association in Alhambra and the Jung Im Lee Korean Dance Academy from Los Angeles were featured during the 2014 *Lunar New Year* festivities (Disneyland Resort Public Affairs "Disneyland Resort Rings in Year of the Horse").

The participation and collaboration of DRGs with local and international communities is central to maintaining a balance between ethnicity, panethnicity, and to avoid extreme versions of essentialization and commodification. Traditional Disney Ideologies and business goals often toe the line of Disneyization by commoditizing ethnic identities for consumption and the accompanying flattening and essentializing elements of Disneyfication of ethnicity, conflicting with the goals of DRGs. This was apparent with the use of the Three

Caballeros birds during ¡Viva Navidad! from 2013 through 2015 on merchandise like t-shirts, hats, pins, and stuffed-bird keychains. Some items, like the Limited Edition pins and stuffed versions of Panchito Pistoles and José Carioca, were wildly popular and soon became collector's items due to their rarity, while others like sombreros and ponchos may have been deemed inappropriate and insensitive. A reduction and near-removal of these Disneyized and Disneyfied versions of Hispanics and Latinos and their ethnic identifiers were seen in the 2016/2017 season, perhaps indicating that some of these lines were crossed and that the merchandise and representation was no longer culturally-appropriate or profitable.

The strangeness that is the Chip and Dale chipmunks in traditional Chinese outfits for *Lunar New Year* also exemplifies the fine line between Disneyfication and Disneyization because these characters have not been read as any race or ethnicity except for their implicit whiteness since their first appearance in 1943 (Disney Wiki "Chip and Dale"). By using Chip and Dale in this way, the Disney Company is remaining consistent in its practices to use anthropomorphic characters as connections to ethnicity and ethnic identifiers. Because they are fictional talking animals that are not human, they are therefore exempted from being politically correct and cannot be accused of cultural appropriation or disrespect. It is fantasy and fiction, after all, and the rules of everyday life do not apply here in the context of Disneyland and DCA.

DISCUSSIONS OF SEASONAL ETHNIC CELEBRATIONS AT DCA

In February 2011, a push towards larger events with connections to local communities arrived with the first *Celebrate Gospel* event as a part of Black History Month. Initiatives to

reflect the growing Latino/Hispanic and Asian communities were then developed for the 2013 major holiday seasons. The events recognized key religious holidays for groups, and incorporated several ethnic identifiers with music, performances, activities, and foods. Careful thought and consideration went into the Imagineering of these major events that include *Celebrate Gospel*, *Lunar New Year*, and ¡Viva Navidad!, as there are unique Disney twists and interpretations that are not present in standard ethnic celebrations. Most recently in the winter 2016/2017 events, more Disney "edutainment" through crafts and activities were incorporated as demonstrated with additional signage and written informational materials. The 2016/2017 ethnic celebrations saw the addition of the new *Festival of Holidays* to the ¡Viva Navidad! repertoire. With the *Festival of Holidays*, more ethnic diversity was presented with the inclusion of the holidays of Kwanzaa, Diwali, and Hanukkah, and accompanying "edutainment" activities. For example, educational and entertaining storytelling elements were incorporated into Blue13's introductions for Diwali, the holiday's religious and cultural significance, how families around the world may celebrate, and the songs and performances held during *Festival of Holidays* (A Slice of Disney "Festival of Holidays Bollywood Party DCA Blue13 Dance Company Disneyland Resort" YouTube).

The following sections detail each of the ethnic celebrations at DCA, *Celebrate Gospel*, *Lunar New Year*, ¡Viva Navidad! and the recent inclusivity found within *Festival of Holidays,* while exploring the ethnic and panethnic identities presented through the lenses of Disney. By connecting these celebrations back to recent demographic trends within California, it is clear that the Disney Company is addressing some of the demands of their visitors in ways that continue to meet larger business goals of simultaneously driving profits and attendance.

CELEBRATE GOSPEL—MID-FEBRUARY (2011-CURRENT)

Celebrate Gospel began its tenure in 2011 at DCA, with a brief interlude in 2015 at Disneyland as the *Hollywood Pictures Backlot* area was under construction. *Celebrate Gospel* occurs as a part of Black History Month during February and the event itself is a one-day extravaganza that is generally held around Presidents' Day. Traditionally held at Stage 17 in the *Hollywood Pictures Backlot* at DCA, *Celebrate Gospel* generally features 12-16 different gospel choirs and groups. Although *Celebrate Gospel* is the longest-running of the ethnic celebrations at DCA, there is surprisingly very little information about the events themselves outside of official Disneyland Resort press releases. Few blogs and bloggers review this event, making it difficult to gauge the impact and popularity for park visitors. This was the only ethnic celebration that I was not able to attend in person to collect field research and make observations.

The small park footprint and duration of events for *Celebrate Gospel* correlate to the small populations of African Americans within larger California demographics. It is unnerving that the relative isolation of this venue and short time scale may also reflect the geographic and cultural marginalization of African Americans in Los Angeles and Orange Counties. Without a concise breakdown from the Disney Company, however, attendance for *Celebrate Gospel* can only be extrapolated. With the overall population in California at just over 39 million in 2015, only 6.5 percent or roughly 2.9 million residents identified as "Black or African American alone," according to the United States Census Bureau (US Census Bureau "Quickfacts: California"). Within Los Angeles County itself, however, blacks and African Americans make up 9.1 percent or roughly 925,496 of the 10.1 million residents of

Los Angeles County (US Census Bureau "Quickfacts: Los Angeles County, California"). Each year for the past decade or so, this population has slowly decreased as more people are leaving Los Angeles, New York City, and other metropolitan areas to return to cities and areas within the South. Greg Toppo and Paul Overberg traced some of these migration trends in their 2015 article "After nearly 100 years, Great Migration begins reversal" and noted that Los Angeles was one of the major metropolitan cities that has been affected (Toppo and Overberg "After nearly 100 years, Great Migration begins reversal"). Aaron Renn from the *Los Angeles Times* followed up in 2016 to say that such out-migration trends for blacks and African Americans are clear as "West Coast progressive enclaves are either seeing an exodus of blacks or are failing to attract them" (Renn "Op-Ed Why has there been an exodus of black residents from West Coast liberal hubs?").

Within Orange County, blacks and African Americans made up only 2.1 percent or roughly 66,000 people within the larger population of 3,169,776 in 2015 (U.S. Census Bureau "Quickfacts: Orange County, California"). These numbers grew only marginally from the 2010 census, where they comprised only 1.5 percent of Orange County's population. Theresa Walker from the *OC Register* noted that traditionally, African Americans as a group rarely surpassed 2 percent of the population, likely because of the high rates of conservatism behind the so-called "Orange Curtain" where some have termed Orange County as "the Mississippi of the West" (Walker "O.C. has a growing ethnic population with one exception: African Americans").

In addition to supporting and connecting with local gospel groups and African American communities, educational and informational components were added in 2014 to *Celebrate Gospel* with a walk-through exhibit that highlights the his-

tory and traditions of gospel music (Rafferty, Jr. "Southern California Choirs to Raise Voices and Spirits During Fifth Annual Celebrate Gospel at Disneyland Resort"). Called the Gospel History Walk, this exhibit is comprised of several informational panels in various locations throughout the Stage 17 area. The history and events presented on these panels, however, do not just present this information through various Disney lenses; instead, the panels are the product of extensive research on the part of gospel scholars and historians, with some events at Disneyland highlighted and DCA briefly mentioned within the larger historical context. The *Celebrate Gospel* panels thus incorporate Disney and the Disneyland Resort as sites of intersection with the gospel movements and music scenes. Unlike the other ethnic celebrations at DCA, *Celebrate Gospel* is unique in that it is relatively independent and does not rely upon Disney characters for its festivities.

LUNAR NEW YEAR—JANUARY OR FEBRUARY, VARIES ACCORDING TO THE LUNAR CALENDAR (2013-CURRENT)

February 10, 2013 [Snake]; Jan 31, 2014 [Horse]; February 19, 2015 [Goat/Ram]; February 8, 2016 [Monkey]; January 28, 2017 [Rooster]

In 2013, the *Lunar New Year* holiday celebration was moved from Disneyland to DCA (Glover "Happy Lunar New Year Celebration Moves Across the Esplanade to Disney California Adventure Park"). Built upon the traditions of Chinese New Year, *Lunar New Year* celebrations have been broadened to also include Vietnamese and Korean ethnic groups. Each of these ethnic groups have their own New Year festivals, with some overlapping similarities. *Lunar New Year* panels feature information written first in Korean, Chinese, or Vietnamese, and then translated into English. Panels have summaries of

key traditions for each group, and discuss how they may be celebrated in the country of origin as well as in Southern California. Notable with *Lunar New Year* celebrations at DCA is the use of DRGs in the planning and implementation of the events with the inclusion of several local Asian performers and dancers in much the same way that DCA invited performers for ¡Viva Navidad! festivities, all as a part of community outreach and connections. The Disney DRG responsible for connecting with Asian and Pacific Islander communities as they plan and organize Lunar New Year celebrations at DCA is COMPASS (Community of Pacific Islanders, Asians and Allies). In 2017, Disneyland Resort Executive Chef Jeremiah Balogh and his culinary team worked in conjunction with COMPASS to craft several different Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean food specialties for the largest *Lunar New Year* festivities yet (Rafferty, Jr. "Every Role a Starring Role–Executive Chef for the Disneyland Resort Lunar New Year Celebration").

The first few years of *Lunar New Year* celebrations were relatively small in scale and event footprint at the park, and celebrations lasted only 2-3 days. I believe that this was a miscalculation on the part of the Disney Company considering the large populations of Chinese, Vietnamese, and Koreans living within a short distance of DCA and within the Los Angeles region itself. Much like with African Americans and *Celebrate Gospel*, the time and space allocations at DCA for *Lunar New Year* reflect broader trends within California, Los Angeles and Orange Counties. Parallel with their struggles for space for businesses, housing, and political recognition within the dominant local frameworks of whiteness, so too have Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean celebrations struggled to gain traction at DCA. Finally, in February 2017 the *Lunar New Year* reached appropriate space within the park

and time on the event calendar when it stretched beyond a 3-day weekend to 17 days of events. Unfortunately, many of these 17 days were rained out when historic storms from the "Pineapple Express" hit Southern California to finally make a dent in California's long-term drought (Phys.org "NASA eyes Pineapple Express soaking California"). When it rains, the Disneyland Resort is still open but may cancel parades, performances, and outdoor activities at their discretion as there is very little cover from the elements at either Disneyland or at Disney California Adventure. This was the case at DCA where, despite its best efforts to expand the timeframe and park presence of *Lunar New Year*, the elements simply did not cooperate and the events ran only a few days longer than the initial 3-day run of previous years.

By 2013, the city of Los Angeles and Los Angeles County itself had become home to more Asian Americans than any other county within the United States, having the largest Burmese, Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Indonesian, Korean, Sri Lankan, Taiwanese, and Thai American populations (Asian Americans Advancing Justice: 1). The January 2017 population report from the Public Policy Institute of California found that immigration from Asia has increased over the past ten years: "Since 2006, Asia has replaced Latin America as the leading source of new immigrants. In 2015, almost three times as many immigrants arrived from Asia as from Latin America, and China replaced Mexico as the leading country of origin" (Johnson "California's Future: Population" 2). With over 45 ethnic groups speaking at least 28 languages, the Asian Americans Advancing Justice group asserts that "our diverse communities continue to shape what Los Angeles will become" (Asian Americans Advancing Justice 1).

Orange County followed similar trends in growth with its own Asian populations. Census data has shown that Orange

County has the third largest population of Asians in the country, including one of the largest populations of Vietnamese out of Vietnam itself (Campbell and Bharath "O.C. has third highest Asian population in U.S."). Yen Le Espiritu noted that such large populations of Vietnamese in the United States, and more specifically in California, are one of the largest refugee groups that have settled since the 1970s as a "result of U.S. military intervention in Southeast Asia" (Espiritu 226). Orange County has the third largest population of Asians in the country, including one of the largest populations of Vietnamese outside of Vietnam (Campbell and Bharath "O.C. has third highest Asian population in U.S."). According to *The Orange County Register*, "Little Saigon sits in the heart of Orange County, five miles from Disneyland ... and within 50 miles of 282,000 Vietnamese-Americans" ("Wiki: The history of Little Saigon and the Vietnamese in Orange County"). Koreatown, with its 60,000 residents, is also known as Little Seoul, and is not far from Little Saigon, often to overlapping it (Asian Media Group "Is Orange County the Asian American Dream Come True?"). Anh Do and Christopher Goffard from the *Los Angeles Times* suggest that Asian communities in Orange Counties are not separate ethnic enclaves, but rather they are Pan-Asian communities and neighborhoods that share resources like shopping centers and are "filled nearly equally with Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese and Japanese" (Do and Goffard "Orange County home to third-largest Asian American population in U.S.").

Over several years of observations in 2014, 2015, and 2017, I have seen *Lunar New Year* events at DCA transform from small, sparsely-attended events (2014) to the greatly-expanded and wildly-popular ethnic and panethnic festival of 2017. In comparison to the nearly six weeks of events for ¡Viva Navidad! and its extensive marketing, *Lunar New*

Year in its early iterations made barely a blip on DCA's annual event calendar radar. Situated within the same area of DCA in *Paradise Garden*, *Lunar New Year* festivities initially took up significantly less space and provided fewer merchandising and food opportunities for park guests. Where ¡Viva Navidad! had expanded its food offerings by taking over part of *Paradise Gardens Grill* with a full seasonal menu, initial *Lunar New Year* food offerings were limited to one small cart that featured steamed pork buns, fortune cookies, and sourdough bread that had been shaped to include images of rams.

Despite the DRGs and their seemingly good intentions of ethnic inclusivity with *Lunar New Year*, the festivities themselves highlight essentializing elements found with Traditional Disney Ideologies. For instance, Chip and Dale and Mickey and Minnie Mouse wear Disney versions of traditional Chinese celebration garb. Mickey and Minnie have generally been read as representations of whiteness that explicitly represent Traditional Disney Ideologies since they are the primary characters and icons of the Disney Company itself. A Disneyfied and Disneyized version of cultural appropriation, this could be interpreted as using 'yellow-face' to exploit Chinese identity for the purposes of selling merchandise.

Lunar New Year is one of the few times of year that the face character Mulan, from the 1998 film of the same name, is featured prominently. During field observations at *Lunar New Year* 2015, I noticed that Mulan was often swamped with lines of ten to fifteen people (comprised of both children and adults) that wanted autographs, hugs, and pictures taken with this "rare" Disney face character. Several culture critics have noted that Mulan and Disney's telling of her story are not very accurate representations of Chinese culture specifically, or even Asian culture in general (Ma 149). However, Disney's cultural appropriation of an important Chinese her-

oine and culture do not seem to have bothered these park visitors or deter them from celebrating Lunar New Year.

In addition to the Mulan face character, Mushu the dragon is also featured in the parade and as a photo opportunity. Children and adults alike were extremely excited to interact with this character, as he is also rarely seen at either of the Disney parks. Voiced by Eddie Murphy in the animated feature (*Mulan* 1998), Mushu provides comic relief and occasionally acts as Mulan's conscience and motivator, although many read Mushu as black rather than as any sort of representation of Chinese ethnicity (Ma 151-152). Although included in *Lunar New Year* celebrations at DCA, there are no characters, face or otherwise, to be found for Vietnamese or Koreans here due to the fact that there are currently very few representations of these ethnic groups to be found within the Disney-verse, outside of some of the characters from *Big Hero 6* (2014).

¡VIVA NAVIDAD!—CHRISTMAS SEASON AND WINTER HOLIDAYS, NOV-JAN (2013-CURRENT)

¡Viva Navidad! was offered for the first time as a part of the Christmas holiday season in 2013, and further expanded in 2014 to take over the *Paradise Gardens* section. The ¡Viva Navidad! event, much like the populations it reflects and represents, has grown, gained traction, and asserted itself as one of the longest-duration events with some of the biggest use of space within the park. This, too, correlates to the growing presence and populations of Hispanics and Latinos in California, as they currently meet or exceed white populations. A growing force to be reckoned with, DCA could no longer afford to isolate or marginalize Hispanics and Latinos since they comprise one of the major park visitor demographics.

With one of the largest populations in the country, California holds a Latino population of nearly 14.99 million, which had

edged out the 14.92 million whites (Panzar "It's official: Latinos now outnumber whites in California" *LA Times* 2015). Javier Panzar at the *Los Angeles Times* states that demographic trends have shown the growth of Latino populations at fairly consistent rates that nearly doubled every 20 years as seen with 12% of California's population in 1970, and nearly 25% of the state's numbers by 1990 (Panzar "It's Official: Latinos Now Outnumber Whites in California"). According to the January 2017 report from the Public Policy Institute of California, by 2014, Latinos surpassed non-Hispanic whites to become the state's largest ethnic group (Johnson 2). Predictions for the 2030 census continue to reflect this growing population while white populations may continue to decrease (Johnson 2). Hans Johnson, from the Public Policy Institute, also notes that among the millennials and younger generation, Latinos are already in the majority with "52 percent of children age 17 and younger" (Johnson 2). This population growth has also been reflected in trends with the housing market in California and the Los Angeles region, and with legislation against immigrants and educational policies that have seen conservative white populations pushing back against such growth.

Here, defining Hispanic and Latino identities is complex and complicated. The terms themselves are multilayered and multifaceted, and have been used in many ways by bureaucracies, politicians, and activists. Typically, Hispanic has been used to describe Spanish-speakers from ethnic groups and cultures like Mexicans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and more, while Latino refers to members of territories and lands that were colonized by Latin nations like Spain and Portugal. While there may be cases of overlapping of the two terms, they are referring to specific histories and contexts that have been critical in the development of ethnic and panethnic

identities. While many Hispanic and Latino groups celebrate Catholic holidays in similar ways, sub-groups have more-specific traditions that distinguish themselves based upon their local traditions.

Problems may arise when Disney definitions of Hispanic/Latino do not align with how Hispanic/Latino peoples define and view themselves. Contributing to this is the use of the Three Caballeros for ¡Viva Navidad! at DCA. The Three Caballeros consists of Donald Duck (a citizen of the United States), Panchito Pistoles (representing Mexico) and José Carioca (representing Brazil). 1944's *The Three Caballeros* has been frequently discussed as a Hollywood propaganda tool under FDR's Good Neighbor Policy in the 1940s to promote and ensure good relations between the United States and South America (Spellacy "Mapping the Metaphor of the Good Neighbor: Geography, Globalism, and Pan-Americanism in the 1940s"). The use of the Three Caballeros within ¡Viva Navidad! celebrations coincides with a modern version of the Good Neighbor Policy that focuses Disneyland's surrounding neighborhoods, as well as propaganda to continue friendly economic, political, and cultural relationships with Mexico and countries in South America.

In addition to the presence and visibility of Donald, Panchito, and José as the Three Caballeros, Mickey, Minnie, and Goofy are also present during ¡Viva Navidad! celebrations in Disney versions of traditional folklorico and mariachi outfits. Again, Mickey, Minnie, and Goofy are read as white, and when they are wearing the traditional garb of ethnic groups not their own, it becomes more than a simple costume and can potentially be read as wearing 'brown-face' to essentialize and stereotype Hispanics and Latinos. However, visitors are delighted to see these mainstay Disney characters participat-

ing and reveling within their own holiday and ethnic traditions, and are unaware that cultural appropriation is taking place here. It is seen as harmless, delightful, and playful rather than inappropriate and disrespectful.

FESTIVAL OF HOLIDAYS—CHRISTMAS SEASON AND WINTER HOLIDAYS, NOV-JAN (2016/2017)

The 2016 *Festival of Holidays* expanded ethnic celebrations throughout a large portion of the park with the inclusion of food and drink kiosks, holiday arts and crafts, and areas that featured performances by multiethnic groups. The logo design for *Festival of Holidays* subtly includes representations of the four ethnic and holiday celebrations. For Kwanzaa and Diwali, candles represent their celebrations of light. Christmas is represented with holly berries and leaves in the center, while Hanukkah, also a Festival of Lights, is represented more-specifically with *dreidels*.

The planning and efforts for these crafts and activities by Disney DRGs reflects additional local demographic trends beyond those already covered by *Celebrate Gospel*, ¡Viva Navidad!, *and Lunar New Year.* By featuring and representing Diwali, a traditionally Hindu holiday that is a festival of light, DCA is reflecting demographic trends in Los Angeles and Orange Counties, where there are an estimated 37 Hindu centers and approximately 70,000 adherents in Los Angeles County alone (Given Place Media "Hinduism in Los Angeles County"). Inclusion of Hanukkah crafts and performances into the *Festival of Holidays* repertoire also recognizes the diverse and thriving Jewish communities and their long-standing presence in downtown Los Angeles and within Orange County (The Pluralism Project "Los Angeles"). Notably absent during *Festival of Holidays* are Muslims and Islamic holidays, following national trends of Islamophobia.

Many different DRGs, including HOLA and PULSE, participated in the planning and implementation for *Festival of Holidays*. This becomes apparent with the print materials and activities featured at arts and crafts tables for Kwanzaa, Diwali, Hanukkah, and Christmas. Along with the crafts and guidance from cast members, print materials were provided that detailed information about the ethnic or religious holiday and the specific craft being created.

CONCLUSION

The Disneyland Resort has held many different kinds of celebrations and festivals over the years, oftentimes to support Traditional Disney Ideologies by reflecting larger national trends of whiteness with events for Halloween, Mardi Gras, and Easter. In contrast to the events at Disneyland, Disney California Adventure instead reflected and responded to the ethnic diversity of California's populations and the shifts in demographic trends in the Greater Los Angeles region over the past several decades. Since DCA opened in 2001, it has attempted to promote and demonstrate diversity in many different ways. In this phase of Ethnic Inclusivity, ethnic identities and corresponding holiday celebrations have in some cases been flattened, essentialized, and used as commodities for the business purposes of the Disney Company. Beginning with *Celebrate Gospel* in February 2011 and culminating with *Festival of Holidays* and *Lunar New Year* in the winter events of 2016/2017, ethnic celebrations and festivals at DCA have grown in size and complexity. The winter 2016/2017 season saw the expansion of ¡Viva Navidad! with the *Festival of Holidays,* and the growth of *Lunar New Year* from one three-day weekend to seventeen days. Events like ¡Viva Navidad!, *Lunar New Year*, and *Celebrate Gospel* at DCA directly compete with other festivities in the Los Angeles and Orange County regions, yet they have proven quite popular and are developing

into Disney traditions that may be complementary or supplementary and incorporated with other ethnic traditions. Perhaps the successes of these ethnic holiday celebrations have contributed to increases in attendance and popularity at Disney California Adventure and further driving future business decisions by the Disney Company regarding the profitability of seasonal ethnic inclusivity at its parks; however, the Disney Company has not publicly released such granular statistics to support my conjecture.

Ultimately, Disney California Adventure is just one cog in the grand scheme of things that comprises the Disney Company as a business and corporation. As such, the Disney Company and DCA are firstly beholden to their board and shareholders that are mainly driven by profits and secondarily by political and demographic trends. Diversity Resource Groups (DRGs) have swayed, at least temporarily, in favor of ethnic and cultural diversity to guide internal policies and external ethnic celebrations that just so happen to be potentially lucrative for profits and attendance. While *Festival of Holidays* suggests a resurgence of multiculturalism at DCA, nationwide there continue to be trends of conservatism and nationalism, as well as growing ethnic and religious tensions.

In contrast to the built-to-last park features like *Cars Land* and those that are semi-permanent features seen with billboards at *Paradise Pier*, ethnic celebrations and festivals at DCA, like the cultures they represent, are more fluid, dynamic, and changeable. Disney DRGs are internal tools that the Disney Company uses to reflect changing internal and external representations of ethnic groups at such events. Local contexts and demographics often form the basis for ethnic and panethnic interpretations that DRGs may then run through Disney lenses to translate into Disney-appropriate celebrations. Both *Celebrate Gospel* and *Festival of Holidays*,

with their distinct lack of Disney characters and therefore the tokenization of ethnic and racial identities deviate from this trend at DCA. On the other hand, ¡Viva Navidad! and *Lunar New Year* tend to embrace, to a limited degree, the Disneyfication and Disneyization of ethnic and panethnic identities.

However, the successes of seasonal inclusivity at DCA with these celebrations suggest that cultural diversity, as managed by DRGs and through Disney lenses, is good for attendance and profitability, and therefore to business. As long as visitors are going to such events and spending their money, it is likely that DCA will continue with events that foster seasonal inclusivity.

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Casting a Wider Lasso: An Analysis of the Cultural Dismissal of Wonder Woman Through Her 1975-1979 Television Series[1]

by Ian Boucher

> "Every successful show has a multitude of fights, and that the shows are successful sometimes are because of those fights. And sometimes shows aren't successful because those fights aren't carried on long or hard enough."
>
> —Douglas S. Cramer

> "And any civilization that does not recognize the female is doomed to destruction. Women are the wave of the future—and sisterhood is ... stronger than anything."
>
> —Wonder Woman, *The New Original Wonder Woman* (7 Nov. 1975)

ABSTRACT

Live-action superhero films currently play a significant role at the box office, which means they also play a significant role in culture's understandings about justice. For the most part, however, superhero films are dominated by philosophies based in irrational fears and stereotypes, perpetuating an antiquated concept of justice that contributes detrimentally to societies around the world. Wonder Woman enrich-

1 The author wishes to thank John Loyd, Dr. Anna Peppard, Dr. Jonathan Sarris, and the invaluable assistance of the staff at East Carolina University's Joyner Library.

es the pantheon of superheroes by representing restorative justice, which is part of a more comprehensive approach to crime-fighting, in which mediators work with victims and offenders to try and overcome the roots of crimes and heal communities. This philosophy is merely one among many that could have a place in America's considerations about justice, but it has not developed the same cultural awareness as the capture or murder of the majority of superheroes. This is partially because before 2017, the only time Wonder Woman was in the live-action spotlight was her 1975-1979 television series. Despite Wonder Woman's publication in comic books since 1941, a commonly accepted sentiment is that her brand of justice is difficult for a superhero format. However, Wonder Woman's perceived difficulty has largely been the result of society's desire to suppress her over the course of her existence. From 1975-1979, the *Wonder Woman* live-action television series, also known as *The New Original Wonder Woman* and *The New Adventures of Wonder Woman*, gave the character's philosophy every reason to take off in the popular consciousness. An analysis of the series reveals a key stylistic link in the development of superhero adaptations between the *Batman* 1966-1968 television show and the 1978 *Superman* film that faithfully and clearly adapted Wonder Woman's philosophy into a mainstream 1970's television format. The series was suppressed, undone, and discredited, with the potential role of Wonder Woman as a figure of justice obscured by her sex, her gender, her feminism, and a perceived threat of sexuality, as part of Wonder Woman's larger impeded legacy in America's embedded culture of misogyny.

KEYWORDS

Wonder Woman, superheroes, television, film, Superman, Batman, Lynda Carter, feminism, misogyny, sexuality, gen-

der, sexism, comics, Patty Jenkins, restorative justice, 1970s, Amazons, Marston

INTRODUCTION

Live-action superhero films currently play a significant role at the box office ("2017 Worldwide Grosses"), which means they also play a significant role in culture's understandings about justice. For the most part, however, superhero films are dominated by philosophies based in irrational fears and stereotypes, perpetuating an antiquated concept of justice that contributes detrimentally to societies around the world. Even if the superheroes of these films do not kill offenders, like the Punisher, or break their bones, like Batman, their main focus is on capture—once criminals are off the street, society's problems are solved, until the villains escape again. While the scholarly literature finds that capture is only part of the equation, and that more comprehensive measures are needed to resolve crime, the United States has prioritized politics over protection. America's dismissal of research-based solutions has been building a world focused on drug laws that have given the United States the highest incarcerated population in the world—not because these laws solve drug problems, or because Americans are especially terrible people, but because these laws have allowed politicians to get votes at the expense of people who are not considered white (Boucher).

Wonder Woman enriches the pantheon of superheroes by representing restorative justice, which is part of a more comprehensive approach to crime-fighting, in which mediators work with victims and offenders to try and overcome the roots of crimes and heal communities. This philosophy is merely one among many that could have a place in America's considerations about justice, but it has not developed the same level of cultural awareness as the capture or murder

of the majority of superheroes. This is partially because before 2017, the only time Wonder Woman was in the live-action spotlight was her 1975-1979 television series. Despite Wonder Woman's publication in comic books since 1941, a commonly accepted sentiment is that her brand of justice is difficult for a superhero format (Boucher; Howell). Howell argues that in fact, Wonder Woman, as a feminist political cartoon integrated into a superhero universe, is "inherently disruptive to masculine superhero franchise branding," which "often seeks to minimize that which makes her character unique: her close ties to feminism, which are seen industrially as unmarketable, especially to male superhero fans" (143). Yockey refers to her origins as "antipatriarchal;" Wonder Woman's focus on love significantly differs from "the masculine-inflected affect that so commonly defines the superhero genre (the reactionary affects of fear, anger, and awe)" (Yockey "Wonder Woman"). Thus, Wonder Woman's perceived difficulty has largely been the result of society's desire to suppress her over the course of her existence (Emad; Lepore). The character continues to be seen as a disruptive force in society, as the United Nations' decision to appoint her as a Goodwill Ambassador for women and girls was met with protests (McCann).

From 1975-1979, the *Wonder Woman* live-action television series, also known as *The New Original Wonder Woman* and *The New Adventures of Wonder Woman*, gave the character's philosophy every reason to take off in the popular consciousness. An analysis of the series reveals a key stylistic link in the development of superhero adaptations between the *Batman* 1966-1968 television show and the 1978 *Superman* film that faithfully and clearly adapted Wonder Woman's philosophy into a mainstream 1970's television format. However, the series was suppressed, undone, and discredited, with the po-

tential role of Wonder Woman as a figure of justice obscured by her sex, her gender, her feminism, and a perceived threat of sexuality, as part of Wonder Woman's larger impeded legacy in America's embedded culture of misogyny.

COMIC BOOK

Wonder Woman was specifically developed to infuse love into the violence of traditional superhero justice. Drawing upon ideas from the literature of women's suffrage, William Moulton Marston, Wonder Woman's primary creator, believed that women held more capacity for love than men, and that a society "ruled" by women would help realize a more peaceful world (Lepore Location 12375). Wonder Woman's early comics were concerned with "women fighting male dominance, cruelty, savagery and war-making with love control backed by force" (Lepore Location 5098). These comics were filled with imagery of bondage and liberation that represented an intricate dynamic in which the personal strengthened the societal (Lepore). These origins have largely been minimized over Wonder Woman's history since Marston's death in 1947; in the 1950s, stories began to focus on her super strength or romance with Steve Trevor, and in the 2010s Zeus became her father, displacing her original origin of being formed by her mother from clay without a man (Lepore Locations 5692, 5716, 5735, 9526; *Wonder Woman* Vol. 4 #3). Yet many of Wonder Woman's original elements have continued to inform the character's approach to justice. One of Wonder Woman's primary tools remains her Lasso of Truth, which forces people to not only tell the truth, but to also see the truth about themselves. In one of her early appearances, Wonder Woman supported the rehabilitation of Nazi spy Baroness Von Gunther (*Wonder Woman* Vol. 1 #3). In "Expatriate," she helped save a group of marauding aliens from destruction (*Wonder Woman* Vol. 3 #18-19). In a

story where she takes over crime-fighting duties in Gotham City, her philosophy is epitomized when she tells another hero, "You don't fix a broken leg by scaring it, Oracle. It's time to try the splint over the sword" (*Sensation Comics Featuring Wonder Woman* Vol. 1 #2).

This philosophy was present in Wonder Woman's comics immediately preceding the 1975-1979 television series. In *Wonder Woman* Vol. 1 #213, she uses her lasso to force a pacifist and a career criminal to help her, and both citizens ultimately work together to use the lasso to help save Wonder Woman from a robot. "Ironic, isn't it," the Flash narrates, "a *violent criminal* and a devout *pacifist* both rallying to a common cause when the moment of truth came ..." (18). The style of these issues would greatly reflect the television series to come. In #212, to rescue a female prime minister from the Cavalier, a villain who manipulates women to do his bidding through pheromones, Wonder Woman changes into her costume by twirling her lasso around her. She bursts through a wall, supposedly at the behest of her "friend," alter ego Diana Prince, uses her prehensile lasso, and turns her tiara into a boomerang. She subsequently gets a job at the United Nations Crisis Bureau. In the show, Wonder Woman would twirl to change into her costume, burst into many rooms at the supposed behest of Diana Prince, fight misogynistic, manipulative villains with a prehensile lasso and boomerang tiara, and get a job as an agent at a government organization. And of course, both the comics and the television show were full of her bullet-deflecting bracelets.

TELEVISION

The *Wonder Woman* television series brought this comics style to the screen, and was a step forward in complexity from the campy, lighthearted *Batman* television series. Much like

the ideals core to Wonder Woman herself, the series brought audiences closer to the current expectation of human drama within the hyperbole of superheroes by grounding a tongue-in-cheek atmosphere with an earnest, empathetic protagonist. The pilot movie, aired on November 7, 1975, introduces a theme song featuring animated art in the style of a comic book. Wonder Woman leaps off a building, uses her lasso, stops a car, pilots her invisible plane, and frees her comic book sidekick Steve Trevor, herself, and others from bondage. The lyrics, set to upbeat 1970s trumpets, include, "Make a hawk a dove, stop a war with love, make a liar tell the truth ... Stop a bullet cold, make the Axis fold, change their minds, and change the world!"

The first season included comic book narration blocks and supporting comedic guests such as actor Henry Gibson, and followed a lighthearted structure of Diana Prince/Wonder Woman (Lynda Carter) and Steve Trevor (Lyle Waggoner) being assigned missions at the U.S. War Department in a simple World War II setting, juxtaposed with comedy relief from Diana's other comic book sidekick, Etta Candy (Beatrice Colen). But within this style, the show clearly integrated Wonder Woman's identity. There was her super strength, her Lasso of Truth, her bullet-deflecting bracelets, a Paradise Island governed by a "sisterhood" of Amazons who overcame slavery in Rome and Greece to become more advanced than Western society, and a respectful, professional Steve Trevor who supported the story. Most importantly, it was centered around Carter's earnest portrayal of a script preaching peace and goodwill.

Several of the episodes in the first season have ridiculous premises, but the show explored them in ways that were quintessentially Wonder Woman. In "Wonder Woman Meets Baroness Von Gunther," the Baroness from the comics

is a Nazi incarcerated in the United States conspiring with guards and a steel magnate heading a congressional committee, and at the end of the episode, Wonder Woman tells her, "It looks as if you're going to have more time to read about democracy, Baroness. Lucky you find it so fascinating. Perhaps now you'll appreciate it and learn from your unwomanly mistakes." Later, Diana and Steve have the following exchange:

> Diana: Well I certainly hope that the Baroness realizes freedom and democracy are the only causes worthy of her intelligence ...
>
> Steve: Diana, your understanding and compassion are amazing. You really do believe that people can learn to change for the better.
>
> Diana: Yes. Where I was raised we were taught that ... good must triumph over evil, and that women, and men, can learn.

In "Fausta: The Nazi Wonder Woman," Diana inspires a female Nazi agent to join the Allies. In "Wonder Woman vs. Gargantua!" Wonder Woman helps rehabilitate an enhanced gorilla manipulated by Nazi agents. It is a surprisingly compassionate episode, in which Diana is constantly concerned with the gorilla's health, putting her hand through the gorilla's cage, and ultimately telling him that, "You mustn't hurt anyone," not even his oppressor. Even Steve becomes interested in the gorilla's welfare, and Wonder Woman replies, "It's just a little kindness and tenderness and love that transcends those barriers with animals. And with people." When the gorilla is returned to the circus, Wonder Woman returns him to the jungle. In "The Pluto File," she helps a scientist solve an equation to stop an artificial earthquake, created by a villain

whom Wonder Woman prompts to reveal that his coldness originated from learning not to rely on others. She responds to him that "it's never too late to change." The two-parter "Judgement from Outer Space" follows a plot very similar to *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951), in which an alien is tasked with finding out whether Earth is worth saving. Although Diana tells the alien that she is a protector of the planet, and from a society that lives "together. In harmony. With our living Earth," she must nevertheless confront whether she should be using force to stop a war. In "Formula 407," a man does not listen to her protests against his sexual advances, asking, "But how can romance ever be the wrong idea?" to which Diana replies, "When there's only one person with it on their mind. I believe you have a phrase here in Argentina, it takes two to tango?" She then overtly addresses the issue by stating, "The W.A.V.E. training manual is quite explicit on its instructions on the handling of unwarranted attentions." When her assailant says, "But what do instruction manuals know? I bet there's not one chapter on Argentine gentlemen," Diana responds, "If you keep this up there's going to be one."

At first, Season 2 stayed true to this identity of responding to violence with the strength of love, often revealing human pain underneath. The season was also less tongue-in-cheek and more within the style of a 1970s crime adventure series. The setting was brought into the 1970s, with Diana returning to Western society—along with Steve's identical son—to fight more nuanced battles, not as a secretary, but as an "associate" before becoming a full agent. In "Anschluss '77," Wonder Woman deflects projectiles and stops a tank in its tracks, but also confronts Nazis still active in South America trying to resurrect Hitler. As the clone shouts to his followers, Wonder Woman remembers the horrors of World War II with a montage of real footage. In the next episode,

"The Man Who Could Move the World," Wonder Woman confronts the revenge of a telekinetic Japanese man who was held in an American internment camp during World War II, where there was no law, "only military oppression of my people." The man tears down the former camp around them with intense closeups. Even though Wonder Woman only acknowledges so much wrongdoing on the part of mainstream society, she takes off her bracelets and belt, the sources of her powers, to find the root of the man's pain, and reunites him with the family he thought he lost.

In "Knockout," Wonder Woman confronts a female police officer turned violent revolutionary. When Wonder Woman acts as a mediator between the revolutionary and police, the revolutionary says, "I'm not afraid of you, do you understand that?" to which Wonder Woman replies, "I've never wanted you to be afraid of me." The former officer relents, saying, "At least it's ended," to which Wonder Woman returns, "At least it's begun." Diana later states to her superiors that "any jury will understand" the former police officer's choice to turn from a life of violence. In "The Pied Paper," when Wonder Woman finally captures in her lasso a truly sinister brainwashing musician similar to the comics' Cavalier, rather than simply taking him away, she says, "You were given a gift, the ability to make people happy with your music. Instead you took that gift and used it to make children steal for you." Eventually, she removes the lasso, her voice gets quieter, and she finds the root of his actions as a disgruntled musician in debt. She ultimately finds a role for him to work on his rehabilitation, and considers with Steve the possibility of a judge ordering "a psychiatric observation period." The audience goes from hoping Wonder Woman takes down a supervillain to being surprised with a thought-provoking reflection that helps the situation move forward. Wonder Woman does not

simply capture the criminal, but talks about his crimes with him and his victim, as well as with the authorities as her citizen self, Diana Prince. These elements continued to combine 1970's superhero action with Wonder Woman's philosophy of justice.

Unfortunately, the second season ultimately minimized Wonder Woman's identity in favor of a more generic adventure show. There were less feminist statements. The lyrics in the theme song were removed. The show seemed to replace its substance with what it thought was popular. After *Star Wars* (1977) became a phenomenon, not only did Wonder Woman fight a gas-masked alien in a cape, but the season introduced a dome-headed robot for comic relief. Most disconcertingly, although Diana did at times continue to demonstrate her signature traits, as when she calms dogs in "Light-Fingered Lady," she started consistently talking, as she does in that episode, about putting criminals "away for life and throw[ing] away the key." In "The Murderous Missile," after a seemingly injured motorcyclist double-crosses Diana by stealing her car, Diana is visibly angry when she says harshly, "Thanks a lot," with her hands on her hips. At times in the show, Diana Prince would pretend to be more alarmed than she actually was, but after this particular thief departs, she continues to display this emotion. It could be argued that her expression of anger differentiates her from the countless female characters who suppress their anger, but the purpose of Wonder Woman, in both the original comics and the early show, was love and compassion. Anger is the easy, superhero status quo, and Wonder Woman has proven time and again that she can express her own philosophy just as strongly. Throughout the series, Wonder Woman approached adversity with unwavering strength. However, over time, her compassionate appeals, the trait for which she was created to

elevate her from the majority of the superhero pantheon, decreased. Season 3 continued this trend. Diana Prince became more sardonic, not as concerned with healing the causes of criminals' actions as with catching them. In "The Girl with a Gift for Disaster," her first thought upon hearing about a plotted blackout is that it "could cause riots and looting." It could be argued that the character grew world-weary in her dealings with human society, but the point of the character is that she is already more advanced.

Although Diana's philosophy was watered down compared to the first season, the final season did bring it out more than the second, and was able to find a style that more consistently utilized many elements intrinsic to the character. In "Disco Devil," when a man tries to dance with Wonder Woman, saying, "Hey, I don't recognize the word 'No,'" she replies, "Well uh, maybe it's time you started," before shoving him away. The season also pushed how the genre could reflect society through the many gray areas in which Wonder Woman found herself. In "Going, Going, Gone," Diana voices her interest to a Soviet agent in overcoming the hurdles facing their governments to focus on their citizens. In "Time Bomb," the time-traveling villain is sent to a futuristic board of governors for rehabilitation, and the time-traveling hero sends back Diana's handcuffs. In "Formicida," the namesake villain, a woman who essentially gets the same powers as Marvel's Ant-Man, tries to stop the head of a corporation from knowingly releasing a pesticide that would destroy the environment. Formicida takes responsibility for her crimes, and is the one to tell her former colleague, who is also remorseful for his own culpability, to "Save it for the judge." Wonder Woman lovingly uses her lasso to help Formicida forget, move on, and start over. In "The Deadly Dolphin," a man training a dolphin for criminal enterprises protests against his associates

when he becomes aware of their intentions to blow up an oil tanker that would kill the dolphin, people on the tanker, and wildlife, and his probation advocated for by both Wonder Woman and the court is to care for and help "un-train" the dolphin at a water park. In "The Boy Who Knew Her Secret," alien invaders who at first glance appear to be taking over human bodies turn out to be doing so only temporarily to catch the real alien villain.

In "Stolen Faces," a woman with a criminal record is hired by thieves to impersonate Wonder Woman, reasoning that "they figured anybody desperate enough to break the law once wouldn't mind doing it again." Diana tells her that "Those people who hired you, they want you to think that just because you made some bad decisions once, that you don't know how to make good ones." At the end of the episode, what the villains don't count on is that, in the words of one of the woman's friends, "A police record doesn't make a person all bad." In "Time Bomb," a villain references that Wonder Woman's lasso "isn't worth a dime in court;" in "Skateboard Wiz," Diana acknowledges that "Testimony by magic lasso isn't exactly admissible in court." All the while, Wonder Woman still gets to bend guns, lasso helicopters back to the ground, and lead with love. Wonder Woman worked with young people throughout the series, but Season 3 more than any other featured Wonder Woman empowering kids and teens. Season 3's identity comes together in the Scooby Doo-sounding two-parter finale, "The Phantom of the Roller Coaster," an episode about a missing in action Vietnam veteran and a teenage roller coaster enthusiast who get caught up in a domestic surveillance plot by "the biggest espionage ring in the country" to sell wiretapped information; as Steve says, "foreign countries are gonna know more about our government than we do." A sign reading "Watergate Mall" also ap-

pears briefly. In the process, the teenager learns to transform his interests into career goals, and the veteran finds a way to reconnect with society.

CONTEMPORARY RESPONSE

Wonder Woman began as a popular show. Its pilot premiered "well" ("Weekly Rating Scorecard" 38), on Friday at 8:00 pm Eastern Standard Time alongside the likes of *Sanford and Son*, *The Rockford Files*, and *M*A*S*H*, with some newspapers objectively listing its premise as "The heroine of the popular 1940's comic books, saves the life of a U.S. Air Force officer," and others including the language of "beautiful" (Appendix: North Carolina Television Schedule Sources). Its first season did not have a set time, but at least one of its early episodes earned a positive Nielsen response (Sharbutt; New York News; "Wonder Woman Kayos Bob Hope!"), and its first season was part of ABC's "most successful calendar year" in the network's history at that point (Kenion "ABC Adds" B9). Despite its moves across days, and eventually networks after being acquired by CBS for its second and third seasons, it consistently aired at 8:00 or 8:30 against the likes of *Little House on the Prairie*, *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, *Rhoda*, *Good Times*, and before *Baretta*, *Starsky and Hutch*, or *Charlie's Angels*. During its final season, it settled into Fridays at 8:00, after *The Muppet Show* and before *The Incredible Hulk* or *The Dukes of Hazzard*, and against shows like *Happy Days* and *Diff'rent Strokes* (Appendix: North Carolina Television Schedule Sources).

While Lynda Carter claimed that in the first year, it was "a very in thing" to be guest-starring on the show, and Douglas S. Cramer, the original producer of the series, said he "could seldom go to dinner party or movie opening without someone saying 'I really love *Wonder Woman*, can you write me

a heavy?'" (*Beauty, Brawn, and Bulletproof Bracelets*), it was dropped by ABC and replaced by *Blansky's Beauties* and *Fish* (Brown 22 Jan. 1977). After its initial season at CBS (Kenion "New Shows;" New York Times News Service), it became one of only four out of 14 new series to continue on that network for the following year of 1978-1979 ("Networks Intensify"). It would eventually outlast both *The Six Million Dollar Man* and *The Bionic Woman* ("Ratings Zonked"), and was used as one of the network's "established hits" to support the new show *The Dukes of Hazzard* (Brown 6 Dec. 1978). Yet the second and third seasons had very poor ratings (Brown 21 Sept. 1977; Kenion "ABC in the Lead"; Kenion "ABC's Old;" Morrison). By the end of 1978, CBS shifted its focus to comedies (Brown 6 Dec. 1978). CBS ultimately dropped both *Wonder Woman* after three seasons (two on its network) and *The Amazing Spider-Man* after two, purportedly to avoid "an overload" of comic book programming on the network, keeping *The Incredible Hulk*, which ran for another three seasons and three television movies (Brown 14 May 1979 17).

Carter was a vocal supporter of feminism, portraying Wonder Woman as "very much a woman with feeling" (Pike 12), and speaking about beauty pageants and the Equal Rights Amendment (Beck 7 Nov. 1975; Christy). Cramer claimed to have received letters from girls and women who "never thought I could have a life like that, and, I've thought about going into the service, or writing to the FBI, or thinking that there are all these jobs out there and all those things that I could do with my life that I never thought were possible. I mean to me, that was one of the most exciting things about the show" (*Beauty, Brawn, and Bulletproof Bracelets*). This author as of yet has not found contemporary pieces analyzing Wonder Woman's philosophy of justice in the series.

While children's Saturday morning cartoons at the time were full of superheroes (Marguiles), there was also a great deal of anti-superhero sentiment (Cleghorn; Beck 24 July 1978; Dunkley; O'Connor: 25 Jan. 1976, 4 Nov. 1977, 31 Mar. 1978, 17 Dec. 1978). Tom Shales of the *Washington Post* wrote about a recent trend of "dumb" television, categorizing *Wonder Woman* as a "strictly nonthink" show part of a dominance of "foolish, proudly witless escapism" (A4). Violence in television was under fire, and *Wonder Woman* repeatedly ranked on lists of violent programs (Associated Press "ABC Ranked"; Associated Press "Group Says" National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting; UPI).

Although *Variety* saw superhero shows as superficial entertainment, it framed the camp, gadgets, and sets of *Batman* in positive language; it actually became involved in the sets, "scientific hocus-pocus," and performances of *The Incredible Hulk*; and it wrote about *The Amazing Spider-Man* that "Comic books provide perfect kid-vid-action shows, and the 90-minute 'Spiderman' [sic] pilot was a good example of the genre…generally treating the story with professional respect," complimenting the physical appearance of the male lead (Demp 42; Mick 62; Pit 47). Wonder Woman was part of the zeitgeist, frequently referenced with other superheroes such as Superman, the Hulk, and Spider-Man (Buck; "Names and Faces;" "The State Pride"), and was considered one of "the top trio in comics" ("Comic-Book Heroes" B1). Several articles communicated the character's identity in clear and objective ways ("ABC Slates;" "Comic Book Heroine Lives!" & "Gangly Girl").

Yet critics seemed to be as shocked by Wonder Woman as the crowd in the pilot which follows her as she first walks down an American city street in full costume. While *Variety* complimented Carter's earnestness in the second season's premiere

and wrote that the show was likely to give CBS its best Friday lead-in of several seasons ("Wonder Woman"), *Wonder Woman* was considered worse than other superheroes. Numerous contemporary writers focused on Wonder Woman's physical appearance and sexuality. *Variety* used "bovine" and "lumpen" to describe Carter in the show's premiere, and described the premise of the character as "silly" without seeming to realize the comic book history or purpose, calling Batman "classic theatre by comparison," and only complimenting Lyle Waggoner's physical appearance as "a Saturday matinee serial star" (Bill 45). One writer called the show "sex-oriented" (Deeb "Sex on TV" 13A) and "pure cheesecake… exploiting sex" (Deeb "TV Makes Sex" 7B). Another writer, ignorant of Wonder Woman's origins, fixated on it as "weekly titillation" (Nobile). Even a more neutral article chronicling comic book history mentioned that Carter's depiction was "less modestly attired" than Wonder Woman's original comic book debut, while praising Batman's "remarkable television career" ("Comic-Book Heroes" B1). One critic for the *New York Times*, who was particularly against superheroes, routinely used sexist language to disparage *Wonder Woman*, with such statements as, "As an actress, Miss Carter creates the impression of a sweet little girl disconcertingly trapped in the body of a potential Fellini sexuality symbol" (O'Connor 19 Sept. 1977). Numerous other writers focused on Carter's physical appearance while being positive (Alridge; "Gangly Girl;" Kleiner; O'Connor 2 Oct. 1977; Scott "Ego").

Criticisms about sexuality were despite the fact that Wonder Woman was rarely depicted in a romantic interaction on the show. There are occasional beats of a romantic tone, mainly involving Diana and the first Steve Trevor expressing hints of their feelings, but Diana never pursues a romantic interaction or relationship. Wonder Woman is focused on her work as a

superhero. The most overt situation is in the second season when she resists the advances of an evil robot Steve Jr., with the implication being that the real Steve would never do that. Critics made the series sound like the famous beach-running sequences on *Baywatch*, but when the Amazons compete in the pilot, the frame focuses on their athletic feats. One writer interviewed in an article offered seemingly fair criticisms that the series had "no characterization" and "no personality" (Associated Press "Read It" A6), but for a series under so much cultural pressure, this could hardly be a surprise.

Behind the scenes, producer Douglas S. Cramer has said that he connected to Wonder Woman through the work of Gloria Steinem, whom he considered to have defined the character as much as Marston and created "a challenge and a reason to do this show" (Carter and Cramer). "[I]nfluenced by *Batman* and its success," Cramer wanted to utilize humor to make the series more fun than other real-life adventures on television, and in a direct step from the 1960s *Batman* series, he hired *Batman* writer Stanley Ralph Ross to develop the pilot (Carter and Cramer; FoundationINTERVIEWS; "Stanley Ralph Ross"). Carter bought everything she could on Wonder Woman, and said that she chose "to play her absolutely for real ... and [Diana] wasn't very impressed with her own abilities because all of her sisters on Paradise Island could do the same thing" (Carter and Cramer; *Beauty, Brawn, and Bulletproof Bracelets*). Carter stated that "I wanted to approach this character in a way that women in particular ... were never threatened by her, by her body, what she was wearing or not wearing" (*Wonder Woman: The Ultimate Feminist Icon*). There was an element of intended sex appeal—although Cramer thought the flash of light used for Diana's transformation later in the series was more effective, he also called the original transformation spin a "striptease," and

noted how the network wanted Steve's shirt off on Paradise Island. But Carter "really wasn't thinking about being sexy ... this was the ban the bra time, this was sexual freedom time." She was somewhat uncomfortable with what she referred to as her "bullet breasts" top in the first season (Carter and Cramer; *Beauty, Brawn, and Bulletproof Bracelets*). In the pilot, a general also refers to the costume as a "uniform."

Carter said that those in power on the production "were afraid of casting ... *any* female in a leading role," and both Carter and Cramer reflected that leading roles for women in television at the time were rare, including for work behind the scenes (*Beauty, Brawn, and Bulletproof Bracelets*; Carter and Cramer). Cramer had many conversations with the network, where many men were concerned that the show was going too far with some of the feminist statements, and Cramer reflected that he was "very glad we said it all ... and went too far in some people's eyes" (Carter and Cramer). At the time, Shull referred to a fear at ABC of "super-women" leads in 1976 ("TV Mailbag"). This was all in spite of the significant role of women in the American marketplace, in relation to Wonder Woman or otherwise (Berlatsky; Carter; Emad; United States). In her audio commentary for the Season 3 DVD, Carter said:

> The one thing that I regret in the present day Wonder Woman [referring to Seasons 2 and 3] was that they lost some of the feminism, particularly because it was such an era of feminism, and I think the networks were afraid that we would lose viewers if it was too feminist, and I really wish that, as we did in the first season, that we had had a stronger feminist message, and that they had trusted me enough to realize that Won-

> der Woman could say feminist things and still be for women and not against men.

Thus, it is clear that the *Wonder Woman* live-action television series was suppressed and undone in favor of a perceived mainstream America afraid of feminism. But the undoing of the series did not end there.

SUPERHERO LEGACY

There continue to be negative reflections about the series. In his book *Wonder Woman: Bondage and Feminism in the Marston/Peter Comics, 1941-1948*, Berlatsky dismisses the show as "terminally dull"—the back of the book reads that the television series was "far different" from the original comics—implying that, by not analyzing the show in greater detail, he considers the series "completely aesthetically and intellectually worthless" (187). Berlatsky writes that most versions of Wonder Woman do not "engage with Marston's themes; they don't build on his ideas; they don't reference or incorporate or think about Peter's art. They're about Wonder Woman the icon, but they don't have much, or anything, to do with Marston/Peter's comics" (214). Others reflecting on the show have focused negatively on Wonder Woman's costume (Weaver).

There are many positive reflections as well, primarily about Wonder Woman's role as a strong female character (Smith; Weinberger). The series resonated a great deal with young people who grew up to become comics creators. Alex Ross, Phil Jimenez, Adam Hughes, and Andy Mangels have emphasized that the show was accurate to the comics, that Lynda Carter "became" the character, and that they "bought her instantly." They saw her for the ideals she represented, and as a superhero brought to life (*Revolutionizing a Classic*). According to Ross:

> Here's this woman, a very gorgeous woman running around half-naked essentially wearing pretty much a swimming outfit, and somehow, she comes across as not being ultra-sexual, that in fact, she is this symbol to young women, or ... women of any age, as not being defiled by that exposure. Essentially, the character was taken as what the character's meant to be, as an object of energy and motion, not as of corrupted sexuality, or something that is just for the boys. (*Beauty, Brawn, and Bulletproof Bracelets*)

Andy Mangels has said that "Other than Christopher Reeve, there has never been a single actor who has so embodied a comic book character as Lynda Carter did; she was the epitome of everything Wonder Woman was in the comics and everything that fans of Wonder Woman wanted the character to be" (*Revolutionizing a Classic*). Alex Ross stated that Carter is of "near equal importance to the legend of Wonder Woman ... as the creators." He also said that "there is really only one Wonder Woman to anybody's eyes" (*Beauty, Brawn, and Bulletproof Bracelets*). What these interviews did not appear to emphasize or explore, however, is that at the time, there literally was only one successful live-action Wonder Woman. Hughes even attributed the character's inherent qualities of gentleness and peace to Lynda Carter's portrayal (*Revolutionizing a Classic*). Although these interviews were part of promotional DVD retrospectives, the footage that was released reflected an emphasis in comics circles that Lynda Carter was the only Wonder Woman, rather than questions about why she was the only Wonder Woman, or why the qualities of the character have not been more present in American culture.

More than scholars, fans, and creators, one must look up in the sky. In the middle of *Wonder Woman*'s final season, the Christopher Reeve *Superman* film was released to the joy of many critics, who praised it for many of the same reasons their colleagues disparaged *Wonder Woman*. *Variety* wrote that it was "a wonderful, chuckling, preposterously exciting fantasy," stating that the filmmakers "did it: they brought this cherished and durable comic book character to the screen," implying that, unlike previous superhero adaptations, the world had been hoping for this. *Variety* praised the film's "laughs," and was able to "adjust" to how "most of the plot elements are completely absurd" (Harwood).

Particularly interesting is the contemporary emphasis on the sexual dynamic between Superman and Lois Lane, relishing the sexual euphoria of Lois Lane toward Superman, and the Man of Steel's confident response. *Variety* wrote that "her initial double-entendre interview with Superman is wickedly coy, dancing round the obvious question any red-blooded girl might ask herself about such a magnificent prospect." About the nighttime tryst across the clouds of Metropolis, the author wrote, "The women are going to love it." The *Washington Post* similarly praised this midnight flight as "an elegant erotic reverie," and savored Reeve's "upper hand" of the situation, dubbing him "a young actor at once handsome and astute enough to rationalize the preposterous fancy of a comic-book superhero in the flesh" (Arnold). The *Globe and Mail* wrote that Reeve's Superman was "the man who is more of a man than most men dare to be ... He's a romantic. Margot Kidder's cracklingly contemporary Lois Lane finds that she is, too—she eulogizes her conquest as he takes her for a convincing nighttime spin over Manhattan/Metropolis...Even Lex Luthor's grounded moll falls for him" (Scott "Superman"). The *New York Daily News*, in a review notably

written by a woman but with several striking similarities to *Time*'s article on the film, cited Lois as evidence of the film's "cheerful attempt to update" the Superman mythos:

> Lois Lane, played with great zest by Margot Kidder, is not the prim spinster of the '30s, but a spirited, stubbornly independent woman who owns her own seduction pad (with a terrace, yet). But as liberated as she obviously is, she is transformed into a gushing, blushing schoolgirl at the sight of Superman. Not that this is surprising because Superman himself has been transformed into a sex object with slightly rumpled hair who can even melt the heart of Luthor's buxom moll (Valerie Perrine) who tells him regretfully, "Why is it I can't get it on with good guys?" And Christopher Reeve plays Superman with such sexy self-assurance (he plays Kent just as well, showing his complete lack of self-assurance) and such good-natured humor that no red-blooded American woman could resist him. (Carroll)

Despite the centrality of these elements whose mere hint was considered so reprehensible in *Wonder Woman*, the *Washington Post* dubbed the film "terrific juvenile entertainment"; the *Globe and Mail* wrote that "Superman makes you feel like a child again;" the *New York Daily News* called it "pure escape and good, clean, unadulterated fun;" and even the less euphoric *Time* wrote that, "Not since Star Wars, the all-time champ, has there been such an entertaining movie for children of all ages" (Arnold; Carroll; "Here Comes Superman!!!"; Scott "Superman").

Yet while the *Washington Post* review mentions *Superman*'s flying opening credits, the *Globe and Mail* mentions the black and white opening, and *Time* mentions a reminder of the *Batman* television series, none of these reviews compare the *Wonder Woman* pilot's similar opening soaring star trails, its black and white expositional newsreel, its connections to *Batman*, its earnest hero surrounded by tongue-in-cheek villains, or its transition from the fantastical setting of the protagonist's heritage to the cool color palette and period style of the real world.

Shortly after *Superman*'s success, when a *New York Times* piece reported film studios' pursuit of comics properties, the article also claimed that superheroes were an inherent part of culture (Beller). *Time*'s *Superman* review framed the film as responsibly adapting almost "mythological" icons—icons now with fans apparently ("Here Comes Superman!!!"). But when the character of Wonder Woman has referenced and built on pop culture, critics have continued to jump at the opportunity to point it out, whether lambasting the "Gargantua" episode being released before the first remake of *King Kong* (1976), or praising *Superman*'s influence over 2017's *Wonder Woman* (O'Connor 17 Dec. 1976; Scott "Review"; Tobias). *Superman* appears to be a savior of superhero adaptations arriving as suddenly as the Man of Steel into Metropolis's headlines, elevated by an overt sexual dynamic that was fixated upon and framed as central to the film's merits. But while *Superman* did influence 2017's *Wonder Woman* (Davis), no adaptation happens in a vacuum, and no superhero is an island—1975's *Wonder Woman* also influenced *Superman*. Wonder Woman played her own distinct, crucial role in the evolution of superhero adaptations, but was dismissed due to a perceived sexual threat that was fixated upon and applied to her simply by virtue of her existence, in a television series that largely kept romance at the peripheral.

As a character, Wonder Woman has clearly endured, from a powerful example of "linking the individual consumer-citizen to the public sphere via the affective commodity object," as Yockey writes about Andy Mangels's use of Wonder Woman Day to support victims of domestic violence, to the success of the 2017 film (Hughes). But as Yockey writes, while the Wonder Woman show appeared in "the early to mid-1970s," "perhaps the most prominent period of mainstream feminist visibility," Wonder Woman as a character has been additionally concluded by Robbins to be "threatening to heterosexual men...not only is she physically powerful, but she also chooses to use her powers in nonviolent ways. Thus Wonder Woman herself literally and figuratively contains the aggression of patriarchal authority." The suppression of the series is part of a very tangible suppression of women in American society, both consciously and subconsciously. The response to the television show was influenced by a "rise of market segmentation" in which Wonder Woman could be used both by *Ms. Magazine* and suppressed by "the corporate gatekeepers of hegemonic values" (Yockey "Wonder Woman"). Emad refers to "discourses of danger surrounding the women's movement in the 1970s," writing, "While the movement appropriates Wonder Woman as a powerful symbol of feminist strength and possibility, DC Comics' own representations of Wonder Woman during this time often depicted her as too powerful ... Female power is depicted as a menace to society" (968). This cultural perception has been as embedded in the American superhero genre as in any other part of society. Yockey writes that during the 1960s *Batman* television show, "Mainstream news coverage of feminism in this period typically reduced the movement to narratives about the breaking of boundaries, rather than a consideration of what motivated such 'transgressions'" (Yockey 56). In *Batman*, "Masculine authority always retains an advantage over

female agency" (Yockey 52). "Commissioner Gordon and Batman regulate female sexuality, a function they ritualistically carry out in their constant recontainment of Catwoman. Consistent with the super-hero genre's repression of sex, sexuality is exclusively both female and criminal. As a conservative antidote, Batgirl is necessarily asexual" (Yockey 50). As for Superman, Lynda Carter, responding to the Wonder Woman United Nations backlash, pointed out, "Superman had a skintight outfit that showed every little ripple, didn't he? Doesn't he have a great big bulge in his crotch? Hello!" (Williams). Marjorie Wilkes Huntley, who had a close relationship with the Marstons, came to this conclusion long before the *Wonder Woman* television series, or this essay for that matter. In 1955, when she discovered that Wonder Woman remained on *Parents' Magazine*'s list of objectionable comics even after being watered down, she wrote to the magazine that Wonder Woman "is now a character which is active in the ways that Superman is active—which you do approve of" (Lepore Location 9524).

On the basis of genre style, the restorative justice of *Wonder Woman* (1975-1979) could have taken off to join the philosophies of Batman and Superman in enriching the collective superhero pantheon long before *Wonder Woman* (2017), which came 38 years later, much longer than any gap between Superman and Batman's live-action adaptations. This is especially striking when one considers the centrality of love to any character's longevity in fandom (Yockey "Wonder Woman"). Lynda Carter's Wonder Woman was seen as threatening because she existed—not just as a woman or a superwoman, but as a superwoman epitomizing particular ideals. The series was suppressed, undone (not necessarily in its lifespan in comparison to other shows at the time, but in its identity), and after that, discredited, with the cultural

role of Wonder Woman as a figure of justice obscured by her sex, her gender, her feminism, and a perceived threat of sexuality, in contrast to the euphoric dominant sexuality of *Superman* (1978). The treatment and continued perception of this show has contributed a critical role in the lack of presence of Wonder Woman's philosophy of justice in American culture. Since its conclusion, language about the series has not focused on the philosophy its lead character represented or the significance of how that philosophy was represented in a television format, obscuring how *Wonder Woman* (1975-1979) played its own distinct, crucial role in the evolution of superhero adaptations.

This character's cultural legacy continues to be impeded by misogynistic cultural mores, as society still contends with her costume—Lynda Carter also responded to the United Nations backlash that "It's the ultimate sexist thing to say that's all you can see, when you think about Wonder Woman, all you can think about is a sex object" (Williams)—and female superheroes are still headlines. Writers such as Berlatsky acknowledge that culturally, "Wonder Woman the icon is just another female superhero with a few slightly unusual quirks," but contribute to the collective ignorance about her history by taking the television series for granted (215). As Emad writes, "The symbol of Wonder Woman loses cultural capital in the broader imagined community where she—and the women's movement—are perceived as a threat" (968). And as Yockey writes, "That the Equal Rights Amendment failed to be ratified only confirms the ongoing need to promote a combination of progressive feminist politics and Marston's vision of matriarchal authority for all" (Yockey "Wonder Woman"). In a country governed by politics over protection, the suppression of Wonder Woman's ideals has suppressed a philosophy that American culture would do well to cast fur-

ther lassos in analyzing, learning from, and integrating into its stories about justice, whether in comics, films, or television.

APPENDIX: NORTH CAROLINA TELEVISION SCHEDULE SOURCES

"Friday." *News and Observer*, 11-17 Oct. 1977, p. 17.

"Friday." *News and Observer*, 3-9 Oct. 1978, p. 17.

"Friday Evening." *Greensboro Daily News*, 6 Nov. 1977.

"Friday Evening." *Greensboro Daily News*, 29 Oct. 1978.

"Friday Evening." *Greensboro Daily News*, 7 Jan. 1979.

"Friday Evening." *High Point Enterprise*, 26 Nov. 1977, p. 16B.

"Friday Evening." *Robesonian*, 2 Nov. 1975, p. 9.

"New Season." *News and Observer*, 5-11 Sept. 1978, p. 5.

"Saturday Evening." *Robesonian*, 31 Oct. 1976, p. 13.

"Saturday Television." *Greensboro Daily News*, 2 Jan. 1977.

"Saturday's TV Schedule." *News and Observer*, 18 Dec. 1976, p. 13 or 15.

"Some Changes." *Charlotte Observer*, 8 May. 1977, p. 9D.

"Television." *Charlotte Observer*, 30 Dec. 1977, p. 2A.

"Television." *Charlotte Observer*, 17 Mar. 1978, p. 13D.

"Television." *Charlotte Observer*, 14 Apr. 1978, p. 11D.

"Television." *Charlotte Observer*, 2 June 1978, p. 9D.

"Television." *Charlotte Observer*, 26 Jan. 1979, p. 9D.

"Television." *Charlotte Observer*, 2 Feb. 1979, p. 11D.

"Television Today." *Greensboro Daily News*, 31 Mar. 1976, p. A16.

"Television Today." *Greensboro Daily News,* 22 Jan. 1977, p. A8.

"Television Today." *Greensboro Daily News,* 18 June 1977, p. A12.

"Thursday, Friday Prime Time TV." *Piedmont Today,* 1 Mar. 1978, p. A3.

"Today on Television." *Charlotte Observer,* 7 Nov. 1975, p. 7B.

"Today on Television." *Charlotte Observer,* 31 Mar. 1976, p. 17A.

"Today on Television." *Charlotte Observer,* 28 Apr. 1976, p. 17A.

"Today on Television." *Charlotte Observer,* 11 Sept. 1976, p. 5B.

"Today on Television." *Charlotte Observer,* 8 Nov. 1976, p. 17A.

"Today on Television." *Charlotte Observer,* 16 Feb. 1977, p. 13A.

"Today on Television." *Charlotte Observer,* 27 Jan. 1978, p. 9A.

"Today on Television." *Charlotte Observer,* 17 Feb. 1978, p. 13A.

"Today on Television." *Charlotte Observer,* 28 July 1978, p. 9B.

"Today on Television." *Charlotte Observer,* 22 Sept. 1978, p. 9B.

"Today on Television." *Charlotte Observer,* 16 Feb. 1979, p. 11B.

"Today on Television." *Charlotte Observer,* 10 Mar. 1979, p. 7B.

"Today's Best on Television." *News and Observer*, 18 Dec. 1976, p. 13 or 15.

"TV Picture." *Greensboro Record*, 28 May 1979, p. A12.

"TV Today." *Greensboro Daily News*, 12 Feb. 1979, p. A8.

"Wed." *Daily Times-News*, 27 Mar. 1976, p. 11.

"Wednesday Previews." *Daily Times-News*, 27 Mar. 1976, p. 11.

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Written Text to Oral Presentation

by Luc Guglieimi

ABSTRACT

In Belgium, as it is the case in other parts of the world, people have always told stories. However, since 1975, in the French part of Belgium, a resurgence of oral storytellers, telling legends in a variety of environments, from the jail to boy scout meetings, has occurred. The oral tradition is no longer limited to the family circle and has been freed from spontaneity. Instead, these events are planned and, for a fee, anyone can come and listen to the storytellers, sometimes professionals, sometimes amateurs. This article will examine the classifications of these stories being told as well as the various functions these stories have in the French speaking part of Belgium.

KEYWORDS

Belgium, oral tradition, storytelling, legends, tales, storyteller

INTRODUCTION

Stories have been an integral part of people's lives for a very long time. Generation after generation have told stories, passing down a legacy that somehow remains original and intact even as its particulars and details transform. In Belgium, as in every part of the world, stories are still part of people's lives. The French part of Belgium is no different, with an explosion of public storytelling since 1975. These storytellers narrate tales, myths, and legends in different locales—even in jails and hospitals. Traditional stories were historically confined to the family, but this has branched outward in Belgium over

the past century. Stories are now being spread far outside of the family to the public arena. Many of these public performances are now planned storytelling events—spontaneous storytelling is slowly fading. Today, storytelling is a meet-and-tell affair in which people know the kind of story that will be told. Storytelling is a profession that has become more like a hobby, taken up by people of many different backgrounds and professions.

ELEMENT CHANGE IN WRITTEN STORIES

The emphasis on oral adaptation from written texts represents a profound shift in how these tales are being communicated. The change from written to oral presentation causes modifications—some aspects are lost, while others are gained. Today, a storyteller will adapt a written story from the 19th Century to suit and become relevant to an audience in the 21st Century. One such storyteller is Michel Dellebecque, who uses the tale of La Fille au Foutre to create humorous content for his work. This fabliau is from an oral tradition written in the 13th Century by anonymous authors. Some stories have such wide-ranging appeal that each of their adaptations represent quite distinct changes. Till I'Espeigle is one such example, with multiple written and oral adaptions concerning his story, some of which scarcely resemble each other.

Till I'Espiegle is a mischievous fictional character and joker from the popular literature of the South of Germany. Till I'Espiegle is also a French name borrowed in the 19th century. The name means Till Mischievous. This story was first published in the 1510s under the title "*Dyl Ulenspiegel*" in Brunswick. In this version, the Till I'Espiegle character was born in 1300 in Kneitlingen and died in 1350 in Molln. However, this character has inspired many authors, among them

Charles De Coster from Belgium, Richard Strauss from Germany, and Joris Ivens from the Netherlands.

The work of Charles De Coster is especially interesting in determining how this ur-story and the inspiration of Till I'Espiegle has changed across various mediums and cultures. According to Werner, the sound of the word heard or listened to has its own freedom and limitations; it is very distinct from a written text. The phrase rings true: oral storytellers have the freedom to express a written text in their own way, and while some may be highly regular and disciplined in their structure, others may exercise the ability to adapt to each performance and audience. There are changes when a written text transitions to an oral presentation: a written text is meant to be read, not told. Telling the story in the same way as the written text will not create the living narrative aspect of the oral tradition. Most storytellers will only read the original texts, research, and write to make their adaptation fit the present audience. Many contemporary authors will turn to older traditions and legends to mine ideas and characters, but the evolution of the story they tell is usually their own. They will write their own narrative from scratch to create a relatable experience for those they seek to entertain.

In his adaptation of Till I'Espiegle, Charles De Coster does not attempt to maintain the culture and history of the Belgians at the time he was writing. Belgians, during the Spanish acquisition, did not like the Spanish; in fact, they deleted everything about the Spanish when their occupation ended. In the novel by Coster, the relationship between the Spanish and the Belgians is presented in a radically different fashion. Most books emphasize the atrocities the Dutch committed against the Belgians more than that of the Spanish. Furthermore, the period of Spanish influence lasted longer than that of the Dutch. Fitting a subject matter from such a radically

different time and situation is a taxing process that involves the author and their preoccupations on an essential level. This involves research and, inevitably, many changes to the present work. The end result is certainly not a direct translation of the original work—sometimes, the entire political context and argument can be changed.

According to Smet, a writer and math teacher, retelling involves taking in all the research and ideas from the prior work to create another 'original.' The notes from reading the originally written text help in the creation of the new book. Smet will always reread after writing a part of the new story to look for potential improvements or changes to ensure the story aligns with his ideas. Smet then edits in the changes and works towards finishing the first draft for feedback from another party. After just such a process of rewriting and editing, Smet came up with the book *Et Voila,* adapted from the story of Till I'Espiegle.

According to Smet, the new creation is a constant dialogue between the creator and the oral production. The creator will control the written text, but the oral production will keep changing. Every time Smet tells the story, there is always some change; it is hard to remember the whole story word for word. Another writer, Schlegel, agrees with Smet. Her latest book, entitled *La mémoire des oeuvres*, stresses that writing is fixed in place on a piece of paper, while speech is full of meanings generated through the person who is speaking and his or her context.

It is true that there is always some change in the written text when it is translated to the oral, especially from a linguistic point of view. When storytelling, the verb tenses change to fit the spoken flow of language, subjects change, and all styles are supplanted and replaced to fit the speaker and make it

lively. In the oral tradition, so many descriptions can be limitations; therefore, cutting them out from the written text will help captivate the audience. The tone and character of a written text are transformed in many essential and interesting ways during an oral presentation.

However, some things are added. The accents, jargons, sexual mores, atmosphere, and ambiance of the new century are all added in the new adaptation. Charles De Coster creates his book around national ideas of Belgium, a nation which did not exist at the time he is writing about. Belgium came into existence in 1830. Charles reviews and ridicules the Spanish acquisition while showing the suffering they caused in Belgium. Smet applies the same concept in his book by removing the Spanish story completely. His primary idea was to relate to a contemporary audience because in this century nobody cares about the acquisition, the bloodshed, and the suffering. Smet's primary goal is to create a humorous read about Till and his mischief.

In the new work by Smet, sticking to the same issues as DeCoster would lead to backlash and become mired in political issues. A writer, though adapting different work, has to keep his main concept in place. Keeping the concept requires adding and losing the things that may affect the story, so that it is tailored to its audience. The oral tradition has a close relationship with its immediate audience. For Smet, with a focus on humor, it was necessary to remove the heavy and political ruminations obvious in the work of DeCoster. In the oral tradition, seemingly incidental props and features such as a character's accent can serve to completely change the emphasis of a text. Smet transforms Till from a hero and poor Flemish man who spoke French to combat the Spanish dictator (according to DeCoster) to a man with a Brussels

accent, all in the service of highlighting the humor in Till's character.

Smet, in his work, adapts a different atmosphere and storyline compared to DeCoster. He makes his story, its language, and characters relatable to the present audience. Smet deletes the part of DeCoster's story when Till is tortured by the Spanish and suffers in the same way as Christ. That heavy religious and symbolic treatment is simply unnecessary to Smet's audience. The sad and painful experience of Till related by DeCoster becomes a comedy, with Till as a clown rather than a martyr or political champion. The living and breathing story of Till can be just as effective in entertaining an audience, even if Smet leaves out the civic and heroic acts of his subject.

CONCLUSION

Today, so many stories suffer from changes due to public demand. Storytelling has become a business; hence, the public ought to get what they demand. So many storytellers like Smet are turning to traditional literature to create new work for today's audience. However, there is an underlying question about the effect of the traditional literature on today's audience. It is important to draw a line between keeping traditions and doing business.

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Why Mario Works: Super Mario as Transformative Icon for the Working Class

by G. Christopher Williams and Brady Simenson

ABSTRACT

Nintendo's Mario has transcended the realm of character and sits firmly in the realm of icon. Despite his appearance as a simple working man, nevertheless, just as Mario takes different forms throughout his adventure series, he is also a pliable figure of transformation throughout culture in general. Mario is a transformative and easily adaptable figure in the lineage of silent film stars, but Mario echoes them even further as a specifically transformative hero of the working class, a group who greatly desire the freedom of form that he represents. Thus, it is, perhaps, unsurprising that the 1980s, the era of Mario, would look for something of a solution to the problem of the working class or at least attempt to ameliorate their situation by adding a virtuous component to working hard in order to survive, a kind of heroics that comes along with hard work and economic struggle.

KEYWORDS

Mario, Nintendo, Super Mario Bros., working class, 1980s, transformation, plasmatic, icon, media representation

Super Mario is arguably the most famous video game character of all time, an icon for Nintendo akin to what Mickey Mouse is for Disney. Beyond his own series of adventure games, he has been inserted into a multitude of other games

that represent a diversity of game genres, including *Mario Kart*, *Super Smash Bros.*, *Dr. Mario*, and many more. His image is also used, like Mickey Mouse's, to sell various non-gaming products like shirts, birthday cards, dishes, clocks, and most other kinds of merchandise that you can imagine. Mario has transcended the realm of character and sits firmly in the realm of icon. He can be placed into almost any pop culture environment, where he often does not merely adapt, but often thrives. Despite his appearance as a simple working man, nevertheless, Mario takes different forms throughout his adventure series—everything from Fire Mario to Metal Mario to Paper Mario—he is also a pliable figure of transformation throughout culture in general.

In his essay "Super Mario, the New Silent Clown," Manuel Garin agrees that Mario's tremendous and lasting appeal is tied closely to his aforementioned transformative ability. He too connects the appeal of Mario to the appeal of Mickey Mouse and even Charlie Chaplin. Garin writes, "[Mario] has become to video games what Chaplin was to silent film and Mickey Mouse to cartoon animation, a transcultural [...] image that fosters intense cultural re-appropriation" (305). Garin should take this further, though. He mainly sticks to establishing Mario as "an icon of user-generated comedy in hundreds of YouTube parodies" (305). This idea ignores Mario's pliability within and throughout his various incarnations in video games themselves. It also ignores how that pliability functions to add comedy and even pathos to the character. Most importantly, it ignores some of what defines Mario as an individual and what allows him his adaptability, roles that call for him to change who and what he is and make the best of difficult circumstances. As such, Mario as an icon is much more than a ripe source of parody. Mario is a working man. He is an immigrant.

Like Chaplin and Mickey Mouse before him, the character serves as a transformative figure for his prominent working-class background. Chaplin and Mickey Mouse, according to Kathy Merlock Jackson, "function as universal characters who can adapt to any situation," and this observation could easily be made about Mario as well (440). Much as Mario transforms from a doctor to a tennis player to a painter, so too does Mickey Mouse become a steamboat captain or Chaplin adopt the role of a dictator. Again, Merlock Jackson offers insight as she notes, "Whether a bricklayer, window repairer, floorwalker, drunk, fiddler, minister, or gold prospector, Chaplin's Tramp tries to be serious and dignified, to do the right thing; this provides the essence of his comedy. Mickey is equally determined and adaptable" (440). The last part, "determined and adaptable" is of particular interest, as this statement sums up just about everything that makes Mario great: hard work and transformation.

Preceding the decade of the creation of this working-class video game hero, American media of the 1970s would portray a more naturalistic image of the working man in the rough and gruff form of characters like Archie Bunker. Bunker was no hero, and instead struggled with coming to terms with a changing and more progressive American cultural landscape, representing a character that was hardly "adaptable." The working-class man would continue to be presented as struggling in other ways in the lyrics of songs by musicians like Bruce Springsteen. Springsteen's 1975 song "Born to Run" would open with a bleak vision of the prospects of the working American: "In the day we sweat it out on the streets of a runaway American Dream/ And at night we ride through mansions of glory on suicide machines." In "Whitman, Springsteen, and the American Working Class," Greg Smith observes of these lines:

> This is nothing less than a summation of the circumstances facing the working class in all of Springsteen's music; taunted by images of an American Dream which is just out of reach but which they still must chase by way of day jobs out of economic and sometimes psychological necessity, these people are left to fantasize at nights in cars and on roads that go nowhere. (309)

Further, Smith suggests that these fantasies serve as a mirage for Springsteen's characters that leave them spinning their wheels on the way to nowhere, trapped as they are by the identity that working hand-to-mouth leaves them in: "It is often the idea, 'mirage' though it may be, that they will be able to escape their dead-end jobs that allows Springsteen's characters, sadly and paradoxically, to continue working at them" (309-310). While Bunker's response to a changing landscape in America was a reactionary desire to return to the "good old days," as the show's theme song "Those Were the Days" suggested, Springsteen's characters sought hope and ultimately change in their economic condition and something transformative to affect their circumstances.

Thus, it is, perhaps, unsurprising that the 1980s, the era of Mario, would look for a solution to the problem of the working class or at least attempt to ameliorate their situation by adding a virtuous component to working hard in order to survive, a kind of heroism that went along with economic struggle. Bon Jovi's Tommy and Gina from "Livin' on a Prayer" are struggling to survive, but they do so for the sake of something virtuous: love, making them into not just working-class individuals, but into working class heroes:

We've got to hold on to what we've got
It doesn't make a difference if we make it or not
We've got each other, and that's a lot
For love, we'll give it a shot
("Living on a Prayer")

Romanticizing the experience of being working class is indicative of the media of this period, again, the era of the first appearance of Mario, something much less common in the 21st century, as Diana Kendall notes in *Framing Class: Media Representations of Wealth and Poverty in America*: "Currently, the predominant messages we receive from the media regarding the working class are that this class does not exist at all or that it comprises people who are uninteresting other than as sources of labor" (175). Yet, in the 1980s, many of John Hughes films, like *16 Candles, The Breakfast Club,* and *Pretty in Pink* valorized working-class characters and showed their ability to transform by attempting to elevate their position in a highly stratified society. Within the lyrics of "Livin' on a Prayer" or the character of Andie in *Pretty in Pink* is a hope in some essential virtuous humanity that lies within these characters to become more than they are for the sake of another person, that these working poor characters can adapt and survive.

The ability for silent characters to adapt is explored particularly well by silent film director, Sergei Eisenstein, who wrote extensively about his theory of the plasmatic characters of his own earlier era, that is, characters who have "the ability to dynamically assume any form" and who appeal to audiences of the working class who reside "in a country and social order with such a mercilessly standardized and mechanically measured existence" (21). Eisenstein is speaking particularly about the animation of Walt Disney in the United States.

However, his theory should be explored in depth to consider how it applies to silent film icons like Mickey Mouse and Chaplin and how Mario continues that tradition into today. Garin is correct to say that Mario is a transformative and easily adaptable figure in the lineage of silent film stars, but Mario echoes them further than Garin realizes as a specifically transformative hero of the working class, a group who greatly desire the freedom of form that he represents.

This freedom of form is obviously present, but it is also important to understand how Mario has such wide-ranging appeal. While Eisenstein writes that the plasmatic is a character who is able to be plugged into a variety of scenarios, his writing also confronts how this versatility is translated into a literal pliability of the bodily form. An example that he offers is Walt Disney's *Silly Symphonies* where Mickey Mouse's "arms shoot up far beyond the limits of their normal representation [...] repeated by the necks of ostriches, the tails of cows [... all] shot to meticulously coil to the tone and melody of the music" (10). He compares this to older stories such as Alice's "episode of expanding and shrinking height" in *Alice in Wonderland* (11). This note on changing height may have already made you think of Mario. An essential gameplay mechanic in most Mario side-scrolling adventures is that Mario begins as a shorter version of himself, almost half a man so to speak, but when he gets a Super Mushroom, he appropriately becomes Super Mario, a taller and stronger version of himself capable of taking more damage and of smashing bricks. This image of Super Mario jumping up to break the bricks above him that were previously holding him down has a similarity to the "glass ceiling" metaphor often used for the oppression of women in the workplace. It is not a stretch to imagine Super Mario's breaking of a ceiling as an overcoming of oppression either, given his obvious association with the working class.

Mario's own creator Shigeru Miyamoto, while being interviewed by the late Nintendo president Satoru Iwata, acknowledges a relationship between Mario and *Alice in Wonderland*, though he denies being directly influenced in the sense of growing and shrinking. He says, "When you think about Wonderland, you think about mushrooms [...] there has always somehow been a relationship between mushrooms and magical realms. That's why I decided that Mario would need a mushroom to become Super Mario." It may be the case that Miyamoto's decision to make Mario grow and shrink was not a direct reference to Lewis Carroll's novel, but the admission that Wonderland was on his mind in regards to the Mushroom Kingdom at least suggests the possibility of him making the decision subconsciously. This admission also suggests that the mushrooms and their effect on Mario is connected to fantasy, and what is fantasy if not wish fulfillment? Transformation is here connected to becoming better than who you were before.

But is growing taller or shorter enough to deem Mario a figure of the plasmatic as Eisenstein describes? There are a multitude of bodily transformations that occur to him even in his earliest games in the form of the flame-shooting Fire Mario, the flying raccoon Tanooki Mario, and the swimming Frog Mario, but the most clearly Eisenstein-like transformations occur in *Super Mario 64* in which the player is offered a strange title screen on which he or she sees a large close-up of Mario's face that the player is then allowed to tug and stretch to comical proportions. This opportunity has no connection to the actual game and only seems to exist to familiarize new gamers with Mario's identity, those players drawn in by the Nintendo 64's groundbreaking 3D graphics. It also suggests to those players the plasmatic qualities of Mario, that this is a man who can be shaped and reshaped and that doing so is a

part of the pleasure of playing as him. The use of his first in-game dialogue "It's a me, Mario!" is reason enough to view this game as an introduction of the character to the uninitiated. Mario's true identity is underscored to them here as a pliable persona for the gamer to do with what they will. This concept is an interesting inversion of what was recently shown in 2015 in *Super Mario Maker*. In that game, Mario remains the same, while the world is what the player gets to play with. Either way, that player can understand that the series at its core is a clay of sorts, a transformative toy for the gamer to change him- or herself within and to change his or her surroundings.

Mario's ability to transform holds allure for so many gamers because so many people desire the same ability to change their lot in life. Much of the available research on video games focuses on their role as a form of wish fulfillment. Sheila C. Murphy says the foundations of academic video game and digital culture research "triumphed the virtual as a realm where one could escape 'lived' reality and act 'freely' in the realm of the 'technological sublime'—in a cyberspace that was untainted by the social realities and inequalities of class, race, and gender" (225). People on social media create new identities for themselves via cool user names, flattering profile pictures, and carefully crafted feeds, while video gamers do these things and more. Gamers control and embody their idealized selves. This is easy to see in games like *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* or *Fallout 4* where players name their avatars, control their appearance, and even make personal decisions for them, but research shows players experiencing a sense of idealized self even through avatars who bear little resemblance to the player.

The wish fulfillment one experiences through an avatar like Mario takes place through the process of identification. Jon-

athan Cohen, whose theories on identification with media characters is drawn on heavily by video game scholars, says that, "While identifying with a character, an audience member imagines him- or herself being that character and replaces his or her personal identity and role as audience member with the identity and role of the character within the text" (250-51). The authors of "Identification with Video Game Characters as Automatic Shift of Self-Perceptions" draw on Cohen's research when they say:

> While playing as a soldier, [gamers] would experience themselves as more courageous, brave, loyal, patriotic, and strong [...] Playing a first-person shooter and identifying with such a game's protagonist would change their self-perception in a way that they experience themselves to be more similar to how they want to be or to be exactly as assertive as they wished to be. (Klimmt, et al. 325)

Further, they believe that "[c]ontrolling a character or fulfilling a role while playing video games shapes players' self-concept [....] Video games would, thus, appear as a self-transformation machine with which players can temporarily enter states that detach them from 'normal' self-perceptions" (335). So, players who control Mario put themselves in his perspective and identify with his attributes, including his transformative nature. This identification occurs even though Mario is not an exaggerated interpretation of the player's self, as one may create when playing *Skyrim* or *Fallout*.

According to a study entitled "Player–Avatar Identification in Video Gaming: Concept and Measurement," identification is not so much about embodying a character who is supposed

to directly represent the player, but even more so about embodying a character who represents traits that a player aspires to. The study focuses on the theory that "people often wishfully identify with media characters who are more successful, more popular, or in other ways rewarding or positive" (Li, et al. 258). The research finds that "players are motivated to escape into games because of a narrowed gap between one's actual self and ideal self during play [...] identification is enjoyable for game players due to the reason that altered self-perceptions during game exposure reduce self-discrepancies" (261). An example of one of these discrepancies being altered when playing as Mario is that of a working-class individual with no perceived means of becoming anything else. This is what makes identifying with Mario so fulfilling for so many people in that situation.

The authors of "The Ideal Self at Play: The Appeal of Video Games That Let You Be All You Can Be" found similar results in their research, claiming that, "Video-game players can act in ways that are congruent with idealized views of the self and can experience abilities and satisfactions that are difficult to access in everyday life," and they later conclude that "results indicate that players who experienced a wide discrepancy between their ideal self and actual self in their day-to-day lives were the players most motivated by games that provided them with opportunities to embody their ideal characteristics" (Przybylski, et al. 70, 73). If this discrepancy between ideal self and actual self is so powerful, then it makes sense for those with the least ability to socially transform in their actual lives to most idealize Mario's ability to do so.

Mario's appearance, ethnicity, and occupation are no coincidence in this regard. Mario is an Italian plumber from Brooklyn. Can there possibly be a group more desiring of the ability to transform, to have social and financial mobility,

than working class immigrants? Jeff Ryan compares Mario to another Italian hero of popular culture when he says, "[Mario is] as perpetual an underdog as that undertall Italian boxer from Philadelphia, Rocky Balboa. [Mario is] a world-beloved character with roots across three continents: Asian invention, American setting, European name [...] A hero who is at once us, more than us, and so much less than us" (5). At first glance, Mario, like Rocky, is an unremarkable working stiff from a family of immigrants, but his understated charm and determination toward greatness make him so endlessly easy to root for. The player can relate to the drive of both characters, and that player can also relate to their struggles.

Mario, as a cartoon character, may seem like a much less serious figure than the struggling prize-fighter Rocky. Yet, both the medium of the cartoon and the genre of comedy in general abound in such heroes. Comedy is a place in which traditional heroism might be reversed, where the pauper, not the prince, might become a hero by transforming his station in life through his own actions, sometimes actions that are ennobling, sometimes actions that are foolish. As noted earlier, Chaplin is a figure much like this one, such as when he portrays himself as his Tramp, whose activities elevate him as an individual with a persona that defies his station in life. This idea provides the audience, especially a working class or working poor audience, the idea that one can become so much more than they are if the avatar that that they assume reflects themselves and has the pliability to allow for enlarged and greater forms. As Paul Flaig observes in "Life Driven by Death: Animation Aesthetics and the Comic Uncanny," such an audience, specifically the audience of the cartoon, seeks the idea of an avatar that creates such a transformative figuration:

> The heroes of these [cartoon] films are humorous avatars for the audience's mimetic embrace, their adventures defined less by continuous plot than by the discontinuity between representation as 'a set of lines, and as the image that arises from them,' the pulsation of forms gagging across levels of sense and nonsense, the referential and ridiculous. (13)

Such referential qualities are found in cartoons but also in video games in which the player takes on the role of working through these gags and discontinuities through their own embodiment of heroic figures. In video games, the players are the ones who struggle and strive to achieve greatness despite their own limitations.

Struggling, yet striving, is also an unfortunate hallmark of the working class. G. Christopher Williams ties Mario's working-class appeal to this very thing. Williams writes, "If Mario is heroic as a hard worker [...] it is in a kind of Faulknerian sense—because he 'endures' through his persistent labor." It may seem like an afterthought that Mario's appearance happens to mark him as working class. Indeed, Ryan mentions that Mario's appearance was determined more by practical limitations, such as his appearance in the original game being "limited to three colors," and the need to distinguish between his clothing and physical features within that limitation more than anything else (25). For example, "Miyamoto gave [Mario] a bushy mustache, mostly so players could tell where the nose ended and the mouth began," and similar concerns led to him having his hat and overalls. So even though Mario's classic design is more about practicality than a specific desire on the part of his designers to make him working class, the imagery was used to define much of that game's setting

and its premise, placing Pauline and her abductor on a construction site, for example. Additionally, Williams goes on to discuss Mario's collecting of coins throughout the series as it relates to Mario's connection to working class imagery and the personal struggle for Mario that the need for such collection implies. He writes, "Working to acquire money for the sake of survival becomes a persistent theme in the adventures of Mario through this mechanic of money being used to purchase life [...] 100 coins always translates into an extra life [...] The working man is always working hand to mouth. With every nickel and dime, Mario ekes out a continued existence."

Williams is correct here to tie the collecting of coins with "survival" and "working hand to mouth." However, seeking financial stability should be seen as more than "Mario ek[ing] out a continued existence." This idea frames gaining an extra life in a practical way, in other words, having more lives helps Mario survive the game, but this also implies that Mario gains a new life, that is, as an alternative to the one he already has. This works in the same way as any other working stiff who dreams of working hard enough and making enough money for a chance at another life, a fresh start. This prophecy is also fulfilled throughout Mario's video game career: he gets more lives as a doctor, a golfer, a go-kart driver, and more still.

While Williams certainly does acknowledge Mario's ambition, he does not address this idea of collecting lives. What he addresses in particular is Mario's dogged persistence in rescuing Princess Peach, a figure of wealth and class beyond his station. Williams says, "Mario is not merely relatable as a regular Joe, but his progress from the labor class to a man capable of mixing with the elite is a familiar claim of the American dream of upward mobility. With a lot of hard work and elbow grease, not only can one merely survive, but the individual

can eventually land the princess and everything that she represents." Beyond this, it should also be noted that the villain that Mario is most often rescuing this princess from is also royalty, King Koopa, more popularly known as Bowser. Not only is Mario a lower-class man able to mix with the elite, but he also proves himself superior to one of their ilk. Bowser, too, is a fire-breathing half-dragon, framing Mario then in the mythic tradition of monster-slayers whose valorous deeds earn them a position of royalty, in the tradition of Theseus or Perseus and their respective beasts.

In his first appearance in *Donkey Kong*, Mario doesn't save a princess, but Pauline's presence may still speak to the idea of saving a damsel in distress, as this notion may relate to social climbing. Pauline appears that she may be working class, special to Mario, a pretty girl in a dress, but not necessarily nobility. She may be from a higher class than Mario, however, as the appearance of her fancy hat, parasol, and handbag might indicate on later levels. However, if one assumes that the premise of *Donkey Kong* is much inspired by the plot of the 1933 film *King Kong* in its borrowing of the love triangle between man, woman, and ape, then Pauline's similarity to the Anne Darrow character played by Fay Wray may also suggest a lower-class background for Pauline as well. In the film, the character Carl Denham, a filmmaker, is seeking an actress in New York City. He finds an impoverished Darrow and offers her the part that will eventually take them all to Skull Island, the home of Kong. Once again, if there is a parallel between these characters, this indicates that Pauline and Darrow, like Mario, are working class, people who have to strive to endure as Mario must. Mario then is working to save someone of his own station or of a slightly higher class, not a princess, but, nevertheless, one way or the other, he is "rising" in order to do so. Thinking about Pauline's social status is interesting as

it is somewhat debatable in *Donkey Kong,* but in Mario's most recent game *Super Mario Odyssey,* she is more distinctly upper class. In a Polygon article, Julia Alexander quotes one of the game's producers who says, "We knew that players know Pauline so we of course wanted to make her the mayor of New Donk City. It's important to note that though they are called Kingdoms, they do not necessarily have royalty, and that's why she's the mayor." Regardless of Pauline's current social positioning, though, in *Donkey Kong,* Mario's pursuit and salvation of the character points towards consummation and potential marriage within the context of the altogether common "saving the girl" narrative premise of video games. Marriage itself traditionally represents an act of socioeconomic betterment, and Mario, by enacting this seemingly traditional act of chivalry, ends up saving the girl in order to establish a potential relationship or in order to maintain one. Thus, he is striving towards marriage as one possible means of gaining upward mobility for he and Pauline or at least for himself.

Mario then can especially be accepted in his latter incarnations as a savior of princesses and as a form of our vicariously held dream of transforming from peasant to king, but more is needed to place him firmly in the tradition of what silent icons like Chaplin and Mickey Mouse were doing. To further support this, consider once again Eisenstein's focus on the plasmatic, or in other words, on how transformative bodies can represent social transformation. Using the body to tell stories is ingrained both in silent film and in early video games. In his article, "Silent Film," Manuel Garin says, "the absence of synchronized dialogue and the supremacy of visual attractions pushed creators—both early filmmakers and game designers—toward truly imaginative ways of relating the moving image to its audiences" (576). With this in mind,

Eisenstein's notions, pardon the pun, may seem like less of a stretch. Imagine how mimes use their over-the-top bodily movement to express not only stories, but emotions. When words are limited, the physical must be used as creatively as possible. Garin goes into greater detail in this link between the silent film movement and early video games when he says:

> The development of sight gags—based on the creation, repetition, and variation of a kinetic pattern through time—resembles the way game designers conceive certain interactions between a moving figure and the surrounding spaces. As in [...] early *Super Mario* [...] slapstick reels captured a screen trajectory by reconstructing the trace of a character's action (jump, chase, pie in the face) and its physical interactions (platform, rotor, slide, cliff, pendulum, pulley, seesaw, zip-line, lever). (576)

So if early Mario lacked the benefit of cut scenes and voice actors, it stands to reason that the way that he interacts with his world, the way that he grows and shrinks, the way that he transforms to progress, all have genuine meaning connected to what Nintendo wants the player to think of him. This non-verbal storytelling is apparently so significant that Mario and many of Nintendo's other oldest characters, like Link, Donkey Kong, and Kirby, remain mostly silent to this day.

Nintendo's preference for physical storytelling over verbal storytelling is apparent in their games, but also in their marketing, showing its audience that bodily movement and transformation are more than functions of gameplay, but also part of Nintendo's intentionally constructed narrative.

In their launch trailer for the original Nintendo Wii, "Wii Trailer 1," customers are sold on one of the bestselling consoles of all time not just by the strength of a game lineup, but even more so by the way that the Nintendo Wii promised to make them move. The advertisement shows the actual games only in brief flashes, focusing the majority of its time on the cartoonish way that players swing their bodies around to become the characters on their screens. Players are shown taking on multiple roles just like Chaplin, Mickey Mouse, and, of course, Mario have done. The movement of the player makes them swing a racket like a tennis star, fly a plane like a pilot, wave a baton like a classical conductor, and even move like Mario himself. When a woman flicks her wrist with the Wii Remote, this image is instantly followed by an image of Mario flicking his own wrist to send a fireball at his enemy. Just as Mario is a figure who aspires to other lives, represented by his varied roles, so too do players aspire to other lives, including Mario's own.

This isn't the first time that Nintendo has used an advertisement to emphasize how players want to be Mario, but also in particular, how they want to move like Mario. In a commercial titled "Nintendo School's Out," the audience sees a classroom full of elementary school students who are bored with their humdrum daily life. They watch the clock desperately, and the audience later finds out that it is so that they can rush to the nearest store to purchase a new Mario game. The catch, though, is that during this rush to the store, all of these children have the miraculous ability to run and jump like Mario himself. They jump from the top of one building to the next or from the top of one subway train car to another, just like Mario does while jumping from platform to platform in his games. They do this throughout Hong Kong until they finally reach the store, and when they do, all of them are

suddenly wearing Mario masks, completing their transformation and victory over everyday life. The words "Who are you?" appear on the screen, letting us know that Nintendo wants us to think of ourselves as Mario, to transform as we play. To play as Mario, to move and transform like Mario, is to become Mario.

The point of the advertisement is to take the focus off of who Mario is because he is a vessel for you. Instead the focus is on what you, and in turn Mario, do. And what does Mario do? As has been mentioned many times: he changes. He changes his body by using power-ups to either become big or become half-raccoon or to even become a two-dimensional being in the *Paper Mario* series. Notice how *Paper Mario: The Thousand Year Door* works on the basis of changing and manipulating Mario's body as an essential element of progression. You can fold Mario's body into a paper airplane to fly over gaps. You can turn him sideways to fall or to walk through cracks. You can even roll him into a tube so that he can then roll himself under obstacles.

Like *Paper Mario*, Mario's other RPG titles are particularly notable for using bodily manipulation to advance. In *Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga*, Mario and his brother Luigi are shown teaming together to perform special abilities that allow them to reach previously inaccessible areas or to perform powerful attacks. These abilities show them working together in an almost slapstick fashion resembling the work of vaudevillian tumblers. One such technique is called "Splash Bros" where Mario jumps on Luigi's back and springboards off of him, Luigi then jumps as well so that Mario, still in mid-air, catches him, and both spin like a falling corkscrew onto an enemy. Another move involves Luigi smashing Mario with a hammer so that Mario can walk under certain doors in his newly squished form.

These sorts of moves exist throughout the whole *Mario & Luigi* franchise. The physical comedy and showmanship of those titles is so similar to vaudeville that it is easy to connect them with the sight gags discussed by Garin and how those sight gags contribute to the telling of a story and the development of character in that context. This fluidity of form made available to him as a working-class hero has never really left him since his birth over 30 years ago as Jumpman in *Donkey Kong*. As previously noted, Mario first appeared in the 1980s, an era known for romanticizing the working stiff in popular culture as heard in Bruce Springsteen's music or in demonizing capitalism as seen in the character of Gordon Gekko in the film *Wall Street*. This tendency to romanticize the lower class in particular is not far off from the tendencies of the cultural era of silent film to do so as well. Within those films resides a reflection of the struggles of people who experienced the Great Depression. Popular culture is shaped to appeal to those who consume it, and Mario's various incarnations are no different.

The most recent iteration of Mario suggests an even greater versatility in our hero. Consider the use of Mario's hat shown in the most recent Mario game, *Super Mario Odyssey*. Mario uses his hat this time around to possess the bodies of other creatures. At one point, he even transforms into a T-Rex, but the player is assured that this larger than life monster is still the player's Mario because the beast is wearing that signature red cap. If the T-Rex had Mickey's ears or Chaplin's bowler, the audience could be similarly assured of his true identity. This provides comfort because people want to know that their heroes will stay the same at heart despite those heroes' transformations. This proposition convinces us that we too will stay the same good, down-to-earth people no matter how much we change, as we learn new things and take on our

own new identities. The myth critic Joseph Campbell was so sure that readers crave sameness in their heroes that he essentially believed that all heroes are the same figure, a "hero with a thousand faces," as the title of his famous book proclaimed. In *Super Mario Odyssey*, such a subtitle would seem equally appropriate. Mario is a modern myth in the Campbellian tradition. Mario transforms endlessly, but always into an identity that can be loved and related to, a hero with a thousand faces, but only one hat. Of course, *Odyssey* inverts this as well by having Mario wear the hats of others, sombreros, explorer hats, and the like. With this, Mario's body stays the same while he takes on the characteristics of others instead. Perhaps Mario can relate his identity to others while others can also relate their identity to him. As in the "Nintendo School's Out" commercial, Mario is everyone, and everyone is Mario.

Odyssey seems to suggest this recursive identity building through its gameplay. As noted, Mario's ability to transform has now literally allowed him the ability to take on the roles belonging to others by becoming one with enemies and some objects in his world and gaining their skills. Also as noted, these transformed individuals are marked by his hat as he assimilates with the form of these others. Likewise, Mario, acting purely as himself, can adopt a variety of personas in the game by collecting outfits that reflect a variety of occupations or cultural identities, from building inspector to explorer to a guise reflective of Mexican culture, complete with sombrero and serape. Adopting these personas and allowing others to reflect his identity allows the audience to see Mario's plasticity and his ability to transform and to adapt to whatever role is necessary for him to succeed in *Odyssey's* game world. This plasticity frees us to understand the hero in ways that we understand or that we can see in ourselves. A man, for instance, might view himself through his occupation, through

his familial role as father or brother, or through his role as husband. Likewise, a woman may see herself through what she does for a living, through her role as mother or sister, or through her role as a wife. Everyone, then is capable of wearing different hats, Mario just seems more capable of wearing one that represents a nearly endless set of possible roles, which makes him into a hero as well as into an everyman.

Scholars like Garin, Ryan, and Williams explain many valuable things about Mario and his aforementioned appeal, while Merlock, Jackson, and Eisenstein explain important things about figures from the silent era so that it becomes clear how the legacy of those figures continues through Mario. Thus, their arguments become the significant dots that must be connected in order to understand the greater picture that makes up who Mario is to so many people. The silent film era lacked dialogue and relied on bodily movement and transformation to tell stories. This same lack of dialogue in early games meant that the same methods were used to translate Mario's working-class appeal to a 1980s audience that was hungry for it. With *Odyssey,* Mario's has evolved from a simple plasmatic figure to an even more complicated symbol of adaptability and versatility. Audiences of the 80s were hungry for a determined, hard worker just like themselves. They remain hungry to see someone from the bottom who is able to leap his way all the way to the top. Perhaps most of all, audiences were and still are simply hungry for someone who represents a chance to change, a chance to have a new life. This is what Mario gave to them. This is what Mario still gives to people. This is what truly makes Mario so super.

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Defining a Life

by Lorna Gibb

There have always been cats, their presence for me is familial, inextricably linked to a sense of home. I cannot remember a time before cats, even in the brief space of years between birth and memory there are images of a cat, caught in grainy black and white photographs and Kodachrome slides, a cat whose escapades are as familiar to me as recollections. This is Snowy, the first cat, the work cat, the half stray ravaged thing with his scars and his battered ears and his permanently grubby fur.

Snowy was a legend to me. He was also the reason that I should hate cats. The thin thread like chin scar I have to this day, even if it's only partially visible in the brightest of sun, was Snowy's doing. He was a wild one, I was told, but it is apparent from those images. Battle scarred and grubby, pictured halfway up walls, balancing on drain pipes, rubbing against the chimney of the old tenement flat my parents lived in before there was me. This wasn't a lap cat but a warrior, and my dad when he was living would speak with something close to pride about Snowy's shady origins, his lack of loyalty, and above all those rare moments of grace bestowed when he decided to demonstrate a smidgeon of affection to my adoring parents.

We don't know how he died, or when, or if he just found somewhere else to go for food, but he vanished as unexpectedly as he had arrived. My parents got a dog, had me, adopted several other cats without ever really trying to, and a couple of decades passed by.

When I left University I had cats of my own. It seemed a grown-up thing to do, a rite of passage marking my as-

sumption of responsibility. But I was also lonely. Living in a strange town where I knew no one at all, comforted by the gentle purring, their demands for food, arriving after work to a house where things lived and which started being home instead of my flat because of it. I worked abroad and gave custody of my three cats Pandora, Tabbitha and Houdini to my parents, then didn't have the heart to take them back again. Pandora, a jet black stray I had taken from a shelter when no one else would because she was aloof and no longer a kitten, would not let my father out of her sight. Her independence was extinguished by love for him. She had never so much as sat on my lap, but she slept on my dad's bed, curled up on him when he was reading.

I married and found out I could not have children not long afterwards. Both inveterate cat lovers, my husband and I decided to adopt a cat. But we didn't have a proper garden and we were turned down by every rescue shelter we approached. Through Facebook we met a woman who rescued unwanted, imperfect pedigree cats. There was something close to serendipity in our meeting. I felt defective myself, unfit for purpose, a sterile useless thing, and I took the Bengal cat to my heart, because, although he looked more physically striking than any cat I had ever owned, he too had been declared not up to the task he had been bred for.

Ivanhoe was shocking in his beauty, ceaselessly demanding, vocal and interactive, he attached himself to our slightly ramshackle lives and when we moved to the Middle East came with us in a Sherpa bag without complaint.

Ivanhoe's presence seemed to act as an unspoken signal. Within days we were haunted by street cats. A heavily pregnant tortoiseshell we named Gypsy, a ginger boy we called Brutus, a scruffy white stray I fancifully called Launcelot,

who looked like the ghost of Snowy, the incarnation of those faded images from my unremembered infancy. Launcelot was not a well cat, so we took him to a vet to find that he was dying. He would walk around the compound on our heels, more dog than cat, and wait on our steps for us, not just for food; he'd even leave a bowl of food to follow us.

The compound was a new one, all concrete and sand, a construction site filled with workmen from Nepal and India who lived in slums hidden on the edge of Doha and earned a pittance. My husband carried cans of coke out to them on sweltering days where even walking to the car made you feel you couldn't breathe and a neighbour told him off for that small act of kindness. We never understood why, beyond the implicit racist hierarchy that ran through Doha like a vein filled with shit. The only common air-conditioned space was a big room often overrun by children who disliked the stray cats and would catch and torture them. We caught two boys abusing Lancelot and screamed at them, only to have their mother appear and shout at us that it was obvious I didn't have children, otherwise I would have known that it was just how children were. Her words stung, but I held my ground. Our pyrrhic victory. The next day Lancelot was gone. Our workmen told dark tales of cats and dogs abandoned in the desert without food or water, miles and miles from the city. Not killed because that would be irreligious, but left there so that God might save them if he so wished.

Gypsy had five kittens and we took them all into our University accommodation villa and tended them till they were old enough to be rehomed with my students from the University. Brutus died, was killed by a car, and in his honour we named one of the kittens who was also a ginger after him. The first time I was ever welcomed into a Qatari house

was because we took a kitten to be adopted there, the second time was because one of the students I had given two kittens to spoke to her parents, who invited us for dinner. Other people bonded over their children, the experience of the schools in Doha, the difficulties of raising a family in an alien culture. We rescued cats and made friends by finding homes for them. In the compound the builders called me the cat lady. I didn't mind at all. My husband tried to grow flowers on the rectangle of sand at the back of our house and became the Garden man. They were affectionate terms in a social sphere where I was far more commonly the poor woman without children, the woman with the kind husband who hadn't taken a new wife.

Neither of us had become accustomed to our childless state, perhaps we even had some vestige of hope still, despite the medical pronouncements on the fallibility of my body. Some days were sad, weighed down with the weight of a future that seemed so much less bright than it had one or two years before. On one such afternoon, tired of the continual traffic jams and of trying to be polite to each other when we were both restless and unhappy, we drove into a supermarket car park. I was tearful. A doctor had told me earlier in the day that my hormone count was more like someone in their seventies than someone in their thirties. My mind replayed his pronouncement over and over in my head. I couldn't think of anything else. There, outside Carrefour, between the cars was a tiny, scrawny, half dead kitten with a voice that somehow, incongruously, filled the air. A woman was dragging her toddler away from it, saying firmly that it was diseased, he mustn't touch. The child wailed, the kitten got louder. 'Alan,' I said, all dissent forgotten, suddenly juddered out of my misery loop. 'Let's take it, at worst we can give it to that woman who has all the cats on the edge of town.'

We put her in the car, called my mum to tell her we had yet another cat, told her we couldn't say what colour she was because she had a bit of everything, black, white brown, ginger, tortoiseshell, and my mum said you must call her Confetti.

Naming a cat is never a good thing to do if you intend to part with it, but we had and so we did not.

I could not settle. In three years we went from Qatar to Spain to Italy, taking Ivanhoe, Confetti and Brutus Junior with us. We left them in a cattery to attend one of my dearest friend's funerals back in London and when we returned I held Ivanhoe while he was put to sleep. His kidneys had never been strong.

When we returned home to the UK, we had lost one of my dearest friends, the last hope of children with the advent of an early menopause and our first cat together, but we brought Brutus and Confetti, survivors like ourselves. After a couple of years they were joined by another rescue Bengal, a snow, with cerulean eyes, that we named Iona, a miracle cat, it turned out. She fell ill with failed kidneys and the Queen Mother Hospital said had she been older they would have put her down, but she was only two then, and maybe she could live six months more since she seemed to have adjusted so well to such a diminished function. That was years ago. She's been in and out the hospital a couple of times. Each time we think we will have to put her down, each time the staff greet her by name and call us after a few days to tell us our miracle cat is recovering again and do we want to take her home? She doesn't like to eat when she's in hospital.

Five more years pass. We are finally resigned to our state. But a legacy of sorts remains. Confetti, older, sedate and very graceful still, poised and posing with her single leg stretched

high. My husband's cat. Not mine. She never took to me. But ours too because her presence is inextricably tied to that mewling kitten she once was, the needy creature who took us out of our own grieving.

And Iona. My cat. Not my husband's. She won't even come when he calls her, even if he makes the sound of treats rustling, even if he opens the butter tub. She waits, as if he is invisible, unheard. Yet she always comes for me. But in another way she too belongs to both of us; she was my gift in my darkest time. It is as if she knows.

Only Brutus is really shared. Brutus, with his single canine tooth and rictus grin, his other front tooth and much of his early Doha independence taken by a car who didn't stop even though they knew they had hit him. The cat who came during our sorrow, the one we nurtured and brought up through it, beyond it. The cat who comes for both of us, or neither, on certain days. The one that made both of us cry out that day. The late afternoon when the kind people who had seen the car hit him, slow down, then speed up and leave him, called the number on his tag to see how we could save him. 'Not Brutus,' we said, not Brutus.' As if anything would be better than that.

They remain with us, all three, in a home we have finally made that fits them. Living mementos. Rescuing cats as much as rescued.

Book Review

Blasian Invasion: Racial Mixing in the Celebrity Industrial Complex (Race, Rhetoric, and Media Series). Myra S. Washington. University Press of Mississippi, 2017. 192 pages.

ISBN: 978-1496814227

The best aspects of story telling in service of a good argument are evident in Myra Washington's book, *Blasian Invasion* in which she offers an engaging and layered argument that is a dynamic discussion about human nature and modern culture. Although this is a sociological treatise, *Blasian Invasion* tackles the mythological facets of race as well as the real world results of misunderstandings that occur when we evaluate people in terms of racial stereotypes. In fact this work is timely and vital particularly in light of the fact that current American political discourse racism is now being liberally employed to validate some horrific social engineering protocols.

This is a discussion of ethnicity as a term that because of the way the terms is used has become devoid of authenticity. "We find ourselves in a postmodern moment where culture has become flattened and emptied of meaning, only to be commodified and then sanitized ..." (14), Washington writes. She focuses on ethnicity as if it was a brand used to sell the product (the person or the candidate) and considers the possibility of the development of "alternative concepts of community," ones that focus on the name calling, if you will, that can be used positively to redefine human connections in terms other than ancient historical or biological terms. She

not only wins the argument she presents, but she offers a place for so many aspects of self and identity to be examined that you finish this read wanting to write your own long hand response.

In this process, Washington also scrutinizes the notion of "whiteness," reflecting on it as an unexamined code word that strangles any conversation about race because the word is so laden with assumptions of identity and power that no one contests its meaning. "I use transracial theory to denaturalize and disrupt normative racial categories," (13) she says. Focusing on race as a construct (Washington uses the word "performative"), Washington dives into the reality of a culture that cannot cope with the reality of the diversity it seems to embrace. And in positing the strength of a hybrid understanding of race that is more vital than white vs. another she comes closer to an investigation about the nature of identity that is more flexible and therefore more genuine than the one currently being produced in mainstream conversations.

This is a compelling text. It is well written and wonderfully argued. It is also an aggressively contemporary with the text focusing people and events affecting the reader NOW (Miss Japan Beauty Pageant, Law and Order episodes, Charles Mingus, and the Kimora Barbie, for example.) I can think of several ways this text will further any number of investigations into racism and the way it affects the human psyche. I finished this book feeling as if I could fill notebooks with new ideas generated by my interaction with this text. Washington offers solid conclusions but more importantly she offers a myriad of rhetorical avenues one might pursue after reading this work.

Kim Idol

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Book Review

Epistrophies Jazz and the Literary Imagination. Brent Hayes Edwards. Harvard University Press, 2017. 336 pages.

ISBN: 978-0674055438

Brent Hayes Edwards is a noted scholar of numerous aspects of the black diasporic experience. In *Epistrophies Jazz and the Literary Imagination*, he examines the often overlooked interplay between the emerging jazz music of the Harlem Renaissance, and, what we might think of as, the more conventional "literature" both preceding and following it. That is the crux of Edwards's scholarly mission. He seeks to demystify the origins of jazz by showing that its history is just as rich and varied as that of any other literary form. He does not do this because he feels the need to "justify" the history of jazz by connecting it to some more "acceptable" literary genre. Instead, this study seeks to demonstrate the interconnectedness of the many literary and musical forms which melded to produce jazz, and which continue to influence popular culture today.

Formally speaking, the book is divided into eight chapters. Each chapter, ostensibly, focuses on either a great figure in jazz, like Louis Armstrong, or some aspect of music construction, like the, sometimes multifaceted, meanings of song titles. Practically speaking, however, insights and observations ebb and flow, freely between chapters like an improvised jazz tune. At every turn, new, unexpected, connections between prose, poetry, and jazz, appear. From the more familiarly styled literary introductions of James Weldon John-

son to Neil Armstrong's first words on the moon, *Epistrophies Jazz and the Literary Imagination* draws together not only the myriad threads of the African-American experience, but provides much useful insight on some of its perspective on wider American popular culture through the decades.

Taking *Epistrophies Jazz and the Literary Imagination* as mirroring less a single jazz tune, and more an entire, multi-artist, concert extravaganza, the book's structure makes even more sense, and its mission becomes that much clearer. The "headliners" each take center stage for a while and then yield to someone else. Their individual accomplishments, and the mythos surrounding them, are examined in such engaging terms, that readers will become just as eager as is Edwards, himself, to understand why, for instance, it is so important to the legend of Louis Armstrong that his use of Scat singing arose from "an accident" even though many who were present at the supposed incident claim that was not the case? Readers also will be given much food for thought as to how that speaks to what factors help to shape any sort of popular culture, race notwithstanding.

Like Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington receives top billing in the "concert" that is *Epistrophies Jazz and the Literary Imagination*. His musical and literary beginnings are expertly chronicled. While some of this may be well known, what may be quite a bit less so is the prodigious amount of, more conventional, poetry and prose he wrote, and how throughout his life he constantly converted prose to poetry and back again, and tried to infuse jazz into other areas of music, and vice versa. It may surprise many readers to find just how much of a distinction Duke Ellington drew between the jazz being played in Harlem, and that being played in New Orleans, and in just how much higher esteem he held the former.

Other, perhaps less well known, artists also populate the pages of *Epistrophies Jazz and the Literary Imagination.* For example, Mary Lou Williams, and her technique of "zoning" in order to produce her best music may not automatically resonate with readers until Edwards makes the point that many athletes and entertainers now "get in the zone" in order to achieve optimum results. Singer songwriters Henry Threadgill and Nathaniel Mackey also receive relatively brief, but riveting, examination. Through close reading of their song titles and lyrics Edwards reveals their influence on more widely popular artists like Ray Charles and Stevie Wonder. Their impact on contemporary hip-hop and rap artists is also explored, as is the notion that many who acknowledge their impact do so only through anecdotes shrouded in myth and legend.

Those interested in the journey of jazz, from where it has been, to where it is, to where it is going, will find *Epistrophies Jazz and the Literary Imagination* an eye-opening pleasure to read. Those interested in the wider impact of music upon generations of popular culture will also find the book enlightening.

James Altman

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Contributors

James Altman serves as Academic Support Specialist for the Academic Success Center (ASC) at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. His research interests include Modern and Contemporary Literature, Modern and Contemporary Poetry, Popular Culture, and how best to implement assistive technologies to aid student learning. He has published both scholarly and creative work. He is a book reviewer for the Journal of American Culture (JAC).

Ian Boucher earned his Bachelor of Arts in Film Studies and Communication at the University of Pittsburgh, and his Master of Library and Information Science at Kent State University. He researches the role of superhero media in developing America's understandings about justice, and edited *Humans and Paragons: Essays on Super-Hero Justice*.

Amy M. Green specializes in the study of video games. She is especially interested in the expanding presence of video games as a compelling source of narrative, one that is necessarily participatory by nature. She is the author of two books*: Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, Trauma, and History in Metal Gear Solid V* and *Storytelling in Video Games: The Art of the Digital Narrative*.

Luc Guglielmi is currently an Associate Professor of French and Francophone Studies at Kennesaw State University. He also directs the French program at Kennesaw State University since 2006. His general research interests are Francophone comics, oral tradition, and eroticism. Luc Guglielmi received his PhD in 2004 from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in Francophone Studies.

Kim Idol is a writer/instructor partial to dogs, guns, rock climbing and travel. Her short stories are published in *Danse Macabre, Portland Review, Toasted Cheese, Dead Neon*, and *Helen: A Literary Journal*. She is working on a novel in between trips to the Middle East and Asia, her passion of late.

Patricia M. Kirtley earned a Master of Fine Arts in Writing from the Vermont College of the Fine Arts in 2008. She co-authored *Healthy Grieving* (2005), *America Cries "I'm Sorry,"* (2016), and *Strategic Literacy Instruction* (2017). Pat enjoys reading, writing, traveling, and learning.

William M. Kirtley earned a Doctor of Arts from Idaho State University. He wrote *Politics of Death* (2012), and co-authored *Healthy Grieving* (2005), *America Cries "I'm Sorry,"* (2016), and *Strategic Literacy Instruction* (2017). He and Patricia celebrated their 51st wedding anniversary. He enjoys reading, writing, and learning from his grandchildren.

Maureen Salsitz is an instructor in Cultural Anthropology at California State University, Fullerton, as well as several community colleges in Orange County, California. With a PhD in Cultural Studies, her research interests have been focused on ethnicity, multiculturalism, representation, museums, Disney theme parks, and popular culture.

Brady Simenson is a Masters student and composition instructor at Northern Illinois University. His emphasis is in Film and Literature, but his work expands throughout all of popular culture studies, especially those involving issues of race and class. Beyond teaching, he has also recently accepted a position as a film writer with the online magazine, *Pop Matters.*

Max J. Skidmore is University of Missouri Curators' Distinguished Professor of Political Science and Thomas Jefferson Fellow at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. He specializes in presidential politics, American political thought, political ideologies, popular culture, and the politics of Social Security and health care. He has been Distinguished Fulbright Lecturer to India, and Senior Fulbright Scholar, University of Hong Kong.

H. Peter Steeves is Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Humanities Center at DePaul University. He is the author of eight books, including the forthcoming *Being and Showtime* (Northwestern U P, 2019). He has published more than 130 book chapters and journal articles. His current research focuses primarily on cosmology and astrobiology—on the origin events of both the cosmos and life.