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EVIL EYE:
**WITCH-HUNTS, GENDER RELATIONS,
AND COVERT RESISTANCE IN
NINETEENTH-CENTURY COLONIAL INDIA**

Mary Margaret McConnell

"I have cut the plantain grove,
I have taken off my clothes.
I have learnt from my mother-in-law
How to eat my husband.
On the hills the wind blows,
I have cut the thatching grass,
I have grown weary,
Weary of eating rice."[1]

INTRODUCTION

  Spiritualism was central in Adivasi culture and was inexorably linked to gender relations.[2] Transgression against the norms of feminine behavior within a patriarchal society could result in persecution of these women by way of violent witch-hunts and execution. The term for "witch" varies from rural regions in the subcontinent, but for clarity, this paper will

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[1] Shashank Sinha. *Restless Mothers and Turbulent Daughters: Situating Tribes in Gender Studies.* (Kolkata, India: Bhatkal and Sen, 2005), 60.

[2] Adivasi: collective term for tribes of the Indian subcontinent (Dip Kapoor. "Human Rights as Paradox and Equivocation in Contexts of Adivasi Dispossession in India." *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 47, no. 4 (August 2012): 416)

use the Bhili dialect's vocabulary to refer to the image of the Adivasi witch as *dakan*.[3] Gendered violence, gender as a colonizing tool, and resistance to British authority are all predicated on dimensions of power. The choice to subvert these structures through passive resistance against the oppressor resulted in the oppressed gaining marginal power for themselves. The *dakan* was a metaphor for obtaining a subversive form of authority with which Adivasi women could contest the power of their domineering patriarchal society, and resistance to civilizing legislation in the mid-19th century gave Adivasi men an avenue to express their frustrations caused by increased social tension and anti-colonial sentiment.

Before discussing the nature of power relations between Adivasi men and women and those between Adivasi and British colonizers, the shortcomings of the colonial archive must first be addressed. The British Empire was prolific in collecting knowledge about its colonies, and this knowledge always carried with it dimensions of power. The type of knowledge produced and disseminated was strictly controlled, so as to promote the British civilizing mission and justify the further subjugation of their colonial subjects.[4] The colonial archive was created to intentionally create a specific kind of knowledge, one that produced a one-dimensional image of the colonized. Certain perspectives were either never recorded in the first place or have not survived; the sources that have endured are not as accessible as the British archive. Therefore,

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[3]In Vasavi or Bhili dialect, the word *dakan/dako* means a woman who is regarded as a witch. In their worldview, certain women are stimulated by negative emotions, mainly by envy, causing harm, sickness, misfortune, economic loss, and death by casting the evil power. (Robert Gabriel Mac-Machado. "Witchcraft and Witchcraft Cleansing among the Vasava Bhils." Antrhopos 105, no. 1 (2010): 192)

[4]Thomas Richards. *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire*. (London: Verso Books, 1993), 4-7.

the incompleteness of the archive means that one cannot take Imperial sources as the final word on what life was like in India during the mid-nineteenth century.

We must consider the evidence we do have, as well as can be inferred about power structures from the colonial period from the absence of evidence we do not have access to.[5] For our discussion, there are few records from the Adivasi perspective that are easily accessible; many are held in rural Indian libraries or are not digitized or translated. There are quotations from indigenous individuals in a few of the British sources, but the accuracy and selectivity of these must be questioned. Instead, this research relies on the decades of work conducted by scholars like Ajay Skaria and Shashank Sinha who were able to study original documents.

Acknowledging the lack of Adivasi sources in this paper is a necessary responsibility. If historians attempt to create only one version of the truth, other possible perspectives are silenced and eventually lost.[6] The effects of British attempts to promote a narrative through the regulation of knowledge collection and dissemination in India and the obstacles faced during this research process are evidence of this phenomenon. Guided by scholars who interpreted data that I do not have, my examination of power relations within gender and colonization is an attempt to augment knowledge of witch-hunts and their implications despite the limitations of the British archive.

NATURE OF SPIRITUALISM IN ADIVASI TRIBES

Contact between the physical and spiritual words was believed to be commonplace among rural populations in India

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[5] Frederick Cooper and Ann Stoler. *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*. (Berkley, California: University of California Press, 1997), 18.

[6] John Arnold. *History: A Very Short Introduction*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 116.

where traditional Brahmanism was not observed. All misfortune in a village, such as diseases that affect humans or animals alike, was credited to be the cause of one of two sources; the rage of an evil spirit or the work of a witch or sorcerer. An evil spirit can be appeased through ritual, but a witch must be punished or driven from the village.[7] Magical spiritualism was not always accredited to the evil power of a witch. *Ojha*, or individuals who practiced white magic, was associated with being both socially and psychologically beneficial. Black magic practitioners, or *dain*, were associated with the maleficent will of the spirits whom they evoked.[8] The acceptance of certain individuals who were in regular contact with the spiritual realm was a cornerstone of traditional beliefs in Adivasi groups. Magic that was harnessed by the authority of spiritual entities for the use of male-centered activities, such as hunting, was encouraged in tribal communities. Male practitioners of magic, known as *dakinos* and *bhagats*, were accepted and even celebrated in Adivasi groups.[9] *Dakinos* and *bhagats* were permitted to contact the spiritual realm as their actions were often sanctioned by powerful male villagers. Since their abilities were recruited by men and for the purpose of serving male interests, there were few if any repercussions against the practice of magic by men. However prevalent contact with spirits was, acceptable access to spiritual power was segregated on the basis of gender and there existed a powerful taboo against women's interaction with the supernatural world. The gendered nature of spirituality in Adivasi religious practice precipitated the violence suffered by women who crossed the boundaries of this male-constructed taboo.

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[7] Shashank S. Sinha. "Adivasis, Gender and the 'Evil Eye': The Construction(s) of Witches in Colonial Chotanagpur." *Indian Historical Review* 33, no. 1 (January 2006), 128.

[8] Ibid, 129.

[9] Ajay, Skaria. "Women, Witchcraft, and Gratuitous Violence in Colonial Western India." *Past & Present*, no. 155 (1997), 115.

The subordinate social and political status of women in Adivasi communities was reflected by their specific exclusion from the ritual sphere, as it was believed that direct female participation in religious activity would be destructive. Women were believed to take away the power of men who engaged spiritual assistance. For example, it was known that a man possessing supernatural powers would lose his abilities if he came into contact with a menstruating woman.[10] Furthermore, women were kept from personal participation in the spiritual sphere due to the belief that they were superior to men in the recitation of mantras and incantations, and therefore could win the favor of spirits more easily than men. Adivasi men feared the power women might gain from spirits would be used to the detriment of society or might threaten their authority. Women who refused to abide by religious taboos, or who were suspected to be in conversation with the spiritual realm, threatened the established patriarchal order of Adivasi society.[11] Though gendered elitism of the spiritual sphere predated British colonialism in India, the presence and policies of the colonizer would prove to complicate and deepen the tensions between men and women that would lead to continued violence against unruly women.

FEAR OF FEMALE SEXUALITY AND DAKANISM

The exclusion of women from the spiritual sphere was directly related to Adivasi fears surrounding the power of female sexuality. There prevailed a view that women could seduce evil spirits to wreak havoc on the lives of their enemies, therefore justifying the ban on female participation in all sacrifices or public religious expression. The taboo against women's participation in the spiritual sphere was meant to establish certain modes of acceptable feminine behavior and used gender

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[10] Ibid, 132.
[11] Sinha. *Restless Mothers and Turbulent Daughters*. (Kolkata, India: Bhatkal and Sen, 2005), 57.

as an essential tool of discrimination.[12] While *dakino* and *bhagat* magic could be positively utilized and there were few sanctions against male practitioners of magic, *dakans*, or female witches, were seen to be evil women who used their power for violent ends. Additionally, *dakans* were supposed to work in secret, adding to men's fears about the power of female sexuality.[13] The mythology surrounding *dakans* supports Adivasi men's fear of women using their sexuality for evil. Maran Buru, the Supreme Being in Adivasi cosmology, was teaching witchcraft to men, but women received magical power as the result of trickery. Women are believed to possess strange, mysterious powers that allowed them to fool the Supreme Being, which was accredited to their compelling sexual allure.[14] Due to the perceived power of divine female sexuality combined with the secrecy surrounding it, men did not understand, and therefore feared, the actions of women who did not abide by their established patriarchal structure. Women who utilized their sexuality were subverting the power structure of Adivasi culture as it was one of few forms of power that men could not have access to.

Accusations of witchcraft and witch-hunts were a violent expression of men's fears surrounding female sexuality and were a reflection of gender tensions in Adivasi society. Witch-hunts came to serve as an institutional method of excreting social control over nonconformist women who refused to abide by the gender norms ascribed to them by the patriarchal structure of their communities. Violence against women accused of witchcraft was an attempt by males to reestablish masculine dominance of religious rites, norms of behavior, and other forms of societal power. Women who were suspected to or claimed to be in communication with spirits were seen as a great danger to the community and therefore were targeted by

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[12] Ibid, 55.

[13] Skaria. "Women, Witchcraft, and Gratuitous Violence in Colonial Western India," 117.

[14] Sinha. "Adivasis, Gender and the 'Evil Eye'," 130-1.

men who feared a loss of masculine authority.[15] The 'evil influence' of women and their deviant intimacy with the spiritual realm was met by brutality and violence at the hands of men who wished to maintain control over community power and resources.[16] *Dakans* were believed to have an unquenchable sexual lust, even considered by some to be nymphomaniacs. Women sexually perverse by Adivasi standards were feared, because they were believed to inherently be evil and capable of black magic.[17] Driven by anxiety of losing their distinctly male power combined with a desire to keep women in physically and spiritually subservient social positions, witch accusations and persecutions became an essential method of gender control.

WITCH-HUNTS:
IDENTIFICATION AND PUNISHMENT

Upon being persuaded that a *dakan* is practicing in their midst, indigenous village leaders must proceed to identify and punish the witch. However, due to their secretive nature, it could prove difficult to find a witch, as those engaged in dark magic are "extraordinarily good at public relations," indicating that a *dakan* was at her core a manipulative and deceptive woman.[18] As they were unlikely to catch the *dakan* in the midst of performing magic, witch-hunters therefore, had to rely on other indicators to uncover the threat within their village. The characteristics that raised or confirmed a community's suspicion of a particular woman being guilty of witchcraft were determined by the ideas of what constituted proper womanhood for Adivasis. Certain aspects are shared with the

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[15] Shamsher Alam and Aditya Raj. "The Academic Journey of Witchcraft Studies in India." *Man in India* 97, no. 21: 128.

[16] Sinha. "Adivasis, Gender and the 'Evil Eye'," 140.

[17] Robert Gabriel Mac-Machado. "Witchcraft and Witchcraft Cleansing among the Vasava Bhils." *Antrhopos* 105, no. 2 (2010): 197

[18] Ibid.

European traditions of witchcraft, as seen in a reported instance of witchcraft in 1852; the suspected witch was "an elderly woman, of witchlike aspect and grotesque costume."[19] Factors such as age and physical abnormality often raised suspicion of witchcraft, though marital status nor economic position held significant influence in accusations. A woman's personality, more than her appearance or social standing, had the most impact on whether she would be rendered suspect of practicing dark magic. *Dakans* were identified as "the most notorious, quarrelsome, and troublesome woman in the family, or the one gifted with the longest broadest and sharpest tongue in the family"; independent and expressive women were most likely to be accused.[20] Accusations were centered around problematic behavior of certain types of women. Those who were outspoken or exhibited any personal autonomy posed a threat to males who sought to completely dominate women in all areas. Proper womanhood was decided by the patriarchy and perpetuated through violence against those who failed to fulfill their prescribed womanly obligations.

The type of women that were accused of witchcraft reveals the tension between genders and conflict over how women were meant to behave. The sight of a woman out at night "where she had no business to be," or examples of behavior in which a woman has not abided by patriarchal standards of a woman's proper place were enough to garner suspicion.[21] Physical deformities often indicated the presence of magical powers provoked fear in villagers, instead of serving as the trustworthy mother image that women were meant to occupy. Due to the nonconformist activities and appearance of accused witches, witch-hunts can be interpreted as an institu-

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[19] NA, "Witchcraft in India," *The Globe* (London, England): Oct. 29, 1852

[20] Skaria. "Women, Witchcraft, and Gratuitous Violence in Colonial Western India," 120.

[21] Sinha. "Adivasis, Gender and the 'Evil Eye'," 138.

tionalized method of discrimination aimed at punishing divergent behavior in women. The attempt to purge 'evil influence' in the village via violent persecution demonstrates an effort to control women by punishing nonconformist activity.[22] These deviant women represented such a threat to the patriarchal structure of Adivasi communities and were viewed as even more dangerous due to their propensity for vindictiveness, that they had to be hunted and exterminated so that other women would learn to accept their subordinate position to men.[23] Essentially, those persecuted under the guise of practicing witchcraft were made examples of what could happen if a woman failed to perform her gender according to the rules decided by Adivasi men.

Once the presence of a *dakan* was suspected, a *bhagat* would be tasked with finding her identity and bringing her to the village officials for judgement. *Bhagats* were male spiritualists whose purpose was to find and exterminate witches.[24] A specific position within the community whose primary duty was to suppress unruly women is further evidence of male fear surrounding the power of female sexuality and the risk of female denial of their ascribed gender roles. The *bhagat* would go into a trance during which a spirit would take possession of him to expose which woman is guilty of performing witchcraft.[25] The accused woman would then undergo a series of tests to determine her guilt, the most common of which was swinging. The eyes of the *dakan* would be covered in a cloth containing chilies, as the glance of an enraged witch, or her 'evil eye,' was believed to cause serious bodily harm to whomever she looked upon. Also, it was believed that a true *dakan*

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[22] Ibid, 140-141.

[23] Mac-Machado. "Witchcraft and Witchcraft Cleansing among the Vasava Bhils," 196.

[24] Skaria. "Women, Witchcraft, and Gratuitous Violence in Colonial Western India," 109.

[25] Rudolf Rahmann. "Shamanistic and Related Phenomena in Northern and Middle India." *Anthropos* 54, no. 5/6 (1959): 689.

would not feel the pain of the chilies. She would then be strung by her feet over a lit fire for up to three days, or until she admitted to being a *dakan*. In one case, eight women were declared by a *bhagat* to be witches after an outbreak of cholera ravaged their village. Each of the women, some of whom were very young girls, underwent similar ill-treatment until they admitted to their charge and agreed to remove their spells.[26] There was no discrimination of punishment in accordance with age; the sentence of those suspected of subverting their ascribed femininity to claim illegitimate spiritual power from men was ubiquitous.

The swingings were not meant explicitly to kill the witch, as a *dakan* who died by swinging could become potentially even more powerful after her death and would be less likely to release her victim from illness. Instead, the purpose of the swingings was to test and punish a suspected *dakan* for her transgression against the victim as well as for unacceptable expression of femininity.[27] If a woman failed this test, she would then face execution at the hand of her neighbors. Even if a woman passed the test and was found to be innocent, the rage of the community about her insolence that led to the accusation remained. In one instance, when suspected *dakan* Kunku was released following her swinging, a relative of the victim refused to accept the judgment and killed her anyway.[28] Death in spite of proved innocence is symptomatic of the extreme gendered tensions between Adivasi men and unruly women who threaten the established order. Despite their innocence, the failure to perform their gender correctly caused such anger among the men in their community that they are still at danger of persecution.

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[26] Edward Tuite Dalton. *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*. (Calcutta, India: Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, 1872), 200.

[27] Skaria. "Women, Witchcraft, and Gratuitous Violence in Colonial Western India," 124-5.

[28] Ibid, 129.

FEMININE ACCEPTANCE OF DAKANISM

Upon traveling throughout colonial India in 1864, Irish geologist Valentine Ball observed a strange phenomenon among the Adivasi women accused to be witches. In his book originally published in 1880, Ball writes, "It is a peculiarity here that the belief is so thorough that even those who are accused of being witches or sorcerers do not deny the impeachment, but accept the position readily with all its pains and penalties." [29] Accepting the role of *dakan* and therefore the subsequent punishment of murder by their fellow villagers raises the question of why women chose to identify with witchcraft even when the repercussions for being perceived as a witch were so severe. The exclusion from spiritual practices that were essential to Adivasi life, coupled with other gendered restrictions such as limited land rights, strict control of sexuality, and repressive taboos led to a societal devaluation of women. Exclusion and discrimination based on gender left Adivasi women with limited options to exercise any autonomy or power over their own lives. Participating in magic or accepting the position of *dakan* was one of few ways tribal women could gain agency.[30] The image of the *dakan* provided Adivasi women with a covert form of resistance to the exploitative, male-dominated society in which they lived, serving as "a fault-line along which social tensions could be articulated."[31] The existence of *dakans* in traditional beliefs as well as the violent reaction of men to suspected witches was proof of acknowledgment of power only women could hold, though it was illegitimate and unacceptable.[32] Acceptance of the title of *dakan* was a method of non-confrontational resistance to

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[29] Valentine Ball. *Tribal and Peasant Life in Nineteenth Century India.* 1880. (Darya Ganj, New Delhi: Usha Jain, 1985), 115.
[30] Sinha. "Adivasis, Gender and the 'Evil Eye'," 133.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Skaria. "Women, Witchcraft, and Gratuitous Violence in Colonial Western India," 132.

the patriarchal restrictions of Adivasi society and was a way for women to gain powerful agency in their communities, though it would most likely result in their violent death.

Religion was essential for Adivasi communities, but it was a man's religion. Women could only communicate with spirits through a male conduit. Adivasi women, for purposes evil or good, wanted to have equal access to the spiritual realm with men. In order to practice, women were forced into secrecy.[33] Furthermore, male control over female sexuality and women's lack of control over their bodily autonomy coupled with their exclusion from religious practice represents the total dominance of Adivasi men and the complete subordination of women.[34] The image of an otherwise powerless woman who could simply look upon an enemy and cause them bodily harm through the power of their evil eye was simultaneously a terrifying idea for men and a potentially empowering image for women.[35] Some women would claim the authority of the *dakan* by wearing ornaments or symbolic jewelry that openly indicated their authority independent of the patriarchal structure that dictated every aspect of their lives.[36] The display of their identity was a passive form of resistance to the practices that sought to expose, humiliate, and punish or murder subversive women. The public nature of their punishments compounded the ignominy of their accusation, and the acceptance of the role of *dakan* was a means to negate that indignity.[37]

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[33] Sinha. *Restless Mothers and Turbulent Daughters.* (Kolkata, India: Bhatkal and Sen, 2005), 61.

[34] Ibid, 64.

[35] NA, "Survival of Superstition in India," *The Star* (Guernsey, England), Nov. 28, 1893.

[36] Skaria. "Women, Witchcraft, and Gratuitous Violence in Colonial Western India," 135.

[37] [37] James C. Scott. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1990): 113.

Dakans were regarded with fearful respect, and fear drove their persecution. However, the respect of their power garnered a type of marginal legitimacy that other women did not possess. As only women to be *dakans*, there existed a belief that women are inherently inclined to evil actions. These women were not weak or powerless against men. In some traditions, *dakans* gained their power by eating men, explicitly drawing the dimensions of divine feminine authority on the gendering of evil.[38] Since *dakans* had the capacity to harm men, they needed to be controlled through violence. Male preoccupation with the existence of *dakans* in these communities and fear of their distinctly feminine abilities is indicative of an acknowledged marginalized legitimacy of power exercised by specific types of women who gained authority by drawing on the metaphor of the *dakan* in a society which gave them few opportunities to exercise agency.

BRITISH GOVERNMENT
AND INDIAN WITCHCRAFT

A central aspect of British involvement in India was criticism of Indian society's 'barbaric' customs and the subsequent legislation aimed at civilizing the subcontinent.[39] Views on Indian witch-hunts as observed in English newspapers from the mid-nineteenth century demonstrate the opinion held by those enacting and upholding the legislation regarding witchcraft in the colony that it was a British responsibility to serve as an example of civilized society. In 1858, the *Surrey Comet* commented that "The pretence (sic) of supernatural powers was a source of great evil in India, not only as a means of extortion

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[38] Govind Kelkar. *With-Hunts: Culture, Patriarchy, and Structural Transformation.* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2020, 182.

[39] Partha Chatterjee. "Colonialism, Nationalism, and Colonized Women: The Contest in India." *American Ethnologist* 16, no. 4 (1989): 622.

and intimidation, but also by numerous murders perpetrated on persons suspected of practicing…by magical arts."[40] Towards the end of the nineteenth century, *The Star* reported that "Witchcraft, as the records of the criminal courts occasionally reveal, is still as common a belief among the lower strata of the natives of India as it was in England in the Middle Ages, and even, as we saw the other day (says the Times of India), the educated Baboo is not wholly free from this ignorant survival of primitive animalistic faiths."[41] The views reflected in these newspaper articles demonstrate the metropole's vision of itself as a civilizing force in colonial India, enacting legislation that would protect the native from the dangers of their "primitive animalistic faiths"; the British believed that the subjugated population in India must come to terms with the inferiority of their culture and embrace the rational order of Western customs in order to form a new, civilized Indian society.[42] So-called civilizing legislation was passed, often with the justification of protecting Indian women from what the British saw as barbaric traditional practices. Therefore, gender became a central fault line upon which the British would enact their civilizing mission of India.

Differences between colonial and indigenous populations were established consciously to create dynamics of domination and subordination in colonized territories.[43] Furthermore, colonial spaces are inherently gendered, as seen by the tensions that resulted in witchcraft-related persecution of Adivasi women. The gendered nature of colonial spaces allowed for

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[40] NA, "On Infanticide, Burning of Widows, and Witchcraft in India," *Surrey Comet* (London, England), Feb. 27, 1858.

[41] NA, "Survival of Superstition in India," *The Star* (Guernsey, England), Nov. 28, 1893.

[42] Chatterjee. "Colonialism, Nationalism, and Colonized Women," 623.

[43] Catherine Hall. *Cultures of Empire: Colonizers in Britain and the Empire in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.* (New York City, New York: Routledge, 2000), 19.

sexuality and gender to be utilized by the colonizer as a tool for exerting control over indigenous groups.[44] The British government had already established a precedent for using gender as a tool of eradicating traditional practices in 1829 when the colonial government banned sati.[45] The 1847 anti-witch-hunt proclamation claimed to protect tribal women against the 'evil practice' by declaring that the killing of a supposed witch would be considered, for the first time in rural India, as murder and would be punished as such.[46] By disguising the anti-witch-hunting ban as a means to curb gender-related violence, the British government used this legislation as a method to establish further domination of the native population. Officials and missionaries recorded and investigated instances of witch-hunts and witchcraft-related murder that they often did not witness first-hand as proof of barbarity to further justify strict regulation of indigenous populations.[47] The evidence garnered by Westerners of cultural violence was intertwined into modernizing, nationalist projects of the British in India.[48] By framing the British suppression of traditional practices under the rhetoric of protecting women, indigenous women themselves became the grounds for interaction between native populations and British officials.

From the British perspective as reported in domestic newspapers, the ban of witch-hunts was effective legislation,

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[44] Margaret Strobel. "Women's History, Gender History, and European Colonialism." In *Colonialism and the Modern World* (New York City, New York: Routledge, 2002), 54.

[45] Lata Mani. "Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India." *Cultural Critique*, no. 7 (1987): 152.

[46] Ball. *Tribal and Peasant Life in Nineteenth Century India.* (Darya Ganj, New Delhi: Usha Jain, 1985), 115.

[47] Alam and Raj. "The Academic Journey of Witchcraft Studies in India," 126.

[48] Cooper and Stoler. *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*. (Berkley, California: University of California Press, 1997), 16-17.

protecting accused witches from violence at the behest of a savage and backward tradition. The *Surrey Comet* reported, "These acts of fancied retaliation have been, with a gentle but powerful hand, repressed, and great progress has been made towards their extinction. The fraudulent pretence (sic) is now punished as a substantitive (sic) crime."[49] Another newspaper reports justice won for "an elderly woman, of witchlike aspect," by a colonial magistrate when she was robbed. The thief received six months imprisonment with hard labor as a consequence for stealing from the witch.[50]

Journals from the time reveal similar views about the cultural practice of witch-hunts. William Dunbar wrote in 1861 that, "this belief, so common among all savage nations, often leads them to the commission of the most dreadful crimes."[51] The rural group he focuses on, the Coles, has a history of resisting the British Government in their region as they are resistant to sharing their land with outsiders. Dunbar writes with optimism that the Coles "will gradually be weaned from their savage and predatory pursuits and that the blessings of civilization will make sure progress among them."[52] However optimistic these authors depict the hopes of success for the ban in India and the upholding of the law for the punishment of transgressions against perceived witches, the effectiveness of the prohibition of witch-hunts was not ubiquitous due to Adivasi resistance and lack of British enforcement.

Adivasi assumed that the British would aid them in the extermination of witches during the initial years of British rule, but these hopes were dashed when the first anti-witch-

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[49] NA, "On Infanticide, Burning of Widows, and Witchcraft in India." *Surrey Comet* (London, England), Feb. 27, 1858.

[50] NA, "Witchcraft in India," *The Globe* (London, England): Oct. 29, 1852.

[51] William Dunbar. "Some Observations on the Manners, Customs, and Religious Opinions of the Lurka Coles." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 18 (1861): 374.

[52] Ibid, 375.

hunt ban was imposed in 1847 in the rural Dangs.[53] Similar bans were soon implemented in Rajputana in 1853 and Udaipur in 1862. However, the areas in which traditions of witchcraft and therefore witch-hunts were most common were areas which the British struggled to maintain control of.[54] Though British rule was stronger by the mid-nineteenth century than it had been prior in rural areas where witch-hunts thrived, their control remained limited; for example, the Dangs were managed by a few British officials who made visits to the region only during the winter to avoid malaria.[55] The rural nature of Adivasi communities made them practically inaccessible to the type of British rule implemented in other parts of the subcontinent. In addition to limited direct control of Adivasi groups, there was not a consensus amongst British magistrates on how to prosecute those who participated in witch-hunt related violence against women. One man received only three years imprisonment for the murder of a witch following the 1847 ban in the Dangs.[56] The ban was hindered by the disagreement of how to address the pervasive belief in witchcraft as well as the interference of witch-finders or *bhagats*.

Colonial officials at times claimed they found it difficult to prosecute witch-killers to the degree they were mandated by law to do because the natives did not believe themselves to be committing a crime.[57] A British ethnological study from 1868 describes the dissonance the British felt about sentencing the men who carried out these witch-hunts. The task of upholding the ban was described as "melancholy," as magistrate would be sentencing men "who in their examinations detailed the

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[53] Skaria. "Women, Witchcraft, and Gratuitous Violence in Colonial Western India," 135.

[54] Sinha. "Adivasis, Gender and the 'Evil Eye'," 147.

[55] Skaria. "Women, Witchcraft, and Gratuitous Violence in Colonial Western India," 112.

[56] Ajay Skaria. "Shades of Wildness tribe, Caste, and Gender in Western India." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 56, no. 3 (1997): 726.

[57] Ibid, 727.

most marvellous (sic) effects of imputed sorcery, were sincere believers in all that they narrated."[58] The retributive task of upholding the law was considered to be a disheartening job because of the pity magistrates took upon the native men, whose belief in sorcery was strong and could not be diminished by a few pieces of British civilizing legislation.

Furthermore, the role of *bhagats* in witch-hunts and their esteemed place within their communities were a particular challenge for British prosecutors. One official proclaimed, "were it not for these pestilent *bhagats* we should soon see an end to witch-torturing and killing."[59] However, some scholars argue the limited documented instances of the ban's success are more indicative of Adivasi society than of British efforts to prosecute accordingly, as the ban provided supporters of supposed witches with more resources to protect the accused. If a woman accused of practicing witchcraft was attacked in any way, her supporters could complain to the British and therefore increase the likelihood of justice being served. This process was the primary way British officials found out about most witch-hunts at all.[60] Regardless of the identity of those who aided in the effectiveness of the legislation and despite newspapers' claims, the ban on witch-hunts was hindered by limited control of rural areas where the tradition persisted and the judgments of individual magistrates.

The criminalization of traditional practices contributed to the already extensive impact colonial rule had on tribal social structures. Communal modes of production that were replaced with private land rights, commercial deforestation, and intrusion of Western capitalists to previously inaccessible regions are a few of the changes Adivasi tribal communities faced

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[58] E.T. Dalton. "The 'Kols' of Chota-Nagpore." *Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London* 6 (1868), 31-32.

[59] Skaria. "Women, Witchcraft, and Gratuitous Violence in Colonial Western India," 136.

[60] Ibid.

upon British colonization. [61] Specifically, the change in women's traditional land rights intensified the preexisting social tensions between men and women. Under the traditional system, land was given to male descendants of the deceased. British changes to the law made it possible for a widow to legally maintain ownership of her deceased husband's land. This meant that the male descendants would not have access to the land rights until the woman's death, potentially prompting widows to be accused of witchcraft so that their land could be inherited by male family members after their persecution. The fundamental change to traditional land inheritance rights contributed to ritualized violence of women by effectively breaking down the 'ecological moral economy' of Adivasi tribes. Though the witch-hunt ban was promoted as a means to protect women, other policies implemented in colonial India diminished the social safeguards of Adivasi women, making them even more vulnerable to violence.[62] British administrators did not intend to make the lives of Adivasi women safer and more equitable with men. Instead, they imposed regulations that ultimately made women susceptible to the violence that the British claimed to be protecting them from. This reveals that the efforts of the British to 'protect' Indian women were simply a guise for their colonizing and civilizing project in the colony.

EXPLANATIONS FOR CONTINUED ILLEGAL WITCH-HUNTS

The colonial government banned the practice of witchcraft in the 1830s and began to enforce the ban on witch-hunts on a regional basis in the mid-1840s-1850s. The persecution of supposed witches was now considered illegal for the first time in Adivasi communities, and the local population responded to

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[61] Sinha. "Adivasis, Gender and the 'Evil Eye'," 142.
[62] Ibid, 143-44.

the enforcement of the ban with antagonism. There occurred a resurgence in witch-hunts during the mid-nineteenth century that is partly due to anti-colonial sentiments, much like the Sepoy Revolution and similar anti-colonial movements of this era. However, unlike these other movements in 1857-58, women in tribal *Adivasi* communities were the victims of violence rather than active participants in the struggle against the British.[63] Valentine Ball, who traveled throughout India in the 1860s, connected the resurgence in witch-hunts to other anti-colonial insurrections. He writes that as law and order were suspended during 1857-58 when officials were preoccupied with the Sepoy Revolution, the *Adivasi* felt they were free to "make a clean sweep of the witches and sorcerers who had accumulated in their midst, under the benign influence of British authority."[64] E.T. Dalton, an ethnologist who studied the rural tribes in India, observed a similar phenomenon after the 1857 mutinies. He describes the southern tribes of the Singbhoom district who found themselves free from the limitations of British rule at the time of the mutinies. Taking advantage of the "restraint they had never been very patient under," the Ho tribe also took the opportunity of British preoccupation to uncover witches who had amassed since the ban was enacted. The violence was staggering, as it is suggested the witch-hunters went from home to home, "until before the morning dawn they had succeeded in extinguishing, as they supposed, the whole race."[65] The administrators of the ban on witch-hunts had failed to realize the extent to which witchcraft was embedded in *Adivasi* traditions. This fact, coupled with the *Adivasi* belief that witches were thriving under "the *benevolent power* of the British," indicates that the rise of

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[63] Shashank Sinha. "Witch-Hunts, Adivasis, and the Uprising in Chotanagpur." *Exonomic and Political Weekly* 42, no 19. (2007): 1672.

[64] Ball, *Tribal and Peasant Life in Nineteenth Century India*, 116.

[65] [65] E.T. Dalton. "The 'Kols' of Chota-Nagpore." *Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London* 6 (1868), 31.

witch-hunts was the direct cause of anti-colonialist sentiment among tribal communities in rural India.[66]

Increased social tensions resulting from new colonial policies like annual visits by a colonial commissioner, regular payment of taxes, and a formalized system of written oaths contributed to an expression of these stressors in the trialing and murder of witches.[67] By effectively breaking down traditional practices through the implementation of 'civilized' methods of rule, the British contributed to increased ritualized violence against women as the Adivasi viewed the new diseases, deforestations, and other social issues caused by colonialism as the handiwork of witches in their communities.[68] These ideas grew stronger as external pressure on tribal society increased, and as deforestation made it difficult to acquire medicinal plants and alternative types of protection against evil spirits. Deforestation and increased social stress from colonial activity caused many Adivasi groups to ascribe the cause of their struggles to individual women, and accusations of witchcraft thus increased. Women therefore became the targets of widescale violence in an attempt to remedy the growing social and ecological crises facing Adivasi communities under the British. Witch-hunts were known to increase during 'hunger-months,' or at other periods of increased stress or the community.[69] It is therefore a logical conclusion that external pressures caused by colonial policy could also contribute to increased rates of witchcraft-related violence.

The civilizing mission of the British government in India resulted in social insecurity within Adivasi communities, and specifically the change in traditional womanhood. The British used Indian womanhood as the grounds to interact with the

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[66] Sinha. "Witch-Hunts, Adivasis, and the Uprising in Chotanagpur", 1674-1675.

[67] Alam and Raj. "The Academic Journey of Witchcraft Studies in India." 125-6.

[68] Sinha. ""Adivasis, Gender and the 'Evil Eye'," 143.

[69] Ibid, 144-5.

local populace as the colonial state. The social reforms instituted by the British in the early nineteenth century with the aim of 'civilizing' India, such as the ban on witch-hunts, effected varying ideas of what proper Indian womanhood should be. The new patriarchy created by British reforms threatened to change the status and role of Indian women from the cultural norm. There was a sense among these communities that no matter the external change of their situation under colonialism, women must maintain their core feminine values. Women serve as the keepers of tradition, and reactions of indigenous communities against civilizing legislation represented a "straightforward defense of tradition and outright rejection of the new."[70] Meanwhile, Adivasi groups had already been forced to give ownership of their lands and forests to the British, causing fundamental disruption to their way of life.[71] In order to resist further Westernization, customary practices were clung to more fervently in spite of the British efforts to stamp out the culture they viewed as barbaric. In the struggle to maintain cultural identity, the ritual aggression of exterminating witches continued in order to struggle against the changes facing Adivasi community and to reinforce their traditional view of proper femininity.

Scholars tend to view these reasons for continued witch-hunts following the ban as separate, isolated contributors. However, it might be more accurate to interpret the increased social tension and desire to maintain tradition as cumulating to anti-colonial sentiment, resulting in a resurgence of witch-craft-related violence. Subjugated groups rarely contest established power structures of domination directly, but rather "behind the scenes [...] they are likely to create and defend a social space in which offstage dissent to the official transcript of

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[70] Chatterjee. "Colonialism, Nationalism, and Colonized Women," 627.

[71] Mac-Machado. "Witchcraft and Witchcraft Cleansing among the Vasava Bhils," 191.

power relations may be voiced."[72] Resurgence in witch-hunts following the British regional bans in the early to mid-nine-teenth centuries is indicative of this form of hidden critique to colonial power. The continual observance of traditional practices, even those as violent as witch-hunting, is a form of resistance to the dominant's condemnation of the subordinate culture as barbaric and uncivilized. The integration of Adivasi groups into colonial rule through the civilizing tool of gender and ultimately forcing indigenous populations to abide by British cultural mores inevitably involved systemic social subordination of their traditional practices. The indignity experienced by the Adivasi because of this process of appropriation and suppression of their way of life caused frustration to grow, manifesting itself in refusal to abide by colonial regulations.[73] Specifically articulated anti-colonial sentiment itself may not be the cause of increased violence against women but rather the consequences of colonialism were attributed to the work of malevolent spiritualism, thus effecting persecution of supposed witches.

The issue of witch-hunts despite the colonial ban can be explained in terms of power and covert resistance. Contact with the spiritual realm was a cornerstone of Adivasi traditional life, and women's exclusion from it is indicative of the distrust of women's potential power by the existing patriarchal structure. Retaliation against women seizing subliminal power by claiming individual spiritualism was punished by gender-based violent persecution in the form of witch-hunts. The increased British presence in previously inaccessible rural communities during the mid-19th century effected fundamental change to the Adivasi lifestyle as land rights and power structures were altered, and traditional practices were criminalized in a civilizing effort. The elevated social stress because of this threat to indigenous identity resulted in the continued practice

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[72] Scott. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts,* xi.
[73] Ibid, 111-113.

of illegal witch-hunts. The refusal to abide by the British mandate through maintaining the traditional punishment of nonconformist women via witch-hunts therefore represents a form of discreet anti-colonial resistance by Adivasi tribes.

Both the persecuted women and the men who persecuted them are attempting to reclaim agency from their oppressor via concealed denial to follow their appointed roles. Women who refused to abide by proper Adivasi womanhood resisted by adopting the metaphor of the *dakan*; Adivasi men contested the changes to their way of life caused by British interference by refusing to cease witch-hunts. Ultimately, the choice to be subversive to the dominant, either by acceptance of the role of *dakan* to exploit the power of femininity or by the denial to relinquish cultural identity to the colonizer, is perpetuated by a desire to claim illegitimate, marginal power through forms of passive resistance.

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FOUNDATION AND PROPHECY

Scott Johnson

Interdisciplinary studies are the norm for groundbreaking modern scholarship. Many scholarly books published in the last several decades do not conform neatly to their proposed discipline or genre. An historical work might blend sociology, politics, and psychology to reflect on past crises and apply them in analysis of the present; a sociological work might examine the underpinnings of political and religious movements in American life today, or a religious study of science fiction literature may draw on eschatological narratives from the thematic and commentative content of an episode of *Star Trek*. Inherent to scholarliness is the need to connect ideas to partially reveal the truth of the human condition, constantly measuring pieces of the human puzzle against each other to see if they fit snugly and further illuminate the picture. Isaac Asimov's pivotal work of speculative fiction, *Foundation*, imagines the ultimate interdisciplinary field of psychohistory, a far-future scholarly venture which has completely assembled the human puzzle: sociology, technology, politics, mob psychology, history, and religion all wrapped up and quantified through mathematics. Through the power of science, psychohistorian Hari Seldon is equipped with a nigh-prophetic ability to predict the future—the downfall—of the Galactic Empire.

I will exercise some caution in labelling Hari Seldon a prophet. Leading 20th century Jewish theologian-rabbi Abraham Heschel warns against this kind of hasty analysis, saying "the ability to compare, an outstanding function of the mind, is more easily developed than the ability to differentiate. Qual-

ities that things have in common are outstanding; the unique-ness of each thing is frequently imperceptible."[1] It might be inappropriate to conflate prophecy and technology in this fic-tional context; however, to examine Asimov's character through a prophetic lens can yield specific criticism toward modern society and modern religious thought, not to mention further illuminating the classic work of science fiction that is *Foundation.*

One purposeful approach in modelling Hari Seldon as prophet would be to reconcile his psychohistory with modern Christian spiritual practice, connecting, perhaps, the observa-tion of social trends and political awareness with a Christian moral responsibility for the less fortunate and the human cost of geopolitical machinations. One might conduct surface-level research into the definitions and roles of prophets, drawing the kind of parallels Heschel would be so critical of, associating anachronistic concepts and characters without thought or re-straint. These approaches, and those like them, are constrained by the unreality of speculative fiction; the scholar often reads selectively for an intended moral or political message, rather than remaining open to what might be revelatory in science fiction for the reader's real life and context.[2] Characters in later chapters of the *Foundation* saga may label Hari Seldon a prophet, or a mere magician shrouded in the depths of the Foundation's past. I seek to understand the significance of the prophetic using *Foundation*'s treatment of psychohistory as a

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[1] Abraham Heschel, "Prophets Throughout the World," in *The Prophets,* II, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1962), 229. Of course, Heschel here refers to various comparisons be-tween the prophets of the Hebrew Bible and the prophet-like fig-ures of the non-Abrahamic world. He notes that the prophets of Is-rael distinguished between true and false "prophets" in their times, using the word liberally but not without modification. See 230-231.
[2] A study of Science Fiction as Apocalyptic Literature would be a fantastic undertaking.

mirror for modern expressions on prophetic literature, particularly Walter Brueggemann's *The Prophetic Imagination*. Namely, the prophetic centers around honest criticism and radical hope in shaping a world—fictional or real—for the better.

EXAMINING THE PROPHETIC

In his work, *God's Servants, the Prophets*, Bryan D. Bibb identifies five definitions of the prophets: the "Ecstatic Revealer" reveals the truth while in a trance of some sort; the "Messianic Predictor" reveals the coming of the Messiah; the "Religious Genius" understands and interprets Israel's religious past; and the "Political Functionary" serves the kings, primarily in a predictive militaristic sense.[3] For Bibb, however, the fifth role, "Messenger," is most important—these are the prophets who claim specific knowledge, who use the phrase "thus says the LORD," often to announce God's judgments or otherwise predict what is to come.[4] The prophet "shall serve as a mouth" for God, traditionally restated as prophets being the "mouthpiece" of God.[5] Bibb is (perhaps understandably) at odds with William Blake, who ascribes the following to the prophet Isaiah in his book *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*: "I saw no God nor heard any, in a finite organical perception; but my senses discover'd the Infinite in everything, and as I was then persuaded and remained confirm'd that the voice of honest indignation is the voice of God, I cared not for consequences, but wrote."[6] According to Abraham Heschel, Blake was "inclined to deny the prophets…the

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[3] Bryan D. Bibb, *God's Servants, The Prophets*, (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, Inc., 2014), 1-2.

[4] Bibb, *God's Servants, The Prophets*, 2, 19. Bibb calls the phrase "thus says the LORD," "the most important phrase in all of the prophetic literature."

[5] Exodus 4:16, NRSV.

[6] Quoted in Abraham Heschel, "Explanations of Prophetic Inspiration," in *The Prophets,* II, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers,

experience of the divine," instead classifying their writings as "inventive" and merely "derived from their vivid apprehension of the principle of righteousness."[7] Heschel aligns instead with Bibb's Messenger role, pointing out that Blake attached "little, if any, importance…to the prophets' own insistence on having received 'the word of [the LORD]' and on having been called by Him."[8]

Walter Brueggemann's *The Prophetic Imagination* elegantly holds the tension between Blake's divergent analysis and Bibb/Heschel's more traditional one. I will explore several themes of this text as a means of further defining the prophetic and the modern approach thereto, with some assistance from Bibb and others. Brueggemann is more comfortable with the notion of individual agency on the part of the prophets than Heschel appears. He considers "imagination as a way of knowing," emphasizing the ways in which speech and text create "alternate worlds" for rhetorical and theological use. [9]

Inc., 1962), 191-192. Heschel's dialogue with Blake puts the opposing forces of prophetic understanding in tension wonderfully and is therefore worthy of imitation—and further reading and research..

[7] Heschel, "Prophetic Inspiration," 192.

[8] Heschel, "Prophetic Inspiration," 192. Here, to make my rhetorical point, I substitute "the LORD" for God in reference to Bibb's emphasis thereon.

[9] Walter Brueggemann, Preface to *The Prophetic Imagination*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2001), x. This particular nod to imagination comes in response to Phyllis Trible's *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, which Brueggemann credits as a starting point for the use of imagination as a means of seeking out the existing theological history for modern ideas if not expanding the biblical narrative to apply to contemporary values. Don't hasten to admonish the disrespect to biblical interpretive tradition! Brueggemann is crediting Trible's book as a starting point, and I am using this specific imaginative language to partly reconcile Blake and Heschel.

Brueggemann justifies this: "The prophetic is truth that is beyond the explicable…[it] *must* be imaginary because it is urgently beyond the ordinary and the reasonable." [10] Brueggemann is not necessarily saying that the words of the prophets were conjured by them alone (i.e., not from God at all) but is acknowledging that for the prophets (or other writers) to have penned these words at all was an act of imagination, the daring to believe that their words might make a difference and create the "alternative world" they speak of.[11] As Bibb clarifies, they "were themselves creative geniuses who critically changed their communities and brought their own personalities, perspectives, and insights to the process."[12]

An alternative world, broadly speaking, is any which is recognizably different from our own. Just as the world of a comic book or dystopian novel might be initially foreign to our understanding, biblical idioms, worldviews, and customs can require significant study to reconcile the alternative worlds of the Bible with our own—and a similar education would prove repeatedly necessary in the prophetic reconciliation of the Old Testament Hebrews to God. Bibb offers three principles for the historical interpretation of Old Testament texts which are analogous to the understanding of a science fictional context: one must always identify the historical context of the passage, place oneself in the shoes the author,[13] and understand texts as

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[10] Brueggemann, Preface to *The Prophetic Imagination*, xv. Italics added for emphasis. The idea of imagination, the "placing oneself in the shoes of the author/prophet" that I reference in the next paragraph, is a foundational principle of Jesuit spiritual formation practices.

[11] Is this starting to sound familiar?

[12] Bibb, *God's Servants, The Prophets*, 19. Creation itself is an ode to imagination—and therefore, our imaginations must be God-ordained.

[13] Identifying with the author lends itself to understanding intent, audience, personality, experiential knowledge, etc.

part of an ongoing conversation[14] in the specific time of the author."[15] These tools, which help the reader to understand the alternative worlds of the biblical prophets, will help us interpret the world-building of Isaac Asimov.

Having clarified the necessity of imagination and context in examining the prophets, Walter Brueggemann's chapter, "The Alternative Community of Moses," then narrows the lens through which he approaches the prophetic: Brueggemann undertakes analyses of various prophets of the Hebrew Bible, as well as the New Testament's Jesus, using an understanding of the prophetic as the combination of criticism and energized hope.[16] In the same way that alternative realities are spoken into existence when prophets present the word of the LORD to their listeners, Brueggemann identifies the newly created covenantal community of Moses as an alternative community, one rooted in a free-moving, all-powerful God.[17]

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[14] These conversations are not always fully evident in individual passages, but undergird the narrative and provide the emotional, social, political, and economic backdrops for prophetic works.

[15] Bibb, *God's Servants, The Prophets*, 14-15. Indeed, some passages are not traceable to the time of the original writer but are reflective of "later prophetic activity that has been incorporated back into the original tradition," according to Bibb. These passages require even more diligent examination.

[16] Brueggemann, "The Alternative Community of Moses," *The Prophetic Imagination*, 1-20.

[17] Brueggemann, "The Alternative Community of Moses," 2-7. Here Brueggemann admittedly and clearly nods to Liberation Theology (as should be expected when discussing Exodus), but the emphasis on Moses as creating a community, not just a covenant, was new to me. An 'alternative community' has the connotation of being set apart, subversive, and strange to the dominant culture. Today, Christianity has been the dominant culture for several hundreds of years, but with the dominant culture of straight, cisgender, white, Christian men on the decline compared to the combined weight of dozens of historically oppressed groups, there is an increased need for the traditionally dominant group to be receptive to

This community shares a common history and identity, an uncommon (common) God, and a clear sense of the boundaries of their ethnic identity. The Hebrews are God's Chosen, unique in the experience of direct relationship with God as they wandered in the desert. No longer is God far-off and impossible to please or know; instead, God leads them in a pillar of flame to his Promised Land. Most significantly for the purposes of this paper, the Hebrews share an affinity for the prophetic, one pioneered by Moses, who Brueggemann credits with the foundations of the Hebrew prophetic tradition due to his radicalism and the urgency of his message.[18]

The prophetic relies on criticism and energy to equip God's people to form a new, alternative reality as God imagines it and express it through the prophet. Brueggemann uses an artful metaphor of contemporary American politics to explain the necessity of both energy and hope in creating an American alternative reality—and in the prophetic as a whole—by giving credit to both political sides.[19] The progressive side, Brueggemann posits, are wonderful critics, skilled at dismantling the dominant culture in the ways it remains stagnant and oppressively so—but struggle to provide energizing, hopeful alternatives to present systems that quantify their ideals in the eyes of conservatives. Conservatives, on the other hand, are wonderfully hopeful and energized due to their faith

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the kinds of questions Brueggemann here raises and meditates on. What does it mean to be liberated from the dominant mindset which has been the reality of the white man in America for three hundred years? Is there freedom in that? I would certainly say there is freedom in embracing love for the neighbor, for the Other, and that a narrow mindset is a stifling thing. Certainly, these are questions the prophets—and science fiction, for that matter—can help us begin to answer as a culture if we are willing to listen.

[18] Brueggemann, "The Alternative Community of Moses," 5-6.

[19] Brueggemann, "The Alternative Community of Moses," 4-5. What follows is a synopsis, the full version of which can be found on the indicated pages.

in their country's past—and its future—but struggle to acknowledge the ways that systems become outdated with time; they are more critical of proposed changes than of the systems they perpetuate. Only with both energetic hopefulness and honest criticism can an alternative reality be imagined, let alone embodied—a country further perfected and on the right track toward a more complete, inclusive future.

This metaphor captures the two needs of a prophet: being intensely, exactingly critical of the current dominant social system while instilling hope for a better future. Religious transformations, to Brueggemann, are fundamentally social, stemming from a weariness of inert, perpetual conflict: "dominant cultures are wearied cultures, nearly unable to be seriously energized to new promises from God."[20] Whether Moses rejecting enslavement under the Egyptian Pharaoh; Elijah rejecting and disproving the power of other, more popular gods; Amos rejecting social systems of wealth inequality in Israel; or Hari Seldon rejecting the sprawling and stagnated Galactic Empire, the prophetic voice requires a criticism of dominant culture and an energizing hope for a better, imagined future.

FOUNDATION'S FORM OF PROPHECY

There are a great many similarities between the prophets of the Hebrew Bible and the setting, actions, and words of the character Hari Seldon in Isaac Asimov's *Foundation*. Asimov's narrative, originally published as a sequence of short stories and later as the trilogy *Foundation*, *Foundation and Empire*, and *The Second Foundation* (along with a variety of side stories, prequels, and sequels), centers around the history of the titular Foundation, an organization whose trajectory was carefully planned by its founder, Hari Seldon, to hasten the

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[20] Brueggemann, "The Alternative Community of Moses," 4. Originally "the dominant culture is a wearied culture," altered for greater blend with the sentence prior.

recovery of the galaxy after the unavoidable fall of a Galactic Empire. As one character explains, "the future course of the Foundation was plotted according to the science of psychohistory…and conditions arranged so as to bring about a series of crises that will force us most rapidly along the route to future Empire. Each crisis, each *Seldon* crisis, marks an epoch in our history."[21] These "Seldon crises" are turning points in which concurrent threats, both domestic and foreign, so endanger present ways of life at the Foundation that eventually, given enough time, the Foundation is forced down one route of action that ultimately proves the most beneficial, with the Foundation more powerful and equipped to extend its reach. As the narrative unfolds, the reader observes as successive leaders, largely through a discipline of inaction, allow events to take the course predicted by Hari Seldon—a course that is forced upon them by circumstance. The Foundation does not lack in enemies, but the true enemy is the Empire that succumbed to absolute intellectual, technological, and sociopolitical stagnation under the strain of pushing paperwork for 25 million planets inhabited by humans.[22]

On page 19 of Asimov's book, a detailed description of psychohistory is printed as excerpted from the "Encyclopedia Galactica."[23] It outlines three main points of introduction

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[21] Isaac Asimov, *Foundation*, Revised edition, (New York: Bantam Spectra Books, 1991), 215.

[22] Asimov, *Foundation*, 4.

[23] This "Encyclopedia Galactica" was the original stated intent of Seldon's Foundation: to compile and print a comprehensive encyclopedia of galactic knowledge to preserve information before the fall of the Empire, thereby shortening its effects. Among the first crises faced by the Foundation revealed the Encyclopedia to be a mere ruse on Seldon's part to disguise the true nature of his Foundation. The description of psychohistory on page 19 is necessarily short so that the Foundation's members might not be equipped to unduly influence the course of events Seldon has laid out—preserving the "random" factor.

to the field of psychohistory for the reader: psychohistory is a "branch of mathematics which deals with the reactions of human conglomerates to fixed social and economic stimuli" which requires that the "conglomerate" is sufficiently large for statistical analysis, and that "the human conglomerate be itself unaware of psychohistoric analysis in order that its actions be truly random."[24] The reader will see Hari Seldon himself using these "fixed social and economic stimuli" to calculate the statistical probability of the Empire's collapse, to illustrate through complex mathematics what can be more easily said with words by the young mathematician Gaal Dornick:

> As Trantor[25] becomes more specialized, it becomes more vulnerable, less able to defend itself. Further, as it becomes more and more the administrative center of the Empire, it becomes a greater prize. As the Imperial succession becomes more and more uncertain, and the feuds among the great families more rampant, social responsibility disappears.[26]

This is the first problem of the galaxy at the time of the Galactic Empire's fall, and the first criticism levelled by Hari Seldon in his role of prophet. The second criticism is part of the first Seldon crisis, and is expounded by the character Salvor Hardin to (largely unsuccessfully) convince his fellow Foundation members:

> …you haven't *tried* [to escape from our dilemma]. You haven't tried once. You refused to admit that there was a menace at all! Then

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[24] Asimov, *Foundation*, 4. Thus why the definition was 'necessarily short' as I said and used "nonmathematical concepts" as the entry also explicitly indicates.

[25] The Galactic Empire's capital.

[26] Asimov, *Foundation*, 22.

you reposed an absolutely blind faith in the Emperor! Now you've shifted it to Hari Seldon. Throughout you have invariably relied on authority or on the past—never on yourselves…It amounts to a diseased attitude—a conditioned reflex that shunts aside the independence of your minds whenever it is a question of opposing authority. There seems no doubt in your mind that the Emperor is more powerful than you are, or Hari Seldon wiser. And that's wrong…Don't you see? It's Galaxy-wide. It's a worship of the past. It's a deterioration—a *stagnation*![27]

Between these two ideas, intellectual stagnation and the sprawl of an increasingly powerful but equally vulnerable capital, the Empire is doomed—and Hari Seldon plots the future of the Foundation to outperform these problems. While the rest of the galaxy loses the technological understanding of atomic power plants, the Foundation is innovating atomic generators that can fit on a belt buckle. While the rest of the galaxy reverts to a feudal, war-torn state, the Foundation capitalizes on the oversteps of its neighbors to secure its future and protect its ultimate purpose—to shorten this period of chaos. Never is it appropriate for the mayor of Foundation's small city-world or any other individual to act purely on gumption when dealing with a Seldon crisis—it is only appropriate to allow the forces of history to push the Foundation into the corner where they have but one option to ensure their survival. In the above example Salvor Hardin assumes control and pits the Foundation's neighboring kingdoms against each other to protect the Foundation's neutrality.[28] Later, the same man co-opts and

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[27] Asimov, *Foundation*, 87-88. See note 28.

[28] The first Seldon crisis in Part II, wherein Hardin overthrows the Encyclopedists (who remain bullishly true to Seldon's stated and

centralizes the Foundation's religious apparatus (used to spread technology to the neighboring kingdoms) to cement control of those worlds.[29] Later still, an independent trader artfully manipulates more reticent kingdoms to accept the sale of Foundation technology despite religious objections.[30] Finally, the Foundation ultimately transitions from religious control of technology to pure trade as a source of strength and revenue for the Foundation.[31] The Seldon crises are never solved by the actions of one person but through a natural means of the galaxy's complex machinations.

SELDON: THE PROPHET

What Seldon crises amount to is faith that these machinations have been accurately predicted to the point that the path forward becomes clear by necessity—that Hari Seldon could prepare the way of his descendants without their needing knowledge of psychohistory. Hari Seldon fills a prophetic role for the Foundation, capitalizing on the "broad sweeps of economics and sociology" to deliver his people from the land of darkness into the metaphorical 'lands flowing with milk and

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false original purpose for the Foundation) to assume control of the Foundation, to its great benefit. This is a largely domestic crisis.

[29] The second Seldon crisis in Part III. The Foundation has been training "priests" in the rudimentary running of power plants and other technological jobs while passing off the training as religious, in service of the "Galactic Spirit"—a concept the leadership all know to be complete hogwash—but it gets the job done. Traders begin selling atomic gadgets—"atomics"—to neighboring kingdoms.

[30] The third Seldon crisis in Part IV. Nations outside the Foundation's ring of control are conscious of the Foundation's religious danger and seek to avoid its influence by refusing trade or even use of atomics.

[31] The final Seldon crisis of this first book.

honey'.[32] These Seldon crises, these turning points, occur at major moments in the history of the Foundation—as is the case for the prophets of the Hebrew Bible.[33] Biblical narratives of prophecy capture major turning points in the history of God's People; each prophet appears with a new course correction to a society turning away from God. These prophets, according to Brueggemann, "are not lonely voices against the establishment but are in fact representative voices that give social expression to what may be important" in their communities.[34] This is not, and my intention has never been, to discount the prophets as mouthpieces of God, but to acknowledge that they exist within their contexts and have their own agency and skills. To reiterate, they "were themselves creative geniuses who critically changed their communities and brought their own personalities, perspectives, and insights to the process."[35] The prophets of the Hebrew Bible shepherd their own "Seldon crises" for the People of God, a role Christians believe to be fulfilled by Jesus' death—humanity fundamentally and irrevocably reconciled with God by the action of his son.[36]

The prophetic tradition of *Foundation* is one established by Seldon and carried out by intelligent leaders. According to the Brueggemann characterization above, prophetic ministry creates an alternative to the dominant consciousness through the rejection of this world coupled with the anticipation of the coming.[37] In the words of Walter Brueggemann, "the dominant culture is a wearied culture, nearly unable to be seriously energized to new promises from God."[38] In the same

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[32] Asimov, *Foundation*, 289.

[33] Bibb, *God's Servants, The Prophets*, 15.

[34] Brueggemann, Preface to *The Prophetic Imagination*, x.

[35] Bibb, *God's Servants, The Prophets*, 19.

[36] See John 3:16.

[37] Brueggemann, "The Alternative Community of Moses," 3.

[38] Brueggemann, "The Alternative Community of Moses," 4.

way, the Foundation is laboring under a weary, lusterless Empire—a culture that has been dominant for so long it has forgotten the meaning and power of prophecy. Thus, the "blind faith in the Emperor" and inability to innovate that Hardin criticizes in the diatribe blocked out above: the Empire's great need of revitalization has it poised on the brink of thirty thousand years of darkness and the complete loss of technology. Hari Seldon volunteers this knowledge to the authorities and is banished to the outer rim of the Galaxy[39]—and while that suits Seldon's purposes in planning for the future of the Foundation, the overconfident, complacent, and weakening Empire has signed its own death notice in refusing to bend an ear to prophesy. The Kings of Israel and Judah were seldom receptive to the prophetic; in failing to change their ways, they too penned the death certificates of the Judean and Israelite monarchies not only because they refused to listen to God but also because the actions God wanted them to change were what ultimately undercut their power and legitimacy, leading to a predictable collapse.[40] The God of the Hebrew Bible works as much through inevitable consequences of the world as through direct intervention—if not more of the former.[41]

Through the power of psychohistory, Seldon voices the countercultural truths of Brueggemann's prophetic to the Galactic Empire of his universe. Isaac Asimov has written an alternative world, an imagined world, and his prophetic character has created a further alternative world within his created

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[39] A fate familiar to the Old Testament prophets, also, who were largely marginalized for their subversive (but accurate) beliefs and predictions.

[40] The parallel with the ideological stagnation in Asimov's first Seldon Crisis is notable.

[41] God may not need to act in the broad strokes due to the predictability of human nature. Surely an omniscient God has an omnipotent "psychohistory" of his own—and would know just when to act with the greatest impact, sending his mouthpieces and ultimately his son to lead humanity to better ways.

one. Seldon dares to imagine a perfected Second Empire which could pick up the pieces of the first and rebuild, rather than starting from scratch from a point longer than humans have been farming and herding on Earth.[42] Here I return to the William Blake quote from above: "I saw no God nor heard any, in a finite organical perception; but my senses discover'd the Infinite in everything, and as I was then persuaded and remained confirm'd that the voice of honest indignation is the voice of God, I cared not for consequences, but wrote."[43] Though Heschel is critical, Blake is not entirely out-of-true with Brueggemann and Bibb: Isaiah had his eyes opened to Creation and his response was to write the truth that Creation inspired in him. Bibb has already acknowledged that the prophets were not under the direct control of God but given the freedom to persuade God's People in the most effective ways they could, by way of their own intellect and passion backed by God's will.[44] The prophets were acutely aware of their reality and, by way of their intellect and obedience to their call, helped predict or call for a future which (in the Christian tradition) culminated in the birth of Christ. What is Seldon's psychohistory but an acute awareness of reality that equipped him to shape a future with the least suffering for his people? Cannot *Foundation* be read as a reaffirmation of the prophetic in the world around us?

SELDON: NOT THE PROPHET (CONCLUSION)

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[42] It's almost comparable to God sending a prophet vs. God sending a flood.

[43] Quoted in Abraham Heschel, "Explanations of Prophetic Inspiration," 191-192. The Noah and the Flood parallel is clear, when things have deteriorated to the point of needing to start over from scratch. Luckily, this period of darkness has a prophet to guide the people through it.

[44] Bibb, *God's Servants, The Prophets*, 19.

In J. Philip Hyatt's 1947 book, *Prophetic Religion*, the author devotes an entire chapter to the prophetic view of the future.[45] He begins with the popular definition of prophet as "prognosticator," or one with the ability to predict the future.[46] Hyatt acknowledges that some of our conceptions of the Old Testament prophets as prognosticators come from decontextualized New Testament references to OT prophecy that were used to tie Jesus to the Jewish religious tradition outlined in the Tanakh.[47] Hyatt further argues that there are many predictions of the prophets that have not been fulfilled, and that attempting to use prophetic works—let alone apocalyptic works—as fodder for future-predicting in the modern era is folly.[48] Rather, the prophets were ethicists, the apocalyptists writers of "tracts for bad times," both invaluable theologically but not written with the modern Christian explicitly in mind.[49] As Hyatt puts it, "[the prophets themselves] would readily admit the possibility of erroneous predictions without admitting that their understanding of the fundamental nature of God and the moral law was likewise in error."[50] The prophets were fallible beings, God-inspired and faithful but human as well. The prophets observed closely the world around them and were convicted to tell the truth about their cultures; in doing they built a prophetic tradition that would culminate in Jesus Christ.[51] The prophetic concern for the future spurned the

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[45] J. Philip Hyatt, "The Prophetic View of History: The Future," in *Prophetic Religion* (New York, Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1947), 91-117.

[46] Hyatt, "The Future," 91.

[47] Hyatt, "The Future," 91.

[48] Hyatt, "The Future," 92-93.

[49] Hyatt, "The Future," 92-93.

[50] Hyatt, "The Future," 94-95.

[51] Whether the reader is a person of Christian faith or not, Christ's sect of Judaism that has grown to include two-and-a-half billion humans worldwide and motivated much of the past two millennia of

claims of special powers of the contemporary occult in favor of a God-given revelation of the consequences of the current moral and ethical crises.

Science fiction is powerful genre for its license to reflect what is good and what is broken about our own culture. From the shoes of those prophets of the alternative realities of science fiction, we may observe our own world from the outside—and in a new light. We are all a product of our culture, whether distorted and corrupted by conflict, greed, or inaction. Whatever it is that leads us to be complacent, if we, say, affirm a stagnant political system through inaction, we are just as liable for the suffering of those to follow us as those in power.[52] The call of prophetic ministry—the assumption of the mantle of careful observation and bold truth-speaking that Brueggemann refers to intermittently in his book—is the invitation to dare to imagine a world that is better, whether a world with the technological expertise of the Foundation or a world where people do not live in fear and hatred of each other. If we dare to imagine, to write, and to speak what we come to believe through our own imagining, surely we too may embody the prophetic, if just for a moment. Hari Seldon did not have the backing of God; he was no mouthpiece. He was also imperfect, and ultimately (spoiler alert) fails to protect his First Foundation. Hari Seldon was not a prophet of any God—but he made an impact with the best of them. Perhaps in observing, criticizing, and producing an energized hope in others, we might join the likes of Hari Seldon, Mahatma Ghandi, Eleanor Roosevelt, Thomas Paine, Martin Luther King, Jr., Nelson Mandela, Rosa Parks, and so many others who have embodied defiance in the face of a broken world rooted in an enduring hope for a collective future.

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history. Jesus is indisputably an influential figure, if not the most significant historical figure as I have claimed.

[52] Here the impending and present ecological crisis serves as a good example.

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THE QUESTION OF QUALIA

Jonathan McKinney

Daniel Dennett concludes his provocative essay "Quining Qualia" with the radical assertion that, contrary to all common sense, "there are simply no qualia at all."[1] By "qualia," he means "the way things seem to us" – the unique content of our conscious experience at any given moment.[2] The metaphysical nature of qualia, or conscious experience, is one of a bare handful of questions which is no closer today to being solved than it was when Descartes first conjectured about the duality of mind and body. Neurobiological explanations of sensation and perception abound, but these do not address the "hard problem" of consciousness – that is, how can it be possible for a non-physical phenomenon such as conscious experience to arise from a world which, we hypothesize, can be understood entirely in physical terms?[3] Dennett's approach to this question may be counterintuitive, but its significance cannot be overstated. The successful elimination of the need to reckon with qualia as a metaphysical fact would also eliminate the significant challenge they pose to the materialist picture of reality.

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[1] Daniel Dennett, "Quining Qualia," in *Philosophy of Mind: Classical and Contemporary Readings*, ed. David Chalmers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988): 244.

[2] Ibid., 226.

[3] David Chalmers, "Consciousness and Its Place in Nature," in *Philosophy of Mind: Classical and Contemporary Readings*, ed. David Chalmers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988): 244.

Despite the modern-day prevalence of an implicitly materialist ontology, numerous arguments and thought experiments make the case for the necessary existence of a non-physical component to our reality. Frank Jackson's "knowledge argument," illustrated in a now-classic thought experiment, makes a strong case for dualism. Mary, a brilliant scientist, "knows everything there is to know about the physical processes relevant to color vision." However, she has never seen color herself.[4] If Mary then experiences color for the first time, Jackson says, she has then "learned a *new* fact" – but, since she already knows every physical fact, the fact which she has learned must regard something non-physical. Accordingly, Jackson concludes that "the physical facts do not exhaust all the facts."[5] David Chalmers makes a similar case with his conceivability argument, which proposes the idea of "philosophical zombies." These "zombies" are beings which are metaphysically identical to human beings in every respect but one – they lack phenomenal consciousness. A philosophical zombie may report being in pain and may grimace or cry exactly as if in pain, but no actual pain will be experienced. Because such a being is conceivable, Chalmers argues, there must be an implicit dualism upon which the thought experiment rests.[6] Finally, the explanatory argument holds that physical accounts of reality can "explain at most structure and function," but that consciousness is a phenomenon that cannot be explained purely in terms of structure and function. Therefore, "no physical account can explain consciousness" and consciousness must be non-physical.[7]

Each of these arguments seeks to establish both an epistemic gap and an ontological gap dividing physical from nonphysical reality. The epistemic gap refers to a difference in

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[4] Ibid., 249-250.

[5] Ibid., 250.

[6] Ibid., 249.

[7] Ibid., 248-249.

our way of knowing physical and non-physical phenomena. While physical truths can be deduced from other physical truths, the arguments go, non-physical truths cannot be logically arrived at from knowledge of anything physical. The ontological gap, meanwhile, refers to a separation or metaphysical distinction between physical and non-physical reality. It is, depending on the specific argument, either strongly implied by the existence of an epistemic gap, or a necessary conclusion following from it.[8]

      The idea that reality can be split fundamentally between the physical and the nonphysical has elicited numerous responses. In Chalmers' classification, the first major response to dualism is Type A Materialism, a broad grouping of positions which eliminate both gaps by arguing that there are no qualia – or, at least, "nothing in the vicinity of consciousness that needs explaining over and above the various functions."[9] (Dennett may be said to broadly fall into this camp, although he is neither a behaviorist nor a total eliminativist.) Rather, our language is structured in such a way that although we may speak of private mental states, all that really exists is disposition towards a particular behavior.[10] Pain, for instance, is not conceived of as having existence in itself, but rather as being a strong disposition towards alleviating some physical malfunction. On the other hand, Type C Materialism accepts the epistemic gap but denies the ontological gap. Although it accepts that there is such a thing as private, qualitative experience, this does not correspond to a fundamental divide of reality between the physical and the nonphysical. Rather, the split is only between different modes of understanding the same substance.[11] Finally, two types of dualism affirm both gaps but maintains that the gap must be bridged somehow as

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[8] Ibid., 250.

[9] Ibid., 251.

[10] Ibid., 252.

[11] Ibid., 258.

the two sides of reality must have some causal impact on each other. Type D Dualism which allows for "downward causality," whereby the phenomenal can causally affect the physical.[12] Type E Dualism posits a "one-way" causal flow from the physical to the mental (leaving phenomenal properties as dead-end "epiphenomena"), and another which allows for "downward causality," whereby the phenomenal can causally affect the physical.[13]

Into this jumble of theories and countertheories steps Dennett, whose radical "quining" of qualia does not quite deny them entirely, but rather seeks to understand their nature.[14] Dennett maintains, for instance, that "conscious experience has properties… in virtue of which those [conscious] states have the experiential content they do."[15] Accordingly, rather than *deny* conscious experience, Dennett's project aims more to define qualia out of existence, such that his precise definition of qualia, which he takes to be the usual definition, is shown to be untenable. Because non-intersubjective phenomenon such as qualia cannot be referred to by a common language, defining them tends to be a difficult and somewhat arbitrary project – as Dennett himself acknowledges. [16] However, the question of whether qualia "exist" might be best rephrased, not in reference to specific "second-order" properties they are said to possess, but in reference to the nature of their being – what *kind* of thing is a quale?[17] Obviously, there

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[12] Ibid., 261.

[13] Ibid., 263.

[14] Dennett, "Quining Qualia," 226.
The verb "to quine" is a satirical neologism, coined by Dennett in *The Philosopher's Dictionary* (Dennett 1978c, 8th ed. 1987).
Named for the philosopher Willard van Ormen Quine, it means "to deny resolutely the existence or importance of something real or significant."

[15] Ibid., 227.

[16] Ibid., 226.

[17] Ibid., 229.

is *something* we have been referring to as a "quale" – but that "something" might be a "thing in itself," or, just as likely, a kind of heuristic name that we give to a collection of interconnected processes because we find it pragmatic to think of them as one. Dennett, of course, ultimately concludes in favor of the latter – and yet the notion of qualia as "real" remains tempting. Might it be the case that qualia are, somehow, things "in themselves"?

Dennett uses a series of "intuition pumps" – brief thought experiments designed to convince our rational minds by first appealing to our intuition – to illustrate the fallibility of traditional, implicitly realist conceptions of qualia.[18] Implicit in these traditional conceptions is the breakdown of sense perception into a tripartite process. First, the sensory organs deliver raw data to the brain; second, the brain produces (or the mind experiences) "qualia" in response to that data; third, the mind interprets these qualia and forms judgments about them (i.e. positive or negative valence). It is the middle term which Dennett believes can be done away with. Although I ultimately believe he is right, the purpose of this paper is to prove this by attempting to defend as far as possible the reality of the middle term, qualia.

First, it seems clear that qualia cannot belong fully to the first or the third term. If one is tempted to equate qualia with the first term, sense data, one must remember that sense data can be misprocessed. One can see this in optical illusions. One such illusion involves three orbiting circles and three stationary triangles; stare at the circles long enough, and the triangles disappear. The light waves from the triangles are still entering my eyes, just as before; the data is reaching my brain, but I do not see the triangles. Qualia, then, cannot *be* sense data, but must be some sort of process by which sense data are understood. And yet, qualia cannot belong fully to the third term, interpretation, either. Although Dennett considers that

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[18] Ibid., 227.

qualia might be "constitutive acts" by which we "bring [qualia] into existence… by fiat," he rejects this easily, and it is not hard to see why.[19] Try as I might, I cannot will myself to see something red as blue, or vice versa. Thus, there is a sense in which qualia are things external to me – immutable facts encountered by the part of my mind which judges and acts, and not constituted by that part.

Thus far, the idea of qualia as neither data nor interpretation suits our working conception of qualia as a) real, and b) the middle term in the tripartite model. Dennett's intuition pumps cast doubt on this conclusion, but do not ultimately render it impossible. The pumps *aim* to show that qualia have no consistent, intrinsic properties, even internal to one subject; in fact, however, they only show that qualia cannot be *known* to have consistent intrinsic properties internal to one subject, even by the subject himself. The most striking of these pumps is a thought experiment involving two coffee tasters, whom he calls Chase and Sanborn.[20] Although the coffee they taste has not changed in terms of its composition, their judgment of the coffee has; they no longer like it. Dennett claims the two tasters cannot know whether they are now experiencing a different taste, as Sanborn believes – or whether, as Chase believes, they are merely judging the same taste in a different way. Further, he suggests that "their apparent disagreement [might be] more a difference in manner of expression than in experiential or psychological state".[21] If it is true that there is no substantive difference between a change in experience and a change in judgment – if there is no clear delineation between the middle and third term – then there is no way for qualia to be metaphysically real.

However, it is not immediately clear why one could not distinguish between the two reasons for their change in

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[19] Ibid., 233.
[20] Ibid., 231-234.
[21] Ibid., 232.

judgment. For instance, if one were to beam the original taste of the coffee into their heads now, the two tasters should be able to tell whether what they tasted then *is* the same as what they are tasting now. Of course, such a "coffee beam" presumes that qualia are real, and thus that there is some objective old taste-experience which can serve as a basis of comparison for the new taste-experience. To investigate more clearly whether this can be maintained, let us try taking the experiment outside the mind by assuming Chase and Sanborn return to their alma mater. Both find the visit nostalgic. "The campus is just what it used to be," says Chase, "only it doesn't produce the same reaction in me anymore. When I first came here the sight of these buildings filled me with excitement and possibility; now, all the buildings appear to me as run-down, metaphorically speaking of course, and it just makes me sad for good times past." "What are you talking about?" replies Sanborn. "The campus *has* changed! The streets need repaving, the floors haven't been redone in several years, and there's ivy growing up the wall of Old Main! It does make me sad, but it's not a metaphor – the whole thing is run down, *literally!*" Now, it is possible, as Dennett suggests in another of his intuition pumps, that one of the two men is misremembering. One must concede Dennett's point this far: memory cannot always be relied upon, and it is possible that one or both men are wrong about the phenomenon – this time an external phenomenon – that they are encountering. However, it is not possible that the difference between the two accounts is merely one of interpretation; rather, it is an empirical fact whether or not the campus *is* objectively in a state of physical deterioration relative to its physical state several decades ago.

The state of the buildings corresponds to the taste of Maxwell House coffee – that is, the thought experiment suggests that whether the quale of an experience has changed is a fact which is objective but merely not sharable, and thus not verifiable. This conclusion is supported by the realization that it is not a conceptual impossibility to think of qualia as intersubjective. Language is a grossly insufficient medium for

communicating direct experiences in detail. However, one can imagine circumventing the language barrier via direct mind-to-mind communication. Whether this takes the form of the new Neuralink technology currently in development or the telepathy of science fiction and fantasy does not matter; the point is not whether such communication is possible but whether it is thinkable. If the nature of qualia is such that they it is conceivable for them to be agreed on by two independent subjects, then qualia might be comparable to the buildings of Chase and Sanborn's old campus: objective, public things which are rendered subjective and private only by incidental factors.

If this logic holds, the strongest case that can be made for Dennett's original thought experiment is that there is no way to for anyone, even Chase or Sanborn, to actually distinguish Chase's claim of changing judgment from Sanborn's claim of changing qualia. However, if this is the case, it would only amount to there being no *pragmatic* difference between the claims. An unobserved but very real metaphysical distinction would remain, which in turn would allow one to plausibly maintain the reality of qualia.

All of this, however, rests on the assumption that Chase and Sanborn are, in fact, looking at the same alma mater. Returning to the world of coffee, and Dennett's original thought experiment, there is no reason to suspect that Chase and Sanborn ever experienced the same taste – or is there? After all, the coffee itself is exactly the same – poured from the same pot, perhaps. The question of what bearing the material bases of qualia has on the qualia themselves is a complex one. On the one hand, Dennett is careful to couch Sanborn's explanation for his changed preference in material terms; Sanborn talks of his "tasters" being defective, which we take to mean his tongue, taste buds, and neural pathways. Dennett refers to the objective sensory data that enters the brain along neurons as "phenomenal information properties" (or "pips" for

short).[22] He writes: "Chase's speech shows that he is under the impression that his pips are unchanged…. Sanborn is under the impression that his pips are different."[23] Pips, however, are material phenomena, and if a pip-based account of the change in flavor is the correct one, then there must be a physiological basis for the change, and it will be easily proven which man's explanation for his dislike of the coffee is correct.[24] One might instead try to recapture the essence of the thought experiment by assuming *only* that Sanborn's qualia have changed – and yet, a change in qualia in the absence of a material change would be impossible under physicalism. Such a "random qualia shift" – random because of its lack of a physical cause – is conceivable, yet its existence would have enormous ramifications.

This implication can be avoided if one considers that the shift might in fact be a (materially based) mental process occurring *after* the sense data arrives in the brain – that is, it might be something to do with that data's interaction with other brain processes. Indeed, as the optical illusion involving spinning circles and stationary triangles, mentioned above, indicates, it is foolish to assume that higher brain functions have no impact on perception. So long as qualia do not arise from sense data alone but exist as a kind of compromise between sense data and higher brain function, there is no need to resort to dualism. However, for two reasons, this causes the entire argument to collapse.

First, with respect to the shareability of qualia – previously brought forward as a point in favor of their reality – if qualia do not correspond to sense data, but are influenced by idiosyncratic interpretation, then they cannot be shared without also sharing the interpretive context of the mind in which

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[22] Ibid., 232, 242.
[23] Ibid., 242-243.
[24] Ibid., 243.

they originate – in other words, without substantially transforming the mind receiving the data. It is much harder to imagine that data could become directly sharable between minds if qualia will only ever arise from the interaction of that data with the unique mental state of one individual mind. It may be true that a given neurological state will always correspond to a unique qualia, but it is in this narrow sense alone that qualia have objective being. Insofar as there continue to be individual, independent minds, any such objective being is decidedly not public. Accordingly, the alma mater thought experiment is based on a fallacious premise, and there is no reason to suppose that Chase and Sanborn taste the same thing when they taste Maxwell House coffee. Their observable reactions to it and their conscious assessments of it may have changed in lockstep with each other, but this is a pragmatic requirement on the part of the brain, which must process reality consistently and reliably. As for the qualia it generates in doing so, there is no reason they must be likewise consistent and reliable.

Second, and more importantly, with the introduction of higher brain functions, one has essentially transmuted Sanborn's explanation into Chase's. The assertion that there has been an objective change, essential for maintaining the reality of qualia, is ultimately explainable only in terms of a change in interpretation. Dennett's point is proven.

These objections, which together speak strongly against the reality of qualia, can be accounted for much more easily by rejecting the original three-part model of perception in favor of a two-part model. Earlier, realizing that qualia belonged neither to the senses nor to interpretation, we supposed that they must have a separate being of their own as a "middle term." However, we neglected a second possibility: that qualia exist, not *between* these two terms, but as *the holistic experience of all mental processes associated with both terms*. It is here that Ned Block's notion of types of consciousness becomes helpful. Block begins with P-consciousness – that is, phenomenal consciousness, the information about the world

that we passively receive from our senses and thus objectively *are* experiencing.[25] P-consciousness, to put it in Dennett's language, can be thought of as the sum total of our pips. Block distinguishes P-consciousness from A-, or access, consciousness, which has to do with control.[26] Taking Block's conception with some liberality, A-consciousness refers to the executive processes which, among other things, incorporate this sense data into an internal representation of the world in which we are acting. It is non-passive and pragmatic. Moreover, beyond merely returning feedback to the world (i.e. in the form of actions), A-consciousness in fact processes the world *only with respect to its capacity to be acted upon*.

This further assertion is demonstrated by a number of psychological experiments dealing with attention blindness. In one such study, viewers are asked to count the number of times players of a certain team pass a basketball. While their attention is focused on the task at hand, a man in a gorilla suit is able to walk through the scene unnoticed. The gorilla, though it is clearly present in our P-consciousness, is not attended to by our A-consciousness. The nature of qualia as more than just sense perception hinges on whether one can claim that, in fact, we *do not see the gorilla*.

This might at first seem straightforward. The correct visual data enters your eyes; just because you fail to "attend" to certain aspects of it, does not mean that you do not see it. However, consider again the case of the moving circles and the disappearing triangles. In this optical illusion, the proper visual data enters your brain – however, some mental module *automatically* filters it out as unimportant. The triangles are not there; although they reappear when one looks directly at them, so long as one keeps one's eyes steady, one can attend to the space where they were and note their phenomenological

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[25] Ned Block, "Concepts of Consciousness," in *Philosophy of Mind: Classical and Contemporary Readings*, ed. David Chalmers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988): 207.
[26] Ibid., 208.

absence. This is a curious case. One possible interpretation is that the triangles are filtered out as unimportant *prior* to the generation of P-consciousness – thus defeating our earlier definition of P-consciousness as the sum of one's pips. However, another possible interpretation is that the triangles are actually present in P-consciousness, but that some evolutionary module which is better considered part of *A*-consciousness has become so deeply ingrained in our biology that our minds fail to see the triangle by reflex. If the latter is true, it would suggest that the triangles' state of absentness is the same state in which all "qualia" which exist in P-consciousness are in when not being attended to by A-consciousness. Thus, we *literally* do not see the gorilla. However else our brains might process these unattended visual cues – for instance, in the case of blindsighted people – there is little cause to suspect they would be rendered as qualia.

Thus, if A-consciousness is the unity of experience and action, qualia might best be thought of as experience-judgment. After all, although we do not will qualia, neither do we "encounter" them as external phenomenon; rather, we encounter the *world through* them. Not being part of the external world, they are not things which are apprehended but rather *are* themselves the process of apprehending. They are not "representations" of neurological processes; rather, they *are* those processes: what looks like neurons firing from a third-person perspective is experienced from a first-person perspective as qualia.

If the two-part model is indeed correct, then qualia do not have a being-in-themselves but are a heuristic used by the brain to interpret the world. Although some of Dennett's intuition pumps postulate an objective change in qualia – see, for example, the one involving an evil neurosurgeon who "inverts" your vision such that down appears as up – in fact all that happens is a temporary, materially-based disturbance in perception which fades away as your brain reinterprets the

new qualia as "normal."[27] Soon, despite the supposed change, your brain has learned to reprocess "down" as "up" and you are, not metaphorically but literally, experiencing things exactly as before. Such flexibility confirms both the independence of qualia from sensory input *and* their nature as having no fixed nature.

Although one must conclude that Dennett's argument is sound, neither the two-part model nor the three-part model decisively eliminates the other from consideration. However, the tripartite model does not have quite the intuitive appeal that was initially supposed. Because it requires qualia to have objective existence apart from material sense data and higher brain processes, it is, compared to the two-part model, far less compatible with ample psychological evidence indicating much back-and-forth between higher brain functions and the sense data which supposedly informs them. A two-part model, which postulates that experience does not come between perception and interpretation but rather is constituted by them, is a much better fit. Accordingly, the reality of qualia as anything more than a mental heuristic must be cast into serious doubt.

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[27] Dennett, "Quining Qualia," 230-231, 234-235.

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    phy of Mind: Classical and   Contemporary
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THE ELEVATED STATION OF CHAUNTECLEER:
THE GREAT CHAIN OF BEING AND AUGUSTINIAN SIGN THEORY IN *THE NUN'S PRIEST'S TALE*

Lara Rudman

The Great Chain of Being was an idea widely accepted throughout the medieval, Christian world. This concept created a hierarchy that placed God at the top, with humans and animals below that. Within this view of the cosmos, humans retained dominion over animals. This idea of hierarchy has been used by St. Augustine to explain the natural order of this world, as it was believed that this order had been put forth by God at the time of creation. From this idea about the natural world, Augustine created a sign theory in his work *De Doctrina Christiana*. Augustinian Sign Theory has been widely recognized and utilized for centuries.

Augustinian Sign Theory is the simple idea that a sign is a thing that invokes the impression of another thing, specifically that God reveals greater truths in this way. Before the Fall of Man, man knew God inwardly. After the Fall, external means were necessary to know God, which He revealed through signs, particularly written word.[1] For theological purposes, sign theory sees Scripture as "intentionally given by

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[1] Jackson, Darrel B. "The Theory of Signs in St. Augustine's De Doctrina Christiana." Revue d'Etudes Augustiniennes et Patristiques 15, no. 1-2 (1969): 19, https://doi.org/10.1484/j.rea.5.104162.

God, presented to us by men, and set forth in language."[2] Therefore, if the sign-giver is God, then the sign must signify what He has determined. In his work, Augustine explicitly defines "*signa naturalia*," or natural sign, which shows how the natural world brings to mind greater truths, such as the ordered hierarchy of beings.[3] The sign itself is not nearly as important as what it signifies. The animals, as an integral part of the natural world governed by the structure of the Great Chain of Being put forth by God, can be used as signs of morality.

Furthermore, utilization of Augustinian Sign Theory can be made practical for other types of texts, particularly moral tales rooted in Christian values. One of the more popular ways that signs can be utilized is in stories, as this medium is particularly suited for imparting moral lessons without being overly explicit. An example of moral messaging in stories through signs can be understood through the work of Geoffrey Chaucer in *The Canterbury Tales*. These tales are presented individually through an overarching story about pilgrims participating in a storytelling contest as they make their long journey to visit the shrine of St. Thomas Becket at the Canterbury Cathedral. These tales are entrenched in moralistic themes from the time period, particularly Christian ones. As author, Chaucer has entered a god-like role of sign-giver that bestows upon him the ability to designate signs, through his characters, to express his Christian values, which Chaucer achieves in *The Nun's Priest's Tale*. These Christian values lend themselves to, and exist in harmony with, the Great Chain of Being, along with Augustinian Sign Theory, which bridges the gap between

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[2] Jackson, Darrel B. "The Theory of Signs in St. Augustine's De Doctrina Christiana." Revue d'Etudes Augustiniennes et Patristiques 15, no. 1-2 (1969): 28, https://doi.org/10.1484/j.rea.5.104162.

[3] Gramigna, Remo. "Augustine on Lying: A Theoretical Framework for the Study of Types of Falsehood." *Sign Systems Studies* 41, no. 4 (2013): 478, https://doi.org/10.12697/sss.2013.41.4.05.

the fantastical nature of the stories and the insight into morality that is to be applied to the readers' everyday life.

The Nun's Priest's Tale, one of the stories from *The Canterbury Tales*, is interesting in how it disrupts the Great Chain of Being and breaks natural order within the narrative. This narrative poem recounts the tale of Chauntecleer, a rooster. This rooster is presented very differently from the humans, or even the other nonhumans, in the story. Chauntecleer is arguably of greater importance and of higher standing in the hierarchy due to his superior understanding in astrological matters; therefore, his inherent purpose exceeds that of any humans or nonhumans. *The Nun's Priest's Tale* also lends itself to an analysis through Augustinian Sign Theory because the story's moral is conveyed with the use of animals as signs. Chauntecleer is the sign for adhering to the Great Chain of Being, and a sign for what evils await if one does not comply.

While many critics debate what the tale's moral might be, it is fair to say that there are a number of correct answers.[4] For the purposes of this essay, this story serves as a reminder of the importance of natural law, of finding one's place within the Great Chain of Being and finding fulfillment. It is only when one seeks to elevate themselves away from one's station that one becomes vulnerable to corruption and chaos.[5] God created an exceptional animal in Chauntecleer as a sign of His divine intellect, but Chauntecleer is still bound by his station as a rooster, in an ultimate moral statement of the hierarchical natural world that God created.

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[4] Myers, D.E. "Focus and 'Moralite' in the Nun's Priest's Tale." The Chaucer Review: A Journal of Medieval Studies and Literary Criticism 7, no. 3 (1973): 210–11.

[5] Schuman, Samuel. "The Widow's Garden: 'The Nun's Priest's Tale' and the Great Chain of Being." Studies in the Humanities: Journal of the Senshū University Research Society 6, no. 2 (1978): 13.

As a character, Chauntecleer is uniquely vulnerable to temptation and corruption because of the line he walks in between human and god, complicated even more so by the fact that as a rooster, he is neither. Chauntecleer's temptation to leave the safety of his station inspires a moral lesson on the importance of knowing one's place within the Great Chain of Being, with a greater allegorical meaning for the natural world that can be revealed through Chauntecleer's use as a sign, in accordance with Augustinian Sign Theory. Chauntecleer signifies the temptation that can befall individuals who are not secure in their position in life, and the dangers that come from not adhering to their God-given purpose and hierarchical station.

Because the Nun's Priest's Tale reads like a fable or instructional story, the reader is ready for a moral or value to be imparted through the use of animals as signs. By setting up the reader's expectations, it will be easier to impart the lesson. The larger lesson being conveyed is the importance of staying humble and not succumbing to flattery, which is particularly applicable to Chauntecleer, as he is characterized as a superior being in all ways, but most importantly, he is aware of it. The moral also speaks to the danger of thinking too highly of oneself and striving for more than their station in life.[6] It is described that "[i]n al the land, of crowing nas his peer."[7] Because of this great skill that Chauntecleer possesses, he knows that he is an integral part of the lives of those around him. As such, the story's structure suggests that Chauntecleer is of more importance than his human owner, or any other being mentioned in the story.

The Nun's Priest's Tale starts with an introduction to Chauntecleer's owner, the widow, and then an explanation of the setting and relationship between the human and nonhuman

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[6] Myers, D.E. "Focus and 'Moralite' in the Nun's Priest's Tale." The Chaucer Review: A Journal of Medieval Studies and Literary Criticism 7, no. 3 (1973): 212.

[7] Chaucer, "The Nun's Priest's Tale," line 2850.

characters: "For thilke tyme, as I have understonde, beestes and briddes koude speke and synge."[8] The story eventually transitions into a narrative focused entirely on Chauntecleer and those that surround him, and the subsequent trouble Chauntecleer gets into when he lets the Fox tempt him away from the safety his hierarchical standing provides within the widow's yard.

Animals in this story take on human qualities, displaying more fully realized personalities than any of the human characters mentioned in the opening lines. While the main human character, Chauntecleer's owner, is characterized in the beginning, the characterization seems to only be there to describe just how low in station she really is, by mentioning that "[f]ul sooty was hire bour and eek hir halle."[9] His owner, only referred to as a "povre wydwe,"[10] is a peasant, poor and destitute. Her greatest possession is Chauntecleer himself. Her house is dirty and in disrepair, whereas Chauntecleer lives in relative comfort in her front yard.[11] While she is without a husband, Chauntecleer has seven hens for wives. In this way, Chauntecleer has a better life and higher station than his owner. Chaucer creates an earthly hierarchy within the widow's own garden, with Chauntecleer as the ruler, which also behaves as a signifier for the natural world. From that hierarchy, the narrative "[f]ocuses on a number of enlightening and entertaining illustrations of the dangers of deviating from one's place within the universal order, and the delights to be found in cleaving to that place."[12]

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[8] Ibid, lines 2880-2881.

[9] Ibid, line 2832.

[10] Ibid, line 2821.

[11] Ibid, lines 2847-2849.

[12] Schuman, Samuel. "The Widow's Garden: 'The Nun's Priest's Tale' and the Great Chain of Being." Studies in the Humanities: Journal of the Senshū University Research Society 6, no. 2 (1978): 13.

Regardless of Chauntecleer's excellence, the fact remains that Chauntecleer is a rooster, and the widow is a human. As such, the widow's humanity comes with certain inherent qualities, a claim that would be supported within the Great Chain of Being and by St. Augustine. The theory based on Augustinian thought put forth by Anne Payne in her essay helps illuminate the dynamic between the widow and Chauntecleer. Even if the widow is poor, she is still a more elevated individual just in the nature of her being human.[13] Chauntecleer does not know what a fox is, or the danger it can pose to a rooster. The widow does though, only due to the inherent intelligence that comes with human lived experience.

The medieval conception of the dynamic between humans and nonhumans implies some basic principles for analyzing medieval animal fables. "According to the rules of hierarchy in fable," Anne Payne explains, "animals move up into the role of men, and men move up into the role of gods."[14] In the context of this story, the widow would be raised to a god-like status, while Chauntecleer and the other hens are humans. In stories such as these, to be human is to be God. The foreknowledge of the widow will always be more than Chauntecleer's, simply because she is human, and he is not. Chauntecleer, as an animal, is constantly in contention with his lack of foreknowledge, which is inherently linked to the fact that he is not human. Even with his cosmic abilities, arguably, it does not do enough to push him into god-like status. Chauntecleer, at times, appears to be "a fool because he is a chicken but acts like a man.[15] It is Chauntecleer's attempt to move into a god-

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[13] Payne, F. Anne. "Foreknowledge and Free Will: Three Theories in the Nun's Priest's Tale." *The Chaucer Review: A Journal of Medieval Studies and Literary Criticism* 10, no. 3 (1976): 206.

[14] Payne, F. Anne. "Foreknowledge and Free Will: Three Theories in the Nun's Priest's Tale." *The Chaucer Review: A Journal of Medieval Studies and Literary Criticism* 10, no. 3 (1976): 205.

[15] Schuman, Samuel. "The Widow's Garden: 'The Nun's Priest's Tale' and the Great Chain of Being." *Studies in the Humanities:*

like role that casts him into a perilous situation. This entire narrative shows Chauntecleer constantly fighting against the constraints that come with being a rooster confined to the hierarchical structure of the natural world. Furthermore, this inequality in existence does not stop Chaucer from attempting to elevate Chauntecleer and assert his higher status through the utilization of his unique ability in time-keeping. This fact further cements the limitations that the Great Chain of Being puts on Chauntecleer, which is morally conveyed through Chauntecleer as a character and as a sign.

Chauntecleer the rooster, whose name in modern English means "clear singing," has his narrative significance as the main character and moral signifier conveyed by Chaucer through detailed description of the bird's physical appearance. Much care is taken to describe him. Most of the other animals are mentioned in passing and without much of a description at all, such as the "thre large sows," "three keen," and "a sheep that highte Malle."[16] Chauntecleer, on the other hand, is given six lines that explicitly describe his coloring:

> His coomb was redder than the fyn coral,
> And batailled as it were a castel wal;
> His byle was blak, and as the jeet it shoon;
> Lyk asure were his legges and his toon;
> His nayles whitter than the lylye flour,
> And lyk the burned gold was his colour.[17]

The level of detail that is provided to any of the other beings in the story pales in comparison to the breadth and depth of detail that the story provides Chauntecleer, because he is the most important character. Even of the seven hens that were all

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[16] Chaucer, "The Nun's Priest's Tale," line 2830-31.

[17] Ibid, lines 2859-64.

his wives, only "faire damoysele Pertelote" is described because of her standing as Chauntecleer's near equal.[18] Her description, as well as the other hens, is entirely based on his own, as Pertelote, in particular, is extolled only in her relationship to Chauntecleer. All the hens are described as "wonder lyk to hym, as of colours."[19] Pertelote is beautiful and talented only in the qualities that she shares with him, that is her looks and her singing, which Chauntecleer holds in high regard. However, she does not possess all his abilities, that is, his timekeeping abilities and his knowledge, so she is still beneath him.

Chauntecleer's most essential character trait as a sign, and most compelling evidence of his higher level on the Great Chain of Being, is his cosmic and astrological understanding of how the sun rises and sets. His crowing is more exact than any "clokke" or "orlogge."[20] It is said that "[b]y nature he knew ech ascencioun of the equynoxial," which means that Chauntecleer knows the time, once each hour, when each of the twenty-four imaginary points on the celestial equator rises on the horizon.[21] Because of Chauntecleer's great skill, his purpose has surpassed any rooster that has ever been. Roosters are known for crowing when the sun rises and as timekeepers in general, but Chauntecleer crows in such an exact way for each hour of the day, and with such understanding of how the world works, that he has risen past his station as a mere rooster, or even a mere animal. It is his fundamental purpose, and Chaucer describes it as part of "his nature." The *Oxford English Dictionary* describes this particular meaning of nature,[22] for this time period, as "the inherent dominant power or

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[18] Ibid, line 2870.

[19] Ibid, line 2868.

[20] Ibid, line 2854.

[21] Ibid, lines 2855-58.

[22] "nature, n.5a." *OED Online*. December 2020.

impulse on a person by which character or action is determined, directed, or controlled." This definition captures the nuance of Chauntecleer's abilities and their correlation to his higher standing within the Great Chain of Being. It is in this way that Chauntecleer attempts to cement himself higher up on the hierarchy, even surpassing humans. His understanding of timekeeping rivals that of a god. This skill is his essential quality that is inherent to his being. This quality puts him above most beings but is in constant conflict with the nature of his existence as a rooster.

After the opening lines of *The Nun's Priest's Tale* strongly declare Chauntecleer's high place in the Great Chain of Being, Chaucer crafts a narrative that shows the danger of breaking away from one's station, through the introduction of the Fox as a villain. When analyzing the relationship between Chauntecleer and the Fox, it is important to understand how lies function in this story. Lies are integral in the strategy the Fox uses to try to eat Chauntecleer. He preys on Chauntecleer's inflated ego and uses flattery to lure him into a dangerous situation, entreating, "But trewely, the cause of my comynge [w]as oonly for to herkne how that ye synge."[23] This flattery is rooted in lies, but in an unconventional way. Critic Remo Gramigna offers a theoretical framework to better understand how lies are used within stories. By understanding the intention and goal of the liar, the nuances of the statements used to lie can give better insight into the motivations of the liar, in this case, the Fox. This analysis is based on the works of St. Augustine, who contributed to the study of human deception through two short treatises. Within Chaucer's work, Augustine would most likely categorize the Fox's lies as the "intention to mislead" rather than to "assert a falsehood."[24]

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[23] Chaucer, "The Nun's Priest's Tale," line 3289-90.

[24] Gramigna, Remo. "Augustine on Lying: A Theoretical Framework for the Study of Types of Falsehood." *Sign Systems Studies* 41, no. 4 (2013): 467.

Not even the Fox would try to state that Chauntecleer's crowing is not magnificent; rather, he acknowledges this truth by saying that his voice is like that of "any aungel hath that is in hevene."[25] He weaponizes this truth to prey on the rooster's ego and maneuvers him into a situation that benefits the Fox's ultimate goal. The Fox represents what happens when signs are utilized for personal purposes, rather than to express God's will. Signs not properly framed through Augustinian Sign Theory, that is, signs that corrupt natural order and God's plan, can be misleading. The endless proliferation of meanings from signs, when unchecked by properly formed morals, can lead individuals astray from the true order of existence.

  Through the lens of Augustinian Sign Theory, the Fox symbolizes evil and chaos, which speaks to his position in the story as a foil to Chauntecleer's attempt to rise above his station and the subsequent harmful results of such an action. Chauntecleer, having fallen into the trap of the Fox's lies about his intentions puts himself in danger of being eaten by the Fox. Having learned his lesson, Chauntecleer actually uses the Fox's deceptive technique to free himself from the jaws of the predator. As D. E. Myers observes, "The Nun's Priest chose to tell a moral little fable in which a flattering liar is deceived by the same kind of trick that he himself used."[26] It is only after this close call with the Fox that Chauntecleer comes to accept his place within the widow's yard, his rightful place as a rooster. Regardless of his lofty ambitions, Chauntecleer's special abilities are uniquely suited to the station that has been provided to him, and it is only there that he can achieve contentment in the natural world. In moral tales, characters act as a sign to a moral truth. The moral messaging of *The Nun's Priest's Tale* imparts that all beings have a natural station in the hierarchy that brings fulfillment. Even Chauntecleer, who

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[25] Chaucer, "The Nun's Priest's Tale," line 3292.

[26] Myers, D.E. "Focus and 'Moralite' in the Nun's Priest's Tale." The Chaucer Review: A Journal of Medieval Studies and Literary Criticism 7, no. 3 (1973): 220.

through his paradoxical existence seems to blur the line between human and nonhuman, finds a place that is fit for a rooster by the end of this tale.

Through the lens of the Great Chain of Being and Augustinian Sign Theory, it is possible to understand how Chaucer crafts a character that seems to break natural law, while also acting as a cautionary tale about the dangers of doing so. Critics agree that, in many fables such as this one, humans are raised to the levels of gods, and the animals are raised to the levels of humans.[27] Chauntecleer, in particular, is raised to an even higher level within the Great Chain of Being than that of the typical animal of fable, due to his astrological understanding. The dynamic between the Fox and Chauntecleer ultimately behaves as the primary driver for the moral of the story. When the Fox arrives in the story, he acts as the initiator of direct conflict with Chauntecleer's elevated station, highlighting how Chauntecleer's arrogance and susceptibility to flattery will get him in trouble. The Fox symbolizes the corruption of natural order. He is a sign for devilish influence that Chauntecleer eventually overcomes by resisting the flattery and finding contentment in his station. As such, one can find ultimate pleasure and purpose by acknowledging one's station and staying there.

Chauntecleer in *The Nun's Priest's Tale* is an unusual character because of how he breaks the mold for what is expected of animals, and what is believed to be the capacity of their intelligence and understanding, especially during medieval times. Chaucer presents a main character that is not only a nonhuman, but is such an exceptional being that Chauntecleer seems to surpass any other being within the story, most importantly, his human owner. In the context of the Great Chain of Being, Chauntecleer seems to be approaching a higher level than that of both humans and nonhumans, resting somewhere

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[27] Payne, F. Anne. "Foreknowledge and Free Will: Three Theories in the Nun's Priest's Tale." *The Chaucer Review: A Journal of Medieval Studies and Literary Criticism* 10, no. 3 (1976): 205.

between humans and God. Chaucer infers this by his authorial choices regarding Chauntecleer: through visual imagery, relationships to other characters, and his own character traits that set him apart from any other being in the story. Chauntecleer's status is further complicated by the nature of his being, and subsequent susceptibility to corruption, with the story's moral expressed in a narrative that can be analyzed through the lens of Augustinian Sign Theory.

 Why is it that Chauntecleer makes for such an integral sign for Chaucer to discuss the Great Chain of Being? Augustinian Sign Theory ultimately asserts that the natural world is a sign of God's divine intellect, as creator of the natural world, which he imbued with inherent hierarchical properties. These properties have then been understood though the concept known as the Great Chain of Being. Chauntecleer is particularly situated, through his character descriptions, character arc, and hierarchical place in the widow's yard to represent Chaucer's most striking conversation about the state of hierarchy in the natural world. Through this dialogue, Chaucer highlights God's divine intellect and providence, in accordance with medieval Christian beliefs.

 While this belief was not exceptional for medieval times, Chaucer's use of the character of Chauntecleer for this purpose is exceptional, and it highlights Chaucer's brilliant craft and knowledge of sign theory, as a critical theory to instill the moral underpinnings of his tale. Chauntecleer's use as a sign initially seems as though it would conflict with the Great Chain of Being because of the perceived elevated nature of Chauntecleer's existence, but the events of *The Nun's Priest's Tale* counter this initial inclination. Chauntecleer's story arc demonstrates that even if one possesses extraordinary characteristics, one must come to understand and accept the station appointed by God. To be a sign in Augustinian Sign Theory is to align with the God-given order of the natural world.

 Chauntecleer is presented as a being with a unique ability, that of his astrological understanding, which places him at a higher station than would be expected of a mere

rooster, or a mere human. While his station does not place him higher than humans, in agreement with the Great Chain of Being, the surety and fulfillment that Chauntecleer finds in his station at the end of *The Nun's Priest's Tale* functions as a sign of God's divine love for, and divine providence of, His ordered creation. Chaucer frames the Great Chain of Being through the tale of Chauntecleer, in a way that allows Augustinian Sign Theory to reveal what it means to truly find one's place as a hierarchical being in the natural world.

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MARY KINGSLEY'S
TRAVELS IN WEST AFRICA:
AN EXAMINATION OF GENDER'S ROLE
IN DISCURSIVE PRODUCTION

Grace Ryan

"Why did I come to Africa?" Thought I. Why, who would not come to its twin brother hell itself for all the beauty and charm of it!" — Mary Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa*[1]

     Mary Henrietta Kingsley's *Travels in West Africa* offers readers much more than scientific analyses on, to use the words of the author, West African "fish and fetish." In truth, *Travels* reflects Kingsley's perceptions of African culture, European imperialism, colonial commercialization and Christian missionary work, making it as much a sociopolitical field guide as a scientific resource. Interestingly, much of Kingsley's rhetoric regarding these themes contradicts the prototypical Orientalist notions furthered by many nineteenth- and twentieth-century European male authors. However, when considering Kingsley's unique position on the periphery of the colonial identity, and what's more the discursive pressures associated with such an identification, this individuality appears logical and, importantly, representative of more generalized trends regarding gender and textual production.[2] Thus, *Travels*

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[1] Mary Henrietta Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa: Congo Francais, Corisco and Cameroons*, 5th ed. (Boston: Beacon, 1897): 328.
[2] Importantly, Kingsley's work also reflects the intersections of race and the gendered experience, as she implicitly perpetuates racial tropes in her descriptions of West African indigenous peoples. However, a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between

can be used both to further existing suggestions that female writers often produced work that stylistically and contextually diverged from their male counterparts and be considered evidence for the necessity of a more gender-conscious rendition of Edward Said's *Orientalism*.

BACKGROUND ON TRAVEL WRITING

Early travel literature was predominately male authored due largely to the gendered disparities in available travel opportunities. However, women authors were not entirely absent from the field and, in Great Britain especially, the Age of Imperialism ushered in additional — though still relatively minimal — opportunities for female exploration. So as nineteenth-century European imperial fervor and the associated "Scramble for Africa" increased the acreage of recently acquired yet uncharted territory under Western purview, the long perceived "dark continent" quickly transformed into an enticing escape for male and female travelers alike.[3]

For Victorian era (1837-1901) women especially, newly conquered British imperial sites were the perfect "controlled," yet nevertheless exotic, destinations. [4] While undoubtedly

race and gender is beyond the scope of this paper, as *Travels* contains countless passages ripe with examination-worthy material. Therefore, while meaningful and deserving of acknowledgment, Kingsley's treatment of race will not be confronted directly in the following pages.

[3] Monica Anderson, *Women and the Politics of Travel, 1840-1914* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2006); Catherine Barnes Stevenson, "Mary Henrietta Kingsley," in *Victorian Women Travel Writers in Africa* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982): 1–12; 87–160.

[4] Anderson, *Women and the Politics of Travel*; Alison Blunt, *Travel, Gender, and Imperialism: Mary Kingsley and West Africa* (New York: Guilford Press, 1994); Ulrike Brisson, "Fish and Fetish: Mary Kingsley's Studies of Fetish in West Africa," *Journal of Narrative Theory* 35, no. 3 (2005): 326–40.

challenging both geographically and culturally, a woman's European identity provided her enough territorial legitimacy and security to make the embarkment appear a feasible undertaking.[5] Resultingly, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw an increase in British women traveling throughout Africa and other Eastern territories, all the while recording and eventually publishing their observations. Mary Kingsley, Mary Gaunt, Flora Shaw, Isabel Savory, and Alexandria David-Neel represent just a small grouping of these women, and with each's journey came greater societal recognition of female travelers and their efforts.[6] Mary Kingsley, for instance, was the first woman to travel West Africa alone, making her 1897 expedition and the correlated *Travels in West Africa* a landmark achievement for female expeditioners.[7]

Yet however remarkable these women's journeys and subsequent writings were, few were accredited the factual legitimacy granted to their male correlatives. In fact, women's narratives were oftentimes lost or ignored in early studies of nineteenth- and twentieth-century travel writing, as a variety of social, cultural, and political pressures combined to silence female travelers' perceptions for the sake of popularizing the more main-stream sentiments expressed in male-authored literatures.[8]

ORIENTALISM:
CONCEPTUALLY VALID OR GENDERED?

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[5] Brisson, "Fish and Fetish."

[6] Sara Steinert Borella, "Travel, Gender, and the Exotic," *Dalhousie French Studies* 86 (2009): 133–42; Sally Ulmer, "British Women Travelers: Challenging and Reinforcing Victorian Notions of Race and Gender," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 20 (1893): 1-38.

[7] Blunt, *Travel, Gender, and Imperialism.*

[8] Anderson, *Women;* Blunt, *Travel;* Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 1991).

Due to the legitimacy associated with the persona of the male traveler, male-authored writings were typically considered the default "factual" sources for Westerners to learn about "Oriental" lands. Female accounts, in contrast, were typically referenced less for their informative abilities and more for their colorful descriptions and narrations — oftentimes, women's works were likened to personal diaries while male writing considered academic materials.[9] This skewed accreditation of objectivity and authority had dangerous ramifications, the most detrimental being the creation of blatantly patriarchal, societal-wide echo-chambers of falsely espoused observations regarding the Eastern "Other."[10]

By relying predominantly on the "knowledge" compiled in male-authored works, Europeans unwittingly fell privy to the epistemological trend Edward Said coins "Orientalism."[11] Orientalism, Said claims, is a way of thinking that focuses on the "basic distinction between East [the Orient] and West [the Occident] as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, 'mind," destiny, and so on."[12] For example, Orientalist ideas were often used to justify European colonization and intervention, for in creating a fictitious Oriental identity of backwardness and barbarity Western writers were able to validate the civilizing missions of their ascribed metropoles.

The European focus on male authorship is relevant to Orientalism in that, as argued by multiple scholars in the field, while male writers shared a tendency for conceptual reinforcement and consequentially typically only propagated the Orien-

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[9] Mills, *Discourses;* Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, First Edition (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).
[10] Said, *Orientalism*.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Said, *Orientalism,* 2-3.

talist ideas popularized by earlier male authors, women consistently rebutted Orientalist narratives and instead worked to redefined European perceptions of the exotic and the "Other."[13] As Borella contends, women travel writers regularly produced materials that refuted the stereotypical notions common to male accounts and, in welcoming a "negotiat[ion] and re-evaluat[ion] [of] their own cultural (mis)understandings," "represent[ed] and simultaneously reconfigure[ed]" typical European understandings of the exotic.[14]

However, Said's original conception of Orientalism fails to distinguish between male and female writings. Therefore, while still valid the notion undoubtedly necessitates further exploration and perhaps reformulation "within a more complex model of textuality" that better encompasses the distinctiveness of female narratives and recognizes gender as "the determinate in the production and reception of both texts by men and women."[15]

DISCURSIVE BOUNDARIES IN FEMALE WRITING

Those claiming female uniqueness predominantly attribute women's authorial differences to the travelers' positions on the periphery of colonial zones and, relatedly, the specific discursive pressures female writers faced as a result of time, place, and sex-role perceptions in the metropole.[16] To speak on the former, being neither a "native" nor male imperialist left female travelers with no clearly delineated "function" within imperial structures, meaning they occupied relatively ambiguous roles within sociopolitical colonial ecosystems. However, this flexibility was oftentimes an asset

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[13] Anderson, *Women;* Blunt, *Travel, Gender, and Imperialism;* Borella, "Travel, Gender, and the Exotic;" Mills, *Discourses;* Strobel, "Women's History."

[14] Borella, "Travel, Gender, and the Exotic."

[15] Mills, *Discourses,* 57.

[16] Pratt, "Imperial Eyes."

for travelers, as they were thus able to observe situations from the perspectives of outsiders as much as participants and subsequently gain a more holistic understanding of colonial zones. Textually, this awareness manifested in a stress on "personal involvement and relationships with people of other cultures" over the strict informational cataloguing or geographical commentary common to male accounts. [17]

Race is one subject in which the female focus on interpersonal interactions and relational reciprocity appears most blatant. Many contend that colonial settlements were binarily divided between an antagonistic colonized-colonizer relationship where mutuality between European settlers and black "natives" appeared non-existent. However, these perceptions fail to accommodate women in their understanding of colonial interactions and thus negate to consider women's unique abilities to transcend or circumvent typical European-"native" interfaces.[18]

Inferior to white men due to gender yet treated as racially superior to "natives," the flexibility of European women travelers meant they were able to emphasize distinctions between the "self" and the "Other" ("native") in some cases while aligning with the "Other" against the white colonizers elsewhere. Essentially, these women maintained the freedom to approach interactions with "native" populations openly and without ascendent intentions, thereby recording more intimate and introspective "native" interactions that both rebutted male

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[17] Mills, *Discourses,* 21.

[18] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1967); Linda Lane and Hauwa Mahdi, "Fanon Revisited: Race Gender and Coloniality Vis-à-Vis Skin Colour," in *The Melanin Millennium*, ed. Ronald E. Hall (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2013), 169–81. Deborah Shapple Spillman, "African Skin, Victorian Masks: The Object Lessons of Mary Kingsley and Edward Blyden," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 39, no. 2 (2011): 305–26.

descriptions and added to the exclusivity of female writing tendencies more broadly.[19]

Of course, it is important to acknowledge that female travelers, while falling outside the direct categorization of imperialist, certainly played a part in the colonial narrative. Again, use of the term "periphery" is quite helpful, for it recognizes the female traveler as one neither within nor outside the colonial sphere and thereby grants her a certain amount of agency in furthering the European imperial mission while not too heavily chaining her to said action.[20] As Strobel notes:

> Control of information is one feature of imperialism: the colonizer collects information about the colonized; rarely does the latter have the power and resources to control the flow of information or the context of its use. European women collected and disseminated information about the colonial world for readers back home. In some cases this reporting aimed to create a climate favorable to imperial expansion or to bring public attention to purported abuses on the part of the indigenous peoples or European colonial officials.[21]

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[19] Borella, "Travel;" Mills, *Discourses;* Strobel, "Women's History;" Ulmer, "British Women."

[20] Pratt, *Discourses;* James Buzard, "Victorian Women and the Implications of Empire," ed. Dea Birkett et al., *Victorian Studies* 36, no. 4 (1993): 443–53 Gerry Kearns, "The Imperial Subject: Geography and Travel in the Work of Mary Kingsley and Halford Mackinder," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 22, no. 4 (1997): 450–72; Mills, *Discourses;* Spillman, "African Skin, Victorian Masks."

[21] Margaret Strobel, *European Women and the Second Empire*, (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 35.

Therefore, it is vital to recognize the female traveler's ability to act both as an instrument and critic of the European imperial mission.

DISCURSIVE PRESSURES

While avoiding certain limitations due to their ambiguity within colonial systems, female travelers were alternatively constrained by various discursive pressures. Discourse, per Foucault, is "a historically, socially, and instructionally specific structure of statements, terms, categories and beliefs" that sway author subjectivity.[22] Discursive pressures, therefore, are the exact outside stimuli that inform the construction of written texts (be they political, social, or cultural factors) and consequentially vary depending on writer and background.[23] In the context of imperial travel writing, a female's navigation of these pressures can be seen as her final attempt to satisfy a unique combination of influences stemming from the sociocultural and political climates of both the metropole and the colony at the time of her trek.

Perhaps the most challenging influences facing Victorian female travelers like Kingsley were those of sex-role socialization and textual gender identification.[24] On the one hand, female travelers were uniquely positioned to defy gender stereotypes and assert a more masculine identity in their writings, as their journeys far removed them from the domestic realm and involved what were typically considered virile tasks. However, these travelers were simultaneously bounded by their readers' (English society and the English scientific

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[22] Mills, *Discourses,* 3.

[23] Mills, *Discourses;* Pratt, "Imperial Eyes."

[24] Sex-role refers to the range of attitudes and characteristics socially determined as acceptable, normal, or desirable for an individual based on their gender.

community) gendered preconceptions, and moreover the patriarchal metropole climate they would have to re-assimilate to upon return.

Women occupied a precarious social position in late-Victorian society. While social movements in the 1850s and 1860s had raised questions about a woman's role in the workforce and, more generally, the role of the Victorian bourgeois woman in society, the backlash of said movements had also catalyzed a reinforcement of typical feminine identity tropes. Resultingly, English society was polarized between those in support of the Victorian "New Woman" — females who defied gendered expectations by remaining unmarried longer, obtaining an education, or working outside of the home — and those who saw such women as lost "spinsters" in need of domestication.[25]

Specifically for the more scientifically-oriented traveler, the pressures radiating from England's academic community were deeply impactful in shaping textual production. Highly gendered and misogynistic, Victorian academia made it incredibly difficult for women to establish professional legitimacy, as texts had to both declare factual authority *and* cater to the community's patriarchal prejudices to be accepted. [26] Such pressures were especially important for Kingsley; intent on providing an authoritative voice on fish and fetish in West Africa, she undoubtedly catered to a scholarly audience and was resultingly forced to determine the amount of expertise she could textually assert while still appearing feminine for, and thus acceptable to, her gendered audience. However, while those looking for a future in academia likely experienced exaggerated professional pressures, even writers targeting a broader, less academically inclined audience were forced to grapple with precarious gender perceptions that in-

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[25] Harper, "Mary H. Kingsley: In Purist of Fish and Fetish;" Korte, "Travel Writing in 'The English Woman's Journal."
[26] Harper, "Mary H. Kingsley," 25.

evitably influenced literary production. Caught between appeasing audiences at home and textually embracing their more adventuresome side, most nineteenth- and twentieth- century women's writings resultingly display contradictory expressions of the authorial "self" and vacillating gender identification tendencies based on factors like locality, time-period, or subject matter.[27]

SCHOLARLY CRITIQUES

The subdued nature of most discursive maneuverings has, of course, spurred contention as to the actual existence of female identity conflicts. Regarding Kingsley specifically, Ciolkowski and Nnoromele both argue that the traveler had no trouble asserting a certain textual identity, though Ciolkowski believes Kingsley to be identifying with the prototypical Victorian woman while Nnoromele the imperial masculine figurehead.[28] However, the existence of these polarizing binaries seemingly refutes their very arguments, for if one author can so staunchly contradict the other than it is somewhat obvious that Kingsley's work adopts no clear viewpoint or identity. Moreover, certain authors refute female textual uniqueness in its entirety. For example, Buzard argues that gender-based generalizations are procedurally unfair, as theories presenting "multivocal 'gender-specific' (female) alternatives require the straw-man of noble dominant discourse against which to show the alternative's valuable divergence."[29]

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[27] Anderson, *Women;* Blunt, *Travel;* Mills, *Discourses.*

[28] Laura E. Ciolkowski, "Travelers' Tales: Empire, Victorian Travel, and the Spectacle of English Womanhood in Mary Kingsley's 'Travels in West Africa,'" *Victorian Literature and Culture* 26, no. 2 (1998): 337–66; Salome C. Nnoromele, "Gender, Race, and Colonial Discourse in the Travel Writings of Mary Kingsley," *The Victorian Newsletter*, no. 90 (1996): 1–6.

[29] Buzard, "Victorian Women and the Implications of Empire," 447.

While well-intentioned, these arguments fail to recognize both the clear discursive divergences between male and female accounts of the Orient and the commonalities identifiable amongst same-sexed authors. In the same way that female-authored travel literatures *generally* express multiple syntactical similarities, male accounts similarly share certain discursive tendencies, for instance a stress on the tangible or focus on locality over culture.[30] Given that, "in comparison with accounts by Victorian men, women's travel narratives incline less towards domination and more toward discovery," certain gender-based generalizations are useful when conducting larger intersectional analyses, as they highlight important sex-dependent discursive similarities.[31]

In summary, modern scholarship suggests that nineteenth-century female travelers, whether a result of their peripheral positions or discursive navigations, consistently authored texts that diverged from, or blatantly rebutted, the Orientalist themes common to male-authored works. Let us now consider Mary Kingsley and *Travels in West Africa* specifically to see where her work aligns with, or perhaps opposes, these suggestions, and to examine more broadly its positions vis-a-vie Said's *Orientalism*.

MARY KINGSLEY: A CONTRADICTION

Mary Kingsley is a well-studied nineteenth-century traveler, meaning *Travels* has been the source of much academic discussion surrounding discursive navigation and gender identification. However, while scholars generally conclude that Kingsley's text is one of many complexities,

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[30] Anderson, *Women;* Mills, *Discourses;* Linda McDowell, "Introduction: Place and Gender; Displacements," in *Gender, Identity, and Place: Understanding Feminist Geographies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 1–33; 203–23; Pratt, "Imperial Eyes;" Strobel, "Women's History;" Ulmer, "British Women."
[31] Margaret Strobel, *European Women*, 39.

disagreement abounds when considering what these intricacies reveal about the specific pressures she faced.

For example, Harper suggests that Kingsley's careful accommodation of male scientists in *Travels,* and moreover her continual struggle to both identify with, yet note herself inferior to, the character of the serious male academic displays her desire to simultaneously placate the gendered English scientific community *and* establish legitimacy as a scholar.[32] Meanwhile, Anderson highlights gender conflicts through Kingsley's conscious and continual mentioning of clothing, for she perceives it as Kingsley's way of reinforcing typical ideals of Victorian femininity while undertaking objectively masculine tasks.[33] And while multiple authors advocate that Kingsley's complex employment of humor was in fact a tool to degrade her own legitimacy as both an author and explorer, many identify contrasting influences as the inspiration for such self-discrediting rhetorical moves.

Moreover, authors also clash when speculating on the influences behind Kingsley's unique treatment of "native" populations, opinions on imperial and commercial policy, perceptions of the self, and actions towards other travelers. Therefore, while there is apparent consensus regarding the nuance and exceptionalism of Kingsley's text, disagreement arises when contemplating the exact technicalities of these divergences, thus making *Travels* an opportune case study for further examination.

ANALYSIS: KINGSLEY'S ASCENT OF MOUNT CAMEROON

Athough it is not the explicit goal of her expedition, Kingsley devotes several chapters of *Travels* to her southeast-

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[32] Harper, "Mary H. Kingsley."
[33] Anderson, *Women.*

ern summit of Mungo Mah Lobeh, or the "Throne of Thunder," the highest mountain in the West African region (13,760 feet).[34] Being the first white person to ever complete the trek (male or female) her summit is an important event in both *Travels* and British expeditionary history and thus a special point of interest for British society at the time of publication — in sum, it was a section Kingsley crafted with audience perceptions top of mind. Additionally, given mountaineering's symbolic ties to notions of imperial domination, English superiority, and masculine resilience, Kingsley's descriptions of her ascent primely demonstrate her careful navigations of sexual, geographical, and even racial (her ascent was guided by black indigenous people) discursive pressures, all within the context of an already-gendered activity — mountaineering.[35] Resultingly, the undeniably contradictory nature of Kingsley's authorial positioning in these chapters is hardly surprising. Wholly asserting neither a masculine nor feminine perspective, Kingsley's unstable sexual attitudes manifest in everything from accounts of the surrounding topography to descriptions of "native" people, and perhaps most prominently in the excerpts focused on self-portrayal.

GENDER SELF-PRESCRIPTION IN TRAVELS

To claim that Kingsley adopted a singular identity in *Travels* is a misstatement, for she consistently switches between use of the male or female persona with little determinable strategy. The following sentence perhaps best captures her dichotomous assertions: "Now it is none of my business to go up on mountains…nevertheless, I feel quite sure that no white man has ever looked on the great Peak of Cameroon without a desire arising in his mind to ascend it;" while putting herself

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[34] Kingsley, *Travels,* 286, 287.
[35] Kearns, "The Imperial Subject," 459.

in a subservient position from the onset by claiming no asso-
ciation with the European mountaineering mission or identity,
she subsequently explains her desire to climb the mountain
with justifications tailored to the metacognition of the white
man.[36] Elsewhere Kingsley also reinforces her lack of "moun-
taineering spirit," yet continues on with her troublesome quest
to Mungo's summit regardless — thus, her actions seem to in-
voke one ideal, that of the persistent explorer, while her self-
reflections another, that of a directionless maiden.[37]

However, not all sections of *Travels* are so dichoto-
mously constructed; certain passages seem intentionally
crafted to portray Kingsley as masculine and domineering. For
instance, when reflecting on her motivation for summiting
Mungo, Kingsley claims that her main objective is to "get a
good view and an idea of the way the unexplored mountain
range behind Calabar trends."[38] This reasoning of geograph-
ical categorization appears designed to invoke the masculine
identity, as topographical domination and organization were
desires often associated with male explorers.

Kingsley's depictions of herself as a serious academic
and consciousness scientist also play a role in furthering her
perceived masculinity. For instance, after leaving her men and
proceeding to the summit of Mungo unaccompanied, she notes
her taking of "careful compass bearing for future use regarding
the Rumby and Omon range of mountains."[39] In other words,
she reminds readers that the focus of her activities in West Af-
rica remains that of scholarship and knowledge-accumulation,
tasks characteristically reserved for the identity of the male ex-
plorer.

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[36] Kingsley, *Travels,* 286.
[37] Ibid., 309.
[38] Ibid., 318.
[39] Kingsley, 304.

Beyond portrayals of the self, Kingsley's treatment of others — specifically other women — in *Travels* seems deliberately formulated to cast her as patriarchal and stoic. While in a black Basel Mission camp, Kingsley describes the "melancholy coo-ing" of the "native" women as irritating and terms them "foolish creatures" for worrying about the whereabouts of their husbands.[40] Annoyed by their actions, Kingsley displays no empathy for the women and dismisses their concerns by noting that "those husbands who are not home by now are safely drunk in town, or reposing on the grand new road the kindly Government has provided for them."[41] Moreover, when a "bellicose" husband eventually returns and begins beating his wives, whose subsequent "squawks and squalls" stimulate the "silly things [other women] to go on coo-ing louder and more entreatingly than ever so that their husbands might come home and whack them too," Kingsley describes this situation with a sense of its correctness — as if this is the proper behavior of a husband and wife.[42] Females, one would speculate, would certainly identify more with the wives in this situation, yet Kingsley goes no further than noting mere irritation at their actions. Therefore, Kingsley seems, both in action and sometimes in dialect, to embrace many characteristics and tendencies typically associated with masculinity.

Yet elsewhere in the text, Kingsley is certain to emphasize her femininity. Upon meeting a German official in Buea, she promptly refuses the "trying" man's offer of a bath due to the lack of windows or door on the bath shack, communicating to readers her staunch adherence to female modesty norms even in the wild landscape of West Africa.[43] On another occasion, Kingsley refrains from describing her furious chastisement of the "native" crew due to a desire to be

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[40] Ibid., 292.
[41] Ibid., 292.
[42] Ibid., 292.
[43] Kingsley, 295.

"guarded in [her] language," as her feelings are but "one degree below boiling point."[44] In abstaining from fully detailing this tongue-lashing, Kingsley perfectly accentuates the stereotypical feminine preoccupation with societal perceptions and accentuates her aspirations to remain proper in the eyes of readers — essentially, by citing her unease with appearing uncouth or tyrannical, Kingsley reminds audiences that, though in West Africa, social graces were nevertheless upheld and maintained.[45]

Nowhere is Kingsley's adherence to the feminine identity more pronounced than in her descriptions of the envoy's return to Buea post-ascent. Approaching the camp, Kingsley recounts:

> I feel disgusted, for I had put on a clean blouse, and washed my hands in a tea-cupful of water in a cooking pot before leaving the forest camp, so as to look presentable upon reaching Buea, and not give Herr Liebert the same trouble he had [the last time]…..and all I have got to show for my exertion that is clean or anything like dry is one cuff over which I have been carrying a shawl.[46]

Having just accomplished a remarkable and dangerous summit, Kingsley returns to camp, not boasting of her feat or expecting exultation, but rather concerned over how she will appear to those around her, specifically the male official. Indeed, Kingsley's frequent mentioning of her Victorian garb throughout the text only further highlights what appears to be an obsessive desire to maintain a feminine appearance. Oftentimes, Kingsley takes an aside mid-description to mention something about looks or appearances that, for several sentences, will

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[44] Ibid*,* 307.
[45] Ibid, 307.
[46] Ibid, 324.

take precedence over all other present focuses. Functionally, these subtle yet impactful digressions surely indicated to Victorian readers that, regardless of activity, Kingsley was a woman of the period at heart.

Perhaps in direct response to the academic community's patriarchal assumptions, Kingsley also goes to great lengths to ensure self-deprecation is as common a theme in *Travels* as authoritative reinforcement. Whether it be emphasizing her mental limitations or physical missteps, several excerpts of her work seem designed to negate the little legitimacy she grants herself elsewhere and portray her as the helpless spinster many wished to view her as.

For example, Kingsley often emphasizes the many ways in which her womanly tendencies hamper her ability to lead — in one instance, she claims her "feminine nervousness" led to irrational and unstable decision making that eventually catalyzed an unfortunate and costly route miscalculation.[47] On another occasion, she elaborately describes the results of her "noble resolution" to keep watch over her sleeping African crew one night in such a facetious way that the passage merely highlights her own incompetence.[48] Kingsley recounts falling asleep, not once but twice, and subsequently undergoing a slumber-induced tumble into the fire, which she would have surely put "out like a bucket of cold water" had she not been rescued by her crew.[49] Later in the journey Kingsley describes that, while her men "slip[ped] and scramble[d] down" a dangerous tree, she instead took a "flying slide of twenty feet or so and [shot] flump under the tree on [her] back, and then deliberated[d] whether it was worth while getting up again to go on with such a world; but vanity forbi[d] [her] from dying like a dog in a ditch."[50]

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[47] Kingsley*,* 326.

[48] Ibid.*,* 326.

[49] Ibid.*,* 316.

[50] Ibid.*,* 322-23.

Though humorous and wonderfully truthful, Kingsley's conscious decision to include and lengthily discuss both missteps emphasizes her incompetence as an explorer and, further, allows readers to distinguish her from the rarely stumbling characterization of the male imperial figure she self-identifies with elsewhere. Thus, Kinsley's overt failure to claim one authorial gender in *Travels* clearly highlights her awareness and navigation of gendered metropole pressures, as she caters to both the patriarchal and the more progressive audiences at home.

DIFFERENTIATION THROUGH DESCRIPTION

As noted earlier, women's unique circumstances led them to produce works more descriptive and observational than their male counterparts.[51] *Travels* only buttresses this sentiment, as in it Kingsley artfully describes her surroundings to the point of inspiring awe amongst readers. However, Kingsley's descriptions do more than grant *Travels* additional vivacity — rather, Kingsley's careful employment of topographical observations also provide additional commentary on her perceptions of gender and acceptable sex-role delineation. Going beyond mere examination, Kingsley employs captivating personifications to give surrounding, inanimate objects their own personalities, agency, and verve. Take, for example, her characterization of a thunderstorm on Mount Cameroon:

> The thunder, however, had not settled things amicably with the mountain. It roared rage at Mungo, and Mungo answered back, quivering with a rage as great, under our feet. One feels here as if one were constantly dropping, unmasked and unregarded, among

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[51] Strobel, *European Women;* Mills, *Discourses.*

painful and violent discussions between the elemental powers of the Universe.[52]

As seen above (and elsewhere in *Travels*), Kingsley tends to employ very gendered adjectives when describing her environment. While plants are typically observed in overtly romantic, and frankly feminine, ways, the weather and topography, which notably give Kingsley consistent trouble, are usually labeled in masculine terms. For example, while she describes "rich soft green moss and delicate filmy-ferns" and vegetation "to the point of its supreme luxuriance," she portrays the clouding mist as a "savage monster."[53] In fact, Kingsley seemingly attributes all passive entities, be they the plants along the way or the moon — which she describes as "young and inefficient" due to "her" dimness — feminine temperaments, and all active and forceful factors masculine characteristics.[54]

Kingsley's descriptive gendering is perhaps most pronounced regarding Mungo itself, which could easily be seen as its own character given her treatment of it. Consider the following excerpt, which refers to a tornado brewing on the mountain: "I only hope *he* will not overdo it, as *he* does six times to seven, and make it too heavy to get out on to the Atlantic…".[55] Not only does Kingsley refer to the mountain as "he," but she also employs harsh and domineering language when describing "his" emotions, desires, and reactions, as also evidenced by the thunderstorm quote included earlier.[56] Indeed, Kingsley consistently describes Mungo as a force working against her, an incredibly volatile and imposing one at that.

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[52] Kingsley, 310.

[53] Kingsley, 323, 317.

[54] Ibid., 307.

[55] Ibid., 300; Italics not original to text.

[56] See page 16.

Given Kingsley's clear association of Mungo and masculinity, her eventual summit of the peak could be read as an attempt to convince readers of her equality to the male persona. Persevering despite difficulties to eventually conquer the peak, Kingsley's description of her summit could very well be read as a subtle reference to her own struggles with, and eventual domination over, male patriarchy.

Yet continuing the earlier trend of vacillating authorial attribution, Kingsley's relative disappointment at the summit due to the mist (ironically male-gendered elsewhere) lessens the masculinity she invokes by accomplishing her summit and could even been seen as symbolic of her continual submissiveness to the masculine identity. Following similar sentiments, Kingsley's infatuation with Mungo, it being her "greatest temptation" that moves one to "bow down and worship," could also be evidence of authorial attempts to display a simultaneous obsession with and submissiveness to the male person.[57]

Notwithstanding the messages hiding within Kingsley's interesting associations of gender and the inanimate, her descriptive and elaborate focus on the natural surroundings undoubtedly functions to remind readers of her feminine identity, for it consistently portrays her more as a wonderous observer than a determined expeditioner. No male explorer would have been expected to produce as vivid of accounts, nor would it have been considered acceptable for them to do so. By emphasizing the details, be they the "velvety red brown" of the earth or the "canary-colored, crimson, and peacock-blue liveries" of the butterflies, Kingsley reminds readers of her feminine eye and successfully distances herself from the male imperial persona.[58] Therefore, from the actual depictions

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[57] Kingsley, 286, 287.
[58] Ibid., 288.

themselves to her frequent employment of lengthy characterizations, Kingsley undeniably uses observations to further explore notions of gender and self-identification in *Travels*.

RACE, RELATIONSHIPS,
AND RECIPROCITY

Kingsley begins her ascent accompanied by an all-"native" crew and, though she eventually reaches the peak alone, her relationship vis-a-vie the indigenous population features prominently in her descriptions of the event. Interestingly, Kingsley never asserts outright authority over "natives;" rather, power and influence seems to shift parties depending on situation and context. Therefore, *Travels* again furthers earlier espoused observations supporting female textual particularity, specifically those claiming that female writers tended to depict "native" relationships more in terms of reciprocity than domination. Yet importantly, Kingsley's descriptions of her party's power dynamics — as with many other themes in *Travels*— also work to reinforce and contradict traditional sex-role stereotypes, thus bringing gender to the forefront of discursive analysis once again.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of Kingsley's relationship with the men is their term of reference for her, one she readily embraces: "ma."[59] Yet it is a fitting descriptor, for Kingsley often displays motherly attitudes and actions towards the largely chaotic grouping of men, whom she reciprocally refers to as "my boys."[60] She is careful to make sure they are well fed, accounted for, and looked after; often, she even imperils her own well-being for their safety or comfort. In one instance, though still stewing at them for their desertion of her earlier, she notices the men have no food to eat — notably because they themselves sent it back — and thus shares "a few

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[59] Kingsley*,* 301.
[60] Ibid.*,* 301.

tins of [her] own food" with them, obviously taking less for herself at the expense of her seemingly incompetent accompaniers.[61]

Kingsley also frets about her possible imperilment of her crew for the imperial project, debating if she is "justified in risking the men" while simultaneously worrying little if she herself perishes on the mountain, as "no one will be a ha'porth the worst if I am dead in an hour."[62] And despite continually disappointing her in their fear of the mountain and refusal to climb higher, Kingsley nevertheless ensures their safety and even forgives their seemingly frequent mistakes. Occasionally, she even paints herself as inferior to the men, whether it be in their leading capabilities or their acceptance of the elements. During one particularly heavy rainstorm, upon seeing her crew embrace the rain without a second thought Kingsley laments that "shame comes over me in the face of this black man's aquatic courage," thereby indicting an element of equality inherent in their relationship.[63]

Overall, Kingsley's emphasis of her motherly capabilities seems directly intended to heighten readers' perceptions of her femineity, as womanhood and motherhood were so closely linked as to appear synonymous in Victorian England (and indeed today). Additionally, by implying elements of sameness between herself and the "natives" Kingsley again appears to consciously separate herself from the persona of the male imperialist, as the deep chasm between colonizer and "native" was one acknowledged and upheld by most in Victorian Britain.

However, Kingsley's motherly instincts or submissive behavior towards her crew only go so far, again displaying her dichotomous approach to gender identification. She often refers to the men as "perfunctory," "lazy," and "listless," noting

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[61] Ibid., 308.

[62] Ibid., 317.

[63] Kingsley, 286.

their refusal to complete any task at an acceptable speed.[64] In these instances she usually describes her subsequent taking of the helm, whether it be in making fire or continuing along the upward trek, as a result of their idiocy or indifference to the mission's success. In such cases she becomes observably authoritative — few decisions are made without Kingsley's direct say-so, and she becomes the clear delineator of tasks for the group.

On the topic of task division, it is worth noting that, while Kingsley has no problem making fire, scrapping wood, or doing other necessary camp chores, she never cooks; in every instance, she calls on Cook to begin the cooking, even if he is in an inebriated state. Given its feminine associations, cooking would have logically been one of the main tasks Kingsley felt comfortable undertaking, yet she abstains. Thus, Kingsley's avoidance of cooking seems intentionally mentioned to distance herself from the feminine identity, and moreover her delineation of the task to Cook perhaps included to show her machismo over him.

But again, the dichotomies of *Travels* must be continually emphasized, for many passages will invoke conflicting ideals of authority or gender even between correlated phrases or sentences. These sharp binaries can be seen in what appear sections designed to enforce notions of cultural, and thus individual, superiority. There, Kingsley details how her European tendencies diverge from those of the "natives;" for instance, while she insists on tea as her beverage of choice (other than water) the "natives" always elect rum as theirs, and never do the parties swap beverages. Moreover, Kingsley sleeps on a camp-bed while the "natives" the floor. However, while both of these traits functionally remind audiences of her "Europeanness," and thus superiority over "natives," they also appear designed to invoke notions of fragility and womanhood,

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[64] Ibid.*,* 297.

as each denotes a certain adherence to domestic lifestyles and preferences common to the traditional female sex-role.

Yet Kingsley does disregard concerns over formality when speaking to the "natives," as she reverts to "their" form of English — when questioning Xenia, she says "Where them Black boy live," to which he replies, "Black boy say him foot be tire too much."[65] This leveling of speech could be interpreted in two ways; either a patronizing inclusion to highlight a lack of "native" intellect or an excerpt intended to show Kingsley's considerate and empathetic side, as she attempts equal communication no matter the means. Given the lack of associated degrading descriptors it appears a communication style adopted out of comfort, not humiliation, thus emphasizing her capacities for consideration and accommodation.

In short, Kingsley's describes a complicated relationship with the indigenous West African people with whom she travels. While motherly and empathetic in certain passages, she also asserts obvious dominance over the Africans and displays her frustrations with their ways of life in others, again only further convoluting sex-role self-identification in the process. Yet regardless of gendered innuendos, Kingsley's copious mentioning of the "natives," and moreover her in-depth descriptions of them, point to the unique female ability to transcend notions of domination and rather embrace a more cooperative mindset when approaching "native" relationships.

CONCLUSION

While seemingly immune to the physical dangers of West Africa, Mary Kingsley was nevertheless susceptible to the discursive pressures facing female writers in the Victorian era and thus expressed conflicting authorial identities in *Travels*. However, her dichotomies are strikingly similar to those expressed by other nineteenth- and twentieth-century female

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[65] Kingsley, 304.

travelers. Whether it be her contentious relationship with gender — which is reflected in her every phrase — descriptive tendencies, or interactions with "natives," Kingsley displays many of the authorial "oddities" identifiable in other female accounts.

Therefore, *Travels* proves that individual travel accounts necessitate context-specific analyzation and cannot simply be generalized as one part of a larger, monolithic genre. This conclusion impacts both male and female discursive analyses, for it stakes that over-arching categorizations, while helpful at times, need to be situationally established and verified.

In light of this deduction, Said's attribution of Orientalist thought to centuries of authors and travelers appears all the more inaccurate, as neither gender of writers can be expected to consistently and unvarying produce narratives following the same foundational notions while existing in divergent and changing geopolitical contexts. Therefore, it is clear that Orientalism as a concept must be re-evaluated for its truthfulness and validity, and perhaps deconstructed to better reflect the complexities of gender, place, identity, and authorship.

Beyond highlighting the shortcomings of Orientalism, Kingsley's account also speaks to the antagonistic gender ecosystem of nineteenth-century Britain. Ever-evolving, societal perceptions of gender played a major role in deciding how and in what manner female travelers relayed information to the metropole. Kingsley's tempestuous relationship with gender in *Travels* proves the difficulty in appealing to such a wide range of opinions and further speaks to the specific discursive pressures faced by British female travelers. Moreover, the scientific community's reaction to her work — despite Kingsley's clear attempts to appease said audience — highlights the staunchly rooted patriarchal elements of nineteenth- and twentieth-century academia and thus questions the validity of scholarly information stemming from such periods.

Excepts on Kingsley from *The Journal of African History, African Affairs, The Journal of the Royal African Society,* or *Scientific America* all speak to the stilted academic environment at the time of Kingsley's writing.[66] Though refraining from outright slander or debasement, scholarly critiques clearly adopt the larger community's misogynistic mentality and consequentially seek to feminize and delegitimize Kingsley, their consummate Victorian "spinster," whenever possible.[67]

A nineteenth-century newspaper excerpt in *Scientific American* perhaps best exemplifies academia's gendering tendencies; beginning with "had it been written by a man, it would have been a monumental performance," the text progresses to detail Kingsley's expedition without accrediting her a shred of autonomy.[68] Instead of hailing her bravery in the face of West African dangers, it describes her trek as a brilliant showing of Great Britain's civilizing capabilities, for it claims that the very fact that an unaccompanied female successfully traveled the "savage" lands of Africa is purely a reflection of English imperial efforts, not Kingsley's intellect — as the article brazenly stakes, "the British make the best colonists."[69] Recognizing the gendered conditions of nineteenth- and twen-

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[66] John E. Flint, "Mary Kingsley-A Reassessment," *The Journal of African History* 4, no. 1 (1963): 95–104; John E. Flint, "Mary Kingsley," *African Affairs* 64, no. 256 (1965): 150–61; Alice Stopford Green, "Mary Kingsley," *Journal of the Royal African Society* 1, no. 1 (1901): 1–16; Stephen Gwynn and R. S. Rattray, "The Life of Mary Kingsley," *Journal of the Royal African Society* 31, no. 125 (1932): 354–65; Caroline Oliver, "Mary Kingsley," *African Affairs* 70, no. 280 (1971): 222–35; "Miss Kingsley's Travels in Africa," *Scientific American* 76, no. 23 (1897): 361–62.

[67] Flint, "Mary Kingsley," 151, 159.

[68] "Miss Kingsley's Travels in Africa," *Scientific American* 76, no. 23 (1897): 361.

[69] "Miss Kingsley's Travels," 361.

tieth-century England is important for any female textual analysis dating from a similar period, as it is only after accounting for these conditions that the candor and subtilies of a text can be best understood.

Moving forward, the conclusions of this paper will hopefully prompt more thorough and comprehensive textual analyses that regard context and situational influences in higher degrees. Moreover, by highlighting the exceptionality of female production this work aims to increase academic support for women's studies more generally, as it speaks to the treasure trove of unique commentary that awaits examiners in female-authored works.[70]

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[70] The limitations of this paper stem predominantly from the small section of *Travels* examined. While many of the trends identified above are highlighted by other authors in different sections of *Travels*, this paper's conclusions can truly only speak to Kingsley's descriptions of her summit, not her entire trek throughout West Africa. Moreover, this paper did not directly examine a male travel account to draw unique conclusions on the divergences in gendered production. Though using the works of accredited scholars in the field to inform conclusions on male tendencies and authorial traits, future works could include a direct comparison of male and female writings to further develop claims regarding observable differences.

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THE VIEW FROM MT. NEBO:
CATO, MOSES, AND THE FATE OF THE UNBAPTIZED
IN DANTE'S PURGATORIO

Abigail Smith

Cato, the pagan statesman of Utica, has confounded scholars of the *Commedia* since the ink dried on Dante's poem. Here on the banks of Purgatory we meet an unbaptized pagan conducting the new pilgrims to begin their ascent to God. But what of his own fate? Is Cato destined for damnation? Or will he one day take his place amid the ranks of the saved in Paradise? Many scholars have noted numerous connections between Dante's figure of Cato and the biblical Moses*,* but these connections have not been sufficiently examined in the context of the *crux interpretum* of Cato's salvation. By examining the relationship between Cato and Moses, I hope to present a new understanding of this mysterious figure and his final, unfortunate destiny in the *Commedia*. Charles Singleton's analysis centered the theme of exodus in the *Commedia*, and especially in *Purgatorio*.[1] More recently Carol Kaske has provided a thoughtful analysis of the ways in which Mt. Purgatory reflects Mt. Sinai.[2] Both of these scholars present persuasive arguments for the association between Cato and Moses, yet neither considers whether this may have anything to say about Cato's fate.

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[1]Charles Singleton, "*In Exitu Israel De Aegypto*," *Dante Studies, with the Annual Report of the Dante Society*, no. 118 (2000): 167-87.

[2] Carol Kaske, "Mount Sinai and Dante's Mount Purgatory," *Dante Studies, with the Annual Report of the Dante Society*, no. 89 (1971): 1-18.

Cato, one of few pagans to be elevated out of Hell, cuts a mysterious figure. He is never named in the two cantos in which he appears, but the details about him make his identity clear.[3] Cato, a Roman statesman who sided with Pompey against Caesar in the civil war, seems like the most unlikely guardian of Purgatory at first glance.[4] He opposed Caesar, a crime for which Brutus and Cassius are condemned to the second-to-worst punishment in the *Inferno* (XXXIV.64-9). He also committed suicide at Utica, a normally irredeemable sin because it excludes the possibility of repentance, when faced with the prospect of submitting to Caesar's victory. Dante boldly references Cato right outside the forest of suicides in *Inferno* XIV.14-15, despite saving him from the same sticky fate in the next cantica.[5]

This is worth a brief remark. Dante references Lucan's *Pharsalia* which describes Cato leading Pompey's surviving soldiers through the Libyan desert to escape from Caesar's army.[6] Hollander points out that Dante sees Cato's suicide as different from the others' with Cato as a type of Christ, sacrificing himself for his people. I see clear similarities with the story of Moses in this account, primarily through the act of guiding his people through a desert to escape from the enemy. But I also see a connection between this Christ-like sacrifice of Cato's with Moses. After Moses found and destroyed the golden calf, he pleaded with God, saying, "either forgive them this trespass, or if thou do not, strike me out of the book that thou hast written" (Ex. 32:31-2, DRA). Moses sought to sacrifice himself to save his people. In both cases of Moses and Cato, their people were not

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[3] Dante Alighieri, *Purgatorio*, Trans. by Robert Hollander and Jean Hollander, (New York: Anchor, 2004), 18.

[4] Richard Lansing, ed., *The Dante Encyclopedia* (London: Routledge, 2010), 146.

[5] Pun intended.

[6] Dante Alighieri, The *Inferno*, Trans. by Robert Hollander and Jean Hollander, (New York: Anchor, 2002), 268.

exactly spared by this self-sacrifice, with the subsequent plague on the Israelites and the ultimate defeat at the hands of Caesar, but both offered themselves as sacrifices.

In her recent article, Leah Schwebel argues that "Cato was likewise considered a model of pagan virtue, and in part for his suicide. Cato sacrificed his most precious possession – his life – for freedom, a point so salient for Dante that he emphasizes it in both the Convivio and Monarchia."[7] In this understanding, Cato's suicide is not only *not* a crime worthy of the seventh circle of Hell, but it is also commendable; i.e., it is contributes to Cato's virtue. She goes on to use this as support that Dante was explicitly rejecting Augustine's understanding of suicide, but for our purposes it is enough to note her idea that Cato's suicide was seen as a sacrifice, not an act of self-violence.

When Cato is first introduced to the readers in the poem, he is described as an old man with a long double-stranded beard "bianco mista" [streaked with white] (*Purg.* I.31-36). Kaske notes that this "forked beard" is a peculiarity of Moses iconography.[8] This could be a conscious allusion to Moses in Cato's description, although Dante is also following Lucan's portrayal of Cato as aged, a nod to his venerable character.[9]

Cato is also described with a shining face (I.38-9), recalling the shining face of Moses after he talked with God (Ex. 34.29-35). Cato's face shines in the light of "le quattro luci sante" (I.37), four stars that are commonly seen as symbolic of the four cardinal virtues. Cato, the one "degno di tanta reverenza in vista" [so deserving of respect]" (I.32), is marked by these stars as perfect in virtue. It is not difficult to see the connection between the virtuous Cato and the other righteous pagans found in Limbo. Virgil claims that he and

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[7] Leah Schwebel, "The Pagan Suicides: Augustine and Inferno 13," *Medium Ævum* 87, no. 1, (2018), 109.

[8] Kaske, "Mount Sinai and Dante's Mount Purgatory," 3.

[9] Lansing, *The Dante Encyclopedia*, 147.

his companions, though lacking the theological virtues, blamelessly followed all the others (VII.34-36). Kaske notes that Cato does not possess the three theological virtues any more than Virgil.[10] Despite this observation, Kaske accepts the idea that Dante presents Cato as the one exceptional (and Pelagian) case of natural virtues meriting salvation. Dante's own guide, however, claims that merit is not enough for the unbaptized (*Inf.*, IV.34-36).

There is a short list of pagans named in the *Commedia* who are clearly granted salvation: Statius, Trajan, and Ripheus. Unlike Cato, however, Dante provides a reason for their presence in Paradise. Significantly, this reason is never based solely on their merit, but on some measure of Christian faith. Dante has Statius, the pagan poet, convert to Christianity upon reading Virgil's work (*Purg.*, XXII.55-93). While there is not historical evidence to suggest the real Statius ever became a Christian, Dante uses this story to explain Statius' eventual salvation and place in Purgatory.[11]

Trajan's story at least has sources in prior tradition. Dante says Trajan was saved by St. Gregory the Great's prayers, which briefly raised him from the dead long enough for Trajan to be infused with the faith and love necessary to attain his place in Paradise (*Par*. XX.106-117).[12] Also without precedent, Ripheus the Trojan, a minor character in Virgil's *Aeneid*, was granted knowledge of redemption by a vision of God's grace and was somehow "baptized" by the three theological virtues (XX.118-129). Dante grants these pagans salvation by making Christians of them:

> D'i corpi suoi non uscir, come credi,

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[10] Kaske, "Mount Sinai and Dante's Mount Purgatory," 14.

[11] Dante, *Purg.*, 501.

[12] Marcia L. Colish, "The Virtuous Pagan: Dante and the Christian Tradition," in *The Unbounded Christian Community: Papers in Christian Ecumenism in Honor of Jaroslav Pelikan,* ed., William Caferro (New York: Taylor & Francis, 1996), 48-55.

> Gentili, ma Cristiani, in ferma fede
> quel d'i passuri e quel d'i passi piedi.
>
> [They left their bodies not as gentiles
> But as Christians, firm in their beliefs, the one
> Before, the other after, the piercing of His feet]
> (XX.103-5).

Dante does not provide Cato with such a conversion. In fact, "nothing marks his excellence as more than a pagan one."[13] Kaske uses the advent of the three new stars (*Purg.* VIII.89-93) to argue that Cato possessed the cardinal virtues to such an extent that it appeared, even to God, "as if" he had the theological virtues.[14] This argument seems to disregard the fact that the three new stars did not alight upon Cato's face, nor did our perspective of the four stars shift in such a way as to make them appear to be three. The four stars were replaced by the three; they "queste son salite ov' eran quelle" [have risen where those others were], only after Dante and Virgil had ascended up the mountain leaving Cato behind (VIII.93). There is not evidence to suggest that these three stars shed light on Cato's salvation.

 Kaske makes another interesting connection here regarding sight. When Moses returned from speaking with God, the Israelites asked him to veil his face, for they could not bear the sign of God's presence. Paul expresses the need to remove the veil from one's eyes to be able to see God (II Cor. 3:13-18). Cato commands Virgil to wash Dante's face, lest he appear before the angel with "l'occhio sorpriso d'alcuna nebbia" [his eyes still dimmed by any mist] (*Purg.* I.98). The veil, Kaske notes, is interpreted by Ambrose as sin which is cast off through absolution.[15] Moses continuously

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[13] Kaske, "Mount Sinai and Dante's Mount Purgatory," 14.

[14] Ibid., 14.

[15] Ibid., 13.

combats the spiritual blindness of his people, seeking pardon for them again and again, despite his own veiled face. Likewise, Cato again demands clear-sightedness by commanding the group of pilgrims to "spogliarvi lo scoglio / ch'esser non lascia a voi Dio manifesto" [shed the slough that lets not God be known to you] (II.122-3).

Moses' vision is therefore regarded as inferior to the vision of Christians who can see with "unveiled face" (II Cor. 3:18). Significantly, this inferiority is shared by Cato, whose vision "is only the light of the stars, not of the sun."[16] Dante, however, is sent towards the sun, and when he reaches the summit of Mt. Purgatory he has "lo sol che 'n fronte ti riluce" [the sun shining before] him (XXVII.133). His eyes grow clearer as he progresses, and when he is baptized in the Lethe by Matelda, the connection between sight and virtue is made clearer. The four ladies (or virtues), who by their own admission are also stars in heaven (XXXI.106), lead Dante to Beatrice:

> Merrenti a li occhi suoi; ma nel giocondo
>
> lume ch'è dentro aguzzeranno i tuoi
> le tre di là, che miran più profondo.
>
> [We will bring you to her eyes. But to receive
> the joyous light they hold, the other three,
> who look much deeper into things, shall sharpen
> yours] (XXXI.109-11).

As he enters Paradise, the veil is literally removed from between him and Beatrice (XXXI.145), and his eyes are strengthened to behold the image of Christ through Be-

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[16] Ibid., 14.

atrice's eyes. Dante surpasses both Virgil and Cato's limitations, the limitations of pagans who lack the infused sight of the theological virtues.

Further connections between Moses and Cato can be made by examining the topography of the land and themes of exodus. Moses led his people through the Red Sea, into the desert where his people faced many temptations while seeking the promised land. Singleton describes the whole first two cantiche by this same exodus pattern, a pattern of conversion, and this image is repeated in the first cantos of *Purgatorio*.[17]

In the deadly waters of Purgatory is easily seen an image of the crossing of the Red Sea (Ex. 14). Those pilgrims in God's grace cross the waters piloted by an angel to reach the shores of Purgatory at the base of the mountain. As seen with the story of Ulysses, it is impossible to cross those waters without God's goodwill. Ulysses suffered the fate of the Egyptians, covered over by the sea, by seeking access apart from God's grace (*Inf.* XXVI.130-42). Those pilgrims who crossed the waters safely arrived on the reed-covered shore into a desert of temptation. Similarly, Singleton compares Ante-Purgatory with the desert through which the Israelites had to march. Both were beset with temptations and needed the "manna" of God's grace to come to their aid. The first temptation is seen with Casella's song that Hollander boldly calls "a siren's song."[18] This song, an innocent love song by first impression, is strongly rebuked by Cato, which leads one to suspect that more is going on than meets the eye.

Canto II of *Purgatorio* presents a contrast between two songs, one from Psalm 113 sung by the pilgrims arriving on the shores, and the other a love song from Dante's *Convivio* sung by Casella (112). Hollander presents a persuasive argument about the relationship between these songs and the

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[17] Singleton, "*In Exitu Israel De Aegypto*," 168.
[18] Robert Hollander, "*Purgatorio* II: Cato's Rebuke and Dante's *Scoglio*," *Italica* 52, no. 3 (1975): 348.

message of the Canto. Casella's song recalls "how [Dante's] love for Beatrice is conquered and replaced by his love for the donna gentile/Lady Philosophy."[19] This theme from Dante's past is brought up again by Beatrice who scathingly chastises Dante for giving himself to others (XXX.126). As part of this lament over Dante's false turns Beatrice then says:

> e volse i passi suoi per via non vera,
> imagini di ben seguendo false,
> che nulla promession rendono intera.
>
> [He set his steps upon an untrue way,
> Pursuing those false images of good
> That bring no promise to fulfillment] (XXX.130-2).

Beatrice ties Dante's pursuit after other women to false images, to idolatry. This theme of new lovers is often used to symbolize Israel's idolatry and forsaken God. This connection, though unmentioned by Hollander, is striking considering his analysis of the other song sung in Canto II. He points out that in our bibles the Vulgate Psalm 113 is actually two psalms, 114 and 115. Dante's pilgrims do not sing only "in exitu Israel de Aegypto," but also that they "con quanto di quel salmo è poscia scripto" [went on, singing the entire psalm] (46; 48). Upon closer look at the rest of the Psalm (115:4-8), one can see verses that "reveal the inefficacy of the idols made by the gentiles."[20] This makes the whole scene of Casella's song and Cato's rebuke about Dante backsliding into his idolatrous ways like the stiff-necked Israelites.[21]

This connection makes the theme of temptation and idolatry manifest throughout the canto and provides another

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[19] Hollander, "Cato's Rebuke," 352.

[20] Hollander, "Cato's Rebuke," 356.

[21] Robert Hollander, "*Purgatorio* II: The New Song And The Old." *Lectura Dantis*, no. 6 (1990): 40.

clear association of Cato with Moses. Cato's rebuke of Dante and Virgil resembles the episode in which Moses found the golden calf and descended to rebuke the people of Israel (Ex. 32). Understanding both of these incidents in this way further unites Dante's Cato and the figure of Moses as guardians of their respective mountains, whose people tend towards idolatry when their leader is out of sight.

In addition to this first temptation, Singleton draws our attention to the final temptation in Ante-Purgatory, among the group encamped below the mountain like the Israelites encamped at Sinai (VII.64-9). Here, they pray to Mary and then to God to deliver them from "this vale of tears."[22] The scene reflects the *Pater Noster* as the people beg for deliverance from their Enemy. The snake comes, "forse qual diede ad Eva il cibo amaro" [perhaps the one that gave to Eve the bitter fruit] (VIII.99), and the angels arrive to drive it away (106-7). Singleton connects this scene with the idea of temptation, and, more broadly, the entire area of Ante-Purgatory as "a place where temptations can still beset the way."[23]

This presents an interesting question about temptation in Purgatory. The souls in Purgatory at not at risk of failing in their journey to the "promised land," so in what way are they being tempted? By recalling Cato's rebuke to Dante and the pilgrims, their failure comes through a lack of urgency to strive towards God, a slothfulness that centers on the delay to journey up the mountain of conversion. Interestingly, a similar theme is apparent in the crime of the Israelites who grew impatient with God, and so built themselves an idol of gold (Ex. 32:1). Both stories include this sense of delay that reflects a kind of idol of one's time. The Israelites saw Moses' delay as a sign to turn from God, and Dante delayed from his mission by turning from God back to his old

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[22] Singleton, "*In Exitu Israel De Aegypto*," 179.
[23] Ibid., 180.

habits. Cato echoes "God's command and Moses's compliance ('neither let the flocks nor herds feed before that mount' – Exodus 34:3), [and] sends the music-lovers flying."[24]

Another connection between Moses and Cato can be seen through their relationship to law. Both are presented as lawgivers. Moses descended from Sinai with the Ten Commandments. Reflecting much Christian thought, Christians are under a new law, a "*nuova legge*." This law is summed up by the Beatitudes, of which the first seven are seen by Augustine as "'gradus' to perfection."[25] In her examination of the relationship between Mt. Sinai and Mt. Purgatory, Kaske addresses this subject of law, arguing that the mountain of the prologue represents Natural Law.[26] Hell represents the Old Law, the condemnatory law, which Dante was required to climb down to learn humility, before climbing back out and up Mt. Purgatory, which symbolizes the New Law, the justifying law.

Cato is seen as the giver of the New Law, bidding Dante and the other pilgrims to climb towards the fulfilment of that law in the Beatitudes, like Moses is the giver of the Old Law who bid his people to follow God's precepts.[27] Law here is seen as that which God requires of man, and one may ask why Dante places such primacy on Law in the *Commedia,* seemingly over grace. Kaske argues that "grace and human effort are here portrayed as complementary and alternating like night and day."[28] She connects the activity of the prayerful princes at night and Dante's sleep as times of reception of grace. Further, she characterizes Dante's Cato as the "example of human effort," a pagan who made it into Purgatory through his own merit and whose role as guardian

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[24] Dante, *Purg.*, 47.
[25] Kaske, "Mount Sinai and Dante's Mount Purgatory," 5.
[26] Ibid., 7-8.
[27] Ibid., 5.
[28] Ibid., 11.

has him urging on countless pilgrims to make effort towards God at the top of the mountain.[29]

      This is an interesting characterization of Cato in several respects. First, if Cato is the exemplar of human effort, the one who is so deserving of respect that Dante kneels for the duration of their first conversation, then it raises a question about his place in Purgatory. Cato, unlike everyone else we meet in Purgatory, is not journeying up the mountain with the aid of grace. In fact, he is not journeying up the mountain at all, but remaining stationary, like the souls in *Inferno* and *Paradiso*. *Purgatorio* is the one place of journey, of movement, that the other souls experience in the *Commedia*.[30] No one in Hell can be seen to be progressing; any movement that exists is circular in nature. Likewise, the souls in Heaven cannot go beyond the Beatific Vision, and their action is more contemplative and less of a journey.

      Cato's position seems fixed by his duty as guardian of Purgatory, but will he ever ascend the mountain to take his place in the "promised land" of Paradise? If Cato exemplifies human effort without grace, and Dante's Purgatory requires both effort and grace to ascend, it seems he will remain stuck outside the gates through which he ushers others.

      Guiseppe Mazzotta makes a connection between Cato and Paul's Old Man mentioned in Rom. 6:6.[31] Mazzotta argues that Cato's suicide represented the crucifixion of the Old Man, a kind of mortification in which "law reveals what is sinful and human effort resists it."[32] Cato fulfills this resistance in his response to Virgil's appeal to remember his wife Marcia, for:

      Or che di là dal mal fiume dimora,

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[29] Kaske, "Mount Sinai and Dante's Mount Purgatory," 10.

[30] Singleton, "*In Exitu Israel De Aegypto*," 178.

[31] Kaske, "Mount Sinai and Dante's Mount Purgatory," 12.

[32] Ibid., 12.

più muover non mi può, per quella legge
che fatta fu quando me n'usci' fora.

[Now that she dwells beyond the evil stream
She cannot move me any longer,
According to the law laid down at my deliverance]
(I.88-90).

Kaske disagrees with Mazzotta though in his identification of Cato also as the New Man. She rejects the idea because Cato's virtue has a negative cast. He acts as law, rejecting what is against it, but does not supply grace. He commands Virgil to wash Dante; he does not do it himself. Kaske considers the New Man to be represented by Matelda (who did wash Dante) or Beatrice, both of whom are youthful and overflowing with grace. I find it significant that Cato cannot be paired with the New Man, but only the Old Man who must be crucified. But if Cato is crucified, but not made new, where does that leave him?

Dorothy Sayers also notes that Cato is, simply in Dante's presentation, not like the others who are working their way towards Paradise. She says, "he lacks the intensity, the exuberance, and the courtesy which are marks of those in Grace; he is, in a word, ungracious. He is a moral imperative, founded in duty rather than love: a preparation for penitence, but not penitence itself."[33] Cato represents duty over love, an understanding of the Old Law seen in Hebrews, a Law which "decayeth and groweth old, is near its end" (Heb. 8:13).

But the most significant connection between Moses and Cato has yet to be made. When considering the subject of Cato's salvation, scholars have rarely given Mt. Nebo much thought. In fact, Kaske, after laying out all her arguments to connect Cato and Moses, notices Mt. Nebo, yet does not carry the connection to any sort of conclusion. She says

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[33] Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy II: Purgatory*, Trans. by Dorothy Sayers, (London: Penguin Books, 1955), 77.

"once we have paired Cato with Virgil, we can see that he shares another limitation of Moses: he and Virgil, like Moses, can see the promised land but cannot as yet cross the river and enter it."[34] She even added a qualifier, "yet" to weaken any conclusions that could be made.

Mt. Nebo, like Mt. Sinai, has clear connections with Mt. Purgatory, perhaps more so. Let us examine the story:

> And the Lord spoke to Moses the same day, saying: Go up into this mountain Abarim…and see the land of Chanaan, which I will deliver to the children of Israel to possess, and die thou in the mountain…Because you trespassed against me in the midst of the children of Israel, at the waters of contradiction in Cades of the desert of Sin: and you did not sanctify me among the children of Israel. Thou shalt see the land before thee, which I will give to the children of Israel, but thou shalt not enter into it. (Deut. 32:48-52).

The whole progress of Moses's journey with his people was to find the Promised Land. And now, on the cusp of entry, Moses is denied. He is allowed, because of his favor with God, to see the land, more grace than the generation of stiff-necked Israelites received (Num. 14:21-23).

Singleton has already made the connection of Heaven as the "promised land," as the goal of the exodus through the *Commedia*.[35] And if Cato is representative of Moses, the virtuous lawgiver and leader, he has made it past Mt. Sinai to Mt. Nebo. He has made it further all other virtuous pagans and Christian sinners (until Virgil). He has seen into the garden of Paradise, glimpsed the promised land, and gone no further. All of these scholars have agreed that Cato

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[34] Kaske, "Mount Sinai and Dante's Mount Purgatory," 15.
[35] Singleton, "*In Exitu Israel De Aegypto*," 178.

was among the saved, but if the associations between Cato and Moses are to be carried out to their logical conclusions, a different answer about the final fate of Cato is suggested.

Kaske links Cato and Virgil in their visual limitations.[36] One theme that appears repeatedly in *Purgatorio* is Virgil's lack of competence in leading Dante through Purgatory. He has guided Dante onto the shore and immediately makes a mistake and must be corrected by Cato (I.78-93). His sight is dimmed because he lacks faith which brings understanding (XVIII, 48). Virgil has gone to the limit of where pure reason can carry him, and he can go no further. Additionally, he says, "Io son Virgilio; e per null' altro rio / lo ciel perdei che per non aver fé." [for no other failing / did I lose Heaven but my lack of faith] (VII.7-8). Why was Moses barred from the Promised Land? Moses had a lack of faith. He did not trust God enough to abide by His command; he struck the rock and showed his lack of faith to all Israel. Virgil and Cato share their virtues and failings in common. Both were perfect in virtue and yet did not have faith.

Singleton also makes a connection between the Jordan and the river Lethe. Virgil departs from the *Commedia* on the bank overlooking the river, looking into land he will never get to enter. This evokes the picture of Moses who looked into Canaan but would "not cross the Jordan" (Deut. 4:21). Cato, like Moses, ushers his people towards the promised land. And Cato, just like Moses and Virgil, can see it, but cannot enter it.

There are other reasons why most scholars accept Cato's salvation. Primarily because of Virgil's mention of Cato's glorified body and because of his mention of deliverance. Let us briefly examine these. Virgil says:

> Tu 'l sai, ché non ti fu per lei amara
> in Utica la morte, ove lasciasti

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[36] Kaske, "Mount Sinai and Dante's Mount Purgatory," 14.

la vesta ch'al gran dì sarà sì chiara.

[You know this well, since death in Utica
Did not seem bitter, there where you left
The garment that will shine on that great day]
(I.73-5).

This is likely the most obvious piece of evidence that points to Cato's eventual salvation, until one remembers the full context of this declaration. A few observations might be made.

First, not enough caution is employed when trusting Virgil's words. In the very next tercet Virgil blunders into attempting to persuade Cato to give them passage with thoughts of his wife (I.76-84). This reference of Cato's glory could be simply another cajoling attempt at flattery on Virgil's part. But, regardless of Virgil's motivations, there is no guarantee that he knows what he is talking about. As Hollander himself notes, despite unquestioningly trusting Virgil's words in I.73-5, Dante "wanted to call Virgil's sense of the situation into question."[37] If anything is made clear by Virgil's forays into Purgatory, it is that he is no longer on his own turf. Virgil's word can no longer be trusted in the same way as it could in *Inferno*.

Second, Virgil could be making the same assumption many scholars make: because Cato is in Purgatory, it must mean he is saved. As just established, Virgil is not the most sound guide for this part of the poem, and it seems to make sense. Purgatory is the place where saved souls go to cleanse themselves to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, so if someone is there, they must be saved. Except, Cato is not journeying through Purgatory. Rather, he is staffing it. And there is at least one other instance in which someone condemned to

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[37] Dante, *Purg.*, 22.

Hell entered Purgatory without possibility of salvation…Virgil himself.

Finally, even if Virgil is correct, he says that Cato's garment will shine on the Last Day when each dead soul will be reunited with their bodies. This seems at first glance like a clear reference to the shining light that glows from all the souls of *Paradiso*, but it may be easy to forget the first time Dante recounted shining spirits: "quand' io vidi un foco / ch'emisperio di tenebre vincia" [I beheld a blaze of light / that overcame a hemisphere of darkness] (*Inf.* IV.68-9). This light came from the virtuous pagans in Limbo, non-Christians whose only crime was a lack of faith but were worthy of honor upon honor. When Virgil sees Cato, he makes Dante kneel to give proper reverence to the honorable pagan, reverence that is also due to the great pagans of Limbo (*Purg.* I.49-51). The fact that Cato will shine when he receives his body is no guarantee of his salvation.

Sayers makes this very point in her commentary on this passage. She writes, "It may be, as J. S. Carroll suggests, that in the Last Day [Cato] will return to become the brightest and most authoritative inhabitant of the Elysian Fields in Limbo, 'giving laws there to the good in the hidden place,' as Virgil wrote of him (Aen. Viii. 670)."[38] Not only does she notice this possibility but supports it using Dante's muse as her guide. If Cato really is destined for Paradise, more persuasive evidence would be necessary than simply Cato receiving his body, shining though it may be.

More trustworthy would be the words from Cato's own mouth: "più muover non mi può, per quella legge / che fatta fu quando me n'usci' fora" [she cannot move me any longer / according to the law laid down at my deliverance] (I.89-90). What is this law, and what is this deliverance? I will gladly admit that this line is a strong indicator of Cato's salvation, but it does not absolutely settle the conversation.

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[38] Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy II: Purgatory*, 77.

This deliverance could be of the kind offered to Moses when he was delivered to Mt. Nebo to see the promised land, but not to enter it. Or the kind of deliverance offered to the Israelites who were led out of Egypt but, because of their faithlessness, were not delivered to the land of milk and honey. Likewise, this law could be the type of law that allows a damned pagan to wander through Purgatory with a living man in tow. Laws and deliverances are not always eternal, even when dealing with the afterlife.

Scholars have noticed that Dante links his Cato to the biblical Moses in many ways, from his appearance to his role in salvation history and his relationship with law and God. But Moses's fate has not been sufficiently explored in connection with Cato's. Of the scholars who mention the connection at Mt. Nebo, they dismiss it too quickly.

But why does this matter? Cato's hypothesized salvation is often used as evidence that Dante is a sort of premodern liberalizing figure, but I think that would be a hasty conclusion to make. Rather, Dante uses the figure of Cato to reveal the themes of Exodus, Law, and Grace in a way that is deeply rooted in his traditions, both Roman and Christian. But he also transcends these traditions by using Cato to show the complexity of human life in its relationship to God. Cato offers us another instance of Dante's complex use of allegory. Cato is at once the unbaptized pagan who committed suicide *and* the Moses-type ushering the Christian souls to Heaven. He is Cato *and* he is Moses. It would be a mistake to limit Dante's use of Cato to a statement about the possibility of salvation for non-Christians. Through the few tercets allotted to Cato, Dante is saying much more than that. Cato calls to mind where we have come from, both the pits of Hell with Dante and our own desperate flights from the pursuing enemy, be it the armies of Rome or our sins. He shows us where we should be going, reminds us not to get lost on the way. Cato is a tribute to the value of a life well-lived *and* a

plaintive nod to our need for grace. He is exemplar and ex-
ample, and as such it is too early to canonize Cato because he
may yet "die on the mountain" of Nebo (Deut. 32:50).

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