



12-9-2020

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“Space For All?”¹: An Analysis of Race, Gender, and Society in *Doctor Who*.

By Liron Sussman

HNRS 4990: Honors Thesis
Western Michigan University
Fall Semester 2020
Dr. Rubin and Dr. Berkhofer

December 9, 2020

¹ *Space. For All*, November 21, 2019, digital poster released by the *Doctor Who* social media team to market the 12th Season. <https://www.facebook.com/DoctorWho/posts/3732364913444175>.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to extend thanks to Dr. Rubin and Dr. Berkhofer, who so kindly helped guide me through this process, who cheered me on when I felt discouraged, and who pushed me beyond my comfort zone. I would also like to thank the Lee Honors College for allowing me to explore the universe of *Doctor Who* from a historical and literary lens.

ABSTRACT

Much like the Doctor, people are constantly growing and evolving, and it is out of a desire for human connection that people strive, always, to improve and as a long-running television program, *Doctor Who* reflects that desire for connection. This analysis explores race, gender, and society as portrayed in the modern series of *Doctor Who* (2005-).

DOCTOR WHO?

On November 23rd, 1963, *Doctor Who* aired for the first time. The first serial, “An Unearthly Child,” featured an old man and his young granddaughter, the mysterious disappearance and reappearance of a standard Police Telephone Box, and two concerned school teachers. Marvelling at their student’s surprising depth of historical and scientific knowledge coupled with a dearth of cultural knowledge--she does not know popular music groups, and she does not have many friends her own age--the teachers follow her home to a junkyard, where they find a singular blue police phone box and no trace of the girl. Later, after staking out the place, they enter the box and find themselves transported into the Doctor’s TARDIS, a historic event which grew to be a world-wide phenomenon.²

The popularity and longevity of *Doctor Who* stems from the fact that it possesses a universal appeal. Longtime fan Lynne Thomas remarks:

One of the beautiful things about Doctor Who and its fandom is that there’s room enough for everyone [...] we all agree that we love this show. [...] In a universe that doesn’t always change for the better, despite our best efforts, we love a show about embracing change, making adjustments, and moving on.³

Life, like the Doctor, goes through changes, and those changes become bearable and manageable with support from other people, as no one exists in a vacuum and actions have consequences. Within the fandom, one can see an attempt to create a space that is open to and accepting of everyone. While *Doctor Who* began as a children’s educational program,

² *Doctor Who*, series 1, serial 1, “An Unearthly Child,” directed by Waris Hussein, aired November 23, 1963, on BBC.

³ Lynne M. Thomas, “Marrying Into the TARDIS Tribe,” in *Chicks Dig Time Lords: A Celebration of Doctor Who by the Women Who Love It*, eds. Lynne M. Thomas and Tara O’Shea (Illinois: Mad Norwegian Press, 2011): 85.

teaching history, science, math, and more, it has evolved to include mature themes such as war, change, and the inevitability of death that render it a family program.⁴

To better understand the universe of *Doctor Who*, it is important to define what comprises the canon--the authentic, acceptable works--of *Doctor Who*.⁵ Canon arises out of a combination of the author's creation and the fans' interpretations, such that many variations on "canon" exist.⁶ For *Doctor Who*, from which myriad novels, audio dramas, television specials, and more have been created, one might consider the series' canon as consisting of "a whole bunch of *smaller* fictions [with] a natural lower limit being an episode."⁷ Given the age of *Doctor Who*, creating anything that will satisfy the entire audience is nigh impossible.⁸

This analysis seeks to synthesize themes from eight episodes in order to illuminate the ways in which gender, race, and society are all reflected and explored in the revised series of *Doctor Who*. Some sources are supplementary, such as audio dramas and novels, and thus comprise the extended universe of *Doctor Who*; nonetheless, they provide important insight to the thoughts and attitudes of the authors and subsequently, of their audience.⁹ Fanworks are not treated in-depth because there exists too much to pull from, and as there is no consensus among fans regarding characterizations of either the Doctor, the Master, or their companions, analysis of fan culture would produce enough material to write another thesis.

⁴ Jody Lynn Nye, "Hopelessly Devoted to Who," in *Chicks Dig Time Lords*, 110.

⁵ Merriam-Webster, "canon," <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/canon>.

⁶ Matt Hills, "Traversing the "Whoniverse:" Doctor Who's Hyperdiegesis and Transmedia Discontinuity/Diachrony." in *World Building*, ed. Martha Boni (Amsterdam University Press, 2017), 343.

⁷ Richard Hanley, "Who's Who on Gallifrey?" in *Doctor Who and Philosophy: Bigger on the Inside*, ed. Courtland Lewis and Paula Smithka (Chicago: Open Court Publishing, 2011), 29.

⁸ Hills, "Traversing the "Whoniverse"..." 345.

⁹ "Franchise / Doctor Who Expanded Universe," TV Tropes, accessed September 22, 2020, <https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Franchise/DoctorWhoExpandedUniverse>.

ETHICS OF TIME TRAVEL

Time Travel is central to *Doctor Who*. Moving through the universe, the Doctor and their companions often face dilemmas over whether they should help or merely allow events to happen. The Doctor's species,¹⁰ the Time Lords, have a strict non-intervention policy: they do not interfere when other species or planets are in crises.¹¹ Irony lies in that statement. With their Time Travel abilities and pompous, self-aggrandizing nature, it happens all-too-frequently that the Time Lords interfere in myriad situations throughout the universe as they work to preserve the laws of Time.¹²

The Time Lords function as an analog for the British. Specifically, their policy of intervening throughout the universe belies British policies towards its colonial holdings, as both are strong imperial powers that seek to exert control over their own worlds (the planet Gallifrey and the British Isles, respectively) as well as over territories beyond their control. Both also claim that they want to improve other civilizations by imposing their notions of what constitutes a civilized society upon them. Additionally, for most of *Doctor Who's* run thus far, the vast majority of the actors portraying Time Lords have been white and extrapolating from that, one can analyze narratives tropes related to race as represented within *Doctor Who*.

This section examines the white savior trope and the model minority myth in relation to both British society and the character of the Doctor, followed by the ethical concerns which arise when travelling somewhere equipped with foreknowledge of events, and concludes with the consequences of being too late to save the day.

¹⁰ In season 12, episode 10 of the revived series, "The Timeless Children," the current head-writer, Chris Chibnall, revealed that the Doctor was originally a foundling whose DNA was exploited in order to create the Time Lords; this topic will be explored further later on.

¹¹ Sarah Honeychurch and Niall Barr, "Why the Daleks will *never* beat us" in *Doctor Who and Philosophy...*, 197.

¹² Gary Russell, *Doctor Who: The Encyclopedia* (London: BBC Books, 2011), 354.

Since *Doctor Who* began in the 1960s, the vast majority of actors portraying the Doctor have been older white men, with the companions more often than not cast as teenage girls/young women.¹³ Unpacking the narrative of a white man moving about through Time and Space followed around by a young girl who more often than not idolizes him reveals layers of British imperialism and colonialism. Further, having the Doctor present as a white man provides an interesting view into the “White Man’s Burden,” also known as the “White Savior Complex,” a narrative trope in which a white individual sets out to help a person of color because they take pity on them, with the end result being that the white character grows to feel better about themselves.¹⁴

In order to explain the notion of the white savior, one must first understand the United Kingdom’s imperial attitudes. As British subjects encountered Asian and African nations in the 18th and 19th centuries, they viewed unfamiliar cultures as backwards and in need of civilizing. This resulted in the school of thought known as Orientalism, which involves the othering and mysticizing of eastern nations with the presumption that western civilization represents the pinnacle of culture, functioning as a justification for the taking of foreign lands as colonies.¹⁵ This belief is still prevalent today and influences the ways in which white Europeans regard immigrants to their countries.¹⁶

In the wake of World War Two, the United Kingdom found its workforce depleted and so the government encouraged immigration as a means by which to rebuild their labor force.

¹³ Charlie Coile, “More than a Companion: “The Doctor’s Wife” and Representations of Women in “Doctor Who,”” *Studies in Popular Culture* 36, no. 1 (2013): 85.

¹⁴ “White Man’s Burden aka: White Savior,” TV Tropes, accessed July 28, 2020, <https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/WhiteMansBurden?from=Main.WhiteSavior>.

¹⁵ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 39-41.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

The first group of laborers to arrive came from the West Indies in 1948 under the British Nationality Act (BNA), which granted citizenship to members of the British Colonies.¹⁷ These workers were eventually required to obtain employment vouchers in order to enter the UK. Twenty years after the BNA was passed, colonial citizens were no longer allowed to immigrate, and only those who could claim direct descendancy from British Citizens were granted entry.¹⁸ Conflict in India and Pakistan following the partition of those nations produced refugees, who in the years following World War Two qualified as British subjects and who also served to bolster the depleted workforce.¹⁹ Labor requirements further altered who could enter the country, with 28-35% of immigrants between 1979 and 2009 coming from Asia and 11.8-21.2% coming from countries in Africa.²⁰

A myth exists that Europeans who immigrated to the United Kingdom prior to WWII had an easier time of assimilating versus those from Eastern Europe and Asia who immigrated following the war.²¹ When people move into a different country, they are often forced to choose between assimilating or retaining their cultural identity, thereby rendering themselves outsiders in their new nation. An example of this can be seen when the young child found beneath a boundary to another universe is taken in by a Gallifreyan woman and raised as a Time Lord.²²

¹⁷ Suzanne Model, "Testing the White Favoritism Hypothesis" in *West Indian Immigrants: A Black Success Story?* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2008), 117.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 118.

¹⁹ Ann Dummett, "United Kingdom," in *Acquisition and Loss of Nationality vol 2: Country Analyses: Policies and Trends in 15 European Countries*, ed. Rainer Bauböck, Eva Ersbøll, et al. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 565, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt46n00f.19>.

²⁰ Jonathan Wadsworth, "The UK Labour Market and Immigration," *National Institute Economic Review*, no. 213 (2010): R37, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23881469>.

²¹ Kenan Malik, "The Failure of Multiculturalism: Community Versus Society in Europe," *Foreign Affairs* 94, no. 2 (2015): 24, <http://www.jstor.com/stable/24483478>.

²² Chibnall, "The Timeless Children.""

Regarding immigration, some Europeans feared that “[immigrants] might undermine [their] country’s sense of identity.”²³ Europeans often claim that their nations are homogeneous, with all of their citizens speaking the same language, sharing the same values, enjoying the same media, and being of the same race and ethnicity. This is a myth that started in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and which is often accompanied by the assumption that “[homogeneity of a populace] is the “natural” form of organization of nation states. The concept of minorities results from this.”²⁴ When considering minorities, divisions between them and the majority often lead to conflict, including an uptick in racist attacks, which according to Anthony Goodman and Vincenzo Ruggiero happens because “The *other* becomes a threat to predictable social interactions and homogeneity: [they are] equated to chaos, and racism provides an easy way to escape chaos.”²⁵ White supremacist groups harm minority groups by propagating lies that only those who look, think, and act the same way they do have merit.

Minority individuals are encouraged to assimilate into their adoptive countries. Those who do so are often favored as exemplifying a model minority: another myth which began as a way to shift blame for social inequalities onto minority groups; for example, the myth states that African-Americans in the United States are only impoverished because they are not “trying hard enough,” unlike Asian Americans, who are generally favored for their assimilation into broader American society.²⁶ Further, the “figure of the model minority is used to dispute the validity of those who have suffered and continue to suffer under social inequalities,” a fact

²³ Malik, “The Failure of Multiculturalism...,” 25.

²⁴Anil Bhatti, “Culture, Diversity, and Similarity: A reflection on Heterogeneity and Homogeneity,” *Social Scientist* 37, no. 7 (2009): 38. <http://www.jstor.com/stable/27748596>.

²⁵Anthony Goodman and Vincenzo Ruggiero, “Crime, Punishment, and Ethnic Minorities in England and Wales,” *Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts* 2, no. 1 (2008): 58. <http://www.jstor.com/stable/25594999>.

²⁶ Sze-Wei, Ang, “The Politics of Victimization and the Model Minority,” *CR: The New Centennial Review* 11, no. 3 (2011): 121. <http://www.jstor.com/stable/41949758>.

which serves to divide minority groups as it pits them against each other: rather than focusing on the systemic issues that render it nearly impossible for a BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) individual to achieve the success which white people are easily able to, blame shifts to an individual level.²⁷

Let us return to the character of the Doctor. Philosopher Keven Decker argues that “*Doctor Who* raises questions about the nature [...] of personal identity by its very title.”²⁸ Throughout the show’s run, the question of just *who* the Doctor is comes up time and time again with often contradictory answers, particularly with regards to the revived series (known to fans as *Nu Who*).²⁹ In one account, the Doctor was created from a loom (a machine, used by the Time Lords in the wake of a infertility curse, that can produce various types of offspring depending on the Time Lords’ needs);³⁰ in another, they were born to a Time Lord father and a human mother;³¹ and in the most recent season, helmed by Chris Chibnall, the Doctor was a foundling whose DNA was exploited and spliced into some of the citizens of Gallifrey in order to create a race with longer life spans and regenerative abilities.³² The latter backstory (that of a foundling child) involves a major departure from portraying the Doctor as a white savior. Instead, their genetic code was stolen in a move that mirrors the exploitation of Henrietta Lacks, a black woman whose cancer cells were taken without her knowledge or consent and experimented on, leading to myriad medical breakthroughs as doctors researched cancers,

²⁷ Ibid., 122.

²⁸ Kevin S. Decker, *Who is Who?: The Philosophy of Doctor Who* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 133.

²⁹ “Why is Doctor Who sometimes called NuWho?” Quora, February 14, 2020, <https://www.quora.com/Why-is-Doctor-Who-sometimes-called-NuWho>.

³⁰ Marc Platt, *Lungbarrow* (London: Virgin Books, 1997).

³¹ *Doctor Who: The Movie*, directed by Geoffrey Sax (1996).

³² Chibnall, “The Timeless Children.”

diseases, and the effects of radiation.³³ Many of the Timeless Children, regenerations of the child who would later grow up to become the Doctor, are children of color, while the woman who takes them in is white. She forces them to regenerate until she understands the process and then alters her own DNA. Simultaneously, it is implied that the child is becoming more and more like the native Gallifreyans until they're indistinguishable from them.³⁴ With this new development, the Doctor no longer knows who they are or where they come from.

From a viewer standpoint, this allows more children to relate to the character of the Doctor as they are able to see children who look like them in the role instead of seeing a young Doctor played only by a white boy with fair eyes. Furthermore, the Doctor's seamless assimilation into Gallifreyan culture renders them an ideal example of a model minority: they have *become* Gallifreyan in language, mind, and body, with their original culture having been lost to history.

Ethical quandaries plague the Doctor anytime they arrive somewhere equipped with foreknowledge of tragic events. Given the aforementioned Time Lord policy of non-interference, they *should* stand by as tragedy after tragedy occurs, for as the Tenth Doctor puts it: "certain moments in time are fixed. Tiny, precious moments. Everything else is in flux, anything can happen, but those certain moments, they have to stand."³⁵ Such fixed points are defended as turning points in history and any alteration of them can change the course of human development, creating a timeline divergent to the original.³⁶

³³ Rebecca Skloot, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* (New York: Broadway Books, 2010).

³⁴ Chibnall, "The Timeless Children." For an in-depth analysis of the deconstruction of the reveal, see Tumblr post from user glompcat, dated July 5, 2020.

³⁵ *Doctor Who*, season 4, episode 16, "The Waters of Mars," directed by Harper Graeme, aired December 19, 2009, on BBC.

³⁶ Decker, *Who Is Who?...*, 189.

The prominent example of meddling in fixed points occurs when the Tenth Doctor arrives at Bowie Base One, the first human settlement on Mars, *knowing* that the mission's entire crew perishes on that very same day. His initial instinct is to leave so as to not disturb the Laws of Time, but there is some unidentifiable martian creature in the water that is infecting the crew and with his curiosity piqued, the Doctor sticks around, allowing himself to get pulled into the chaos.³⁷

The Doctor's decision to stay reflects both his desire to help others as well as his insatiable curiosity and the longer he stays, the more his ethics are tested as more crew members become infected. Earlier in the season, the Doctor laments about not being able to save everyone during the explosion of Mount Vesuvius, but he comes to a realization during *The Waters of Mars*: "He's the only Time Lord left. He *is* the Laws of Time! He can do what he wants!"³⁸ Alone, the Doctor assumes the powers of intervention which were a staple of the Time Lords and in so doing, he succumbs to a darkness within him. Were he travelling with anyone at the time, they would have tempered his actions; but alone, he declares himself to be the "Time Lord Victorious" and goes against the Laws of Time to save three members of Bowie Base One's crew, including their captain, Adelaide Brooke, despite having told her how they were all meant to die. In making his choice, the Doctor alters history. It is, to some extent, "his final arrogance."³⁹

While the Doctor basks in his self-righteous attitude, having taken the surviving crew back to Earth, Adelaide expresses her anger at him as he had explicitly told her that she was meant to die and that her death would inspire future generations of space explorers:

³⁷ Davies, "The Waters of Mars."

³⁸ Davies, *Doctor Who: The Writer's Tale*, 528.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 423.

Adelaide: If my family changes, the whole of human history could change! The whole of the human race! *No one* should have that power!

Doctor: Tough.

Adelaide: I don't *care* who you are! The "Time Lord Victorious" is *wrong!*⁴⁰

Shortly after entering her home, Adelaide commits suicide, thereby preserving the timeline as the impetus for her granddaughter exploring the stars--her grandmother's death--remains rather the same.⁴¹ This incident further dampens the Doctor's reputation as a savior by showing that, despite their best efforts, they cannot always save the day. The universe is cruel and empty and when owed a life, it *will* claim that life. As put forth by R.T. Davies: "Fight time, and it fights back. It's what we all do. And we all fail."⁴²

Left to their own devices, the Doctor is cruel and callous and less than virtuous and while it is true that "remaining virtuous is hard work," it is further true that:

Having virtuous friends can help the virtuous person to practice [their] own virtue. Compassion isn't the Doctor's virtue, and at times [they] seem to slip. [Their] companions, filled with human compassion, can help keep [them] on track.⁴³

Travelling alone is dangerous for the Doctor. They lose control, assume powers of intervention which no single individual should possess, and prevent people from asserting autonomy over their own fates. The Doctor was not always alone, however. In the classic series of *Doctor Who* (1963-1989), the Time Lords played a recurring role, either helping or hindering the Doctor's exploits. Following the release of the television movie in 1996, it was revealed that Gallifrey was destroyed during the course of the Time War, leaving the Doctor as the last of the Time Lords, a development which hindered Davies' writing throughout the first three seasons.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Davies, "The Waters of Mars."

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Davies, *Doctor Who: The Writer's Tale*, 566.

⁴³ Roman Altshuler, "Is the Doctor the Destroyer of Worlds?" in *Doctor Who and Philosophy...*, 290.

⁴⁴ Russell, *Doctor Who: The Encyclopedia*, 354.

Another ethical issue related to the possession of foreknowledge while time travelling involves the creation of paradoxes, feedback loops in which a thing in the future directly causes a thing in the past to occur. One type of paradox is the so-called “bootstrap paradox” in which a person experiences something in the present, such as a certain song, and then introduces that thing to the past, thereby creating it despite not having been the original creator.⁴⁵ An example of this can be seen in the opening two-parter of *Nu Who*’s ninth season.

While teaching her English class one day, Clara Oswald notices that all of the planes then in-flight above the Earth have stopped, and as the Unified Intelligence Taskforce (UNIT) seeks her help in locating the Doctor, they encounter the Mistress (Missy, also known as the Master), who has received the Doctor’s confession dial (his last will and testament) and fears that their friend does not have long to live. They find him throwing a party in medieval London, hiding from something that has caused him great shame and celebrating what he believes to be his final hours before he heads to his death.⁴⁶

Throughout the series, the Doctor is presented as a great hero, particularly when it comes to saving the lives of children. As put forth by their former companion Amy Pond, “[The Doctor] never interferes in the affairs of other peoples or planets---*unless there are children crying.*”⁴⁷ Depending on one’s moral viewpoints, adults can be irremediably bad, but children are young and malleable with their futures still ahead of them, and passing judgement on a child for their future endeavours is cruel. Further, by portraying the Doctor as a great hero who

⁴⁵ “Bootstrap paradox,” TARDIS Data Core: The Doctor Who Wiki, Fandom TV, Accessed July 28, 2020, https://tardis.fandom.com/wiki/Bootstrap_paradox.

⁴⁶ *Doctor Who*, season 9, episode 1, “The Magician’s Apprentice,” written by Steven Moffat, aired September 19, 2015, on BBC.

⁴⁷ *Doctor Who*, season 5, episode 2, “The Beast Below,” directed by Andrew Gunn, aired April 10, 2010, on BBC.

helps children, this sends a message of *hope* to children that, should they find themselves in trouble, an adult *will* come to their aid.

The Doctor's shame comes from judging a child based on who he will grow up to be. He lands on a war-torn planet and encounters a young child in the middle of a minefield and even with the TARDIS, saving the boy is a nigh impossible task. The Doctor abandons him after learning that he is Davros, future creator of the Daleks.

During his party, Davros's servant arrives and takes the Doctor, Missy, and Clara to what at first glance appears to be a space station and which later proves to be Skaro, the homeworld of the Daleks, where Davros is dying and requires the Doctor's aid.

While in transit, the Doctor questions: "Davros made the Daleks, but *who* made Davros?"⁴⁸ When he *does* go back to save Davros at the end of part two, the Doctor brings a Dalek gun and uses it to shoot the handmines which surround the young boy, shouting "exterminate" as he does so. It is thus implied that the Doctor's actions here are what later inspire Davros in his creation of the Daleks. Further, despite being archnemeses and believing Clara Oswald to have been shot by the Daleks, the Doctor gives the dying Davros regeneration energy to allow him to see one last sunrise.

Davros questions why the Doctor allows compassion to ruin him and why he tries to help wherever he goes, and the Doctor replies by saying that it is not just the morally correct thing to do, but that it's *kind*.⁴⁹ Why harm others when putting positive energy, helping someone out in a hard time or merely being kind, can help to make the world better?

⁴⁸ Moffat, "The Magician's Apprentice."

⁴⁹ *Doctor Who*, season 9, episode 2, "The Witch's Familiar," written by Steven Moffat, aired September 26, 2015, on BBC.

While the Doctor is being tricked by Davros, Clara and Missy are still alive and on the outskirts of the Dalek citadel. They survived as Missy used the energy from their being shot to teleport the both of them out of the station and on their trek into the citadel to rescue the Doctor, Missy murders a Dalek and puts Clara in its outer casing. Upon finding the Doctor, Missy orders him to shoot the Dalek, claiming that it had been the one to murder Clara and was *gloating* about it, but both Clara and the Doctor are hesitant to fire first. When the Doctor asks why the creature isn't firing at him, a Time Lord and mortal enemy of the Daleks, Clara manages to say, "I show mercy." Daleks generally do *not* show mercy; they shoot first and never question anything, but the Doctor's actions in saving Davros had instilled *some* amount of mercy and compassion in the boy which later, unwittingly, wound up in the Daleks' programming and showed itself when Clara chose not to kill her best friend.⁵⁰ Connection between individuals, then, proves sufficient to save the day.

One might also argue that saving Davros was a means by which to avert the creation of a grandfather paradox, which more generally involves a person venturing into the past and altering their personal future by preventing important life events from happening. While likely, sending messages regarding kindness, compassion, and mercy seem to have been Moffat's primary aim.⁵¹

A final negative aspect of Time Travel involves *timing*: that is, there are several instances in which the Doctor arrives too late to save the day and must face the consequences of their

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ The_Silver_Avenger, "Production Notes (Steven Moffat Q&A)...", Reddit, October 15, 2015, https://www.reddit.com/r/gallifrey/comments/3ov4gz/production_notes_steven_moffat_qa_for_doctor_who/.

actions (a fact they very much despise, as evident by their proclivity for running away). Tragedy exists as a fact of life and despite their best efforts, the hero does not always save the day.⁵²

Of all the Doctor's incarnations who make grand promises and then fail to deliver, perhaps the most notorious is the Eleventh Doctor. As he travels with Amy and Rory Williams, he consistently fails to fulfill his promises and in the process proves to Amy that life is anything *but* a fairytale. He abandons her for twelve years, letting people believe that she hallucinated him dropping from the sky,⁵³ allows her daughter to be abducted and forced into being a child soldier,⁵⁴ and eventually allows the Weeping Angels to take her and her husband's lives,⁵⁵ and with each misstep, the Doctor shows how one can aim for a goal and consistently miss, not out of malice or cruelty, but due to the unpredictable nature of life.

The Twelfth Doctor also makes a grand promise upon which he fails to deliver. Prior to a test to see if Missy can be reformed, his companion, Bill Potts, asks the Doctor not to let anything bad happen to her. Unfortunately, Bill gets shot in the chest and in the moments before she gets carted away to a hospital, the Doctor tells her to wait for him and promises to rescue her as soon as he is able, but when he finally finds her, she has been converted into a Cyberman. When the Doctor regenerates, he believes Bill to be dead and that her death was caused by his inaction and so carries that guilt into his next incarnation.⁵⁶

While in her Thirteenth incarnation, the Doctor regards herself and her companions as having a so-called "flat-team structure." By this she means that they each have their specialties

⁵² Decker, *Who Is Who?...*, 12.

⁵³ Moffat, "The Beast Below."

⁵⁴ Doctor Who, season 6, episode 7, "A Good Man Goes To War," written by Steven Moffat, aired June 4, 2011, on BBC.

⁵⁵ Doctor Who, season 7, episode 5, "The Angels Take Manhattan," written by Steven Moffat, aired September 29, 2012, on BBC.

⁵⁶ *Doctor Who*, season 10, episode 12, "The Doctor Falls," written by Steven Moffat, aired July 1, 2017, on BBC.

and none of them is more important than the others, as they play equal parts in decision making and problem solving.⁵⁷ It is, however, part of the facade behind which the Doctor hides, as she does not tell her companions personal details about herself and appears cheerful at all times.

Bill's death haunts her, though, and when she next encounters the Cybermen, it involves making an impossible choice. Ashad, a partially-incomplete Cyberman, is in search of the Cyberium, a database of all Cyberman knowledge, which has housed itself in Percy Shelley. The Doctor can either give Ashad the Cyberium or allow Percy Shelley to die, thereby altering the course of history, and when grappling with the problem she proclaims:

Sometimes this team structure isn't so flat---it's mountainous, with me at the summit, in the stratosphere. Alone. Left to choose. [...] Sometimes, even I can't win.⁵⁸

Here, again, the Doctor assumes powers beyond the scope of what is generally accepted and while she tries her best to do what's *right*, sometimes the only choices a person has are bad ones, and while saving Shelley in that moment and preserving history, she dooms the whole of humanity by allowing the cyberman to escape with the cyberium.⁵⁹

BRITISH SOCIETY

No discussion of *Doctor Who* would be complete without further examination of the society in which the show was created. Professor Alec Charles, who specializes in science fiction and postmodernism among other subjects,⁶⁰ describes the science fiction genre as having

⁵⁷ *Doctor Who*, season 11, episode 8, "The Witchfinders," written by Joy Wilkinson, aired November 25, 2018, on BBC.

⁵⁸ *Doctor Who*, season 12, episode 8, "The Haunting of Villa Diodati," written by Maxine Alderton, aired February 16, 2020, on BBC.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ "Professor Alec Charles." University of Winchester, Accessed November 28, 2020, <https://www.winchester.ac.uk/about-us/leadership-and-governance/staff-directory/staff-profiles/charles.php>.

“always attempted to reflect contemporary events.”⁶¹ Commentary on society renders science fiction political and the politics in *Nu Who* emerge in criticisms of the police surveillance state and the prime ministers, as well as in reflections on modern medicine. Of note in this commentary is a distinct lack of criticism directed towards the royal family, particularly current royals, owing to censorship restrictions put on the BBC, as both the UK government and royal family play a role in funding the network.⁶²

Criticism of the police surveillance state occurs early on in season five as the Doctor travels with Amelia Pond, whose story is that of a fairytale: a man falls from the sky, disappears, then reappears twelve years later only to sweep her away, taking her far into the future, where the citizens of Earth have fled the planet in the wake of environmental and political disasters and have formed nation-states aboard spaceships.

Aboard the Starship UK, everything appears normal. Beneath the surface, however, lays a dark plot: unknown to the citizens, *something* resides in the ship and the darkness first presents itself in a classroom setting: Smilers, creatures in booths, watch over everyone, and one judges children based on whether or not they did their homework, with the naughty children not being allowed to take the elevators. Should they disobey orders and do so anyway, they get sent below decks, likely to their deaths, as the Doctor and Amy stumble upon a young girl, alone and crying.

She tells them that every year, citizens sixteen years of age and older are eligible to vote and are brought to booths where they watch a video showcasing the planet’s destruction due

⁶¹ Alec Charles, “War without End? Utopia, the Family, and the Post-9/11 World in Russell T. Davies’s “Doctor Who,”” *Science Fiction Studies* 35, no. 3 (2008): 451.

⁶² Gideon Polya, “Censorship by the BBC,” Google Sites, accessed November 21, 2010, <https://sites.google.com/site/censorshipbythebbc/>.

to climate change and nuclear war, and after seeing the whole of humanity's darker side, voters are given a choice in the form of two buttons: forget or protest. If they forget, nothing changes and they can go about their lives undisturbed until the next election cycle, where they will undoubtedly again choose to forget. Protestors are rare, and the video begins with a preface: should even one percent of the eligible population elect to protest, society as the UK's citizens know it will collapse.

While investigating the darkness which permeates the ship, Amy and the Doctor encounter Elizabeth X, ruler of the Starship UK who, too, is investigating. Unusually for a spaceship, there are strange tentacles which poke out from sewer grates and a distinct lack of reverberations from the engines. The episode ends with Liz X discovering that she has ruled for *centuries* with her memory erased over and over again every ten years, abdicating her throne, and granting the Star Whale--the benevolent creature who so kindly serves in place of an engine, who came to the UK's rescue when the Earth was burning--freedom from the torture that each citizen had previously been complicit in.⁶³

Although the notion of a 'Liz X' is hilarious, very little criticism is ever directed towards the British Monarchy, and in fact the Doctor is shown to have an intimate relationship with Queen Elizabeth I of England, as he marries her while in his Tenth incarnation but later leaves her, earning her scorn.⁶⁴ Another royal who features prominently in *Nu Who* is Queen Victoria. She, too, encounters the Tenth Doctor, but under threat of an alien lycanthrope. As we meet her, Victoria is older and determined to do anything possible to protect her nation against alien

⁶³ Moffat, "The Beast Below."

⁶⁴ *Doctor Who*, season 7 episode 14, "The Day of the Doctor," written by Steven Moffat, aired November 23, 2013, on BBC.; *Doctor Who*, season 3 episode 2, "The Shakespeare Code," written by Gareth Roberts, aired April 7, 2007, on BBC.

incursion, so while she knights the Doctor and his companion, she simultaneously banishes them from her kingdom before founding the Torchwood Institute, an imperialistic organization that claims anything alien as its own while striving to keep alien beings out of the United Kingdom.⁶⁵

Contrary to the treatment given to the royal family, prime ministers of Great Britain are heavily criticized, with two different characters in 2006-2008 functioning as stand-ins for then-Prime Minister Tony Blair.⁶⁶ First, there was Harriet Jones.

Harriet Jones is an older woman who becomes prime minister after encouragement from the Doctor and Rose Tyler, and she promised to bring peace and to lead Britain into a golden age. However, one Christmas day the Sycorax invade the Earth and the Doctor, freshly regenerated into their Tenth Incarnation, is incapacitated; it then falls to Jones, leader of one of the terrorized countries, to address the invaders. It is of note that a running gag permeates Jones' run: people *and* alien creatures respond to her introduction with, "yes, we know who you are." She is thus a public figure who functions more as a burden to her constituents than as an effective leader, which serves as criticism of the British parliament. Furthermore, although the Doctor sends the Sycorax away in peace, Harriet Jones' finger had been hovering over the proverbial trigger button and she orders Torchwood to fire on the retreating ship. This earns immediate retaliation from the Doctor and he brings her down with six simple words.⁶⁷

Those six words, "Don't you think she looks tired?," combined with the portrayal of Jones as trigger-happy, criticizes Tony Blair in that he, too, was prepared at any moment to

⁶⁵ *Doctor Who*, season 2, episode 2, "Tooth and Claw," written by R.T. Davies, aired April 22, 2006, on BBC.

⁶⁶ Charles, "War without End?...", 454.

⁶⁷ *Doctor Who*, season 2, episode 0, "The Christmas Invasion," written by R.T. Davies, aired December 25, 2005, on BBC.

attack alien others and he, too, was worn down from the stress of being prime minister.⁶⁸ Like Harriet Jones, Blair acted preemptively, stoking public fear by arguing that Iraq had “weapons of mass destruction, capable of launch within forty-five minutes.”⁶⁹ However, Jones, unlike Blair, did not invoke racist fears and was not, as one philosopher put it, “trigger-happy;”⁷⁰ in fact, she had good reasons for striking first: she had seen what the Sycorax could do and wanted only to protect her citizens against a *known* threat. However, it is also true that in saying, “don’t you think she looks tired?,” Davies was criticizing former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher’s actions during the Falklands War, in which she ordered the sinking of an Argentinian vessel. This action has earned a reputation of questionable legality, as the Argentinians have argued that they were attacked out of nowhere and the British government retains that their actions were justified. Shortly after the war, a public campaign questioning Thatcher’s health led to her political downfall, much as the Doctor’s damning sentence did with Jones.⁷¹

The second prime minister portrayed in *Nu Who* is Harold Saxon, an alias for the Master. Saxon is young, charming, and full of empty promises, and as he has no true political policies, he comes off as a rather nice man.⁷² However, he aims to destroy the people of the United Kingdom by bringing back in time people from the end of the universe and setting them to destroy the Earth, remaking it in his own image. Prior to this, he murders his parliament, and during his term he vacillates between actively causing harm and sitting back watching children’s

⁶⁸ Charles, “War without End?...,” 454-5.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 454.

⁷⁰ Altshuler, “Is the Doctor the Destroyer of Worlds?,” 284.

⁷¹ “When Doctor Who Gets Political,” *RadioTimes*, October 31st, 2015, <https://www.radiotimes.com/news/2015-10-31/when-doctor-who-got-political/2/>; Patrick S. Baker, “Sink the Belgrano!”, History Net, March 2019, <https://www.historynet.com/sin-the-belgrano.htm>.

⁷² Charles, “War without End?...,” 456.

programs, reflecting frustration with a government that refused (and continues to refuse) to help its citizens in their time of need.⁷³

Another facet of British Society addressed in *Doctor Who* is that of technology and industry, which have changed greatly in the past fifty-seven years and which *continue* to change as scientific breakthroughs allow for further advancements. A recurring villain since the mid 1960's represents fears regarding the advancement of medical technology and so-called "dehumanising medicine:" the Cybermen.⁷⁴ Throughout their myriad appearances on the show, little has changed about how the Cybermen operate. They arrive (or are born) on planets populated by humans, convert them into Cybermen, and move on to somewhere else, where they will convert those people as well, all-the-while amassing an army of emotionless, hive-minded robots. Cybermen do not merely convert people into machines; rather, they do so in a horrific way by shoving human bodies into cybernetic casings and installing emotional inhibitors. Without emotion, they are unhindered in their actions.⁷⁵ Because they remove difference, eliminate emotion and pain, and don't discriminate in who they convert, philosopher Courtland Lewis argues that the Cybermen are altruistic.⁷⁶ Lewis' argument is false and misguided. While idealistically one might strive to be free of pain, and while cybernetic limbs and other technologies prove beneficial when used properly, allowing oneself to be converted into a murderous machine does *not* benefit humanity.⁷⁷

⁷³ *Doctor Who*, season 3, episode 12, "The Sound of Drums," written by R.T. Davies, aired June 23, 2007, on BBC.

⁷⁴ Lincoln Geraghty, "From Balaclavas to Jumpsuits: The Multiple Histories and Identities of "Doctor Who's" Cybermen," *Atlantis* 30, no. 1 (2008): 89.

⁷⁵ Justin Richards, *Doctor Who: The Secret Lives of Monsters* (New York: Harper Design, 2014), 8.

⁷⁶ Courtland Lewis, "Cybermen Evil? I don't think so!" in *Doctor Who and Philosophy...*, 201.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 204.

It also begs the question of how Lewis and others who share his opinions would regard chronically ill and disabled individuals, who are already so often viewed as less than human; could he honestly and in good conscience look at someone in pain, whom society treats as less-than, and tell them that the solution to their problems is the *further* removal of their humanity?

Digressing from the universe of *Doctor Who*, it is worthwhile to explore the backgrounds of *Nu Who*'s executive producers, who are all well-off, middle-aged white men. Since the revival of *Doctor Who* in 2005, three men have acted as the show's head writer/executive producer: Russell T. Davies, Steven Moffat, and Chris Chibnall.⁷⁸ According to Davies, whenever someone views a "Doctor Who" script, "they expect to see [his] name on the front."⁷⁹ That is, while guest writers might draft episodes, creative control rests mainly with the showrunner and any major decisions regarding plot and characterization fall upon them. Further, fans divide the modern series into eras based on who was the head writer at the time, and any major changes to the canon of the series is either fondly attributed to, or else used to scorn, the writer.

While fans tend to pit the writers against one another, claiming that one is a better writer while the others are terrible (with a good bit of criticism being thrown especially at Moffat, as illustrated by Figure 1), the writers have generally been supportive of one another.

⁷⁸ "Head Writer," TARDIS Data Core, accessed 1 July, 2020, https://tardis.fandom.com/wiki/Head_writer.

⁷⁹ Russell T. Davies and Benjamin Cook, *Doctor Who: The Writer's Tale* (New York: Penguin Randomhouse), 370.

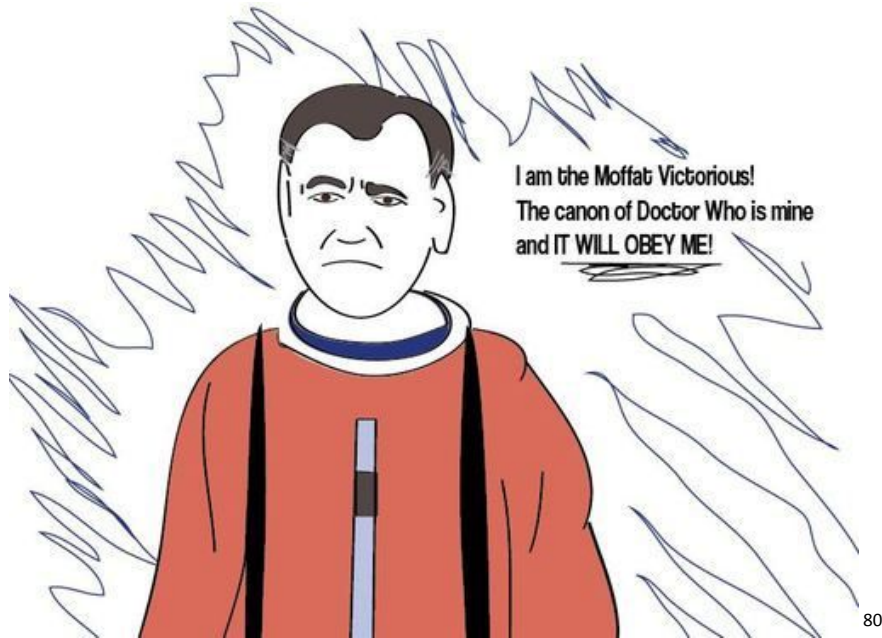


Figure 1.

Figure one portrays Steven Moffat, *Doctor Who* showrunner from 2010-2017, as “the Moffat Victorious,” a play on the Tenth Doctor’s “Time Lord Victorious” persona in his final episodes, and the comparison implies that Moffat was destroying the canon of *Doctor Who* in order to create his own version of canon. However, for Moffat the opportunity to write *Doctor Who* was “[his] specific dream job since [he] was about seven. [...] [he] love[s] *Doctor Who* to tiny bits, [he] know[s] [he’s] good at writing it, and [he] so want[s] it to continue.”⁸¹ As a lifelong fan of *Doctor Who*, Moffat *did* remake the show to satisfy his own desires, and while his earlier seasons are weakly written, his latter seasons reflect growth and maturity which improved, rather than ruined, the show.

⁸⁰ adventures-in-poor-planning, “all the cool kids were doing badly painted doctor who...,” captioned comic, Tumblr, April 24, 2014, <https://adventures-in-poor-planning.tumblr.com/post/83712961570/all-the-cool-kids-were-doing-badly-painted-doctor>.

⁸¹ Email correspondence between Steven Moffat and R.T. Davies, quoted Davies, *Doctor Who: The Writer’s Tale*, 162.

Further aiding the development of Moffat's writing was the casting of Peter Capaldi, an older man, as the Twelfth Doctor following the departure of Matt Smith, who had been the youngest actor ever cast in the role. Generally speaking, the actor cast as the next Doctor has been younger than their predecessor, but Capaldi presented a return to the Classic era of *Doctor Who* with an older man as the Doctor and a new regeneration cycle.⁸²

Within his autobiographical text, Davies indicates that he trusts and supports Moffat and Chibnall, the two men who would succeed him as showrunner, as they were close friends and worked on *Doctor Who* as well as the spinoff *Torchwood* together. Any doubts Davies held towards their abilities faded quickly. In his discussion with journalist Benjamin Cook, Davies expressed worries regarding how other episode writers would handle the character of Donna Noble and ended with: "Not Steven Moffat, obviously."⁸³ Further, as showrunner it fell to Davies to revise and correct episode scripts before they could be approved for the final cut, and when it came to rewriting scripts, he would "write the final draft of almost all scripts---except *Steven Moffat's*, *Matthew Graham's*, *Chris Chibnall's*, and *Stephen Greenhorn's*."⁸⁴

The support which these men have provided one another and which they continue to provide reflects problems within the broader film and television industry, in which racism remains an issue. On *Doctor Who*, most of the executive producers since the 1980's have been white men, and few of the companions have been portrayed by actors of color. On the broader industry, Rachel De-laHay, a black writer and actress, remarks: "Because no one's hiring any Black people, there are far less 'experienced' Black people seen as ready to do the more senior

⁸² Jason Whyte, "I read a lot, and much of it is sci-fi," Quora, October 11, 2018, <https://www.quora.com/Why-does-the-Doctor-seem-to-regenerate-younger-each-time>.

⁸³ Davies, *Doctor Who: The Writer's Tale*, 68.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 150. Emphasis mine.

jobs.”⁸⁵ Where experience is required, white producers, writers, and other forces in the industry generally accept other white individuals, who have more credentials not because they are exceptionally talented, but because they have been hired more often than their black and brown counterparts. This results in a negative loop for creatives of color. They cannot get work without prior experience, but they cannot get experience when no one wants to hire them. Sometimes, a person of color will join a team where the executive producer is a white individual who does not take their concerns seriously, resulting in the approval and airing of offensive material.⁸⁶

GENDER IDENTITY

Another societal aspect which deserves broader treatment is that of gender identity. For *Time Lords*, gender is fluid, capable of shifting over time, and the *Time Lords*' nature as a genderfluid species allows for exploration of how Western society views gender identity.⁸⁷ As the series has existed in some way since 1963, the narrative of an old man in a box who carts away younger girls has changed very little, with the exception of the Thirteenth Doctor's introduction (as played by Jodie Whittaker), as well as that of a previously unknown incarnation as portrayed by Afro-European actress Jo Martin.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Hanna Flint, "'Hire More of Us': Black Creatives Slam Racism Across U.K. TV Industry (EXCLUSIVE)," *Variety*, June 11, 2020, <https://variety.com/2020/tv/global/black-lives-matter-racism-uk-tv-industry-noughts-crosses-rachel-adedeji-rachel-delahay-dominic-buchanan-obioma-uguoala-1234631379/>.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Merriam-Webster, "gender-fluid," accessed July 26, 2020, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/gender-fluid>. For more on *Time Lords* and gender, refer to episode eleven of the 10th season of the revived series, where the Doctor explains the *Time Lords*' view on gender to his companion.

⁸⁸ *Doctor Who*, season 12, episode 5, "Fugitive of the Judoon," written by Vinay Patel and Chris Chibnall, aired January 26, 2020, on BBC.

Romance between the Doctor and their companions permeates Davies' era of *Nu Who*, as the Tenth Doctor was portrayed for four years by David Tennant, a young, conventionally attractive white man. In an email exchange with Cook from 2007, Davies discusses the Tenth Doctor's relationship with his human companion Rose Tyler, a nineteen-year-old who leaves her job working in a shop to travel the stars with the Doctor:

Cook: We warm to the idea of the Doctor and Rose in love [...] because they look right together.

Davies: Man, woman, on screen = love story. Very little work necessary.⁸⁹

Despite Davies' reasoning that such a relationship is natural, having the Doctor engage in a romantic relationship with their companions does *not* serve to humanize them and instead plays into the audience's biases while betraying the patriarchal bias within British society. Furthermore, age gaps between couples, particularly wherein one is a younger woman and the other an older man, are more often than not predatory.

Contrast Davies' insistence that Rose and the Doctor make a good couple with his apparent revulsion towards the notion of Martha Jones, a young black woman, fancying the Doctor: when discussing the upcoming companion, Donna Noble, Davies insisted that he wanted none of that "Martha-fancying stuff."⁹⁰ By this he meant he wanted a companion who would not pine after the Doctor, but it was Davies who helmed the first four seasons of the revived series, and as such *he* was the one to write Martha pining after the Doctor while the Doctor moped and mourned Rose, who was not dead, but rather trapped in an alternate universe *with a clone of the Doctor*.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Davies, *Doctor Who: The Writer's Tale*, 129.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 192.

⁹¹ *Doctor Who*, season 2, episode 13, "Doomsday," written by Russell T. Davies, aired July 8, 2006, on BBC.

Portraying the mostly young, mostly female companions as “sweethearts” and “groupies” of the Doctor’s serves to reinforce the unspoken heterosexual myth that women will always relate to powerful men in romantic ways and that in a deeply fundamental way women will be defined in relation to men[...].⁹²

Rose and Martha are so often defined by their relationship to the Doctor, who as they know them, presents as a conventionally attractive, young white man, and their admiration for the Doctor comes at the sake of their own development as people, enforcing the false notion that a woman’s worth arises out of her relationship with men.

In the decade following Martha’s departure as a companion, a few characters in *Doctor Who* served as audience tests for the potential of a female Doctor, including River Song (a human-Time Lord Hybrid, shown to be equal to the Doctor in intellect),⁹³ Clara Oswald (the Doctor’s companion in their Eleventh and Twelfth incarnations who would take up the moniker of “Doctor” on adventures where the Doctor was unavailable or otherwise incapacitated),⁹⁴ and even a few passing references to various Time Lords who have presented both masculinely and femininely, the Corsair among them.⁹⁵ Even the Time Lord’s military general regenerated from her only time presenting masculinely back to presenting as a woman, following which she carried about her duties unhindered by her change of gender.⁹⁶

⁹² Helen Kang, “Adventures in Ocean-Crossing, Margin-Skating, and Feminist-Engagement with *Doctor Who*,” in *Chicks Dig Time Lords...* 42.

⁹³ Moffat, “A Good Man Goes To War.”

⁹⁴ *Doctor Who*, season 8, episode 9, “Flatline,” written by Jamie Mathieson, aired October 18, 2014, on BBC; *Doctor Who*, season 8, episode 12, “Death in Heaven,” written by Steven Moffat, aired November 8, 2014, on BBC.

⁹⁵ *Doctor Who*, season 6, episode 4, “The Doctor’s Wife,” written by Neil Gaiman, aired May 11, 2011, on BBC.

⁹⁶ *Doctor Who*, season 9, episode 12, “Hell Bent,” written by Steven Moffat, aired December 5, 2015, on BBC.

In 2014 it was revealed that the Master, one of the Doctor's oldest friends and best enemies whose character originated in the Classic series,⁹⁷ had reincarnated into female form,⁹⁸ and her gender fluidity further aided in the transition to having a female Doctor. For Missy, being a woman represented an "upgrade" from being a man as it allowed her to move about unhindered given that most of the people she encountered underestimated for her small stature and disarming aesthetic.⁹⁹

In "Too Many Masters," an audiobook produced by Big Finish Productions, Missy's history as the Master and her gender transition play a central role in the story's conflict. It begins with the Monk, an old friend-turned-foe of both the Doctor and the Master, kidnapping Missy in an attempt to gain revenge for her previously wronging him. Smugly, he proclaims himself to be the Master with Missy serving as his prisoner and the Ogrons, overhearing this, assume his statement to be *fact* given that the Master when they had known them had been masculine presenting. After all, their people possess a strictly binary understanding of gender that does not allow for gender transition.

The Ogrons have spent millennia searching for the Master as he owes them a debt for services rendered during the Time War, but given that the Monk cannot pay them back, he corrects them, telling them that *Missy* is the Master, and in response she retorts: "A *female* Master? How does *that* work? It's *political correctness* gone mad! Well, you can't have a lady Master--it's implicit in the word [Master]."¹⁰⁰ The irony lies in the fact that there *is* a female Master; the beloved cult figure, portrayed for over forty years as a man, now presents as a

⁹⁷ *Doctor Who*, series 8, episode 1, "Terror of the Autons" written by Robert Holmes, aired January 2, 1971, on BBC.

⁹⁸ *Doctor Who*, season 8, episode 11, "Dark Water," directed by Rachel Talalay, aired November 1, 2014, on BBC.

⁹⁹ Moffat, "The Witch's Familiar."

¹⁰⁰ John Dorney, *Too Many Masters*, performed by Michelle Gomez and Rufus Hound (London: Big Finish Productions, 2020), Audiobook, 1hr.

woman, and she is able to laugh at the backwards, close-minded society of the Ogrons while mocking the strict gender binary which the United Kingdom imposed on its imperial holdings over hundreds of years.

While Missy elects to play along and let the Ogrons believe what they will about the Monk, she is hindered by the fact that she and the Monk were nearly married, for when the Master cannot pay the owed debt, the Ogrons assume possession of Missy.¹⁰¹ This harkens back to the notion of women as property, belonging to her husband or betrothed, with her merit arising from her connection to a man. Despite this one instance, Missy, for the most part, defies gender stereotypes and traditional gender roles. True, she may appear as a Victorian nanny, even being fondly deemed “Scary Poppins” in promotional material, but she is unmarried and does wicked things for the sheer thrill of it.¹⁰²

Further, establishing the Master as a woman allowed for a palatable form of romance between the Doctor and the Master, who in the classic series were both men and who are often regarded as having been romantically involved at some point in their youth.¹⁰³ Despite the Master’s repeated attempts to kill the Doctor, they still seem to care for one another. On one notable occasion, the Master utilizes a machine that removes and stores the evil essence from an individual to kill the Doctor and then hastens to check on him, cradling his face and checking his heartbeats.¹⁰⁴ Davies, himself a gay man, played on the notion of a romance between the pair, notably by having the Master die in the Doctor’s arms and then later by portraying them

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² “Scary Poppins,” *Vortex Magazine*, June 2020, 10.

¹⁰³ “Doctor/Master,” Fanlore.org, updated September 10, 2020, <https://fanlore.org/wiki/Doctor/Master#Fanon>.

¹⁰⁴ *Doctor Who*, series 8, serial 2, “The Mind of Evil,” directed by Timothy Combe, aired February 13, 1971, on BBC.

as unable to live without one another.¹⁰⁵ By making Missy a woman, having her refer to the Doctor as her “boyfriend,” and letting the two of them kiss, Moffat retroactively validated fan interpretations that younger Doctors and Master were romantically involved.¹⁰⁶

After years of teasing the possibility of a female Doctor, Jodie Whittaker was announced as the Thirteenth Doctor in 2017. In her first season, the writers needed to navigate having the first woman cast as the Doctor and much of the writing reflects a desire to acclimate and comfort the audience through the transition. Shortly after regenerating, the Doctor remarks in passing, “half-an-hour ago, I was a white-haired Scotsman,” but does not elaborate further on her gender identity.¹⁰⁷ It is only once she starts travelling with Yasmin (Yaz) Khan, Ryan Sinclair, and Graham O’Brien (who she fondly deems her “Fam”) that her identity is called into question. They travel back in time to visit Yaz’s grandmother in the days prior to the partition of India and Pakistan and discover that her grandmother had been married before, and it is while preparing for the wedding ceremony that the Doctor first experiences gendered spaces as a woman: the women and men divide into groups and the Doctor, confused, looks towards Yaz for what to do and at a nod, she follows Yaz and the other women to get henna tattoos.

Admiring the novelty of the experience, the Doctor remarks that she never did anything like it as a man, and when Yaz comments on the Doctor’s “jokes,” the Doctor rather awkwardly replies, “Yeah, that’s right. My references to body and gender regeneration are all in jest. I’m such a comedian.” Following this, the women exchange glances, unsure of how to respond, and

¹⁰⁵ *Doctor Who*, season 3, episode 13, “The Last of the Time Lords,” written by R.T. Davies, aired June 30, 2007, on BBC; *Doctor Who* season 4, episode 18, “The End of Time Part Two,” written by R.T. Davies, aired January 1, 2010, on BBC.

¹⁰⁶ Moffat, “Death in Heaven.”

¹⁰⁷ *Doctor Who*, season 11, episode 1, “The Woman Who Fell To Earth,” written by Chris Chibnall, aired October 7, 2018, on BBC.

the Doctor laughs.¹⁰⁸ As it plays off, this scene reads as a trans person hastening to conceal their past and their identity in order to comfort those around them, yet it does not accurately address how the Doctor views *herself* and is almost unnecessary as a consequence.

In another adventure, the Doctor and her Fam find themselves in the middle of a witch hunt in the 17th Century and it is assumed that Graham, an older white man, holds the power in their group. Frustrated by getting called little and being regarded as a second class citizen, the Doctor remarks, "If I was still a bloke, I could get on with the job and not have to waste time defending myself."¹⁰⁹ She is therefore aware of the privilege which comes with presenting as a man but she persists anyways, showing young children that women and girls are just as capable as their male counterparts. And while she can no longer always travel about unhindered, it must be stated that the Thirteenth Doctor is never once portrayed as a weak white woman in constant need of saving, nor does her femininity ever function as an excuse for her negative actions.

Another groundbreaking portrayal of the Doctor came fifty-seven years into the show's run when Jo Martin was the first woman of color cast in the role. Her introduction proved world-shattering for the Thirteenth Doctor. Having already illuminated the ways in which the Timeless Child arc subverts the trope of the White Savior narrative, a further discussion of gender and race is now called for as it relates to the introduction of Jo Martin as the "Fugitive" Doctor.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ *Doctor Who*, season 11, episode 6, "Demons of the Punjab," written by Vinay Patel, aired November 11, 2018, on BBC.

¹⁰⁹ Wilkinson, "The Witchfinders."

¹¹⁰ Patel and Chibnall, "Fugitive of the Judoon."

Season Twelve of *Nu Who* pushes the Doctor to her limits in myriad ways, beginning with a challenge from the Master (reincarnated as a man and portrayed by Sacha Dhawan) in the two-part series opener: “Spyfall.” In true-to-character dramatic fashion, the Master threatens the Doctor’s life and warns her that “everything [she] think[s] [she] know[s] is a lie.”

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What, exactly, is the Doctor supposed to believe about herself? First, that she is a Time Lord, and as such she comes from the planet of Gallifrey in the constellation of Kasterborous. She grew up on Gallifrey as Theta Sigma, whose best friend was Koschei Oakdown, and she attended the Time Lord Academy, where she learned to despise her people for their pompous and overbearing nature. Second: when she was very young and in a different body, she stole a space-time machine and ran away from the oppressive nature of her society to explore the universe. She thus possesses a clear view of who she is and what she does, as well as what she has done in the past,¹¹² which philosophers would argue is key to identity formation.¹¹³

However, one fateful day, Judoon attack the city of Gloucester, seeking out an alien fugitive under the commission of Gat, a Time Lady who works for a mysterious agency known only as the Division. The Doctor intercepts a transmission from their ship and takes her companions down to intercede, where she finds herself aiding the fugitive: a human woman known as Ruth Clayton. Ruth is a cheerful woman. She is black, around forty years of age, and works as a tour guide in Gloucester (though to her chagrin, *no one* ever takes one of her tours). She is also happily married to Lee Clayton.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ *Doctor Who*, season 12, episode 1, “Spyfall,” written by Chris Chibnall, aired January 1, 2020, on BBC.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ Decker, *Who Is Who?...*, 141.

¹¹⁴ Patel and Chibnall, “Fugitive of the Judoon.”

The Doctor is not the primary focus of the episode; “The Fugitive,” whoever they may be, *is*, hence the build-up of Ruth as an ordinary person leading a perfectly normal, *human* life, until the Judoon grow suspicious of her and her husband. Lee feigns ignorance, claiming that he and Ruth are normal people---until, under pressure from the Judoon, he gives himself up and dies doing his best to protect his wife. In his final moments, he sends Ruth a text message which proves sufficient to activate a part buried deep within her subconscious.

While Lee distracts the Judoon, Ruth and the Doctor venture to the town’s church, where they face off with more Judoon and Ruth, after watching a recording of Lee’s death, attacks, claiming: “It feels like instinct--against the bullies.”¹¹⁵ As illuminated later in this essay, the Doctor has before acted out of duress against bullies, and by killing the Judoon, she is doing what she does best: protecting those she cares about and towing the line between “good” and “bad” by doing what is *right*.

Lee’s message to Ruth was coded: “Follow the light. Break the glass.” What is known of Ruth Clayton is but a construct, including that she grew up in a lighthouse which her parents left her and that she has not visited in over two decades. While there, she breaks the glass of a fire alarm, releasing her contained Time Lord essence, before going to join the Thirteenth Doctor (who has just unburied *the Doctor’s TARDIS*) outside, saying,

I broke the glass. It’s all come back to me. [...] Let me take it from the top. Hello. I’m the Doctor. I’m a traveller in space and time. And that thing, buried down there, is called a TARDIS -- Time and Relative Dimension In Space.

With a grin, she takes the Doctor’s hand, saying, “You’re gonna *love* this.”¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

For once, the Doctor is not portrayed by a white individual; for once, the Doctor presents as a black woman, self-assured and confident, yet full of a *young* energy that throws the older Doctor for a loop, and it presents children, young black girls in particular, with the chance to see *themselves* centered in the narrative, rather than as the companion who pines after a man who refuses to acknowledge her brilliance or personhood.

Put brilliantly by feminist scholar Helen Kang:

Sure, the show is rated and ultimately made for a children's audience, but does this mean that girls and young women are to always see themselves as wide-eyed groupies or the romantic interest of the leading man or the Time Lord?¹¹⁷

If children are meant to learn from *Doctor Who* (as they might learn cultural values from *any* similar program), the message which having teenage girls and young women idolize the Doctor sends is that romance is essential and their value stems from their relationship to men. Such a narrative is old and tired, and by showing first a woman and then a *black woman* as the Doctor, the series helps to normalize women in those professions while simultaneously proving that there *can* be "space for all,"¹¹⁸ so long as efforts are made to portray and humanize more than just cisgender, heterosexual white men.

FREE WILL VS. DETERMINISM

While race, gender, and societal background can influence a person, a philosophical question arises in *Doctor Who*: do people possess free will or are their thoughts and behaviors predetermined?

Of all the Doctor's enemies, none are more notorious than the Daleks, and a question arises after the nth episode involving their sudden return: can Daleks change, or are they

¹¹⁷ Kang, "Adventures in Ocean-Crossing...", 41.

¹¹⁸ "Space. For All."

merely murderous squids in tanks, destroying everything that crosses their path? For the Doctor, the Daleks are one of the worst species in the universe as they seek to destroy anything unlike themselves while perpetuating their own clone race, which they regard as universally pure.¹¹⁹ They played a central role in the Last Great Time War, a battle between the Daleks and the Time Lords over the fate of the entire universe. During the war, civilizations burned, peoples were conquered and forced to work for either side, and the level of destruction shook the universe, marring those who were fortunate enough to escape. To end the war, the Doctor did the impossible: he became a warrior and destroyed his own planet in order to save the universe, killing both the Time Lords and the majority of the Daleks in the process.¹²⁰ Following this, a traumatized Doctor ventures to Earth, seeking out some sense of normalcy after the chaos of war.

While on Earth in their Ninth incarnation, the Doctor takes Rose Tyler on as a companion. Unlike that between the Tenth Doctor and Rose, the dynamic between Rose and the Ninth Doctor is one of friends and equals who help each other cope with trauma and the turbulent nature of everyday life in an increasingly technological society. Hiding behind puns, a leather jacket, and a cool exterior, the Doctor does not reveal his trauma from the Time War until halfway through season one.

In “Dalek,” the Doctor and Rose venture into a museum of alien paraphernalia owned by Henry van Statten, the CEO of a technology company who claims to have a very rare, unique

¹¹⁹ Richards, *The Secret Lives of Monsters*, 40.

¹²⁰ *Doctor Who: The Encyclopedia*, 354-5. The Destruction of Gallifrey is another aspect of *Nu Who* canon with various iterations: in RTD’s run, Gallifrey was utterly destroyed by the Doctor in the throes of the Time War; in Moffat’s, the Doctor saved Gallifrey by sealing it away in a pocket dimension, but still believed they destroyed the planet due to a temporal paradox; and in Chibnall’s run, the revived Gallifrey was *again* destroyed, but this time *not* by the Doctor.

item in his collection, deemed a Metaltron: a metal casing which (unknown to the humans torturing it) houses a mutant Dalek creature. Upon encountering the Metaltron, anger and trauma consume the Doctor and he immediately tries to kill it because he views all Daleks as immutably evil. After convincing van Statten to grant him time alone with the creature (which now *talks*, something it had been withholding from its human captors), the Doctor informs the Dalek that they are both the last of their species and as such, that they are now alone in the universe.

Upon learning this, the Dalek demands orders from the Doctor, declaring: “I am a soldier! I was bred to receive orders!” In response, the Doctor orders the creature to commit suicide in a dark, gritty moment which emphasizes the trauma of war, only the Dalek refuses and ventures out of its holding cell in search of its fellows.¹²¹

But the Dalek is weakened from its stint in the War. It requires the touch of a Time Traveler to regenerate itself, and it acquires said touch from Rose, a human girl who sees the creature’s pain and wants only to *help* in whatever way possible. Daleks are programmed to be cruel, callous, and single-minded creatures, but with Rose’s touch, it experiences what might be the first for a Dalek: it feels *fear* and *despair* that speak to an existential crisis as it grapples with its new reality. As it ventures through the museum, it repeatedly faces armed guards and even Rose and Adam Mitchell (one of van Statten’s employees), both of whom it spares,¹²² showing a spark of mercy which the Doctor would later go on to instill in a young Davros.¹²³

At the end of the episode, the Dalek opens its casing and experiences the sensation of sunlight, reflecting a human desire for warmth and connection with others, yet it remains alone

¹²¹ *Doctor Who*, season 1, episode 6, “Dalek,” written by Robert Shearman, aired April 30, 2005, on BBC.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ Moffat, “The Witch’s Familiar.”

in the universe and begs for the order to self-destruct, to which the Doctor adamantly refuses. He is perfectly content to see it suffer as the last of its kind. But Rose, the human girl from London, shows the Dalek mercy by ordering it to exterminate itself, thereby sparing it a life of isolation and despair. After the Dalek is dead, Rose and the Doctor argue about the Dalek's nature, for while the Dalek *had* spared Rose and Adam, the Doctor refuses to believe that the creature was truly changing for the better. Rose, however, argues that it *was* changing.¹²⁴

Without the knowledge of the destruction which Daleks usually bring, Rose takes a humanistic approach towards the creature. After all, "People improve when they get external love and support. How can we hold it against them when they don't?"¹²⁵ Extending for the moment the notion of "people" to include "mutant space squids," it follows that a Dalek *could* change from its murderous nature to care about people and things other than itself, so long as someone like Rose Tyler or Clara Oswald was there, not only to restrain the Doctor, but to demonstrate compassion.¹²⁶

No discussions of free will and determinism as pertaining to *Doctor Who* would be complete without examining the Twelfth Doctor's attempt to rehabilitate his greatest enemy and former friend, the Master, for their turbulent relationship functioned as a driving force in Moffat's final season.

CASE STUDY IN "REHABILITATION"

Morality, gender identity, and millennia of animosity all come to a head in the season 10 two-part finale penned by former showrunner Steven Moffat: "World Enough and Time"/"The

¹²⁴ Shearman, "Dalek."

¹²⁵ *The Good Place*, season 4, episode 8, "The Funeral to End All Funerals," written by Michael Shur, aired November 14, 2019, on NBC.

¹²⁶ *Doctor Who*, season 8, episode 2, "Into the Dalek," written by Phil Ford and Steven Moffat, aired August 30, 2014, on BBC.

Doctor Falls.” Controversial in its outcome, Moffat’s era was one defined by puzzles and paradoxes, pushing the Doctor to make more and more impossible choices as the seasons wore on. Prior to the season ten finale, the Doctor is made to execute Missy for unrevealed crimes, but instead helps her fake her death and puts her in the Vault, a Time Lord prison in which she will not be able to cause any more harm.¹²⁷ As revealed at the end of the eighth season, both the Doctor and Missy want nothing more than to become friends again, like they were as children when they attended the Time Lord Academy. However, Missy loves to sow chaos and does not fit the Doctor’s definition of what makes a good person, and it is that fact which renders a reconciliation between them difficult.¹²⁸ Further, much of the tension between the Doctor and the Mistress arises from the inherent conflict of two souls encountering one another: “when two people, each of a particular self-consciousness, meet, each seeks to consume the other.”¹²⁹ Consumption implies destruction. To take a person in, to consume them in the sense that their time and selfhood begins to belong to another, is an act of intimacy, and their connection will inevitably produce conflict. As put forth by Baruch Spinoza: “Strife will never arise on account of what which is not loved.”¹³⁰ No one puts effort into destroying a relationship if they had not once cared deeply for the other person.

As children, the Doctor and the Master (known respectively at that age as Theta Sigma and Koschei Oakdown) wanted nothing more than to escape the strict, pompous aristocracy of Gallifrey and the Time Lords, and this desire led them to experience bullying at the hands of another child: Torvic. One day, he approached Theta and Koschei while they were sitting near

¹²⁷ *Doctor Who*, season 10, episode 6, “Extremis,” written by Steven Moffat, aired May 20, 2017, on BBC.

¹²⁸ Moffat, “Death in Heaven.”

¹²⁹ Paula Smithka, “Sympathy for the Master,” in *Doctor Who and Philosophy...*, 275.

¹³⁰ Baruch Spinoza quoted in Decker, *Who Is Who?...*, 98.

the River Lethe and shoved Koschei beneath the water, drowning him (though in a later recollection, the Doctor would claim that *he* had been the one to nearly drown). Thinking only of his friend, Theta bludgeoned Torvic to death with a rock while Koschei watched on in shock. Theta then pulled his friend from the water and arranged a funeral pyre, with which they disposed of the body so no one besides the two of them---excepting the personification of Death---would know what had transpired on that fateful day.

Reflecting on the incident while in his seventh incarnation, the Doctor describes the Master thusly:

...but *something* was growing inside of him: *evil*. Wherever he travelled, so he brought Death. He had no motives, no reasons... [...] There was only *one* certainty about the Master, and that was: that he would bring Death. He was, beyond all doubt, *evil*.

In referring to him as “beyond all doubt, evil” and placing the blame for Torvic’s death on his former friend, the Doctor argues that people (the Master in particular) are incapable of changing who they are; that a wicked child will grow up to be a wicked adult, and that a good, rule-abiding child will remain a decent citizen in their adulthood. The irony lies in the fact that the *Doctor* committed the murder. Were he honest, he would disprove his own theory of immutability, for it was he who made a deal with Death to sell off Koschei’s soul in order to save his own, after which Theta grew into the Doctor, someone who does their hardest to *help* others whenever possible.¹³¹ This audio drama seems to be aimed more so towards an older audience who would likely understand the nuances of a person’s nature, though children might also gleam that things are not always as black-and-white as one person being distinctly evil

¹³¹ Gary Russell, Jacqueline Rayner, et. al., *Master*, performed by Sylvester McCoy, Geoffrey Beevers, et. al. (London: Moat Studios, 2003), Audio Drama, 2 hr., 14 min.

while another is distinctly good. Rather, everyone is a mixture of the two and it is the conscious choices they make that defines who they are.

Flash forward to Missy in the vault, where the Doctor encourages her to reflect on her past, to feel pain and sadness and regret after lifetimes spent conquering civilizations, planets, and even *galaxies*. When she *does* express genuine emotion, the Doctor steps back, fearing that she may be lying to manipulate him.¹³² Further, Missy's agency is stripped away. The Doctor and Nardole must approve her requests for items (which range from harmless, such as bandages and books, to more dangerous ones, such as explosives and even a tiger), and she is not allowed to leave the Vault without strict supervision.¹³³ Such behavior does not merely reflect a desire for renewed friendship on the Doctor's part and instead reads as controlling and manipulative. Following the death of River Song (one of the Doctor's myriad spouses) and given that Missy's full title is 'the Mistress,' the act of keeping her locked in the Vault for 70 years renders her little more than the Doctor's woman-on-the-side, behaving only in ways that are suitable to him.

Reflecting on the Doctor's morality and his attempts at rehabilitating her, Missy says, "Your version of 'good' is *not* absolute. It's vain, sentimental, arrogant, and naive. So if you're waiting for me to become *that*, I'm going to be here a long time yet."¹³⁴ The Doctor often tries to force people to see matters from *their* perspective, even when they are fundamentally wrong (as shown early when Adelaide speaks out against the Tenth Doctor), and they expect their friends and companions to adhere to their morality in their everyday behaviors. However,

¹³² *Doctor Who*, season 10, episode 10, "The Eaters of Light," written by Rona Munro, aired June 17, 2017, on BBC.

¹³³ Jacqueline Rayner, "Girl Power!" in *The Missy Chronicles* (London: BBC Books, 2018).

¹³⁴ *Doctor Who*, season 10, episode 8, "The Lie of the Land," written by Toby Whitehouse, aired June 3, 2017, on BBC.

friends cannot be made to fit a mold. The Doctor is not always right, no matter how much they moralize about the universe and their existence within it.

As to the Doctor's motivations regarding seeing Missy rehabilitated, he remarks: "she's the only person I've met who's even *remotely* like me."¹³⁵ They come from the same home, the same school, the same oppressive society, and a part of him wants nothing more than to be friends again, no matter the work required to get there. After all, despite the apparent differences between the Doctor and the Mistress, they are far more alike than either would care to admit, and in many ways they function as mirrors of one another.¹³⁶

The events of the season 10 finale culminate in the Doctor and two versions of the Master making a *choice* as to who they are, where they stand, and whether or not their old friendship can ever be rekindled. Wanting to test if Missy can choose to be and do good, the Doctor sends her, along with Bill Potts and Nardole, to a colony ship which is hovering dangerously close to a black hole, ordering them to investigate and solve the issue. Due to a temporal paradox, the Mistress does not remember having been on that ship before and the appearance of her immediate past self comes as a devastating surprise, for the younger Master has helped in the genesis of Mondasian Cybermen.

"World Enough and Time" ends on a cliffhanger: will Missy stand by the Doctor's side? Or will she ally with her past self and revel in the resulting chaos?¹³⁷ The next episode begins with Missy and the Master dancing a waltz, having betrayed the Doctor and apparently having reverted to her old behavior. Unbeknownst to either Master, the Doctor modified the

¹³⁵ *Doctor Who*, season 10, episode 11, "World Enough and Time" written by Steven Moffat, aired June 24, 2017, on BBC.

¹³⁶ Hegel quoted in Decker, *Who Is Who?...*, 79.

¹³⁷ Moffat, "World Enough and Time."

Cybermen's conversion parameters to include species with two hearts, forcing the three of them to flee. The Doctor orders the Master to "knock [themselves] out," and Missy obliges by hitting John Simm's incarnation of the Master with her umbrella before telling the Doctor, "I was secretly on your side all along!" However, she appears to abandon the Doctor, allowing him to get shot by Cybermen while she and her former self make their escape.¹³⁸

Towards the end of "The Doctor Falls," while the Doctor is dying, he chooses to stand with the ship's colonists and help them fight. He also chooses to *not* regenerate, claiming, "where I stand is where I fall." He then asks both versions of the Master to stand with him but both deny him. The younger Master not only believes that the Doctor's attempts to help others are ridiculous and unworthy of his time, he also enjoys watching what he believes to be the Doctor's futile efforts. Missy, meanwhile, appears visibly conflicted, even as the Doctor appeals to her:

The Doctor: Missy. You've changed. I *know* you have, and I know what you're capable of. Stand with me -- it's all I've never wanted.

Missy: Me too.

The Doctor extends his hand to Missy, as if to take hers.

She reaches out to take the Doctor's hand -- and then changes the movement to a little wave.

Missy: But no. Sorry. Just no.

*And she turns and strides off into the night.*¹³⁹

In abandoning the Doctor, Missy walks off to her certain death. While travelling through one of the ship's lower levels with the Master as well as a young girl, Missy comes to the following decision: "Get rid of... betray...kill. [...] Yes, I suppose that's the only way."¹⁴⁰ The Master

¹³⁸ Moffat, "The Doctor Falls."

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ Richard Dinnick, "Alit in Underland," in *The Missy Chronicles*, 218.

remains blissfully unaware of her intentions until the end of the episode, when she stabs her umbrella into the dirt and declares that it's time for them to stand with the Doctor. What follows is a form of murder-suicide: Missy draws her younger self into a hug and stabs him in the back and as she is walking away, her younger self shoots her in the back.¹⁴¹

By writing such a scene, Moffat argues that no matter how hard a person might work to improve themselves, life is not a fairytale and one cannot always reap the rewards of their self-improvement as the past can catch up and destroy them, like it did with Missy and the Master. Missy's death was tragic. While Nietzsche would deem it a fitting end, arguing that people only choose to do good when they know a reward awaits them in the afterlife, and though Moffat presents a bleak view of self-improvement, people *are* capable of improving for the better, regardless of what moral desserts they may or may not anticipate.¹⁴² After all, as Kevin Decker argues, "selfhood is dynamic [and] individuals [...] are sources of novelty and agents of transformation for their world."¹⁴³ How one thinks and behaves as a child is different than how they act as a teen and as an adult, and even the most notorious of villains can give up their wretched ways with the proper care and support.

Reconciliation between the Doctor and the Master has further been dampened by the reveal of the Doctor as the Timeless Child. For Sacha Dhawan's incarnation of the Master (who succeeds Missy in the Master's timeline), he and the Doctor are no longer equals. In fact, he regards her as being more important than himself and resents that her DNA was exploited to create the Time Lords. Given that *he* then destroyed Gallifrey, coupled with the Doctor

¹⁴¹ Moffat, "The Doctor Falls."

¹⁴² Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*, trans. Thomas Wayne (New York: Algora Publishing, 2003), 70.

¹⁴³ Decker, *Who Is Who?...*, 154.

abandoning a freshly regenerated Master on the colony ship and their overall history, it is doubtful that they will soon rekindle anything remotely resembling a friendship.¹⁴⁴

CONCLUSION

People change over time and the driving force behind society is a desire for human connection. With its nature as a communal story, *Doctor Who* reflects not only the fears and worries which haunt humanity, but our hopes for a bright future which lays in *our* hands.

Recent seasons of *Doctor Who* reflect massive strides in representing more than just white men: River Song, Clara Oswald, and Missy are all fully fledged characters who challenge the audience's assumptions of what women can be and do. Furthermore, the Thirteenth Doctor and the Doctor as portrayed by Jo Martin reflect growing acceptance of women and people of color in traditionally male dominated fields.

There *is* space for all, so long as people are willing to work through and overcome their unconscious biases in order to *create* a space that is accepting, tolerant, and welcoming for everyone. Such a space cannot form overnight, however. It requires time and sustained, continuous effort, the sort which the Doctor exerts as they wander throughout Time and Space, helping out where- and whenever they can.

¹⁴⁴ Chibnall, "The Timeless Children."

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