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Contents

Notes from the Editor 1

Surveillance, Knowledge, and Inequality: Understanding Power Through Foucault and Beyond 3
Simon Purdy

Academic Honesty and the New Technological Frontier 14
Jennifer Deranek and Ceceilia Parnther

Daniel J. Patten

Hamlet and Amleth, Princes of Denmark: Shakespeare and Saxo Grammaticus as Historians and Kingly Actions in the Hamlet/Amleth Narrative 35
Megan Arnott

Religious Discourse and Interdisciplinary in Sports Studies 45
Zachary T. Smith

God’s Getting Married: The Wedding at Cana as Dramatization of Covenantal Fulfillment 56
Rachael M. McGill

Breastfeeding and Subsistence Work: Connecting Theory and Experience 69
Olivia M. McLaughlin

Advocating for Mother Earth in the Undergraduate Classroom: Uniting Twenty-First Century Technologies, Local Resources, Art, and Activism to Explore Our Place in Nature 77
Christina Triezenberg and Ilse Schweitzer VanDonkelaar

Art Work

Path to PhD 88
Muthanna Yaqoob

The Hilltop Review, Fall 2015
The Wood at the End of the Tunnel
Charles Lein

Eiffel Tower, Day of Charlie Hebdo Shooting
Roland Black

Flow
Christina G. Collins

Little “Sister”
Raina Khatri

Creative Writing

Funeral Season
Carolyn Nims

I, Jesus
Jill McEldowney

Graduate Humanities Conference Winners

2015 Winner: Proof of Heaven?: Controversy Over Near-Death Experiences in American Christianity
Joel Sanford

2015 Runner-Up: Controversy in Skeletal Biology: the Use of Pathological and Osteological Markers for Activity Patterns
Anna Alioto
Notes from the Editor

I and the rest of the Editorial Board are proud to present the fall 2015 issue of The Hilltop Review, containing scholarly articles, creative work, and art work by the graduate students of Western Michigan University, and, once again, the winners of the Graduate Humanities Conference. I am also excited to announce that this is the 10th anniversary of The Hilltop Review—the first issue was published in fall 2005! That first issue had five articles. Ten years later, we have published countless more articles, opened the Review up to creative work and to art work, established prizes for the best articles, creative writing, and art work, and formed a partnership with the Graduate Humanities Conference. Looking forward, we are working on forming more partnerships with other research and creative initiatives at Western Michigan University, including the recently launched Three Minute Thesis Competition, and looking into other ways the Review can grow, including utilizing the digital capabilities of ScholarWorks. We are very excited to continue to develop The Hilltop Review as a publication opportunity for graduate students.

An interesting phenomenon that I have observed in my time as editor of The Hilltop Review is the ebb and flow of submissions that we receive from certain fields. In this issue, for example, the social sciences are particularly well represented; we have several papers from the Departments of Sociology and Comparative Religion. In other semesters we have had strong showings from students in engineering and mathematics, and in others, a large humanities presence. Next semester, in the last issue that I will work on as Director and Editor of The Hilltop Review, I hope to present a well-rounded issue with submissions from a variety of fields represented in graduate study at Western Michigan University with the theme of “Interdisciplinarities.”

Our fall issues are open to submissions on any subject or theme; our spring issues are organized around conceptual or thematic foci that represent the cutting-edge of graduate studies, but also need to be broad enough to allow students in any field of graduate study to submit work. I think that “Interdisciplinarities” fits the bill nicely: interdisciplinary work is increasingly recognized as a vital way to make discoveries and complete research that would not be possible in a single, isolated field and is becoming a more popular way to work in fields from the humanities to medical sciences. As a medievalist, I am convinced of the importance of looking at trends and issues not only from my own “specialty” of literature, but also through the lenses of history, linguistics, and cultural studies—and some of the most fascinating work to come out of medieval studies in the last few years is in the field of medical humanities! I’m sure many of you have heard of the study done at The University of Nottingham where Anglo-Saxonists worked together with microbiologists to find that a 10th-century Anglo-Saxon remedy for eye infections is effective in treating Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA). Perhaps similarly surprising and boundary-breaking research is happening among graduate students of various fields here at Western Michigan University! It is my hope that we can publish some of that research in our spring 2016 issue. The deadline for submissions is January 31, 2016. Information on how to submit can be found at wmich.edu/gsa/hilltopreview.

Many congratulations to authors and artists in this issue are in order. First, to the winners of The Hilltop Review Awards: Simon Purdy will receive $500 for First Place Paper for “Surveillance, Knowledge, and Inequality: Understanding Power Through Foucault and Beyond”; Jennifer Deranek and Ceceila Parnther will split the $300 prize for Second Place Paper for “Academic Honesty and the New Technological Frontier”; and Daniel J. Patten will receive $150 for Third Place Paper for “An Unfinished Journey: The Evolution of Crime Measurement in the United States.” Carolyn Nims will receive $250 for Best Creative Writing for “Funeral Season” and Muthanna Yaqoob will receive $250 for Best Artwork for “Path to PhD.” His work also appears on the cover of this issue. (All reviews and judging are double-blind; I do not take part in the judging process.)
We must also congratulate the winners of the Graduate Humanities Conference, co-sponsored by the Center for the Humanities and the Graduate Student Association! The mission of the Center for the Humanities is to “recognize and support the humanities at Western Michigan University,” and one way in which they do that is by hosting an annual conference to showcase the work of humanities graduate students on campus; the work of the winner and the runner-up of each conference is then published in *The Hilltop Review*. The winner of this year’s conference was Joel Sanford, with “Proof of Heaven?: Controversy Over Near-Death Experiences in American Christianity”; the runner-up was Anna Alioto, with “Controversy in Skeletal Biology: the Use of Pathological and Osteological Markers for Activity Patterns.” Congratulations to these students!

A huge thank-you to all the graduate students who submitted their work to *The Hilltop Review*, and to the graduate students and faculty members who served as peer and faculty reviewers for each piece submitted. The double-blind reviewing process is a vital step in the publication process, and I greatly appreciate the effort and time of each of our reviewers. If you are interested in reviewing for *The Hilltop*, please contact me! The review process usually takes only 1-3 hours and it’s a great line on your CV. And, of course, I would like to thank my wonderful Editorial Board: Joshua R. Berkenpas, Roland Black, Cameron J. Manche, Jill McEldowney, Hannah Pankratz, and Carolyn M. Ray.

As I mentioned earlier, my tenure as Director and Editor of *The Hilltop Review* will be coming to an end with the spring 2016 issue. We are therefore looking for a new Director and Editor! The call is open for applications, information about which can be found at wmich.edu/gsa. The position requires a two-year commitment (from May 2016 to April 2018) and involves 10 hours of work per week; it includes a stipend of $4,000 per year. Applications are due by January 29, 2016, and the new editor will work with me on completing the spring 2016 issue so I can show him or her the ropes. If any of you are curious about the job or have questions, please feel free to email me at gsa_hilltop@wmich.edu.

Please enjoy this issue of *The Hilltop Review*! I look forward to continuing to work with you all as graduate students and as authors for the spring 2016 issue.

Rebecca Straple
Director and Editor, *The Hilltop Review*
gsa_hilltop@wmich.edu
Surveillance, Knowledge and Inequality: Understanding Power Through Foucault and Beyond

First Place Paper, Fall 2015

By Simon Purdy
School of Sociology
simon.j.purdy@wmich.edu

Introduction

Power is a concept that has been at the heart of many academic and public debates for as long as observers have been focusing their attention on the social world. Over the years, many different theories of power have been offered up which look at power from different standpoints, frameworks, and theoretical bases, each arriving at a slightly different conception of what we should mean when using “power” as a concept in the social sciences. The modern debates regarding power, and how to conceptualize it, are often traced back to the works of philosophers like Aristotle, who looked at locations of power in political societies and distinguished between rational (abilities to be exercised at will) and natural (dispositions of objects or individuals) types of power (Morriss, 2002, p. 24; Dahl, 2002, p. 9), Hobbes, who looked at what power is and how it is ordered, or Machiavelli, who looked instead at what power does and the various strategies which it entails (Clegg, 1989, p. 5). Each one of these approaches to defining and explaining power brings something new to the table, and perhaps not surprisingly, there tends to be a clash between these various approaches.

For instance, there is a good deal of work that takes power as something which is exercised over others, with definitions such as “A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do” (Dahl, 1957, pp. 201-202), or “A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B’s interests” (Lukes, 2005, p. 37). This concept of “power over” others is certainly not a wrong way of looking at power, as this is a very natural tendency to put one over another in the context of a social relation (Morriss, 2002, p. 32). However, this single way of considering power leaves out a whole host of things and acts which exemplify a more general sense of “power to” do something, such as “the power to make our views known to our elected representatives” (Morriss, 2002, p. 33). This distinction also makes clear the potential problem of only considering power when it is being exercised, such as making decisions, in what Peter Morriss calls the “exercise fallacy,” because even when not being utilized we might consider an individual, group, etc. to still have power (2002, p. 15). Likewise, we might look at power both in the decision making process, and the lack of decision making, perhaps in a political setting, in which case not acting is an example of power (Lukes, 2005, p. 22). While these two approaches to defining power are quite different, they both help to add to our understanding of the overall concept.

Another example of a contention that adds to our understanding of power, is the division between structure and agency. Starting in the late 1960s and continuing on to today, there has been a contention within the Marxist tradition of power studies and theory based on the works of Ralph Miliband and Nicos Poulantzas. Miliband took the position in The State In Capitalist Society, that state structures serve the interests of the capitalist classes because they were composed of capitalist class members who acted towards this end (1969; Lukes, 2005). This approach considers the agency of human actors as the important aspect when it comes to the basis of power. On the other hand, Poulantzas offers a structural critique to this agency approach approach. Instead of focusing on individuals as the basis of power, Poulantzas holds
that “the state is defined as the instance that maintains the cohesion of a social formation and which reproduces the conditions of production of a social system by maintaining class domination” (1969, p. 77). In other words, the state structures themselves have the power, and operate in a similar fashion to benefit the capitalist class regardless of who fills the individual positions within the system. We can find this line of reasoning at play in the work of Gramsci (1971), who emphasizes the importance of overthrowing not only the state and its members, but also the ideological basis of the state (that which can reproduce the same class structures and patterns of power), when it comes to successful revolutions and social movements. So which concept of power is the best? Should we only think of power in terms of individuals and their actions, or should we look to the structures of our society for a better understanding of power and related inequalities? Again, we see that a one sided approach to power is probably not the best way to go, and ultimately it may be that we need to look at both structure and agency, just as we should consider both a “power over” and a “power to,” in order to gain a full understanding of power as it exists and plays out in our social world.

These contentions within the examination of power are not brought up to confuse or to belittle the understanding of this important concept. Instead, we look at these disagreements in order to show that there are a multitude of different ways to approach the issue. According to Robert Dahl, in a fictionalized conversation between two social researchers, power is very much relative in that it can be looked at and studied in many different ways, and looks different across time and cultures. And yet, it is important to find common threads between the various approaches and instances, in order to show that power as a social concept is consistent enough to compare and incorporate into studies of social life (Dahl, 1957, p. 214). In this current paper, the examination of power will utilize one such thread of similarity between various approaches, knowledge, and will be specifically examined by looking at a force which produces knowledge in relation to power and inequality: surveillance.

Power, Knowledge and Surveillance

In his examination and definition of power, Michel Foucault writes that “there can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operates through and on the basis of this association” (1986, p. 229). What Foucault is getting at here, is the importance of knowledge, and the “imposition of particular knowledge as truth” (Haugaard, 2002, p. 185; Foucault, 2002) when it comes to the existence and exercise of power in nearly every social relation. In other words, power is knowledge, and in order to discover who in a particular situation has power, we must first look to who is creating and disseminating the “truth” of the situation, looking at how this “truth” is used to pacify others (Haugaard, 2002, p. 185; Foucault, 2002). This concept of pacification, and discipline, will be expanded upon later in this paper, but for now, it is key to understand that in all types of power relations, knowledge plays an important role. For instance, if we go back to a basic concept of “power over” (A getting B to do something, etc.), then we see that in order for one actor to have power over another, there must be some knowledge of the individual over whom power is had, or else the power relationship may not exist. If for example, actor A does not have knowledge about the behaviors or dispositions of actor B (perhaps B has a hidden cache of political influence/relationships), it might end up that B will be unaffected by the attempt at power from A. Likewise, if we look at power as a structural phenomenon, it would be important for a social structure like the state (or the individuals with agency within them if you take an agency approach) to have knowledge of those about whom it is making decisions, and to be able to create certain knowledge which can then become a social “truth” (Foucault, 2002). Such things as economic or civil unrest, if they are unknown to decision makers, might end up derailing the decisions which are made, and as such it would benefit those with power to be able to shape the discourse on civil unrest among the population (Foucault, 2002). This
Simon Purdy

seems to be what Foucault is getting at with his discussion of the “art of government,” or
governmentality, when he talks about analyses and tactics which are made based on a certain
body of knowledge, which is often political and economic in nature (1991, pp. 92-102). If we
take knowledge as a fundamental aspect of power, it becomes important then to look more
closely at the mechanisms through which knowledge can be produced, and through which
power itself can come to bear. In this instance, taking yet another page from Foucault, the
mechanism of importance which we will look at is surveillance.

Defining surveillance is a bit more of a straightforward task than defining power, but it
still has its fair share of diversity in this regard. In a more general definition, surveillance
includes any number of activities in the “collection and storage of information (presumed to
be useful) about people or objects” (Dandeker, 1994, p. 37). This could include any number of
things, from basic sensory observations (sight, smell, touch, etc.), to more complex modes of
technological information collection such as drones, thermal imaging or data mining utilizing
computer programs. Another aspect to a definition of surveillance, which is hinted at by our
general concept above, is that there is a degree of intention related to the act of surveillance.
For instance, when talking about surveillance we are often brought into discussions of
“supervision,” issuing instructions, monitoring for specific behaviors/actions, and regulating
or governing behavior (Dandeker, 1994, p. 37; Gilliom and Monahan, 2013); surveillance is
by definition used of some purpose. These conceptions of surveillance appear to bring the
practice into a close relationship with the concept of power. For instance, in Jeremy
Bentham’s discussion of the panopticon, he defines surveillance as “a new mode of obtaining
power of mind over mind” (Mattelart, 2010, p. 7), which is a conception picked up and used
by others, including Foucault in his use of the panopticon to illustrate discipline. Surveillance
itself then constitutes and supports power, and those with power, in a few different ways,
mainly in the constitution of both productive and repressive power.

The difference between productive and repressive power is similar to the difference
between “power over” and “power to.” Repressive power is “power which prevents specific
behaviors” (Hornqvist, 2011, p. 13), and is exemplified in such things as the relationship
between police officers and criminals, or between parents and punishing children to prevent
them from say taking cookies from the cookie jar. This is very much akin to “power over,” in
that the emphasis is on keeping someone from doing what they might otherwise want to do,
and limiting their ability to act in the first place (Morriss, 2002; Hornqvist, 2011). On the
other hand, we have productive power, which emphasizes the production of specific behaviors
(Hornqvist, 2011, p. 13). This type of power motivates people to behave in a certain fashion,
giving people the “competence to act” in this fashion, without necessarily having an iron
fisted approach or utilizing a sheer dominating force (Hornqvist, 2011, p. 13). In this way,
productive power is more similar to “power to,” in that it enables people to carry out a
behavior, albeit one which they might not themselves have thought of or even desired to carry
out. There is therefore, a similarity of productive power to the ideological concepts of
Poulantzas and Gramsci as discussed above. Productive power also gets away from the “zero
sum” concept, in that it does not require one individual to lose power when another gains it,
but rather that both parties can benefit from the interaction (Clegg and Haugaard, 2009, p. 31).
And so, for Foucault, the productive and repressive forms of power are the most important,
and are both constituted by and intertwined with surveillance.

The Panopticon and Beyond

In his book *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1977) focuses much of his discussion on the
ways in which power and surveillance are related, and uses the concept of the panopticon in
order to do this. Foucault uses the panopticon as an “ideal type” of a structure of power
relations between people. The panopticon, initially conceived of by Bentham, was a model for
a prison involving a central tower (within which are the overseers) and a series of rooms/cells arranged in a circle around it (Foucault, 1977). A prisoner is isolated in each of these rooms, which can all be observed from the central tower, but the individual prisoner never knows when he is being observed, so as to “arrange things so that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action [thus] the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary” (Foucault, 1977, p. 201). Basically, what Foucault pulls out of this system of surveillance, is that the goal is to get the prisoners to turn their gaze inwards and discipline themselves and produce a modified behavior, thus making it unnecessary to actually practice repressive forms of power. While it might seem on its face that this form of surveillance, which involves a prison, is particularly repressive, Foucault demonstrates that the panoptic surveillance has much more of an emphasis on productive power through this modification of behavior. This example shows us that surveillance, and the development of knowledge/truth, can have both repressive and productive power intertwined with it.

Power, both repressive and productive, is also constituted by, and related to, other forms of surveillance, not just this panoptic conception. And this is a good thing, as it allows us to step beyond this seemingly fixed conception of a prison, and into the realm of more flexible, mobile and decentralized forms of surveillance and power. With the panoptic model, we see surveillance built into a rigid central system (Foucault, 1977); however, surveillance, especially in the modern day is much less fixed, even if it is built into social systems of power and control. For instance, when we consider something like the military, and its use of surveillance in the form of aerial drones, it appears that structure matters more than the actual agency practiced by those who operate these surveillance technologies. The military, which according to Weber is a form of bureaucracy, has the activities required for its operation, including surveillance, “distributed in a fixed way as official duties” (Weber, 1958, p. 196). This does not mean however that surveillance via drones, which can be deployed nearly anywhere on earth, is fixed in its operation (Mattelart, 2010; Gilliom and Monahan, 2013). However, when it comes to the way that power is constituted in this example, the structure is more important. For example, the drone operator may actually carry out the surveillance, but they themselves do not own the military drone, nor do they make the decision about who/what to observe or whether or not to use force (repressive power in the form of missiles, etc.), these decisions are made by those in positions above them in the bureaucratic structure. And so, regardless of who is in the position of carrying out the surveillance, or even making the decisions, the military system will operate in a similar fashion. And so, both in fixed and flexible forms, surveillance has the potential to be repressive when involved in social structures, for instance missile attacks from a drone, or tickets issued by a traffic camera, are reminiscent of the heavy handed approaches to power and surveillance utilized by feudal regimes of the past (Foucault, 1977). But this is not to say that surveillance cannot also constitute productive power outside of the panopticon.

The control of surveillance mechanisms in social systems is also a major source of productive power in the modern day, and not just in the realm of discipline and behavior modification. For example, surveillance of people, goods, machines and even weather, is of central importance in modern air travel. Air traffic controllers utilize GPS and radar technology to keep track of the multitude of airplanes in our skies at any given moment, and use this information gathered from surveillance in order to produce an orderly and safe travel experience (Urry, 2007; Adey, 2010). Likewise, surveillance in the form of body scans, security officers, cameras and the like are used in order to produce orderly behavior of those individuals who are moving through the air travel system (Urry, 2010; Mattelart, 2010). Another area in which productive power is related to surveillance is in the classroom. Foucault did extend the concept of the panopticon into the educational sector, with descriptions of classrooms in which students are isolated and only the teacher can see
everyone, thus producing the educational experience (1977). However, Magnus Hornqvist contends, in his book Risk, Power and the State, that in some educational settings, such as those which exist in the corrections system, the focus of observation and productive power is not on the student, but on the teacher, with cameras aimed at him/her in order to ensure the integrity of the educational program (2011, p. 90). In effect, placing teachers under the lens has the effect of producing behaviors more in line with institutional policies and procedures.

Moving beyond these structurally based forms of surveillance, we also find surveillance in interpersonal uses not couched in bureaucratic structures. Such things as social networking sites, cellular phones, webcams, or Google Earth, allow anyone who has access to observe a wide variety of people places and things (Gilliom and Monahan, 2013). For instance, if you want to know what your friends are doing, you might search through their social media activities in order to gain knowledge about their behaviors. Bringing it back to Foucault, we might also find that those who are “posting” their behaviors on these platforms are under the impression that anyone can see them, and therefore may produce certain behaviors that are more in line with some cultural ideology, based on peer expectations, etc. instead of some central authority figure or institution.

Power and the Spread of Surveillance

As we have seen thus far, surveillance practices and arrangements can constitute both repressive (power over) and productive (power to) forms of power, in both structural bases and through individual human agency. However, like many concepts which are the focus of sociological inquiry, power is subject to change over time and in conjunction with other social changes. In Discipline and Punish, Foucault details the change from older repressive practices, with graphic descriptions of torture, hangings and other public displays of punishment (1977). While surveillance was in play with these forms and exhibitions of repressive power, it was very much dependent upon the ability of those in positions of power to directly observe, or have observed for them, the behaviors of people (Foucault, 1977). This obviously has its limits, in that to hide one’s behaviors from this gaze would seem to be rather easy. As such, Foucault holds that the public spectacle of punishment, torture, etc. was necessary to get the point across to a population, and thus influence/prevent future sanctioned behaviors (1977). Over time, Foucault shows that surveillance became more refined, with things like the census of populations, and citizen registrations, allowing for more effective forms of surveillance and governing practices, which he demonstrates with a discussion of citizen surveillance and control during plague outbreaks (1977).

Through these changes in surveillance, we can also see a change in the forms of power which are practiced. The examination of the prison, and the panopticon in particular, suggests that power shifted away from repression and towards productive ends, with the emphasis on discipline and influencing people to modify their own behavior (Foucault, 1977). However, Foucault’s examination of the panopticon does, in the modern day, appear to be a bit dated, perhaps due to the fact that it was written in the 1970s, and examined practices which took place many years before that. And so we must ask ourselves how the balance between repressive and productive power has been affected by the huge growth and intensification of surveillance in recent history.

Surveillance technologies, use of these technologies, and the implementation of surveillance practices into institutions and individual lives, have grown so much in the past several decades, that some have started to use the term “surveillance society” to describe our modern era. In the surveillance society, “virtually all significant social, institutional, or business activities...now involve systematic monitoring, gathering, and analysis of information in order to make decisions, minimize risk, sort populations, and exercise power” (Gilliom and Monahan, 2013, p. 2). In other words, modern society is characterized by the
collection of information from nearly every aspect of life, and the use of this information to some end. For instance, every time you swipe your credit card (or punch in the numbers online) to make a purchase, information is logged regarding the amount and type of transaction which is made (Gilliom and Monahan, 2013). Likewise, our interactions in the digital world, the searches that we carry out on Google, the pictures that we post, the comments that we leave, and most everything else, is logged by those who host the services (Gilliom and Monahan, 2013).

The use of this information which is collected ranges from predicting future sales or searches, which we might believe would make the consumer experience better (and thus influence us to spend more...), to data mining by governments, universities, or other businesses who might use this information to gain insight into the population, such as who is most likely a terrorist, or to whom an advertisement for baby products should be sent (Gilliom and Monahan, 2013). But it is not just in the digital realm that surveillance has been intensified. In the security sector, such as police, border patrol or military agencies, there has been a pronounced expansion of surveillance efforts and technologies. For instance, as of 2006 in the United Kingdom there were 4.2 million Closed Circuit TV (CCTV) cameras, or one for every 14 citizens, which are used for crime prevention and national security purposes (Gilliom and Monahan, 2013). Likewise, border patrol and local law enforcement agencies are increasingly adopting the use of military style aerial drones (some equipped with thermal imaging cameras) for observation of movements across national borders and pursuit of criminals in cities around the U.S. (Mesenbrink, 2001; Stone, 2014). When these forms of surveillance are taken along with the increased possibilities for interpersonal surveillance, with social media and other digital technologies as discussed above, it does indeed seem that surveillance is everywhere in our lives. If, along with a shift to what we might consider today to be rather rudimentary modes of surveillance there was a large transformation from repressive to productive forms of power, it would seem that this modern day expansion and refinement of surveillance might also have some impact on this balance of power.

The historical shift seems to indicate that with more surveillance we can expect to see power as increasingly productive in nature (Hornqvist, 2011, p. 8). However, is this really the case? Looking at the ways in which modern surveillance is used, we see what appears, at least on its face, to be rather repressive forms of power alongside. For instance, when looking at the ways in which border patrol agencies, and other agencies dealing with border mobilities, use surveillance to target, document and otherwise regulate the flow of people across borders (drones, patrols, passports, penalties, deportations, etc.), it would seem that these efforts are not so much concerned with producing legal forms of crossing so much as they are concerned with preventing illegal immigration (Torpey, 2000, pp. 154-155). This may be due to implementing surveillance in response to a risk, or perceived risk, in order to manage this risk and thus avoid some negative effects (Hornqvist, 2011, p. 19). Similarly, the use of surveillance by law enforcement seems to be used to collect information that will help to catch criminals and stop their behaviors, instead of a self-discipline approach to productive power. This reactionary form of surveillance implementation would seem to indicate that the associated forms of power are more repressive in nature, seeking obedience to rules and organized around risk, according to Hornqvist (2011, pp. 153-157).

This is not to say that surveillance does not constitute productive power in the modern surveillance society. For example, the data mining which is engaged in by businesses can be utilized in order to advertise and produce certain consumption behaviors, and as discussed above, surveillance in transportation and educational systems can be aimed towards producing orderly and effective behaviors among participants. In fact, it might be argued that many of these surveillance practices have aspects of both productive and repressive power, as Foucault did, though he focused on (and perhaps over emphasized) the productive aspects of surveillance and power (Hornqvist, 2011). Given the forms of surveillance we have seen thus
far, it would seem that both productive and repressive power are indeed constituted in their use. However, at least in its popular framing, surveillance does seem to be viewed as a rather negative and repressive practice, as can be seen in the public reaction to leaked information about government intelligence and surveillance programs directed at populations around the world. And so, whether or not there has actually been a shift towards more productive forms of power which are constituted by surveillance, it appears that repressive forms of power have potentially made a comeback along with the expanse and intensification of the surveillance society.

Surveillance, Power and Resistance

Given that surveillance is deeply intertwined with power, and that it is potentially more repressive, and is viewed as such either way, in the modern day, it might not be that surprising that not everyone in a surveillance society is content with these power relations and surveillance practices. And in the face of the massive scale of the surveillance society, it might seem a daunting task to oppose these regimes of surveillance and power in any way. However, along with constituting different forms of power, surveillance also offers possibilities for challenging and resisting existing power. Indeed, we must avoid looking at power relations and coming to a conclusion that a state of powerlessness results from repressive power, and instead we must look for ways in which those who power is used “over,” or who are the focus of productive forces, might themselves have power with which to resist this domination, and that resistance is in and of itself a form of power (Lukes, 2005, pp. 68-69).

Despite the extent of surveillance mechanisms, there are many ways in which people are able to resist having their behaviors and other personal information collected and analyzed. For instance, when individuals going to a drug test swap out clean urine for their own, when shoppers with rewards cards get together and swap/duplicate them in order to confuse predictive data mining, or when fake ID cards or passports are used to gain access to various locales, these are all acts of resistance against surveillance systems themselves (Gilliom and Monahan, 2013). An interesting example of this type of surveillance resistance is found in the city of Chicago, which in recent years has been expanding its use of CCTV cameras and facial recognition software in order to detect criminals and curb high levels of violence (Katz, 2014). However, some residents were not comfortable with this form of surveillance, especially the facial recognition systems, and decided to push back. Leo Selvaggio, a college student in Chicago, has developed a mask of his face, which can be downloaded, printed, and worn by anyone (a simple paper cut out), as well as a more sophisticated rubber mask for purchase, which can allow an entire crowd of people to effectively change their identities while out in public (Katz, 2014). Not only are the identities of individuals changed in their detection by the facial recognition systems, but ultimately it is Selvaggio’s face that is being detected and registered, which if it were to be widespread could ultimately mitigate the effectiveness of this surveillance system (Katz, 2014). Similarly, there are companies marketing merchandise such as RFID blocking wallets, or the “anti-drone hoodie,” which masks an individual’s heat signature from thermal imaging (Kooser, 2013). And so, it does appear that there are manifold ways in which surveillance, and its associated power can be resisted. However, surveillance itself can be used to “turn the tables” on these power and surveillance relations.

During the recent protests in Ferguson Missouri, and in response to the events which sparked them (and other protests around the country), there have been several notable uses of surveillance practices to challenge existing power structures and practices. One of the most notable developments, has been the expansion of the police “body camera,” which shifts the focus of surveillance from the criminal suspect to the police officer, and thus may help to
prevent excessive use of force and produce behaviors which are more in line with the “protect and serve” motto of the police force (White, 2014). Another way that surveillance has been used in an attempt to produce certain behaviors in the power relations between police officers and citizens, is the live streaming of protests over the Internet. During the Ferguson protests, several groups set up live streaming channels which could be accessed by anyone around the world with an Internet connection, in an attempt to bring transparency to the actions of law enforcement personnel in their confrontations with protestors (Sydell, 2014). During the high point of the protests, nearly 2 million people around the world were watching as events unfolded every night (Sydell, 2014). In these cases, the use of surveillance technologies by those who are normally the targets of such practices turns the focus of larger numbers of people onto those who normally do the observing, and thus challenges and potentially threatens the existing power relations.

This might also pose a potential problem for these acts of resistance, in that those acts which challenge existing power relations might be opposed, and acted against, by those who hold the power. For example, if a population is disciplined into an ideology which conforms to the benefit of those with power, it might be that there is not much motivation to actually oppose what are seen as negative practices which come from those with power (like police use of force). If we draw from the work of Mills (1956), we might look to the concept of the mass society, and the possibility that the population at large might be perfectly content (even in the face of these inequalities of power and surveillance practices) to partake in, and feel good about, banal forms of surveillance, like finding out what a friend ate for lunch via a picture posted to Facebook. And so, while these practices of resistance seem to be promising and potentially effective, it is possible that there will be challenges along the lines of repressive and productive forms of power that face those who partake in them.

Understanding Inequality

This relationship between power, knowledge and surveillance, inspired by Foucault, is not just an interesting theoretical device in the examination of power, it can also be used in order to shed light on other issues of sociological importance. One such issue, which flows out of this discussion of power, is inequality. And for our purposes here, we will attempt to shed new light on a dimension of inequality: welfare and poverty in the United States. Welfare, and other forms of public assistance, are of great interest to sociological and political understandings of modern society. As of 2014, some 45 million Americans (14.5% of the population) are living below the poverty line (Gongloff, 2014), and with the number of those near the poverty line ballooning the number of people who may be in need of assistance, it is no surprise that there is an increasing focus on the American welfare system. Of sociological importance, Piven and Cloward (1993) suggest that welfare, which covers a variety of programs that give aid to those in need (from direct cash or food aid to things like medical coverage and works programs), has historically been a source of economic and behavioral regulation. In times of economic trouble, welfare programs are increased so as to quell the potential of unrest among the disenfranchised in society, and are then scaled back when economic conditions are more favorable in order to maintain the labor market (Piven and Cloward, 1993). In this process, the welfare system is very much a form of behavior modification, in that it threatens those who may be temporarily receiving benefits by treating them, and others in the same situation, poorly, so that they are more likely to rejoin society in a timely fashion (Piven and Cloward, 1993). While this appears to be a decent understanding of this important societal institution, this conception of welfare in the U.S. can be further enlightened by an application of the relationship between power, knowledge and surveillance in several ways.
First, we must look at the role that surveillance plays in the welfare system. Many welfare programs and “benefits” are administered by way of means-testing. Basically, what this entails is the meeting of certain criteria before the benefits are distributed to individuals (Piven and Cloward, 1993). This can involve myriad criteria, such as income levels (providing assistance to those who make $10,125 per year, but not those who make just a few dollars more, etc.), actively seeking employment, and mandatory drug tests. These means-tests not only serve as qualifications and potential degradation ceremonies for those who are seeking welfare, but also are a point of surveillance and information gathering, providing knowledge of the individual to those systems which seek to influence them in some way. This process of means-testing thus serves as a form of power, with a gaze from an authority fixed on the personal details of one’s life having the potential of producing self-examination and potentially even disciplining the behaviors of those who seek these benefits.

Another way that surveillance plays into the welfare system, especially in the modern day, involves the monitoring of the behaviors of those who are receiving benefits. For instance, in the past, direct aid, such as giving cash or food benefits directly to those in need (Piven and Cloward, 1993), was not something which could be easily observed past the point of delivery. However, with the advent of things like food stamps, which were exchanged for goods, or the modern day incarnations like the “Bridge Card” in Michigan, generate a more traceable set of information along with their use. Whether or not the data which is generated by things like Bridge Card use are actually systematically tracked might not be important, as from the panopticon we see that if an individual thinks they are being observed the actual exercise of this power need not take place (Foucault, 1977). In other words, when on welfare you may get the feeling that you are being watched, and that any deviation in behavior could result in loss of benefits, so you conform your behavior to the state issued norm and thus no one ever has to actually engage in observing your behavior in order to keep it in line.

The use of surveillance in welfare programs appears then, to constitute both repressive and productive power. If observations, for instance of food stamp purchases, are utilized in order to punish or penalize those who are receiving benefit, this would seem to fall more along the lines of repressive power. Though there is also an aspect of productive power here as well, in that the idea of being observed might help to produce behaviors more in line with what is expected by the welfare authorities. However, the tone behind the surveillance, and the public response towards those on welfare, appears to indicate that we are more interested in preventing “abuse” from those like the stereotypical welfare mother, by way of punishment, as opposed to producing behaviors or even reintegrating those on welfare back into the mainstream economic and social systems in a more productive fashion (Piven and Cloward, 1993). This shift towards a more repressive and punitive approach to welfare also plays into other areas of inequality, such as crime and deviance. For instance, some researchers hold that we have shifted away from helping the poor with benefits, to using the criminal justice system in order to manage this problem population (Reiman, 1998; Wacquant, 2009); in other words, prisons are the new poor houses. This highly repressive treatment of those who are at lower socioeconomic levels of society, and the focus of legal mechanisms of surveillance (welfare, law enforcement, etc.) on this population, has the potential to produce a certain societal “truth,” which can then further shape and cement the discourse of those on welfare and those in poverty as being “deviant” (Foucault, 2002). And therefore, from our Foucauldian approach to looking at welfare, we see that the mainstream ideology/knowledge of the welfare system, and its basis in surveillance, has the potential to produce and reproduce power relations which disadvantage a specific population in society.

And so we see that an approach to power and inequality that incorporates the concepts of knowledge and surveillance, has the ability to provide a unique insight into our understanding of these concepts, as well as other aspects of the social world. If we go back to the beginning of our discussion in this paper, the unique perspective on power and inequality which is
offered by this approach can spread beyond just the theories and research of Foucault. And moving beyond a single approach is an important point in the exploration of a concept, like power, that elicits great divisions and contentions within the field of sociology.

References


Academic Honesty and the New Technological Frontier

Second Place Paper, Fall 2015

By Jennifer Deranek and Cecelia Parnter
Department of Educational Leadership, Research and Technology
jennifer.e.deranek@wmich.edu, cecelia.m.parnther@wmich.edu

Advances in technology affect academic integrity in significant ways. In order to respond to this issue, it has become necessary to change the way institutions work to prevent cheating and promote integrity. Higher education leaders should consider the ways technology has changed the landscape of academic integrity, or academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty refers to a behavior or set of behaviors that lead to the misrepresentation of scholarly work (International Center for Academic Integrity [ICAI], (2015). These behaviors include plagiarism, fabrication, deception, cheating, bribery and paid services, sabotage, and/or impersonation. (ICAI, 2015). Technology has emerged as a growing opportunity for students to both engage in cheating behavior and be caught doing so (McCabe, 2001; 2004; Robinson-Zañartu et al., 2005). In this manuscript, technology describes the vast access to information on the internet, the use of cell phones and social media, and the increased use of online platforms to supplement, host courses, or verify integrity. The impacts on higher education over the past two decades have led to a new technological frontier, characterized by social media, increases in online courses, unprecedented access to information on the internet, changes in labs and educational technologies, and algorithms which detect academically dishonest behavior. This language is also chosen to represent the unchartered and rapidly changing environment of higher education.

Papp and Wertz (2009) contend that cheating is not new, but that technology has provided increasingly creative outlets for students to engage in dishonest behavior. Stuber-McEwen, Wiseley and Hoggatt (2009) describe that the percentage of undergraduate and graduate students who have reported cheating varies between 9% and 90%. While the 81% gap may seem significant, it relates to the notion that cheating has perhaps become such second nature to many students that they do not see their behavior as cheating (Stuber-McEwen et al. 2009) or they are not able to admit to their dishonest actions.

McCabe (as cited in Jones, 2011) found that many students saw the internet as an open forum, and did not feel obligated to cite material found online. In a study to identify cheating perceptions, students and faculty alike believe that it is easier to cheat in an online course than in a traditional lecture course (Mastin, Peska, & Lily, 2009). A study assessing the motivation for student cheating in the online environment suggests that student cheating in the online environment is due to factors not traditionally associated with cheating in face-to-face courses such as anonymity (Black, Greaser, & Dawson, 2014). When examining academic dishonesty in higher education, it is valuable to examine the ways that the use of technology has increased, how different types of students are using technology, and examine the role and responsibility of faculty and institutions as academic honesty continues to be challenged in today’s new technological frontier.

The Rise of Technology in Higher Education

Beyond online courses, internet research provides access to information faster than ever before (Manly, Leonard, & Riemenschneider, 2015). Instant access to information alters historical concepts of the faculty student relationship as faculty have been forced to alter curriculum. Technology has added to the methods of academic dishonesty including
unauthorized representation, purchasing written papers, using unattributed secondary sources, and cut and paste plagiarism (Manly et al. 2015). The prevalent nature of cheating behavior is not limited to online education, and is not new. Bowers, (1960) found that 60% of students were involved in academically dishonest behavior; over fifty years later McCabe, Trevino, and Butterfield (2012) found that 66% of students self-reported cheating behaviors in a national study.

Opportunities for education and prevention of student cheating in the online environment are significant. Over 6.7 million students, or 32% of students in postsecondary education have enrolled in online courses since 2012 and the number continues to climb (Sheehy, 2013). Despite this growth, a 2011 study from Babson College showed only 30% of faculty support the legitimacy of online education. This disconnect is a concern, as faculty are largely responsible for design course content and promoting integrity in coursework. Indeed, with institutions becoming increasingly friendly to asynchronous coursework, the potential for students to obtain course credit or even an entire degree without a face-to-face interaction is increasing (Trenholm, 2006). 2.6 million students were enrolled in fully online programs in 2014 (NCES, 2014). Growth in online education is rapid and promoted within higher education (Azevedo, 2012; Symonds, 2003). Research suggests limited differences in quality between courses delivered online and those facilitated face to face. There are several factors to consider in the online environment. First, current research shows an increased workload for faculty developing course content online, and academic integrity literature acknowledges the need for meaningful connections between students and faculty in creating communities of academic honesty. The question of what, if any resources are provided to faculty to create relationships with trust and integrity in mind is a concern. Trenholm (2006) notes that while instructional designers find reward in efforts to modernize course content to include new technologies, “in this competitive environment administrators backed by many working in instructional design appear in no rush to examine issues of quality assurance and academic integrity” (p. 287).

How Students Use Technology to Challenge Academic Honesty

The internet has changed the way students choose to cheat, and in some ways those students who choose academic dishonesty. Students frequently use search engines to quickly access information which has led to the idea that students are viewing scholarship as borrowing ideas and piecing the ideas together to demonstrate learned knowledge, when in fact it is plagiarism (Huang, 2013; Scanlon, 2003). Beyond basic search engines like Google and Yahoo (Herberling, 2002), students are frequently using Wikipedia, Yahoo! Answers, eNotes, OPPapers, and Slideshare to access information for assignments (Huang, 2013). College students perceive peer-to-peer sharing as an acceptable type of behavior (Scanlon, 2003). The ease of access to these internet sites provides endless amounts of information at the eager fingertips of college students. Yet, there is a question of whether or not students fully understand if their use of the information constitutes as cheating. Additionally, explaining the nuances of cheating behaviors is complicated, and faculty and administrators are loathe to label a student as a cheater based on an erroneous citation. Evering and Moorman (2012) also suggest that there is “little concern for differentiating degrees of seriousness, such that the intentional copying of large amounts of text without any acknowledgment is often viewed and treated the same as failing to properly cite sources” (p. 35).

Selwyn (2008) notes that “students who self-reported instances of online plagiarism were also significantly more likely to be frequent users of the internet” (p.471). Students who self-reported cut and paste plagiarism were also more likely to use the internet as an online student (Selwyn, 2008). In addition, students who purchased papers online and/or used essay-writing
services were also students who used the internet as a required part of coursework. This study also suggests students who commit online plagiarism are more likely students who use the internet to purchase goods and download media. This reinforces the need for education around the ownership of information, and the risks of using information without attribution on the internet. Selwyn (2008) also asserts that despite changes in how students choose to cheat, the reasons why students choose to cheat remain the same.

Beyond plagiarism, technology provides students with avenues to purchase research and papers. While the list is not exhaustive, these behaviors include copying files from friends, manipulating timestamps to request extra time, using messaging software or email to discuss exams (Etter, Cramer, & Finn, 2006), and the misuse of student response technology in participation (Zou, 2011). Clickers have been used to aid cheating students who fail to show up for class. Perhaps more concerning is the fact that students who do attend are willing to complete work for non performing classmates (Zou, 2011). Faculty often consider foregoing the technology due to the risks of student teaching in such overt ways (Zou, 2011). Etter, Cramer, and Finn (2006) studied 237 students focusing on ethical orientation and personality traits related to cheating using information technology. This work suggests that students with an idealistic orientation are more likely to use cheating behaviors than those who are thrill seeking. These findings are promising to educators, suggesting that reframing appropriate behavior and student responsibility for success may have an influence on academically competitive students.

Prevalence of Academic Dishonesty

Clarity is lacking in definitions of academic integrity among educational institutions; however, this should not provide leniency for students choosing to violate the principle. Plagiarism occurs so frequently that Herberling (2002) contends that putting material into an individual writing style is too much work for today’s Generation Y students. Institutions of higher education should be concerned that “the Center for Academic Integrity found that 70% of college and high school students admit to some sort of cheating” (Wasley, 2008, n.p.).

Academic dishonesty starts as early as high school. Stuber-McEwen et al. (2009) say that the students who cheat in high school are more likely to cheat in college and those who cheat during their undergraduate years are more likely to cheat in graduate school. This issue is not a new one; in 1999, a series of high school focus groups indicate a socialization of cheating behaviors. The majority of students openly admitted to cheating or witnessing cheating in high school (McCabe, 1999). In the same study, high school students expressed confidence in online cheating, and a sense that they knew more about technology than their instructors (McCabe, 1999). Additionally, students with low grade point averages and those who are exposed to the pressure of maintaining high price scholarships are more likely to be academically dishonest (Stuber-McEwen et al. 2009). When entering college, freshman are reported as having higher levels of academic dishonesty (Şendağ, Duran, & Fraser, 2012). Additionally, traditionally-aged college students are considered digital natives, and as a result adjust to new technology at a faster pace than many faculty members adapt (Manly et al., 2015).

Alternatively, Stuber-McEwen et al. (2009) found that non-traditional students are less likely to cheat, especially with online classes. Non-traditional students are more likely to take online classes and are potentially more motivated and independent than those in traditional brick and mortar institution classrooms, which could decrease their desire to cheat (Stuber-McEwen et al. 2009). Cheating occurs through online and on-campus courses, but many students feel as though online courses require far more work and that it is harder to cheat online because it is easier to detect (Herberling, 2002). Despite the instructional format of the class, faculty and administration should be alerted to the amount of students who are reporting
academic dishonesty and should be responsible for educating students on the appropriateness of information from the internet and the ramifications of plagiarism in order to establish a positive educational atmosphere.

Faculty Involvement with Academic Honesty

Faculty are often thought of as silent partners in regards to academic dishonesty (McCabe & Pavela, 2004), yet their influence is outstanding and sometimes not recognized. Faculty members are instrumental to facilitating a positive and effective educational experience and it begins with their demeanor and relationship with students. Research has demonstrated that when professors appear to be unconcerned about their class, the incidence of cheating increases (Stuber-McEwen et al., 2009). Additionally, instructors who are permissive, unduly difficult or are considered unfair are more at risk to have their students be dishonest (Stuber-McEwen et al., 2009). On the contrary, Stuber-McEwen et al. (2009) found that professors who are closer to their students and develop positive, honest relationships are less likely to have incidences of academic dishonesty. Additionally, when students believe their professor has knowledge, acceptance and adheres to the institution’s academic integrity policy, they are less likely to cheat (Kelley et al., 2005).

Faculty responses to plagiarism are varied and dependent on individual faculty member discretion (Roig, 2001). Research also indicates that faculty members prefer to handle student issues on plagiarism independently, rather than going through administrative policies (Robinson-Zañartu, Peña, Cook-Morales, and Peña, 2005; McCabe & Pavela, 2004; Coren, 2011). Faculty who do not address academic integrity violations note time constraints and the perception of a difficult and confrontational process (Robinson Zañartu et. al, 2005; Coren, 2011).

The variation in how faculty handle academic integrity is problematic as the lack of consistency impacts how students view the process. When faculty members choose to not follow administrative policies in plagiarism cases, it downplays the severity of academic dishonesty. These issue provide the opportunity to improve processes and resources available for faculty members to provide more of a simple, streamlined process to address academic dishonesty. As technology continues to provide new opportunities for academic misconduct, a coordinated, faculty supported effort is a necessary in creating an educational response (Volpe, Davidson, and Bell, 2008).

Students who take online classes oftentimes do not have any face-to-face interaction with their professor which makes it more difficult to understand their personalities, characteristics, intricacies and expectations. Therefore, Stuber-McEwen et al. (2009) found that students and faculty both perceive that cheating occurs more frequently in virtual settings than in brick and mortar classes despite Herberling’s (2002) previous thought about the difficulty of online education. In fact, some students take online classes, especially with certain instructors, because they know they can cheat in them (Khuder, 2011). Yet, the researchers also found that students who perceive that their professor is tech savvy are less likely to cheat because of the ease of accessibility to resources to catch academic dishonesty.

Hoshiar, Dunlap, Li, and Fredel (2014) also note the effectiveness of academic authenticity procedures. In their study of 100 California community colleges, the researchers found that faculty who teach online are aware of the importance of student authenticity in online education. The study showed that faculty perceive a higher potential for academically dishonest behavior in the online environment. The researchers note a relationship between faculty professional development and awareness of authenticity issues. Faculty with strong professional development opportunities had a greater awareness of authenticity issues. To a lesser, but still significant extent, faculty practicing in an institution with clearly written and disseminated policies also have a greater awareness of authenticity in online learning.
However, there are other ways for instructors and institutions to decrease academic dishonesty.

For online classes, professors could require students to take their exams and quizzes through a regional testing proctored system (Khuder, 2011). Additionally, professors can check IP addresses, have students submit screen shots with assignments, and participate in challenged and timed tests and assignments where the questions are random and shuffled (Herberling, 2002; Lytle, 2012; Khuder, 2011; Stuber-McEwen et al., 2009). For face-to-face classes, professors can allow and encourage their students to turn in papers early to be examined before being graded. Multiple submissions of a paper allows students to take corrective actions and possibly alleviate some of the stress for both the faculty member and the student (Turnitin®, 2013). Use of the software in empirical research finds that student knowledge of plagiarism detection software will prevent cheating behaviors (Perhaps one of the most effective, and often the most forgotten, is just the simple education and action of individual professors. As stated previously, professors are often thought of as silent partners in regards to academic dishonesty (McCabe & Pavela, 2004); however, the administration must be regarded as a partner as well. Olt (2002) identified four strategies for online instructors to use as tools in preventing academic misconduct; identify limitations for the student instructor and include relationships; design effective, mastery based online assessments; curriculum rotation; and providing students with a written academic dishonesty policy. Faculty and administrators should openly discuss academic dishonesty and decide what approach is best to take for their institution (Stuber-McEwen et al., 2009). Scanlon (2003) thinks that colleges and universities need to be upfront in confronting plagiarism and academic dishonesty through many ways in order allow students to understand the policies but also promote personal change and academic understanding. Administration can support faculty by financially providing services like Turnitin® and eCOACH, an online program to provide education and training for students and faculty members to teach them how to research online, understand journal articles and write more effective papers and presentations (Saint Leo University, 2013).

Opportunities for education and prevention of student cheating in the online environment are significant. Olt (2002) identified four strategies for online instructors as tools in preventing academic misconduct. These strategies are to identify limitations for the student instructor relationship, design effective, mastery based online assessments, curriculum rotation and to provide students with a written academic dishonesty policy.

Cizcek (1999) supports these suggestions, offering additional strategies including maintaining the security of assessments, proctoring exams, disabling networking capability during assessments, requiring handheld and mobile devices to be turned off, varying test questions, and using private distance learning management software.

Institutional Response to Academic Dishonesty

University responses to plagiarism have a history of ambivalence. In a survey of 257 chief academic officers at colleges and universities throughout the United States, Aaron (1992) concluded that higher education has not moved aggressively to address any issues of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism. This reactive response is apparent when institutions are faced with student violations of academic integrity.

Unpredictable levels of institutional support and participation illustrate the need for coordinated educational efforts. Apathy and a lack of involvement are illustrated throughout the literature as a multifaceted problem. Specifically, faculty handle university academic integrity procedures inconsistently, students are often not active partners in enforcing a culture of academic integrity, universities do not regularly provide or assess academic integrity education, and few universities have an office of department dedicated to academic
honesty (Gallant and Drinan, 2008). A coordinated, intentional effort is needed to create and sustain an environment that values academic honor (Gallant and Drinan, 2008).

Promising theoretical frameworks created to promote academic honesty are instrumental in changing campus culture. Gallant and Drinan (2008) developed a theory of academic integrity institutionalization, an opportunity to integrate academic honor into postsecondary education. This four stage model is not linear, and should be adopted within the culture of an institution, rather than in opposition to current culture. The first stage, recognition and commitment, acknowledges the issue and builds relationships with others that are likeminded. A catalyst, such as a highly publicized incident, or shift in technological effectiveness often prompts the first stage. The second stage, response generation, requires an answer to the issue at hand. At this stage the actor will, with support, name the problem and propose an opportunity for others to aid in creating a solution. The third stage, response implementation, is where the responses generate a course of action. These changes are integrated into current policies and slowly adopted. An important piece of response implementation is support; the theorists stress that support “should not simply be directed at stopping academic misconduct but at supporting academically integrous behaviours” (pg. 32). The support should also be in line with the organizational objectives of the institution. The final stage of this process is institutionalization, a process characterized by the normality of process changes. For example, an institution using online modules to educate students on academic integrity will achieve institutionalization when it becomes commonplace, the vast majority of students have access to and are familiar with the modules and the principles contained within the modules. Gallant and Drinan (2008) note that within this model, countless factors can act as a “pendulum effect” (pg. 34) at once providing momentum or setback. In addition to organizational and staffing concerns, technology could also affect the adoption of academic integrity initiatives.

Complementing theory, there are a variety of technologies available to faculty and administration in the investigation of academic misconduct. Proactive measures include software to educate students on academic integrity. AcademicIntegrity.com, Epigeum UK, and Future Learn® provide modules that assist faculty and students in identifying academic misconduct. Investigative measures are more popular, and include commercially available resources, like Turnitin®, are online programs where professors can submit papers and it is compared to 20 billion webpages and 220 million previously submitted papers to cross reference for similar phrases and paragraphs to detect cheating (Anders, 2012; Herberling, 2002). According to Turnitin® (2013), roughly 200,000 papers are submitted per day and in 2012 over 80 million papers were processed. The use of this technology requires students to submit their papers electronically and often redirect them to third party websites like Blackboard, Moodle and Desire2Learn (Turnitin®, 2013). Punitive and preventative measures include other products, supported by literature and sold by vendors in the field such as academicintegrity.com, a site providing institutions with best practice modeling solutions as a supplement to university policies. For example, students with one lower level violation may be subject to complete a number of modules focused on plagiarism should an instance of cheating occur (Ryan, 2007). Completion of the module will serve as the educational outcome for the student necessary to return to positive academic standing. It is valuable for institution’s to invest in these support systems for the faculty members in order to create an environment in which students are being academically honest and learning the proper ways to use electronic sources in the classroom.

Conclusion

Online education will continue to expand, and with it, the risks of academic misconduct using the internet. There are several factors to consider in the online environment. First, current research shows an increased workload for faculty developing course content online.
(Trenholm, 2006). Given the research that cites time as a detractor when dealing with academic misconduct, it is important for faculty to have resources that provide timely methods of developing online content and addressing academic misconduct. Academic integrity literature acknowledges the need for meaningful connections between students and faculty in creating communities of academic honesty. The question of what, if any resources are provided to faculty to create relationships with trust and integrity in mind is a concern.

Despite the avenue of delivery of coursework, academic dishonesty is occurring in higher education, much of which is stemming from the ease of access to information from the increase in the internet and technology. While there are different challenges for both students and faculty members for face to face and online education, there is a very simple solution. Faculty members need to face plagiarism and dishonesty head on and do so as educators and not always as detectives (Scanlon, 2003, Gallant, 2008). As educators, faculty should be proactive in their approach to students to address academic dishonesty in a fashion that will foster learning and growth. Administration need to be supportive by offering educational programs and in order to support academic honesty, to protect the reputation of the school and the integrity of academic work. Educational programming for students, faculty, and staff promotes academic honor and integrity (Gallant and Drinan, 2006). These culture shifts provide students the opportunity to assess their own values both academically and otherwise as they prepare for prospective careers. The opportunity for learning in this area is vast, and extends to faculty, staff, and students. Engagement opportunities that use the technologies students are familiar with are one way to demonstrate technological competence. While punitive measures are valuable, an approach rooted in student learning is necessary to shift behavior (Gallant, 2008).

It is necessary to engage students in education around academic integrity in ways that are unique to the online environment and ways that echo campus initiatives. As stated previously, many students do not believe their actions constitute cheating or dishonesty. Therefore, institutions need to be intentional about educating students on the proper use of the vast uses of technology which can be done through an up to date, technologically perceptive response at each institution to provide a unified and informative front on educating and tackling academic dishonesty due to technology.

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An Unfinished Journey: The Evolution of Crime Measurement in the United States

Third Place Paper, Fall 2015

By Daniel J. Patten
Department of Sociology
daniel.j.patten@wmich.edu

American novelist, Henry Miller (1945), describes the study of crime as originating within ourselves beginning “with knowledge of oneself” and “all that you despise, all that you loathe, all that you reject, all that you condemn and seek to convert by punishment springs from you.” This portrayal of crime highlights the essential issue of crime measurement and its relationship with crime definitions. Crime is essentially the labeling of deviant behavior and Miller details the intimate, idiosyncratic, and emotional process of that labeling. In contrast, the academic field of criminology is the “rational” attempt at measuring and studying crime from a “neutral” perspective. The conflict, of course, is that defining and measuring crime takes place in a social world in which crime is socially constructed. Here lies the important dilemma and need for disentangling how sociologists and criminologists “objectively” measure crime while also being products of the social world.

To this end, the following paper traces the history of crime measurement in the United States beginning with the U.S. census in 1790 in an attempt to contextualize this crime measuring dilemma within the historical and social forces which brought us to where we are today. Throughout this journey several pieces of history will be magnified including the origins of collecting national crime statistics, the Chicago School, known for its influence in American sociology and criminology, the split between these two academic fields into their own separate entities, and, more recently, the development, criticisms, and historical forces of the Uniform Crime Reports, self-report surveys, and victimization surveys. These three methods are the most commonly used methods for studying and measuring crime today. The current paper will conclude with one of, if not the most important, lessons of this rich history of crime measurement.

BRIEF HISTORY OF US CENSUS
Mosher, Miethe, and Hart (2011) describe census data as likely being the first form of social measurement, not only in the U.S., but in the world as well, dating back to 2275 BC in China. The first U.S. census was conducted in 1790 with obvious flaws. First, 16 federal marshals were tasked with surveying a broadly dispersed population with an endless amount of land to cover. Due to lack of technology, many surveys were done through word of mouth with no contact with their actual subjects. Second, race could not be properly sorted or compared since Native Americans were not included and African Americans were counted as three-fifths a human (“History of the United States Census” 2000). With these flaws in mind, surveys, similar to the census gathering before them, were conducted in England to gather data on individuals’ average living conditions (Biderman and Reiss 1967). Although to this point, crime was not the social problem it was to later become and national crime statistics had not been generated or systematically collected, the U.S. Census Bureau began attempting to collect crime data in 1907 while conceding their efforts to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) shortly after.

THE BIRTH OF NATIONAL CRIME STATISTICS IN THE UNITED STATES
The importance of Adolphe Quetelet to the U.S. and the rest of the world interested in
criminology should not be understated. He was certainly a positivist and felt that the laws of
the social world could be uncovered much like they had in the physical world using the
scientific method. With his positivistic bent and coming from the physical sciences himself,
Quetelet (1842), utilizing the first national crime statistics the world had ever known, made
several influential observations of criminals in France and Belgium that reign similar to more
recent findings. He was quite aware of the limitations of official data by making mention of
the dark figure of crime well before it was seriously addressed (we will return to this later).
Knowing these shortcomings, he established that the ratio between crimes known and
unknown remained relatively stable over time allowing for researchers to be aware of this
discrepancy, but ultimately its effects were not spuriously affecting the outcome.

Quetelet (1842) was a criminal statistics pioneer making discoveries about crime that
have stood the test of time. First, he delineated that race had an impact on crime, specifically
racial composition of an area. Although the racial categories were much different in his day,
consisting of Celtic, German, and Pelasgian, racial composition is still an essential variable in
criminology and particularly in social disorganization theory. Second, a link between alcohol
consumption and violent crime was established by his early studies. Third, poverty and
inequality were also noted as having an impact on crime. Fourth, men were found to commit
more crimes than women, although the gap was not quite as large as it has been more
recently. Fifth, age was declared one of the more fascinating correlates of crime and he even
argued that crime, primarily crimes against persons, increased in young adulthood until about
age 25 when it began to decline. This finding is remarkably close to what has been replicated
throughout criminological history in relation to age and crime. Although there have been
significant advancements beyond Quetelet’s theories on the causes of crime, the legacy of his
methodological approach remains strong, and he was a paramount force in the creation of
quantitative methods utilizing national crime statistics in the U.S.

New York was the first state to have statewide criminal statistics on individuals entering
its judiciary system in 1829, but it took another almost 70 years for many states to follow suit.
Even in 1905, only 25 states had enacted legislation to mandate criminal statistics be collected
(Pepinsky 1976). With half the country still not collecting criminal statistics, the U.S. was
well behind having a database like that utilized in Quetelet’s (1842) study. Throughout the
early 1900s, crime statistics gathering was scattered throughout the country. Sometimes data
collection would be limited to one state, one county, or one prison. In addition,
communication among courts, law enforcement agencies, and the government collecting
criminal data was poor.

An unorganized system of crime recording was not the only problem plaguing quality
criminological research in the U.S. The definitions of several types of crimes varied by region
and state with no standardization or universal agreement (Tibbitts 1932). Police departments
were greatly dependent and manipulated by politicians compromising their data on crime.
Moreover, police discretion led to different police tactics and focusing on different types of
crime, driving statistics up or down depending on their colloquial importance. All of these
deficiencies severely limited the ability to make fruitful comparisons, especially of a
nationally representative sample.

With these shortcomings of the current state of crime statistics in the U.S., the
International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) was formed with the intent on producing
a national crime reporting system and data collection institution (IACP 1929). Only a few
years later, the IACP established a uniform crime reporting system. Its operations were later
handed over to the FBI and became known as it is today, the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR).
By 1931, the UCR collected crime statistics that covered around 80 percent of the U.S.
population (Tibbitts 1932). Let us step away from the UCR and official crime data for a
moment to consider another development occurring contemporaneously, germane specifically
to the fields of sociology and criminology.
THE CHICAGO SCHOOL
In 1892, the first Department of Sociology was founded at the University of Chicago, which produced several sociologists and criminologists who later became known as products of the Chicago School. At a time when a massive wave of immigration was moving to America and into the metropolises around the country, Chicago experienced several changes in the city due to this great population influx along with rapid industrialization and urbanization. This rapidly transitioning city became fertile ground for sociological research.

Ethnographic fieldwork was commonly used to explore and test sociological and criminological theories in these urban areas. The early 1900s was a time before much of the technological advances known today for data collection, organization, and analysis. Suffice it to say, sociology was new and the measuring of crime was even newer in the U.S. Influenced by the dominating theoretical lens that human behavior was primarily determined, if not completely, by ecological and structural causes, the Chicago School theoretical stance was a break from much of the genetic and biological stated causes of crime that dominated Europe at the time (Rafter 2008).

While immigrants poured into Chicago, the city faced several social problems at never before seen magnitudes. Many people were forced to the edges of the economy, contributing to a rising number of homeless and unemployed and poorer living conditions (Anderson 1923). Some of these consequences were related to the intense competition for low-wage labor created by overpopulation in the city. As crime rates rose, criminology began to take on a new appreciation in the U.S. Cesare Beccaria’s (1963) work long before this crime wave heavily influenced the shape of the criminal justice system in the United States through his philosophical guiding. Yet, Beccaria did little to inform the measurement and scientific study of crime.

Of the early Chicago School sociologists, none may be more important in furthering the measurement of crime than Robert Park and Ernest Burgess. Both Park and Burgess, with the help of their graduate students, began systematically collecting data throughout the city of Chicago (Burgess and Bogue 1964). They were intent on mapping the city of Chicago by demarcating neighborhoods in order to make comparisons between individuals and the areas in which they resided. These maps of the city have been instrumental in empirical tests of social disorganization theory and studies interested in neighborhood level variables. Census data went a long way in allowing them to construct this novel dataset. With this data, Park, Burgess, and McKenzie (1925) developed the Concentric Zone Model which demonstrated the demographic breakdown of Chicago—although it is applicable to other major U.S. cities—by zones or areas demarcated by their distance from the central metropolitan area.

Many of the early sociologists from the Chicago School laid the groundwork for those to follow, such as Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay. Influenced by the Concentric Zone Model, Shaw and McKay (1942) used official delinquency data to uncover a relationship between crime rates and residential locations (neighborhoods). It was one of the first studies to test a theory (social disorganization theory) empirically using official crime statistics in the U.S. Although the Chicago School has continued a tradition of ethnographic work and symbolic interactionism, Shaw and McKay sparked, at least, a curiosity and even an interest among most criminologists in quantitative empirical work.

Despite the renowned reputation of the Chicago School using ethnographic methods, Shaw and McKay (1942) evince that this is not completely true. Even Ernest Burgess, who is considered more of an ethnographic researcher, utilized sophisticated data analysis techniques for his time. Once his data was gathered, using some ethnographic methods, he used a form of unit-weighted regression to predict one’s likelihood of parole based on the individual’s job skill (Burgess 1928). This technique has been utilized throughout the history of criminology without the knowledge of its roots.
CRIMINOLOGY BECOMES ITS OWN FIELD

Around the time sociology in the U.S. was flourishing at the University of Chicago, several things were happening that ultimately lead to the development of the first school of criminology in the U.S. in 1950. Despite its official development in the 1950s, its presence was felt starting in the 1930s. August Vollmer was an influential individual in the development of criminology. Vollmer was a police officer that eventually became the first police chief of Berkley in California while also being employed as a professor at the University of California at Berkley (Carte and Carte 1975). Through first-hand experience with the police force, Vollmer took issue with the fact that most police officers were not only without a college education, but were also generally uneducated. Using his clout at the university, he eventually was able to establish the country’s first School of Criminology at the University of California, Berkley. His vision was to have a highly professionalized police force that was college-educated and capable of being both police officers and teachers at the university level (Morris 1975). In addition, Vollmer played an instrumental role in the creation of National Association of College Police Training Officials which is now known today as the American Society of Criminology. Thus, the first criminology school was intended as a police training program rather than producing the theoretically driven criminologists bent on discovering the causes of crime. Academic criminology began its focus on police training and the criminal justice system.

The education and professionalization of police were also the goal at Michigan State University where its School of Criminal Justice was created in 1935 (Rykert 1985). As stated earlier, Beccaria (1963) shaped the U.S. criminal justice system. He also appears to have had a major impact on the initial developments of criminology and criminal justice programs throughout the U.S. The academic programs at both Michigan State University and University of California at Berkley influenced most of the programs that began to sprout up throughout the country.

The twenty years from 1930 to 1950 coincided with a shift in emphasis of criminology and criminal justice programs. Courses covering the causes of crime were being offered transitioning the field of criminology away from educating cops to creating criminological theorists and practitioners. Then, the 1960s brought major media attention to crime as a social problem, changes in federal legislation, and funding from the federal government. The Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) is one of the most influential federal funding programs that funded the education of several criminologists and police officers (Ohlin and Remington 1993).

UNIFORM CRIME REPORTS AND ITS CRITIQUES

Returning to the UCR and official crime statistics, it has already been outlined how the UCR developed over time and specifically how the Chicago School of Sociology used official crime statistics to map the city of Chicago. Once the UCR were developed, criminologists were quick to utilize official statistics to explore the nature of crime. Despite the creation of a nationwide crime statistics system that revolutionized the scientific study of crime, it was not without its flaws and critiques.

The early years of the UCR exposed potential complications. High crime rates were thought to reflect poorly on a police department displaying the ineffectiveness of the police force in that municipality. For that reason, it was understood early on that many police precincts were likely underreporting crime to the FBI (Leonard 1954). Since the UCR are reliant on the integrity of the police departments reporting of crime, it was thought that several crime statistics were compromised. Another potential issue that inspired the education of police officers aforementioned was likely due to the dependency of the UCR on police officers ability to correctly classify crimes. With the UCR being a new innovation, it has been suggested that the majority of the police force did not have adequate training or could not
competently understand the processes of crime reporting (Maltz 1977). Overestimating crime may have also been an incentive for some of the police departments in need of additional funding. The manipulation of crime reports was one potential way to secure these funds if resources were distributed on a needs basis.

Thorsten Sellin (1938) was an early critique of official crime statistics. Equally influenced by both Marxist and conflict theory, he argued that crime must be analyzed for what it is, a conflictual outcome of a clash between social norms. Official statistics reflect one set of behaviors or conduct norms. However, for Sellin, every group of individuals had an unwritten code of conduct and many times these behavioral guidelines differed across groups. Thus, wrongful or deviant behaviors - what is institutionalized into crime - differs across cultures. Even more problematic, conduct norms are divergent even among groups within the same society and even between individuals. The conflict over these conduct norms (in other words, morality of behavior) was called culture conflict. Dominant groups – defined as those possessing power – have the ability and resources to institutionalize their conduct norms into criminal law. On the other side of this cultural conflict are the weaker groups that are incapable of legalizing their normalized behavior. At the behest of the law-making groups, less powerful cultural collectives must refrain from their traditional behavior that may now be illegal under the new legislation. It is no wonder then why Sellin would find the UCR and official crime statistics fruitless as a measurement for crime. These measurements of crime are viewed as only one list of deviant behaviors, and studies that utilize these statistics would neglect alternative forms of crime that may be deemed important. Sellin’s critiques gained more support later and are influential in Richard Quinney’s critiques explored later.

According to Sellin (1938), it can be implied that the middle and upper classes may be committing crimes, but they are not reported or even considered crime. Instead, these crimes are likely viewed as acceptable and do not appear in the legal code. Edwin Sutherland (1940) continues this riveting critique gaining notoriety within criminology. He simply criticized official statistics and studies based on them because these statistics did not include white-collar crimes. Much like Sellin, he realized that all crime was not being recorded in official statistics. The crimes of the powerful were realized to potentially be more harmful than the ubiquitously studied street crimes. Despite his insights, white-collar crime did not really gain favor in criminology for approximately another forty years.

Women were also notably neglected in official statistics. Otto Pollock (1950) produced a study of female criminality that revealed various flaws in these statistics concerning female offending and victimhood. Although he has since then been dismissed for his theory predicting female criminality, he made some early discoveries of shortcomings within official statistics and the measurement of crime which has since then been taken up by feminist scholars. It became understood that men and women were treated differently by the criminal justice system and that women were likely to underreport several types of crimes committed towards women (e.g. rape).

SELF-REPORT SURVEYS
In an attempt to address the various criticisms of official statistics above, a new method was developed. The primary impetus was a sum of several of the critiques referred to as the dark figure of crime. The dark figure of crime simply suggested that there is a large number of crimes that are unknown to authorities (Biderman and Reiss 1967). Since the UCR was dependent on police officers reporting crime, most crime in the end would not be reported partly due to some of the political maneuvering discussed earlier and some due to what is included in the official definition of crime. More importantly, however, was that even in the best case scenario, where these other issues are controlled for, there will still be a large number of unknown crime due to underreporting by victims and the limited surveillance by the police. Simply put, the criminal justice system cannot identify all crime always.
The philosophy of self-report surveys is to ask people anonymously or confidentially if they have committed various crimes or delinquent acts. These questions are usually supplemented with asking questions concerning the frequency of crime and delinquent acts committed. From their conception there were foreseeable issues: (1) there was a concern over the likelihood that individuals would honestly report their crimes to a researcher; and (2) the surveys would not be valuable unless they could efficiently include a wide group of people while asking pertinent questions about crime commission and frequency (Phillips, Mosher, and Kabel 2010).

Alfred Kinsey’s studies on sexual behavior have become renown in the social sciences (Kinsey, Pomeroy, and Martin 1948; Kinsey et al. 1953). One of their major contributions was their demonstration that individuals may willingly and honestly discuss deviant behaviors they have committed. In this case, it was not necessarily criminal behaviors, rather sexual behaviors. However, both sets of behaviors were deviant and it was thought that people may not be willing to disclose such information. The Kinsey studies revealed shocking results of a high prevalence of sexual behavior before then considered unlikely.

The original self-report measures of delinquency are typically attributed to James Short and F. Ivan Nye (1957). In the 30 years to follow the initial self-report measures, several improvements were made as outlined by Thornberry and Krohn (2000). They offer four guidelines developed over the years for future self-report researchers to follow. First, a comprehensive list of delinquent behaviors that run the gamut of delinquency must be included rather than a few of the most common. Contrarily, Hindelang, Hirschi, and Weis (1981) concluded that small subscales with as few as 10 items may perform as well as large 63-item global scales. Yet, their conclusion was made with little evidence, and since then it appears that more than 10 but likely less than 63 items would be ideal. Second, Short and Nye (1957) were criticized for asking questions solely about petty offenses. Since then, self-report scales have included more serious crimes to address many of the inquiries of criminologists. Third, with the suggestions made by Hindelang et al. (1980), frequency measures have evolved as well. Frequency measures that ask “have you ever” tend to perform better than “last year” items due to telescoping (recalling events as more recent than they actually occurred) issues and have now been incorporated into self-report surveys. Lastly, strictly quantitative self-report surveys have recognized the value of qualitative follow-up questions (although these do not need to necessarily be open-ended). Self-report surveys often ask open-ended questions to elicit more information about reported crimes.

Although self-report surveys appeased some of the critiques of official statistics, feminist scholars as aforementioned still claimed that women were likely underreporting crime and men were not likely to make up for this by admitting crimes they had committed. Criminologists interested in white-collar crime also claimed that self-report measures were not gauging for crimes of the powerful. The lack of trust in men’s reporting may have been due more to the zeitgeist of the 1950s, when popularity was growing in self-report surveys, rather than any deliberate attempt to lie. This was also a time when white-collar crime was not in the forefront and before domestic violence was even viewed as a crime in greater society. It was not until feminist criminologist offered their critiques of the ignorance of women’s victimhood when some of these dark figures of crime became uncovered.

VICTIMIZATION SURVEYS
Joanne Belknap (1996) summarizes some of feminist scholars’ concerns with mainstream criminology. She attempts to bring to light the “invisible woman” in crime and criminal justice. Women are made invisible through their treatment by men, being neglected by the criminal justice system, their own denial of victimhood, and by social structures and society as a whole primarily through gender role indoctrination. Women’s victimization is inextricably linked to the power imbalance among the genders. Furthermore, when women
victims become visible (which can be rarely), they are overwhelmingly downplayed or blamed for their victimization (e.g. women described as “asking to be raped” because of their clothing or behavior). Her work begins to address the identified literature gap emphasized by the neglect of gender in most criminological theories and an outright obsession with men considering they constitute the vast majority of criminal offenders.

Although asking people if they have committed a crime had uncovered some of the dark figure of crime, it was still speculated that there was more unknown than known crimes. As more of a response to official statistics than self-report surveys, victimization surveys were created with the logic encapsulated by Belknap. It was thought that if people would honestly admit to crime, they would certainly discuss their own victimhood (although some crimes may be underreported for reasons discussed by Belknap). As a result of rising crime rates and urban riots in the 1960s, the President’s Commission of Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice (1968) was created under the purview of the U.S. government to address the measurement of crime in America. The Law Enforcement Assistance Administration was established in 1968 that allocated federal funding to criminal justice agencies for training, education, and research. Money poured into the study and treatment of crime. One of the most pertinent conclusions of the President’s Commission was that victims have all but been completely neglected in the study of crime. In turn, they sponsored three of the original victimization studies that laid the foundation for victimization surveys to follow.

DEFINING CRIME

Found among the three main forms of crime data collection (i.e. official data, self-report surveys, and victimization surveys) is an assumed agreement on the definition of crime generally speaking. In other words, the evolution of data collection for crime statistics, until this point, has mostly been consumed with the question, “How do we measure crime?” However, the measurement of crime (or its operationalization) is contingent on the definition of crime (or its conceptualization). Although some criminologists had hinted at the potential problems of conceptualization, Richard Quinney (1970) devoted an entire book to that issue. Most criminologists around this time were using one of the three forms of crime data collection to establish their dependent variable (crime). All of which are fundamentally based on the conceptualization of crime as being an illegal act, but Quinney understood quite well that the law was socially constructed and, in turn, that crime was also socially constructed. Quinney’s critique and others like it allowed some researchers to expand their definition of crime on self-report and victimization surveys.

Quinney (1970) came to four important conclusions about the law and crime that impacted criminologists to come. First, laws are formulated through conflicting interest groups vying for power of defining crime. The most powerful and resourceful groups tend to define crime through the legal system. Second, the application of criminal definitions via the legal and criminal justice system is influenced by several variables, some of which are extralegal (e.g. police basing arrest decision on offenders’ demeanor, socialization of police, public morals). Furthermore, the applications of criminal definitions result in several social realities despite the social construction of crime. Third, different subgroups (categorized by race, gender, class, age, etc.) vary in their normal patterns of behavior and these behavioral patterns differ in their likelihood to being labeled and categorized as crime. Individuals of the less powerful groups tend to have their normal behaviors criminalized because they are in direct conflict with the interest of powerful groups in control of defining crime. Fourth, public conceptions of crime are driven by various factors, most influential being media and politics. These public conceptions also play a role in political motivations and policy. For instance, the public desire for harsher punishment of criminals has led politicians to run “tough on crime” campaigns and vice versa.
Following in Quinney’s footsteps, Taylor, Walton, and Young (1973) attempt to reintegrate sociology and criminology. The splitting of the two fields has been highlighted earlier in this paper. They felt that a “new criminology” must be fully social in that it must incorporate the foundational elements of sociology theorized by Marx, Weber, and Durkheim. Criminology had lost its social roots and because of that has perpetuated social and economic inequalities.

During an era of turbulent change and seeming disorder, Taylor et al. (1973) were a product of the 1960s. The radicalism of this time found its way into criminology and stressed the importance of a social understanding of crime which specifically suggested that crime must be understood within its wider structural origins, criminals must be seen as possessing free will, and crime must be situated within the social setting it occurs. Furthermore, they emphasized the often neglected importance of the societal reaction to crime which was introduced before them by Edwin Lemert (1967) and Howard Becker (1963). Becker and Lemert also understand the importance of official labels something hinted at earlier by Sellin (1938).

HISTORICAL, SOCIAL, AND POLITICAL INFLUENCES FELT TODAY

These criticisms over the definition of crime and crime being a social construction littered throughout the paper have not been really addressed by the majority of mainstream criminologists and quantitative researchers. Although there are likely several reasons why quantitative researchers have not heeded some of the suggestions made by qualitative critics, two cultural changes in particular affected multiple facets of social life. The following two changes seemingly have had an impact on the measurement of crime as well.

Neoliberal Economic Movement

Neoliberalism can be defined as the various policies and procedures that have taken hold in multiple facets of society - not only the U.S. but throughout the world as well – predominately focused on privatization of all realms of social life and with the pursuit of profit maximization (McChesney 1999). An ideological and organizational shift has come to make universities resemble corporations. This shift has the potential to completely reshape the foundation of higher education and has led Giroux (2002: 428) to label neoliberalism as “the most dangerous ideology of the current historical moment”. Academic fields that are not profitable run the risk of being eliminated, or at the very least, underfunded. As Snider (2000) highlighted, certain academic fields were more likely to receive funding for research, and those fields lacking funding opportunities tended to be the same fields with research that was not profitable. These affected fields are those related to or with a major focus of “critical theory, literature, feminism, ethics, environmentalism, postcolonialism, philosophy, and sociology” (Giroux 2002: 434).

An exemplar case of neoliberal personnel in academia is that of James Carlin who gave a speech in 1998 as the chairman of the Massachusetts State Board of Education. Carlin was a formal insurance executive and a millionaire with neoliberal ambitions for the education system. In his speech, he insisted on increasing professors’ teaching workloads by having them teach four, three credit courses each semester opposed to the traditional two (Honan, 1998). The proposed changes would directly interfere with the time professors have to conduct research. He also attacked the soft sciences in his speech by proclaiming that “at least 50 percent” of their research is “foolishness” and should be removed from universities.

With the rise of neoliberalism, corporations now have more power and control over research than ever before. Giroux (2002) exemplifies this point by using the case of the University of California, Berkley. Typically, the faculty of a particular department has meetings in which they determine how they will allocate research funds. In the case of Berkley, business executives are now being invited to participate in these research fund
allocation meetings where they are able to exert considerable clout on what and how research is done. There are numerous examples of corporate-sponsored research that have removed entire passages that were critical of the corporation or were damning to their potential profits (Berube 1998; Press and Washburn 2000).

This economic shift has influenced the type of research that takes place directly and indirectly. Its direct effects have made many academic researchers responsive to the needs of the state and corporations. Furthermore, indirect effects from funding via grants have also affected research methods. Underfunding is a barrier much more prevalent among qualitative research (Carey and Swanson, 2003) which suggests criminologists may find it easier to use quantitative methods to secure funds. In relation to the increased workloads accompanied by the neoliberal shift, quantitative research is thought to be less time consuming and may have led researchers to utilize these methods over their counterparts to ensure they meet the needs of their employer. Several difficulties common to qualitative research including lack of generalizability, lack of objectivity, more spuriousness, and potential influence of common sense thinking (Diefenbach, 2009) have been problematic for the needs of these research financiers.

Penal Paradigm Shift
Occurring contemporaneously with the neoliberal economic movement, David Garland (2002) explains the paradigm shift in penal philosophy from rehabilitation to retribution as beginning in the mid-1970s, gaining momentum over the next couple decades, and still has its influence felt today. The downfall of rehabilitation as a guiding philosophy is attributed to several conditions coalescing including, most prominently, academic reports of rehabilitation’s lack of efficacy, a rising crime rate paired with a growing fear of crime, and a political platform of “tough on crime” politics that became essential for political success. Instead of fixing criminals or addressing their problems, a view of criminals as being incorrigible led to a penal system more focused on quarantining career criminals in the name of public safety and order.

Several factors have contributed to building the “culture of control” as Garland calls it. The public and politicians alike have fed into the punishment frenzy requesting increasingly more punitive responses to crime. Late modernity has brought about some turbulent changes in society resonating to a chaotic image of society. In response, the public has requested more control and order through warehousing of criminals, personal responsibility in welfare, and surveillance. The neoliberal economic movement has also brought an economic style of reasoning to the criminal justice system. Now, evaluators of the criminal justice system are more interested in economic efficiency rather than the outcome of offenders. Overall, Garland attempts to demonstrate that the retributive shift in penal philosophy was a part of the larger cultural shift (including the political and economic system primarily) that also drifted from a rehabilitation focus to a more punitive one.

The influence of these two paradigm shifts – the neoliberal economic movement and the growing popularity of retributive penal policies – along with the impact of positivism and the advent of the computer capable of conducting sophisticated data analysis techniques, led to the favoring of quantitative methods and the big three methods of crime measurement (i.e. UCR, self-report surveys, and victimization surveys). The milieu of all these influences seemed to create a high demand for expedient results that could be instantaneously applied. A demand that was, at least, felt to be met by quantitative methods. To the untrained observer, and even to some trained researchers as well, quantitative methods appeared to be more objective and possess the ability to quickly reduce the complexity of a sophisticated social issue with extreme efficiency.
SUMMARIZING A HISTORY OF CRIME MEASUREMENT: MIXED METHODS
To benefit from the history of crime measurement, we should come to some conclusions on the best ways to measure crime. It should be clear from this paper that official statistics, self-report surveys, and victimization surveys are most commonly used. Generally, dissimilar crimes are measured better via different methods. For example, official statistics are good for acquiring the murder rate not likely admitted on self-report surveys and murder victims obviously cannot respond. Child sexual abuse and other underreported crimes that are highly shunned by society may best be uncovered using victimization surveys. Status offenses and other fairly petty infractions like drug use can best be surveyed through self-report. Also, qualitative studies have been useful in uncovering crimes of the state and corporations despite the several forces directing researchers towards quantitative methodologies. Yet, there is certainly no one perfect way to measure crime, and many of these methods are used in collaboration.

Robert Sampson’s (2012) book, *Great American City*, exemplifies the use of multiple methods to measure crime. He utilizes a series of methods to triangulate the reality of crime and incorporates several of the elements discussed in this paper. Utilizing much of the work of the Chicago school criminologists to come before him, he further developed the mapping of Chicago and advanced the theory of neighborhood effects on crime. More importantly, his book is a good example of how a researcher can begin with empirical observation (as he did when walking through the streets of Chicago), conceptualize these observations theoretically within the available literature, construct operational definitions of a complex social phenomenon, collect data over various years using several different methodological techniques, analyze that data in turn testing theoretical presumptions, and finally proposing the future direction for research.

Above all else, this tracing of history should inform future criminologists and sociologists alike that all measurements of crime have their own unique merits while also possessing idiosyncratic shortcomings. Qualitative methods may be better for contextualizing crime with immense detail specific to individuals and cases while quantitative methods allow us to reduce this complexity in order to make accurate predictions about crime. More qualitative methods allow us to place our crime predictions (engendered through quantitative methods) within their historical, political, and cultural context. Both criminologists and sociologists should familiarize themselves with all available measurements of crime building a large method repertoire and use them when most appropriate.

References


Hamlet and Amleth, Princes of Denmark: Shakespeare and Saxo Grammaticus as Historians and Kingly Actions in the Hamlet/Amleth Narrative

By Megan Arnott
Department of English
meganmelissa.m.arnott@wmich.edu

Introduction

Shakespeare played a decisive role in creating a Middle Ages for the generations that came after him. In the introduction to Shakespeare and the Middle Ages, Curtis Perry and John Watkins note that “almost any book written on the Hundred Years War or the Wars of the Roses begins by explaining just how Shakespeare got it wrong. He conflated characters, condensed chronologies, cleaned up some careers, and sullied others” (Perry and Watkins 1). The two tetralogies, which include Richard II, Henry IV Part 1 and Part 2, Henry V, Henry VI Part 1-3, and Richard III, comprise the body of work that is commonly studied for medievalisms, and in these plays Shakespeare’s interpretation of the past demonstrates nation building, ‘Englishness,’ and a concern about the nature of power (Perry and Watkins 16). A different kind of engagement with the medieval past is occurring in Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, though Hamlet is no less concerned with nations and power. Set in a contemporary Danish court, the play draws on the medieval Scandinavian tradition of Amleth, a version of which was recorded in the thirteenth-century, in Books III and IV of Saxo Grammaticus’s Gesta Danorum (“The Deeds of the Danes”). Both Hamlet and the tetralogies are manipulating medieval material, but the tetralogies fictionalize an English past in a way that makes readers reflect on historical events. Hamlet is not a medievalist text like Henry V or Richard III, which adapt medieval historical events for dramatic purposes. Perhaps it is more medieval, because it is an adaptation of a medieval tale, inheriting the medieval themes from the original telling, even when the medieval history is removed, whereas the tetralogies are more original constructions. In fact, in this regard Gesta Danorum bears more similarity to these ‘Wars of the Roses’ texts because the Gesta Danorum records and creates a national past for Denmark, in a way that is similar to how Shakespeare’s tetralogies create a national past for England. The tetralogies look back to a recent medieval past from an early modern perspective, and the Gesta Danorum is looking to an ancient and early medieval past from the High Middle Ages. Hamlet and the Amleth narrative in Gesta Danorum both tell the same story, but represent two different ways of interacting with a tale from the past. The way the two stories play off of each other when read together brings out the differences between the way that Shakespeare and Saxo Grammaticus act as antiquarians in this instance. The Gesta Danorum uses the Amleth narrative as an instructive instance of history and Hamlet spins a medieval tale into an entertaining yarn, more recognizable for its contemporary themes than for its references to the past. Both texts look to ancient/early medieval Scandinavian tradition to make arguments about kingship which will be relevant to the author and to their respective audiences.

By looking at Gesta Danorum Amleth through a Hamlet lens, we see the text in two parts—the part of the narrative that coincides with the events in Hamlet, and the events which extend past the Hamlet narrative. In that light, the Amleth story opens before the start of the play, beginning when brothers Orvendil and Fengi are given joint rule of Jutland by Rørik in Book III. Orvendil is a successful pirate and wins Gerutha, the daughter of Rørik, as his wife. In a fit of jealousy Fengi kills his brother. This brings us into the action of Hamlet. Amleth, Orvendil’s son (and Rørik’s nephew), feigns madness, though that is not enough to fool his
uncle Fengi, who abstains from killing Amleth himself for political reasons. After being sent on a mission to England that Fengi hoped would bring on his death, Amleth returns at his own funeral and takes revenge on Fengi for his father’s death. This would be where the play narrative ends. Davidson suggests that the story leading up to Fengi’s death could be a separate narrative from that which continues because it is told in Amleth’s speech to his people and again in a depiction on Amleth’s shield. The idea that it may be a separate tale only complicates the transmission history between Gesta Danorum and Hamlet, as we shall see (Davidson 91). Fengi’s death marks the end of Book III and Book IV opens on Amleth addressing his people, taking over the governance of Jutland and having further dealings in both England and Scotland, before being killed by Rørik’s successor (and Amleth’s cousin) Vigleik.

Whether you are looking at Hamlet through the lens of the Gesta Danorum or not, the play opens in media res. At the beginning of the play Hamlet’s uncle Claudius has already married Gertrude, Hamlet’s mother and widow of King Hamlet, Prince Hamlet’s father. Hamlet’s father’s ghost reveals to the protagonist that he was murdered by his brother Claudius. Hamlet is able to stall his enemies and further reveal the guilt of his uncle Claudius by feigning madness. Hamlet confronts his mother about Claudius and accidentally kills Claudius’s spy Polonius, father of Ophelia, the woman who seems to be in love with Hamlet. Ophelia becomes deranged and drowns, most likely an act of suicide, though it might also have been an accident. Claudius tries to send Hamlet to England to be killed by the English on Claudius’s behalf, but when this plan fails, as it did in Saxo Grammaticus’s tale, Claudius arranges for Laertes, Polonius’s son and hence Hamlet’s enemy, to fence with Hamlet, but with a poisoned-tipped foil. In this match Laertes kills Hamlet, but Hamlet kills both Laertes and Claudius with the same foil. Gertrude dies by drinking poison Claudius laid out for Hamlet in case the fencing match did not go as planned. Prince Fortinbras of Norway, whose advance has been threatened throughout the play, steps in at the end and takes the Danish crown.

The events in Gesta Danorum and Hamlet, Prince of Denmark are similar enough to posit a direct relation between the texts, but different enough and separated enough by time for the relation to be unknown. It is the Gesta Danorum specifically, and less the rest of the medieval Scandinavian tradition of Amleth, that starts the textual journey to becoming Hamlet, though other sources, which will be discussed later, cannot definitively be ruled out. For instance, if the killing of Fengi is a separate tradition, which may have been indicated by its retelling within the text, it may have been transmitted from parallel sources, though again the similarities between the stories suggest some sort of transmission link between the two texts. Work that has been done in this area is summed up by William F. Hansen: “I do not, however, take up the old problem of the origin of the Hamlet story, not because the question is uninteresting, but because it appears to be unanswerable” (Hansen xi-ii). Scholars, interested in the historicity of either text, have done some work in tracing the Amleth tradition. A text of Gesta Danorum was printed in Paris in 1514 and a copy of the Amleth story was told by François de Belleforest in the fifth volume of Histoires tragiques in 1570 (Hansen 66). This is supposedly a transitional text, though Davidson, not unbiased as an editor of Saxo Grammaticus, sides with Yngve Olsson in arguing that Shakespeare instead used a simple Latin version of the Gesta Danorum as his source material, dispensing with possible intermediaries (Davidson 67). An earlier Hamlet, no longer extant, was acted in 1589, and it is believed to have been the work of Thomas Kyd, though Philip Edwards indicates that that also is uncertain (Edwards 3). The textual tradition of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark itself is complicated, as there is not one definitive text for how Hamlet was acted on the stage in Shakespeare’s day (Edwards 8). There is also a suggestion that Shakespeare was with the acting troupe that went to Elsinore in 1586; this does not offer any clear suggestions as to what impact this may have made on the playwright, but suggests further ambiguous
Danish inspiration for the play, either through sources or through contact with Elsinore (Srigley 178).

Proving the influence of the earlier text on the former is impossible and undoubtedly unimportant, because the texts are separated by, among other things, time, place, genre, and author. And yet the existence of both versions of this story impacts the way that both are read. Hamlet presides over the mental space of at least the English readers of the Gesta Danorum, and the presence of the medieval tale (including the clear, though hard to define, link between the two texts) makes the play a work of medievalism. Edwards identifies the following as the most important changes from the medieval tale to the Elizabethan play:

1. The murder becomes secret; 2. A ghost tells Hamlet of the murder and urges revenge; 3. Laertes and young Fortinbras are introduced; 4. Ophelia’s role is extended and elevated; 5. The players and their play are introduced; 6. Hamlet dies as he kills the king. (Edwards 2)

Differences and similarities between the two texts may occur for any number of reasons, but looking at the texts through this comparative lens brings out certain readings. Thinking about the play as an expression of medieval influences the way we read the text. Instead of trying to sort out the exact medieval influences on Shakespeare’s work, it is more fruitful to see how having knowledge of the medieval tale, and the Gesta Danorum in particular, directs our understanding of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark.

Saxo Grammaticus wrote the Gesta Danorum ("Deeds of the Danes") over many years. Scholars argue about the order in which the books were written, but the completion of the work probably occurred between 1208 and 1218 (Davidson 1). In the Preface Saxo states that he is writing this work on behalf of his patron and in the service of constructing a national identity:

cum cetere naciones rerum suarum titulis gloriari, uoluptatemque ex maiorum recordacione percipere soleant, Danorum maximus pontifex Absalon patriam nostrum, cuius illustrande maxima semper cupiditate flagrabat.

because other nations are in the habit of vaunting the fame of their achievements, and joy in recollecting their ancestors, Absalon, Archbishop of Denmark, had always been fired with a passionate zeal to glorify our fatherland.

(3)

As Saxo points out, he is engaging in a literary trend, prominent in this period of the Middle Ages, of creating a national history and identity for his community (Davidson 6). Saxo writes in Latin because works of national history, like Bede’s Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum and Paul the Deacon’s Historia Langobardorum, tended to be, though were not always, written in Latin (Hansen 40).

The first books of the Gesta Danorum discuss the distant and largely mythic past, in which a dragon fight that occurs in Book II does not seem out of place. The story of Amleth, his father Orvendil and his evil uncle Fengi fit into this legendary section of the text. Saxo argues for the historicity of these stories by attributing them to sources: the Preface gives credit to sources such as Danish oral tradition and the “Tylensium industria” (diligence of the men of Iceland) who continue to “officia continuae sobrietatis exerceant, omniaque vitae momenta ad excolendam alienorum operum noticiam conferre solet” (pursue a steady routine of temperance and devote all their time to improving our knowledge of others’ deeds) (5). Based on the way Saxo treats his early material, and the way that other texts are similarly constructed, it is clear that these fanciful tales do not break with the expectations of Saxo’s audience; for them the legendary past was more fantastic than the more recent one, but events in the early books and events in the later books both depict, for that audience, the Danish past.
It is not possible to confirm Saxo’s sources, so there is no way to know what material they covered exactly or what Saxo may have added himself to the narrative. Nevertheless, between Saxo’s claims and extant external sources there is enough evidence to suggest the Amleth tale is rooted in longstanding Scandinavian traditions. Hansen, studying the Amleth narrative in Saxo Grammaticus, has identified five medieval Danish chronicles that give a very truncated version of the life of Amleth (Annales Ryenses [The Annals of Ryd], Annales Slesvicensis [The Annals of Slesvig], Runekrøniken [The Runic Chronicle], Gesta Danorum pa danske [The History of the Danes in Danish], and Sagnkrøniken [The Legend Chronicle]), which suggests a wide knowledge in Denmark (Hansen 147-9). Sources in Iceland also suggest there was a longstanding tradition there. The Ambales Saga, recorded after the Middle Ages, tells a romantic version of the same story as found in Saxo (Hansen 38). There is also, dating from about two centuries before the Gesta Danorum, a reference by an Icelandic poet to ‘Amloði’s meal,’ referring to sand (Hansen 5). This mirrors the event in the Gesta Danorum where, in his feigned madness, Amleth refers to the sand on the shore as flour that “eadem albicantibus maris procellis permolita esse” (had been ground by the foaming billows when it was stormy) (79). Hansen demonstrates that there may be a link between this story and Scandinavian words for fool: “as a common noun amlóði is current in Icelandic in the sense of ‘an imbecile, weak person,’ and it survives in Norwegian dialect as amlod ‘a fool’” (Hansen 6).

So Saxo Grammaticus constructs his ‘history’ by bringing together a narrative out of a combination of these sources. It is important to analyze Saxo’s role as an historian because of how much historicity and the textual tradition have been the mainstay of English scholarship on the Gesta Danorum, directly because of the popularity of Hamlet. When scholars have gone looking for Hamlet sources or an historical Hamlet they have been led here, and have been disappointed with the historicity (Welsh 4). And many have been led here: Philip Edwards, in his introduction to the New Cambridge Shakespeare edition, does not overestimate Hamlet’s importance when he states “it is probably safe to say that in the world’s literature no single work has been so extensively written about as Hamlet, Prince of Denmark” (Edwards 32). Hilda Ellis Davidson, in her introduction to Peter Fisher’s translation of the first nine books of Saxo Grammaticus, shows how English scholarship of the text has centered around the Amleth story (Davidson 2). Hansen’s work, while about the Amleth tale, is called Saxo Grammaticus and the Life of Hamlet, even though Hamlet and Amleth are not etymologically related (Hansen 6). Therefore, while it is clear that Shakespeare (or at least the sources for Shakespeare’s Hamlet) chose that English name based on its resemblance to Amleth, there is no reason to suppose the Amleth of Saxo Grammaticus should be Anglicized for modern readers as Hamlet in translation or scholarship, unless it is to remind Shakespearean readers why they are researching Saxo Grammaticus in the first place. Davidson attributes the first translation of Saxo into English by O. Elton in 1894 to the popularity of Shakespeare’s play (Davidson 67). English speaking scholars (and filmmakers, taking into consideration Gabriel Axel’s 1994 Royal Deceit, which tells the Gesta Danorum’s Amleth story, but only the parts that correspond with the play) have trouble representing Saxo Grammaticus outside of the lens of Hamlet.

Saxo is not just a compiler of sources, but a deliberate editor and creator of a specific narrative. The text may be pulling different sources for the Amleth story together, but Davidson has demonstrated that the narrative that comes out of the first books of Saxo Grammaticus specifically explores the ideology of kingship. Amleth is not just a story of a Danish king that should be included because this is a text about Danish kings, but a story that demonstrates different principles of good and bad kingship, and so is a kind of exemplar (Davidson 6). The text does not try to be objective but regularly interjects with value judgements about a king’s actions. For instance, summing up Amleth’s actions at the end of Book III the text states that “[i]taque et se solletier tuatus et parentem strenue ultus, fortiori
an sapientior existimari debat, incertum reliquit” (considering the skill with which he preserved himself and the energy with which he exacted atonement, one can hardly decide which to extol more, his courage or his wisdom) (84). When describing Fengi the text says:

[a]t ubi datus parricidio locus, cruenta manu funestam mentis satiavit. Trucidati quoque fratris uxore potitus incestam parricidio adiecit... Idem actrocitatem facti tanta calliditatis audacia textit, ut sceleris excusationem benevolentiae simulatione componeret parricidium que pietatis nomine coloraret.

[o]nce given an opportunity to dispatch him, Fengi dyed his hand in blood to satisfy his black desires. Besides butchering his brother he added incest to fratricide by taking possession of his wife... Fengi covered up this foul deed with such presumptuous cunning that he manufactured an excuse of kindheartedness for his crime, and gave the murder a coloring of scrupulous conduct (77).

The text helps the reader to make judgements about characters’ actions when the actions themselves might be interpreted either way. For instance, the king of England is treated negatively as having a “curam adumbratis” (malignant purpose) when he plots to kill Amleth to avenge Fengi, despite the fact that the king of England exchanged oaths with Fengi that they would do this (88). This action is not very different from Amleth’s vengeance, but the text leaves us in no doubt that killing Fengi was justified whereas killing Amleth is an evil plot on the part of the king of England. Gesta Danorum frames the Amleth story as a tale of two kings, one bad and one good, by using language that specifically makes value judgements about both kings’ actions and by including this story in a text that is interested in this overarching theme of kings; since the other narratives in the text are about kings, we are bound to notice the kingly actions in the Amleth story.

The Gesta Danorum makes Amleth particularly effective amongst other kings. The proto-Hamlet story, emphasizing Amleth’s cunning and revenge upon his uncle, is repeated, as has been mentioned, but the text also focuses on the unusual kingly qualities Amleth demonstrated during his feigned madness, including his ability to speak the truth (as a king should, according to the text) while trying to keep up this ruse: “[f]alsitatis enim alienus haberi cupiens, ita astuti an veriloquio permiscebat, ut nec dictis veracitas deeset, nec acuminis modus verorum indicio prodetur” (Amleth wanted to be held a stranger to falsehood, yet he mingled artfulness with plain speaking, so that he adhered to the truth without letting it show through to betray his acute mind) (79). The jockeying for position amongst nobles and within noble families, the wide travel, the political machinations through marriage, and the death in open battle with other kings are all interesting aspects of this story, each contributing to the characterization of Amleth as a good king, though the clever way that Amleth brings revenge on his uncle is what comes under focus when the tale is paired with Hamlet.

There are no political reasons why Saxo needs to portray Amleth so positively. This king is a minor king of Jutland, and not descended from, or contributing descendants to, the main Zealand line that Saxo is keenly interested in. Just as the setting of Shakespeare’s play in Denmark allows the play to open up to universal themes in England, this example is removed by dynasty as well as temporally from any royal audience the Gesta Danorum has, allowing the lessons of kingship to be universal. When talking about Fengi the text can give advice like “neque enim apud principes fides mendacio deest, ubi scouries interdum gratia redditur, obtrectatoribus honos” (if buffoons are sometimes favored and slanderers honored, people will certainly believe the lies of princes) and “quisquis enim uni se flagicio dedit, in aliud mox procluitor ruit, ita alterum incitamentum est” (whoever commits himself to one crime soon finds himself sliding downhill towards the next), offering morals for any leader (77). Amleth possesses the basic qualities necessary for a good king, including noble birth,
intelligence, martial power, and ambition, all of which are relevant for Saxo Grammaticus’s depiction of a good king.

The retention of Denmark in *Hamlet* is significant, not least of all because the story could have been set elsewhere to match the change in epoch. By keeping the play in Denmark the setting serves as a place both familiar and foreign to the audience. By keeping it familiar, English audiences recognize it as a real place. Gunnar Sjörgen shows that Elsinore is meant to resonate with an English audience because it was one of two ports English ships would have been familiar with (Sjörgen 69). Other places where an historical Denmark asserts itself is in the reference to the intemperate drinking, which Michael Srigley argues was a well-known aspect of the Danish court of Christian IV, a contemporary of Shakespeare (Srigley 168). It is mentioned several times as characteristic of the Danes, often by Hamlet, who states “though I am native here/ And to the manner born, it is a custom/ More honoured in the breach than the observance” (1.4.13-16). Wittenberg was a well-known school where there were many Danish students, and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are aristocratic Danish names (Srigley 168). However, while the references to a specific Denmark enrich the setting of the play, no references deny the universality of the Elsinore of *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*. If some names are distinctly Danish, others are Greek (Laertes, Ophelia), Latin or Neo-Latin (Claudius, Cornelius, Marcellus, Polonius), or Italian (Horatio, Barnardo) (Hansen 85). Edwards remarks that “Fortinbras, with its Frenchness (‘Strong-arm’), is an odd name for a Norwegian king and his son” (Edwards 70). Polonius’s reference to Danskers in 2.1.7 represents the confusion, because while it is clearly meant to be Danes, Sjörgen shows the word actually meant people from Danzig (Gdansk) in Poland, and that there is a strange geography at play, with a confusion between the borders of Denmark, Norway, and Poland (Sjörgen 69). Of course, Shakespeare may be representing a legitimate understanding of continental geography that did not correspond with reality, but regardless, the placement of Norway and Poland on the borders of Denmark tighten the action of the play, making the setting more claustrophobic, which has been noted during stagings of the play, so that it is not necessarily a mistake (Duffy 141). This is Denmark, but it is not just Denmark. Denmark is a stand-in for a state that is familiar, but not too familiar. In 2.2 when Hamlet exclaims “Denmark’s a prison,” Rosenkrantz replies “Then is the world one” (2.2.233-34). The choice and portrayal of Denmark is important to the message of kingship in *Hamlet*, because Denmark is recognizable to the English audience as a real place, and yet the way it is described would be foreign to people of Denmark. The general change of time, from a tale of the past to a tale of the imprecise present, allows the universality of the emotional components of the play to be augmented by a real, yet universal Denmark. Consequently, the ideas about kingship put forth in the play are not specific to Denmark, but can be applied to all kings, and all nations, or at least to power structures familiar to Elizabethan audiences. When Saxo Grammaticus’s *Gesta Danorum* and Shakespeare’s *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* are juxtaposed, the reader is drawn to what it means to be king or to hold power. Unlike *Gesta Danorum*, it is not as important that it seem a real time or place to its audience. This lack of specificity is significantly different from the *Gesta Danorum*, since Saxo’s purpose is to create a specifically national history, one that sets Denmark apart from other countries, but that demonstrates Denmark is likewise as worthy as others of a national history. Despite this lack, *Hamlet* is still similar to Saxo and to the tetralogies because it is similarly interested in nation building. Perry, commenting on Benedict Anderson, demonstrates the early modern fascination with the “imagined community” of England (Perry 173). The idea of an imagined nation does not have to be limited to depictions of one’s own nation. *Hamlet*, like the tetralogies, is concerned with nation and statehood, organized around a central kingship. The medieval narrative has been brought closer to audiences by updating the Danish references, but maintains distance from home and relation to the original tale by retaining Denmark as a location. Most importantly, it retains the theme of kingship from *Gesta*
Danorum, although it is no longer Germanic kingship, or even medieval kingship from the High Middle Ages, but the age of absolute central rule, i.e. the age of monarchs like Elizabeth and Henry IV of France who were able to control large territories directly by means of elaborate bureaucracies (Perry 175). Analyzing Elizabethan plays that engage with the Middle Ages, Perry states that “for though these plays stage certain kinds of cultural heterogeneity … Helgerson is clearly correct to argue that they are ultimately plays about the consolidation of royal power conceived of as central to a brand of national identity” (Perry 174). Hamlet is engaging with the Middle Ages, though in a way that puts history on the backburner.

Drinking at funerals, fostering, and sworn brotherhood, all of which are part of the social and political structure of the kingdom in Gesta Danorum, have different places in the social and political structure in Hamlet, though they have not entirely disappeared (Hansen 83). When looking at the importance of the social and political structure to Amleth’s motivations (the importance of lineage to kingship and societal expectations of revenge dictate his actions), this draws attention to the importance of the political structure to Hamlet’s motivations. An elective monarchy is an aspect of Germanic kingship, old-fashioned even by Saxo Grammaticus’s time. The Gesta Danorum balances an antiquarian idea of what Germanic kingship was in a mythic heroic age and what kingship looked like at the beginning of the thirteenth-century. In the Gesta Danorum it is common for brothers to take over kingship, as royal blood and kingly qualities are more important than primogeniture. Fengi and Orvendil ruled together. Edwards argues that for Elizabethan audiences this was very antiquated, and that they had a “deep emotional commitment to primogeniture and the right of a son to inherit” (Edwards 42). He goes on to say that “for the audience, the system is a legalism which runs counter to their instinctive sense of rightness” (Edwards 42). The people who elect kings, an important group in the Migration Age depicted in Gesta Danorum, are called the “rabble” in the Elizabethan play:

The rabble call him lord,
And as the world were now but to begin,
Antiquity forgot, custom not known,
The ratifiers and props of every word,
They cry ‘Choose we! Laertes shall be king.’
Caps, hands and tongues applaud it to the clouds,
‘Laertes shall be king, Laertes king!’ (4.5.102-08)

This is not an ancient Germanic election, but simply a country that does not honor those who are the kings by right of primogeniture. This affects Hamlet, who is the offended party. His loss of a father is also the loss of a promised office, which should have been his by right of primogeniture.

When the system falls apart, and royalty cannot be maintained, the state falls apart. An interesting similarity between Gesta Danorum and Hamlet is the conflation between the person of the king and the political body that makes up the nation. Gesta Danorum means “Deeds of the Danes,” but it is a history of the deeds of exclusively Danish kings. A history of the people is a history of the kings, and this is true of the other Latin national histories that Saxo references. It is interesting, then, to see the way the king stands in for the country in Hamlet, Prince of Denmark. Rosencrantz, talking about the office of the king, says that “Never alone/ Did the king sigh, but with a general groan” (3.3.22-23). Laertes, when convincing Ophelia not to pursue Hamlet, says that he may have lost interest because

He may not, as unvalued persons do,
Carve for himself, for on his choice depends
The sanctity and health of this whole state,
And therefore must his choice be circumscribed
Unto the voice and yielding of that body
Whereof he is the head. (1.3.19-24)

The king must act for the country. In the play, not only are kings responsible for the state, but they stand in for it. Claudius and King Hamlet are both referred to as Denmark, the King of Norway is called Norway and it is the same for England; when Claudius sends a message to the King of England for Hamlet to be killed, he says “Do it England,/ For like the hectic in my blood he rages,/ And thou must cure me” (4.3.61-63). Therefore, there is added significance to Marcellus’s line that “something is rotten in the state of Denmark” (1.5.90) and to Hamlet’s statement that “Denmark’s a prison” (2.2.233) because in both cases it shows how there is something wrong in the state, and also in the mental capacity of him who embodies the state.

In the Gesta Danorum Amleth’s madness is a political act. Amleth uses it to save himself from the same fate as his father: “eoque calliditatis genere non solum Ingenium textit, uerum eciam salute defendit” (this piece of artfulness, besides concealing his true wisdom, safeguarded his life) (88). This is what made the tale distinct from the other tales of kingship in this large body of work, and why it gets passed down to us. But the nature of Hamlet’s madness is different. If the act of madness is also for self-preservation, it is of a different kind. Saxo Grammaticus praises Amleth for his cunning, but there are no narratorial interjections directing the audience’s reading in Hamlet; Hamlet’s treatment of Ophelia in his madness does not seem praiseworthy, though the ambiguity of his madness is part of what draws in audiences. In Saxo Grammaticus the madness is a way for Amleth to remain connected to his world, and to ensure his proper inheritance. The ‘antic disposition’ marks Hamlet’s alienation from his world, and brings on Claudius’s suspicion that something is wrong (Edwards 46). Claudius’s guilt is revealed through feigned (or maybe real) madness, which allows for political action on Hamlet’s part, but Fengi’s guilt is known by everyone and Amleth’s madness is a stalling technique, allowing him to kill Fengi when he is ready. Madness in both texts is a way of enacting family and dynastic politics, though the madness in the two texts has opposite effects; Hamlet uses it to bring on his political action and Amleth uses it to stall his.

Hamlet’s character is more complex than Amleth, as Hamlet, Prince of Denmark is arguably more (psychologically) complex than Gesta Danorum, but both texts end their narratives by commenting on how royal a personage the protagonist could have been if fate had been kinder. Gesta Danorum ends the tale of Amleth by talking about his death in battle: “[h]ic Amlethi exitus guit, qui, si parem naturae atque fortunae indulgentiam expertus fuisset, aequasset fulgore superos, Herculea virtutibus opera transscendisset” (such was Amleth’s departure. If fate had tended him as kindly as nature, he would have shone as brightly as the gods and his courage would have allowed him to surpass the labours of Hercules) (92). Fortinbras, who arrives just in time in Hamlet to pick up the political pieces, commands:

Let four captains
Bear Hamlet like a soldier to the stage,
For he was likely, had he been put on,
To have proved most royal; and for his passage,
The soldier’s music and the rite of war
Speak loudly for him. (5.2.374-379)

The two texts talk about the character of the royal personage, because both texts share an interest in expressing an ideology of kingship in addition to a narrative. Looking at Hamlet, Prince of Denmark through the lens of the Gesta Danorum, what Shakespeare highlights in the medieval tradition is the variety of ways that kings shaped their state and how the character of a king is important to his ability to rule.

The texts together evoke a sense of history because that is one thing Saxo Grammaticus claims his text is, and because the Gesta Danorum comes up when we are trying to locate sources or history for Shakespeare; the existence of the Gesta Danorum, rightly or not, lends
historical weight to Shakespeare’s narrative. *Hamlet* is not considered a historical fiction text in the same way that the tetralogies are (it is not a work of fiction grounded in real historical events and characters recognizable to the audience), but it has colored the popular interpretation of any possible historical Amleth that may have lived, as well as real locations in Denmark. Saxo Grammaticus says “*insignis eius sepulture ac nomine campus apud Iutiam exstat*” (there is a plain in Jutland famous as [Amleth’s] burial place and named after him) (92). Hansen states that there was either a medieval tradition associating Ammelhede with Amleth, or that a succession of etymologists have made the association (Hansen 145). However, it is at Elsinore, in Zealand, not Jutland, where this tale, and at times a supposed ‘historical’ personage, have been commemorated. Starting in the eighteenth-century, tourists came to Elsinore, modern Danish Helsingor, because of its association with the play. Hansen jokes that “some tourists were inevitably disappointed to discover in Elsinore a castle that was too recent for Hamlet’s time, but others cheerfully began to remake Elsinore to fit their expectations” (Hansen 90). According to Hansen, it was in the nineteenth-century that businessmen tried to profit from Elsinore as the ‘actual’ burial place of the ‘actual’ Hamlet (Hansen 90). Though it is no longer associated with a ‘historical’ Hamlet, the first sentence on Denmark’s tourism website about Helsingør states “in Helsingør lies Kronborg Castle, made famous as Elsinore in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*” (Denmark.dk). Shakespeare’s mark lies over our interpretation of Danish medieval history, as well as Danish landscape.

As Davidson says, it is “no longer in fashion” to identify literary characters with historical figures (Davidson 68). And yet, our interpretations are influenced by the interpretations of older historians and literary critics who did find it fashionable. As Perry and Watkins point out,

if every medieval biographer and historian knows that Shakespeare got it wrong, they still talk about him as if his fictions not only prompted their investigations but somehow continue to authorize them in the minds of the reading public.

(Perry and Watkins 1)

Shakespeare’s play and Saxo Grammaticus’s national history use the past to construct their tales in distinctly different ways. Both are engaged in a kind of medievalism; where Saxo asks readers to think about how a tale of the medieval past can offer a moral for the present, Shakespeare uses the past to talk about the present, without as specifically asking his audience to think about the tale as history. But both *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* and *Gesta Danorum* discuss the relationship between king and state and conclude that the king is the state, and vice versa. Amleth must root out what is rotten in the state of Denmark as much as Hamlet must, though for both that means different things. Shakespeare roots Amleth in our mind as Hamlet as surely as he roots the characters of the medieval English kings into the introductions of history books.

References


Religious Discourse and Interdisciplinarity in Sport Studies

By Zachary T. Smith
Department of Comparative Religion
zachary.t94.smith@wmich.edu

In 2008, Scott Kretchmar wrote that disciplinary specialization and the utilitarian rationalization for the study of human movement were “silos and bunkers” that were vital to the evolution of kinesiology into a formal discipline. However, he also observed that these same bunkers and silos have a tendency to unnecessarily fracture the discipline as well as divorce research from its cultural context. These observations would seem to ring true of most formal academic disciplines, and they are especially pertinent to the broader constructs of leisure, recreation, and sport studies.

Perhaps it is no surprise then that religious and theological explorations of sport have remained few and far between, as theological studies perceive sport and game related studies as trivial, and as leisure theorists find social scientific methods more compelling. And yet, religious traditions and thinkers have been offering accounts and ethics of leisure activities for thousands of years, and anthropological evidence suggests the origination of sport and game play arose in, or at least around, the context of religious cult activity (Huizinga, 1949; Guttmann, 2007). Further, contemporary research has indicated that religion plays an important role in structuring the thought and behavior of religious persons towards their leisure (Waller, 2009) and spiritual and transcendental explanations have been increasingly considered in phenomenologies of sport and play (Parry, Nesti, & Watson, 2011) as well as therapeutic recreational models (Wozencroft, Waller, Hayes, & Brown, 2012).

Somewhat informally, the discipline has grown significantly over the last decade, and the last year alone has seen several such monographs published. More formally, the Inaugural Global Congress on Sports and Christianity was recently announced to take place in 2016 at York St. Johns University along with the launch of the new International Journal for Sports and Christianity.

With this evidence it seems time to recognize religious accounts or theologies of sport as a contributor to the greater field of sport studies, and one that will enable a richer understanding of the cultural context of sport. Along this tack, this paper will offer an introduction to such religious conceptions by looking specifically at the theology of sport discipline from the tradition of Western Christendom.

The sketch will begin by referencing the long history of Christian commentary on sporting activities by the likes of Tertullian and Richard Baxter, as well as referencing formal Church declarations. It will then overview the Victorian development of Muscular Christianity and proceed with an overview of some more recent texts which illustrate the interdisciplinary nature of theological work on sport as well as show some of the ways in which theological explorations of sport can contribute to the broader field of sport studies. The paper will conclude with a few notes about present gaps in the discipline, with an eye toward offering suggestions for future engagement.

Historical Overview

The Patristics

The Patristic Age of church history refers to a period of time from roughly AD 100 to AD 450 — the time period around the time of the Apostle John’s death to the Council of Chalcedon (Fergusen, 2005, p. 287). It is named for the collection of figures which constitute the Fathers of the Early Christian Church, and under whose guidance many of the formal doctrines were solidified. Many of these figures, while concerned with the orthodox
formulation of dogma were nonetheless overtly pastoral figures equally burdened by caring for the many members of their spiritual communities.

Such was the case for both Tertullian and St. Augustine, and this was reflected in their voluminous writings to their churches, which included many prescriptions about how to live an ideal Christian life. Not surprisingly, this included recommendations about leisure choices, specifically including instruction on the kinds of sports and games that were unacceptable for Christian participation or spectating. And while modern readers may smirk at these puritanical prescriptions, they were nonetheless critically composed to fit within the religious framework of these early Christians. Indeed, in many ways these writings reflect a level of critical reflection about contemporary culture that present day society would do well to emulate.

Tertullian, writing at the beginning of the second century dedicated an entire treatise to issues surrounding public games. De Spectaculis as the treatise is titled, was primarily a polemic written to instruct against Christian participation in the spectacles and games laced with pagan cultic meaning and rituals. Chapter 18 specifically deals with forms of sport that intentionally employ violence. Of intentionally violent sports Tertullian (trans. 1885) writes, “you will not refuse to admit that the things which are done there are not for you to look upon: the blows, and kicks, and cuffs, and all the recklessness of hand, and everything like that disfiguration of the human countenance, which is nothing less than the disfiguration of God’s own image” (para. 18). Tertullian instructs that the Christian should avoid athletic contests that intentionally mar the human “countenance,” for this “countenance” bears the image of God. This brief passage provides a great illustration of theological reflection on sport as Tertullian develops his ethic out of the doctrine of the Imago Dei and what it means to possess the image of God.

The Medievals

If Patristic positions on sport were occasioned by deep and faithful reflections on Christian doctrine, the medieval period would eschew theological principles for more pragmatic concerns. Indeed, it seems that ecclesiastical opposition to the popular games and tournaments of the day was occasioned more as a response in support of the commencement of the crusades than as legitimate theological criticism (Harvey, 2014, pp. 41-43). In this way the Church officially condemned what amounted to the big-time organized sport events of the day because it saw the knight’s tournaments and melees as direct competition for its own agenda in the holy land. Theologian Lincoln Harvey notes that this ban was issued in 1130 and then reiterated again in 1139 and yet again in 1148 and 1179 (2014, pp. 42-43). Though these were formal declarations of the Church, they mostly failed at offering any explicitly theological rational for these decisions. What resulted was a formal position of the Church against the tournaments, while the people, knight’s, and many parish clergy continued on with their popular festivals and games.

Eventually, in 1320 the Church would capitulate and rescind the ban on tournament games (Harvey, 2014, p. 44). The popularity amongst the lay population was too much to overcome, and the Church found that it could reap significant social and financial benefits by allowing — and even sponsoring — such events. Interestingly, such an instrumental view (whether for or against) of sport event pastimes possesses a striking resemblance to modern day “sports ministry” programs that aim to employ sports as a means of proselytizing. As such, it bears reflecting on whether this is an appropriate use of sport — and perhaps, to what extent it is ever appropriate to use sport at all.

The Early Moderns & Puritans

In some ways, it was the inauthentic behavior of the Church that lead figures such as Martin Luther and John Calvin to try to reform, and later separate from the Roman Church. Their efforts would spark a reformation that would come to infiltrate all aspects of continental
social and political thought and would become, if philosopher Charles Taylor (2007) is to be believed, the very grounds upon which enlightenment modernity would be founded upon. In fact, it is this very thesis that Steven Overman (2011) undertakes in his book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Sport*, which he finds to be thoroughly rooted in Puritan principles — commitments to hard work, asceticism, personal piety, and temperance.¹⁰

These principles are readily apparent in the work of Richard Baxter, arguably the leading figure in the English Puritan movement. A prolific writer, one of Baxter’s major works was his four volume *Christian Directory* (1678) which was a comprehensive survey of practical “Puritan” theology. In *Christian Directory*, Baxter presented an ethic for living on virtually every topic imaginable to the late seventeenth century imagination, including a chapter on “Directions about Sports and Recreations, and against Excess and Sin therein” (1678, pp. 460-465). His directions permitted varying forms of sport and recreation, though he placed a high premium on the suited-ness of the activity to the individual (Brailsford, 1991). In this way Baxter recognized the general ethical neutrality of most sport and recreation activities and placed the ethical imperative on the individual.

Placing the ethical impetus on the individual was a typically puritan way of including sport and recreational activities in personal piety. Baxter teased this out even further by juxtaposing leisure activities with work, and stating that leisure should be chosen such that it furthered an individuals work, which was seen as synonymous with carrying out God’s will. And though Baxter recognized the benefits of recreation and even athletic activities, he cautioned against pursuing such activities for their own sake. Sport may be an enjoyable thing — which is permitted and even necessary — but for the Puritan it was never to be pursued solely for its enjoyment, as it was “to fit the body and mind for ordinary duty to God” (Baxter, 1678, p. 386).

The Puritans have suffered the brunt of much critical scholarship as it regards to their views on sports and recreation, though this is slowly being countered by recent scholarship which notes the ambivalence towards sport as recreation that is likely to be a more accurate picture of Puritan thought and behavior (Daniels, 1993). Still, regardless of the historical implications, Puritans like Baxter thought deeply about the role of sport in their lives and the ways that it influenced their Christian faith.

**Victorian England and the Rise of Muscular Christianity**

Victorian England was a time of political peace and prosperity, which also featured a great deal of social change and unrest. The industrial revolution gave rise to a new leisure class, and the nature of manual labor greatly changed (Cunningham, 1980). Physical and biological sciences experienced great leaps, formal disciplines like human physiology were established and in the midst of this, the strong nationalist desire to maintain the status of Britain’s imperial legacy (Putney, 2001; Watson, Weir, & Friend, 2005).

All of these factors combined to make Victorian England fertile ground for a “health revolution” (Haley, 1978, p. 3; Watson, Weir, & Friend, 2005, p. 2), predictably extending into educational and religious considerations of the body. Like the Puritans, the Victorians saw the body and associated physical pursuits like sports as an instrument to be used in God’s program. They differed however, in that they found sport to contribute to the positive moral formation and development of young men instead of as a road to vice and moral malformation. This belief in sports as a primary developer of moral and spiritual character came to be known as Muscular Christianity.

Charles Kingsley is generally recognized as a leading figure of the Victorian Muscular Christian movement, and his 1874 writings in *Health and Education* (1874) offer one of the most often quoted passages of the time:
Religious Discourse and Interdisciplinarity

The Beginnings of Modern Inquiry

In a chapter of the volume *The History of Exercise and Sports Science*, Scott Kretchmar (1997) locates the beginnings of the philosophy of sport discipline in philosophy of education at the end of the nineteenth century — notably converging back on multidisciplinary giants and educational theorists like John Dewey and William James at the turn of the twentieth century. Not coincidentally, this coincided with the end of the Victorian age that saw the development of Muscular Christianity. Throughout this period, “sport studies” if the anachronism can be tolerated, was primarily tied to its pedagogical potential. Because of this, any sports literature, including of religious orientation, tended to deal with sports in terms of its potential moral and character formation. Understandably, any work on sports from religious perspectives at this time was indeterminable from a disciplinary standpoint. Sports were a derivative category of study and a consequential discipline, of interest only for its secondary contributions to other matters of primary concern.

In 1938, and later translated to English in 1949, historian Johann Huizinga authored a groundbreaking and now classic work titled *Homo Ludens*, which proposed play as the fundamental element of human culture, standing in stark contrast to Scheler’s more famous articulation of *homo faber*. This historical anthropological work spurred an interest in the play phenomenon from a variety of social scientific and humanity perspectives, and French sociologist Roger Callois published his commentary *Man, Play and Games* (1958/1961) which built critically on Huizinga’s work. In this same period, Catholic philosopher Josef Pieper published his own *Leisure: The Basis of Culture* (1948).

Gustave Thils in 1955 was perhaps one of the first to articulate a need for a “theology of the body and of sport,” though as Weir has noted, his subsequent work never went on to address this (Thils quoted in Weir, 2011, p. 6). The next two decades would see a sharp rise in theological discourse on sport and play. The first edition of Michael Novak’s famous work *The Joy of Sports* was published in 1967 and is generally recognized as seen as “the first systematic study of the sports-faith interface” (Watson & Parker, 2013, p. 11). In 1970 D.L. Miller wrote *God’s and Games: Toward a Theology of Play* and just two years later renowned theologian Jurgen Moltmann published his own *Theology of Play* (1972). By the time Robert Johnston wrote his definitive *The Christian at Play* in 1983, theology of sport was finally starting to amass a significant amount of modern literature. The 1980’s saw Shirl James Hoffman, Robert J. Higgs, and Joseph Price begin to publish on theology and sport, whom Watson and Parker consider as three of the four founders of the modern discipline along with Robert Novak (Watson & Parker, 2013, pp.11-12).

Since then, a number of volumes have been published in the area (Baker, 2007; Harvey, 2014; Ellis, 2014; St. Sing, 2004), as well as the establishment of several professional
Disciplinary Considerations and Case Studies

In considering theology of sport a discipline of inquiry in its own right, it seems necessary to at least briefly treat its methodology. This is perhaps especially important considering that theology of sport was developed in an interdisciplinary manner and conversations about it have often been and even continue to be hosted by parent disciplines other than theology. Indeed, to date, many authors writing on the topic have come from parent disciplines other than religious or theological studies.

To this end, rather than seek to establish a distinctly theological methodology for the study of sport, this section will offer several short reviews of different texts all broadly “theological” in nature. This both affirms Kretchmar’s call for more interdisciplinarity in sports studies as well as recognizes the legitimacy of theological reflection as it occurs in varied contexts and methods. To this end, Overman’s *Sports and the Protestant Work Ethic* will be presented as a work from a socio-historical theological perspective; Touchdown’s *for Jesus* by Marcia Mount Shoop will represent a more contemporary socio-cultural perspective; Randolph Feezell’s “Tim Tebow, Religious Diversity, and Religious Belief” will operate as a philosophical text speaking into and about the theological claims of religious believers; Susan Saint Sing’s *Spirituality of Sport* presents a psychological phenomenology from a religious perspective; and Lincoln Harvey’s *A Brief Theology of Sport* rounds out the field as a work of systematic theology.

Socio-historical: Overman’s *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Sports.*

Overman’s (2011) *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Sports* is a fine piece of scholarship that documents the influence that historically protestant thought has had on modern views of sport. While much of the text is historical in nature reviewing the history of protestant thought on recreation and leisure, Overman does well to establish the connections of this thought to modern day sports discourse, much as Max Weber had done in his work *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1930/2001).

Overman offers a lucid overview of the Lutheran doctrine of calling, the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, and the personal pietism of the Puritanism and connects them to the industrialized and capitalistic mechanisms hard at work in American society. This text, while written from a historical trajectory is nonetheless decidedly theological in nature, offering a historical-theological “social epistemology” of sport, as one reviewer has commented (Vannatta, 2012) and performing the kind of historical analysis that provides the foundation for constructive theological works on sport to build on.

Socio-Cultural Studies: Mount Shoop’s *Touchdown’s for Jesus*

Mount Shoop’s (2014) *Touchdown’s for Jesus and Other Signs of Apocalypse* is a recent and under-discussed work that treats a variety of socio-cultural issues facing sports like gender and race in fresh way. Mount Shoop brings a feminist theological perspective to these issues, which she terms as “apocalypses” which provide an opening into the fabric of sports. In this she levies the theological concept of apocalypse or “unveiling the truth” to provide a critical theological critique of modern sport.

But her theological critique is more than just social commentary on sport, and she ties it to the constructive project of “redeeming” sport from the classist, racist, and sexist “demons” that have come to possess it. In fact, her proposal is that once those demons are called out, then they can be exorcised which will enable the sports world to be inhabited and habituated with “new, more life-giving ways of being in the world” (2014, p. 103-104). In situating her proposal theologically, Mount Shoop recognizes the liturgical potential of sports — its power
to “inform the ways we build relationships, the way we form communities, and the way we understand purpose in our lives” (2014, p. 103). This insight about the power of sport to both form and deform the sporting individual, as well as the sporting community and society at large is deeply theological — the liturgy is after all the pedagogy of the Church — as well as deeply apposite to the often exploitative culture of modern sports.

**Philosophy: Feezell’s “Tim Tebow, Religious Diversity, and Religious Belief”**

Randolph Feezell has authored numerous books and articles in the areas of ethics and philosophy of sport, including an article in the *International Journal for the Philosophy of Sport* titled “Tim Tebow, Religious Diversity, and Religious Belief” (2013). The primary thrust of the article is an argument about the ethics of role model figures using their platform as a pulpit for proselytism — especially in light of the fact of religious diversity (Feezell, 2013, p. 153). Throughout the course of the article, Feezell proposes that a better model for would be moral exemplars like Tebow: to hold religious convictions “fallibly” or “tentatively” which in turn will cause the tentative believer to refrain from proselytism and other exclusivist public displays of religiosity.

Feezell’s tentative belief thesis assumes a profoundly rationalist conception of the relationship between faith and practice. In doing so he limits the possibility of realizing proselytism as an ethical communicative practice (Smith, 2015). Instead of providing the “more thoughtful, more constructive engagement between faith and sports” that Tom Krattenmaker (2009, p. 3; also quoted in Feezell, 2013, pp. 138, 152) calls for, Feezell would prefer to see faith removed from the realm of sport altogether.

And so while the article is definitively a piece of philosophy, it also forays into public and moral theology, making profoundly theological statements about both the role of faith and religious practice in the life of the believer. It also serves as a prime illustration of a work that bears theological thinking on contemporary issues in sports studies from outside of any religious establishment.

**Psychology: Saint Sing’s *Spirituality of Sport***

Susan Saint Sing’s *Spirituality of Sport: Balancing Body and Soul* offers a personal window into the transcendental aspects of the sporting experience, and a kind of psychological phenomenology of the unified body and soul that participates in sport. Interestingly, Sing takes established notions of transcendental experience in sports and links them to the doctrine of the divine energies of God, which is a more obscure doctrine primarily in the Eastern Orthodox tradition that establishes the dogmatic basis of all mystical experience. According to Sing, human play “is an invitation passing back and forth between the energy of God and the energy here in this world’s creation” (2004, p. 10) so that when people play, they tap into “the energy of the universe” which is “the playfulness of God” (2004, p. 5). This participation in the divine energy establishes “the conjunction of two worlds” through the “communion of effort” (Sing, 2004, p. 13) which “coupl[es] the flesh with the spirit… creating a sacrament” (2004, p. 34).

Sing’s book is a mystical exploration of the sporting experience, but it is also a penetrating exploration of peak and flow experiences from a religiously transcendent perspective. And in may ways Sing’s proposal hearkens back to the classical Greek ideas about sport, spirit, and the body in a way that makes those ancient concepts relevant for contemporary consideration.

**Systematic Theology: Harvey’s *A Brief Theology of Sport***

In his book *A Brief Theology of Sport*, author Lincoln Harvey leverages the Christian doctrine of contingency — traditionally defined “as the dependence of finite being on God’s necessary being” — to provide a theological understanding and ensuing ethic for sport (Thiel,
From within this framework of contingency, Harvey posits sport—defined primarily by its autotelicity—as a "liturgy of creaturely contingency." In this liturgy, God steps back to allow humankind to experience her own freedom in a celebration of her created and contingent self, as herself (Harvey, 2014, p. 94). The implication of this view is that true or good sport is sport that finds its end only within itself. Sport which is used for other purposes becomes the instrument of an ulterior telos. This destroys the pure being of creaturehood experienced in sport, and ultimately corrupts it.

Such a view of sport has tremendous implications. It stands starkly against the instrumentalization of sport for any purpose—including the proselytizing missions of modern parochial sports programs, sport for development and peace initiatives, and of course, the capitalistic bonanza that is present day big-time sports (Smith, 2014b). And it begs everyone—religious and non-religious alike—to consider the fundamental nature of sports and the most basic reasons for participation in them.

Gaps and Future Considerations

Together, these texts illustrate the depth of religious reflection on sport, and show how theology can and does further contemporary conversations in sports studies. However they also demonstrate the relatively monolithic development of theologies of sport as a project of Western Christendom. In their extensive literature review, Watson and Parker (2014) cite seven texts on religion and sport from traditions outside of Christianity and include a brief note about the possibility of comparative approaches for work on religion and sport. Future work on sport could be greatly expanded by considering other religious perspectives.

Tangentially related, theology of sport conversations would be enriched by contributions from feminist and liberation theologies. Feminist theology would have particular saliency for issues of embodiment and gender plasticity in sport, which have been almost completely ignored in Christian commentary on sports but which are quickly developing as major themes in the broader context of sports studies. Similarly, liberation theology could help to moderate discussions about the ethics of sport development and peace programs which are often blindly promoted as forces of good in the world, despite serious ethical concerns (Smith, 2014).

Lastly, adopting the idea that sports operate with an internal logic and pedagogy that shapes the form of individuals and cultures, it would seem beneficial to consider and evaluate the forms of the sports themselves. That is, if it is accepted that different sports possess different ludic pedagogies, and if it is at least partially the place and purpose of religion to contribute to humanities understanding of the good life, then it would seem profitable to examine the value that each sport might offer. Doing so is likely to lead to tough questions about the appropriateness of certain sports, much in the way that Tertullian admonished against boxing. And while some of these conclusions could prove unpopular, theological perspectives on the values and virtue of sports could help to provide a much-needed corrective to the voyeuristic spectacles that have come to dominate the modern sporting landscape.

Conclusion

This paper has taken a birds eye view of the development of religious reflection on sport and as the commentary on these texts has shown, theological accounts of sport provide a relevant contribution to the overall discipline of sports studies and help to work against the “silo and bunker” mentality that Kretchmar has described by reuniting this research with one aspect of its cultural context. In this way religious discourses are able to respond to Tom Krattenmaker’s (2009) call and offer thoughtful and constructive engagement with the issues of modern sport.
References


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i As compared to other disciplines.

ii It should be noted that though this is the dominant paradigm in the literature, it is somewhat contested. For example, David Sansone (1988) contends that while early sport activity should be conceived of as ritual, the ritual nature of those activities need not necessarily be read as cultic or religious in nature.


iv This paper will largely be based on generally Judeo-Christian perspectives, as one example of religious discourse on sports. Thus references to the discipline of theology of sport in this paper should generally be understood as specifically referencing the Christian tradition. This is not to exclude or otherwise marginalize the perspectives of other religious traditions or to suggest that the religion and sport discipline only consists of work on Christianity and sports. As will be suggested towards the end of this paper, the discipline would benefit greatly from further exploration of a wide variety of religious lenses.

v It should be noted that the purpose of this paper is not to pose theology of sport as if it were a new discipline; rather, it is to acknowledge the long history of theological reflection on sport as well as recognize the recent more formal efforts that are “professionalizing” the discipline.

vi It should be noted that there is a disciplinary difference between religious studies and theological studies. In fact, McCutcheon (2014) suggests that theological studies are one of the objects of religious studies. Recognizing this as a legitimate distinction, but also allowing that the possibility for theology to speak constructively is a legitimate enterprise, this article attempts to make the case that theologies of sport have a legitimate place in the interdisciplinary field of sport studies inasmuch as it helps to culturally situate the study of sport. Additionally, while this article briefly sketches some history of Christian theological commentary on sport, the purpose is not to “do” history, or to specifically understand the ways that theology and sport influenced each other and society. The purpose is to situate modern theological reflections on sport in a historical stream of work, to understand the context for modern theological of sport, and ultimately to show that these reflections can be considered a legitimate part of the interdisciplinary dialogue of sport studies.

vii Specifically, these bans were made at the Council of Claremont (1130), the Second Lateran Council (1139), the Council of Rheims (1148), and the Third Lateran Council (1179). See Harvey (2014, pp. 42-43).

viii The major exception being that those killed in tournaments were to be denied a Christian burial since the death was considered the result of murder or suicide (Harvey, 2014, p. 43).

ix Puritan, for the sake of this broad overview, is defined as a tradition founded in Calvinism, which is itself a protestant stream of thought seen as synonymous with the thought of John Calvin and more formally articulated in the articles of the Synod of Dordt (1618-1619). See Overman (2011, p. 19).

x For some this formation was notably a malformation.
Though the German biologist Karl Groos wrote *The Play of Man* in 1901, Huizinga’s work gained much more traction in America.

While I have highlighted the major literature, Watson & Parker provide a detailed and extensive literature review of relevant works (Watson & Parker, 2013, p. 13; Watson & Parker, 2014).

The Christian Society for Kinesiology and Leisure Studies was officially formed in 2002.

The *Journal of the Christian Society for Kinesiology and Leisure Studies* has been published intermittently since 2010; the *International Journal of Religion and Sport* was published by Mercer University Press in 2009, but seems to have ceased after two volumes; The *International Journal on Sports and Christianity* is being planned to launch in 2016.

Mercer University Press publishes the Sports and Religion series; Routledge has published several titles broadly dealing with religious studies in its Routledge Research in Sport, Culture and Society series.

For an exhaustive list in each of these categories, see Watson & Parker (2014).

Michael Novak (philosophy, though much of his work has focused on philosophy of religion), Hoffman (Kinesiology), Higgs (English Literature), Matthisen (Sociology), Watson (Psychology), Parker (Sociology) though Price was a professor of religious studies and recent authors Marcia Mt. Shoop, Ellis, Harvey, and White all have backgrounds in religious or divinity studies.

Harvey is generally speaking about competitive sport.

To be fair, this review was conducted in a book specifically written on Christianity and sport, and certainly does not reflect the full extent of literature on non-Christian religions and sport. Still, it is vastly outnumbered by Christian literature on the subject.
God’s Getting Married: The Wedding at Cana as a Dramatization of Covenantal Fulfillment

By Rachael M. McGill
Department of Comparative Religion
rachael.m.mcgill@wmich.edu

John 2:1-11 kicks off the very first sign in that Gospel: the miracle of the changing of water to wine. Often when this passage is brought up, many focus on the fact that Jesus is capable of changing water into wine with the flick of his wrist and gloss over the rest of the details of the passage. However, a closer examination juxtaposing a bird’s-eye view of the passage in its literary context will reveal far more about the passage than a first-time reader might catch. By examining the nature of Jesus’ signs in John, key Johannine motifs, and John’s allusions to the Old Testament, one can find that the wedding passage is actually a depiction of a greater event that is yet to come: God marrying humanity. God illustrates what He is going to do at a wedding. This illustration functions in the same way as the rest of Jesus’ signs in the Gospel of John: they all depict an aspect of the kingdom of God. Thus, this article will conclude that the miracle at the wedding in Cana is a crucial event in the story of the restoration of Israel because it is a dramatization of the process of God uniting with humanity.

This article seeks to provide a new approach to eisegesis and, more importantly, exegesis—micro- and macro-interpretation of Jn 2:1-11, respectively—by examining the progression of the scene both within and in between the lines of the text. It also suggests that the major significance of the Cana passage with regard to the rest of the biblical story is its literal and symbolic connection to other events in the Old and New Testament, making this passage crucial to the progression of the story of covenantal fulfillment. Since this article suggests a new approach to the passage, this is not intended to provide an exhaustive counterargument to other scholarship. Rather, this article seeks to engage with some major scholarship and to determine how this new approach differs from previous interpretation. Overall, it suggests that the Cana passage is strikingly significant because of how and where it is placed within a progressing storyline.

Jn 2:1-2: DAY COUNTING, SYNOPTICS, SETTING OF THE PASSAGE

The passage begins as follows: “On the third day there was a wedding in Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding” (New American Bible, Jn 2:1-2). Note the timekeeping used by the author of the text; there is a total of eight days between Jn 1:19 and 2:1. The first is John the Baptist’s testimony to himself as the final prophet before the arrival of Jesus (Jn 1:19-28). The second is John the Baptist’s testimony to Jesus being the Son of God (Jn 1:29-34). The third is the Baptist sending Andrew and another disciple over to Jesus as he passed by them (Jn 1:35-40). The fourth is Andrew bringing his brother Simon to Jesus, who renames him Cephas, or in English translations, Peter (Jn 1:41-42). The fifth day is Jesus calling Philip and Nathaniel (Jn 1:43-51). Then comes “on the third day” in 2:1, bringing the total to eight days. In Jewish tradition eight is a crucial number: it signifies one full week plus the beginning of a new one. The day of the resurrection is also on the eighth day of the week; in accordance with Jewish tradition, the Sabbath is on the seventh day, since God rested from forming creation on the seventh day (Gn 2:2-3). Jesus’ resurrection, occurring on the first day of the new week, also seen as the eighth day of the week, has thus been referred to as the first day of a new creation. This is also the final point in the text where the author mentions a specific day save the resurrection,
where the author specifies, “on the first day of the week” (Jn 20:1). The fact that day counting in John all adds up to eight, then, is of no coincidence.

But why use “third day”? This phrase alone has puzzled some scholars. This is an obvious sign pointing forward to an event that is introduced by the other three Gospels in the same language, which makes a crucial point. The use of “third day” does refer back to a continuation of the events from John 1:43-51, which will be addressed later, but there is more beyond that. The concept of a significant event scheduled to happen on a third day is peppered throughout the Synoptic Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The only other significant event on a third day in John is the cleansing of the temple, in which Jesus proclaims he would rebuild it in three days once it is destroyed (Jn 2:19-20). The author of the text emphasizes that Jesus was really referring to his own body (Jn 2:21). The only event in all four Gospels that involves a rising of Jesus’ own body is, of course, the resurrection. Logically, the “third day” that all four of the Gospels refer to, then, is the resurrection. The explicit usage of “third day” in Jn 2:1, then, is obvious: Jn 2:1 refers directly to the resurrection. So not only is this event toward which the Cana wedding points occurring on the eighth day of the week—the first day of the new week, a.k.a. the first day of the new creation—but it is also the third day that all four of the Gospel accounts emphasized. It is the third day toward which the Cana wedding directed the reader. Thus, this is a hint that the resurrection must happen in order for a true wedding to take place.

As for the wedding itself, there is a crucial detail in v.1 that isolates John’s first miracle from the other first-miracles in the Synoptics: Mary. This is the only first-sign at which Mary is present. It is also worth noting that Mary in the text is present again only at the crucifixion (Jn 19:25). To explain her presence further, Karl T. Cooper suggests that Mary in the text has some degree of acquaintanceship with the family of the groom, hence her presence before Jesus arrives (Cooper 365). The fact that she is aware of the lack of wine before the headwaiter knows of it implies that she was probably a server at the wedding, which was typical: women usually were in charge of serving at large festivities.

However, whether or not Jesus according to the text would have had some acquaintanceship with the family of the groom is unclear but plausible. The fact that Mary would have had some relationship with the family logically allows for Jesus to also have some relationship with them. Nevertheless, this is not necessarily guaranteed. First-century Palestinian Jewish weddings were a public event. If a person merely recognized a passerby on the road, that passerby would likely have been invited to the wedding as well. According to Craig Keener, this might have been the case with Jesus and his followers; it is likely that someone may have passed by Jesus while he and his followers were already on their way to Cana from Nazareth (Keener 499). Jesus in the text, Keener suggests, may not have been especially close to the groom or his family, but some friend or acquaintance of the family may have recognized him and invited him. It would be heavily implied that Jesus’ disciples would have been invited as well, since weddings were, as mentioned above, such an open event.

Jn 2:3: MARY AS HEADWAITER

In the next verse, the plot of the passage commences: “When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, ‘They have no wine’” (Jn 2:3). Wine was absolutely crucial to weddings. If a bridegroom ran out of wine at his wedding, there would be social and possibly even legal consequences. He could be shamed for years to come and could even be considered a disgrace to the family. Knowing this, Mary approaches Jesus and notifies him of the imminent crisis. Those four words, simple as they may be, have stirred much debate among interpreters. A popular assessment is that Mary, according to the text, requests that Jesus rectify the situation, expecting him to do something phenomenal. Cooper suggests that Mary challenges social authority by going to Jesus, since women at such festivities could not talk to men, let alone male guests, least of all to warn them of such an embarrassing issue (Cooper
Cooper references Andre Feuillet, who says Mary expresses a need which can only be filled at the time of and after Jesus’ death (Cooper 370). These points, while interesting, are all problematic. First, they all suggest that Mary makes a request. The text makes no such indication. Her statement is merely a declarative one, telling Jesus about a deficit, and nothing more. Second, they are inconsistent with an important aspect of the background behind John’s Gospel. It is the consensus of the majority of Johannine scholars that John knows the Synoptics, and he assumes his readers know them as well. If that is the case, then John’s readers would know that in Luke, the only Gospel account with an adolescent Jesus and thus the only age indicator for the precise moment of the commencement of Jesus’ ministry, Mary appears right after his teaching in the synagogue (Lk 2:46-51). Luke is the only other Gospel account that involves Mary sometime around the instance of the first sign, albeit afterward. The outer appearance of this sign was nothing impressive. It does not involve any physical transformation through a miraculous process, as would the Cana miracle. Thus, at the time of this sign Mary had not ever witnessed a physical miracle, so it would be implausible that she would be expecting something that phenomenal. Moreover, it would not be plausible that she could have jumped to such an elaborate theological conclusion as Feuillet suggests. Although it is true that John’s Gospel account should be read with an eye for ulterior meaning, in this case the larger theological point to be made within this passage, as stated above, is the role of the crucifixion. Any points toward eschatology would be premature.

Perhaps the manner in which Mary approached Jesus may have followed the same nature of his miracle: discreetly. Perhaps she served him something, and as she set it down in front of him muttered in his ear, “They have no wine,” not from any expectation, but more for the reason that she is seeing from the same vantage point as he does. Perhaps it was merely meant as a comment, pointing out something she noticed. Perhaps she did not think too far into it, and simply noted an observation. Regardless of whether or not this is the case, Mary still plays an important symbolic role here by assuming the role of headwaiter with Jesus as the bridegroom. At Jewish weddings in first-century Palestine, a headwaiter would be chosen either by the family or the guests to monitor the festivities (Keener 500). If preparations went awry, the headwaiter would be notified and would be the first to address the situation, only referring to the bridegroom if absolutely necessary. But a lack of wine is more than enough cause to notify the bridegroom. However, what happens instead is the headwaiter at the Cana wedding never being notified and therefore never knowing about the deficit—but Mary does. She then goes to Jesus and informs him of the deficit, directly mimicking the actions of a good headwaiter by going to the bridegroom, Jesus. But it is not known by anyone other than Mary at the time that Jesus is the bridegroom. Unbeknownst to almost everyone present, Jesus will soon reveal himself as the true bridegroom.

In the next verse, Jesus gives his striking response: “Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, what concern is this for you and for me? My hour has not yet come’” (Jn 2:4). Even more baffling than Mary’s declarative statement is Jesus’ disjointed reply—or at least, it would certainly seem so at first. As per usual in John’s Gospel, this too has a deeper meaning hidden beyond the surface of the response. The mystery is simply a question of why. Why would Jesus respond to Mary so curtly? Why would he mention his “hour” at a wedding?

Augustine of Hippo says the answer to both is that Mary had asked about a temporal, earthly need, and Jesus is rebuking her for asking him about such a trivial need, when he had come to bring redemptive wine, the wine of eternal salvation (Ancient Christian Commentary 91). According to Augustine, the reason is that Jesus here conveys the concept to her that he is divine—the same divinity that made her “woman,” thereby explaining why he refers to her as “woman” and not “mother.” Augustine goes on to say that Jesus also conveys the message to Mary as a reminder that with respect to God there is no mother; she is merely “woman” in

The Hilltop Review, Fall 2015
comparison. In this way he hints that he will demonstrate his own personal majesty at his hour, the crucifixion, while remaining human.

Karl T. Cooper says the reason is that Jesus warns her not to expect a public manifestation of his glory just yet, because a public manifestation would throw off the timing of the grand Messianic plan, either by being thrust into worldly kingship, which would completely miss the point of his incarnation, or by premature execution (Cooper 371).

While Augustine and Cooper both make interesting points, neither makes much sense when put in context with the practicality of v. 4, and this is where the new approach to the eisegesis is proposed. This new approach is centered on an important literary element: the flow of dialogue between Jesus and Mary. Properly addressing this would require a bit of storytelling and speculation. Based on what few literary hints the text gives, the flow of conversation may have intentionally included much fewer spoken words and more nonverbal communication. First, Mary tells Jesus about the lack of wine in a discreet manner to prevent other guests—and the headwaiter—from overhearing. Then Jesus would likewise respond to her in a way that would continue to hide the fact that something is wrong, i.e. speaking at a regular volume, “Woman, what concern is this for you and for me?” Next he would add in a volume so low that only she and the disciples would hear, “My hour has not yet come.” This is where Jesus gives nonverbal cues, such as a certain facial expression that only she would understand. She may see it just before she leaves him to tend to other guests. This whole interaction would be very brief, no more than a few seconds or so, and would go unnoticed by all except for Jesus’ own followers. Mary, catching his intended message, knows what to do.

The next servant she encounters may or may not be coming to her specifically, but Mary would tell her and other servants involved to do whatever Jesus would instruct. Confused but desperate for help, the servant does so and allows Jesus to proceed with his instructions. Of course, this is all speculation; the text gives few to no hints to any of this, but in theory it would explain the dialogue between Jesus and Mary. It factors in the possibility of tone of voice, which, again, is nowhere in the text itself, but it opens the door to a world of deeper interpretations in between the lines of the text.

But here is why this approach explains the intent better than Augustine’s or Cooper’s suggestions: If wine was so crucial to an occasion such as a Jewish wedding, Jesus would not likely have viewed a need for wine as a trivial necessity. Jesus was probably well aware of social stigmas. Moreover, as it was with the case of Andre Feuillet’s interpretation, it is unlikely that Mary would have jumped to any elaborate theological conclusion, especially if there was no actual wine left at the wedding. Thus, there would be no reason for Jesus to rebuke her. Furthermore, he has not begun his ministry just yet, so Mary would not have any profound conclusion to jump to anyway. She, at this time, would not have had an absolute understanding of the details of Jesus’ mission.

Augustine’s view is more plausible than Cooper’s, but it has another minor problem. Augustine’s view of the first part of Jesus’ statement is true; however, that does not appear to be the focus. It is true that with respect to Jesus being God, he has no mother, and with respect to him being human, Mary is his mother. But here Jesus is about to commence his ministry, which will lead to his eventual crucifixion, and this ministry will consist of Jesus demonstrating his divinity. Up to this point, Jesus has led a life of humanity throughout his childhood, and now he is about to begin his life of divinity. Not that he was never divine as a child, but his divinity was not ready to be revealed yet. Now, it is about to be revealed here.

Cooper would be correct in saying that a premature public display of Jesus’ divine power and glory could throw off the grand Messianic plan by a huge margin, but to say that Mary expects a public display of Jesus’ divine power and glory is another example of potentially putting words in her mouth. The text gives no indication that Mary is expecting anything, whether it be phenomenal or perfectly normal, nor does it indicate that Jesus suspects Mary of expecting anything in particular from him.
Given the suggestion of nonverbal communication, it is somewhat likely that the first part of v. 4 could be an invitation to Mary to deepen her faith in her God. She was aware of Jesus’ divinity since before the moment of his conception, and now he is telling her that the time to reveal his divinity to the world has arrived. God, in this case Jesus, inaugurated his role as the Messiah by being born through her and is now consummating his role as the Messiah by beginning his ministry of demonstrating his glory and power. The challenge to Mary, then, is to begin seeing him no longer as just her son, but now her Messiah.

The most likely explanation comes from Jean-Bosco Matand Bulembat. He suggests that Mary, having already known that Jesus is the Messiah, also knew that Jesus will one day reveal his true power and glory to the world (Matand Bulembat 64). That said, clearly he would be more than capable of supplying the most crucial ingredient to a successful wedding. Mary knows three facts: there is a crisis at hand, the Messiah is present, and the Messiah will eventually reveal his true glory. These three facts alone are all she needs to know. The only question is whether or not those three will come to pass now or later. So she approaches Jesus.

Although there is no indication of tone, as discussed above, the dialogue gives clues. Mary in the text approaches Jesus and says out loud, “They have no wine,” when the unspoken understanding could be somewhere along the lines of, “There is a problem. I know you can fix this, though doing so would mean revealing yourself. So could this mean now is the time to reveal yourself?” This then makes Jesus’ response sound perfectly natural, “What concern is this for you and for me?” He adds in a whisper, “My hour has not yet come.” In other words, Jesus replies, “Not yet.”

But regardless of whether or not he whispered this to Mary, if Jesus meant “not yet,” he could have simply responded with those two words. Certainly they would have fallen in line with the discreet nature of the entire passage. Instead he draws them out by bluntly stating his hour has not arrived. That must mean that this was a deliberate statement intended to highlight something, both on the part of Jesus and on the part of the evangelist. A broader analysis of what Jesus meant by his “hour” reveals that there is, in fact, more to his reply than simply “not yet.” Here I will discuss four key reasons why this particular statement is important.

First, this is the very first mention of Jesus’ “hour” in the Gospel of John (Moulton 1025). In fact, there are seven occurrences of “hour” in which the phrasing, “The hour will come when...” indicates something in general happening when that hour occurs. The hour will come when: the Samaritan woman will worship the Father neither on a mountain nor in Jerusalem (Jn 4:21); true worshipers will worship the Father in truth and Spirit (Jn 4:23); the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God (Jn 5:25); all in their tombs will hear His voice (Jn 5:28); those who kill the disciples will think they are offering worship to God (Jn 16:2); Jesus will no longer use figures of speech but will more bluntly speak of the Father (Jn 16:25); the disciples will scatter and abandon Jesus (Jn 16:32). What is different about Jn 2:4 is that this is the first of eight mentions that not only will there be an hour—or time—in which something special occurs, but that there will be an hour that is specifically Jesus’ hour. This is explicitly stated in the most crucial passages in John’s Gospel: Jn 2:4, 7:30, 8:20, 12:23, 12:27, 13:1, 17:1, and finally 19:27. The final mention of an hour in John occurs just before Jesus’ death. It goes without saying, then, that “hour” here refers to the process of crucifixion and resurrection. It is no accident that in the very next two verses after the final mention of Jesus’ hour in 19:27 Jesus calls for wine (Jn 19:28-29). This mirrors the very first mention of Jesus’ hour in the wedding at Cana which follows with him bringing forth wine. In both cases, Jesus, as God, is providing the wine, specifically the wine of salvation, which is necessary for the upcoming wedding. The evidence is all there: the first instance of “hour” is the tool John uses to allude to the process for salvation, the crucifixion, and resurrection. The text could not make any clearer the idea that Jesus’ hour and the wine of redemption are directly correlated to the upcoming eschatological fulfillment, the wedding of God with humanity, the wine of
which will be provided at the crucifixion. Thus, the transformation into wine serves as a literal dramatization of the process of covenantal fulfillment.

The second significant piece about Jesus’ statement in v. 4 is that it is a plant in the grand story of the restoration of Israel through Jesus’ revelation of his divine glory. Storytellers know that in order to have a good, plausible story, one must incorporate tiny plants toward the beginning of a story that foreshadow the coming climax and yet have the climax remain unexpected. There are two plants here: one is John’s use of the word “hour,” and the other is the bringing forth of wine—an abundance, no less. Clearly Jesus in the text refers to his crucifixion and resurrection when he declares his coming hour, but that is what makes these plants so striking: nobody at the wedding has any idea to what he refers. The only person who could have any hint would be Mary, but even she would not fully know what Jesus’ plan of salvation would entail, much less Jesus’ disciples. Thus, Jesus’ crucifixion remains hidden in plain sight.

But that only begs the question: why would he mention something so huge in such a discreet fashion? This is the third piece of significance in Jesus’ statement in v. 4 which goes hand-in-hand with the second. There is a specific order by which Jesus reveals his glory to the disciples. He needed to reveal that he is the Messiah first before revealing that he would eventually be crucified. If he had revealed his crucifixion and resurrection first and his Messiahship second, no one would have believed him. Since the Jewish expectation of the Messiah was that the Messiah would not die, Jesus’ story would immediately be dismissed. Even with the resurrection added to the story, none of the Jews would believe him, and certainly not anyone else. He needed to establish first that he is the Messiah before establishing that he must die.

So, Jesus hinted toward his crucifixion and resurrection gradually in order to reveal to his mother and disciples along the way that he is the Messiah, he did come to fulfill Scripture, and there will be a specific time at which the kingdom of God will be commenced. If he had revealed all of this at once, no one would have believed him. By hinting at this time in small doses, his followers can truly come to believe in and be eyewitnesses to the Son of God in the flesh. In this way, they can more fully come to understand his role once the crucifixion and resurrection had taken place. They can more fully understand that he had to die so that Scripture is not just mostly fulfilled, it is completely fulfilled.

The fourth piece of significance is an instance of “hour” in John in which Jesus gives an analogy of a woman in labor:

“When a woman is in labor, she is in anguish because her hour has arrived; but when she has given birth to a child, she no longer remembers the pain because of her joy that a child has been born into the world. So you also are now in anguish. But I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you.” (Jn 16:21-22)

This passage occurs during the Last Supper, at the Passover meal that initiates the kingdom of God. Jesus describes the current spiritual status for the disciples and how that will very shortly change. What is most striking about this analogy is that Jesus is referring to the crucifixion and the coming resurrection. The disciples and all of Israel are in anguish akin to that of childbirth, but they will soon rejoice as a mother does once her baby is born.

This also echoes Matthew’s Gospel: “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be famines and earthquakes from place to place. All these are the beginnings of the labor pains” (Mt 24:7-8). Here is the emphasis: contrary to what would seem to be the logical conclusion, the agonizing labor Jesus talks about in John is not the crucifixion—the labor is happening currently, before Jesus’ hour. The crucifixion is the time of birth. Jesus refers to his own death as birth—the birth of a new creation and the inauguration of the kingdom of God. The other period of labor mentioned by Matthew refers
to eschatology. The fact that Matthew’s context of labor pains points to end times and John’s context of labor pains refers to the crucifixion highlights the link between the two events. It is without coincidence, then, that John’s use of “hour” is deliberate: he must have intended to use “hour” with a mother giving birth as an allegory of what Jesus’ hour will truly mean even at the time of his death. Jesus’ response at Cana means, in other words, that although his hour will not come to pass until later, nevertheless the time is ripe to begin the ministry that would bring about the goal of his mission.

Jn 2:5: MARY’S ROLE

In v. 5 Mary takes action. “His mother said to the servers, ‘Do whatever he tells you.’” Now Mary leaves the crisis of the wine deficit in Jesus’ hands. What does she think is going to happen? Keener suggests that Mary here recognizes Jesus’ authority and wherewithal to change the situation in some way (Keener 502). Just as in her declarative statement in v. 3, there is no way of knowing in v. 5 if she expects anything in particular, although her follow-up action could suggest that she may not have felt she needed to know if Jesus’ plan to rectify the situation involved something miraculous or mundane. All she needed to know was that Jesus could do it, not necessarily how he could do it.

Cooper parallels Mary with John the Baptist in Jn 3:29-30:

“You yourselves can testify that I said I am not the Messiah, but that I was sent before him. The one who has the bride is the bridegroom; the best man, who stands and listens to him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice. So this joy of mine has been made complete. He must increase; I must decrease.”

In this passage John the Baptist likens his role to Jesus as a best man to the bridegroom; the bridegroom must increase while the best man decreases (Jn 3:29). By using the Baptist’s analogy, Cooper points out that Mary quickly realizes and then nonverbally acknowledges that she also must decrease while Jesus increases (Jn 3:30). Cooper suggests that Mary does not know precisely what she must do, but she does know of something she can do: shift the authority (Cooper 372). This is not authority in the sense of control but more in the sense of having the wherewithal to tell the servants what to do from where Jesus stands. This is also not to suggest that Mary had any authority over the servants to begin with. Rather, Mary in the text is saying to the servants that neither other servants nor the headwaiter nor the bridegroom can rectify the situation, but Jesus can. It is worth noting that Mary is also not necessarily expecting the unexpected, but that she is not expecting anything in particular, as described above. In this way Mary is doing her part to help Jesus commence his ministry and reveal the glory that she had believed in from the beginning.

Jn 2:6-8: POPULAR INTERPRETATION AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

In verses 6-8 the plot of the passage begins: “Now there were six stone water jars there for Jewish ceremonial washings, each holding twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus told them, ‘Fill the jars with water.’ So they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, ‘Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter.’ So they took it.” This is the core of the passage. Here is where the wine miraculously appears. Here is where the author of John’s Gospel deliberately points to the richness in the depth of this first sign.

But before diving into the crucial detail of filling the jars with water, one must consider the background of the whole situation. In Jewish tradition drunkenness is forbidden, but wine and drinking in and of itself are not (Keener 499). Typically, the headwaiter has good wine served first while guests are sober. Then, once senses have dulled, he orders that the servants bring out the inferior, cheaper wine. The Pharisees back in that time had strict codes on drinking, even at festivities.
Thus, Keener suggests that the host family of the wedding was probably more lenient on
drinking rules, as there is an implication toward the end of the passage that guests at the
wedding were already well intoxicated (Keener 500). Keener goes on to say that Jesus brings
forth wine from the jars used for ritual purification in order to demonstrate that he values his
host’s honor and dignity over ritual. This is certainly a tempting view, but it hardly scratches
the surface in theological significance, especially when put in context with John’s larger
narrative. When one factors in all the symbolism in this passage and its implications for the
future of Jesus and Israel, the fact that Jesus upheld his host’s honor at this wedding is more
of a convenience.

Now for the water: A popular interpretation of this passage suggests that the water in the
jars is the tradition of the old Judaism and the old revelation. Water is also the word of the
prophets of the Old Testament, but wine is Jesus’ revelation, the new revelation. Jesus
illustrates that he has come to bring fruit; he has come to bring substance to the word of the
ancestors. While it is also tempting to interpret the miracle this way, it hardly hits the tip of
the iceberg in theological significance. Though to say that Jesus is the “new” coming to
replace and fulfill the “old” is not incorrect, there is simply more to it than that. First, keep in
mind that John intends to direct the reader forward, not backward, in allusion. Second, wine is
too much of a prominent symbol in literature and tradition to be only a vague reference to
Jewish history. Rudolf Schnackenburg says wine symbolizes eschatological fulfillment
(Schnackenburg 333). D. Moody Smith and many other scholars point toward wine being
used by pagans to celebrate Dionysus (Smith 86-7). It can safely be assumed that John and his
readers knew about pagan traditions with wine. But even then, wine here would not be
pointing to a theological attack on pagan tradition. That too would be a trivial matter in
comparison to what the wine here is actually alluding to, apart from the deficit.

Ephrem the Syrian comes closer to a likely theological point than the others. Ephrem
parallels the changing of water to wine with the nature of Jesus’ birth. He says that just as
Jesus transformed water into wine without altering the nature of the stone jars, so too does
Jesus transform the nature of his own humanity by being both human and divine without
changing the nature of his mother’s womb (Ancient Christian Commentary 95). While this is
a tantalizing thought, it glosses over a crucial detail: Jesus transforms water. Divine
intervention through water is an important motif in the Old Testament; the significance of the
transformation of water, then, cannot be understated.

In the Old Testament, God demonstrates power over water a number of times: unleashing
and retreating the waters of the flood beneath Noah’s ark (Gn 7:6-8:5), sending and
withholding rain for Job (Job 5:10, 12:15), allowing Moses to stretch out his hand and part the
waters of the Sea of Reeds (Ex 14:21, 27), parting the waters before the ark of the covenant
(Jsh 3:15-16), etc. Only once in the entire Old Testament is water transformed, and that is
when God transforms the waters of the Nile into blood (Ex 7:14-24). He changes water into
blood without altering the nature of the ground beneath and around the river.

It is no accident, then, that the water at Cana is transformed into wine. Wine also refers to
Jesus’ blood, which at the time of the crucifixion is referred to as the wine of salvation. When
Jesus is with his disciples at the Last Supper, he takes the cup of wine and says to them that
that cup is the new covenant in his blood (Mt 26:28, Mk 14:24, Lk 22:20). So, through Moses,
God transforms water into blood. At the wedding at Cana, God, through Jesus, transforms
water into wine. At the institution of the kingdom of God at the Last Supper, God, through
Jesus, transforms wine into blood. Thus, the dramatization of the transformation of water to
wine also attains literary significance as well as literal, which has been previously discussed.
This means it is also important to note that Jesus, being the true bridegroom and having
brought forth wine at Cana, transforms that wine into blood to further dramatize the point that
at weddings, especially that of God with humanity, wine is absolutely essential, just as it is in
Jewish culture. When Jesus in John transformed the wine into blood, he practically spelled out
his plan for the salvation of Israel. If that wine is blood, then that blood is wine—specifically, wine for the coming wedding. Thus, the true marriage between God and humankind cannot take place without the wine of redemption, that is, the blood of Christ.

Jn 2:9-10: HEADWAITER AND BRIDEGROOM

If Jesus’ command to the servants is the cause and the means for the transformation, then vs. 9-10 provide the result: “And when the headwaiter had tasted the water that had become wine, without knowing where it came from (although the servers who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom and said to him, ‘Everyone serves good wine first, and then when people have drunk freely, an inferior one; but you have kept the good wine until now.’”

Hilary of Poitiers points out a striking detail in v. 9. The servants who dumped water into the jars expected water to be drawn. The servants who drew out from jars saw wine and may have thought that wine was poured into the jars. Hilary notes that there was no account for gain or loss of character (Ancient Christian Commentary 97). So that means somewhere in there the water actually turned into wine. The text, however, does not indicate if the content of the jars became wine, or if the water in the jars remained water, and whatever was drawn out turned into wine. All the reader knows is that by the time whatever was in the jar reaches the headwaiter, the content becomes wine.

Hilary makes a great point, but if the existence of wine is crucial, then every detail about the wine must also be equally crucial, as each one would in itself provide symbolism. The only problem is that the text gives no detail whatsoever regarding the precise nature of how and at what point the water becomes wine. The only way it is known that the water changes at all is through the clause in v. 9: “τὸ δῶρ ὡν γεγενημένον” (Jn 2:9)—the water that had become wine. It is plausible that the water turned into wine when water was being drawn out and poured into a cup for the headwaiter to taste while remaining water when it is in the jar. If this is true, it would symbolize an important point that Jesus later makes: he did not come to change or negate Scripture but to fulfill it (Mt 5:17-18). However, as Matand Bulembat suggests, if the transformation itself only has four words attributed to it, then the transformation must not be the focus of the passage. The focus must be on the people and the situation surrounding it (Matand Bulembat 63).

So, turning to focus on the people in the passage, Matand Bulembat points out that the roles of headwaiter and bridegroom appear to be reversed in this passage. Typically at a first-century Palestinian Jewish wedding, a good, responsible headwaiter knows all the arrangements in advance, and if there is a need for anything, he goes to the bridegroom and speaks to him in a respectful manner (Matand Bulembat 63-64). In the passage the headwaiter at the wedding appears to have done neither; he summons the bridegroom and speaks to him casually. Moreover, as he does not appear to have even known about the deficit at all, he appears irresponsible, having never communicated with the bridegroom prior to the festivities. Even though there is also the absence of the role of the bridegroom, he is not without fault either. There is no indication that he accepts the headwaiter’s praise nor that he denies it. Neither the bridegroom nor the headwaiter in the text appears to be taking on the responsibility of his respective role. Instead the emphasis is placed on the true headwaiter and bridegroom, Mary and Jesus.

It is Mary, not the wedding’s headwaiter, who is immediately notified in some way that there is a deficit of wine. It is Mary, not the wedding’s headwaiter, who notifies someone in charge who is more capable of fixing the problem than she. It is Mary, not the wedding’s headwaiter, who transfers immediate authority over to higher authority to ensure that the situation is rectified. It is Jesus, not the wedding’s bridegroom, who is notified of the situation. It is Jesus, not the wedding’s bridegroom, who tells the servants how and where to obtain more wine. One might even say that the headwaiter and bridegroom at the wedding

The Hilltop Review, Fall 2015
appeared to be counterfeits in comparison to Mary and Jesus, who truly fulfilled the roles of headwaiter and bridegroom, respectively. Although this is the only time Mary appears as a headwaiter in the text, this is only the first time Jesus fulfills the role of a bridegroom. Nowhere in John 2 is it explicitly stated that Jesus is the bridegroom, but his actions convey that message loud and clear. In fact, we find that Jesus’ identity as the true bridegroom is a key theme of John’s Gospel, as demonstrated in Jn 3:29-30, which was discussed earlier.

In that passage John the Baptist declares that he is the best man to the bridegroom, who is obviously Jesus. Furthermore, John’s readers would have been familiar with the Synoptics, where there is the recurring theme of Jesus being the bridegroom. “Bridegroom,” or “ο νυμφίος,” is present in Mt 9:15 and 25:1, 5-6, 10; Mk 2:19-20; and Lk 5:34-35, so it does not need to be prevalent in John. Nevertheless, it makes for an interesting coincidence that in all four Gospel accounts there are no less than twelve occurrences of “bridegroom.” Twelve, of course, coincides with the twelve apostles of Jesus, who coincide with the twelve tribes of Israel.

JOHN’S OTHER SIGNS

Another way of seeing Mary and Jesus as the true headwaiter and bridegroom comes directly from taking a larger look at the rest of John’s Gospel, particularly at what distinguishes John from the other three Gospels—the signs. By reading John’s first sign in context with its placement among the other six Johannine signs, one can clearly see that there is a second purpose as to why Jesus would have made the transformation so subtle.

All seven of the signs are as follows: the healing of the official’s son—which is the second sign at Cana (Jn 4:46-54)—and of the man at the pool of Bethseda (Jn 5:1-9), the feeding of the five thousand (Jn 6:1-13), the walking on water (Jn 6:16-21), the healing of the man born blind (Jn 9:1-12), the raising of Lazarus (Jn 11:1-44), and the resurrection (Jn 20:1-29). Each of these signs reveals something about Jesus’ glory, as v. 11 describes. The healing miracles illustrate Jesus’ life-giving power, as specified when he says the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and live (Jn 5:25). The signs involving supplies and gifts—changing water to wine and feeding of the five thousand—illustrate messianic and eschatological abundance and fulfillment (Thompson 379). The earlier signs are smaller and simpler, but they start to build in significance, precision, and extravagance. First, the subtle transformation of water to wine, then a couple of healings from disease, then a miraculous abundance of food, then demonstrating dominion over the forces of nature through walking on water and healing a birth defect. Finally, through the resurrection of Lazarus and then of Jesus himself, Jesus demonstrates dominion over the single force that overpowers nature: death.

While the four later signs are obviously significant, one must not overlook the three earlier signs as well. The earlier signs are less precise, but that growing precision is exactly what makes them worth noting. The first sign is completely ambiguous. To change the water into wine, Jesus barely even acknowledges the process, let alone the exact point at which one can say the water transformed. He only instructs the servants to fill the jars with water. The exact point of transformation is skipped entirely, and the narrator only mentions that the water at one point had become wine. In the second sign, the healing of the official’s son, the exact point at which the son was healed was when Jesus said, “Your son will live” (Jn 4:50, 53). In the third sign, the healing of the man at Bethseda, the precise miracle point is when Jesus said, “Rise, take up your mat, and walk” (Jn 5:8-9). In the feeding of the five thousand, the multiplication of loaves and fishes occurs during distribution, right after Jesus gives thanks (Jn 6:11).

But why is precision of the turning point in a sign so important? Matthew provides the answer. “But of that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone…Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come…So too, you also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of
Man will come” (Mt 24:36, 42, 44). No one knows the day nor the hour at which God will come to be with humanity forever—no one knows at what point the process of eschatological fulfillment will commence. This is foreshadowed by the wedding at Cana: neither the readers nor the servants nor the disciples nor Mary knows at what point the water becomes wine. No one knows at what point the true bridegroom brings about the abundance of the wine of salvation.

THE FIRST SIGN AS A PARABLE

As can be seen with the Cana wedding, the signs in John are used to convey the power of God over all, since Jesus is, of course, God Incarnate, the Word made flesh. In the Synoptics Jesus uses parables to get his point across regarding the revelation of his glory. In John, however, parables are nowhere to be found. Signs replace them. The result is that each sign in John is a parable. One could even utilize the language for the parables to describe the meaning of each sign.

To test this theory, the wedding at Cana could be narrated as follows: “The kingdom of God is like a wedding at which the headwaiter, chosen by the people, for the bridegroom, who was sent by the people, is unaware that the people have run out of their supply of wine. Meanwhile, the headwaiter chosen by God notifies the bridegroom who was sent by God of this crisis. The real bridegroom quietly informs the servants of exactly how and where to obtain all the wine they will need. When they do so, they find that this bridegroom sent by God had actually supplied them with more than enough wine.”

When read as a parable keeping in line with the apparent focus, this passage tells the reader how much more significant it is when one considers the people involved. The transformation becomes a vehicle to drive home the point of the arrival of the true bridegroom who will bring the necessary wine for the coming wedding.

But this also means that by reading the Cana passage as a parable, it is transformed into an allegory. As an allegory it answers an important question: Who is the bridegroom? This is especially important considering the wedding imagery in the Old Testament, which will be discussed further below. But the question of the bridegroom’s identity will be answered later in Jn 3:29-30, as mentioned above. That must mean one of two possibilities: either the author of John’s Gospel wants to emphasize Jesus’ identity as the bridegroom, or there is more to the passage by which reading it as an allegory does not fully address its meaning or significance. If the latter is true, then in order to fully address its significance, the passage must be read as something non-allegorical, which turns it into something literal, live, and real—a dramatization

As a dramatization, and not an allegory, the passage spells out a process: at the “hour” of the bridegroom, wine will be brought forth for everyone for the wedding. This dramatizes the meaning and purpose of the coming crucifixion, in which blood becomes wine. This wine will be necessary for the coming wedding of the bridegroom, Jesus, with his bride, humankind.

Jn 2:11: WEDDING IMAGERY IN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT

The final portion of the passage acts as a kind of closure of the sign as well as a commencement of the rest of Jesus’ journey: “Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs in Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him” (Jn 2:11).

There is one final, obvious aspect of this passage that has not yet been addressed. Jesus, the true bridegroom, subtly reveals his glory and power at a wedding. Wedding imagery is peppered in the words of the prophets of the Old Testament: Hosea warns that God will punish Israel for being unfaithful to Him like an unfaithful wife to her husband (Hos 1, 2:1-19). But then he also proclaims that God will make a covenant with Israel, betrothing Himself to her (Hos 2:20-25). Jeremiah tells of Israel being faithful to God in her youth much like a bride and, almost exactly as Hosea describes, compares her to an unfaithful wife, but her
husband, God, is merciful (Jer 2:32, 3:1-15). Isaiah foretells of God rejoicing in Jerusalem as a bridegroom rejoices in his bride (Is 62:3-5). Isaiah also explicitly states that the Israel is the unfaithful wife who will be reunited with her husband, who is God:

For more numerous are the children of the deserted wife than the children of her who has a husband, says the Lord...For the shame of your youth you shall forget, the reproach of your widowhood no longer remember. For your husband is your Maker; the Lord of hosts is his name, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, called God of all the earth. The Lord calls you back like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, a wife married in youth and then cast off, says your God. (Is 54:1, 4-6)

Much of the wedding imagery in the Bible as a whole, both implied and blatant, is illustrated in Revelation. Rev 19-21 depicts the bride Jerusalem and her groom, the Word:

"'Alleluia! The Lord has established his reign, our God, the almighty. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory. For the wedding day of the Lamb has come, his bride has made herself ready. She was allowed to wear a bright, clean linen garment'...Blessed are those who have been called to the wedding feast of the Lamb...I [John] also saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold, God’s dwelling is with the human race’...[one of the angels] came and said to me, ‘Come here. I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb’" (Rev 19:6-9; 21:2-3, 9).

Just after Rev 21:9 is a description of the new Jerusalem, which has the names of all twelve tribes of Israel inscribed upon the walls and each of the twelve foundations (Rev 21:12-14). Given the Jewish expectation of the marriage of God with His people, it is surely significant that the symbol-rich Gospel of John would begin immediately with the Word becoming flesh, shortly thereafter naming the twelve disciples, and then a wedding (Jn 1; 2:1-11). In fact, no other sign could fit in that order better than the Cana wedding. With this sign in this particular order at the beginning of the Gospel, John appears to be deliberately illustrating the wedding between God and His people, as expected to happen in the time of fulfillment, as depicted particularly in Revelation. The Cana wedding, then, is no mere allegory, nor is it a bare miracle with no further significance. Rather, when you factor in the social and exegetical aspects, it becomes a dramatization of the fulfillment of the Jewish expectation of the reunion between God and humanity by means of a great wedding feast at the end of the age: a dramatization of covenantal fulfillment.

CONCLUSION

Regarding the plot of the story of the restoration of Israel, the miracle of the changing of water to wine serves as a tiny plant for the coming climax in the story: the crucifixion, leading to the thrilling conclusion, eschatological fulfillment. Regarding John’s use of symbolism, it serves as a dramatization of Israel’s hopes being fulfilled, of God keeping His promise, and of precisely how God will reunite with Israel. By taking a closer look at the details, particularly of John’s use of “hour,” “day,” and “bridegroom,” one can see how this passage points toward the climactic events of Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection and especially toward the ultimate climax of eschatological fulfillment. But by taking a broader look at the context of this passage, one can see that it simultaneously points toward the eschatological fulfillment that is yet to come. Jn 2:1-11 thus serves a dual purpose, one in hinting that the kingdom of God will shortly be inaugurated through the blood of Jesus, and the other in that the kingdom of God will later be consummated through the marriage of God with humanity, in which there will be an abundance of wine.
References


Breastfeeding and Subsistence Work: Connecting Theory and Experience

By Olivia M. McLaughlin
Department of Sociology
olivia.m.mclaughlin@wmich.edu

Human beings are animals; more specifically, they are mammals capable of nursing their young. What is believed to be natural and sustainable for the rest of the animal kingdom is often stigmatized and criticized in the land of man as being animalistic and primitive and therefore necessarily segregated from the public eye. Despite the fact that reproduction and breastfeeding are natural Ward et al. write that “views towards breasts and breastfeeding are shaped by larger cultural values and assumptions” (2006). Women and their partners often hesitate when making the decision to breastfeed because of “their discomfort with the culture’s sexualization of the breast” (Dettwyler 1995). Despite the functionality of the female breast (to provide life-sustaining nutrition for infants and children) it is also a symbol of carnal desire, sex, and lust, instilling the belief in some that its exposure in public is not only inappropriate but immoral. Breastfeeding then, as a type of work in which only women can partake and requiring at least partial exposure of the breast, is a practice that is only suitable for the private sphere—the home.

As women’s contribution to the social and economic spheres has increased in recent decades, breastfeeding itself has become a social process and as such, mothers’ experiences of breastfeeding are subject to the beliefs, values, and attitudes of the people around her (Faircloth 2010). By conducting secondary data analysis on a series of interview data collected in the spring of 2014, I will discuss how Engels’ and Althusser’s classic theories of gender stratification provide an appropriate theoretical framework for understanding the pressure nursing mothers feel to hide their practices and the stigmatization that occurs when they do not. By connecting the lived experiences of seven mothers who participated in my study “Say Yes to the Breast” (2014) with two theories on the social stratification of gender, I hope to demonstrate how mothers’ perceived stigmatization is the result of a continuously reproduced set of values that serve to concretize the gender divide.

Say Yes to the Breast!—Again

Information for the original study was collected through a series of in-depth interviews in 2014, following approval from a human subjects research committee at a university in the Pacific Northwest. I selected seven participants from a sample of mothers who practiced extended breastfeeding, referred to me by both breastfeeding and non-breastfeeding mothers. Participants eligible for interviews were mothers of any age who breastfed one or more of their children for any duration of time past the child’s first birthday. Each mother was assigned a pseudonym so they could speak freely about their experiences without fear of being identified.

The original research and findings focused specifically on mothers who breastfed their children past infancy. The open-ended questions and semi-structured nature of the interview, however, allowed participants to share stories pertaining to their experiences with extended breastfeeding (breastfeeding for a year or more) and conventional breastfeeding (breastfeeding for less than a year). Because of the valuable information collected at both stages of nursing, the present study will not distinguish between extended or conventional

The Hilltop Review, Fall 2015
public breastfeeding as this paper is interested in mothers’ experiences breastfeeding in
public, regardless of the age of the child.

Only seven mothers were interviewed for this study, limiting the generalizability of the
sample. Six out of seven interviews were conducted over the phone and one was conducted in
person. A semi-structured interview guide comprised mostly of open-ended questions in three
different sections was the primary measurement used. To begin, family history and
biographical information of each participant was collected. Topics here ranged from
occupation and income to questions about the mother and partner’s traditions and beliefs.
These questions allowed participants to elaborate on different aspects of their upbringing that
may have affected their feelings surrounding breasts and breastfeeding. The following section
focused on the social encounters and emotional experiences of the mothers. For example, I
asked mothers to reflect and compare their opinions of their body before and after nursing as
well as who they were comfortable breastfeeding around. Questions in this section sought to
understand whether or not mothers were aware of the sexualization and stigma attached to the
female breast and if this consequently impacted their feelings about nursing in public.

In the final segment of the interview I inquired about the logistical process mothers went
through when breastfeeding and weaning their children. The purpose of this section was to
investigate whether or not social interactions and public opinions imposed a timeline on
mothers as to how long it was appropriate for them to breastfeed their children. These
questions led to discussions about unsolicited advice and pressures from family and friends in
regards to their conventional and extended breastfeeding practices.

Interviews were transcribed and coded using grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss 1965) so
as to allow patterns and themes to emerge organically from the data. The original findings
were grouped into three subsections: stigmatization and trivialization, social/cultural
influences, and overcoming/avoiding stigma. Overall it was found that mothers who practice
extended breastfeeding often feel uncomfortable nursing in public and are criticized and
interrogated about their practices. Participants explained that they became increasingly aware
of their child’s age as well as their nursing practices as time went on. Even mothers who
communicated strong opinions about their right to breastfeed in public went through
strenuous and lengthy processes to conceal the fact that they were breastfeeding, often using
wraps, blankets, or covers.

Future research on extended breastfeeding—and public breastfeeding in general—should
aim at gathering a larger and more diverse sample, as previously noted. Participants from this
study were mostly middle- to upper-middle-class white women in different-sex relationships.
Forthcoming research should not only expand the sample size but should also explore how
women of color, women from various socioeconomic backgrounds, and women in same-
sex/non-heteronormative relationships experience both long-term and conventional
breastfeeding.

Interview data relevant to the present paper will be applied to concepts from Engels’ The
Origins of the Family (1884) and Althusser’s State and Ideological Apparatuses (1970)
following a discussion of the sexualization of the female body and its impacts on
breastfeeding mothers.

Women, Sex, and the Breast

Sociologists and feminists alike have identified the social and cultural influences that
factor into a mother’s experience breastfeeding in public. Indeed, it has been noted that
women and their partners might hesitate when making the decision to breastfeed because of
an awareness and discomfort with the sexual connotation associated with the breast
(Dettwyler 1995). Moreover, it is not just the opinions and behaviors of others that impact a
mother’s decision to breastfeed. Women may avoid breastfeeding altogether for fear that the
process will make their breasts less appealing or interfere with their sexual and intimate life, a
decision oftentimes reached by both the mother and her partner (Freed et al. 1993). Combined, this research indicates that the breast serves more of a sexual function as opposed to a biological one. Indeed, the breast is deemed functional, practical, or sexual based on the dominant ideology of the culture it exists within. Dettwyler (1995) posits that the female breast is used for the attention and sexual pleasure of men, and that this behavior and expectation is learned through Western culture. The extent to which the female body has been sexualized in the popular culture of Europe and North America is hardly news to any participating members of that society.

In 2003, Krassas and Wesselink found that 80.5% of photographs of women from Maxim and Stuff portrayed them as sexual objects. These trends have increased over time with only greater percentages of women being featured as sexual beings. Ward et al. (2006) argue that “evidence consistently indicates that the sexual nature of women’s bodies is a dominant focus throughout much of the mainstream media,” with particular attention focused on the female breast (Dettwyler 1995). Additionally, Forbes et al. (2003) identified the role of “erotophobia” and sexism in women’s experiences breastfeeding, arguing that in American culture the sexual significance of the female breast rivals, if not exceeds, its biological significance. Nearly a decade prior, Iris Mason Young postulated in “The Breasted Experience: The Look and Feeling” (1992) that Western culture is responsible for fetishizing female breasts, designating breasts the symbol of feminine sexuality and conditioning the male gaze to favor large, round, and proportioned breasts. Consequentially, their biological function has become secondary to their sexual function. How is it though that this could be learned in one culture and not in another, to the extent that it infringes upon the reproductive processes of women?

Schott and Henley (1996) found that mothers who identify with certain religious ideologies may be affected by morals within their faith system that are concerned with modesty and bodily control. Although these pressures are the result of normative standards perpetuated by various institutions, they can often be self-inflicted. Socially conservative faith communities that value female modesty and denounce women’s sexuality pose problems for nursing mothers who need to feed their children in public. Nursing mothers must take these social conditions into consideration when breastfeeding so as to avoid humiliation, discomfort, and ridicule from the people around them. In order to avoid stigmatization, a mother may feel pressured to restrain bodily acts such as breastfeeding to the private sphere.

The Division of Labor and Its Reproduction

Engels’ division of labor is located within the notions of productive work and subsistence work and is central to understanding mothers’ experiences breastfeeding outside of the home. Interested in chronicling the evolution of the gender division, Engels provides commentary on the mutation of familial forms and their relation to the economic mode of production. Here, he differentiates between two types of work that could be done within a society: subsistence and productive work. Any labor accomplished to satisfy basic human functions, or considered essential for survival, necessarily falls under the category of subsistence work. This type of work, central to the livelihood of an individual (or group of individuals), is done to fulfill corporeal obligations and as such cannot be exchanged for a profit, according to Engels.

Productive work, alternatively, is accomplished as a means to gain capital, both monetary and otherwise. Engels argues that physical limitations and reproductive obligations constrained women to the private sphere where they became concerned with subsistence work—effectively, housework—in exchange for nothing other than an adequate environment in which to reproduce. Explanation as to why women became restricted to the household sphere and subsistence work follows a logical argument centered on the reproductive capabilities of males and females.

In the early days of the human race women were constantly reproducing, given the high death rate and low life expectancy of men and women alike. As soon as women started having
Breastfeeding and Subsistence Work

children, which was most likely very early in life, they were confined to the home and concerned with birthing, nursing, and raising children. As a result, they were not able to participate in any work that would result in capital for the family, as their time was spent in the home. Women’s work (subsistence work) deals with reproductive obligations such as nursing and child rearing, while men’s work (productive work) is concerned with capital gain and each should be accomplished in the appropriate setting, either inside or outside the home, respectively.

With the rise of private property and capital surplus, men began passing down wealth and goods to their sons so as to provide them with the tools necessary to accumulate wealth for the family. Whereas sons learned how to continue productive work from their fathers, daughters learned how to continue subsistence work from their mothers. As such, Engels argues that the division of labor in the economy is built upon the division of labor within the household, a result of the division of genders. Women’s work, not capable of providing tangible capital for the family, is regarded as less important, and as such processes like nursing and child rearing are thought of as inferior types of work, they are necessarily kept separate from the public-masculine sphere. This explicit demarcation of where “women’s work” should be done explains the legacy of the housewife as well as the backlash against public breastfeeding. These sentiments, in conjunction with the sexualization and objectification of the female form, serve as a way to denigrate public breastfeeding and, as Althusser demonstrates, certain cultural and social structures are in place to systematically discipline social actors to behave according to the pre-established roles.

Expanding theories posited by Marx and Engels, Althusser is regarded as a game changer within the second wave of feminism given his theory about Ideological State Apparatuses. Althusser argues that if a social formation is going to successfully reproduce itself it needs to maintain “reproduction of productive forces” as well as “reproduction of social relations of production.” Althusser’s theory sheds light on the stratification of gender and the role of social institutions in reproducing the norms and values that constrain women to the private sphere and stigmatize any subsistence work that takes place in the public sphere.

Social formations, Althusser argues, not only need to reproduce their labor force (in the literal and biological sense), they also require laborers that are adequately trained, competent, and able to be disciplined. In other words, for a value or norm to succeed as a social force, institutions must be devoted to conditioning people into behaving accordingly and imposing consequences on those who do not. Althusser believed that these ideologies are reproduced in Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA) such as schools, churches, the family, and the home. It is in the ISA that attitudes toward the breast and breastfeeding are stigmatized, criticized, and perpetuated. While Ideological State Apparatuses function by inflicting ideology, conversely, State Apparatuses like the police, the army, and the court function by inflicting violence.

Both institutions seek to restrain and control social actors into behaving in ways that align with their respective goals. The main difference between the two is that one seeks to control individuals via violence and restraint while the other seeks to control individuals via ideology and threat of social humiliation. ISAs have a secondary function of repression like State Apparatuses in that they perpetuate ideologies for the purpose of controlling individuals’ behavior. Althusser writes that the repressive intentions of ISAs may be “attenuated, concealed, even symbolic. Thus churches and schools use suitable methods of punishment, expulsion, selection, etc., to ‘discipline’ not only their shepherds but also their flocks” (Althusser 1970). In other words, people are taught to conform to the norms established by the ISA and to also teach others to do the same. By producing and reproducing these ideologies, ISAs successfully maintain established norms and values that social actors must submit to in order to reify the ideology. ISAs such as the church and the family actively produce and reproduce the social and cultural values participatory in the sexualization of the breast, resulting in mothers’ discomfort nursing outside of the home.
Subsistence Work in the Public Sphere

Participants from “Say Yes to the Breast” often spoke of awkward encounters that sparked feelings of embarrassment or discomfort when confronted with breastfeeding in social situations. Some participants from my study recalled how many of these interactions originated from within a community they identified with. Six of the seven mothers within my sample identified with a faith community and four of those six self-identified with a Christian tradition. Three of the four Christian mothers refused to breastfeed in church while the fourth was comfortable breastfeeding as long as she was able to leave the service to nurse in a private room or use a cover.

When I asked Sadie, a single mother and student at an undergraduate university, if she would have been comfortable breastfeeding at her Catholic church she said no, explaining, “It felt inappropriate exposing myself that much. I always wanted to remove myself from that situation.” Likewise, Catherine explained that her Catholic church was “another place I would totally not feel comfortable breastfeeding. Even when my boys were babies I would never nurse in church.” Catherine’s response is particularly interesting given a story she shared with me before explaining her discomfort in church:

Catherine: With the third one (child) I had to go to an event and I was just walking the hallways of the hotel when he was an infant, I didn’t have a cover, I didn’t have a shirt because you know, he had to eat!

Catherine’s discomfort nursing in public appears here to be contextual. While she feels comfortable walking the halls of a hotel without a cover and even without a shirt, she explains that she would never consider doing the same in church, with or without a cover. When speaking about nursing in church, she attributes her uneasiness to antiquated beliefs or attitudes:

Catherine: Yeah there are some really archaic thinkers out there. Like even in church!...Even with babies I never felt comfortable nursing in church ’cause there was always some kind of, I don’t know, cultural differences or demographic differences where the old people would get mad at the young people for disrupting service and I was like well would you rather him scream and yell during the service, or we can sit here quietly while he nurses! I don’t understand but yeah, I always felt uncomfortable in church and it was definitely generational.

Here, the participant is identifying the presence of traditional values in her faith community that stigmatize the exposure of the body. Catherine understands these ideologies as generational and therefore as being perpetuated and handed down from one generation to the next within families that adhere to traditional values of her faith system. Although it seems Catherine herself does not also adopt these “archaic” attitudes, they affect her practices nonetheless. Winter alternatively, aligns herself with similar traditional beliefs but does not create distinction between the values of those within her faith system and her own as Catherine does. A stay-at-home mother and member of the Church of Latter-day Saints (LDS), Winter explains her preference to be modest because of her religious upbringing:

Winter: Pretty much only at family’s home where occasionally if I didn’t have the cover available I would do it in the parking lot in the car. I’m not big about nursing in public places without my cover or some sort of thing over me whether it was a blanket or something else.. My cousin, she’s like ‘just flaunt yourself it’s no biggie!’ and I’m just like, ‘no honey that’s not me.’

Have you always felt that way about being exposed in public?
Winter: Oh yeah I’ve always been that way. When I was a teenager I wore dresses that went down to the floor...I think it’s a combination of our religious aspect, the kind of views our religion teaches us, which is to be modest, to respect our bodies and to be modest.

Consequently, when Winter finds she needs to nurse her two- and four-year-old daughters, she leaves the service and nurses in a special sitting room or will use a nursing cover that wraps around the front and back of her body, allowing her to conceal both herself and the child. This cover also allows the mother to walk around while keeping the child secured to her breast. These mothers express unease about breastfeeding in public for religious reasons. While Catherine identifies her discomfort as something she must negotiate with because of her religious community, Winter recognizes her religious upbringing as informing her inclination to be modest; she does not feel forced to be modest, she is modest in fulfillment of religious teachings.

Inhibitions that prevent mothers from breastfeeding in the church extend outside of services and religious spaces. When Winter needed to nurse one of her daughters and was without her cover, she recalls nursing in bathroom stalls or the back seat of a car because she “didn’t want the looks and judgmental stares.” Winter also took time to explain here that she wished there were more places for women to breastfeed with other mothers, “to feel confident in what we are doing and feel that we don’t have to hide ourselves in shame.” The systems of belief within the mothers’ faith community indeed shape mothers’ breastfeeding experiences. Although Winter wishes she was able to breastfeed freely in a supportive environment, her religious teachings constrain her from realizing this. The church as an Ideological State Apparatus reinforces the doctrine of bodily modesty among women by perpetuating the idea that the female body is a symbol of sex, concealing it within the doctrine of what is right and wrong/moral and immoral.

The idea of sex and the corporeal form (specifically the feminine form) as immoral is heavily bound up within the doctrine of the Christian faith. Within the context of public breastfeeding, the Christian church functions as an ISA to constrain these mothers from engaging in subsistence work in public by disciplining and punishing them via social criticism. Exposure of the breast (an expression of female sexuality) in the Christian community warrants instances of discipline and punishment discussed by Althusser. The instances in which Catherine and Winter modified their behavior for religious reasons display the success of the Christian church in indoctrinating individuals to regard the female form (and its functions) as necessitating restraint.

As previously discussed, ISAs are not only concerned with regulating the behavior and attitudes of social actors; they must also generate methods by which these ideologies can be enforced (Althusser 1970). Thus, respondents who nurse in public recall being approached by family, friends, and strangers questioning their practices. Six out of the seven mothers I interviewed reported that they felt criticism and judgment in the form of questions. One mother explained, “It was not exactly what they said but how they said it.” For example, Catherine recalls questions from her mother regarding the nursing of her eighteen-month-old son, such as, “Don’t you think he’s a little too old for that?” and “Oh, are you still doing that?” Similarly, Rebecca, an astrophysicist from Colorado, remembers nursing her daughter at work when her co-worker asked, “How can you still do that when she can ask for it, isn’t that weird?” Because of the stigma attached to the exposure of the female breast, and the age of the child, Rebecca was made to feel uncomfortable for her decision to breastfeed.

These sentiments were not uncommon within my sample. One mother shared a story in which she was breastfeeding her two-week-old daughter in an electronics store when someone spat the word “exhibitionist” at her, and another time when a passerby suggested she find a private room to continue nursing in. These encounters exemplify instances in which mothers experience punishment for disobeying the norms established by the ISA in the form of social
humiliation and stigmatization. A person who encourages a nursing mother to remove herself from the public eye acts as disciplinarian, reproducing the values of the ISA. Not only is the mother singled out and embarrassed by the interaction, she is encouraged to segregate herself from the rest of society. These encounters reify the separation of women from the public sphere created by the division of productive and subsistence work.

Conclusion

Ideologies that appropriate traditional notions regarding women, the home, and sexuality are not solely perpetuated by values constructed by the Christian faith. Ward et al. (2006) found that frequent exposure to “genres of high sexual content” are associated with more male acceptance of traditional gender roles. This is directly related to how men treat and interact with real women (women in the realistic world as opposed to the media world) and contributes to the process of sexualization. Framed as objects for men’s pleasure, women’s breasts are seen as mainly sexual and therefore not suitable for public exposure.

Punishment in the form of harassment and criticism keeps nursing mothers from feeling comfortable and free to practice breastfeeding in the manner and capacity that they find fit and appropriate. Often having to retreat to bathroom stalls and parked cars, mothers are disciplined by ISAs such as the Christian church, the family, and the workplace to limit the exposure of the female breast. The pressure to abstain from their nursing practices in public can be understood as a result of the division of labor discussed by Engels’ conception of the family. Breastfeeding mothers who attempt to engage in subsistence work outside of the home face sanctions from the ISAs that are established as a means to keep social actors docile and in order.

Public policy that encourages mothers to breastfeed their children for as long as they are able can help to blur the boundaries between subsistence and productive work. Until women can feel comfortable engaging in their reproductive obligations (if they so choose) in the public sphere, the division of labor will continue to function as a means to stratify the genders.

Following recent medical research positing the mental, physical, and emotional benefits of breastfeeding (WHO 2014), creating spaces where mothers can practice nursing outside of the home has become increasingly important. Discomfort with breastfeeding is only exacerbated by ISAs that perpetuate traditional values that seek to constrain women to the subsistence sphere.

Breastfeeding, although a very emotional experience for some women, is perceived as an act of the body. Because of the sexual symbolism attached to the breast, more of an emphasis is placed on the physical aspect (the immoral aspect) as opposed to the emotional and physical health benefits. When understanding these experiences through the lens of Althusser and Engles, it can be reasoned that mothers uncomfortable nursing at religious services and in other public spaces experienced stigmatization because they introduced their subsistence work into the public sphere. The social and cultural influences on mothers’ experiences breastfeeding can be regarded as methods of discipline maintained as methods of discipline by an ISA to control women’s responsibility to engage in private subsistence work.

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Advocating for Mother Earth in the Undergraduate Classroom: Uniting Twenty-First Century Technologies, Local Resources, Art, and Activism to Explore Our Place in Nature

By Christina Triezenberg and Ilse Schweitzer VanDonkelaar
Department of English
christina.a.triezenberg@wmich.edu, ilse.a.schweitzer@wmich.edu

I. Introduction

In his article “Structural Realism: The Best of Both Worlds?”, John Worrall introduces the concept of ‘structure’ in order to defend a version of Scientific Realism that respects historical considerations of ontological discontinuity between successive scientific theories. Worrall argues that despite the fact that there is no ontological continuity between successive scientific theories in general, successor theories do preserve the formal structure of earlier theories. The formal structure of an earlier theory is usually preserved as a “limiting case” of the successor theory’s structure: the earlier structure can be recovered from the successor structure by allowing some quantity in the latter to tend towards some limit (Worrall 1989, 120).

This retention of formal structure between successive theories, according to Worrall, underlies the cumulative nature of science. This cumulative nature, in turn, provides reason to believe that the formal structures of current scientific theories are (approximately) accurate. If formal structure is in fact preserved between successive theories, then only the accuracy of the relevant formal structures can adequately explain the empirical success of science. Despite the potential loss of ontology between theories, then, the Scientific Realist is justified in believing in the approximate accuracy of the structures of current scientific theories.

The fact that most cases of structure retention involve limiting cases, however, presents a problem for Worrall’s account. It seems that some earlier theories can only be recovered from successor theories as nomologically impossible idealizations of the latter, since this recovery involves allowing some quantity in the formal structure of the successor theory to tend towards some physically unrealizable limit. But if this is the case, then the earlier theory cannot be physically realized either. It is thus unclear in what sense the structure of the earlier theory can be said to accurately represent the physical structure of the world, since the former is nomologically impossible while the latter is actual (ex hypothesi). If the nomological impossibility of the earlier theory’s structure undermines the Scientific Realist’s justification for believing in it, moreover, then the preservation of structure through theory change will fail to secure justification for the belief in the accuracy of the successor theory’s formal structure. The Scientific Realist will thus be left with no reason to believe in the structural accuracy of current scientific theories.

II. Epistemic Structural Realism

Worrall introduces the position of Epistemic Structural Realism in order to accommodate Scientific Realist intuitions about the empirical success of science as a whole while addressing concerns about theory change. Worrall notes that the main argument in favor of Scientific Realism is the so-called “No Miracles” Argument: the only adequate explanation of the empirical success of science is the claim that mature sciences are approximately true; we should therefore believe in the approximate truth of the mature sciences (Worrall 1989, 100).

This argument for the Scientific Realist position, Worrall notes, relies on the claim that the succession of scientific theories has historically been “essentially cumulative” (Worrall
Advocating for Mother Earth in the Undergraduate Classroom

1989, 105). Some elements of the supplanted (yet mature) theory, in addition to its successful (observational) empirical consequences, must be preserved to some degree by the successor (and also mature) theory in order for the two successive theories to exhibit a robust form of continuity between them. It is in virtue of this type of continuity that the Scientific Realist can be justified in advancing the “No Miracles” Argument. Once the continuity has been established, the Scientific Realist can infer by induction that any future succession of scientific theories will also be essentially cumulative. All earlier mature theories will thus be viewed as approximately correct from the standpoint of later theories by virtue of this continuity. This approximate correctness, in turn, will serve as the only adequate explanation of their empirical success and must therefore be accepted.

The crucial claim that science is essentially cumulative faces a forceful historical objection, however. This objection is expressed by the Pessimistic Meta-Induction Argument, which denies the robust continuity between scientific theories to which the Scientific Realist appeals. According to this argument, the history of science includes many examples of mature and empirically successful theories that were once believed to be approximately true but are now considered thoroughly false from the perspective of current mature and successful theories. This suggests science is not essentially cumulative, as there have been mature and successful theories once thought to be approximately correct that have not been preserved to any degree by contemporary theories. But if successive scientific theories do not exhibit the requisite continuity, the Scientific Realist cannot appeal to the approximate truth of theories (both supplanted and successors) in order to explain the empirical success of science as a whole.

Worrall believes the Scientific Realist should concede the fact that science is not essentially cumulative with respect to theoretical posits (Worrall 1989, 109). Despite preserving the successful empirical consequences of its predecessor, a successor scientific theory rarely (if ever) retains the complete theoretical ontology of this predecessor. Nevertheless, Worrall claims there is robust continuity of formal structure between successive theories (Worrall 1989, 120). The mathematical equations describing the relations between the theoretical posits of a supplanted theory are preserved to a large extent by the corresponding successor theory. This suggests that the Scientific Realist need not commit to the continuity of ontology between successive theories as the crucial factor underlying the cumulative nature of science. The Scientific Realist can account for the empirical success of scientific theories by appealing to the retention of formal structure between successive theories, which indicates that the Scientific Realist can be justified in believing the accuracy of these formal structures in approximating the actual physical structure of the world. This Realist epistemic attitude towards the formal structures of mature and empirically successful scientific theories constitutes the core of Worrall’s Epistemic Structural Realism.

III. An Objection

Christopher Pincock (2011) raises a worry for the Epistemic Structural Realist concerning the accuracy of an empirically successful theory’s structure. The empirical success of a scientific theory, Pincock claims, does not guarantee that the structure of the theory is an exact representation of the structure characterizing the relevant physical phenomenon being studied.

Pincock argues that the formal structure of an empirically successful scientific theory might fail to accurately represent the physical structure of the world (or of some relevant sub-domain of the world) in one of two ways: the relevant theory might contain too much structure, or it might contain too little (Pincock 2011, 74). In the first case, the mathematics of a theory might be more complex than what is in fact needed to describe the relations obtaining among the entities of a particular physical system. The theory containing this overly complex mathematical structure could still be empirically successful, since it would
contain the necessary resources to generate accurate predictions. Nevertheless, the structure of such a theory would not be faithful to the physical structure of the world.

The structure of a theory can also fail to capture the entire structure of the physical system it studies. It might be the case that the formal structure of such a theory does not take into account certain parameters whose effects, while being exemplified or instantiated in the physical system under consideration, are not noticeable enough at the scale under consideration to sufficiently affect the empirical adequacy of the theory at this scale. iv The structure of the scientific theory would thus seem to accurately represent the structure of the physical system being studied, but only because certain ranges of initial and boundary conditions (corresponding to smaller and larger scales of the physical system) are not taken into account.

If the formal structure of a theory fails to have the exact amount of structure, Pincock, argues, “there is no reason to think that the structures appealed to will survive theoretical change” (Pincock 2011, 75). This would then rob the Epistemic Structural Realist of a key premise in the relevant formulation of the “No Miracles” Argument: the claim that science is essentially cumulative with respect to formal structure.

IV. Limiting Cases

Pincock notes, however, that an Epistemic Structural Realist can at this point appeal to the limiting relation that is supposed to obtain between mature successive scientific theories in order to rescue the notion of structural continuity between theories (Pincock 2011, 75-76). The Epistemic Structural Realist can grant the fact that structure is rarely carried over intact from an earlier theory to a successor theory. Even when mature scientific theories do not contain the correct amount of structure (they contain too much or too little), successor theories can add needed structure or subtract excess structure without violating structural continuity between theories. This can be accomplished by ensuring that the formal structure of an earlier theory is preserved as a limiting case of the successor theory’s structure (Worrall 1989, 120).

In his (1981), Larry Laudan provides a straightforward description of the limiting case relation that the Epistemic Structural Realist claims obtains between successive theories. If an earlier theory $T_1$ is a limiting case of a successor theory $T_2$, then (1) the variables representing both observational and theoretical terms that are assigned a value in $T_1$ form a subset of the set of variables that are assigned a value of $T_2$, and (2) the values that $T_2$ assigns to the variables in this subset are sufficiently close to the values that $T_1$ assigned to the variables in that subset, provided certain initial and boundary conditions are met (Laudan 1981, 39).

Laudan argues that this characterization of the limiting case relation commits the Scientific Realist to the perfect preservation of ontology (including theoretical posits) whenever $T_1$ is succeeded by $T_2$, if $T_1$ is to count as a limiting case of $T_2$ (Laudan 1981, 40). But notice that the Epistemic Structural Realist need not commit to such a strong claim. While granting the above description of what the limiting case relation between two successive theories is, it will be enough for $T_2$ to preserve the relations between the variables assigned a value by $T_1$ in order for $T_1$ to count as a limiting relation of $T_2$. In preserving the relations between the variables of $T_1$ described by the mathematical equations of this theory, $T_2$ need not also preserve the ontology of $T_1$. By simply preserving the structural relations of $T_1$, the theory $T_2$ will also preserve the arity of these relations and can thus preserve the variables of $T_1$. In this way, the two theories can satisfy a weakened form of condition (1) above without the need for the retention of ontology: the variables of $T_2$ that stand in the same relations to each other as the relations in which the variables in $T_2$ stand to each other need not refer to the same entities in $T_2$ as they did in $T_1$. Condition (2) can similarly be satisfied without the need for a shared ontology between the theories $T_1$ and $T_2$: the preserved
variables can be assigned similar values by $T_1$ and $T_2$ without having to refer to the same entities in both theories.

Once again, this retention of structure need not be complete. If the theory $T_1$ contains too little structure to accurately represent the structure of the physical world, the theory $T_2$ can “preserve” the variables of $T_1$ while including more relations among these variables, as well as adding more relations between the variables of $T_1$ and the new variables found only in $T_2$. As such, $T_2$ can supplement the deficient formal structure of $T_1$. If, on the other hand, $T_1$ has more structure than $T_2$, then a corresponding story can be told. It is possible for $T_2$ to eliminate redundant elements of $T_1$’s formal structure, where these surplus structural elements might be identified by the discovery of their unnecessary role in generating successful predictions, lack of heuristic value, etc. In this way, $T_2$ can pare down the surplus structure of $T_1$ while preserving the essential structural components of $T_1$ (where what is “essential” will presumably be determined by criteria such as causal efficaciousness, for example).

A result of the imperfect preservation of structure between successive scientific theories is the fact that the Epistemic Structural Realist must limit claims of justification to beliefs about the approximate accuracy of a scientific theory’s formal structure. Because there is reason to believe that neither the earlier theory nor its predecessor will have the exact level of structural detail that perfectly matches the amount of physical structure exhibited by the world, the Epistemic Structural Realist must settle for a version of the “No Miracles” Argument that employs the assumption of partial structure preservation between successive theories. The Epistemic Structural Realist can then argue for the comparatively modest conclusion that the formal structures of mature scientific theories are approximately accurate representations of the physical structure present in the world.

V. Idealizations in Scientific Model Construction

How exactly can the structure of an earlier theory be recovered as a limiting case of a successor theory? Many instances of the limiting case relation between mature (according to Worrall’s criteria) successive scientific theories involve idealization assumptions. In discussing the process of model construction in the context of the Semantic View of theories²⁷, Anjan Chakravartty identifies two processes involved in this construction: abstraction and idealization (Chakravartty 2007, 190). According to Chakravartty, abstraction involves ignoring some of the often numerous factors present in a physical system in order to construct a model that will serve as a simplification of this physical system (Chakravartty 2007, 190). The simplified model only represents some of the factors that are potentially (or in fact) relevant to the behavior of the physical system, usually for pragmatic reasons. It is often the case that the number of factors relevant to the behavior of the physical system being studied is too many to be included in a model of that physical system. Moreover, the relative significance of these ignored factors is negligible in the particular context in which the physical system is being studied; the effects of these factors on the predictive accuracy of a theory may be miniscule at the relevant scale, for example. Abstraction, however, “does not undermine the idea that putative representations of factors composing abstract models can be thought to have counterparts in the world. The fact that some factors are ignored is perfectly consistent with the idea that others are represented” (Chakravartty 2007, 191). The fact that certain factors are ignored when constructing a model of some physical system does not mean the relevant model cannot be an approximately accurate representation of the physical system.

Idealization is also often employed when constructing scientific models. Unlike mere abstraction, however, idealization involves more than simply excluding factors potentially relevant to the behavior of the physical system being studied: idealization also “[incorporates] factors that cannot exist as represented given the actual properties and relations involved” (Chakravartty 2007, 191).²⁷ In other words, idealization employs certain nomologically
impossible assumptions in order to simplify the model being constructed (where this simplification can be motivated by the pragmatic constraints mentioned above).

As an example of abstraction and idealization in a scientific model, consider that of a simple pendulum (Chakravartty 2007, 191). Such a model is usually presented as consisting of a weight attached to a pivot point by means of rod. Factors such as the air resistance affecting the motion of the weight or the friction of the rotating pivot are usually excluded from the model, in accordance with the abstraction process. Notice, however, that there is no principled reason why such a model that ignores these factors could not be physically realized. A closed physical system containing no air resistance and no friction is nomologically possible: i.e., it could be physically realized without violating the actual laws of nature.

Other elements of the model are simplified beyond what is physically realizable in any such system, however. Examples are the rod’s total lack of mass in the model, as well as the representation of the weight as a point-mass: an object whose total mass is concentrated at a single extension-less point. These types of simplifications (idealizations) could not in principle be physically realized by any system: a rod pivoting around a point with a weight attached must have some non-zero mass in any physical system; likewise, the mass of this weight could not be completely condensed down to a single dimensionless point in any physical system conforming to the actual laws of nature.

Both abstraction and idealization are often used simultaneously in scientific practice for the construction of models (Chakravartty 2007, 191). Nevertheless, the distinction concerning nomological possibility mentioned above will prove to have significant implications for the epistemic attitudes of the Structural Realist towards the formal structures of scientific theories.

VI. Limiting Cases as Idealizations

Recall the notion of structural continuity that is at the heart of the Epistemic Structural Realist’s version of the “No Miracles” Argument. The Epistemic Structural Realist will argue that there is substantial (even if incomplete) structural continuity between successive mature scientific theories, which means the formal structures of earlier theories will be viewed as approximately accurate from the point of view of later (mature) theories. This claim of approximate structural accuracy, in turn, will be the only acceptable explanation of the empirical success enjoyed by each of the successive theories and so should be accepted.

Again, the notion of incomplete preservation of structure between successive theories is understood in terms of limiting cases. Consider the successive theories of classical thermodynamics and statistical mechanics, for example. Both theories seem to meet the criterion of maturity (in Worrall’s sense), since both have enjoyed novel predictive success. Moreover, the two theories exemplify the limiting case relation with which the Epistemic Structural Realist explains partial structural continuity. The formal structure of thermodynamics can be derived from the formal structure of statistical mechanics by taking the “thermodynamic limit” in the latter: assuming the relevant physical system contains an infinite number of particles (Batterman 2005, 227). By allowing the number of particles in the system to tend to infinity, the formal structure of thermodynamics can be recovered from the formal structure of statistical mechanics.

Notice, however, that this “thermodynamic limit” is an idealization: no system with an infinite number of particles could be physically realized. It follows that the limiting case relation between thermodynamics and statistical mechanics can only be instantiated by making use of an idealization (viz., the “thermodynamic limit” assumption). But this means that the formal structure of the theory of thermodynamics can only be recovered from the formal structure of statistical mechanics through the use of an assumption that is not merely (strictly) false, but physically impossible. In other words, the partial retention of formal
structure between these two mature theories in terms of the limiting case relation employs a nomologically impossible assumption.

VII. Problems with Employing Idealizations

This use of idealization in the derivation of limiting cases can be found among many other mature successive scientific theories. It poses a problem, however, for the Epistemic Structural Realist’s claim about the approximate structural accuracy of scientific theories. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that there is partial structural continuity between two mature successive theories such as thermodynamics and statistical mechanics. The presence of this partial structural continuity will imply that the two theories exemplify the limiting case relation, since the partial structural continuity is understood in terms of this limiting case relation for the Epistemic Structural Realist. So thermodynamics will constitute a limiting case of statistical mechanics. This, in turn, means that the derivation of the thermodynamic formal structure from the statistical mechanical formal structure will involve an idealization. The theory of thermodynamics will thus constitute an idealization of the relevant physical system by virtue of the role the “thermodynamic limit” (discussed above) plays in deriving the formal structure of thermodynamics from the formal structure of statistical mechanics. But if this is the case, then the formal structure of thermodynamics will be rendered not just inaccurate, strictly speaking; it will constitute a nomologically impossible structure, by virtue of the use of the “thermodynamic limit” idealization. Given that the structure of thermodynamics cannot be physically realized, then, in what sense can it be said to be an approximately accurate representation of the physical structure of the world? To what degree could a nomologically impossible structure approximate a (the) nomological structure that actually obtains?

Notice that the Epistemic Structural Realist cannot fall back on an appeal to approximate, as opposed to strict, accuracy of structure here (as was done in response to Pincock’s objection above). The problem for the Epistemic Structural Realist is not just that the formal structure of the thermodynamic theory is strictly false, and therefore disconnected from reality to some extent. The problem is deeper than this: the formal structure of thermodynamics could not possibly be realized by the structure of the physical system that actually obtains in our world. The notion of its approximate accuracy in representing the physical structure of the world is thus rendered a complete mystery. As a result, the Epistemic Structural Realist is left without a reason to believe in the approximate structural accuracy of thermodynamics.

The nomological impossibility of the thermodynamic theory’s formal structure thus undermines the motivation for believing in its approximate truth. But if belief in the approximate accuracy of the thermodynamic structure can no longer be justified, then the Epistemic Structural Realist is left without an explanation for the empirical success of science. Without a reason to believe in the approximate accuracy of the thermodynamic formal structure, the structural continuity obtaining between thermodynamics and statistical mechanics is no longer enough to mount a structural version of the “No Miracles” argument. This appears to undermine the entire Epistemic Structural Realist position.

VIII. Potential ESR Reponses and Replies

1. Appeal to Empirical Success

At this point, the Epistemic Structural Realist might appeal to the empirical success of thermodynamics in order to argue that the use of idealization assumptions does not undermine the reasons for believing in the approximate structural accuracy of the theory. Of course, the mere empirical success of thermodynamics is not enough to ground the realism of the Epistemic Structural Realist: the latter must give an explanation of this empirical success.

The problem, it seems, is that this explanation will have to take the form of another “No Miracles” argument: the reason thermodynamics proved so empirically successful is the fact
that its formal structure is an approximately accurate representation of the physical structure in the world (Worrall 2007, 143). But it is precisely the approximate structural accuracy of the theory that is being questioned. So an appeal to empirical success will either not be enough by itself (since this will not be enough to grant the Epistemic Structural Realist a “Realist” status), or will presuppose the approximate structural accuracy of the theory that is at issue.

Other types of explanation seem to be off-limits to the Epistemic Structural Realist precisely because of the epistemic commitment to structures only. Worrall (2007) notes that the way in which the formal structure of a theory can successfully represent the physical structure of the world “cannot be further specified—to suppose that it can would be to suppose that we can somehow have access to the universe that is not theory-mediated and thus can directly compare what our theories say with reality”, this last claim being “untenable” (Worrall 2007, 143). In other words, any explanation that purported to specify exactly how the formal structure of a theory manages to successfully represent the physical structure of the world would have to go beyond an epistemic commitment to mere structures. But this would be to go beyond the Epistemic Structural Realist position itself.

(2) Appeal to Alternative Derivations

The Epistemic Structural Realist might also respond by claiming that the above argument concerning structural continuity between thermodynamics and statistical mechanics does not generalize. Even if the structural continuity between thermodynamics and statistical mechanics involves the use of an idealization, it does not follow that all instances of the limiting relation between mature successive theories will necessarily involve idealization assumptions. It may be possible to derive the formal structure of an earlier theory from the formal structure of its successor without the need to invoke nomologically impossible limits. The formal structure of classical mechanics, for example, may be derived from the formal structure of relativistic mechanics by allowing the velocity of an object to approach zero instead of letting the speed of light tend toward infinity. In this way, physically unrealizable assumptions may be avoided as consequences of partial structural continuity between successive theories.

The mere possibility of derivations that do not rely on idealization assumptions is not enough, however. In particular, the above alternative characterization of the limiting case relation that obtains between classical mechanics and relativistic mechanics does not clarify the structural continuity between thermodynamics and statistical mechanics, or the sense in which the structure of the former can be said to be approximately accurate. The successful avoidance of idealization assumptions in a single case of theory succession, in other words, does not resolve the mystery of how the formal structure of an earlier theory can be an idealization of its successor, and yet count as approximately accurate, in many other cases of paradigm structural continuity between successive mature scientific theories. Similar alternative derivations of structure that avoided the use of idealizations would have to be provided for other paradigm cases of structural continuity between successive theories. Until then, cases such as the transition from thermodynamics to statistical mechanics remain problematic for the Epistemic Structural Realist’s claim to the approximate structural accuracy of predecessor theories.

(3) Appeal to Approximation

Finally, the Epistemic Structural Realist can appeal to a distinction between approximation and idealization (Frigg and Hartmann 2012, §1.1). Though conceptually similar, approximation can be characterized as divorced from any concerns regarding nomological possibility. When a mathematical equation is approximated by another equation by letting some quantity tend toward some limit, “the issue of physical interpretation need not arise. Unlike [idealization], which involves a distortion of a real system, approximation is a
purely formal matter” (Frigg and Hartmann 2012, §1.1). In other words, the limiting case relation that obtains between the formal structure of thermodynamics (for example) and that of statistical mechanics can be a purely formal (mathematical) relation. This would avoid the use of problematic idealization assumptions in the derivation of the thermodynamic structure from the statistical mechanical structure, while preserving some sense in which the former is a limiting case of the latter (and therefore preserving structural continuity between the two theories).

But is this sense of “limiting case” robust enough for the Epistemic Structural Realist? Approximation, as described above, is an entirely formal relation obtaining between the structures of successive scientific theories. It does not appeal to the relevant physical system (the system the two theories are presumably studying) in order to derive the formal structure of the earlier theory from the formal structure of the successor theory. This, again, is in contrast to a derivation involving idealization assumptions. But appeal to the relevant physical system seems necessary in securing the continuity of a structure that the Epistemic Structural Realist can have reason to believe (approximately) corresponds to the structure of the physical world. Without appealing to the relevant physical system, the derivation of one formal structure from another reduces to what Newman (2005, 1378) calls “a trivial symbolic realism”. The Epistemic Structural Realist no longer has reason to believe that the formal structure being preserved as a limiting case through the use of approximation is appropriately correlated with the physical system being studied. Strictly formal relations between structures, after all, are not enough to show that both structures accurately represent (to an acceptably approximate degree) the physical relations obtaining within the relevant physical system. Even if the formal structure of statistical mechanics were an approximately accurate representation of a given physical system, the mere fact that the structure of thermodynamics was formally related to the structure of statistical mechanics would not guarantee that the formal structure of thermodynamics was also an approximately accurate representation of the physical system. A more robust relation than mere approximation is needed in order to secure the structural accuracy of thermodynamics from the fact that there is structural continuity between the two theories of thermodynamics and statistical mechanics.

IX. Additional Implications of Employing Idealizations

The use of idealization assumptions in establishing a limiting case relation between successive theories undermines the Epistemic Structural Realist’s reasons for believing in the approximate structural accuracy of the earlier theory. This result, however, poses potential problems for belief in the approximate structural accuracy of successor theories as well.

One possible difficulty for the Epistemic Structural Realist is the inability to justify belief in the structural accuracy of the successor theory, given that belief in the structural accuracy of the earlier theory is no longer tenable. The use of idealization assumptions in the derivation of the earlier theory’s structure from the successor theory’s structure casts doubt on even the approximate structural accuracy of the earlier theory, since these idealization assumptions imply that the structure of the earlier theory could never be physically realized. But if belief in the approximate structural accuracy of the earlier theory is thus undermined, what reason does the Epistemic Structural Realist have left to believe in the approximate structural accuracy of the successor theory? A significant motivation for establishing structural continuity between successor theories, after all, is to provide justification for the belief in accumulation of true structural content: justification for the belief that the refinement of structure leads to an increasingly accurate representation of the physical structure of the world. If there is reason to doubt the approximate structural accuracy of an earlier theory, however, then structural continuity will not provide justification for the belief in the approximate structural accuracy of the successor theory. The earlier theory cannot bequeath approximate structural accuracy to any successor theories if it does not have this approximate
structural accuracy in the first place. Consequently, the justification of the Epistemic Structural Realist for the belief in the structural accuracy of successor theories is also undermined.

A second possible worry is a version of the Pessimistic Meta-Induction, in terms of idealization. If the structure of thermodynamics is a physically unrealizable idealization of the structure of statistical mechanics, how can the Epistemic Structural Realist be sure that the structure of statistical mechanics will not itself be an idealization of some future theory’s structure? Epistemic Structural Realism, after all, was proposed as a philosophical theory that respected the occurrence of theory-change in the sciences, and took seriously the likely possibility that even current scientific theories will (likely) one day be superseded. But if the theory of statistical mechanics, for example, may one day be shown to be simply a limiting case of some future theory, then all of the reasons for doubting the approximate structural accuracy of thermodynamics pose a risk to the Epistemic Structural Realist’s confidence in the structural accuracy of statistical mechanics as well. Even if there are reasons independent of structural continuity and the empirical success of science for believing that the structure of some future theory accurately represents (to some degree) the structure of the physical world (what would these reasons be?), this does not preclude the possibility that statistical mechanics itself, the currently more mature scientific theory available (as compared with thermodynamics), will be shown to have a physically unrealizable structure. Consequently, the Epistemic Structural Realist is left without reason to believe in the approximate structural accuracy of any mature scientific theories, whether they have already been superseded or will one day be supplanted.

X. Conclusion

Epistemic Structural Realism claims there is preservation of formal structure through the succession of one scientific theory by another. It appeals to this structural continuity in order to formulate an argument for the structures in mature theories being approximately accurate representations of the physical structure of the world. The concept of structural continuity is understood in terms of a limiting case relation obtaining between successive theories. This limiting case relation, in turn, is often established using idealization assumptions: the structure of a theory is a limiting case of the structure of its successor theory when the earlier structure can be derived (recovered) from the successor structure, given certain initial and boundary conditions.

It is often the case, however, that these initial and boundary conditions are idealizations of the physical system being studied by both theories. The derivation of an earlier structure from its successor, therefore, employs nomologically impossible assumptions. This suggests the earlier structure is itself physically unrealizable, which undermines the claim that it is an approximately true representation of the structure governing the physical system being studied. But if the earlier structure can no longer be considered approximately accurate, this undermines whatever claim to approximate truth the successor structure enjoys: the successor structure cannot inherit any approximate accuracy from the earlier structure if this earlier structure has none to bequeath in the first place, after all. This suggests Epistemic Structural Realism as a whole is undermined, which in turn threatens the justification for a belief in the accuracy of scientific theories overall.

Christina A. Triezenberg and Ilse Schweitzer VanDonkelaar are alumnae of Western Michigan University’s Department of English, where they both earned PhDs in English Literature. This article was originally accepted for publication in the Spring 2013 issue of The Hilltop Review, when they were both graduate students. Unfortunately, that issue was never published. The authors have revised the article for publication in this issue. Christina A. Triezenberg is now an adjunct professor in the Departments of English and Liberal Studies.
Advocating for Mother Earth in the Undergraduate Classroom

at Grand Valley State University and Ilse Schweitzer VanDonkelaar is a Commissioning and Technical Editor with Medieval Institute Publications, Arc-Humanities, and Amsterdam University Press and a Visiting Assistant Professor at Grand Valley State University.

References


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i Worrall defines “mature” scientific theories as those theories that lead to novel empirical generalizations beyond any empirical consequences that have already been observed. These generalizations must be shown to generate new and empirically successful predictions (Worrall 1989, 113-114).

ii Worrall associates the formal structure of a scientific theory with the mathematical equations describing the behavior of theoretical entities in a physical system (Worrall 1989, 119-119).

iii By way of an example, Pincock writes: “We could imagine a competing electromagnetic theory which ascribed two kinds of charge to particles and had complicated equations relating these different kinds of charges to each other and to the trajectories of the relevant particles” (Pincock 2011, 74).

iv Another example: “Maxwell’s electromagnetic theory ignored these possibilities [of electromagnetic interactions being affected by intra-particle forces at high energy levels] and so this parameter [representing the relevant intra-particle forces] did not appear in that theory. Additional structure is needed to account for phenomena at higher energies, but we have no hint of this from the experiments conducted in Maxwell’s time” (Pincock 2011, 74).

v Cf. Worrall (2007, 142-144) for a discussion of partial structural retention.

vi The Semantic View of theories claims scientific theories should be identified with collections of models, as opposed to being identified with a linguistic formal axiomatic
system (as the Syntactic View suggests). For further discussion, see Chakravartty (2007, 187-190).

vii Chakravartty’s distinction between abstraction and idealization roughly corresponds to the distinction between Aristotelian idealization and Galilean idealization. See Frigg and Hartmann (2012, §1.1) for further discussion.

viii Pincock (2011) discusses this example in relation to his objection described above (Pincock 2011, 77). See also Batterman (2005), whom Pincock cites.

ix It is an interesting question whether or not the number of particles in a physical system could continue to grow infinitely, without ever actually being infinite. Regardless, the structure of such a system would not be a realization of the structure of thermodynamics, which would require an infinite number of particles according to statistical mechanics.

x Famous examples include the conception of (1) Classical Mechanics as a limiting case of Relativistic Mechanics under the idealization of letting the speed of light tend to infinity in the formal structure of the latter, and (2) the Ideal Gas Law as a limiting case of certain thermodynamic equations under the idealization of having an ideal gas composed of point (dimensionless) particles. Thanks to Marc Alspector-Kelly for bringing these examples to my attention.

xi Cf. Mark Newman’s (2005) objection against the Epistemic Structural Realist, in which he argues that structural “retention through theory change is not sufficient” to establish the claim that a theory’s formal structure succeeds in accurately representing the physical structure of the world (Newman 2005, 1377).

xii This is also the reason why the Epistemic Structural Realist cannot appeal to an ontological conception of formal structure in order to avoid the issues posed by the use of idealization assumptions. Cf. Chakravartty (2007, 143-144) for a discussion of how an ontological conception of the Laws of Nature may avoid the “in-principle vacuity” of idealized formulations of these Laws.

xiii It is not clear, however, that replacing a limit towards infinity with a limit towards zero will always succeed in avoiding idealization: it might also be nomologically impossible for certain quantities to tend towards zero in a physical system. Recall, for example, the use of point-particles (whose dimensions tend toward zero), or the rod used in the simple pendulum model (whose mass tends towards zero).

xiv This can be the case even when the use of purely formal methods to relate different structures proves empirically successful. Cf. Johannes Kepler’s successful use of Platonic solids to model the distance relationships between the six planets known at the time (Di Liscia 2011, §3). Thanks to Marc Alspector-Kelly for bringing this example to my attention.

xv Cf. Pincock’s assertion concerning the considerations motivating preservation of structure: “If [purely] mathematical concerns are driving things, then there is little reason to believe the structural claims of the scientific theory” (Pincock 2011, 76).

xvi I would like to thank Marc Alspector-Kelly, Matthew Minton Miller, and Dustin Van Pelt for a number of helpful discussions on the topics of this paper.
Path to PhD

Winner of Best Artwork Award, Fall 2015

By Muthanna Yaqoob
Department of Geosciences
muthanna.y.yaqoob@wmich.edu
The Wood at the End of the Tunnel

By Charles Lein
Medieval Institute
charles.g.lein@wmich.edu
Eiffel Tower, Day of Charlie Hebdo Shooting

By Roland Black
Medieval Institute
roland.b.black@wmich.edu
Flow

By Christina G. Collins
Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology
christina.g.collins@wmich.edu
Little “Sister”

By Raina Khatri
Mallinson Institute for Science Education
raina.m.khatri@wmich.edu
Funeral Season

Winner of Best Creative Writing, Fall 2015

By Carolyn Nims
Department of English
carolyn.nims@wmich.edu

I’m sorry for your loss, I’m sorry
that in his eulogy I told how John ate
plums: sucked the juice, tore a chunk,
and licked the wound flat-tongued,
then traced the topography of the pulp
with the tip of his tongue.

I’m sorry I stood behind the farthest pew,
black leather trumpet case
left on the floor, brass clasps undone
(I’m sorry he never told me flags
are exchanged for human lives).
A lone piper stood outside
the chapel piping “Amazing Grace.”

I took notes on
the birds in the eaves and hymn
numbers on the pillars but
otherwise I was alone in the church.

I’m sorry for this summer of funerals.
One last Berkshire winter
preserved him like his mosaic room
paneled with crushed porcelain teacups,
headless Hummel figurines—anything
that could shatter
immortalized on the walls.

Through Hadley, Deerfield, Great Barrington
I make the funeral tour, finally turning down
the familiar driveway off Division St.

I stop at my grandmother’s farmhouse,
vacant now but in someone’s trust
(I’m sorry she did not die with a
thick, long braid the color of smoke
but died in a matter-of-fact nursing home
quite alone). Behind the house is
a shallow river we played in
when we were young
into which I have thrown myself, my brother.
I stoop to touch a cool riverbed stone
and see light and water bow my arm.
Droplets tracing down my tiny hairs,
knives of sunlight through the trees.
I, Jesus

By Jill McEldowney
Department of English
jill.a.mceldowney@wmich.edu

Hollywood be thy name—

I want you in gold teeth, white Cadillacing.
I could be good, but I want you to be Man.
It has been a long time,
come be tempted—

this Jesus is a fucking rockstar.

*    *    *

I was a snake by my walk, He knew.
He knows all nine kinds of angels
& there is only one who lurches
as if injured by some kind of Fall,
He says:

“*Let me tell you, I am not sure—*”

He did not expect gentleness,
just teeth.
my Father hates it
when I dress like that—

—white teeth of the villain
grinning back from the red
gloom of a hotel room, this sort of thing belongs in a hotel room.

*    *    *

Already He doubts.
& I sound so good.
I will offer.
All it takes is a little shove.

it takes His face in hands: “*If you tire, Follow Me.*”
everything looks like a homicide from here.
coke out this city of churches,
this place is long forsaken.
fuck dying—lights on.

fuck blondes.
fuck me.
& Jesus Christ: “Let me tell you—”

No—let me show you what I learned in private school.

* * *

The decision had been made the first time 
& just in case there was any doubt, 
He made it again:

“You don’t bleed to death on a crucifix.”

You stop.

You just stop breathing.

* * *

Oh—& didn’t He just? 
What Father opens his son on the cross? 
Again. 
& Jesus breathes out human: “Let me tell you something—”

He is finished. What comes next, turns its face up slow.

“—I’m not sure I ever liked being this God.”
Proof of Heaven?: Controversy Over Near-Death Experiences in American Christianity

Winner, 2015 Graduate Humanities Conference

By Joel Sanford
Department of Comparative Religion
joel.r.sanford@wmich.edu

Since its foundation, one of the major tenets of the Christian faith – and arguably the main hope and promise of the Christian message – has been the possibility of life after death. Conceptions of how this promise is fulfilled, for whom, and what exactly the afterlife looks like have varied over the centuries and from group to group within the tradition. These various conceptions have been informed by scriptural passages as well as personal revelations, visions, and mystical experiences. Some of the more direct experiences of the afterlife come from those who have come very close to death and then recovered, claiming to have glimpsed life on the other side. For several reasons, the number of documented accounts of these experiences, usually termed “near-death experiences,” has increased in the second half of the twentieth century. Along with the increase in number of accounts, has been an increase in the circulation of these accounts in American popular media. Among Christians, the responses to these accounts have been mixed, ranging anywhere from enthusiastic support to extreme skepticism. By examining the discourse surrounding near death experiences within the Christian community, one may gain a greater understanding of how the current popularity of these accounts might affect the way Christians view many issues, including death, the afterlife, morality, theology, and the universe itself. The following pages provide an brief overview of some popular NDE literature, focusing on two of these recent publications in detail, and analyze some reactions within the American Christian community and the possible motivations for those reactions.

Before considering the modern reaction to these phenomena, it is important to define more clearly the kinds of experiences under consideration and some of the history and complications surrounding their report and study. Near-Death Experience (henceforth abbreviated to NDE) is an umbrella term used to refer to a variety of phenomena experienced by individuals at, near, or beyond the point of death or apparent death. These can involve the use of the five senses as well as other sorts of extrasensory or inexplicable sensations/perceptions. Far from being limited to a particular tradition or community, NDEs have occurred throughout human history in many places, cultures, and societies. One of the most well known and oft-cited early accounts can be found in Book X of Plato's *Republic*, dated between 380 and 360 BCE, in which Plato recounts the story of Er, a Greek soldier who was believed dead and placed upon a funeral pyre for incineration. According to the tale, Er awoke and reported that his soul had been separated from his body and traveled to a place where spirits are judged before entering a new realm. Other accounts of travel beyond death can be found in the literature of medieval China and the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* (written c. 8th Century CE). Many experiences of the afterlife don't seem to occur anywhere near death itself, and so are not proper NDEs, but fall under a broader category of otherworldly and paranormal experience. This category, which Carol Zaleski terms the "otherworld journey" includes descents into lower realms (such as the underworld), ascents into higher realms (such as heaven), and fantastic voyages to distant places on earth. More recent somewhat famous accounts of visits to or visions of the afterlife include those of scientist and mystic Emmanuel Swedenborg, actor Peter Sellers, and psychiatrist Carl
Jung. Although all of these accounts claim insight into life beyond the veil of death, this insight is not always gained through an experience of or closeness to death itself.

The differentiating feature of the NDE, the experiencer's proximity to actual death, perhaps helps explain the proliferation of NDE accounts in the second half of the twentieth century. Beginning in the 1960s, advances were made in medicine, particularly in the area of emergency response, that allowed for increased success in resuscitating individuals at risk of death. The resulting increase in the number of persons recovering from near-death situations has certainly increased the potential for NDEs to occur, and it is cited as reason for the recent increase in the number of testimonies. The modern conception of NDEs as well as the beginning of their widespread scientific and scholarly study are owed in large part to the seminal work of philosopher and psychiatrist Dr. Raymond A. Moody, Jr. In 1975, Moody published Life after Life, in which he coins the term “near-death experience” and presents his findings based on 150 testimonies of NDEs. Moody identifies 3 types of testimony that he considered in his study: those of persons thought or pronounced clinically dead who then recovered, those of persons coming very close to death without dying, and those of persons who relayed their experience with others as they died. He further identifies 15 elements commonly found among the narratives, arguing there is striking similarity between individual experiences. Subsequent research has caused this list to be revised and paired down. The following list, reflecting these changes, is provided by Zaleski:

1. Separation from the body, sometimes accompanied by a “spectator” perspective, watching the scene of crisis from a distant or elevated vantage point.
2. Journey motifs, such as drifting through darkness, outer space, a “void,” or a tunnel.
3. Encounter with deceased relatives or friends, or with a godlike or angelic presence (Moody’s “being of light”).
4. Review of one's past deeds in the form of a panoramic visual replay of memories (the life review). In cases of sudden encounter with life-threatening danger, this life review often takes precedence over other features.
5. Immersion in light and love. Many confess that this experience is indescribable. Cognitive and affective characteristics are fused. The keynote is a profound sense of security and protection, accompanied by a sense of receiving special messages or hidden truths. For some, this takes the form of an instantaneous, timeless, and comprehensive vision of the totality of existence.
6. Return to life, either involuntarily or by choice, to complete unfinished business on earth.
7. Transforming aftereffects, such as loss of fear of death, new-found zest for everyday life, and renewed dedication to the values of empathetic love, lifelong learning, and service to others. For some, these positive effects are accompanied by difficulties in adjusting to normal life.

Life After Life quickly popularized NDEs as a distinct phenomenon and sparked research into their nature, effects, and authenticity across fields such as medicine, psychology, parapsychology, neurology, and religious studies. As a part of this research, inquiry has been made into the frequency of NDEs. Estimates of the number of people resuscitated who also report NDEs range anywhere from 18 to 40 percent. Even at the low end, these numbers indicate a significant portion of the population, so it is perhaps no surprise that some have written books about their experiences.

Since 2004, there have been a host of books published in the U.S. providing personal narratives of NDEs, at least six of which have made it onto the New York Times “Best-Sellers” list. The popularity of these narratives has led some to view them as constituting an emergent literary genre all their own, sometimes referred to rather cynically as “heaven tourism.” That there is religious significance to these accounts is obvious, and many of the

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Proof of Heaven?
authors make explicit claims not just that their experiences are real, but also that those experiences provide new information about the nature of humanity, God(s), and salvation. Some of the authors openly identify themselves as Christian, and make an appeal to a Christian audience, while others remain more ambiguous about their personal faith, apparently inviting a wider appeal. However, as previously mentioned, even regarding those claimants most explicit in their endorsement of Christianity, the Christian community is divided over whether to accept these NDE accounts, and many Christians remain skeptical. To understand why, it is helpful to examine some of these accounts and the conventions of the NDE narrative genre as a whole.

Because of its recent popularity and clear ties to the Christian faith, there is perhaps no better place to start gaining a familiarity with the genre than with Todd Burpo's *Heaven is for Real*. Burpo provides a secondhand account of the NDE of his 3-year-old son, Colton, which took place during an emergency appendectomy. The book was adapted into a major motion picture in 2014, which grossed over $100 million at the box office worldwide. It does not contain a linear narrative of Colton's NDE, but instead provides bits and pieces of the experience as revealed to Burpo by Colton over several years following his surgery. Colton reports meeting several prominent figures in heaven including John the Baptist, the angel Gabriel, and all three members of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Spirit), and he reports meeting his great grandfather who had died before he was born and his older sister who had been lost to a miscarriage. Burpo, a Wesleyan pastor, makes frequent references to scripture throughout the narrative, often tying his son's account to specific Biblical passages. The correlations between the Bible and Colton's experience seem to serve, in part, as verification of his story. Burpo reasons that there are several features of the story consistent with scripture and doctrine that Colton could not possibly have known or understood other than through experience. He cites in particular that Jesus has wounds on his hands and feet and sits at the right hand of God the Father, that God is three persons, and that it never gets dark in heaven. But Colton's experience goes beyond confirming scripture and, at times, provides supplemental information about heaven, including that Jesus has a multicolored horse, that everybody has wings, and perhaps most significantly, that unborn children (such as Colton's sister) might make it to heaven, a point on which, Burpo states, "the Bible is largely silent." However, when Burpo teaches about heaven from the pulpit, he still sticks to Scripture. As he explains in the final chapter, one of the main benefits of Colton's NDE for his family has been a renewed confidence and security in their already existing faith.

Compared to other contemporary NDE accounts, the main feature that stands out about *Heaven is for Real* is that the experiencer is a very young child. In evaluating its reliability, whether this works for or against the account seems to be a matter of perspective. To the author, Colton's age provides evidence for his honesty and against any contamination of his experience by cultural influence or expectation. To others, Colton's age might make his experience more susceptible to embellishment from imagination or suggestion. Such concerns seemed justified when, in January of 2015, another best-selling NDE narrative was pulled from the shelves after the young boy who had claimed the experience released a statement recanting his entire account. Alex Malarkey, who was 6 years old in 2004 when he was involved in a debilitating car accident, admitted to making up his trip to heaven in order to get attention. In response, Colton released a statement on the website for Heaven is for Real Ministries stating that he stands by his account. It is also significant that Colton did not in fact die, but only came close to death. It is unclear from Burpo's account whether there might have been a loss of brain function at some point during Colton's surgery, but for Burpo, this does not hold importance as to whether the experience was authentic. Aside from these considerations, the features of Colton's NDE match several of the common elements of NDE accounts given by professed Christians.
Proof of Heaven, by Eben Alexander, contains an account in many ways different from that of Colton, though there are similarities. Alexander gives a firsthand account of his NDE, which occurred during a coma produced by a rare illness affecting his brain.\textsuperscript{xlv} Alexander, a neurosurgeon,\textsuperscript{xlv} uses his expertise in brain physiology and chemistry to claim the authenticity of his experience. He argues that since there was no measurable activity in his neocortex, his experiences could not possibly have been produced by his brain, and therefore, he must have experienced events apart from his body.\textsuperscript{xlvii} The conclusion he draws is that his NDE was a real experience of life after death.\textsuperscript{xlviii} Like Colton, Alexander encounters a person he later discovers to have been a sibling he never knew he had.\textsuperscript{xli} He also meets God, but like the rest of Alexander's experience, the way he describes his encounter with God is decidedly more mystical than Colton's. He refers to God variably as the Creator, the Source, Om, and the Divine, which dwells in a core of “inky darkness that [is] also full to brimming with light.”\textsuperscript{xlii} He describes a world in which he has no body; language, emotion, and logic are gone;\textsuperscript{xliii} and everything is distinct but is also a part of everything else.\textsuperscript{xliv} While there, he communes with God through the help of a sentient Orb and receives super-human knowledge.\textsuperscript{xlv} He learns that there are many universes all connected by one divine reality, and that evil exists in these universes so that growth is possible through free will.\textsuperscript{xlvi} Alexander indicates that the most important truth he learned from his experience, indeed the only thing that truly matters, can be summed up in the following statements. “You are loved and cherished. You have nothing to fear. There is nothing you can do wrong.”\textsuperscript{xlvii} This he believes to be a universal truth and that sharing it is his most important task.\textsuperscript{xlviii}

With regard to religious affiliations, Alexander remains non-committal. There is little reference to scripture throughout Proof of Heaven, just as there is no mention of Jesus, the Holy Spirit, or any other Biblical figure. He does describe his outlook on life prior to his experience, and indicates that he had not believed in God.\textsuperscript{xlix} His NDE served as a conversion experience for him, and towards the end of the book he describes his first trip to church after his coma, expressing a new-found appreciation for religion.\textsuperscript{lxx} He states, “At last, I understood what religion was really all about. Or at least was supposed to be about. I didn't just believe in God; I knew God.”\textsuperscript{lxxi}

In some ways, Alexander's account in Proof of Heaven and Colton's account in Heaven is for Real represent two ends of a spectrum of NDE accounts. Some align closely with what is found in scripture and Christian theology and others are connected loosely at best. The conflicting details in accounts such as these two is quite possibly directly related to the conflicting reactions to NDE accounts within the Christian community. This is not to imply that reactions are split evenly among the Christian population. Importantly, both books can be found for sale on the website for Family Christian stores,\textsuperscript{lxxii} but there is an apparent difference in their reception. As of August of 2015, Heaven is for Real had been given 12 reviews with an average rating of 5/5 stars, while Proof of Heaven had only one review with a rating of 1 star.\textsuperscript{lxxiii} In this case, Proof's one reviewer objects to Alexander's lack of reference to Jesus, and states, “I do not doubt that he had an NDE, but he did not see God.”\textsuperscript{lxxiv} Similar objections can be found on websites geared toward more general readership (where the two books end up much closer in ratings), but so too can some endorsements from reviewers self-identifying as Christians.\textsuperscript{lxxv}

It is no surprise that many Christian readers are distrustful of claims to revelation that fail to mesh with scripture. Since the formation of the Christian canon, and especially following the Protestant Reformation, scripture has remained the primary source of religious knowledge and the standard against which claims of prophecy and experience have been tested for authenticity. It seems this is as true today for near-death experience as it has been for other claims of experience throughout history. Many Christians are skeptical of NDE accounts because of the threat they pose to the Doctrine of Scripture. This argument takes a variety of forms. On one extreme, it is suggested that some or all NDEs are the result of Satanic or
demonic influence. The conservative Christians who hold this view hypothesize that these experiences are tricks “designed to lull us into a false sense of security about the future life, to lure us into occult practices such as astral projection, to beguile us into accepting the advances of demons disguised as departed spirits, and to sell us a secular bill of goods about salvation without Christ.” They argue for the possibility that when one encounters a deceased relative or a “being of light” it is in fact a demon in disguise. NDE proponents, however, point to the aftereffects of the experiences on many of the experiencers, which often include a strengthened faith and increased sense of empathy, arguing that such effects would constitute quite a failure for any hypothetical demon. However, one need not attribute NDEs to demonic influence in order to question their validity, and there are a number of other arguments leveled against them by conservatives.

One of the most common concerns of NDE critics is that many accounts paint a highly inclusive picture of salvation, one inconsistent with the Biblical picture. Conservatives who would hold to an exclusive view of salvation, in which faith in Jesus is the only path to heaven, are concerned with the apparent “looseness” of some NDE accounts. Reflecting back on *Proof of Heaven*, it is easy to see how this concern might arise. Alexander's account emphasizes unconditional love as the basis of everything, and he includes no mention of hell, at least in the ordinary sense. One of the three most important lessons he recalls learning is that there is nothing he can do wrong. Taken as a whole, although it refrains from addressing salvation as such, his narrative seems to imply universalism, and he is far from alone in this tendency. One common feature of NDEs is an immersion of the experiencer in love. In the words of Colton Burpo, “. . . God is the biggest one there is. And he really, really loves us, Dad. You can't believe how much he loves us!” Colton's account does mention hell, but only in the context of the final battle, in which Satan is defeated and cast down. There are also those NDE accounts which offer insight into controversial issues within the Church. In the midst of controversy over the question of homosexuality within the Christian community, a number of homosexuals have reported pleasant NDEs, that is NDEs involving trips to heaven and/or feelings of love and acceptance. While this doesn't necessarily settle any debate about the morality of homosexual behavior, for those who view these experiences as authentic, it indicates that homosexuals are at least not automatically condemned to hell for their sexual orientation. Yet, there are those NDE accounts which do emphasize the exclusivity of heaven through their focus on hell and the possibility of a distressing afterlife for some. A prime example is Bill Weise's *23 Minutes in Hell*, another recent *New York Times* Best-seller. Distressing accounts are, however, understandably less popular, and as long as the overall emphasis in the genre is on God's loving acceptance, conservatives will likely continue to show concern.

Another common form of criticism leveled against popular NDE accounts is to argue strictly from the basis of scripture. Critics point to specific Biblical passages to argue that NDE accounts cannot be trusted or simply shouldn't occur among Christians. Some of the basic ideas are that there is no Biblical basis for NDE accounts, and to expect them is arrogant and ultimately indicative of a weak faith. One passage commonly employed in this argument is 2 Corinthians 12:1-4, in which the apostle Paul speaks of one who was “. . . caught up to the third heaven . . . and he heard things which cannot be told, which man may not utter.” Since Paul seems to be describing a case in which it was forbidden to share testimony of heaven, it is argued this sets a precedent for similar experiences among future believers. In June of 2014, the Southern Baptist Convention published an “Issue Analysis” on NDEs in response to the wide popularity of published accounts. 2 Corinthians 12:1-4 is among the verses cited as a part of the analysis. Some of the arguments are that none of the Biblical accounts of resurrection include testimony of NDEs and that the Bible discourages using others' testimony of heaven to bolster one's faith. The conclusion of the analysis is to recommend that Christians avoid NDE books altogether. Others have made similar
arguments, sometimes with stronger language. Writer Tim Challies refers in an article to Mary Neal's *To Heaven and Back* as “… pure junk, fiction in the guise of biography.”\textsuperscript{lxxxiii} He goes on to say, “You dishonor God if you need this kind of outside verification.”\textsuperscript{lxxxiv} This view is expressed by Alex Malarkey in his statement recanting his own NDE account. Malarkey urges Christians to look to the Bible for answers, stating, “the Bible is the only source of truth. Anything written by man cannot be infallible. It is only through repentance of your sins and belief in Jesus … may you learn of Heaven outside of what is written in the Bible … not by reading a work of man.”\textsuperscript{lxxxv}

This view is sometimes believed to be reflected in John 20:29, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”\textsuperscript{lxxxvi}

Despite the criticism leveled against NDE accounts, there are still those within the Christian community who view them in a positive light. In *Revealing Heaven*, John Price, a Christian pastor and former hospital chaplain, makes a case for their validity and value to a Christian outlook on life.\textsuperscript{lxxxvii} Like Burpo, Price draws connections between Biblical descriptions of heaven and descriptions from the many NDE accounts he has heard.\textsuperscript{lxxxviii} Interestingly, one of the connections he cites is with 2 Corinthians 12:2-4, the same passage used by others to argue against NDE testimony.\textsuperscript{lxxxix} Price, however, apparently does not interpret the passage to be forbidding the sharing of NDE accounts, emphasizing instead that Paul (writing in the third person) is claiming his own experience of heaven and God's presence.\textsuperscript{xc} Price further claims that Paul's statement that everyone “… must appear before the judgment seat of Christ…” is a reference to the life review common in many NDEs.\textsuperscript{xci} For Price, the main value of NDEs, for both the experiencers and those with whom they have shared their experiences, is increased compassion, empathy, and agape love.\textsuperscript{xcii} He states that these experiences help clarify Jesus's only commandment: “live a life of love for God, neighbor, and self.”\textsuperscript{xcv} According to Price, this increased capacity to love is a result of distressing or hellish NDEs as well.\textsuperscript{xcv} In addressing the commonality of heavenly NDEs among people of different faiths, he states that God's love is not limited to Christians but is universal,\textsuperscript{xcvi} and he reasons, “those who live a life of love are, whether they know it or not, accepting Jesus in his command to love as the central orientation of their lives.”\textsuperscript{xcvii} In support of this claim, he cites John 10:16, seemingly implying that Jesus is referring to those of outside of Christianity as his other sheep that will be part of his one flock along with Christians.\textsuperscript{xcviii} Ultimately, Price comes to the conclusion that “… there are really only two religions in the world: a religion of love and a religion of fear.”\textsuperscript{xcix} It seems, then, the insight he gains from NDEs is that God is forgiving and accepting, even of those outside the traditional Christian faith.

Price is not alone in his support of the NDE phenomenon. Kyle Rohane writes in an online article for *Christianity Today* that the NDE accounts can be quite valuable to Christians, provided they are viewed with spiritual discernment.\textsuperscript{c} Rohane points out that Christianity has a long history of individuals seeking ecstatic and mystical experience. He argues that the value of this experience comes from its ability to bring comfort or renewed hope or commitment to the individual, not from any particularly new or specific information about God's nature or the workings of the universe. Likewise, he cautions, Christians should approach NDE accounts with discernment and test them against scripture, while celebrating the fact that God works “… in ways that can't (and sometimes shouldn't) be explained.”\textsuperscript{ci} This view, more reserved than that of Price, is espoused by others in the Christian community, who believe the interpretation of NDEs is key to discerning their spiritual significance.

As with many controversies within Christianity, the debate over NDEs is centered around scripture. Conservatives question the validity of subjective experiences, most often, based on
their apparent contradiction of or addition to scripture. These Christians are concerned with maintaining the exclusivity and purity of the Biblical message. Proponents of the NDE phenomenon argue for its value as a reviving force, which reassures Christians of their security and guides them towards the proper emphasis on love and compassion. Proponents do not view these experiences in opposition to scripture, but as aids in discerning its correct interpretation. For some, like John Price, the testimony of NDEs has been so powerful as to result in a significant reinterpretation of the doctrine of salvation. This might be accurately understood as a move from orthodoxy to orthopraxy, from an emphasis on belief in Jesus as savior to an emphasis on the virtue of love and acceptance. For Christians on both sides of this debate, the primacy of scripture remains central. Yet, there is much room for interpretation. As NDEs continue to occur and accounts become more common in the wider culture, it remains to be seen just what sort of a long term effect this may have on Christian theology.

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xcvii Ibid., 1137-8.
xcviii Ibid., 144; John 10:16.
xcix Price, Revealing Heaven, 157.
ci Ibid.
Controversy in Skeletal Biology: the Use of Pathological and Osteological Markers as Evidence for Activity Patterns

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By Anna Alioto
Department of Anthropology
anna.p.alioto@wmich.edu

-Introduction-

In recent decades, work on the topic of skeletal biology has been increasingly important. Despite its origins in biological anthropology in the early twentieth century with the work of Franz Boas, Aleš Hrdlička and others, recent work in paleoanthropology, the creation of bioarchaeology and the continuing interest in human biology has pushed studies on the human skeleton further than ever before. As with any studies that deal with the past, these advances oftentimes pose issues and controversies within the scientific and academic communities. One of these major advances and controversial topics in skeletal biology is the use of osteological and pathological markers as evidence for activity patterns within individuals and populations (Jurmain et al., 2011). Because of early studies on the differences between skeletal populations in pre- and post-agricultural communities, skeletal biologists have noticed that the amount of physical activity as well as activity patterns can leave stress markers on the bone (Ruff et al., 1984). As a result, skeletal biologists among others have turned their attention to what could possibly be another way to try to reconstruct past human biology and culture.

While the majority of biological anthropologists agree that there is a correlation between the skeletal system, stress and physical activity, there is much debate on how to standardize methodology, establish definitive markers and relate these biological aspects to specific cultural traits (Buikstra and Pearson, 2006). As a result, studies on this topic have brought to light questions about the practicality and accuracy of such an examination. (Jurmain et al, 2011). This paper seeks to address the controversy on this topic, critically analyze it and make an argument for how activity patterns could be utilized effectively within the biological anthropological community if various recommendations were put into place. Through an analysis of historic and current literature on the topic, the paper will highlight why this topic is important yet controversial within the biological anthropological community, give a critical analysis on the importance of this topic within the field of skeletal biology, offer solutions to help alleviate the controversy, standardize the methodology and finally reestablish the underlying issues with studying the past.

-Types of Activities-

One of the reasons why the use of pathological and osteological markers as evidence for activity patterns is important and could be extremely beneficial to the scientific community is that it offers a way to recreate how much physical activity past communities engaged in and the types of activities they performed based on merely the human skeleton. Because almost all of the research conducted in biological anthropology looks at past populations, anything that can be discovered from bones creates an important link between the past and the present. Multiple scientists researched this topic over the past few decades and they have mostly agreed upon the types of information that can be taken from skeletal material in regards to activity. One of the major types of activities that was first researched by skeletal biologists was the difference in bone shapes, more specifically long bones between pre- and post-agricultural societies (Ruff et al, 1984). Significant work in this topic arose with Larsen et
al.’s 1984 research regarding structural changes in the femur with the transition to agriculture on the Georgian coast (Ruff et al., 1984). This specific study looked at the cross-sectional geometric patterns on the femur as an indicator of the change in stress on the body between pre- and post-agriculture (Ruff et al., 1984). In conjunction with this development, additional researchers looked at other ways in which skeletal information could inform about levels of and specific activities. One of these ideas was looking at the differences between activity patterns/stress on one side of the body versus the other (Auerbach and Raxter, 2008). Studies such as Auerbach and Raxter’s (2008) work on patterns of bilateral asymmetry on the clavicle demonstrates how it is possible that there could be wear on the bones, in their case the clavicle, that does not match on both sides of the body. In other words, through their study and many others, it was found that in the analysis of activity patterns among populations, there is oftentimes a difference in osteological/pathological markers, which is attributed to a favoring of one side of the body over the other (Auerbach and Raxter, 2008).

In the subsequent decades, there has been a transition within this topic from a more generalized discussion of activity patterns to a more intricate and conclusive one. The type of activity pattern that really epitomizes this idea is the use of activity patterns in relation to sexual dimorphism, the differences between males and females, among labor patterns (Villotte and Knusel, 2014). Many researchers have looked at osteological/pathological markers between the sexes and have often attributed differences to the social differences between the sexes. Studies have been conducted such as Havelkova et al.’s “Enthesopathies and Activity Patterns in the Early Medieval Great Moravian Population: Evidence of Division of Labour” (2011) which looks at enthesopathies and bone remodeling between the sexes from two different sites and lifestyle patterns between two different social groups, those from the castle and the hinterlands. This type of activity reconstruction has been used mostly by bioarchaeologists in order to reconstruct aspects of culture from past societies but this is also one of the main reasons why such markers have been called into question. Recently, methodology used to score the markers is oftentimes subjective and based on the experience and judgment calls of the bioarchaeologists. (Havelkova et al., 2011). As a result, when attempting to reconstruct life in past cultures, it is important to create the best methodology possible in order to address these issues in an accurate way.

Other activities that have been used in this later period of activity reconstruction are examinations of the development of generalized motion patterns such as those present when riding horseback or throwing a spear (Larsen, 1997). Larsen (1997), among others, looked at such generalized activity as possibly ways to reconstruct culture in his book: Bioarchaeology: Interpreting behavior from the Human skeleton. Most recently, skeletal biologists and especially bioarchaeologists have tried to push the boundaries even further by reconstructing specific physical activities from bone in conjunction with other methods of data collecting such as archaeology (Baker et al., 2012). One of the best examples of this type of reconstruction is Baker et al.’s (2002) work on a woman from the medieval city of Polis in Cyprus. Through both the bioarchaeological as well as archaeological data, they were able to pinpoint her specific occupation as being that of a seamstress (Baker et al., 2012). Based on this knowledge, activity patterns were reconstructed and were found to corroborate this data (Baker et al., 2012).

-Differences Between Markers-

Before delving into the categories, it is prudent to explain why these two categories, osteological and pathological are separated into two distinct ones even when there has been much overlap between the two. In its most simplistic form, the creation of these two categories is representative of the difference between wear and tear on the bones versus not. Osteological markers focus more on the build-up of compact bone such as the robusticity in musculoskeletal markers or the healing process of fractures (Knusel, 2000). Pathological
markers, on the other hand, look at more of the wear and tear process that occurs on bones (Buikstra and Beck, 2006). Rather than focusing on how bone material is recreated and rebuilt because of activity, pathological markers look at how such activities destroy bone and its connecting tissue.

- Osteological Markers -

In order to completely understand how such activity patterns are to be reconstructed using skeletal data, it is important to point out and explain what types of markers, both osteological and pathological, have been used by skeletal biologists to make these reconstructions. Beginning with osteological markers, there is a multitude of different methodologies that skeletal biologists have adapted over the years. The easiest one to decipher on bone, using the naked eye, is asymmetry in the bones. This asymmetry is caused by a variety of different factors, but is most often attributed with a constant repetitious motion, which allows for a stronger build-up of compact bone (Larsen, 1997). While this simply means unevenness in the bones, whether between different bones or on sections of a single bone, there is a variety of different methods that are used which fall under this category (Larsen, 1997). The one that is most often used when looking at the development of asymmetrical bones is cross-sectional geometry and loading modes (Larsen, 1997). This process involves taking a cross-section of the bone in question and looking at the way the bone has been shaped over time (Knusel, 2000). Not only would the researcher look at the cross section to understand shape but they would also look at the length of the shaft, which depicts which loading modes and physical actions created the shape seen in the cross-section of the bone (Maggiano et al., 2008).

Depending on the activities, researchers such as Larsen and Ruff have categorized five different loading modes, which affect the shape of the bone demonstrated by cross-sectional geometry (Ruff et al., 1984) (Larsen, 1997). These include twisting, compression, bending, tension and shear or fracture (Larsen, 1997). All of these modes represent what can happen to bone when impacted by different types of stress from physical activities. The last one, shearing or fracture, is not only one of the most common loading modes but also overlaps two different methodologies in regards to reconstructing activity patterns. It fits within cross-sectional geometry and asymmetry because it is an example of how a loading mode could influence the cross-sectional shape of the bone e.g. if the bone is sheared when the bone repairs itself, then it mostly likely will have a different cross-sectional shape. It also straddles the next category of makers, which is about fractures.

Another marker oftentimes used in order to reconstruct activity patterns, yet is more difficult to attribute to physical activity is the analysis of fractures (Buikstra and Beck, 2006). Fractures, which come in different forms such as healed, unhealed, partially healed and infected, can be used to determine activity patterns (Jurmain et al., 2011). An example of this is the presence of multiple fractures in the same place that have re-healed over time. This is mostly interpreted as evidence for frequent use and/or stress of that particular bone in a repetitive and constant manner (Larsen, 1997). While this variable seems like a plausible way in which to determine activity patterns, in reality, it is oftentimes more difficult. Depending on the quality of healing i.e., how long ago it healed as well as other factors such as frailty etc., specific fractures might not be the result of activity patterns at all but rather other influences such as pathology, accidental injury or violence (Larsen, 1997).

This uncertainty is also oftentimes seen in the next category of osteological markers, which is articular joint wear and tear (Buikstra and Beck, 2006). It is mostly attributed to either a particular general motion such as walking long distances or a collection of motions such as those seen in the development of agriculture (Larsen, 1997). The most common example of this wear and tear is the development of osteoarthritis, which is the degradation of joint cartilage (Buikstra and Beck, 2006). In severe cases, the cartilage will wear away until
all that is left are the bones, which then rub against each other when the joint is used, causing severe pain (Buikstra and Beck, 2006). If the joint is used often enough after the destruction of cartilage, friction occurs between the bones which makes the bone surfaces shiny, a process called eburnation. Similar to fractures, this particular method is oftentimes faulty in regards to activity pattern reconstruction and is a machination of other factors such as pathology, predisposition, and age (Knusel, 2000).

The final osteological marker considered in the reconstruction of activity patterns is musculoskeletal stress markers (will also be referred hereto as MSM), also called entheseal changes (Villotte and Knusel, 2003). These markers refer to the changes in specific sites of bones where muscles attach to them (Villotte and Knusel, 2003). Research has demonstrated that these areas oftentimes change in regards to the stress and activity placed on the body (Stefanovic and Porcic, 2013). These are oftentimes scored based on degree of robustness and demonstrate the build-up of bone in order to accommodate the growing muscle. This particular type of marker has increased in popularity recently in regards to these studies as it has looked at areas in which pathology and age have a lesser effect than other such as fractures or osteoarthritis (Villotte and Knusel, 2003). That being said, there is still much debate amount the types and levels of activities that can be determined from such markers (Stefanovic & Procic, 2013).

Pathological Markers-

The second approach to evaluating activity consists of pathological conditions and trauma. This particular group has not been as common as osteological indictors in regards to activity pattern reconstruction because of the various outside influences and uncertainty (Jurmain et al., 2011). The two major aspects of this group is osteoarthritis, which has been explained above and osteophytosis, which the accumulation of bone spurs, and the creation of bony projections as a result (Buikstra and Beck, 2006). Similar to the discussion about osteoarthritis in the previous section, both of these conditions rely on other factors such as age, health, diet etc. which could affect the amount of osteoarthritis or the development of osteophytosis rather than just activity patterns (Jurmain et al., 2011). Past research, which has looked at these types of pathological conditions oftentimes, does not discuss much about these other factors, which therefore has created much skepticism and controversy within the biological anthropological community. On the other hand, biological anthropologists have recognized the need for the evaluation of these other variables in relation to these pathological conditions and new research is coming out currently but as of yet is still inconclusive (Jurmain et al., 2011).

Previous and Current Literature-

In order to fully understand why there is so much controversy specifically surrounding the issue of reconstructing activity patterns from human skeletal material, it is necessary to address the historic and current literature regarding this topic. Much, if not all, of the research on the reconstruction of activity patterns from human skeletal material is the result of only a few decades worth of work. As mentioned in the section on types of activity patterns that can be reconstructed, historic and current literature can be divided into two different sections, one that looks at more generalized patterns and those that are more specific. In order to cement the importance of the literature, some of the previous points will be reiterated and elaborated further. Studies about activity reconstruction from skeletal material began to gain popularity in the early 1980s with works like Ruff et al’s, (1984) research regarding structural changes in the femur with the transition to agriculture on the Georgian coast. As mentioned earlier, this work is one of the first ones that recognized that there were patterns within the skeletal record that could be used to reconstruct patterns of physical activity among individuals (Ruff et al., 1984). It is also more recognizable in looking at cross-sectional analysis and attempts to
standardize its methodology and decrease margin of error by looking at two different human population lifestyles, pre-agricultural, and post-agricultural (Ruff et al., 1984). Since these beginning steps, the evolution of this topic has taken a drastic step towards trying to reconstruct specific activity patterns and subsequent occupations.

In the present era i.e., from 2010 onward, there has been a push to really understand and develop the argument for sexual dimorphism within population as shown by Havelkova et al.’s (2011) article. As a result, the idea that sexual division of labor can be indicated from skeletal markings on the bones has become a popular research topic. This article also demonstrates how in the past few years, the reconstruction of activity patterns based on human skeletal remains has been called into question. At the same time, this topic has become increasingly important to other fields outside of anthropology such as the medical or forensic fields. Godde and Taylor’s (2011) article looks at the question of obesity and what kind of stress that puts on the skeletal material. This article among others similar to it, have been used in current population studies in order to combat what are seen as huge issues within society such as the obesity epidemic. Yet, like other research of its time, it too is being called into question in regards to similar issues, such as lack of consideration for specific variables, which are oftentimes mentioned in the research that looks at past populations. In regards to that specific examples, anthropologists such as Villotte and Knusel reviewed and critiqued Godde and Taylor’s (2011) research arguing that they did not consider important variables such as age at death and also that their conclusions are too far-reaching for the science that is currently developed on this issue.

-Issue for Anthropologists-

There are many different reasons why the reconstruction of activity patterns based on osteological and pathological markers is controversial in the biological anthropological community. While many of them span different topics, the majority of the major critiques can be narrowed down into two different sections; one, the issue with samples and two, incomplete or dysfunctional methodology (Meyer et al., 2011). In regards to the issues with samples, most of the critiques revolve around the lack of strong sample sizes within a population. Since the majority of sample sizes with the skeletal biology research and especially bioarchaeology research are small to begin with because of preservation, legal issues etc., this critique is present in almost every methodology on the analysis of human skeletal material (Buikstra and Beck, 2006). What is somewhat unique to activity patterns is the use of these sample sizes to make broad assumptions not only about that particular population, but also across a multitude of different populations (Meyer et al., 2011). It is oftentimes coined as the individual versus population debate and has had a constant presence in anthropology since early anthropologists like Franz Boas. Can researchers make broad conclusions about one individual’s activity pattern reconstruction to other individuals in that population? Can even that population be used as a comparison against other populations that show similar markers? These are questions that are constantly being considered and in accordance, the methodology is being reevaluated.

The other major topic is the problem with incomplete or dysfunctional methodology. In some ways, this topic connects to the previous one as oftentimes sample sizes are to blame for some of the reasons why the methodology is lacking (Meyer et al., 2011). In regards to the specific methodology used for the reconstruction of activity patterns, the major critique demonstrated by the writings of Meyer et al.’s (2011) work on “Tracing patterns of activity in the human skeleton: an overview of methods, problems and limits of interpretation” argues that the majority of methods created in reconstructing activity patterns do not ‘truly conform’ to the standards of the field. Specific examples of this non-conformist approach include the neglect of other possible explanations for data results such as disregarding other variables that essentially could impact data or are even the cause of data results (Meyer et al., 2011). An
illustration of this critique as pointed out by Meyer et al. is the issue of sexual dimorphism in
regards to reconstructing physical activity. The authors argue that in some instances the
differences seen in bone markers between the sexes could in fact be sexual dimorphism within
the Homo sapiens species rather than between cultural populations (Meyer et al., 2011). As a
result, many authors like Meyer et al. argue that much of the methodology that has been
created needs to be evaluated and standardized before this topic should be developed further.

-Why Is It Still Useful?-

Despite the controversy and issues surrounding this topic, it remains a useful one within
biological anthropological research. As current research demonstrates, many of the issues
with past reconstruction of activity lies in the inadequate or nonexistent accounting of various
variables that in fact affect the development of stress on the skeletal system (Knusel, 2000).
The following is my critical analysis of many of the variables that can affect the amount of
stress put on the skeletal system and therefore is crucial in regards to any type of research on
this topic. I also include recommendations when analyzing of some of the variables that do
not seem to have been considered by researchers, as they may help fix some of the problems
surrounding this issue. The first variable is age at death. The effect that age has on the body,
more specifically the skeletal system, is known in most cases as an increase in age-related
effects over time. In other words, the older an individual is, the more likely their bones lose
density and strength (Larsen, 1997). As a result, this has an enormous influence on activity
reconstruction not only because of the types of activities that produced changes on the bone
but also whether or not such activities can be attributed to a population on a wider scale.
Researchers who study this topic such as Villotte and Knusel in their (2013) article,
“Understanding Enthesal Changes: Definition and Life Course Changes”, have understood
the importance that the determination of age plays regarding the reconstruction of activity
patterns. The next factor to consider is sex. As mentioned previously, sex and sexual
dimorphism are commonly studied features in this topic, and some researchers have
demonstrated that there are differences in stress markers between males and females.

Another variable to consider is body size in relation to osteoarthritis. While body size is
more difficult to ascertain as in past populations since all that is left is the skeleton, if other
factors such as stature are taken into account along with the osteoarthritis, it is possible to get
a better understanding or a more accurate idea about these activity patterns in individuals
(Buikstra and Beck, 2006). Body type and stature could affect the development and growth of
the bones in which people with a bigger body type and bigger bones could handle more stress
than those who could not (Knusel, 2000). If so, it would be inaccurate to compare activity
markers from different individuals in a one-to-one correlation and make general statements
about it if perhaps one person could handle more stress than the other could. In accordance
with this thinking, there are other variables of similar standing such as diet and health. The
amount and types of foods that are eaten as well as the overall health, including pathology and
trauma, of the individual have a huge impact on activity reconstruction and once again, it
would be inadequate to make general statements about it without considering these factors.
That being said, some of the current methodology acknowledges these variables yet it is not
as popular as age or sex (Jurmain et al., 2011).

The final two variables, ancestry and culture can also be grouped together in most past
populations; as migration of individuals was not as widespread as it is today and culture
therefore was most likely linked ancestrally. These two factors really have not been
considered within the literature yet could offer valuable insights into the reconstruction of
activity patterns. Ancestry could be determined using genetics and studies on human
variation among populations to determine whether or not individuals are more adapted or
predisposed to different types of activities or pathological conditions. This is especially
important for osteoarthritis as genetics and ancestral patterns can, to a certain extent,
demonstrate the predisposition of certain populations to osteoarthritis (Buikstra and Beck, 2006). The final variable that should be looked at is culture. A researcher should look at how the society or culture as a whole views levels of stress and types of activities based on these markers. It could be combined with other data such as archaeological or historical in order to get a more accurate picture such as Baker et al.’s example of the seamstress from Cyprus.

-Methodology and Recommendations-

Because of this and other critiques mentioned by the literature, a reconstruction of methodology is in order. To fully accomplish this, three major things must be taken into account. The first of which is the development of larger samples sizes. While this is more difficult in the study of archaeological specimens, I would recommend using some more recent samples such as those in the past few centuries, which oftentimes have more individuals and better preservation in order to first create a methodology which then could be applied to samples that have less individuals as a result of preservation, legal or recovery issues. The second part of this methodology would be an emphasis on a multi-variable approach using at least three of the above mentioned variables such as sex, age etc. in order to make better implications and reconstructions about activity patterns. The final part would be an emphasis, clarification and alleviation of the problem of reconstructing activity patterns based on the individual versus population debate. In other words, it would be better to separate the conclusions made about the reconstruction of activity patterns into two groups, those that look at specific individuals and those that look at the same data on a population wide scale.

In accord with this ideal methodology are my recommendations for the future development of this topic in the biological anthropological community. These two recommendations would hopefully be able to help decrease some of the controversy surrounding this topic. To reiterate, my first recommendation is the use and recognition of the fact that a multitude of outside variables that can affect the reconstruction of such activities. The second is having better communication within the community in order to establish a generalized methodology as well as pose any new research as tentative until other researchers are able to either reconstruct the results or build on such information with further research.

-The Controversy-

Even though there are smaller controversies or issues that surround this topic within the biological anthropological community such as the lack of a standard methodology or large sample sizes, the use of activity markers as reconstructions of activity also touches on two larger issues outside the field of anthropology. Many people, who study or are interested in the past, understand the concerns that frame all such studies and how problematic they can be especially within an academic setting. The underlying issue that surrounds any study concerning the past is the lack of complete objectivity and as a result, the use of researcher subjectivity. In other words, because the past is never completely clear, anyone who studies it must employ a degree of subjectivity in order to pursue their work such as using educated guesses or analytical methods. In the case of this paper’s example, the use of skeletal markers to reconstruct activity, anthropologists employ a variety of techniques such as a scoring system, which they use to ‘score’ the amount of stress or robusticity placed on a section of a bone that has a muscle attachment. While this issue seems insurmountable, it has been proven here in anthropology as well as other fields that methods can be used to decrease the distance between what is known about the past and what has yet to be discovered. The other controversy which affects studies outside biological anthropology is the issue with comparing today’s health to that of the past. In accordance with the previous concern about studying the past, studying health both in the present and in the past always poses some questions, many of which have not yet been solved. One of the more recent examples is the emergence of the so-
called popular ‘Paleo Diet’. While it is an acceptable trend to the public, there are still many questions that speak to the validity of the diet as something acceptable to present human biological standards. In other words, researchers are questioning the effectiveness and healthiness of the diet, as current human biology does not match that of our human ancestors. The same thing can be said for physical activity and the comparison between the past to the present. Ultimately, both of these examples rely heavily on our understanding of past health issues, something which is still problematic and therefore presents controversy in not only in an academic sphere but also in a public one.

-Conclusion-

Overall, the reconstruction of activity patterns within the biological anthropology community, spanning disciplines such as bioarchaeology, skeletal biology, paleopathology etc., is a topic surrounded by many questions and a lot of controversy. Historic and current literature demonstrates not only the direction this topic has taken but also the problems that are the result of it. Through my recommendations, most notably the use of a multivariable analysis, I believe that the reconstruction of activity patterns based on human skeletal remains is not only still important to the anthropological community but also creates a stronger methodology in which these patterns can be reconstructed, bringing anthropologists one step closer to unlocking the murkiness of the past.

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